



## Monday Morning Report

November 2, 2020

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### INTERNAL

COVID-19 UPDATE: As of this morning (11/2), worldwide cases had risen to over 46 million with 1,201,642 deaths; the United States had 9,208,956 confirmed cases with 231,003 fatalities. ([Johns Hopkins](#)) As of yesterday (11/1) Texas was reporting 904,858 total confirmed cases with over 18,000 deaths, including **Bexar County:** 53,559 cases with 1,414 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 3,903 cases with 81 deaths; **Comal County:** 2,884 cases with 106 deaths; **Hays County:** 6,132 cases with 74 deaths; **Travis County:** 32,143 cases with 448 deaths; and **Williamson County:** 9,588 cases with 156 deaths. ([TDHHS](#))

COVID-19 Hospitalization Update: There's been a marked uptick in pandemic hospitalizations and Intensive Care Unit-bed usage in the last two weeks, according to **Houston** analyst Bill King, particularly in the **El Paso** region, which continues to lead the state in new infections. [Details](#).

COVID-19 Science Update: New data out of the University of California in **San Francisco** indicates that the total viral load of the coronavirus leading to the disease can be cumulative and not just limited to a single exposure. Further, masking cut asymptomatic transmission by one-half, studies show. [Story](#).

Other COVID-19 News: Pandemic-related issues have resulted in dangerously low blood supplies in **San Antonio**, according to the **South Texas** Blood and Tissue Center, which provides blood to over 100 hospitals and clinics in 48 counties. The center has had about one thousand blood drives canceled since March, a spokesperson said. [Story](#).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

Even in advance of tomorrow's election on the Project Connect transit overhaul, **Austin's** Capital Metro has added a dozen new electric buses to its fleet - part of a long-term plan to acquire only Carbon Zero vehicles by 2022. The new buses also feature an interoperable charging feature which is a first in the nation. [Story](#).

Proving once again that it is more than just another electric car company, Tesla has begun offering all-solar energy packages in the United Kingdom for homes with or without one of its vehicles parked in the driveway, thus entering the basic electric utility market with the 'Tesla Energy Plan.' They are claiming savings of up to 75% on energy costs from their patented "Power Wall" solar package. [Story](#).

And although they may be gangbusters at solar energy (above), Tesla is also proving to be less than great at developing auto-piloting technology: **Consumer Reports** finds the company a "distant second" in its testing of various driver-assistance programs; General Motors' Super Cruise came out on top in two successive analyses. [Details](#).

In other self-driving autos news, Ford and Argo just introduced their fourth-generation test vehicles on the Escape Hybrid platform, the first that combines artificial intelligence with other autonomous technologies. Interestingly, it was developed as a 'Deep Orange' program with **Clemson**, SC-based Clemson University. Why not 'Burnt Orange'? [Details](#).

An IH-35 Scoping Working Group will meet this Wednesday (11/4) at 9:00 am, hosted by the Downtown **Austin** Alliance. The working group is an outgrowth of the joint Urban Land Institute/DAA effort looking at a 'Cut-and-Cap' solution to re-construction of the Interstate through **Austin**. More [here](#).

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Veteran political reporter Jonathan Tilove used a state legislative race in **Cedar Park** to illustrate why the Latino vote is so critical to the outcome of tomorrow's elections in Texas, representing 30% of all eligible voters in the state, but with historically lower levels of participation in the process. **The Atlantic** did a deep dive over the weekend into why many misread the political inclinations of the Hispanic community nationally. [Tilove. The Atlantic.](#)

**Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council co-founder Henry Cisneros is moving his investment firm's offices from downtown to **San Antonio's** West Side, into a building that once housed his grandfather's print shop. But, as he reveals in a wide-ranging interview, the move wasn't easy. [Story.](#)

**Fredericksburg** is the second-most charming southern town in the United States, according to the **Big 7 Travel** website (which we'd never heard of before this item crossed the wire). **Beaufort**, South Carolina claimed the top spot, based upon factors that ranged from 'general friendliness' to scenery, food, history, and culture. **Gatlinburg**, Tenn., took third place. [Details.](#)

## Thought of the Week

*"If we do not believe in freedom of speech for those we despise, we do not believe in it at all."*

— Noam Chomsky

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