



Monday Morning Report

October 8, 2018

INTERNAL

Mark your calendars now for the next meeting of the *Austin-San Antonio Corridor* Council's Executive Committee on December 19 at 2:00 pm. RSVP to council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

If you're only going to read one article this year on passenger rail, make it this story in *Railway Age* that calls for abolishing Amtrak and starting over with a totally new federal passenger rail agency with all the authorities and missions of a Federal Highway Administration or Federal Aviation Administration. The author argues that Amtrak has been designed to fail and that moves by current administrators (switching from hot meals to MRE's - military-style meals-ready-to-eat and closing low-traffic lines) have put the service in crisis mode. Well worth a read. [Story](#).

A conservative **Boston** columnist shares several profound insights into the dilemma of modern transportation planning by starting from a deceptively simple idea: no new technology, no matter how dazzlingly attractive, can defeat the basic laws of physics. Too many people in cars are going to cause congestion and even if you charge motorists for the privilege of accessing highways, you will still eventually run out of space for more cars. More public and shared transit can help but policymakers all across the US are letting 'techno-utopianism' become a pretext for doing nothing. [Opinion](#).

Darrell West, a technologist and founder of the Center for Technological Innovation, gives a brief history of artificial intelligence and describes how its application to transportation can revolutionize self-driving automobiles and their connected networks. [Story](#).

Cadillac outscored Tesla in new *Consumer Reports* testing for partially-autonomous vehicles. Volvo came in third in rankings based upon various factors including response speed for automatic functions and how quickly a human driver could re-assert control over the vehicle. [Details](#).

The US Army will participate with a study of military and commercial truck platooning in Michigan, a first in the US. The study aims to autonomously control an entire fleet of trucks via throttle, brake and steering systems while optimizing fuel efficiency and safety. A similar study in Europe is still underway. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

New Braunfels officials are looking at some options for developing up to more than a million square feet east of downtown real estate along the Union Pacific railroad tracks into a potential convention hotel and residential units. A request for proposals is in the works once plans and zoning are finalized. [Story](#).

Some see Honda Motor's \$2.75 million investment last week in General Motors' Cruise autonomous vehicle as a sign that Honda wants to catch rivals in development of self-driving vehicles. Honda will pay \$750 million for a 5.7% equity stake and will invest another \$2 billion over 12 years. [Story](#).

A **Bloomberg Businessweek** investigation has unveiled a downright scary plot by Chinese hackers to use a tiny microchip embedded in servers to penetrate data centers at some of the world's biggest companies and governments. Amazon, Apple and US defense and security systems have been compromised, according to the report, but some corporate sources dispute that their systems were affected. More than a year of investigation and over 100 interviews are summarized [here](#).

New data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration suggests that extreme rain events are occurring more frequently in Texas than was previously documented. [Story](#). The Atlas 14 Report, which **Austin** helped to finance, uses climate records and historical data from the last 100 years to determine what qualifies as a 25-year, 100-year, and 500-year flood. [Report](#).

Thought of the Week

"We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love."

- Mother Teresa

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