



Monday Morning Report

October 29, 2018

INTERNAL

The next scheduled meeting for the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** Council Executive Committee is Wednesday, December 19 at 2pm.

RSVP or submit agenda items to council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Union Pacific - the major freight rail provider to the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** - announced a first round of layoffs last week that will reduce administrative staff by 500 employees and end another 200 contract positions as the company continues to struggle with congestion problems that have depressed profits. According to TxDOT sources, all of UP's Managers of Industrial and Public Projects were let go, meaning construction, maintenance, and development projects are placed on hold. Officials said the goal eventually was a 30% reduction in general and administrative support by 2020. [Story](#).

Texas Central Railroad's high speed rail project between **Dallas** and **Houston** represents the collision of two things Texans hold dear, according to the **Texas Tribune**: "Private property rights and an unrestrained free market." The publication summarizes the current status of the project and political struggles that it faces with both local and state governments. [Details](#).

Transportation is **Bexar County**'s top priority, judge Nelson Wolff told a Chamber of Commerce crowd last week, citing the one million people who will be added to the county's current 2 million population over the next 20 years. He said VIA Metropolitan Transit was 'on the right road' to adapting its services into a multifaceted system. "The county's role in this effort is to address road infrastructure to accommodate that transit," he said, noting projects underway by the county's Alamo Regional Mobility Authority. [Story](#).

The **New York Times** ran an interesting piece over the weekend on the challenges faced in developing fully self-driving vehicles for the marketplace: computing power will have to be increased a hundredfold in existing systems to insure safe deployment; object recognition sensors will require processors that can perform one trillion floating-point transactions per second and main processors performances will be measured in millions of discrete instructions per second. Only artificial intelligence can resolve the combination of issues involved, and it may be a long time coming, they conclude. [Story](#).

What happens when police want to pull over a self-driving vehicle? Alphabet's Waymo has released an updated *"Emergency Response Guide"* to provide protocols for how first emergency personnel and police officers should interact with autonomous vehicles, particularly in the event of an accident. (No, the car won't drive itself away.) [Guide](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

Challenges and opportunities for **San Antonio**'s high tech ecosystem were aired last week at a panel discussion sponsored by the SA Economic Development Foundation. A trend of young people moving out

of the city has begun to change, according to a Tech Bloc spokesman; new tech-training programs are expanding, adding to potential workforce development; housing affordability remains a challenge; and the allure of **Austin's** lifestyle makes recruitment from there a problem, said local entrepreneur Lew Moorman. [Details.](#)

Ben White is the newly-appointed director of economic development for **Cedar Park**, replacing development veteran Phil Brewer, who retired in May. White was formerly a **Round Rock** Chamber of Commerce executive. [Details](#) (lower right hand column).

In the midst of last week's 'Boil Water Notice' in **Austin**, the **San Antonio** Water System trucked a neighborly 5,000 gallons of drinking water to help provide relief for the capital city's wide-area of water shortages. Similar relief supplies have gone to Hurricane Harvey-stricken **Port Aransas** and **Corpus Christi**; this time the 5,000 gallon truck remained in **Buda** for a few days to transport water from there into Austin. [Details.](#)

San Antonio-based Frost Bank announced last week that it will nearly double its branch-banking business in **Houston** to 25 outlets over the next two years, adding more than 200 new jobs to an existing workforce of 600 currently. [Details.](#)

Californians by the thousands are buying homes in **Dallas**, **Houston**, and **Austin**, according to real estate research firm Redfin. The firm studied migration patterns by homeowners away from high-cost metro areas to more affordable markets; both **Austin** and **Dallas** emerged as among the top 10 destinations. Break out the tofu. [Details.](#)

The Capital Area Council of Governments says illegal dumping along highways, park lands, and watersheds is "a dangerous and growing problem in the **Central Texas** region." One of their task forces - through funding from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - provides local jurisdictions with tools to combat the problem through technical expertise and other avenues. [Details.](#)

Thought of the Week

"Do not say a little in many words but a great deal in a few."
- Pythagorus

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