



Monday Morning Report

May 30, 2023

Memorial Day Edition

INTERNAL

The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, June 21 at 2pm by Zoom videoconference. For more information or to add an item to the agenda, email council@thecorridor.org.

Railroad economics are resulting in longer-and-longer freight trains, blocking intersections and delaying emergency vehicles - particularly in Texas - the **Washington Post** reports [here](#). Emergency responders in the **Austin-San Antonio** region may want to join us next week for a Federal Railroad Administration panel, "*The State of Rail Safety and the Policy Path Forward*," 12:00 pm CDT on Tuesday June 6. Register [here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

House Bill 2127 - the 'Death Star' measure that significantly preempts local control over a vast range of authorities including labor law, the environment, and city finances - will be signed by the governor soon, says the **San Antonio Report**. Next stop: the courts, as the bill may be rife with constitutional issues. [Story](#).

As local **Austin** activists attempt to re-connect the city's east side and downtown during the reconstruction of IH-35, the **New York Times** takes a look at the Biden administration's \$1 billion program to accomplish similar efforts around the US, with **Kansas City** as a focal point. [Story](#).

The **Dallas/Fort Worth** Metroplex has become a hub for testing self-driving trucks and autonomous vehicles (so far with safety officers aboard) and is already making Kroger and Sam's Club deliveries. Backers hope the new technology will avert a driver shortage predicted to be in the 160,000 range by 2030, the **Star-Telegram** reports, but how safe are these vehicles and can companies safely govern themselves or is regulation required? [Story](#).

More details emerged last week in the **San Antonio Report** about efforts to rescind the 'perimeter rule,' which for more than four decades has restricted non-stop flights from **San Antonio** to **Washington's** downtown Reagan National Airport. A supporter-commissioned study says the change would reduce ticket prices and generate \$470 million in economic development benefits. [Story](#).

That ecologically inspired ban on short-haul airplane flights in France went into effect last week, but critics say it is 'much ado about nothing' after the written regulations exempted the largest airport in **Paris** and cities without direct high speed rail connections. A planned Europe-wide expansion of the ban is now being questioned. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Even in the face of workforce shortages, debt, inflation, and the energy transition, regaining historic rates of productivity growth could add a whopping \$10 trillion to the US Gross Domestic Product, **McKinsey & Company** reports, as it provides a laundry list of what can be done to accelerate the US economy. **Opinion.**

A surge of interest in artificial intelligence applications has prompted a similar stock surge for chip maker Nvidia, prompting potentially the largest single-day value jump in history for a US company. The 24% rise in stock price means Nvidia is now worth \$939.3 billion - more than Tesla or Facebook, the **Washington Post** reports. **Story.**

In a column datelined out of **Austin**, the **Washington Post** examined the Army Futures Command, finding that it is an Army unit like no other: charged with developing technologies that will enable the military to advance war-fighting robotics, quantum computing, hyper sonics, directed energy, and artificial intelligence. **Opinion.**

The National Association of Counties honored **Travis County** last week for its remote work program, which aims to make 75% of eligible jobs at the county remote - reducing traffic and parking requirements, the county says, and increasing productivity and employee morale. **Story.**

Salvador Hector Ochoa, currently vice president for academic affairs at **San Diego** State University in California, has been selected as the next president of Texas A&M University in **San Antonio**. He replaces Cynthia Teniente-Matson, who departs for a state university in **San Jose**, once he's confirmed. **Details** (right-hand column).

Thought of the Week

"Freedom makes a huge requirement of every human being. With freedom comes responsibility."

— Eleanor Roosevelt

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