



Monday Morning Report

October 19, 2026

INTERNAL

Central Texas Alliance leadership joined the **Austin** Chamber of Commerce on a fact-finding mission to **Miami** earlier this month, part of an ongoing effort to study best practices from other peer-group cities around the US, **KXAN News** reported last week. Of particular interest on this trip was the Brightline **Orlando-Miami** passenger rail service, which has filed for bankruptcy after failing to meet ridership & financial goals. [Story](#). [More](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Chicago, **New York**, and **Seattle** transit leaders shared their answers to revenue shortfalls, legal challenges to their authorities, and inflationary pressures last week at an American Public Transportation Association panel last week, including how **Chicago** overcame a \$770 million budget deficit without additional funding. [Story](#).

Also at last week's American Public Transportation Association conference in **Chicago**, three Sun Belt mayors - including Kirk Watson of **Austin** - made the case for more and better public transit funding for growing cities in the South and West, sometimes overlooked in favor of legacy transit systems in the Northeast. Watson linked transit to the affordability of housing and cited the importance of land use to quality of life issues. [Story](#).

Officials in Washington announced last week that the US Department of Transportation would obligate \$500 million to a new 110-mile-per-hour passenger rail line connecting **Richmond**, VA with **Raleigh**, North Carolina. The project had also earlier received a \$1.1 billion funding commitment from the Biden administration. [Story](#).

Of 69 fatal crashes linked to automated driving systems from July 2021 to August 2026 none have involved heavy self-driving trucks, the **Wall Street Journal** reports out of Texas in a 'state-of-the-industry' survey article featuring autonomous trucking between **Houston-Dallas** and **West Texas**. One industry source predicts there will be 30,000 driverless trucks on US highways by 2030. [Story](#).

Elon Musk wowed the automobile industry (and a lot of other folks) last week with a media launch in **Waco** involving a Tesla Roadster that could hang upside down and leap over a line of stopped vehicles while doing a barrel roll. But the **Wall Street Journal** says the road show

indicates Tesla is abandoning the electric car market to China and marking a shift of the company from cars into robotics. [Story](#). [Opinion](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

San Antonio-based Lewis Energy Group will partner with other entities, including South Korea, to build a \$22 billion power-generation plant and data center in **Encinal**, that's **La Salle County**, in deep South Texas near Laredo. Project Star will spark 1800 construction and 170 permanent jobs, generating 6.47 gigawatts of power. [Story](#).

Pest control company Terminix ranked US cities for rat and mice populations based on related calls to their offices. **Houston** and **Dallas** made the Top Ten; **San Antonio** ranked 36th, just behind **Austin** at 34th. The company says the rodents go where there is the most available food for them. **New York** (of course) led the list. [Story](#).

"The conditions we are facing right now are conditions that we have never seen before," a wildfire expert said last summer, as flames ranged out of control in Canada, reports the **Times**. The evolving worldwide wildfire situation is causing weather prediction services to come up with new terms for fires creating their own weather. [Opinion](#).

WalletHub is out with another analysis of questionable methodology evaluating 1300 US cities across 45 main factors (such as housing costs, school system ratings, entertainment and cuisine access, and other quality of life metrics), concluding that **Cedar Park** is the best small town in Texas and 58th in the US for 2026. [Story](#).

Heads Up: Early voting starts *today* all across Texas with some of the closest statewide races in a generation concluding on Tuesday, November 3. Don't blow your chance to make a difference. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"The best way to predict your future is to create it." – Abraham Lincoln

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