



Monday Morning Report

April 29, 2019

INTERNAL

A special called meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee will take place on Wednesday, May 15, in **San Marcos** in the Corridor Council offices at 2:00 pm to discuss the results of our recent Five-Year Strategy Planning Workshop, sponsored by Raba-Kistner Consulting Engineers. Please RSVP your attendance to council@thecorridor.org. The Executive Committee will review and refine strategies suggested by the workshop, a draft of which can be seen [here](#).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Austin's Bergstrom International Airport is gearing up for a \$4.5 billion expansion effort laid out last week at an Urban Land Institute luncheon. The airport's 2040 master plan begins with a new terminal parallel to the existing one, adding 20 new gates, deemed necessary by planners to serve the 30 million annual passengers expected by 2030 - roughly double the existing passenger load. One problem: funding has not yet been identified. [Story](#).

Researchers in **Elche**, Spain have used deep neural networks to develop an artificial intelligence data solution that predicts traffic conditions up to 15 minutes ahead of time. Their study used nearly 100 sensors along a heavily-traveled 97-kilometer route between **Alicante** and **Murcia** (100,000 vehicles per day) over the past 12 years. They claim the calibration mechanism used decreased prediction error by 40% and allows modeling of connected-vehicle insertion into the system. [Details](#).

CityLab website takes a look this week at the proposed high-speed rail project between **Dallas- Houston** and provides a litany of problems for the project in the courts and the Texas Legislature. Moreover, opponents seem to have been strengthened politically by the collapse of California's high-speed rail program, dramatically whittled back in scope by a Democratic governor. [Story](#).

Speaking of California's high-speed rail project (above), the **Los Angeles Times** published a fascinating story last week detailing how the largest infrastructure project in state history ended up falling victim to a decision - made a decade ago - to maintain only a skeletal core staff and employ instead cadres of consultants who repeatedly underestimated the difficulty of the task. Well worth a read. [Story](#).

Staid **Governing** magazine, tracing shrinking newsroom staffs in places as diverse as **Cleveland** and **San Jose**, reports that there is a direct connection between less local news coverage and more partisan polarization in government, fewer candidates for office, higher municipal borrowing costs, and more pollution. And contrary to overwhelming evidence to the contrary, 74% of Americans believe their local news outlets are doing well financially. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

At first blush, a claim made by a Texas Municipal League spokesperson last week seemed unbelievable: that 74% of all Texans are crammed into just 4% of the state's land area. But **Politifact** analyzed data

provided by Bennett Sandlin - TML's executive director - and found the statement 100% accurate. The figures became relevant to Legislative scuffles in **Austin** regarding enhanced powers for local governments. [Story](#).

Regulation is coming to Facebook and Google, first in data privacy protections and next in antitrust investigations. That's the conclusion of a new **Business Insider** study, the *Top Ten Trends in Digital Media*, which concludes that the duopoly's share of social media ad spending (as high as 81%) will spark public outrage leading to restrictions. They also conclude that the real threat to both companies is Amazon, expected to pick up a larger share of advertising over its three platforms due to softening in the market. Read the study [here](#).

Data collection and mapping of severe weather events has dramatically improved in the last few decades, contributing to better prediction capabilities, better disaster management generally, and an increased interest in building 'resilient' communities and governments. A recent series of threat-mapping graphics from the National Weather Service (and others) generate a somewhat scary risk-profile for the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** from flash floods, fires, rising temperatures and tornadoes. Story and graphics [here](#).

Shakeup at Rackspace: After just two years, Rackspace chief executive officer Joe Eazor is being replaced by Kevin M. Jones, formerly the head of **Dallas**-based contractor MV Transportation. The **San Antonio** (actually the municipality of **Windcrest**) managed hosting/cloud computing provider has seen plenty of change recently after being acquired by **New York**-based private equity firm Apollo Global Management. [Details](#).

Joining the august ranks of **New York**, **London**, and **Washington DC**, the digital publication **CSO Online** has named **San Antonio** as one of the 'Top Ten Global Cyber Security Hubs,' citing the city's 12 federal cybersecurity operations, including the US Air Force's Cyber Command and the National Security Agency's Texas Cryptologic Center. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"No one flower can ever symbolize this nation. America is a bouquet."

- William Safire

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