



Monday Morning Report

July 15, 2019

INTERNAL

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council is scheduled to meet Wednesday, September 18, 2:00 pm at the Council offices in **San Marcos**, 304 N CM Allen Parkway. Please RSVP to council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

H-E-B will begin testing self-driving vehicles to deliver groceries in **San Antonio** later this year. Working with Udelv - a California based startup - the grocery chain will collect and analyze data to evaluate optimum routes and eventually transition to autonomous operations, though still maintaining remote control over the vehicles. Gov. Abbott signed a bill in 2017 allowing the use of autonomous vehicles on Texas roads. [Story](#).

A combination of trade wars and Chinese competition is shaking up the worldwide industry of transit equipment manufacturing. Government-owned Chinese companies - not driven by profits but rather by accumulating market share - are driving global competitors like **Montreal**-based Bombardier and Alstom to reduce their work forces and product lines. Meanwhile, tariffs, trade conflicts, and the quotas set by the Buy America program may shift some foreign manufacturing back to the US. [Story](#).

Big changes are coming to **Austin's** Capitol Complex: an \$895 million-dollar plan to consolidate in three phases all state offices into 1.5 million square feet of new office buildings north of the Capitol. Included are more parking and more greenspace to accommodate tourists, festivals and events. Construction should be complete by 2025 and two additional offices buildings are being contemplated. [Details](#).

Volkswagen announced last week in **New York** that it will invest \$3.1 billion into Ford Motor Company's self-driving/electric Argo unit to develop electric autonomous vehicles for the European market, expected to be producing 600,000 vehicles beginning in 2023. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

Management shakeups continue at Rackspace, the **San Antonio** (actually **Windcrest**) managed cloud computer services company. First to go was CEO Joe Eazor in April, replaced by Kevin Jones. Now four other senior executives are departing: the chief financial officer; the chief of operations; the chief marketing officer; and the general manager Rackspace Solutions and Services. [Story](#).

Former **San Antonio** city council member (and former Alamo Area MPO vice chairman) Rey Saldana was unanimously elected to serve as chairman of the city's VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority. He takes over from former secretary of state Hope Andrade for an initial term that will expire in 2020. [Details](#).

First, it was concerns over a citizenship question troubling the upcoming 2020 Census (now resolved), but officials say a new concern has arisen for the massive \$15 billion decennial people-count: the booming

Texas economy. The Census Bureau reports that, because of low unemployment in the state, it is having trouble hiring enough temporary workers to execute its mission in Texas and elsewhere. *Texas Public Radio* reports [here](#).

An association of **San Antonio** business interests is considering legal action to block an August 1 deadline for complying with the city's new paid sick leave policy. City lawyers have been notified of an attempt to seek an injunction to stop enforcement of the ordinance providing one hour of earned sick time for every 30 hours worked, estimated to cover 350,000 local workers. [Details](#).

Just in case you're one of those people who believes that air quality concerns are just an exotic fetish of environmentalists, consider reading an excerpt from *Choked: Life and Breath in the Age of Air Pollution*, which contends that air pollution has been linked to brain damage, dementia, Alzheimer's, and lower IQ's among affected children. Scary. [Excerpt](#).

Austin's attempts to rewrite its homelessness ordinances continues to generate threats from the state to intervene and lots of complaints from the downtown business community. **Boise**, Idaho is in the middle of a court fight over similar ordinances, and a **Seattle** television station has produced a particularly troubling documentary on the local problem there. [Story](#). [Documentary](#).

Thought of the Week

"No amount of evidence will ever persuade an idiot."
- Mark Twain

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