



Monday Morning Report

August 23, 2021

INTERNAL

The next scheduled meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, September 15th at 2:00 pm by videoconference. For questions or contributions, contact council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Confirmed global cases are at 211,986,070 this morning, with 4,434,668 deaths. US cases are at 37,711,159, with 628,504 deaths. Five billion vaccine doses have been administered worldwide (8/23/21). ([Johns Hopkins](#)). Yesterday, Texas reported 2,909,355 cases with 53,994 deaths, including **Bexar County:** 220,973 cases with 3,864 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 14,214 cases, with 242 deaths; **Comal County:** 8,336 cases with 346 deaths; **Hays County:** 23,759 cases with 252 deaths; **Travis County:** 99,009 cases with 1,097 deaths; and **Williamson County:** 49,549 cases with 521 deaths (8/22/21). ([TDHHS](#)).

INFRASTRUCTURE

The US House returns to **Washington** today facing an immediate dilemma: whether to 'take the win' and immediately pass a \$1 trillion-plus bipartisan infrastructure package already approved by the Senate or hold that measure hostage while negotiating a \$3.5 trillion proposal that hasn't been written yet. Nine House Democrats, including Rep. Henry Cuellar of **Laredo**, choose Door Number One today in a **Washington Post** editorial. [Opinion](#).

While that debate rages (above), the **Post** also ran a graphics package today on *Ten Illustrative US Infrastructure Projects* that urgently need federal funding, including high speed rail in California, a tunnel beneath the Hudson River in New York, and that multi-billion dollar 'Ike Dike' project to protect **Galveston** from Gulf storms. [Story](#).

JSX Air will start nonstop, one-hour flights between **Austin** and **Dallas** private terminals next month (9/29), promising 'simple, fast and enjoyable Hop-On semi-private jet service,' starting at \$129 each way. The company already operates in **Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Houston**, and other Western cities. [Details](#).

In 2020, the number of electric vehicles on the road rose 43% year-over-year globally to more than 10 million cars, while conventional internal combustion engine vehicle registrations dropped by 16% in the same period, according to **Forbes**. As nations worldwide transition their fleets, finding enough raw materials for electric batteries (lithium, cobalt, nickel, and copper) is becoming an economic security issue for many. [Story](#).

Even as US authorities launched an investigation into crashes related to Tesla's auto-pilot systems ([here](#)), Ford Motor Company announced from **Detroit** that its 2022 Lincoln Navigator SUV models will feature hands-free driving capability adapted to 130,000 miles of North American highways. [Details](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

St. Louis-based beer giant Anheuser-Busch will open a 20-plus person regional-marketing office in downtown **Austin** this fall, one of several such new hubs for the company, saying, "We chose cities that we believe will dictate trends of the future, where consumers are already influencing culture. The closer we are to consumers in these key markets, the better positioned we'll be to lead future growth." [Story](#).

The **New York Times** has turned its powerful spotlight on to **New Braunfels** (8/19), touting the city's nation-leading population growth over the last decade (56%), noting the community's German roots, and seemingly awe-struck by the booming local economy. Mayor Rusty Brockman was featured in a photograph and quoted: "People have found New Braunfels - the word is out." [Story](#). There were some minor quibbles with the piece, put together by the **Times'** recently-created **San Antonio** bureau ([More](#)).

[Say It Ain't So](#): After nearly two remarkably successful decades as president of Texas State University in **San Marcos**, Denise Trauth announced that she will be leaving at the end of this academic year. "I have decided it is time to move on to the next chapter of my life," Trauth told the campus community. Tough shoes to fill. [Story](#).

Get ready for stronger, drier, longer-lasting droughts. That's the verdict from leading Texas climate researcher Katherine Hayhoe of Texas Tech in **Lubbock**, who had a lot of other bad atmospheric and oceanic predictions for the Lone Star state in the current **Texas Monthly**. She goes Biblical in more ways than one. [Interview](#).

Thought of the Week

"One machine can do the work of fifty ordinary men. No machine can do the work of one extraordinary man."

- Elbert Hubbard

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