



Monday Morning Report

January 11, 2021

INTERNAL

The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, January 20, 2:00 pm, by Zoom conference call. To put an item on the agenda or for further information, contact council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Global confirmed cases are up by 13 million since our last report, to 90,382,187 as of this morning, with 1,936,614 deaths. US cases totaled 22,410,609 with 374,348 deaths (1/11/21). (*Johns Hopkins*) Texas reported 1,716,824 confirmed cases yesterday, with 29,877 deaths, including in **Bexar County:** 107,783 cases with 1859 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 6,964 cases with 116 deaths; **Comal County:** 3,992 cases with 166 deaths; **Hays County:** 11,545 cases with 117 deaths; **Travis County:** 55,870 cases with 581 deaths; and **Williamson County:** 23,414 cases with 238 deaths (1/10/21). (*TDHHS*)

INFRASTRUCTURE

An interim report from the Texas House's Transportation Committee released this month in **Austin** says TxDOT will be underfunded by \$111 billion between 2019-2030, or about \$9.3 billion per year. The agency lost \$1.9 billion in revenue alone due to COVID-19 for the 2020-21 biennium period, according to the report. Recommendations include: increased/indexed gas taxes, tolling, new optional county and electric vehicle fees. *Report.*

The executive director of the Texas Electric Transportation Resources Alliance (TxETRA) makes the financial and environmental case in the **Austin American-Statesman** for a statewide regulatory framework for electric vehicles with an opinion editorial touting new draft legislation. Tom "Smitty" Smith says 41% of Texas vehicles will be electric by 2030. *Opinion.*

The Colorado River provides water to 40 million people and 5.5 million acres of farmland in a dozen Western states and Mexico, all governed by a 13-page document drafted a century ago in 1922. With private investors increasingly seeking a role in water rights along the river, according to the **New York Times**, that agreement is being renegotiated this month amidst the worst drought in 1500 years. *Story.*

Delivery company Nuro, already operating on a test-basis in **Houston**, has received an Autonomous Vehicle Deployment Permit in California to begin package delivery operations in **Santa Clara** and **San Mateo Counties** in 2021, reportedly pushing the start-up's stock valuation past \$5 billion. *Story.*

The **San Antonio** Mobility Coalition is hosting a "State of Freight 2021" luncheon event on Friday, February 19, from 11:30-1:00 pm with John Esparza from the Texas Trucking Association and other industry leaders. You can register and find more information *here.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

2020 essentially tied 2016 as the hottest year ever recorded, about 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the average from 1850 to 1900, according to a European analysis available [here](#). But the financial implications of climate change become clearer with a report that the costs of US natural disasters doubled last year, to \$95 billion, due to a record number of named Atlantic storms and wildfires in California.

Story.

Climate change also figured prominently in Texas State Comptroller Glenn Heger's assessment yesterday in the **Dallas Morning News** of the budgetary picture for the upcoming Legislative session: He says national bond rating agencies are pointing out that Texas is extraordinarily exposed to hurricanes and droughts, with 203 of 254 counties at risk of scarcities. **Opinion.**

The pace at which Texas population growth is outstripping other US states since 2010 is "jaw-dropping," according to policy analyst Bill King of **Houston**. State population grew by 4.2 million people, about 1/5 of total US population growth of 21 million. Texas will thus gain three new US Congressional seats, based on current figures, **Washington DC**-based publication **The Hill** reports. **Story.**

Wow. It has come to this. An editor at normally conservative business magazine **Forbes** says President Trump's spokespeople will have problems moving to the corporate world. "Let it be known to the business world: Hire any of Trump's fellow fabulists above and **Forbes** will assume everything your company or firm talks about is a lie." **Opinion.**

Thought of the Week

"For last year's words belong to last year's language. And next year's words await another voice."

— T. S. Eliot

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