



Monday Morning Report

November 14, 2022

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will meet *this* Wednesday, November 16 at 2 PM by videoconference. Chad Coburn from the TxDOT Rail Division will discuss TxDOT's rail strategy. For more information, contact council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Global cases reached 635,235,329 with 6,610,338 deaths this morning. US cases are at 97,997,438 with 1,074,485 deaths (11/14/22) ([Johns Hopkins](#)). On Friday, Texas reported 6,394,916 cases with 89,662 deaths, including in **Bexar County**: 549,169 cases with 6,363 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 29,577 cases, still with 415 deaths; **Comal County**: 25,612 cases, still with 572 deaths; **Hays County**: 62,975 cases, still with 456 deaths; **Travis County**: 247,551 cases, still with 1,804 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 129,748 cases, still with 917 deaths (11/9/22). ([TDHHS](#)). *Regional hospitalization-rate data found [here](#).*

INFRASTRUCTURE

President Biden said last week that US voters would begin to see the results of administration infrastructure spending during the first quarter of 2023, and *Texas Government Insider's* Mary Scott Nabers says White House initiatives to reduce regulatory roadblocks are finally beginning to reduce timelines for project delivery. She lists about \$10 billion in projects soon to be underway in six states. [Opinion](#).

Four major railroad unions have decided to coordinate their approach to a nationwide rail strike, with the earliest potential date for a possible strike pushed back until at least Dec. 4th. *CNN* reports from **New York** that a strike by any one union would shut down all major US railroads, because of reciprocal cooperative agreements. [Story](#).

Low-income countries are continuing to raise reparation demands over climate change from rich countries this week at the COP27 conference in **Sharm El-Sheikh**, Egypt. In a story datelined from there, the *Associated Press* reports that in the same period that flooding in Pakistan did \$40 billion in property damage, just six oil companies made \$97.49 billion from July to September this year. [Story](#).

With more than 30,000 orders already in hand, a tiny Swiss-designed, Italian-manufactured electric automobile called the Microlino is shaking up European automobile markets, *Air Mail* reports. Retailing at about \$15,000 and weighing less than 1700 pounds, the two-seat version boasts speeds of 56 mph and a 140-mile range. [Story](#).

Elon Musk's The Boring Company filed paperwork last week indicating the **Pflugerville**-based company may be considering a downtown **Austin** tunnel project in the vicinity of the Convention Center, though apparently unrelated to Capital Metro's Project Connect transit effort. The company is saying little about the effort. [Details](#).

Bexar County, Medina County, and TxDOT officials have cancelled the opening of State Highway 211 between Potranco Road (FM 1957) and Culebra Road (FM 471) scheduled for later *today* (11/14) due to weather concerns.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Since January of 2021 more than 15 new US lithium-ion gigafactories or expansions have been announced in a region becoming known as the Battery Belt (including Texas), representing a potential investment of \$40 billion for the production of electric vehicle batteries, according to the **Electrek** newsletter. US production capacity is expected to grow more than fivefold by 2026, the Federal Reserve Bank of **Dallas** reports. **Story**.

Battery-powered cars now make up the fastest-growing segment of the automobile market, which sales up 70% in the first three quarters of this year compared to 2021. Moreover, the **New York Times** reports, electric vehicles have moved into the mainstream for American consumers, no longer considered exotic or a product for left-leaning liberals. Saving money on gasoline seems to be the primary factor driving sales. **Story**.

A tech multi-millionaire from **Santa Barbara**, CA is making it his mission in life to prevent Tesla from deploying its 'Full Self Driving' software as currently planned for next year. Dan O'Dowd - who began his campaign with a full page ad in the **New York Times** earlier this month - says the technology is not ready for general distribution and he is running over crash test dummies and child-sized mannequins to prove it. **Story**.

This Is Serious: Prolonged drought in northern Mexico, the world's largest exporter of beer, has put major **Monterrey** brewers into an uncomfortable spotlight as local neighborhood water supplies dry up but their water-guzzling beer bottling production lines continue to pump out Corona and Tecate, among other brands. **Story**.

Robert 'Bob' Rivard has announced his retirement as a regular columnist for one of the best local news publications in the country - which he founded - the gutsy and always interesting **San Antonio Report**. True to form, Rivard went out on a high note with some criticism of local police and politicians for the handling of a city councilman's hit-and-run accident. Read his "-30-" column **here**.

Jennifer Storm will become the new executive director of the **Buda** Economic Development Corporation. She had previously served as chairman of the EDC's board of directors and will assume her new role in 2023. **Details**.

Thought of the Week

"We may sometimes take for granted the many liberties we enjoy, but they have all been earned through the ultimate sacrifice paid by so many of the members of our armed forces."

- Charlie Dent

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