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HILL COUNTRY NEWS

VOLUME 52, ISSUE 21 SERVING CEDAR PARK, LEANDER AND NORTHWEST AUSTIN SINCE 1968 hillcountrynews.com THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2020

LEANDER ISD | STEINER RANCH

Parents slam canceled bus service

By APRIL S. KELLEY
HCN Community Reporter

Several Steiner Ranch parents spoke out against the discontinuation of bus service for their students in the upcoming school year, as proposed in the Leander Independent School District's 2020-2021 Hazardous Routes Plan, at a LISD Board of Trustees meeting Thursday.

"High speed. Poor visibility. Six lanes of crossing for the kids. You put it all together, it's a recipe for disaster," Brian Thompto said.

Thompto said his daughter's bus service was discontinued for the upcoming school year as she transitions from Steiner Ranch Elementary to Canyon Ridge Middle School, due to the proposed Hazardous Routes Plan.

To get home, only 1.94 miles away from CRMS, his daughter would have to walk along a dangerous route with busy intersections and vehicles traveling at high speeds, Thompto said. He said he not only witnessed accidents at Steiner Ranch's most dangerous intersection, at Steiner Ranch Rd. and N.

Quinlan Park Rd. at University Club Dr., but he also looked at the Texas Department of Transportation's "Heat Map" of the intersection.

"A lot of them [accidents] involve going off the road along this stretch our kids are going to be walking," Thompto said. "In fact, over 60% of the accidents already this year, of which there's almost 30, are going off the road and that means they're hitting something. People have been hit at that intersection."



SCOTT W. COLEMAN
The Leander Independent School District Administration Building at 204 W. South Street in Leander, Texas.

See LISD page A7

CITY OF CEDAR PARK

Covid-19 whacks CP budget

By JOSH MONIZ
HCN Senior Reporter

The City of Cedar Park anticipates a City General Fund revenue shortfall ranging between \$2.4 million and \$4.4 million for the current Fiscal Year 2020 City Budget due to the local impacts of the coronavirus and the subsequent closure of businesses under local and statewide emergency orders.

"One of the key takeaways from is (this situation) is certainly unprecedented ... We're looking at several city revenues that will be impacted, which could impact our balanced budget," Cedar Park Assistant Finance Director Chad Tustison said.

City staff anticipate a drop in revenues collected from the City's sales tax, new developments, park rentals, alcoholic beverage tax, local fines and forfeitures and income from the City's investments due to interest rates dropping.

City staff stressed Thursday during their presentation of their findings during the Cedar Park City Council meeting that the full impacts of the crisis will ultimately depend on how long it lasts into the budget's remaining 6 months and how much its impact on the state and national level will have ramifications for local operations and businesses. Data for the month of April — the month most heavily impacted by the virus — will not be available to city staff until early June.

City staff constructed a range of models to get a sense of how the crisis could potentially impact the city sales tax revenues.

Staff models estimated the City could face between a 6.7% drop in the total sales tax collected for the year under the fast recovery model and a staggering 18.5% drop under the slow recovery model. The fast model assumes a 15% drop in sales tax collections over 3 months and it taking 9 months to recover while the slow model assumes a 40% drop in collections over 3 months with it taking 12 months to recover.

The models also show that depending on the length of the recovery period, the crisis could also impact collections for the first few months of the next fiscal year.

See CEDAR PARK page A9

POP ART

LOCAL ARTIST "WILLY B" CREATES ART INSPIRED BY CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



COURTESY PHOTO
Local artist "Willy B" creates art during the coronavirus pandemic.



COURTESY PHOTO
Local artist Bill Whiting's "The Real Heroes" is a graffiti art piece inspired by doctors and nurses.

By APRIL S. KELLEY
HCN Community Reporter

Local pop artist Bill Whiting or "Willy B," known for his brightly-colored pop art acrylic paintings and community art projects in Cedar Park, said he believes creativity and the arts offer hope during the coronavirus pandemic.

"When this started and everyone had to stay inside, I offered to do pop art of people's pets or family members for free," Whiting said.

Whiting said individuals emailed him photos,

from which he would create the artwork. When complete, he would send the artwork via email for them to print.

"Art helps us cope with the new normal, if you can call it that," Whiting said. "It keeps your mind busy, positively and creativity helps deal with stress, fear, uncertainty and social distancing."

Whiting said engaging in creative activity boosts health, by decreasing depression, increasing positive emotions and giving you a sense of doing productive things.

See WILLY B page A7

WILLIAMSON COUNTY | CORONAVIRUS

WilCo rescinds emergency orders as 23% of EMTs in quarantine

By RICHARD STONE and APRIL S. KELLEY
Hill Country News

Williamson County officials Tuesday rescinded the state of emergency declared as the result of the coronavirus pandemic. The declaration has been in effect since March 14.

At the same time, the county reported that 23% of WilCo's paramedic force is in at-home quarantine with confirmed Covid-19 tests results or awaiting those results.

"While we have employees out due to illness or self-isolation, the WCEMS system retains

the ability to respond to all calls and ensures continuous service to the community with existing resources," Williamson County EMS Director Mike Knipstein said in a statement released last week.

Knipstein reported Tuesday that 28 paramedics were on paid administrative leave. Six of them had confirmed positive cases and 22 were in quarantine. Knipstein said 19 of the paramedics were tested Monday and were awaiting results. The county employs 134 field paramedics.

"We have strict protocols in place for our paramedics

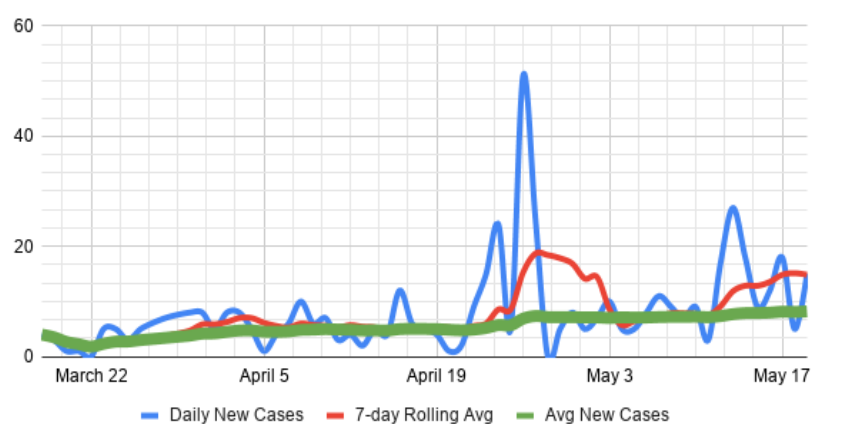
when responding to someone with flu-like symptoms or a potential infectious disease," said Knipstein. "We have been working over the past 60-plus days to ensure our first responders are properly protected and equipped while performing their jobs. The health and safety of our employees is our highest priority."

Commissioners voted unanimously to lift the county's emergency declaration and order Tuesday.

WilCo Commissioner Russ Boles made the motion to lift

See COVID-19 page A9

Daily New Cases | Average Daily New Cases Day Rolling Average



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BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT



SLOAN HARPER BRADY

Lindsey Nichols Brady and Jake Brady are proud to announce the arrival of their daughter, Sloan Harper Brady.

Sloan was born at 2:51 p.m. on December 23, 2019 in New Braunfels, Texas, weighing in at 8lbs 0 oz and 20 3/4 inches long. Sloan's Aunt Kelsey was honored to be there upon her arrival, welcoming her into the world on this special day.

Welcoming Sloan home along with mommy and daddy was her big brother Kase. Sloan's maternal grandparents are Jay and Crystal Nichols of Leander, Texas. Paternal grandparents are John and Wendy Halbert of Sardenia, Ohio and Randy and Cheryl Brady of Schertz, Texas.

Sloan's great grandparents are Henrietta Stanford and the late John D. Stanford of Leander, Texas, Sharon and Bobby Hobbs of Temple, Texas, the late James D. and Barbara Nichols of Comanche, Texas and Ron and Jackie Floerchinger of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Happy Birthday Sloan Harper Brady!

LEANDER ISD

Leander ISD summer school plans announced

By APRIL S. KELLEY
HCN Community Reporter

The Leander Independent School District made several announcements Friday regarding summer school, testing and pre-kindergarten registration.

Virtual Summer School

Leander ISD Summer School will be completely virtual in 2020, due to ongoing public health concerns surrounding the coronavirus pandemic. Some summer programs may also be altered or cancelled due to the continuation of school building closures and other circumstances.

High School Summer School is designed for students desiring credit recovery to regain high school credits from previous semesters, including the Spring 2020 semester. It is also for students wishing to take original credit high school courses to accelerate. Course offerings and registration information can be found at leanderisd.org/summer.

For more specific information on Summer School or Summer 2020 Testing, find details and program contact information at support.leanderisd.org/support/2020-summer-school-information/.

Pre-k registration

Registration for the 2020-2021 school year is open for all new-to-district, kindergarten and pre-kindergarten students.

Leander ISD is ready to get parents started on the completely virtual registration process by providing a video guide via the LISD YouTube Channel.

For students who attended a Leander ISD school in the 2019-2020 school year or those who did not attend a Leander ISD school last year but pre-registered for the 2020-2021 school year, visit the Registration page at leanderisd.org/registration, and look under the "Returning Students" section.



SCOTT W. COLEMAN

U.S. AIR FORCE THUNDERBIRDS



SCOTT W. COLEMAN

The United States Air Force Thunderbirds fly in formation over Cedar Park, Texas to salute frontline COVID-19 responders on May 13, 2020.

Thunderbirds buzz Cedar Park, Leander en route to Austin flyover

STAFF REPORTS

The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds demonstration squadron flew over Austin last Wednesday afternoon but, on the way, took a couple of loops over Cedar Park and Leander.

Scott Coleman, publisher of the Hill Country News — and something of a photographer — set out to document the flyover.

"They passed by me in a full loop, so I had three possible angles on them from my spot," he said. "The whole thing lasted 47 seconds."

The flight of F-16 Fighting Falcons flew over Central Texas cities, honoring front-line workers and health care professionals serving in the coronavirus pandemic. The flight was originally planned for Tuesday but postponed because of weather.

"The contrail shots were all off to

the side in the clouds, so it was really challenging to focus," said Coleman. "I was having to shoot everything manual and do manual focus adjust."

"The flyover was a goosebump event," said Kathy Nell Rutherford. "We parked at LHS and there were about 40-50 cars all spread out."

After buzzing West WilCo, the squadron circled over Georgetown and the Round Rock-Pflugerville area before heading to Austin.

CEDAR PARK REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Hospital designated an Enterprise Zone

By JOSH MONIZ
HCN Senior Reporter

"Even during this hard and dizzy time, Cedar Park is growing and expanding," said Cedar Park Mayor Corbin Van Arsdale in a statement following the announcement the State of Texas had approved the Cedar Park Regional Medical Center for participation in the Texas Enterprise Zone Program.

Back in February, the City of Cedar Park authorized and nominated the hospital to participate in the program. The program allows municipalities to designate zones or projects to receive refunds on state sales tax and use tax to incentivize job creation or capital improvement with the designated project.

"This Enterprise Zone Project allows Cedar Park Regional Medical Center to receive State sales tax funds as an incentive on purchased materials used to expand the hospital. These State incentives help meet our residents' needs by growing one of our target sectors—healthcare. This is a big deal for our community," Van Arsdale said in the City's release.

The city release argued Gov. Greg Abbott's Economic Development and Tourism Office approval of this project will create a higher level of employment, economic activity and stability in Cedar Park.

"We are very thankful for this designation," Cedar Park Regional



JOSH MONIZ

Cedar Park Regional Medical Center

Medical Center CEO Bo Beaudry said. "It will allow for the development of new healthcare services and positions to meet the needs of our community. We truly value our relationship with the City of Cedar Park and their nomination for the Texas Enterprise Zone."

The city statement also said, "the creation of this zone enables the City and Cedar Park Medical Center to pursue the creation of the proper economic and social environment

in order to induce the investment of private resources into productive business enterprises located in the City and to provide employment to residents of enterprise zones as well as to economically disadvantaged people. Under the program, at least 35% of Cedar Park Regional Medical Center's new employees will be residents of the enterprise zone, economically disadvantaged individuals or veterans."

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Discounted registration and On-Site testing for employer groups of 20 or more in Cedar Park-Leander.

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WILLIAMSON COUNTY

Asymptomatic residents can get free Covid-19 tests

STAFF REPORTS

Williamson County and the Family Emergency Room will allow individuals who wish to be tested for COVID-19, but are not experiencing symptoms, to be tested.

Family Emergency Room is conducting COVID-19 tests by appointment free of charge at its facilities in Cedar Park and Round Rock. Residents must go to www.wilco.org/coronavirus to fill out the form first. Schedulers contact patients Monday through Friday; however, appointments are available seven days a week.

"Having more people tested is an important step to being able to track the spread of COVID-19," said Williamson County Commissioner Cynthia Long. "We appreciate that our partners at Family Emergency Room have the capacity to open up testing to more individuals who wish to be tested."

On April 27, the Williamson County



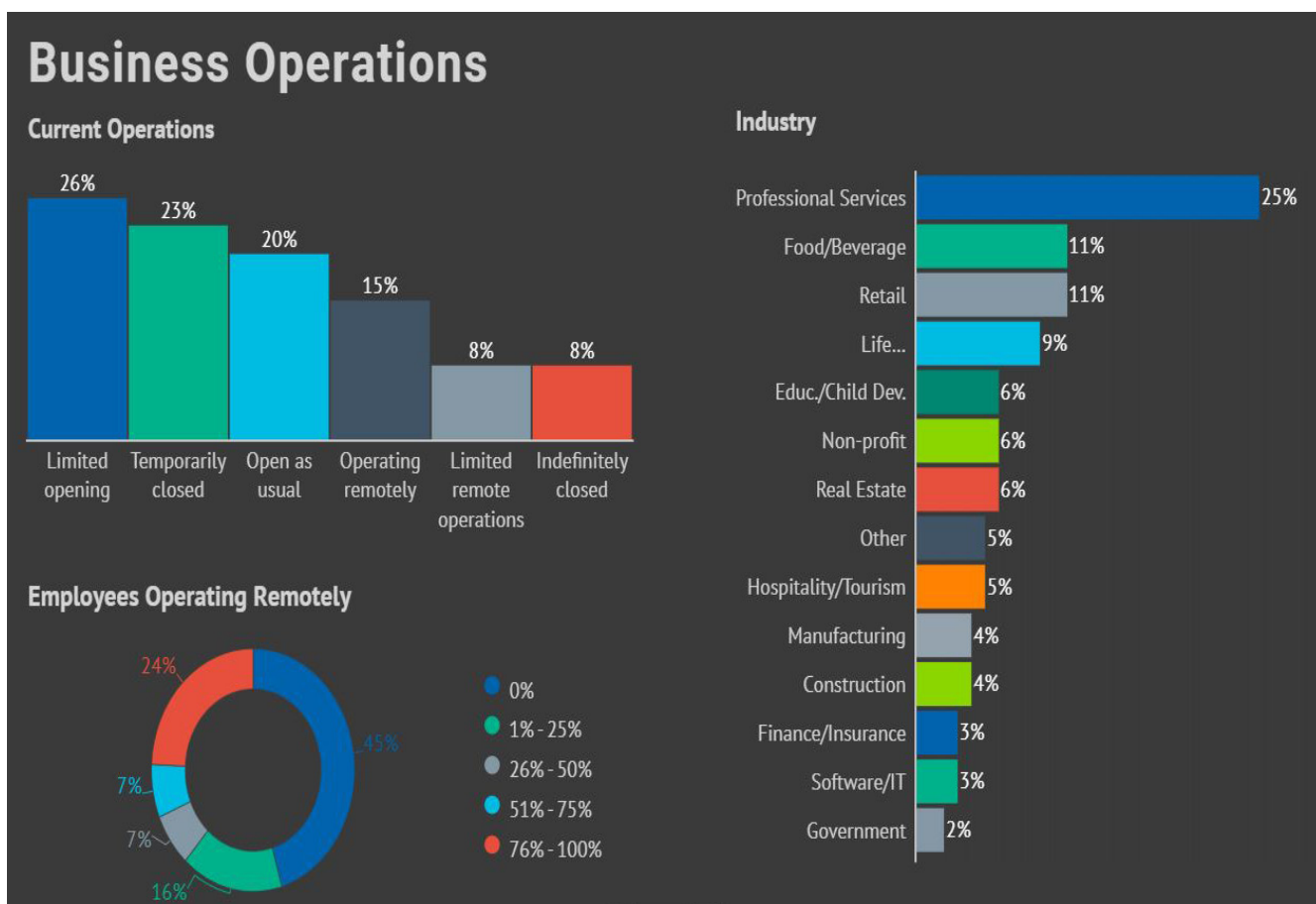
METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS

Commissioners Court agreed to provide COVID-19 tests and personal protection equipment (PPE) to Family Emergency Room, which will be administering the testing services at no cost to the county

or the public.

Williamson County residents can then be tested at either 3620 E. Whitestone Blvd, Cedar Park; or 1925 A.W. Grimes Blvd, Round Rock.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY



JOSH MONIZ

Wilco Survey: 80% of business closed, reduced hours in April

By JOSH MONIZ
HCN Senior Reporter

Approximately 80% of 700 responding Williamson County businesses partially or fully closed their business or significantly reduced their hours in April in response to the coronavirus pandemic, according to a recent survey conducted by local business organizations. Approximately 8% of those closed businesses reported being indefinitely closed.

The Williamson County Business Survey was conducted from April 17 to April 24 in partnership between the County and 11 business organizations in preparation for the eventual "Reopen Texas" efforts.

The participating organizations includes:

- Cedar Park Chamber of Commerce
- City of Cedar Park
- City of Georgetown
- City of Round Rock
- Georgetown Chamber of Commerce

- Greater Round Rock Community Foundation
- Hutto Chamber of Commerce
- Leander Economic Development Group
- Round Rock Chamber
- Taylor Economic Development Corporation
- Williamson County
- Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area

The survey's findings related to reopening efforts recommends policy makers "be clear, metric-based and consistent in communications about regulations processes going forward" because the lack of consistency and clarity has been a source of irritation for businesses. Related to this recommendation, the survey urges policy makers to seek to recognize commerce doesn't stop at city and county borders, so they should seek to have their rules as regionally consistent as possible.

A major concern outlined by responding businesses was how consum-

er and markets would react to reopening efforts, noting businesses that have remained largely open have still received little or no customers.

"Simply put, there is concern that customers may not feel ready to return when business is allowed to reopen," the survey stated.

The finding, which was completed before the May 1 phase of the reopening of Texas businesses, reflected the minimal number of customers later seen locally when area businesses were finally allowed to reopen.

Lastly, the survey found businesses want to see additional local funding assistance to help them in the short term, noting many were still struggling even with recent federal and local funding efforts and grant programs. The survey found 45% of respondents reported having 4 weeks or fewer of cash left in their reserves for staying open.

The survey found 57% of businesses were forced to cut employees' hours and 39% cut employees' wages as of late April.

NEWS BRIEFS

Texas bolsters efforts to reduce spread of COVID-19

AUSTIN — Testing, sanitizing and emergency food benefits increased as Texas entered its third month of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

Notably, Gov. Greg Abbott released a statement concerning an outbreak of the deadly coronavirus in Amarillo, where more than 700 cases were reported on May 16. The report came after the governor's Surge Response Teams conducted site surveys and testing in high-risk areas, including meat-packing facilities in the Amarillo area. Two more weeks of testing would be conducted in high-risk areas, Abbott said.

Abbott on May 13 announced that Texas National Guard disinfection teams operating in coordination with the Texas Department of State Health Services have been deployed to help limit the spread of the deadly coronavirus in nursing homes.

Major Gen. Tracy R. Norris, adjutant general of Texas National Guard, said each of the six teams on duty across the state received training from the Texas Military Department's 6th Civil Support Team, which specializes in manmade and natural disaster assessment and rapid response in hazardous environments.

The Texas National Guard also fights the COVID-19 pandemic by providing personal protective equipment manufacturing support, food bank support, mobile COVID-19 testing and points of distribution for essential items.

Last week, as more Texans increased public activities, official data showed COVID-19 is not contained. On May 17, cumulative figures posted by the Texas Department of State Health Services showed that some 47,784 people in Texas had been diagnosed with COVID-19 and 1,336 deaths resulting from the influenza-like virus had been confirmed.

Order: Test nursing homes

Gov. Abbott on May 11 directed the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, the Texas Division of Emergency Management and the Texas Department of State Health Services to test 100% of residents and staff in Texas nursing homes. The collaboration of those agencies, Abbott said, would "ensure that any potential clusters of COVID-19 cases in nursing homes are quickly detected and contained."

Food benefits announced

Gov. Abbott on May 12 announced that the Texas Health and Human Services Commission received approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide more than \$1 billion in food benefits through the federal Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer program to families with children who have temporarily lost access to free or discounted school meals due to COVID-19-related school closures.

The program, to be administered through the state health department, the Texas Department of Agriculture and Texas Education Agency, provides a one-time benefit of \$285 per child. The benefit can be used in the same way as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits to pay for groceries. Visit hhs.texas.gov/pebt to learn more.

Hospitals receive antiviral

The Texas Department of State Health Services, with FDA approval, on May 12 distributed 1,200 vials of the antiviral drug remdesivir to hospitals to treat patients with COVID-19.

Clinical trials of the antiviral drug reportedly have sped up by several days the recovery time of COVID-19 patients. Remdesivir was provided to the DSHS by the federal government from a supply donated by Gilead, the manufacturer.

Hospitals in these cities received shipments of remdesivir: Amarillo, Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, Laredo, Lubbock, McAllen, Odessa, San Antonio, Tyler and Waco.

Mail-in ballots thwarted

Texans who wanted to vote by mail to reduce their exposure to COVID-19 still must go to their polling place if they plan to cast an election ballot, pursuant to a stay granted by the Texas Supreme Court on May 15.

In effect, the stay accepts an argument lodged by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, who said Texas law prohibits a registered voter who is not disabled, not over age 65 and not an absentee from voting by mail in ballot. Paxton said Texans should not be allowed to vote by mail merely because they fear contracting the deadly coronavirus if they must vote in person.

Texas Democratic Party Chair Gilberto Hinojosa issued a statement in response to the high court's action, saying, "This is a dark day for our democracy. The Republican Texas Supreme Court is wrong to force the people of Texas to choose between their health and their right to vote. They would have Texans die, just so they can hold on to power."

Sales tax holidays set

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar last week promoted the state's Water-Efficient Products and ENERGY STAR sales tax holidays, May 23-25.

"Inefficient appliances and outdated water systems put a tremendous strain on our power grids and water supplies," Hegar said. "Even in these uncertain times, Texans can take advantage of this sales tax holiday to buy more energy-efficient items, support local businesses and save money. You can practice social distancing and other precautionary measures when shopping in person or shop online. Qualifying products are tax free."

More information is available at comptroller.texas.gov.

— Compiled by Ed Sterling of the Texas Press Association

AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police seeking suspect in 620 Walmart robbery

By JOSH MONIZ
HCN Senior Reporter

The Austin Police Department is searching for a man in connection with a robbery that occurred the afternoon of May 14 at a northwest Austin Walmart, located at 3201 RM 620 North near Cedar Park.

Police said officers responded around 1:15 p.m. and learned the suspect was a man wearing a white surgical mask who walked up to the teller and passed a note demanding cash.

The man did not display a weapon during the robbery but told bank employees he was armed, according to the police.

He reportedly headed south after walking out of the Walmart on foot.

Police are asking anyone with additional information on the robbery to call 512-974-5092.



JOSH MONIZ

The Austin Police Department provided an update on May 14 regarding the robbery of a Northwest Austin Walmart located near Cedar Park.

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- Reader letters are welcome and will be run as soon as possible after they are received.
- Letters must be limited to 350 words or less. "Thank you" letters must be no more than 300 words.
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- Anonymous letters will not be published. Please include an email address, city of residence and telephone number for verification.

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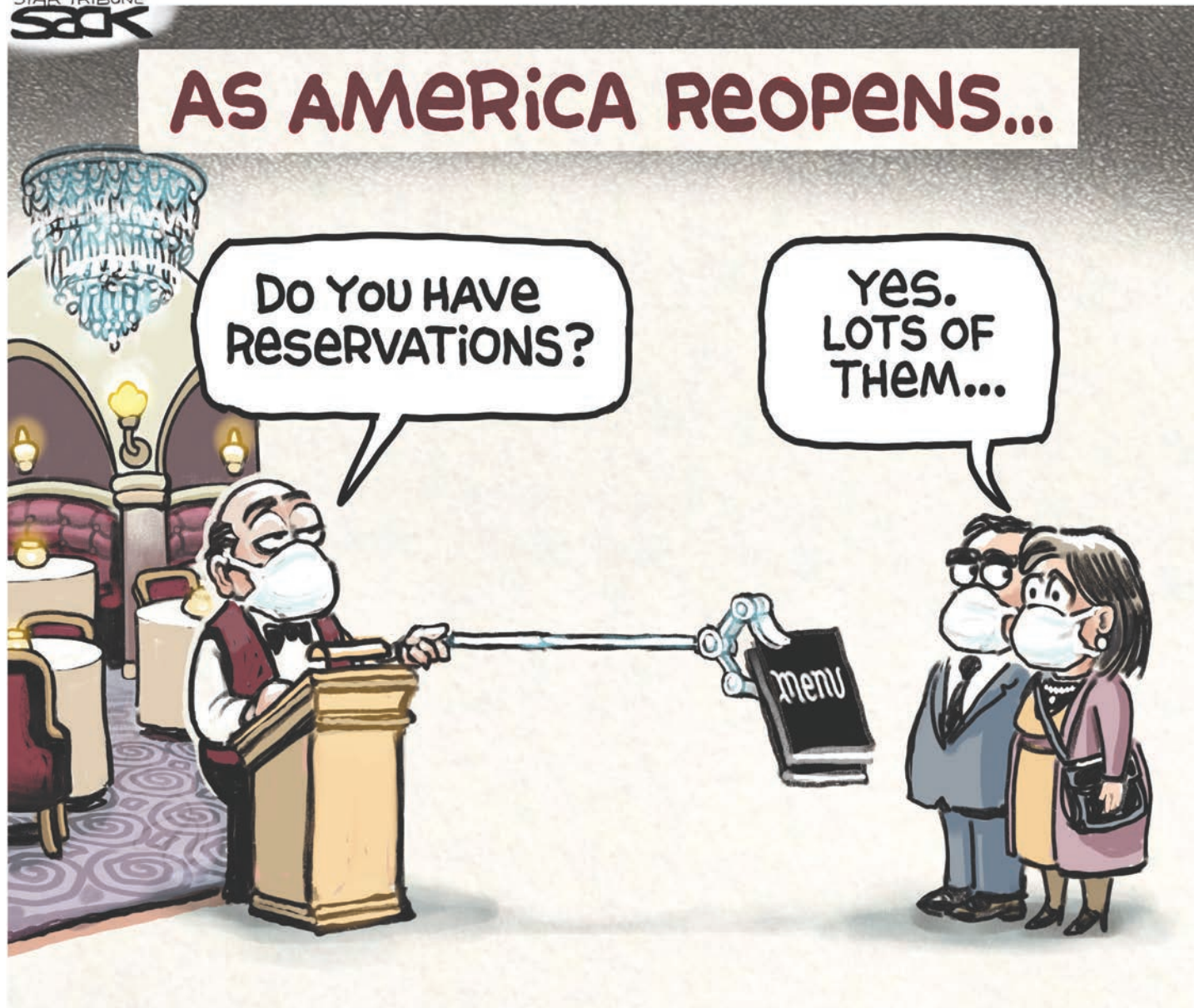
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EDITORIAL CARTOON

STAR TRIBUNE
SACK



THE RAGGED EDGE

Needed: Clear, consistent guidance

I read Josh's story on a survey about the attitudes of WilCo's small business community, which was conducted earlier this month. One thing seems paramount. The lack of clear, consistent, metric-based communications from our local, state and national leaders irritates nearly everyone who needs to forecast what the other side of this pandemic looks like. Or the metrics we need to hit to get there. Small business needs that guidance.

Without that, "... there is concern that customers may not feel ready to return when business is allowed to reopen."

I understand that it might not be a popular opinion in some circles but, I've stopped looking to our national leaders for any sort of consistent message. Advice from that quarter seems wayward, at best, and the most professional advice available is suppressed.

Our governor is ... well, I've never seen anyone work so hard to ride the fence. On one hand, he talks about metrics. On the other, he's racing as hard as he can to stay in front of a cacophonous fringe. So hard, in fact, that he's blurred the edges of the rule of law, undercut the judicial system and rendered most every administrative tool aiding this public health crisis impotent. At the very same time, he's using his own executive authority to forbid local governments to act in the interests of its citizens.

Please note that, early on, our governor was adamant that local authorities knew best how to deal with their own communities. But, once an attractive GOP supporter got in trouble with a local authority, he caved.



RICHARD STONE
EDITOR IN RESIDENCE

Locally, our county judge says all the right words and looks to follow through on his promise to test more people. And, I believe he means well. But, there is little doubt that, regardless of what the county's metrics are, or the opinion of our local health authority, he will lift his orders in lockstep with the governor.

I suspect he would like a bit of consistent guidance as well.

And, don't even get me started on city leaders in Leander and Cedar Park. They are all over the map. Some try to give clear messaging but others seem intent on sabotage. Because freedom, I suppose.

I have friends whose business model depends upon regular gatherings of largish groups of people together in the same room for a meal and conference and networking. At what point will that be safe? Not when, but what metrics need to be met before that's an OK thing to do?

Do you know? I don't. Does Judge Gravel? Does Gov. Abbott?

Every country that has gotten to the other side, or is moving in that direction, stress four things: Adequate testing, thorough contract tracing, the ability to quickly isolate infections and 14 consecutive days of dropping case counts.

On the plus side, we do not appear to have swamped our health care system with

Covid-19 patients. Not yet. Which is a good thing (and the only metric our governor is watching) but, we have yet to have a drop in average new daily confirmed positive cases, in Texas or in WilCo.

Experts in pandemic control say that "adequate" testing requires we test about 10% of the population. We've barely tested 2.5% of Texas' population and as I write this, have currently tested a little more than 1% of WilCo's population. At our current rate, it will take WilCo more than 9 months to hit that particular metric. Get back to me when we've tested 56,000 WilCo residents.

We've struggled with the whole "contract tracing" thing, unless y'all know something I don't.

I cannot imagine any of the aggressively mask-less openers will willingly quarantine should they test positive. I can't imagine they'd voluntarily get a test, obvious symptoms or no.

Sure. Let's get businesses open. This is a newspaper and we need that, desperately. But, it won't do a damned bit of good if customers aren't convinced it's safe. And that won't happen absent clear, consistent, professional, metrics-driven guidance.

Until then, I fear we're flying blind. Through a thick fog. In Beggar's Canyon. At night.

Richard Stone is the editor at large for the Hill Country News. His column, The Ragged Edge, has appeared in dozens of newspapers across the state of Texas and has won a handful of moderately coveted national, state and regional awards for excellence in commentary.

TEXAS TRIBUNE ANALYSIS

Texas tiptoes down the road to normal

How to behave during a pandemic is increasingly up to individual Texans and not to their state and local governments.

Gov. Greg Abbott is poised to lift more of the restrictions he ordered for people and businesses as the coronavirus pandemic spread in March and April. The disease continues to spread, according to state health statistics, but so have worries about the condition of the state economy and protests about government-imposed restraints on behavior.

As the governor continues to pull back, much of what was restricted in the early weeks of the pandemic is now being left for each of us to sort out for ourselves.

Given current trends, the doors of most businesses will soon be open again. Whether the public wants to go through those open doors is the big question of the next few weeks, with implications for both the course of the coronavirus and the economy.

What started with partial openings of restaurants, movies and retail stores now includes hair salons, barbershops and other businesses. Tattoo parlors are waiting for a thumbs-up from Abbott. So are bars.

In practice, what started as a list of essential and nonessential business has become a de facto list of which businesses are more essential in the minds of the regulators. No question that bars are social venues, and the sorts of places where a communicable disease might easily spread. The same is true of restaurants and malls and movie theaters — wherever



ROSS RAMSEY
GUEST COLUMNIST

strangers are mingling in public around other strangers. But those businesses haven't all been allowed to open at the same time. The distinctions might be rational, but they are harder and harder to defend as closed businesses demand permission to operate.

The slow reopening of the state might have looked like a way to ease pressure, to give people cooped up in their homes a way to get out and do something enjoyable, and maybe give the economy a jump-start.

That has turned out to be much more than that. Opening doors a little at a time sparked calls to open other doors, too. The Dallas hairstylist who defied the governor and the courts to open her salon is an attention-grabbing example, but there are others. The New York Times illustrated a story on businesses ignoring government orders with a picture of a masked and tattooed protester with an AR-15 rifle, standing outside of a Texas bar that was open in defiance of government orders.

Defiant openings like that one got even easier when the governor removed jail time from the list of punishments for anyone defying his executive orders.

Others joined the clamor without weapons. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who in a previous

career was a sportscaster, wrote an op-ed for The Dallas Morning News in favor of opening sports — and allowing fans into stadiums to watch.

"Large outdoor stadiums can easily accommodate about 30% attendance as COVID-19 conditions improve," he wrote. "Around 25,000 fans can make a lot of noise."

Patrick listed some safety ideas — physical distancing for fans, wearing masks (he said sponsors would probably pay to advertise on fans' faces), limits on group sizes and so on. He wasn't confrontational about it, but he clearly is on the side of those who want to ease up on the hardcore social distancing that has marked the early weeks of the pandemic in Texas.

Whatever the mechanism, whether it's the state or local officials removing pandemic restrictions, regulators or law enforcement people declining to enforce restrictions that are still on the books, or private and public figures taking it upon themselves to open bars, churches, strip clubs, parks, you name it — the top-down instructions seem to be coming to an end.

The cautions, however, are not ending. Business doors in Texas are opening, but there is still an infectious disease running its course. Each of us gets to decide, as increasing options open up, what level of social interaction is safe and comfortable.

Ross Ramsey is the executive editor of the Texas Tribune, a non-profit, reader-supported news organization focused on statewide legislative and policy issues.

LEANDER ISD

LISD staff disagree on bell schedule

By APRIL S. KELLEY
HCN Community Reporter

The Leander Independent School District Board of Trustees and administration are still not seeing eye-to-eye on the times presented for the newest version of the triple-tier bell schedule that may possibly be implemented in the 2020-2021 school year.

The newest version of the triple-tier bell schedule, presented at a meeting on May 14, is as follows: 7:40 a.m. - 2:55 p.m. for elementary schools; 8:10 a.m. - 3:25 p.m. for middle schools; and 8:40 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. for high schools.

Cara Winegar Owen, a parent of two elementary students, said her children's school day will be nine hours with only one 30-minute recess, if the triple-tier bell schedule were to be implemented. Owen said her children's bus arrives at 6:35 a.m. with the current schedule, and she anticipates an even earlier pick-up time with the proposed schedule.

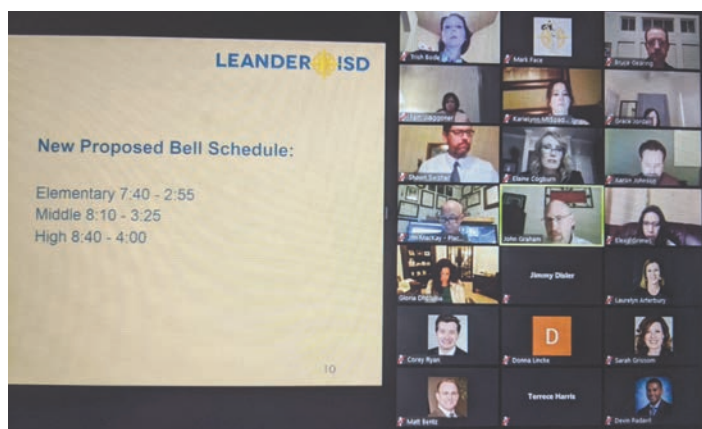
Leander ISD Assistant Superintendent John Graham said the new schedule would mean a five-minute earlier start time, but the school district is still planning the bus routes for next year.

"According to the work that we've done, this would not add any additional time for the pick-up of our elementary students," Graham said. "It may stay the exact same time, but it would not be an earlier time to pick-up students."

Owen also said only one 30-minute break in a nine-hour day is not OK.

"It does not give them the breaks for their brains that they need to learn better and more efficiently," Owen said. "It doesn't give them the time that they need to move their bodies, so that they can sit and focus when they need to."

On Thursday, the major concern voiced by Trustees was whether the extra time added to the school day for elementary students would be used for instructional learning or transition time.



APRIL S. KELLEY
The Leander ISD Board of Trustees is expected to take action on the triple-tier bell schedule at their next meeting Thursday, May 21.

"My concern is more the lack of commitment to what that time is going to be used for," Trustee Gloria Gonzales-Dholakia said. "I want to be more deliberate than just saying we'll have a little more 'wiggle room.'"

Superintendent Dr. Bruce Gearing said he did not think they should dictate how principals use the extra 10 minutes that would be added to their day.

"What I can assure you of is that we can make sure that it is communicated very clearly to them that the Board is concerned about extra instructional minutes during that time, and we really want to make sure that kids have that opportunity to have some downtime," Gearing said.

"I'm not trying to dictate their day," Trustee Elexis Grimes said. "I'm just hoping we can seize an opportunity here, right? ... that we allow that play time that is so important for little minds, to rest and recover."

"I know these principals, and I can assure you that they are going to do what's right for kids," Gearing said.

Graham said he had already spoken with elementary principals, who said they planned to use the additional 10 minutes for transition time, not instructional minutes.

"They're not looking for any additional time to go to any other minutes, but to provide for our students these transition times," Graham said. "They see

the need with their students. They see the need in their teachers. Every discussion I've had with our principals has been in that regard."

Gonzales-Dholakia asked if they should consider holding off on changing the bell schedule for another year, as the ongoing coronavirus pandemic continues.

"Fall may look completely different and maybe now is not the time to add another change on top of what might be potentially a very odd Fall," Gonzales-Dholakia said. "I know the other side might be that this is the best time to do it."

Graham said the school district is early in their work for determining needs for the upcoming school year, but that he received messages from principals asking for them to move forward with the triple-tier bell schedule.

"At some point in time next year, we're going to be back with most of our kids, and we have to prepare for that eventuality," Gearing said. "This is something that has been a long time in the planning, and we feel it is essential to do this now, so that we can be ready whenever we're back to whatever the new normal looks like."

Board Vice President Aaron Johnson said having an even earlier start time makes for an even longer day for the school district's youngest students.

"For our youngest learners, it can be a long day," Johnson said.

LEANDER CITY COUNCIL

Council considers more biz grants

By JOSH MONIZ
HCN Senior Reporter

The Leander City Council will consider Thursday applying for funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant program.

The agenda states \$236 million in economic development assistance funding is available for the Austin region under the new law and project awards are typically \$2.5 million. However, the grant requires cities to provide a 20% local match for the funding.

The program requires that the City of Leander's application aim to support workforce development, entrepreneurship, economic resilience and/or place building. If approved for a grant, the Council could use the funds for construction or upgrades to public infrastructure, constructing business incubators, activities that support business or job creation, planning/recovery strategies for industry contraction/expansion or building infrastructure to promote telehealth and remote learning for job skills.

The Council will authorize city staff to develop and draft the application, which would be submitted in early June. The Council will have the option to decline to accept the grant in the future if they change their mind about accepting the money.

Prior to Thursday's meeting, the Council will enter executive session as part of its 6 p.m. briefing workshop to discuss several major items.

The Council will consider approval of more applications for their COVID-19 Emergency Business Grant Program. The Council has already handed out \$160,000 in grants to 39 Leander businesses to help them through the impacts of the pandemic. They have \$48,000 left for grants out of the original \$208,000 allocated to the program.

The Council will also consider a lease agreement with Hill Country Community Ministries for the use of Mason Homestead.

Lastly, the Council will discuss an economic development prospect.

LEANDER ISD

LISD promotes digital time capsule

By APRIL S. KELLEY
HCN Community Reporter

The Leander Independent School District invites students and staff to participate in a digital time capsule, #1LISD VOICE Time Capsule, to document life, learning, teaching and all of the ups-and-downs in this unique and challenging time.

"Years from now, we will look back and remember 2020 as the year we finished the school year at home and spent a lot of time away from what was considered to be 'normal' life," the district said. "We are living and experiencing an unprecedented time in modern history, one that not only caused our current perceptions of the world around us to change, but will likely have an impact on our future."

Leander ISD said they hope the time capsule



COURTESY GRAPHIC
The Leander Independent School District invites students and staff to participate in a digital time capsule, #1LISD VOICE Time Capsule, to document life, learning, teaching and all of its ups-and-downs in this unique and challenging time.

provides all students and staff with an opportunity to creatively reflect upon and express their experiences during this emergency remote learning time.

"We hope this project will be a gathering point for staff, students and community collective histories, narratives, images, records, art and other forms of response to the impacts of COVID-19," the district said.

"From silver linings to boredom to grief - we're hoping to capture the good, the bad and the real."

Leander ISD students and staff will have until July 30, 2020 to submit an artifact for the digital time capsule.

For more information, guidelines and to submit artifacts, visit <https://news.leanderisd.org/category/time-capsule/>.

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THEATER | TELEVISION

HAMILTON ON DISNEY+ IS ENTIRELY ON BRAND



In this file photo, the cast of Hamilton performs the show's Broadway Opening Night at Richard Rodgers Theatre on Aug. 6, 2015 in New York City. Walt Disney Co. is putting a filmed version of the popular Broadway musical on its Disney+ streaming service July 3, to feed the coronavirus-era hunger for fresh entertainment at home.

WHY BRINGING HAMILTON TO TV A YEAR EARLY IS A BRILLIANT MOVE

By ASHLEY LEE
The Los Angeles Times

Back in February, Disney announced the forthcoming release of a "Hamilton" movie — a filmed version of Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical juggernaut, featuring the original Broadway cast. It's "a live theatrical experience that feels just as immediate in your local movie theater," the composer and star said at the time.

That was before the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus. Movie theaters have since closed their doors, and studios have shuffled their release schedules. (Warner Bros.' adaptation of Miranda's musical "In the Heights," previously set to debut next month, is now dated for June 2021.) While the film industry hopes to see theaters reopened sometime this summer, there's no guarantee that audiences will feel safe enough to show up.

The unprecedented situation begs a question asked in the show by King George III: What comes next?

Disney answered with the announcement Tuesday that "Hamilton" will be released on its streaming service Disney+ on July 3. That's 15 months earlier than expected. The original theatrical release date was Oct. 15, 2021.

"No other artistic work in the last decade has had the cultural impact of 'Hamilton' — an inspiring and captivating tale told and performed in a powerfully creative way," said Robert A. Iger, executive chairman of the Walt Disney Co., in a statement. "In light of the extraordinary challenges facing our world, this story about leadership, tenacity, hope, love and the power of people to unite against the forces of adversity is both relevant and impactful."

The fast-tracking of "Hamilton" to the streaming service on Independence Day weekend is a major pivot for the company. In response to the spread of COVID-19, Disney has delayed the debuts of most of its other theatrical releases, and it added "Frozen II" and "Onward" to Disney+ earlier than expected ("Artemis Fowl," which was also set to hit theaters, will now debut on the streaming service in June). But it has not yet pushed any title directly to premium video on demand, as Universal did with "Trolls: World Tour" last month.

Is it a strategic move to bring even more users to Disney+, which has secured 50 million subscribers in five months? Or is it encouragement to shareholders, while the company's resorts have remained mostly closed and sports cable channel ESPN has been left with little to cover? Maybe it's simply to distract fans from the recent news that Disney has taken on billions of dollars in debt and more than 100,000 employees have been furloughed.

Regardless of the business-related motivations, the decision to release "Hamilton" early on Disney+ is a bold move that makes theater more financially accessible to the masses — a crusade for Miranda that is baked into the DNA of "Hamilton" itself.



"Hamilton," which won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for drama as well as 11 Tony Awards, tells the story of America's Founding Fathers with a cast that reflects the country's racial diversity. "This is the story of America then, told by America now," director Thomas Kail has said of its pop and hip-hop score, as well as its casting.

"The show might be prohibitively expensive, but its embodiment of pluralism and diversity will touch anyone who longs to see America live up to its ideals," wrote LA Times theater critic Charles McNulty in 2017. "(It) lures us into caring by centering the action on an immigrant 'self-starter' whose drive for freedom is matched only by his desire to leave a lasting legacy."

Tickets to "Hamilton" have been hard to get since it debuted off-Broadway in 2015, and its subsequent stagings around the world have frequently sold out months in advance. The show has grossed \$650 million on Broadway, where it consistently charged \$849 for center orchestra seats. Each production is often flooded with ticket requests from famous friends. Unfortunately, a story about how America is for everyone couldn't be seen by just anyone.

Over the years, Miranda and his producers did much to make the show accessible. The Broadway production began offering same-day lottery tickets — \$10 apiece, in honor of Hamilton's mug on the \$10 bill. When the in-person contest got so popular that it clogged Manhattan traffic, the lottery moved online. The London run debuted Ticketmaster's "ticketless" system to ward off bots and scalpers.

Most notably, Wednesday afternoon performances were regularly reserved for thousands of low-income teens learning about American history in school. The program — charging young attendees \$10 each, with private entities like the Rockefeller Foundation and Google helping to cover ticket costs — includes a lesson plan created with the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. The program has been duplicated in Los Angeles, Chicago and "Hamilton" tour stops.

Five years since its world premiere, "Hamilton" has shown signs of fading as a live phenomenon. Before stages went dark in coronavirus closures,

tickets were readily available at nonpremium prices at the Hollywood Pantages Theatre, for example. Still, tickets to the Pantages, where the run has been rescheduled into February, start at \$55.

Even a movie ticket has risen to an average price of nearly \$10, so a family trip (sans expensive snacks) remains a luxury for many. If cinemas were operating, they'd still be few and far between in African American and Latinx communities, whose faces "Hamilton" aims to place at center stage.

"Don't get me started on the fact that many communities of color don't have a movie theater at all," director Ava DuVernay tweeted in 2018. "Can't see 'Selma' in Selma. No theater there. Can't see ('Straight Outta Compton') in Compton. No theater there."

Bringing "Hamilton" to the small screen will make it more affordable. Also paramount: The film version features close-ups with the original Broadway cast — Miranda, Daveed Diggs, Renee Elise Goldsberry, Leslie Odom Jr., Christopher Jackson, Jonathan Groff, Phillipa Soo, Jasmine Cephas Jones, Okieriete Onaodowan, Anthony Ramos and Ariana DeBose. Tickets to their final performance in 2016 cost nearly \$10,000.

Tuesday's announcement means that this "Hamilton" probably won't be released on the big screen. That's a bummer, because its production value was promised to be unmatched for a live-capture of a Broadway show.

"What's so unique about this iteration of 'Hamilton' is that by shooting it over two live performances with 16 cameras, and then having another two days to do dolly shots and close-ups with handhelds and no audience, we've captured a very different perspective of the story," producer Jeffrey Seller previously told The LA Times. "You are going to experience (intimate moments) that you can never experience watching the show live, no matter how close you're sitting."

But the shift to streaming does mean that an entire family can have access to this elusive musical at the cost of one Disney+ subscription (\$6.99 per month) or even for free, given that the service offers a free seven-day trial.

Fans with an internet connection and a screen of any size will be able to watch "Hamilton" at the Richard Rodgers Theatre in New York City no matter where they live. (Even a free, at-home version of the show's student education program is now available.)

It's gorgeously poetic that, because of the novel coronavirus — a "rich man's disease" that is disproportionately harming the poor — the "Hamilton" film can soon be seen for next to nothing.

"I'm so grateful to Disney and Disney+ for reimaging and moving up our release to July 4th weekend of this year, in light of the world turning upside down," said Miranda in a statement Tuesday. "I'm so grateful to all the fans who asked for this, and I'm so glad that we're able to make it happen."

"I'm so proud of this show. I can't wait for you to see it."

TELEVISION



Bill Murray cheers for the Chicago Bulls as they play against the Indiana Pacers on May 31, 1998, at the United Center in Chicago, Ill.

Bill Murray reflects 'Space Jam' with MJ

By PHIL ROSENTHAL
Chicago Tribune

Like virtually everyone else who spent time around Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls during their glory years, actor Bill Murray is watching ESPN's "The Last Dance" closely.

"It's fun," Murray said last week on ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live." "I've actually seen myself in the background (and shouted): 'There! I'm in the background! Right there! ... Stop, play that back!'"

Speaking from his South Carolina home while enjoying a bubble bath and wearing a knit that resembled the Chicago flag, Murray talked about playing golf with Jordan and co-starring in "Space Jam," the 1996 film in which Bugs Bunny enlists MJ to help a Looney Tunes hoops team defeat space aliens.

"People forget I got the assist on the game-winning basket," Murray said. "It's so easily forgotten. ... I stole the ball. I made the pass. Nothing. I don't even get interviewed after."

Murray said during breaks in filming Jordan and fellow basketball great Larry Bird would pass the time by leaving the Warner Bros. lot to slip in a few holes of golf.

"That was a lot of fun," Murray told Kimmel.

Murray also recalled playing in a celebrity pro-am tournament with Chicago sports stars such as Walter Payton, Mike Ditka and Ernie Banks, presumably ahead of the 1988 Western Open at Butler National.

Pro Peter Jacobsen and Murray defeated Jordan and D.A. Weibring at that five-hole event, all but assuring themselves of victory when Murray's 30-foot chip shot wound up within four feet of the final hole.

But Murray glossed over those details on Wednesday and seemed more pleased he got Jordan to pose afterward for a picture with his mother, which he shared with viewers.

"There is the most hilarious photograph of my mother, Lucille Collins Murray, one of the paler beauties ever put on the planet, standing next to this giant man," Murray said. "She was only 5-1 or 5-2, and the smiles on both their faces because they knew how ridiculous the photograph looked."

That episode, not surprisingly, was not included in "The Last Dance," which concludes its 10-part, five-week run Sunday on ESPN and ESPN2.

"That was an exciting time to be Chicago Bulls fan, to be Chicagoan," Murray said of the 1984-to-1998 era of Bulls basketball covered by the series. "It's a great thing and it's very fascinating to watch, but it's too much for some people. They can't take both (weekly episodes) back to back. It sort of knocks them out. Some, they become exhausted _ but it takes ... a lot out of people who watch it."



WILLY B

from page A1

Whiting said the pandemic has affected the kinds of art he produces, explaining that he has been doing more abstract expression and graffiti artwork with an obvious message. The artwork also often shows distorted faces with expressions of bewilderment.

"With everyone in the world experiencing this COVID-19 pandemic tragedy, it's more in the mind," he said. "It affects every aspect of life and disrupts your daily routine."

One graffiti art piece Whiting has created recently called "The Real Heroes" was inspired by the doctors and nurses who are helping the most in the fight against the coronavirus.

"The dedication and sacrifice of the nurses and doctors, they are the real super heroes," Whiting said.

With more time to create art, over and above the usual amount of time spent on artwork, Whiting said his work has been more prolific. He said he has created at least 40 pop art pieces, including the ones he did for others, 30 abstract expressionism pieces and 30 graffiti art pieces, plus sketches and idea drawings.

"When you're stuck at home, you should try to use the extra time constructively and this extra time for me has gotten the creative juices flowing," he said.

Whiting had organized a few community art projects, prior to the coronavirus pandemic, so community members could all contribute to an abstract art piece. One of the completed community art projects was displayed at the Cedar Park Recreation Center in 2019.

"Community art projects, I loved to do before this," Whiting said. "I don't see a way to do community art/painting project



COURTESY PHOTO

A pop art piece called "Wear a Mask or a Space Helmet at All Times" was also inspired by the coronavirus pandemic.



COURTESY PHOTO

"Looking Out for COVID-19" is another pop art piece created by Bill Whiting.

[currently], but if anyone has any ideas, I'm all ears. I would be happy to organize it, if we come up with a safe idea."

Interacting with the local art community has changed from in-person conversations and shows to purely social media interaction these days, which means a monumental increase in social media outreach and usage, Whiting said.

"With social media, you're always in touch locally and around the world with artists," Whiting said.

Whiting said he communicates with artists daily, both locally and around the world, and most are selling artwork via Instagram, Facebook, etsy, Shopify and other various platforms.

View Whiting's artwork or contact him directly via Instagram @willybpopart.



COURTESY GRAPHIC

Jacob Leffler, a parent representing multiple families in the Mason North subdivision of Steiner Ranch, said they found a discrepancy in the documents for the bus routes. The document says bus service would be discontinued for Mason North, but the subdivision is not highlighted on the map.

LISD

from page A1

Thompto said he filled out the scoring matrix for the Hazardous Routes Plan, and though he was racking up points, his daughter still did not qualify for bus service.

"I'm not sure that formula works too well," Thompto said. "I really do feel that our area should be bused for those safety reasons."

With the hazardous route scoring matrix that was unanimously approved by Trustees in Oct. 2019, an estimated 769 students would lose bus service, and 356 students would gain bus service for the 2020-21 school year.

NETZones (Not Eligible for Transportation Zones) have been reassessed under the scoring matrix to include students residing within a two-mile radius from a school area, unless their route is deemed hazardous. The new plan will not impact transportation services for special needs students.

Another parent, Julia Spence, said she also used the scoring matrix and calculated enough points for the route to be considered hazardous.

Jacob Leffler, a parent representing multiple families in the Mason North subdivision of Steiner Ranch, said they found a discrepancy in the documents for the bus routes. The document says bus service would be discontinued for Mason North, but the subdivision is not highlighted on the map.

"Part of the reason for that is it is over two miles from Mason North to Canyon Ridge Middle School," Leffler said.

Leffler said bus service should be continued for Mason North "as well as the other Steiner Ranch neighborhoods that are over two miles that have for some reason been excluded in this process and recommended for discontinuation."

Diana Torres said she and other parents would have to drive their kids to and from school because of the dangerous route, causing more traffic.

Sofia Bogran said student mental health is also an issue to take into consideration, as her child suffers from separation anxiety and would be nervous to walk home.

Trustees agreed to remove the Hazardous Route Plan from the agenda, as requested by Leander ISD Assistant Superintendent John Graham, who said he had reviewed two routes that were scheduled to lose bus service that should not have been. Trustees anticipate to bring it back up for discussion in June.

"I believe it is important we review all routes recommended to lose bus service, and we take time to evaluate the distance between each residence and the campus," Graham said.

"As we review these routes, we may continue bus service for kids who might not have it right now, but we will not withdraw bus service from any student in this process," Leander ISD Superintendent Dr. Bruce Gearing added.

The Hazardous Routes Plan was worked on for more than a year by a citizen-led committee that reassesses hazardous conditions and bus routes within the school district.



\$100,000

Local Stimulus Grant

Matching grants available to local small businesses

The Hill Country News has set aside \$100,000 in matching grant money to help local businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Businesses can apply for up to \$7,500 in grants to be used on advertising campaigns in May, June and July.
- Preference given to locally owned and operated businesses.
- Apply at hillcountrynews.com/stimulusgrant.html or look for the ad on our website.

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We believe this is the perfect time to do our part to lend a hand as our business community works to reopen.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
 Sealed responses addressed to the Purchasing Department, City of Leander, 105 N. Brushy Street, Texas 78641, for:

SIGNAL COMMUNICATION UPGRADES
 will be received prior to 3:00 P.M., June 11, 2020. The City of Leander seeks to contract for the purchase, installation, and programming of traffic signal equipment upgrades at various intersections throughout the City. Upgrades will provide the City of Leander with future remote monitoring and troubleshooting capabilities. Solicitation documents may be obtained from the Purchasing Department at the above address or downloaded from the City website at <http://www.leandertx.gov/rfps>

PUBLIC NOTICE
 The City of Leander Planning and Zoning Commission will meet on Thursday, June 11, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at Pat Bryson Municipal Hall, 201 North Brushy, Leander, Texas, to hold a public hearing to consider the following:

AND

The City of Leander City Council will meet on Thursday, June 18, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at Pat Bryson Municipal Hall, 201 North Brushy, Leander, Texas, to hold a public hearing to consider the following:

Conduct a Public Hearing and consider action regarding Zoning Case 19-Z-018 to amend the current zoning of Interim SFR-1-B (Single-Family Rural) pending annexation to PUD (Planned Unit Development with the following base zoning districts: SFC-2-A (Single-Family Compact) and GC-3-A (General Commercial) on two (2) parcels of land approximately 151.583 acres ± in size, more particularly described by Williamson Central Appraisal District Parcels R032162 and R085648; and generally located approximately 700 feet to the south of the intersection of Sauterne Drive and Lakeline Blvd, on the east side of Lakeline Blvd, Leander, Williamson County, Texas. Applicant/Agent: Peter Verdicchio, PLA (SEC Planning, LLC) on behalf of Nancy Gilpin.

Robin M. Griffin, Planning Director
 512-528-2750

435 MISCELLANEOUS	435 MISCELLANEOUS	435 MISCELLANEOUS
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PUBLIC NOTICES

Attention
Private Non-Profit Schools within the Leander Independent School District

Action Requested: Contact your Local Education Agency (LEA). Your Private Non-Profit School may be eligible to receive educational services from certain Federal Programs such as the Title Programs under Every Student Succeeds Act and IDEA B for children with disabilities. Please contact the Leander ISD Central Office for more details:

Kendra Winans
 Sr. Executive Director of Federal and State Programs
 Phone: (512) 570-0306
 Email: Kendra.winans@leanderisd.org
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 218
 Leander, TX 78641

PUBLIC NOTICE
 The City of Leander Planning and Zoning Commission will meet on Thursday, June 11, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at Pat Bryson Municipal Hall, 201 North Brushy, Leander, Texas, to hold a public hearing to consider the following:

AND

The City of Leander City Council will meet on Thursday, June 18, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at Pat Bryson Municipal Hall, 201 North Brushy, Leander, Texas, to hold a public hearing to consider the following:

Conduct a Public Hearing and consider action regarding Zoning Case 19-TOD-Z-022 to amend the current Bryson PUD (Planned Unit Development) to add a parcel to the subdivision and modify site development standards on several parcels of land, approximately 497 acres ± in size, more particularly described by Williamson Central Appraisal District Parcels R032103, R032104, R032196, R032214, R485832-R485834, R525991, R525993, R531476, R537888-R537936, R543609-R543674, R547233-R547238, R551042-R551106, R558957, R563914-R563965, R563984-R564019, R565247-R565292, R568996, R575603, R575606, R575614-R575670, R575847, R575850-R575858, R576923, R576926-R576995, and R588534-R588601; and generally located to the northwest of the intersection of San Gabriel Pkwy and 183A Toll Road, Leander, Williamson County, Texas. Applicant/Agent: Pharis Design (Stefan Pharis) on behalf of Bryson MPC Holdings, LLC (Tommy Tucker).

Robin M. Griffin, Planning Director
 512-528-2750

 **LEGAL**

NEED TO PLACE A LEGAL NOTICE?
 Call the
HILL COUNTRY NEWS 512-259-4449

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE
 Pursuant to Chapter 59, Texas Property Code, MURP 183, LLC, dba 183 Storage, will hold a public auction of property being sold to satisfy a landlord's lien. Sale will be held 6/5/2020 at 10am at 1905 S. Hwy 183, Leander, TX 78641. Property will be sold to the highest bidder for cash. All sales are final. Seller reserves the right not to accept any bid and may withdraw property from sale at any time. Property being sold includes contents in the units of the following tenants: Glen Briley and Adam Valdez. Items include: Misc. household items, shelves, sporting equipment, tools.

Notice of Public Hearings
 The Lago Vista Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing utilizing an online videoconferencing tool on June 11, 2020, to receive citizen input on the items described below. Planning and Zoning Commission members, staff and members of the public will participate in this manner only. Additional information, details and instructions on how to participate will be posted as part of the agenda on the City website (lagovistatexas.org) approximately seven days prior to the scheduled meeting date.

20-1616-CO-U: Consideration of a recommendation regarding a conditional use permit application pursuant to Section 17 of Chapter 14 of the Lago Vista Code of Ordinances to allow for the addition of a detached composite accessory storage building and carport to shelter a boat 20710 Deep Creek (Lago Vista Country Club Estates, Section 1, Lot 91).

Consideration of a recommendation to amend Chapter 3 and the Future Land Use Map of the current Comprehensive Master Plan and Section 13.20(d) of Chapter 14 of the Lago Vista Zoning Ordinance in order to provide more flexible and useful tools to guide zoning decisions.

Following the recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Lago Vista City Council will receive citizen input prior to potential action on the above items in a Public Hearing conducted in a similar manner or located in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 5803 Thunderbird Street, Lago Vista, Texas on July 9, 2020 at 6:30 PM.

The items described below can be determined by the Planning and Zoning Commission and will be considered at the same Public Hearing, but a recommendation will not be forwarded to the City Council

20-1613-SP-E: Consideration of a special exception application pursuant to Section 11.60 of Chapter 14 to allow an increase in the maximum height allowed by Table A of Chapter 14 from 15 feet to 25.54 feet for a single-family residence located at 2025 American Drive (Highland Lake Estates, Section 26 Amended, Lot 26022).

All interested persons are invited to participate.



Night

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CEDAR PARK

from page A1

Despite the multi-million dollar projected revenue shortfall and other challenges, Tustison explained the FY2020 budget is anticipated to remain balanced due to the City entering the crisis in a strong financial position and the City building in room in the budget for revenue shortfalls through conservative revenue estimates and budgeting multiple years into the future. The City budget is also structurally balanced, meaning its reoccurring revenues are still covering its reoccurring expenses instead of its fund balance.

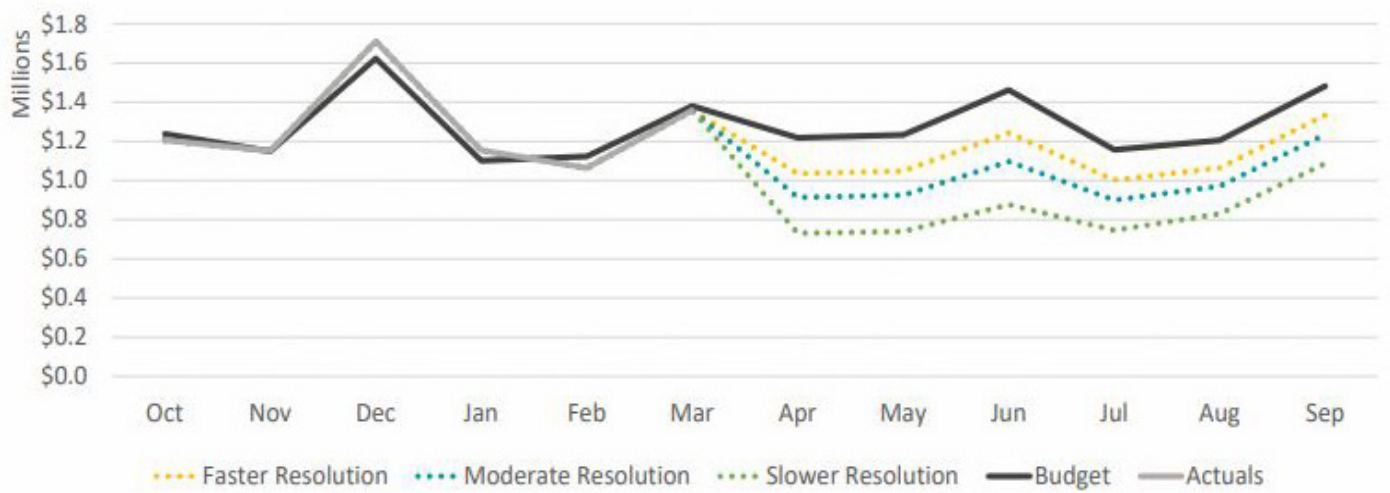
Approximately 71% of the General Fund is financed by the City's property tax and sales tax revenues. The City already collected 99% of property taxes before the crisis began and despite the negative outlook for sales tax revenues, the City had already collected 68% of the \$57.14 million budgeted revenue for FY2020.

Tustison said some economic development agreement payments drawing from the sales tax are scaled based on what is collected, so it will portion scale down based on the revenue drop, and that the City could defer some small project related to the portion of the sales tax dedicated to funding stormwater drainage projects.

The coronavirus crisis is not expected to impact the City's General Obligation bond debt service, the City's bond rating, the revenues that support debt service nor the City's General Fund reserves, which are currently at 36% of the budget FY2020 expenditures. Similarly, city 4A and 4B board budget are not anticipated to be impacted by shortfalls because they were already being budgeted more than \$1.5 million below their original projected revenues.

Tustison noted several areas

SALES TAX (1 CENT) REVENUE IMPACT



Scenario	Budget Impact (April-Sept)	Annual Sales Tax Impact for FY 2020
Faster Resolution	\$1.00 Million	-6.7%
Moderate Resolution	\$1.69 Million	-11.2%
Slower Resolution	\$2.81 Million	-18.5%

www.cedarparktexas.gov



PROJECTED IMPACT TO GENERAL FUND

Revenue Source (\$ in Millions)	FY 2020 Budget	Projection	Variance
Sales Tax – 1 Cent (Operations)	\$15.37	\$14.37 to \$12.56	(\$1.00) to (\$2.81)
Sales Tax – 1/8 Cent (Drainage)	\$1.79	\$1.57 to \$1.57	(\$0.13) to (\$0.35)
Development Fees	\$1.21	\$1.00	(\$0.21)
Parks Fees	\$1.39	\$0.74	(\$0.65)
Fines and Forfeitures	\$0.57	\$0.45	(\$0.12)
Beverage Tax	\$0.39	\$0.29	(\$0.10)
Interest Income	\$0.62	\$0.44	(\$0.18)
Total	\$21.5	\$19.1 to \$17.1	(\$2.4) to (\$4.4)

where the crisis itself helped reduced costs, ranging from significant savings from it causing gas prices to drop and city vehicles not having to consumer as much gas to the City saving on some travel and training expenses due to the virus causing seminars and conferences to be cancelled.

The most drastic actions the City will take to meet budget

shortfalls will include a temporary hiring freeze for non-Public Safety positions to deferring some Capital Improvement projects, such as several street rehabilitation projects.

"While the Fiscal Year 2020 budget is balanced today, we are prepared to take steps to maintain the balanced budget," Tustison said.

Cedar Park financial outlook

Cedar Park Finance Director Kent Meredith also presented the City's Second Quarter Financial Report during the meeting.

Despite the coronavirus only impacting one week of the report, which runs through the end of March, it still caused a notable dropoff in bar and restaurant sales tax revenues compared to the amount collected by this point in prior years.

He reported sales tax collections were 1.2% over the projected collections through the end of March and General Fund expenditures were 2.1% below expenditure projections. Similarly, Utility Fund revenue was 1.6% over projections through the end of March.

Lastly, he presented on the City's Quarterly Investment

report, which found the current economic outlook hard to predict due to virus impacts ranging from it causing unemployment rates to reach 14.7% to the GDP falling 4.8% in March and potentially falling further as spending on travel, bars, restaurant meals and hotels stay near zero to the long-term impacts of many small and medium-sized businesses closing permanently.

Similar to the Finance Report, just a week of direct coronavirus impact in March saw the City earn approximately \$932,000 less in interest revenue than this point last year.

In order to protect the City's portfolio, city staff plans to only reinvest what they receive when city investments mature in safer options like local government fund investment pools, CDs and U.S. agency obligations.

COVID-19

from page A1

the county's emergency declaration, saying he no longer saw a need for the county to have an emergency order that contained criminal penalties for citizens.

County Judge Bill Gravell said WilCo had walked through the most difficult time, that the county had been "brought to its knees" by the coronavirus pandemic, but that "it is time to move forward." "It's time for WilCo to stand again and grow," Gravell said.

Weekly Covid-19 Report

Four more WilCo residents have succumbed to Covid-19 infections since last week. Tuesday's report from the Williamson County and Cities Health District (WCCHD) brings the grim total to 20 fatalities since the pandemic began March 18. Of the 20 fatalities, 15 were to people over the age of 61. Seven of those deaths were to people over the age of 90.

The WCCHD has reported 105 new cases in the last seven days, pushing the cumulative total to 501. County health authorities report 276 recoveries. As of Tuesday, the county was tracking 205 open cases.

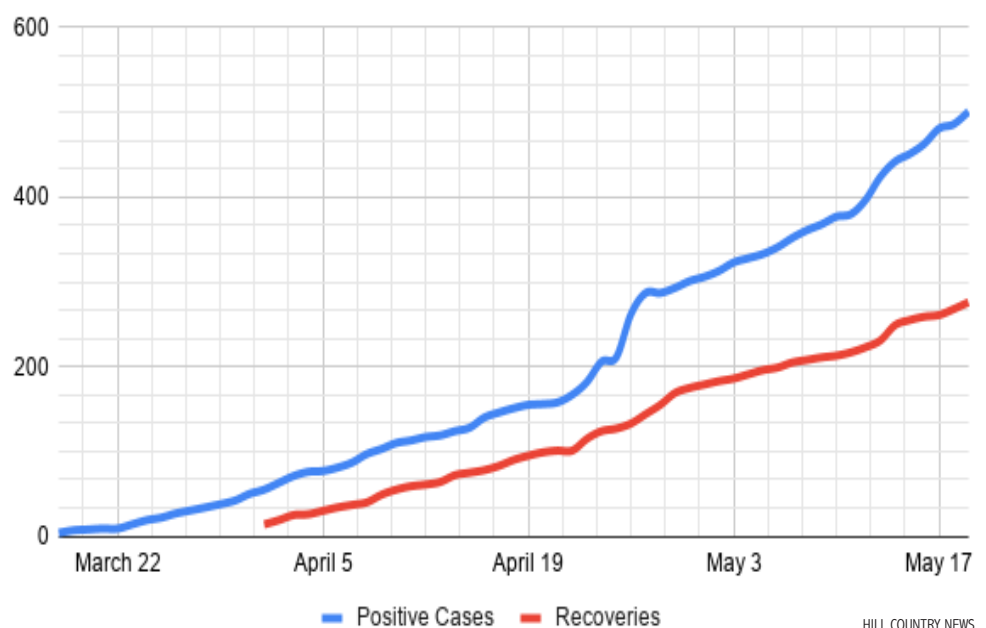
Over the last seven days, the county has reported an average of 8.21 new cases each day since the first report was issued in March. Last week, that average was 7.35.

The current seven-day rolling average is 14.86 new cases reported each day. Last week's seven-day average was 9.14.

In the last week, the county reports having administered 1,157 tests for Covid-19. This report pushed the total number of tests administered to 6,225. Since the first testing total was reported May 6, the county has averaged administering an average of just over 196 tests a day.

talities since the pandemic began March 18. Of the 20 fatalities, 15 were to people over the age of 61. Seven of those deaths were to people over the age of 90.

Cumulative New Cases and Recoveries





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	6		7	8	1			
	7	8			1			
		5				9		
1				9		6	3	
				8				
	8				5		6	
		4					2	

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9	6	9	8	4	7	1	1	8
1	7	7	2	8	8	9	9	3
3	9	7	6	5	5	2	4	1
7	1	2	1	9	8	5	3	6
4	5	2	1	9	8	8	7	6
2	6	1	8	7	4	3	9	5
4	1	7	1	3	6	4	7	5
6	8	3	6	9	8	2	7	3

ANSWER:



Ann Nicole Prado
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Michael Young

* Not pictured: Ryan Chu

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Class of 2020 University & College Acceptances

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 Concordia University • Dallas Baptist University • Full Sail University • Grand Canyon University • Grinnell College
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 Ouachita Baptist University • Pepperdine University • Ringling College of Art and Design
 Sam Houston State University • Samford University • Savannah College of Art and Design
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 Texas A&M University at Galveston • Texas Christian University • Texas State University • Texas Tech University
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 The University of Chicago • The University of Oklahoma • The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
 The University of Texas at Arlington • The University of Texas at Austin • The University of Texas at Dallas
 The University of Texas at San Antonio • Union University • University of Houston • University of Kansas
 University of Kentucky • University of Mary Hardin-Baylor • University of Minnesota Twin Cities
 University of Mississippi • University of Nebraska-Lincoln • University of North Florida • University of North Texas

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 From the Faculty, Staff, and Board of Directors of Hill Country Christian School

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