

HILL COUNTRY NEWS

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THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2021

LEANDER ISD

LISD considers \$933 million school bond proposal

By LILLY CHANDLER
HCN PRODUCTION INTERN

The Leander ISD Citizens' Facility Advisory Committee (CFAC) presented a \$933.4 million bond package recommendation at Thursday's school board meeting. This bond entails projects focused on the district's growth, aging infrastructure, technology and choice.

"A big bond like we're presenting today is inevitable," CFAC

Steering Committee Chairman Jeremy Trimble told the school board.

The committee said that the district could issue bonds in the range of \$600 million-\$1 billion without a tax rate increase. The school board must accept, reject or adjust this recommendation by Aug. 16 to meet the deadline for the Nov. 2, 2021 election.

The committee's report emphasized the district's projected growth as the driving factor

behind the proposal. The district's current enrollment is 40,761 students. It is projected to grow to 48,576 in 2026 and 53,206 in 2031. To accommodate the growth, the district will need nine new schools for 12,445 new students and 20,681 new homes in the next 10 years.

"If we don't prepare for the growth, we're going to get so far behind that we're not going to be able to catch up," Trimble said.

Most of the \$350.4 million the

recommendation allotted for the elementary schools would go toward preparing for the expected growth. The committee suggested building five new elementary campuses, renovating 11 aging schools and improving playgrounds at 27 schools.

Leander middle schools would receive \$143.1 million to build one new school and update the five oldest schools. The CFAC highlighted their goal to update cafeteria lighting and sound,

since cafeterias are "the center of life at that school," chairman Shaun Cranston said.

"We heard and were recommended by the subcommittee from the middle schools that one of the key things for quality of life within the school systems at the middle school level is to have appropriate lighting and sound," Cranston said.

The high schools are allotted

See **SCHOOL BOND**, page A5

LEANDER

Leander's first Town Hall spurs discussion

By JOSH MONIZ
HCN SENIOR REPORTER

What are Leander's long-term plans for public transit, how will it impact development as the city grows and how will the City of Leander fund it? What will it cost Leander to exit the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Cap Metro) rail system? What can Leander gain if it no longer has to pay millions per year into the system?

All of these questions were discussed Thursday at the Leander City Council's first-ever Town Hall meeting, which facilitated a more robust public discussion than in past meetings about topics like Cap Metro, water infrastructure and other major council issues.

The Town Hall event, which will be held quarterly going forward, allows council members and public speakers to directly talk back-and-forth about the speaker's topic, as long as it deals with an issue within the council's voting purview. Regular council meeting discussions tend to be more focused on the specific agenda items, and council members aren't allowed to respond during non-agenda public comments.

See **LEANDER TOWN HALL**, page A7

CEDAR PARK

Missing student was Cedar Park graduate

By JOSH MONIZ
HCN SENIOR REPORTER

The missing American law student found dead in Nizhny Novgorod in Russia after her June 15 disappearance drew national attention was a Cedar Park High School graduate.

Catherine Serou, a 34-year-old Marine veteran, was one of two Americans studying at Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod, where she was studying for her



CATHERINE SEROU

See **MISSING STUDENT**, page A2

TEXAS LEGISLATURE



Bucy addresses issues during town hall event

By RICHARD STONE
HCN EDITOR AT LARGE

Misting fans spun madly against the afternoon heat as more than 100 people crowded onto the patio at Whitestone Brewery for State Rep. John H. Bucy III's first post-legislative town hall meeting last week.

The *Hill Country News* hosted the event. This reporter moderated the discussion.

Bucy used his hour in front of a live audience to tout his successes and review what, in his view, were the misses of the session, which ended May 31.

"I agree, it was a very conservative session," he said, responding to a question about the session's tone. "We took a hard right turn. When [legislators] take hard right turns and we move away from bi-partisan efforts to get things done, it gets hard. But we've got to keep trying to bring ourselves back to the middle ground as we did in the last session. On our best days in the Texas Legislature, we find that middle ground and we can really accomplish good things for the state of Texas."



PHOTOS BY HARRISON FUNK

Top: State Rep. John Bucy's town hall drew about 100 people to the patio at Whitestone Brewery in Cedar Park. Above: Bucy (L) told Hill Country News editor Richard Stone (R) that the recently-ended legislative session took "a hard right turn" that made efforts at bi-partisanship difficult.

He said that the session's conservative tone created "a divisiveness that leads to people walking out. We should have been focused on the electric grid and the pandemic" instead of voter suppression, attacks on transgendered

Texans and micromanagement of history and social studies curriculum in public schools.

He explained that the last campaign was

See **BUCY TOWN HALL**, page A7

WILLIAMSON COUNTY

Commissioners adjust jail pay scale

By LILLY CHANDLER
HCN PRODUCTION INTERN

Williamson County Commissioners and the Sheriff's Office held a 3-hour-long workshop on Tuesday to restructure the corrections department pay scale, in an attempt to stop the departure of officers from the county jail.

The base pay for an entry level corrections officer is now \$40,925.53, which is a 17% increase. Commissioners designed a front-loaded pay scale structure to draw in new officers

to fill the corrections department's 49 openings. Corrections pay chart increases will raise to 5% when employees move from one year to two years and from two years to three years. The chart will increase 4% when moving from three to four years and four to five years and 3% when moving from five to six years and six to seven years.

The increase changes to 2% moving from seven years to eight years, eight to nine years and nine to ten years. The chart increases 1% for the rest of the chart to the maximum step

for each position classification.

"Our commitment to this court is that we will create a great culture and a positive professional operation over there, where people are going to love to come to work," Chief Deputy Ken Evans said. "But we've got to be competitive with pay in order to do it."

The corrections department is nearly in violation of state mandated staffing standards, Evans said. Corrections officers are currently

See **PAY**, page A5

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MISSING STUDENT

from page A1

Master's degree in law. She had planned to eventually pursue a career as an immigration lawyer, according to her mother's statements to the media, and had been passionate about Russian art and the Russian language.

Her mother announced over Facebook on June 19 that police had confirmed they had found Serou's dead body in a wooded area shortly after her disappearance. She reported that her daughter had texted her on June 15 that she was "In a car with a stranger. I hope I'm not being abducted." just before going missing.

Her mother told NPR that her daughter was in a hurry to get to a clinic and may have gotten into a passing car.

According to the Daily Beast, the man being held and charged with her murder is Aleksey Popov, and CNN reported that Russian authorities stated he had a prior criminal record, although details are vague at this time.

Popov has been charged with murder in her death.

Serou grew up in New Orleans and attended Benjamin Franklin High School through her junior year in 2004, according to The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate.

It is unknown why at this time but she graduated from Cedar Park High School in Cedar Park in 2005, according to her LinkedIn account. She participated in French Club and FFA, as well as work as a crew team at the Texas Rowing Center.

She went on to study business management and administration at Purdue University before joining the Marines in 2006 and serving in Afghanistan for the next five years. She earned her Bachelor's degree in design in 2017 and then her Master's degree in art history in 2019.

The U.S. Embassy in Moscow issued a statement about the tragedy.

"We offer our sincerest condolences to the family on their loss. We are closely monitoring local authorities' investigation into the cause of death. We are providing all appropriate assistance to the family," the statement said.

Her mother also issued a statement on social media thanking the public for their support of Serou's family through her disappearance and the eventual news of her death.



Surrounded by family and friends, two new Leander City Council members were sworn into office last week. Left, Nacole Thompson and, below, Esmeralda Traube take their oaths.

PHOTOS BY JOSH MONIZ

Traube, Thompson take oaths of office

By **JOSH MONIZ**
HCN SENIOR REPORTER

New Leander City Council members Nacole Thompson and Esmeralda Traube were sworn into office Thursday following their recent victories in the June 5 runoff municipal elections.

Place 4 member Thompson thanked all of the Leander residents who voted this year, including those who didn't vote for her, for caring and being invested in the town's future.

"It's really important that we have a leadership team that wants to work together to make our city the best it can be, and that's my promise to you guys," Thompson said.

She said she looks forward to finding a way to celebrate diversity in Leander, including using it to help attract businesses to Leander, as well as working with the council to articulate what specifically is Leander's unique brand as it continues to grow.

The council approved a resolution earlier in the meeting marking the Juneteenth holiday.

"The irony isn't lost on me that today, as we acknowledge Juneteenth and the proclamation, here I sit, a descendant of slaves, in this state and able to represent this city. I really appreciate the opportunity. I am so thankful you have entrusted me to make smart and wise decisions on behalf of

the city, and I promise you I will do just that," Thompson said.

Thompson is only the second Black member to serve on the council after former Leander Mayor Charles Eaton in the late 1990s, according to former Leander elected officials.

Thompson said she was so focused on planning how to serve all Leander residents that she didn't realize the significance until Thursday. She said it was "amazing" how far Leander had come from her now being able to serve when maybe a half-century ago she wouldn't have even been allowed in the building.

"I'm just here to do the best job I can do, and show people that everybody can come from a different background, look different than you, maybe have some different beliefs and lifestyles...and we can still come together here and do something good for the city," Thompson said.

After thanking her supporters and family, Place 2 member Traube said she felt honored to be able to serve.

"We're all part of Leander and we're all going to make it a better place and we all want the same goals," Traube said.

She said she looks forward to working on finishing the construction of a Senior Center and tackling the City's water issues.

The council also recognized



outgoing council member Annette Sponseller, who was appointed by the council to finish out former council member Michelle Stephenson's remaining term.

Council member Kathryn Pantalion-Parker said Sponseller "far exceeded any reasonable expectation for any reasonable human being to just jump in and do this." She thanked Sponseller for her service and said she looks forward to seeing Sponseller continue to serve in other ways in the future.

"Leander loves you. We love you. And, thank you," Pantalion-Parker said.

Council members Jason Shaw and Chris Czernek praised Sponseller's love for Leander and tireless work while on the council.

Wiping away tears, Sponseller said it was an honor for her to be able to serve the residents of Leander.

She also outlined several council priorities she urged the council to tackle in her absence. Her suggestions related to Leander's water needs include:

- Implementing a rain barrel program to help conserve water
- Implementing programs to

incentivizing retrofitting showerheads and other water faucets

- Expanding the Sandy Creek Plant to reduce Leander's reliance on the BCRUA plant

- Implementing programs to incentivize xeriscaping of yards and discourage turfgrass and irrigation in the rights-of-way

- Promote water conservation across all City of Leander platforms.

She also urged finding ways to streamline the permitting process of small businesses and suggested the council hold a Small Business Roundtable to learn more about their needs. Lastly, she urged the council to revise the often-criticized Sign Ordinance and support hiring a grant writer to help bring in additional funding to support city programs and projects.

Sponseller concluded by thanking her family, friends, supporters, city staff and fellow council members.

"The election is over. The people decided. We need our city to move forward together so we can be prosperous and flourish," Sponseller said.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Leander theater group to return to live performances this summer

From STAFF REPORTS

Way Off Broadway Community Players will perform A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare on Friday, July 9 at 7:30 p.m. outdoors at Smooth Village in Old Town Leander.

They will also have performances July 10, 16, and 17 at 7:30 pm, and two Sunday shows on July 11 and 18 at 6 pm.

The show is directed by Bethany Watkin, assisted by Jennifer Gonzalez.

Tickets are \$10 and are available at Eventbrite.com or through a link on both the Facebook page and wobcp.org. Seating is limited, so WOBBCP suggests bringing a lawn chair. Smooth Village is located at 203 W. Broade Street in Old Town Leander. Parking is limited. The Smooth Village bar will be open and a food truck is planned to be available.

Check out the group's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/WOBBCP/

THE STORY:

This presentation of A Midsummer Night's Dream is a comedy set in contemporary Athens. It consists of several subplots that revolve around the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta.

One subplot involves a conflict between four Athenian lovers. Another follows a group of six amateur actors rehearsing the play which they are to perform before the wedding.

Both groups find themselves in a forest inhabited by fairies that manipulate the humans and are engaged in their own domestic intrigue.



Here are the young lovers in the WOBBCP production of A Midsummer Night's Dream. L to R are Lysander (played by Amado DeHoyos), Helena (Trinity Adams), Hermia (Courtney Kilmer) and Demetrius (Noah Luster). Hermia's father has arranged for her to marry Demetrius, but she refuses, preferring Lysander, who loves her. Helena is an old flame of Demetrius who still holds strong feelings for him. You will enjoy the antics of these 4 as the spirit world (fairies) interferes with the sorting out of their relationships. The show runs for 2 weekends starting July 9 at Smooth Village in Old Town Leander.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY

WilCo's IT staff wins public sector excellence

From STAFF REPORTS

Williamson County Technology Services was recently awarded a 2021 Tyler Technologies Public Sector Excellence Award at Tyler's annual user conference, Connect2021, in April. Williamson County Technology Services was recognized as a winner because of how it demonstrated excellence in deploying Tyler's Courts and Justice solutions in innovative and impactful ways.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the Wilco Technology Services team responded to the needs of their customers by implementing technology solutions that would reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure for employees and citizens. Many county departments realized the critical need for utilizing Odyssey workflows, electronic hearings, electronic signatures, and other paperless processes that once seemed too complex to even consider. Tyler's software Jury Manager allowed for better communication with jurors and eliminated the need for an excess number of jurors reporting. SoftCode provided an electronic process which created the transfer of requests for service between the Constables' and clerks' offices without the need of in-person delivery. The Tyler solutions implemented during the pandemic provided continuity of business while protecting their employees and citizens. Tyler's Excellence Award submissions



Williamson County commissioners (back row) recognized the county's technology services department for receiving a 2021 Tyler Technologies Public Sector Excellence Award at Tyler's annual user conference in April. The members of the county's IT department are Alvin Galvan, DeAnna Saucedo, Shana Lincoln, Alison Gleason and Richard Semple.

sions were evaluated by a diverse panel of Tyler leadership and were judged on the following criteria:

- Organizational efficiency and productivity
- Organizational responsiveness to employees, vendors, or citizens
- Business value
- Innovation in using Tyler applications or services in unique ways

- Relevance to other organizations using Tyler solutions
- COVID-19 response in handling transitions, changes, and/or other effects from the pandemic

Tyler Excellence Award winners were honored during the virtual Connect2021 conference, where they were recognized in front of more than 5,000 of their public sector peers.

PUBLIC MEETINGS



• WILLIAMSON COUNTY — WILCO.ORG

The Williamson County Commissioners Court is the county's governing body. Commissioners meet beginning at 9:30 each Tuesday morning at the Williamson County Courthouse in downtown Georgetown. Agendas and packets are available, and the meetings are streamed live, on the county's website. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register.

• LEANDER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT — LEANDERISD.ORG

Leander ISD Board of Trustees meet the third and fourth Thursday each month at 6:15 p.m. at 1900 Cougar Country Dr. in Cedar Park. Meetings

are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register. You can find agendas, board meeting packets and a live stream on the district's website.

• LAGO VISTA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT — LAGOVISTAISD.NET

Lago Vista ISD Board of Trustees meet at 6:15 p.m. on the second Monday of the month at 8039 Bar-K Ranch Road in Lago Vista. Meetings are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register. You can find agendas and board meeting packets on the district's website.

• CITY OF CEDAR PARK — CEDARPARKTEXAS.GOV

Agendas and minutes for all boards and commissions are

available, and many meetings are streamed live, on the city's website.

• CEDAR PARK CITY COUNCIL

Meets at 6 p.m. the second and fourth Thursday of each month at City Council Chambers, 450 Cypress Creek Road, Building 4. Council agendas and packets are available on the city's website. Meetings are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register.

• CITY OF LEANDER — LEANDERTX.GOV

Agendas and minutes for all boards and commissions are available, and City Council meetings are streamed live, on the city's website.

• LEANDER CITY COUNCIL

Meets at 6 p.m. the first and

third Thursday of each month in the City Council Chambers, Pat Bryson Municipal Hall, 201 N. Brushy Street. Council agendas and packets are available on the city's website. Meetings are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register.

• CITY OF LAGO VISTA — LAGOVISTATEXAS.ORG

Agendas and minutes for all boards and commissions are available on the city's website.

• LAGO VISTA CITY COUNCIL

Meets 6:30 p.m. the first and third Thursday of each month in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 5803 Thunderbird Drive. Council agendas and packets are available on the city's website. Meetings are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register.



CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

HEAT WAVE PROMPTS CONSERVATION CALL

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas urged Texans to cut back on power usage last week when an unusually large number of power plants shut down for unexpected repairs as temperatures soared. ERCOT officials announced Friday that Texans could resume normal levels of electricity use, however.

ERCOT came under fire after widespread outages during the winter storm in mid-February, resulting in the CEO being forced out and much of the board replaced.

Sunday marked the official first day of summer.

BORDER WALL CONSTRUCTION PLAN UNVEILED

Gov. Gregg Abbott last week announced several key facets of his plan for the state to build a wall on its border with Mexico. Abbott and other state leaders signed a letter during a press conference, allowing the transfer of \$250 million to begin construction and to hire a program manager and contractors. The program manager will hire contractors and subcontractors needed to build the wall and will identify available state land, as well as private land whose owners are willing to volunteer space for the wall.

Meanwhile, Land Commissioner George P. Bush announced approximately 591,595 acres of state-owned land will receive emergency authorization to be used to build part of the wall. Texas and Mexico share 1,254 miles of common border, according to the Texas Department of Transportation.

The governor is also seeking donations for building a wall via www.borderwall.gov. State lawmakers allocated \$1 billion for border security in the recently passed budget, but Democratic officials have pointed out most of that money goes to the Texas Department of Public Safety.

ABBOTT APPOINTS COBOS TO PUC

Abbott last week appointed Lori Cobos to the PUC. She fills a term scheduled to expire on Sept. 1, although she could be reappointed. Senate confirmation is not required since the Legislature is not in session. The PUC will have a full complement of commissioners for the first time since February.

"I am proud to appoint Lori Cobos to the Public Utility Commission of Texas, and I know that she will draw upon her wealth of experience and knowledge to faithfully serve the people of Texas," Abbott said.

Cobos has served in several senior-level posts at the PUC and ERCOT, including as chief executive and public counsel for the Office of Public Utility Counsel. As a commissioner, she will draw a salary of \$201,000 annually.

FOREST SERVICE FIREFIGHTERS SENT TO AID OTHER STATES

Texas A&M Forest Service has sent 25 firefighters, including two engine crews, to wildfires in Colorado, Alaska, Arizona, New Mexico and Florida.

"Texas state resources are supporting wildfire suppression efforts in multiple roles, including firefighters, engine support, prevention team members, aviation operations and support roles," TFS said in a press release. The release said TFS remains dedicated to protecting the state's natural resources from wildfire while assisting other states, a common practice.

Across Texas, the potential for wildfires remains low due to the copious amounts of rain this spring. For current conditions, visit the Texas Potential Outlook site: <https://tinyurl.com/3j84srd7>

VACCINE RATE CONTINUES TO SLOW

The number of Texans who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 has hit 11.4 million, about 39% of the state's population, according to Texas Department of State Health Services.

Across the United States, 45% of the population is fully vaccinated. Texas ranks in the lower tier of states in percentage of population that is fully vaccinated. However, the number of new COVID-19 cases in Texas dropped considerably from the previous week, with 8,414 reported by the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University, along with 186 deaths. Hospitalizations dropped slightly, with 1,564 lab confirmed COVID-19 patients in Texas hospitals, according to DSHS.

STAAR TESTS SHOW DROP IN MATH RESULTS

Results from the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, which measures students' knowledge of several subjects, shows a sharp drop in math scores, the Texas Standard reported last week. The new scores came after a school year unlike no other, with many students taking classes online at home because of the pandemic.

Only 42% of high school students who took the primary high school math test were considered to be "at grade level," down from 66% last year. This year's STAAR results don't include all students, since some did not return to school in-person to take the exam.

Gary Borders, a veteran award-winning Texas journalist, compiled this report. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches and, once upon a time, the Hill Country News in Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com.

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■ Letters must be limited to 350 words or less. "Thank you" letters must be no more than 300 words.

■ The Hill Country News reserves the right to reject letters deemed libelous, in poor taste, solicitous or produced on a mass basis.

■ Anonymous letters will not be published. Please include an email address, city of residence and telephone number for verification.

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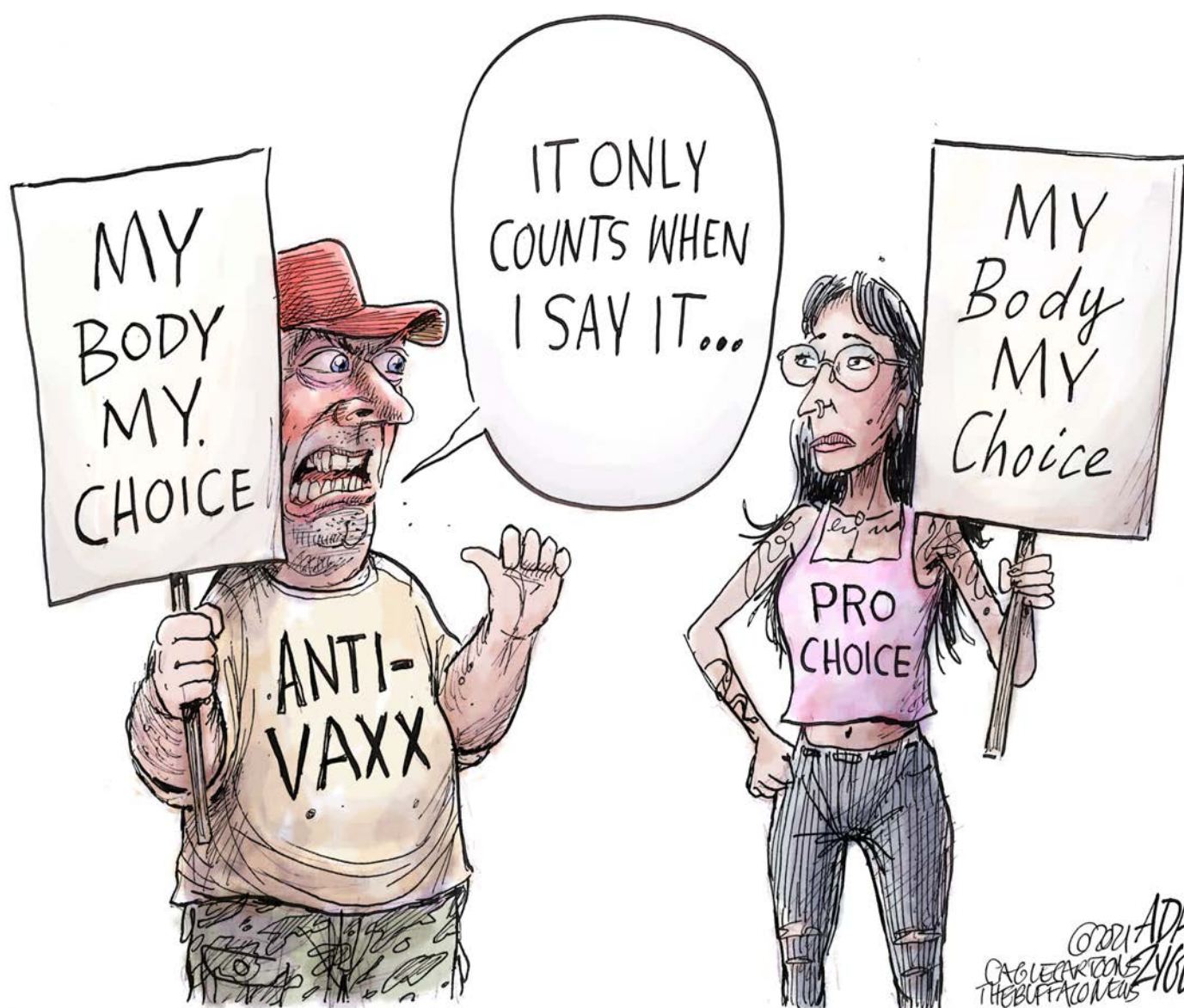
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EDITORIAL CARTOON



TEXAS TRIBUNE ANALYSIS

Issues that play on the national stage

Immigration. The U.S.-Mexico border. Wall-building. Abortion rights. Voting rights. Election laws. The Second Amendment and gun rights. Critical race theory. Transgender athletes.

Do those sound like state issues, or national issues? When you hear that list — which is representative, but not complete — do you think of it coming from someone seeking a job in Austin, or a job in Washington?

It could be both, or neither. But it comes from Gov. Greg Abbott, who appeared two years ago as a centrist Republican trying to get property tax and school finance legislation through a Legislature that was marked by recent Democratic gains. This year's much more conservative theme follows a 2020 election where Texas Republicans held their ground.

More importantly, it leads into a political year when Abbott will be seeking reelection with a Democratic president in office — usually a good sign for GOP candidates — and after this Republican Legislature draws a set of political maps that strengthen their hold on the majority in the Texas Capitol.

Add in persistent political whispering that Abbott might be considering a run for president in 2024, and that list of Texas issues being chased by the governor has national overtones.

Abbott has to survive reelection, a job that became considerably simpler with the endorsement of former President Donald Trump, who remains very popular with Texas Republicans and whose blessing is a signal to conservatives who might otherwise think of Abbott as the establishment candidate.

That's a problem for potential challengers hoping to attack the incumbent as insufficiently conservative. Abbott has to defend his right flank, but between Trump's support, his own popularity with voters and a campaign account balance that hit \$37.9 million at the beginning of this year, he has less reason to fear the candidates from that part of the GOP.



ROSS RAMSEY

TEXAS TRIBUNE

Allen West, former chair of the Republican Party of Texas; former state Sen. Don Huffines of Dallas; and Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller — who've either jumped into or hinted at joining the race for governor — don't have many voters to woo if the Trump supporters stick with Abbott.

For the sake of conversation, let's say the governor doesn't face much of a primary challenge next year. And no solid prospects have taken shape, though actor Matthew McConaughey and former U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke are lurking.

There might be competition ahead, but it's not from the right wing of his own party.

Unless you're thinking about that national race in 2024.

That more moderate Abbott of 2019 seemed open to some mild gun regulation after mass shootings in El Paso and Midland-Odessa that summer.

A year ago, after Houstonian George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis police, Abbott consoled the dead man's survivors: "I'm here to tell you today that I am committed to working with the family of George Floyd to ensure we never have anything like this ever occur in the state of Texas."

All of that was before the 2020 election. And the 2021 legislative session was influenced more by that election outcome than it was by those earlier events. The session was marked by efforts to defend police funding and, with a notable exception regarding guns, to take the police side of the argument on legislative issues. The George Floyd Act didn't pass, though a few of its provisions made it into other legislation.

The Legislature's big Second Amendment legislative achievement wasn't new limits on stranger-to-stranger sales of guns, or tighter background checks of buyers. It was permitless carry, a feat of deregulation that allows most adults to carry handguns without permits or training. That bill — despite opposition by most law enforcement groups — was signed by the governor this month and will take effect Sept. 1.

The governor's fresh echo of Trump's call to build a wall between the U.S. and Mexico is both a state and national play. Immigration and border security have been Republican voters' "most important problem" over several years of University of Texas/Texas Tribune Polls. In the most recent poll, in April, 65% of Republican voters chose either immigration or border security as their top concern.

The governor has promised to revive restrictions on voting that failed in the final hours of the legislative session and is calling lawmakers into special session for that. Watch what else he adds to the agenda. Abbott has mentioned a bail bill that would make it harder for people to get out of jail while they're awaiting trial, and also additional legislation to block teaching of critical race theory in public schools. Other state leaders are asking him to let them try to bar transgender athletes in public schools from competing in sports that match their gender identity.

The governor who was cautious in the legislative session before the 2020 election was unleashed by its results. He's prepping for 2022 and beyond by dropping the "bread and butter" issues of two years ago and serving up what conservatives have been clamoring for.

Red meat.

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

GUEST VIEWPOINT

Everything's wetter in Texas

With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions over the past few months, Texas weather has been releasing its pent-up energy like a post-quarantine exhibitionist with multiple personality disorder.

This winter, we had not one, but two snowfalls in Northeast Texas — a region of the country where a snowflake is usually defined as a hipster with a phobia of full employment and brash ex-presidents with spray tans.

One of our snow events amounted to almost a foot of white powder that forced our doglets to re-evaluate their methods for destroying my lawn. Our Maltese mix even threatened to file cruelty-to-an-animal's-underrcarriage charges against us the first time we let her out to potty in the permafrost.

Then spring arrived with a pant-soaking vengeance. It rained almost daily at our house throughout the month of May and the first week of June, to the point that I wondered whether I should force my daughters to accessorize their crop tops with arm floaties when they made their daily runs to Target and Starbucks.

Seriously, though, the constant rain has had some significant economic consequences. Despite a regional surge in snorkel sales, the precipitation and overcast skies stunted the growth of locally-grown crops like watermel-



JASE GRAVES

GUEST COLUMNIST

ons, the taste of which is like a sweet herald to summer for me. I've been known to make a nutritious meal of a whole watermelon in one sitting—seeds and all—followed by a sleeper in the men's room. I guess this year I might have to get my vitamins from one of those ridiculous fruit cups at Chick-fil-a, with a side of large waffle fries and a milkshake (for my veggies and calcium).

I've also taken a personal financial hit due to my generously supplying the nearest storm drain with landscaping topsoil and mulch from Lowe's. Because my inundated yard has taken on the consistency of those makeup sponge things that my daughters leave strewn through the house, I've resorted to wearing tall black rubber boots for routine outdoor tasks like taking out the garbage or fetching my designer underwear orders from the mailbox. My daughters especially appreciate it when I pair the rubber boots with my bathrobe — just as their boyfriends arrive to pick them up.

And speaking of my daughters, the swimming pool we installed a few years ago to increase their tolerance of sharing oxygen with us became just plain redundant, acting as the neighborhood retention pond and often featuring water the color of those vegetable cleansing smoothies. I've had to apply so many chlorine shock treatments to the pool water that my youngest daughter and her friends recently received free hair highlighting treatments when they came to swim. Unfortunately, you can now see through their skin.

Although the rain has been a nuisance lately in East Texas, the current extended forecast shows conditions that promise to make us all feel like we're wearing woolen long johns inside an active volcano. We'll almost certainly be praying for rain come August — when our car interiors turn into air fryers, and the only moisture we get is the sweat dripping from our navels.

Until then, I think I'll keep greeting my daughters' boyfriends in my rubber boots, bathrobe and snorkel — just for fun.

Graves is an award-winning humor columnist from East Texas. His columns have been featured in Texas Escapes magazine, The Shreveport Times, The Longview News Journal, and The Kilgore News Herald. Contact Graves at susanjase@sbcglobal.net.

SCHOOL BOND

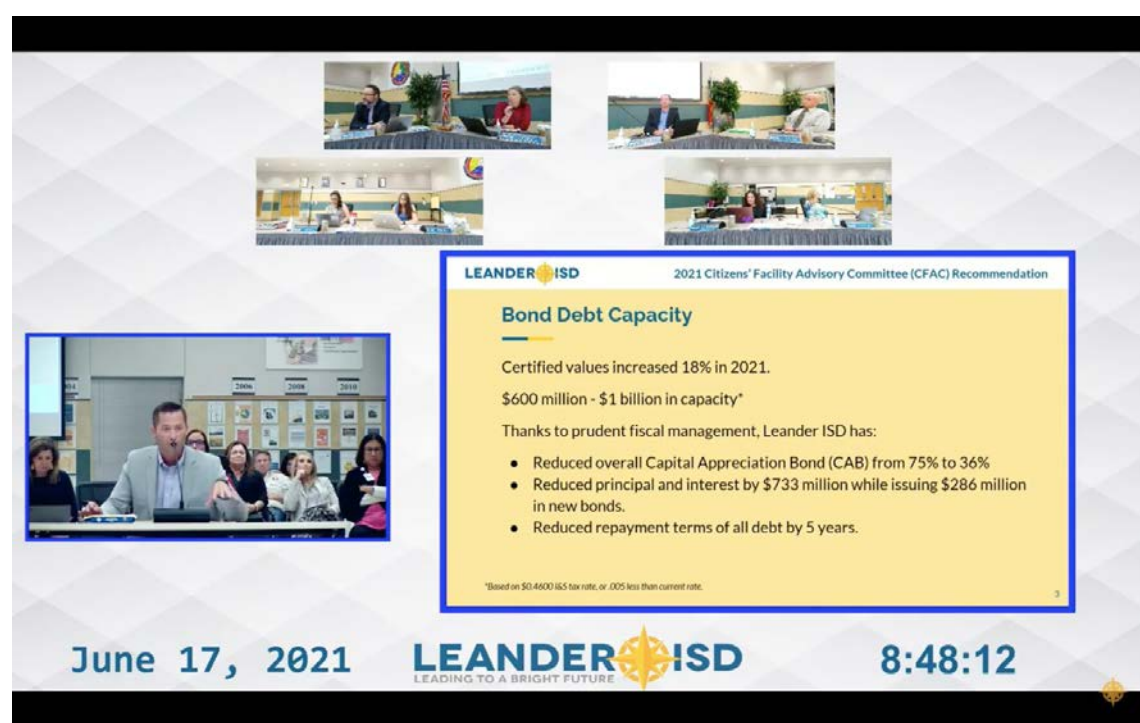
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\$252.6 million in the recommendation, most of which focused on the aging infrastructure in Cedar Park, Leander and Vista Ridge campuses, and on schools of choice. The package recommended a new building for the New Hope High School and the construction of an early college high school, as well as optional additional funding for a third school of choice.

If the board does not build a third school of choice, they would have to build a seventh high school, which was delayed in this bond package, to "have room for [the] projected student population," Cranston said.

\$10.1 million of the high schools' allotment would go toward the fine arts programs. Cranston said that a "part of a well-rounded student is having access to the arts."

The recommended bond package includes \$94.3 million for technology district-wide. One third of these funds—about \$36.7 million—will go toward establishing interactive computer panels in every classroom in the district that will aid connection between students and teachers. The CFAC technology subcommittee proposed this system in wake of students struggling to communicate with teachers on the devices



Jeremy Trimble, CFAC chairman, commended LISD's "prudent fiscal management," before presenting the \$933.4 million bond recommendation. This package is on the higher end of the bond capacity.

they were learning on.

\$26.9 million of the technology focus area will go toward improvements and infrastructure. The CFAC report said the best use of money is for LISD to invest in an independent internet system, rather than using a third party vendor. This system would consist of telephone and internet, which controls security systems, HVAC and climate systems and educational systems.

"Everything is run online, and we were shown in robust detail the need for you to improve the systems that you have," Cranston said.

The last third of the \$94.3 million — \$29.9 million — will replace old devices.

The last item of the recommendation is ancillary services, to which the CFAC assigned \$93 million. This would fund campuswide security and safety updates,

maintenance for the Central Administration building, 139 new buses and the construction of a South Transportation Terminal, PAC improvements and a science materials center.

The committee said the board must now consider using funds from previous projects, like the 2017 bond, poll the community, get answers from the administration, and vote on the package before the Aug. 16 deadline.

PAY

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working mandatory overtime to fill all shifts.

Sheriff Mike Gleason said last week that about 50 officers left "just for money." The department asked to be two percent above the median pay to compete with neighboring counties, which Evans said the corrections office loses staff to. They asked for an immediate \$129,298 on Tuesday to complete this year with full employment. They would need approximately \$760,250 this year to adjust the pay scale, and approximately \$2.7 million out of next fiscal year's budget.

Evans raised concerns about positions like bailiff and medical officers, which are not listed as corrections officers, and would not benefit from this pay increase. The court amended their motion to change the bailiff's title to a commissions corrections officer, and give them a \$250 monthly stipend.

Judge Bill Gravell said the right way to "tackle" medical officers' salary challenge was to bring a motion about the corrections officers' pay first, then discuss the medical officers' salary and stipends next week.

"We're just not there yet," Gravell said about the medical salary, which Evans introduced to commissioners late in the discussion.

Gravell's motion to change the correction department's base pay and pay scale structure, and to make the bailiff a commissions corrections officer with a monthly stipend passed unanimously.

"I want to thank the Commissioners Court for taking this action to help solve our urgent concern of employment and retention in the jail," Gleason said. "This increase will make us competitive in the region. We also have asked for compensation adjustments within the Law Enforcement Bureau that will be reviewed during the regular budget process."

LAGO VISTA

Lago Vista names Hlavinka new city manager

Tracie Hlavinka will serve as the City of Lago Vista's new City Manager following the departure of Joshua W. Ray who accepted a position with the City of Shelbyville, Tennessee in January of this year.

Hlavinka has more than 20 years of public sector experience. She began her career with the City of DeSoto, Texas serving a community of approximately 57,000 residents with 350 employees and an annual operating budget of \$82M. Hlavinka worked briefly on the financial side of City operations before becoming the City's Community Initiatives Manager. Hlavinka held progressively responsible roles within the organization and ultimately promoted to Deputy City Manager. As Deputy City Manager, she directed staff activities and operations for Municipal Court, Information Technology, Economic Development, Development Services,

Environmental Health, and the Action Center.

In 2019, Clarkdale, Arizona City Council selected Hlavinka to serve as Town Manager. Among her accomplishments, Hlavinka lowered the tax levy two years in a row, developed the first Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Town, led strategic planning and creation of an annual Town Council Work Plan, and directed/participated in the 10-year update of Clarkdale's General Plan.

Hlavinka earned a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Texas at Arlington and holds a Master's Degree in Human Resources and Business from Amberton



TRACIE HLAVINKA

University in Garland, Texas.

Lago Vista City Council chose Hlavinka from a group of more than 35 candidates from 14 different states.

Hlavinka's anticipated start date as City Manager for Lago Vista is July 14, 2021.

"We are excited to bring on board Ms. Hlavinka as our new City Manager. She brings a vast amount of experience in leadership, customer service, economic development, development services, and city planning," said Mayor Ed Tidwell. "Her attitude, personality, and style will be a great fit for Lago Vista."

"I am excited about the opportunity to lead the City of Lago Vista during a very dynamic time. I look forward to working collaboratively with Council, staff, and the community to provide quality of life for all who live, work, and play in Lago Vista," said Ms. Hlavinka.

SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test.

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

ANSWER:

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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Cedar Park Chamber of Commerce

Log onto
CedarParkChamber.org
for more information
512.260.7800

1460 E. Whitestone Blvd. Suite 180

Cedar Fest BBQ Cook-Off presented by Smokey Mo's TX BBQ was a success



Lyndee Matthews
Vice President

Despite a bleak forecast for more rain (after two solid weeks of off-and-on rain), Cedar Fest BBQ Cook-Off was a huge success! The cookers came prepared and produced some of the best barbecue our competition has ever seen. It is amazing what can be accomplished when we all come together to get an event done, despite the forecast.

Thanks to the collaboration of the Cedar Park Chamber of Commerce, the City of Cedar

Park and the Kansas City Barbecue Society, the Cedar Fest BBQ Cook-Off presented by Smokey Mo's TX BBQ provided a great competition. In the end, \$15,500 was

paid out in prize money to the competitors and dozens of cooks and judges came from all over the United States to participate.

We would like to extend a special thanks to all the volunteers and board members who stepped up and helped us keep going despite the unpredictable weather. Thank you to the City of Cedar Park for working with us and helping to keep our event going, especially the wonderful Parks & Recreation staff. And special thanks to our great sponsors for supporting us and the business community. It was an honor to be part of an event that was not only fun and exciting, but profitable for the City of Cedar Park's retail and hotel establishments.

By bringing in cooks and judges from not only out-of-town, but as far away as New Jersey and South Dakota, we were able to promote our beautiful community of Cedar Park. These cooks stayed in our hotels, bought their

groceries here and visited our local restaurants. This helps boost our local economy and showcases Cedar Park to the rest of the nation.

This event continues to grow each year and it is all due to the cooks who come from all over to compete and due to our sponsors, who help to fund the competition. Thank you to all who helped to make this competition a success! We are already planning for next year and we can't wait to see you all there!

A special thank you to our Presenting Sponsor Smokey Mo's TX BBQ; Shop Local Sponsor Cedar Park Economic Development; Truck Sponsor Toyota of Cedar Park and our many other sponsors who helped make this event a success.

You can check out all of our photos from this event at: facebook.com/CedarParkChamberOfCommerce.



Peter Armendariz with Armendariz Pride of Texas BBQ prepares for a turn in during the competition.



Chicken Fried BBQ's William Purvis poses with Annie Pierce of Smokey Mo's TX BBQ, with their \$3,000 prize check for being crown Grand Champion of the 2021 Cedar Fest BBQ Cook-Off.



Kansas City Barbecue Society judges and Mayor Corbin Van Arsdale judging the brisket competition.

Past Events



Samaritan Health Facilities celebrated their new location with an Open House and Ribbon Cutting on Thursday, June 10th. Now located at 904 Crystal Falls Parkway, Samaritan Health Ministries is a clinic for uninsured patients in Williamson and Travis Counties. They provide medical, dental, pharmaceutical, women's health and mental health services.



Jeremiah's Italian Ice held their Ribbon Cutting on Friday, June 11th. Located at 700 E. Whitestone Blvd Suite 100, Jeremiah's decadent Italian Ice flavors span the taste spectrum, from the everyday to the exquisite and the eccentric. Stop by today and try their free samples to find your perfect flavor!



Congratulations to Nova Vita Wellness Centers - Cedar Park on their grand opening! They offer Vitamin IV drips and Hydration Therapies. Thank you to everyone who came out to help us welcome them to the Cedar Park Community! Stop by and check them out at 200 N. Lakeline Blvd., Suite C.



Chamber Board and Ambassadors with CEO Tony Moline at Beau Kisses for the Chamber's Cash Mob event.

Welcome New Members:

- Arike Agency: Allstate Insurance
- Ortho 360
- Jeremiah's Italian Ice
- Realty Texas
- Guevara Law, P.C.
- Raising Cane's
- Homestay Senior Living
- Profile by Sanford
- Ashley Home Store
- Premier Martial Arts of Lakeline

Renewing Members:

- CHASCO Constructors
- TopMac IT Solutions
- Unifirst
- Band of the Hills
- Alphagraphics Cedar Park
- Central Texas Refuse
- Computer Age Automotive
- Cook Hearing and Balance
- Minuteman Press Cedar Park
- Samaritan Health Ministries
- United Way of Williamson County
- Sam's Club #6188
- Live Oak Family Dental Care
- Springhill Suites by Marriott
- City of Cedar Park Police Department
- BKA Wealth Consulting
- Affiliated Bank
- Mesa Home Systems
- Barre3 Cedar Park

Upcoming Events:

June 25th
Women's Connection Breakfast
8:30 a.m.
Blue Corn Harvest
\$25 to attend

May 29th
Ribbon Cutting - Raising Cane's - Lakeline
9:30 a.m.
2920 S. Lakeline Blvd

July 14th
Lunch Connect
11:30 a.m.
Hill Country Bible Church Austin

July 16th
We Are Blood - Blood Drive
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Cedar Park Chamber of Commerce Parking Lot
1460 E. Whitestone Blvd.
Must register in order to donate

July 23rd
Power Networking Breakfast
8:30 a.m.
Cedar Park Recreation Center
1435 Main Street
\$5 to attend

For more information on our upcoming events please go to CedarParkChamber.org



BUCY TOWN HALL

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very aggressive on both sides, with more money and harsher rhetoric than the previous election cycle.

"We're going into redistricting and I think those things trigger us going back into our corner," he said, adding, "This state benefits when we meet in the middle."

Bucy defended his decision to join other House Democrats in breaking the quorum — walking out — late on the last day of the session. He said the debate over Senate Bill 7, an election bill that both Gov. Greg Abbott and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick saw as priorities, was bad policy and was modified late in the legislative process.

"On the last day of the session, there was a 20-page resolution added to [SB 7] in the final hours," he said. "This is a 60-page bill that had a 20-page resolution added to it that never went through the Senate committee process, the House committee process. Not all members on the conference committee got to see this resolution. It was debated on the Senate floor starting at 10 p.m. until 6 or 7 in the morning."

He said, despite the lack of public comment on the divisive measure, the House leadership took the unusual step of ending the debate on the bill.

"We decided that, if they decided to take that very unusual step — which is in the rules — we would take the even more unusual step of breaking quorum — which is also in the rules. Whether you agree with those policies or not, your voice was never heard. This was our only chance."

Bucy said he considered SB 7 a bill designed to make it harder to vote in Texas because it criminalizes almost every aspect of the voting process, not just as voters but as volunteers who work elections.

"I don't know any other way to describe it. It's a voter suppression bill," he said. "If SB 7 becomes law, you could make an honest mistake, it would criminalize some of those mistakes. To me, that is intimidation that keeps you from being part of the process."

"We want to be down there to work. We understand we're in the minority. We will work across the aisle to solve the problems of Texas but this was not a problem to be solved. The Republican Secretary of State and staff came to the elections committee on the first hearing ... and said the 2020 election in Texas was smooth, safe and secure. We have safe and secure elections. If that's your goal, mission accomplished."

Gov. Abbott has already called for SB 7 to be the subject of a special session. Bucy said the session could begin as soon as the first week of July.

Bucy touched on a variety of other topics.

He said that the legislature did not go far enough to solve problems with the state's electric grid.

"It's already hotter than it usually is this time of year," he said. "We're being strained and we're not prepared. There are solutions to this; it just takes political capital and investment to get it done. When this happens again, we're gonna look back and think we should've done more and we could have done more."

On the other hand, he pointed to a few issues he worked for that he believes will help Texans.

He said he is proud of the bipartisan ballot by mail tracking bill that passed the legislature and Gov. Abbott signed into law.

"If anyone has ever ordered something from Amazon or any other company, you can go online and see the status of your order," he said. "It's just a tracker. It's for your convenience. That's what we're trying to do with your mail-in ballot. It's for your ease, for you to make sure you know where your ballot is."

He noted that Williamson, Travis and several other counties already have an online mail ballot tracking system.

He touted his work on extending postpartum Medicaid coverage for new mothers from two to six months, and on a bill that synchronizes enrollment dates for families on CHIP.

"It's important to realize that, in Texas, we take baby steps," he said, noting that legislators have fought over the Medicaid bill for more than a decade and the CHIP measure had been before the legislature for three sessions. "It may sound like a baby step but it's been hard-fought battles."

He also noted an important bill he helped author that allows patients to get an emergency supply of insulin without a prescription.

On redistricting, which will be the subject of its own special session in the fall, Bucy predicted that WilCo would not necessarily gain any seats but that House District 20, which stretches across three counties, could contract within WilCo. If so, it would give the county three seats entirely contained within the county, and maybe even part of a fourth. Redistricting could also have an impact on the reach of the Senate Dist. 31.

The town hall was streamed live on Rep. Bucy's Facebook page. An audio recording of the event can be found on the Ragged Edge podcast on Apple Podcasts or at raggededge.buzzsprout.com.



LEANDER TOWN HALL

from page A1

The event marks a new stage in the council's public comments, not only because the council recently repealed the 2019 limits on public comments but also because the following council meeting had one of the biggest turnouts for public comments since the coronavirus pandemic began.

Council member Jason Shaw, who brought the original agenda item to create the Town Hall events, said Thursday was productive, but hopes more residents will utilize it in the future.

CAP METRO

The previous council voted May 20 to direct staff to work to put a potential Cap Metro exit on the Nov. ballot, just minutes before the current council was sworn into office.

The council previously discussed with city staff during their June 3 meeting what information they wanted gathered before they voted on the issue.

However, despite the discussion Thursday that rehashed several of these points, the open format of the Town Hall resulted in the members being more articulate about their priorities and why they held their positions.

Those who addressed the council objected to how the original vote was handled and expressed concerns about how a Cap Metro pullout could hurt developments like the \$715 million Northline and whether it would impact public transit accessibility for residents.

Council members Kathryn Pantalion-Parker, Chris Czernek and Jason Shaw each voted in favor of putting Cap Metro on the ballot. Shaw clarified he had been the one to ask former Leander Mayor Troy Hill to bring the issue up for a vote in May.

Under state law, membership in Cap Metro requires cities to pay one of the two 1% sales taxes they are allowed to levy. In 2020, each 1% represented just under \$8 million for Leander. Leander's sales tax totals are expected to grow by millions over the coming years.

They argued they could contract busing or similar services with Cap Metro or another organization after an exit for a fraction of the cost of what Leander currently pays, especially given how few people use the rail system.

Cap Metro estimated its Leander station ridership peaked with an average of 567 people boarding per weekday in Spring 2020, then dropped to one-seventh as many riders for the rest of that year due to the pandemic.

They also argued that being unable to use those millions for economic development has hurt Leander compared to neighboring cities that are not in the Cap Metro system.

They clarified Thursday that their goal is to replace Cap Metro with another service, not simply remove it.

"If we were paying into Cap Metro half of what we are (paying), it wouldn't even be a discussion. It would be a non-issue," Pantalion-Parker said. "There seems to be a perception that we want to get out of Cap Metro. It's that we don't want to pay so much for it."

Czernek said they would at a minimum provide busing from Leander to Cap Metro's Lakeline rail station, located just a few blocks outside of Cedar Park.

Cap Metro officials issued statements in recent months stating they would like to work with Leander to address their concerns and continue their partnership.

The speakers Thursday repeatedly asked whether the council could find an alternative solution, such as finding a way to reduce how much Leander has to pay into the system or encouraging more people to ride so the service would be worth the cost.

Leander Mayor Christine Sederquist and the other council members oppose exiting Cap Metro at this time. She said she wants an opportunity to work with Cap Metro officials to push for the same reforms former mayor Hill pushed in recent years, which could potentially allow Leander to keep Cap Metro while addressing these main concerns.

But she used Thursday's Town Hall to clarify she only opposes exiting if the council hasn't yet completed the work of finding a replacement service, funding it and getting it online prior to any exit to ensure residents experience no gap in service.



PHOTOS BY JOSH MONZ

Top: Former Leander Mayor John Cowman addressed the Leander City Council on Thursday, June 7, 2021, during their first-ever Town Hall meeting.

Above: Leander's train station on the Cap Metro rail system.

"If Cap Metro was a city department, we would be making cuts right now to facilitate our needs in other departments. They need to come to the table with something. I hope they will continue to work with us and treat us like partners. Because, right now, they're not treating us like a partner."

— Leander Mayor Christine Sederquist

She explained she agrees with Czernek, Shaw and Pantalion-Parker's points and that they need to be addressed. She said she is on the fence because "there are very good points on both sides."

"If Cap Metro was a city department, we would be making cuts right now to facilitate our needs in other departments," Sederquist said. "I've been talking with Cap Metro. They need to come to the table with something. I hope they will continue to work with us and treat us like partners. Because, right now, they're not treating us like a partner. We need to fix that relationship for sure."

Speakers asked whether the City could get the Texas Legislature to change the laws governing how much Leander and other small city members have to pay into Cap Metro.

Sederquist said achieving those changes would be great but noted two hurdles to this approach: the next legislative session won't be held until 2023 and uniform taxation laws might mean changing the rules would force Cap Metro to reduce membership for all of its members, including its primary funder, the City of Austin.

Leander City Manager Rick Beverlin previously said he believes there's a path forward remaining with Cap Metro, noting it is a unique asset for Leander. He said he and city staff have been talking with Cap Metro officials about other options, including getting around those hurdles by having Cap Metro rebate back some of what Leander pays, similar to Houston Metro's approach.

However, he acknowledged the criticism that no concrete agreement had been reached yet.

Under state law, any city whose voters approve exiting Cap Metro will immediately lose service but still have to pay into Cap Metro until it pays off its remaining share of Cap Metro's debt, which is determined by calculations laid out in the law.

In 2018, Leander generated \$5.1 million per 1% sales tax and owed Cap Metro \$9.3

million if they wanted to exit, which meant they would have had to keep paying for two more years without service.

The Hill Country News and the City requested an updated cost estimate from Cap Metro approximately two weeks ago but no official numbers have been provided yet.

Former Leander Mayor John Cowman addressed the council Thursday, urging them to consider that exiting Cap Metro would mean the City loses a valuable marketing tool that they have leveraged over the years to attract major developments.

He noted Cap Metro had invested in Leander when it had no significant developments and they had used it to create \$1 billion in value via the Transit-Oriented District. He also noted the Northline development's name was built around the assumption the rail would bring a sizable number of people from Austin into Leander once the City built out, notably bypassing the congested highways that hindered travel to the city for years.

Shaw claimed he had spoken with the developer and believes the development will be sustainable in the event of a Cap Metro exit.

Czernek argued Cowman was too close emotionally to see how much it was impacting the current city budget, repeatedly asserting continued membership should be determined by current Leander residents and not just the about 40 people who approved joining in 1985.

However, Leander has already voted in favor of remaining in Cap Metro since that point. In 2000, the issue was put on the ballot and 66.5% of Leander voters approved remaining in the system.

Northline developer and owner Alex Tynberg declined to answer specific questions about whether an exit would adversely impact the project.

However, in a written statement, he expressed hope that the City and Cap Metro could come to an agreement and said the rail helped make a walkable downtown by providing more mobility options to residents.

Based on the council's June 3 discussions, city staff is currently gathering data on what public transit options are available for Leander, what other area cities are spending to contract busing service from Cap Metro and what their comparative staffing levels are for those services.

Notably, the Council has not yet directed city staff to conduct a formal Transit Study, which was estimated to cost at least \$150,000 and take between nine and ten months to complete. Without a formal study, city staff's data will be narrower and won't have long-term projections on the costs and comparative ridership of the different public transit options.

If the Council decides to put the Cap Metro issue on the Nov. ballot, they must approve it by Aug. 16 to meet state deadlines for special elections. The cost of the special election for the City hasn't been determined yet.

McDONALD'S LISD ALL "A" HONOR ROLL - 3RD 9 WEEKS

Akin
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 Averi Alvarez
 Bowie Appelfeller
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 Peyton Blevins
 Cade Carson
 Macy Cassell
 Won Il Chung
 Audrey Clements
 Shreyes Dasi
 Oliver Deicher
 Easton Elkjer
 Mia Elzayat
 Stella Enzor
 Liza Fletcher
 Eva Gardner
 Estella Garibay
 Sophia Glover
 William Graham
 Brynn Grothouse
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 Jordan Hetzel
 Savannah Hill
 Zachary Hullum
 Escosasere Ighile
 Metekaeta Jones
 Myla Jones
 Nolan Jones
 Nidhi Kaja
 Keyaan Kamal
 Sahiti Kanduri
 Luam Kassahun
 Anesh Katta
 Cooper Kennedy
 Hurditya Abhijay
 Koppala
 Rithvik Kunduru
 Grant Lerma
 Bryn Levie
 Aaron Liao
 Iris Mak
 Joshika Mannam
 Andrew Martin
 Isabela Meintrup
 Oliver Messagee
 Paige Mieties
 Laurana
 Mompremier
 Bhumi Murki
 Meha Myadala
 Adina Nall
 Alyssa Pena
 Joshua Petty
 William Pfaff
 Maria Pham
 Harsha Pulakhandam
 Keaton Rebers
 Max Rehberg
 Rhett Rogers
 John Rolofson
 Tenley Russell
 Krozby Sawyer
 Paislie Scott
 William Scott
 Addison Sedtal
 Avishi Singh
 David Skopal
 Audri Spivey
 Quinn Suchomel
 Ava Terbay
 Kaela Thurman
 Natalia
 Valle Mendivil
 Shakti
 Vengadeswaran
 Evann Ware
 Samantha Wells
 Easton Wilks
 Olivia Wood
 Mason Wurster
 Miriam Yonathan

Natalie Vega
 Saul Villarreal
 Bennie Zuniga

Grade 5
 Kathryn Bentley
 Madison Burch
 Annabelle Darling
 Bella Delgado
 Sofia Duarte
 Claudia Fernandez
 Anthony Gonzalez
 Devin
 Keeth-Stephens
 Shreyes Dasi
 Oliver Deicher
 Easton Elkjer
 Mia Elzayat
 Stella Enzor
 Liza Fletcher
 Eva Gardner
 Estella Garibay
 Sophia Glover
 William Graham
 Brynn Grothouse
 Nidish Gudivada
 Jordan Hetzel
 Savannah Hill
 Zachary Hullum
 Escosasere Ighile
 Metekaeta Jones
 Myla Jones
 Nolan Jones
 Nidhi Kaja
 Keyaan Kamal
 Sahiti Kanduri
 Luam Kassahun
 Anesh Katta
 Cooper Kennedy
 Hurditya Abhijay
 Koppala
 Rithvik Kunduru
 Grant Lerma
 Bryn Levie
 Aaron Liao
 Iris Mak
 Joshika Mannam
 Andrew Martin
 Isabela Meintrup
 Oliver Messagee
 Paige Mieties
 Laurana
 Mompremier
 Bhumi Murki
 Meha Myadala
 Adina Nall
 Alyssa Pena
 Joshua Petty
 William Pfaff
 Maria Pham
 Harsha Pulakhandam
 Keaton Rebers
 Max Rehberg
 Rhett Rogers
 John Rolofson
 Tenley Russell
 Krozby Sawyer
 Paislie Scott
 William Scott
 Addison Sedtal
 Avishi Singh
 David Skopal
 Audri Spivey
 Quinn Suchomel
 Ava Terbay
 Kaela Thurman
 Natalia
 Valle Mendivil
 Shakti
 Vengadeswaran
 Evann Ware
 Samantha Wells
 Easton Wilks
 Olivia Wood
 Mason Wurster
 Miriam Yonathan

Audrey Ripple
 Alyssa Rodriguez
 Tashen Samad
 Aiden Sharma
 Cayden Tubb
 Ellis West
 Jai Wester
 Constant Winter

Grade 5
 Ryan Ahuja
 Sadie Arredondo
 Ava Campbell
 Wilder Carlson
 Gabrielle Chouinard
 Ella Collins
 Maya Drachov
 Emma Francis
 Tennyson Gaynor
 Phoebe George
 Lily Hobbs
 Landon Hopkins
 Yunha Hwang
 Elsa Koch
 Jaideep Krothapalli
 Gasmitha Krothapalli
 Andrew Nagel
 Mia Quirke
 Riley Rimmell
 Sydney Sheffield
 Ariel Toebeck
 Kylie Tobias

Cypress
Grade 4
 Fincher Blessing
 Brandon Brown
 Kensington Carter
 Jesse Cuicico
 Rosalie Dekay
 Roger Deleon
 Connor Fear
 Maya Gutschow
 Adrian Hall
 Reece Hebert
 Jenavieve Hurt
 Milo Jacobsen
 Kasey Jamison
 Charles Kane
 Brady Koen
 Hailey Lambert
 Reed Mongenel
 Isabel O'Donoghue
 Morgan Ormiston
 Audrey Renkenberger
 Reese Resendez
 Carson Rucker
 Natalie Seebaldt
 Ethan Staerckel
 Michaela Storms
 Hannah Wang

Grade 5
 August Allick
 Harper Bohnen
 Noah Branch
 Ethan Carlson
 Landry Carter
 Peter Chen
 Lane Cooper
 Nolan Deangelis
 Emerson Derocher
 Vivianne Escobar
 Maxence Famechon
 Ellis Fellin
 Savannah Fernsler
 Sophia Fernsler
 Hayden Friedrich
 Blake Gilkey
 Jack Girardeau
 Taylor Gooden
 Amanda Hamsa
 Troy Hobbs
 Adelyn Hughes
 Lana Johnson
 Jaxon Kane
 Dylan Luebker
 Laurel Miller
 Ella Misura
 Adithya Muthukumar
 Kobe Quintana
 Maksym Rahimov
 Madilyn Ramsey
 Jude Reddy
 Kaitlyn Reynolds
 Adair Rochford
 Piper Roussel
 Drew Sanderson
 Sloane Schwarz
 Ryan Wang
 Aubrie Whitmire
 Katherine Willard
 Bryce Williamson

Chloe
 Halfin Betancourt
 Mia Lopez
 Beauen Reiswig
 Jeremiah Roberts
 Reese Sanford
 Brooklyn Thompson
 Luke Trinen

Grade 5
 Dominic Acevedo
 Kya Eaves
 Emily Flores
 Elyssa Ortiz
 Lilia Reus
 Kira Shepler
 Hannah Smith

Giddens
Grade 4
 Sofia Armenta
 Makayla Carlisle
 Aliviah Christian
 Matthew Duran
 Isabella Kimball
 Tomas
 Martinez Hernandez
 Georgia Maynard
 Jakob Sinclair

Grade 5
 Kennedy Berrian
 Savanna Bryant
 Madoline Chambers
 August Holtrop
 Reese James
 Caleb Jiang
 Lucy Loera
 Mikayla Ramirez
 Nikolas Rathichith
 Sophia Seelbach
 Jack Strub

Knowles
Grade 4
 Brayden Bell
 Isaiah Berger
 Layla Blackmon
 Roman Briceno
 Ethan Burks
 Brianna Contreras
 Lyla Dermanci
 Anthony Greer
 Ahmet Guzel
 Bennett Hagood
 Emma Hall
 Cameron Hollander
 Tatyana Ivanko
 Eva Kramer
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 Hailey Walker
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 Emelyn Winans
 Dylan Wise
 Tyler Womack
 Landon Zwienner

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Grade 4
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 Shubh Ajmera-Shah
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 Molly Barr
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 Stella Neuman
 Crew Nielson
 Cedar Nimety
 Sara Oliver
 Taryn Pietzsch
 Evelyn Pinson
 Ayden Pittman
 Ikshu Prashanth
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 Margaret Reaves
 Max Reisman
 Skylar Reyes
 Nishanth Sai
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 Asher Van Daley
 Mounika Vennavalli
 Ashton Wallace
 Kyndle Warren
 Jameson Webb
 Peter Wheelwright
 Kayla Narup
 Addaly Navarro
 Autumn Newland
 Bella Olson-Sweatt
 Ellis Paulson
 Julia Pechman
 Bella Perez
 Noah Pettit
 Angel Reyes
 Presli Rodriguez
 Geetali Shivashankar
 Aidan Shoup-Vella
 Dylan Siegel
 Connor Tackett
 Brielle Tanis
 Katherine Toney

Eden Mawdsley
 Andrew Miner
 Bryce Moline
 Audrina Patel
 Emily Pham
 Landon Riley
 Davin Ryan
 Vincent Salgado
 Connor Smith
 Hunter Umsted
 Blake Vazquez
 Aleah Whorton
 Bella Williams
 Michael Wood

Naumann
Grade 4
 Olivia Berry
 Yevheni Bondariev
 Harper Chapman
 Carter Christ
 Mary Earley
 Tyler Flenniken
 Sonya Gebhardt
 Isabella Haug
 Haoteng Hsu
 Corban Johnson
 Jewel Joplin
 Rida Lalani
 Elizabeth Lambert
 Taryn Leach
 Marieme Mendy
 Diego Navarro
 Brooklynn Person
 Ryan Pessin
 Charlie Robichaux
 Carson Schubert
 Weston Vavrek
 Catherine Zheng
 Jameson Zwienner

Grade 5
 Sulaiman Ali
 Tyler Beane
 Parker Butler
 Noah Caldwell
 Andrew Campa
 Maiya Casner
 Amelianna Chiti
 Zanfredo Chiti
 Keely Donald
 Helaina Garza
 Anthony Greer
 Ahmet Guzel
 Bennett Hagood
 Emma Hall
 Cameron Hollander
 Tatyana Ivanko
 Eva Kramer
 Blake Kuntz
 Greta Lerche
 Desmond Lin
 Joseph Losurdo
 Daniella Matheny
 Sarah Milanes
 Brandon
 Moreno Martinez
 Owen Orth
 Rushil Pandey
 Lark Powell
 Ala Sanku
 Henry Searle
 Jovie Springer
 Hadley Taylor
 Lily Updegraff
 Hailey Walker
 Dejana Williams
 Lorelei Williston
 Emelyn Winans
 Dylan Wise
 Tyler Womack
 Landon Zwienner

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 Cohen Carlino
 Sofia Caro
 Noah Carpenter
 Loah Cha
 London Chamberlin
 Faith Cole
 Jordan Cooke
 Samyukta Darisipudi
 Erick De La Garza
 Casparis Decker
 Lokesh Dhinesh
 Kourtney Dye
 Sloan Foster
 Brinley Francis
 Ayush Ganta
 Max Gao
 Santiago
 Garcia Rodriguez
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 Srikar Krovvidi
 Ananya Kundala
 Xavier Lane
 Hrishikesh Lenin
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 Aarush Lingam
 Lauren Logan
 Isabella Malnar
 Caleb Meeks
 Easton Muck
 Luke Munoz
 Srinivas Karthik
 Naga
 Tristan Navarro
 Diego Neff
 Maia Newton
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 Ishanvi Palle
 Neha Pinnamaneni
 Zachary Poynter
 Paige Proctor
 Adhrit Pulluri
 Sofia
 Ramos Rodriguez
 Adithya Reddy
 Pranav Remya Manoj
 Aiden Reyes
 Jaron Rodriguez
 Morgan Rutan
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 Philip San Miguel
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 Jayden Stoops
 Steven Stoppenhagen
 Hermione Strucke
 Laney Suman
 Emily Tobon-Umana
 Sam Tracy
 Abel Varnado
 Nitin Sethupathy
 Vijayapandi
 Vaibhav Visvanathan
 Austin Washam
 Kinley Wells
 Dylan White
 Jayden White
 yRyan Williams
 Ethan Wilson
 Soeun Kang
 Evan Yemets
 Hailey Young

Plain
Grade 4
 Riley Archer
 Landon Briggs
 Alyssa Gill
 Jackson Jurells
 Portia Keller
 Jackson Mabry
 Piper Metzger

Grade 5
 Rhys Allen
 Abigail Butler
 Nicholas Goin
 Haeloh Hamilton
 Emma Heckler
 Kyleigh Huntington
 Aurora Lake
 Kennedy Nunnery
 Mae Noi Ojeda
 Mae Rosas
 Hazelee Van Houten

Dante Torres
 Ilyana Torres
 Jada Waldman
 Luke Wallis
 Kinley
 Williamson
 Isabella
 Winstead

Reagan
Grade 4
 Srisamvidha
 Aki
 Nelli Antilla
 Axel Becerra
 Davalos
 Ryan Boze
 Tyler Brode
 Colton Brooks
 Calla Burkhardt
 Liam Cruz
 Bayla
 Cunningham
 Andrew
 Dolajak
 Hollis Eaton
 Yaqeen
 El-Zein
 Kayla Elmer
 Jared Fatigate
 Braeden
 Freeman
 Leo
 Gangatirkar
 Victoria
 Gomez Perez
 Camden
 Harding
 Arham Hassan
 Payton Holley
 Anne
 Homerstad
 Coa Huynh
 Taeli Huynh
 Levin Jeong
 Eleanor Jones
 Jackie Kasprzak
 Harper Key
 Raiyan Khan
 Eunstung Kim
 Chloe King
 Alyssa
 Landman
 Nikki Lefebvre
 Connor
 Letnauchyn
 Gabriel Lopez
 Harper
 Matlock
 Alexis Narine
 Nicolas Ochoa
 Natalie Perdon
 Alison Pham
 Lilianna Reese
 Phoebe Sawyer
 Jessica
 Schneider
 Riaan Shah
 Ainsley Sciotte
 Skyler Skrabanek
 Riley Smith
 Aashna Sunkenapalli
 Garrett Whittlinger
 Brady Wilgoren
 Jackson Young

Grade 5
 Neha Arun
 Rosalie Becvarova
 Olivia Bentley
 Lucas Borges
 Kaye Brutus
 Ekaterina Buiankina
 Caden Case
 Caroline Case
 Alisa Edwards
 Emily Fallahpour
 Griffin Froelich
 Kaden Goldson
 Rex Hauenstein
 Madden Huskerson
 Haris Hussain
 Soeun Kang
 Antareep Koner
 Emma Lee
 Safa Malik
 Charlotte Martindale
 Luca Maya
 Molly McCleskey
 Austin Miller
 Katherine Moore
 Carlos Moreno
 Aivy Nguyen
 Benjamin Pope
 Peyton Pratt
 Andrew Preston
 Humberto
 Rodriguez Alvarez
 Oliver Schafer
 Ella Termosto
 Kendall To
 Andrew Tutdud
 Caris Wells-Barker
 Eliza Wingate
 Harper Wingate
 Barrett Woodruff
 Eliana Yao
 David Young

Rutledge
Grade 4
 Javad Abdullazade
 Inmaculada Aldecoa
 Andrew Allen
 Daniela Amorin
 Eli Anderson
 Rylie Anderson
 Sanchit Balaji
 Brynna Bigon
 Dane Binnicker
 Manuel Bou
 Bryant Bugbee
 Ryder Caruth
 Audrey Cham
 Vaishnavi Das
 Natalie Dominguez
 Caden Drake
 Maria Exposito
 Hafsa Fatima
 Ethan Freels
 Samhith Gollapally
 Azmeer Hashmi
 Alyssa Hendricks
 Asma Humayun
 Sheldon Ip
 Benjamin James
 Yuanshan Jia
 Eymen Kara
 Mridul Karnataka
 Rohan Khanna
 Kian Kim
 Minchae Kim
 William Kim
 Srivarenya Kota
 Ravi Krishnan
 Thival Kularatne
 Luke Lee
 Jacob Lin
 Matthew Livingston
 Kilee Lundell
 Pragma Malliya
 Denis Martynov
 Noah Mubley
 Aprotim Mukherjee
 Kaitlyn Mullen
 Ananya Narvekar
 Alex Nguyen
 Sadie Palomares
 Luca Patrocino
 Diego Pedraza Garcia
 Rafael Ramacciotti
 Ritvik Ravi
 Aiden Rutigata
 Turner Rye
 Ethan Sam
 Yunseo Seo
 Norah Shaik
 Addison Simons
 Alexandra Singh
 Kimi Skrnjog
 Chloe Sohn
 Mateo Spencer
 Emily Timm
 Cash Tipton
 Piper Tripp
 Wyatt Wilde
 Haylee Wu
 Natalie Wu
 Jason Yern
 Wyatt Yook

Grade 5
 Vaishvi Acharya
 Easton Aguirre
 Sarahi Anaya Duran
 Micah Anderson
 Arush Arun
 Braden Bugbee
 Joshua Carmichael
 Jeffrey Chen
 James Gamoneda
 Elisabeth Harrison
 Alex Heter
 Shamel Islam
 Jaicee-Rayne Johnson
 Minseo Kang
 Gabriella Larre
 Emelia Leung
 Henry Mann
 Jaiya Mathur
 Maxwell McCord
 Yash Mehtani
 Tais Meller
 Dominic Molnar
 Sebastian
 Morales Davila
 Jayden Nguyen

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 Nicklaus Kayfes
 Katelyn Kerin
 Riley Smith
 Edith Lopez Jaimes
 Kaitlin Matthews
 Julissa
 Melendez Teran
 Cesar Monreal
 Alexandra-Shae
 Murphy
 Dhruv Patel
 Raymundo
 Paulin Figueroa
 Lucas Phan
 Hunter Phillips
 Robert Rainwater
 Matthew Rajan
 Arnab Rajeev
 Ryan Rehm
 Rebecca
 Rios Morales
 Wyatt Rolfe
 Austin Rutherford
 Aarav Nambiar
 Thilop
 Avery Truong
 Amrit Yadav

Saul Placeres Marines
 Isabel Presas
 Maya Ruseva
 Mateus Santos
 Mina Selcuk
 Evan Selken
 Rohan Sengupta
 Satvik Shukla
 Lauren-Louise Swain
 Leticia Szabo
 Sana Vastani
 Nidhir Vontivillu
 Wynn Wallace
 Owen Zirges

Westside
Grade 4
 Zac Aguilar
 Talia Alderman
 Emma Anderton
 Dean Bahlmann
 Sara Bisbee
 Brier Bradley
 Charles Carter
 William Culp
 Isabella Dupre
 Jett Eisenhour
 Lilah Frankie
 Ava Fritts
 Brooklyn Hailey
 Ridley Hermes
 Henry Kumengi
 Melinda Lengyel
 Lorelei Lopez
 Mallory Massey
 Caleb Morris
 Matthew Muirhead
 Brynlee Nordstrom
 Sarah Prescott
 Waylon Pribbenow
 Mila Reed
 Victoria Ritz
 Denae Rosario
 Myles Schopfer
 Zachary Schram
 Allisha Shea
 Logan Slocum
 Charlotte Swan
 Stella Toon
 Emma Trejo
 Hadley Tullis
 Dylan Vance
 Sherman Watters
 Trevor Wilks
 Evan Zelsnack

Grade 5
 Colton Alderman
 Dawson Anderson
 Vale Andrews
 Raya Bailey
 Connor Boriskin
 Chandler Bruce
 Olivia Case
 Zachary Clifton
 Kellen Cumutt
 Isabelle D'Mello
 Vanessa Davis
 James Decuir
 Zada Denson
 Kilee Edwards
 Aubrey Elizondo
 Chloe Enberg
 Anjali Eswaramoorthi
 Jessica Fernandez
 Aubrie Filippoff
 Allie Garcia
 Julian Gfeller
 Joseph Gorordo
 Linnea Hagen
 Rithanya Jayakumar
 Ome' Jindani
 Ava King
 Aiden Kovaric
 John Mihealsick
 Rhys Nartowicz
 Madison Ong
 Marguerite Park
 Maxwell Peters
 Landon Pierson
 Lillian Pope
 Evelyn Richards
 Ava Joel Ricklefsen
 Tyler Schmidt
 Rebekah Smith
 Olivia Stavrou
 Ethan Swenson
 Elijah Valleu
 Austin Vaughan
 Nicholas Watson
 Lillian Wernecke
 Emry Whittington
 Ava Williams
 Lihl Yaakovi
 Ron Yaakovi

Charlotte Wuescher
 Dylan
 Aguilars-Martinez
 Isabella Arevalo
 Salma Avalos-Mata
 Nushka Bagga
 Madison Bledsoe
 Mischa Castoldi
 Eva Chu
 Emma Fallon
 Logan Foster
 Saxtyn Franks
 Augustus Garcia
 Kevin Garcia James
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 Ellis Glick
 Sofia Gomez
 Reagan Gray
 Mya Harris
 Sophia Hernandez
 Yulimar
 Jaimes-Sanchez
 Nolan Johnson
 Emery Lamm
 Leila Marquez
 Santiago Mata
 Tori Matteson
 Alli McBroom
 Tyler Meadows
 Bella Melendez
 Andres Morales
 Paige Newman
 Megan Ocana
 Presley Ortega
 Syvash Panthi
 Isabelle Paul
 Sally Riddles
 Lauren Rodriguez
 Nathan Rossique
 Austin Shmoys
 Griffin Sisk
 Draco Soto
 Izabella Stempel
 Rocco Triolo
 Josue Zorrilla Ubiara

Winkley
Grade 4
 Devin Bloomer
 Ryder Brown
 Ian Challis
 Lucas Challis
 Peleg Elkayam
 Gwendolyn Gaiennie
 Isabel Gammelgaard
 Emma Gardner
 Murdock Gleeson
 Chloe Hale
 Lauren Hoel
 Trenton Ipson
 Matthew Kinyanjui
 Collins Maxwell
 Luke McFarling
 Elyas Noor
 Eva Oviedo
 Sebastian Oviedo
 Easton Rice
 Christiana Rivera
 Tyler Roberts
 Beau Schreiber
 Finley Shelnut
 Ella Siefert
 Charlotte Sills
 Olivia Strevey
 Brooks Tafreshi
 Jacob Wills

Grade 5
 Jasper Arnold
 Srishti Attelli
 Tatiana Browne
 Ariana Chun
 Journey Coats
 Evelyn Curtis
 Ava Davis
 Aarav Donakanti
 William Duvall
 Kade Edwards
 Skyla Espinoza
 Clara Grant
 Zaiden Le
 Myah Lopez
 Sydney Martin
 Luis Martinez
 Dylan McNabb
 Addison Miquel
 Jackson Montville
 Colton Moorman
 Avery Moore
 Ryder Nelson
 Audrey Nguyen
 Preston Nichols
 Juan Pechan Silva
 Beckham Petty
 Aaron Prater
 Karen Prater
 Olivia Putnam
 Aleza Sahibzada
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PREVIEW: Weds., 6/23/21 AUCTION ENDS: Fri., 6/25/21
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 An inventory of sewing machinery and equipment, furniture, and a great variety of supplies are included in the sale, making it ready to continue operating, once it re-opens under new ownership.
For more information call: 512-267-7993
 Please leave a recorded message and your phone call will be returned as soon as possible.
 • Previously, the shop provided services to a customer base located in Lago Vista, Point Venture, Jonestown, Marble Falls, Cedar Park and Leander.

900 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

950 PUBLIC NOTICES

900 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

950 PUBLIC NOTICES

950 PUBLIC NOTICES

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LEANDER, TEXAS
 ORDINANCE NO. 21-044-00
 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LEANDER, TEXAS, ADOPTING A ONE PERCENT (1%) PERCENTAGE-BASED HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION FROM AD VALOREM TAXES; RATIFICATION OF PRIOR EXEMPTIONS ADOPTED BY THE CITY OF LEANDER; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR A REPEALER; FINDING AND DETERMINING THAT THE MEETING AT WHICH THIS ORDINANCE IS PASSED WAS NOTICED AND IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AS REQUIRED BY LAW.

950 PUBLIC NOTICES

950 PUBLIC NOTICES

950 PUBLIC NOTICES

950 PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO ISSUE CITY OF CEDAR PARK, TEXAS COMBINATION TAX AND REVENUE CERTIFICATES OF OBLIGATION, SERIES 2021

NOTICE is hereby given that it is the intention of the City Council of the City of Cedar Park, Texas to issue Certificates of Obligation (the "Certificates") of the City in one or more series for the purpose of providing funds for paying contractual obligations incurred or to be incurred for: (i) constructing, improving, equipping, renovating and/or expanding City library facilities, including the acquisition of land, and (ii) payment of professional services in connection therewith including legal, engineering, architectural and fiscal fees and the costs of issuing the Certificates. The City Council tentatively proposes to authorize the issuance of the Certificates at its regular meeting place in the City Hall, 450 Cypress Creek Road, Cedar Park, Texas to be commenced at 6:00 p.m., on the 12th day of August, 2021. The City Council presently proposes to provide for the security and payment of the Certificates by a pledge of ad valorem taxes upon all taxable property within the City within the limits allowed by law and from a limited pledge of the City's surplus water and sewer system revenues not to exceed \$1,000.

Due to the ongoing public health concerns regarding the COVID 19 virus, and as may be authorized by Executive Order of the Governor of Texas, such meeting on August 12, 2021 may be conducted via a free public video conference or other lawful electronic means. In such event, information regarding how to access the meeting and public participation in the meeting will be available on the City's website and in the agenda posted no less than 72 hours before the August 12, 2021 meeting at the following internet address: <https://www.cedarparktx.gov/meetings>.

The following information is required pursuant to Texas Local Government Code, Section 271.049(b)(4) to be provided by the City (excludes \$41,960,000 in principal amount of outstanding debt obligations that the City has designated as self-supporting and which the City reasonably expects to pay from revenues sources other than ad valorem taxes; provided, however, that in the event that such self-supporting revenue sources are insufficient to pay debt service, the City is obligated to levy ad valorem taxes to pay such debt obligations): As of June 10, 2021 principal of all outstanding debt obligations of the City is \$169,720,000. As of June 10, 2021 combined principal and interest required to pay all outstanding debt obligations of the City on time and in full is \$219,411,648.74. The maximum principal amount of the Certificates to be authorized is \$8,000,000. The estimated combined principal and interest required to pay the Certificates to be authorized on time and in full is \$10,624,900. The estimated interest rate for the Certificates to be authorized is 3.00%. Such estimates take into account a number of factors, including the issuance schedule, maturity schedule and the expected ratings of the proposed Certificates. Such estimated maximum interest rates is provided as a matter of information, but is not a limitation on the interest rate at which the Certificates, or any series thereof, may be sold. The maximum maturity date of the Certificates to be authorized is February 15, 2041. More information on the specific debt obligations that the City has designated as self-supporting is available upon request to the City at the address noted above.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC POSTING FOR WILLIAMSON COUNTY/HUD CDBG GRANT POSTING OF 2021 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Williamson County has been awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding allocation of \$1,693,040 to successfully support community development and affordable housing efforts for low and moderate-income areas throughout the County. The County will also reallocate \$329,994 from previously funded projects that are now complete or did not utilize funding. In total, the County will allocate \$2,023,034 in the FY21 Annual Action Plan. On June 22, 2021 Williamson County Commissioner's Court approved the proposed projects to be included in the 2021 Annual Action Plan. In accordance with HUD regulations, the County encourages public participation to review and comment on the proposed projects and to review and comment on the FY2019-2023 Consolidated Plan which describes goals, objectives and the types of County activities to be potentially funded over the next five years.

Notice is hereby given that the Williamson County Community Development Block Grant is presenting an updated Citizen Participation Plan.

Direct written comments by July 26, 2021 to the following address:
 Honorable Bill Gravell, County Judge
 710 Main Street
 Georgetown, TX 78626

The proposed plans are available for review from June 24, 2021-July 26, 2021 at the following locations:

- Williamson County Courthouse and Website at www.wilco.org
- City Halls of the following:
 City of Cedar Park
 City of Coupland
 City of Georgetown
 City of Granger
 City of Hutto
 City of Jarrell
 City of Leander
 City of Liberty Hill
 City of Taylor
 City of Weir

A public hearing will be held by the Williamson County CDBG office on Tuesday, July 13, 2021 at 5:00pm at the Williamson County Courthouse located at 710 Main Street, Georgetown, TX 78626. Please use the 8th Street entrance. The purpose of the hearing is to obtain comments regarding the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan.

Williamson County is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Reasonable modifications and equal access to communications will be provided upon request. Please call 512-943-3757 (voice) or Relay Texas at 1-800-735-2989 (TDD) for assistance.

Williamson County also offers, to all non-speaking English persons and upon written request, translated versions of all public documents and public hearing notices. Non-English speaking persons who desire translated public documents or public notices should formally request these items from the Williamson County CDBG Office during normal business hours.

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities and for non-English speaking populations will be made upon request and as appropriate. Call 512-943-3757 or write to the address above to request information, documents, records or accommodations.

Bill Gravell, County Judge

AVISO PÚBLICO DE LA FIJACIÓN DE WILLIAMSON COUNTY / HUD CDBG GRANT DESPLAZAMIENTO DE 2021 PLAN DE ACCIÓN ANUAL AVISO DE AUDIENCIA PÚBLICA

El Condado de Williamson se ha adjudicado un Community Development Block Grant ((CDBG) (Beca de Bloque del Desarrollo de las Comunidad) la asignación de fondos de 1.693.040 dólares para apoyar con éxito el desarrollo de la comunidad y los esfuerzos de vivienda asequible para las zonas de bajos y moderados ingresos en todo el Condado. El Condado reasignará \$ 329,994 de proyectos previamente financiados que ahora están completos o no utilizaron fondos. En total, el Condado asignará \$ 2,023,034 en el Plan de Acción Anual de FY21. El 22 de junio de 2021 la Corte Williamson del Comisionado del Condado aprobó los proyectos propuestos para ser incluidos en el Plan de Acción Anual 2021. De conformidad con las regulaciones de HUD, el Condado fomenta la participación del público a revisar y comentar sobre los proyectos propuestos y para revisar y comentar sobre el Plan Consolidado FY2019 -2023 que describe las metas, los objetivos y los tipos de actividades del Condado para ser potencialmente financiado durante los próximos cinco años.

Por la presente se da aviso de que la Subvención para el Desarrollo Comunitario del Condado de Williamson presenta un Plan de Participación Ciudadana actualizado.

Los comentarios deben ser recibidas antes del 26 de julio de 2021 a la siguiente dirección:
 Honorable Bill Gravell, Juez del Condado
 710 Main Street, Ste 101
 Georgetown, TX 78626

Los planes propuestos están disponibles para revisión del 24 de junio de 2021 al 26 de julio de 2021 en los siguientes lugares:
 Corte del Condado de Williamson y SitioWeb en www.wilco.org
 Ayuntamientos de las siguientes:
 Ciudad de Cedar Park
 Ciudad de Coupland
 Ciudad de Georgetown
 Ciudad de Granger
 Ciudad de Hutto
 Ciudad de Jarrell
 Ciudad de Leander
 Ciudad de Liberty Hill
 Ciudad de Taylor
 Ciudad de Thrall
 Ciudad de Weir

Una audiencia pública se llevará a cabo por la oficina de CDBG del Condado de Williamson el Martes, 13 de julio 2021 a las 5:00 pm en el Palacio de Justicia del Condado de Williamson ubicado en 710 Main Street, Georgetown, TX 78626. Por favor, use la entrada de 8th Street (Calle Ocho). El propósito de la audiencia es para obtener comentarios sobre el Plan Consolidado y el Plan de Acción Anual.

El Condado de Williamson se compromete al cumplimiento de la Ley de Americanos con Discapacidades (ADA) y la Sección 504 del Acta de Rehabilitación de 1973, según enmendada. Modificaciones razonables e igual acceso a comunicaciones se puede proporcionar a petición. Por favor llame a 512-943-3757 (voz) o Relay Texas al 1-800-735-2989 (TDD) para obtener ayuda.

El Condado de Williamson también ofrece, a todas las personas que no hablen inglés y previa solicitud por escrito, versiones traducidas de todos los documentos públicos y avisos de audiencia pública. Las personas que no hablen inglés que deseen documentos públicos traducidos o avisos públicos deben solicitar estos artículos formalmente en la Oficina de CDBG del Condado de Williamson durante el horario comercial normal.

Se realizarán adaptaciones razonables para personas con discapacidades y para poblaciones que no hablen inglés a pedido y según corresponda. Llame al 512-943-3757 o escriba a la dirección de arriba para solicitar información, documentos, registros o adaptaciones.

Bill Gravell, Juez del Condado



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HILL COUNTRY NEWS 512-259-4449

LEGAL

TEXAS TRIBUNE

Texas congressional Democrats propose bill to let local governments expand Medicaid without state consent

By KAREN BROOKS HARPER
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Local governments would be able to bypass conservative state leaders and implement their own Medicaid expansion programs for working poor Texans with federal funds, under federal legislation announced Monday by U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett, D-Austin.

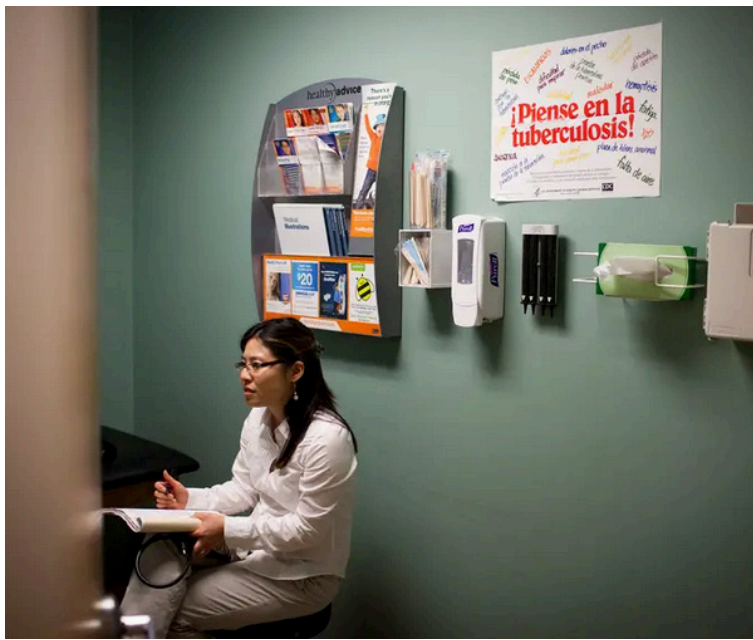
Dubbed the “Cover Outstanding Vulnerable Expansion-Eligible Residents Now Act,” the legislation is a “homegrown solution” to a decade of resistance by a handful of red states to allowing more people who are struggling financially to access the federal health care program, said Doggett, chairman of the House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee and lead sponsor of the bill, which has more than 40 cosponsors.

In Texas, that could be as many as 1 million newly eligible residents — most of them people of color — who currently fall into that gap because they can’t afford private health insurance and can’t qualify for subsidies, but make too much to qualify for Medicaid.

The bill sponsors include all of the Texas congressional Democrats and most Democrats from 12 other states that have refused to expand Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act. It is the first time local governments have been able to directly contract with the federal government for Medicaid funds.

“For many of our most disadvantaged citizens, this bill offers a pathway to access a family physician, necessary medicine, and other essential coverage that thirteen States continue to deny,” Doggett said in a statement. “The COVER Now Act empowers local leaders to assure that the obstructionists at the top can no longer harm the most at-risk living at the bottom.”

The bill allows counties, cities and other political subdivisions to apply directly to the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for funds that were declined by their states, including Texas. States would be required to cooperate and authorize access to state Medicaid systems for those entities, with incentives for cooperation and potential penalties otherwise.



Sonia Wood, a certified pediatric nurse practitioner, is shown treating a patient in 2012 at Carusel Pediatrics in Austin.

That amounts to 100% federal funding for three years and tapering to 90% federal funding by year seven and beyond, Doggett said.

Keep tabs on Texas politics and policy with our morning newsletter, The Brief newsletter.

The bill will be filed later Monday, he said. Other proposals being floated in D.C. include doing the same thing through a federal program or expanding access to the marketplace to lower income people, Doggett said.

“All of these have pros and cons,” he said.

An effort by a bipartisan coalition of state lawmakers to expand Medicaid during the most recent session of the Texas Legislature became mired in conservative opposition and never got a hearing.

Opponents of expanding Medicaid to an estimated 1 million Texans who would qualify under the Affordable Care Act of 2010 argue that the program is poorly managed and financially unsustainable, and that expansion encourages government dependence, delivers poor health outcomes, and crowds out children and people with disabilities who need it the most.

The new federal legislation

would further burden a program that is already “a poorly performing program which leaves millions of low-income and disabled Americans without real access to quality care,” said David Balat, director of the Right on Healthcare initiative at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a conservative think tank.

Balat pointed to several measures that were passed by the Texas Legislature this year, and championed by conservative leaders, that are “strong steps” toward helping the uninsured, would serve more people than would be covered by Medicaid expansion, and don’t threaten funding for other services like education and public safety, he said.

Some of those measures included programs that reduce the cost of some prescription drugs, ease continuity of Medicaid coverage for children, require transparency in medical billing, expand availability of telehealth and broadband services, expand Medicaid coverage for new mothers, and increase insurance plan options through small businesses, agricultural nonprofits and associations, among others.

“Putting millions more people into a struggling program will only further hurt current beneficiaries,

mostly low-income women and children, the elderly and the disabled, and do nothing to address the existing issues of access to care,” he said. “The bottom line is that this is just an effort by some counties and cities to gain access to federal dollars without actually doing anything to help patients.”

A request for comment from Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, who has resisted calls to expand Medicaid, was not immediately answered on Monday morning.

The death of the state legislation left on the table billions of dollars in federal incentives that supporters said would not only have paid for the expansion but added money to state coffers and lowered costs for hospitals that care for large numbers of uninsured patients.

“The lack of access to health care during COVID killed people. It killed people. It decimated their finances, it drove people deeper into poverty. And we’re not talking about poverty that only impacts immediately family at that given time. I’m talking about generational poverty, and on the border, it is most chronic,” said U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar, D-El Paso. “We’ve got to stop hoping they [state leaders] will open their hearts and get off the culture war train, and we’ve got to take care of our people.”

Under Doggett’s proposed COVER Now Act, that money would be directly available to local governments through pilot programs approved by CMS without the state’s involvement.

“Health care coverage is as vital to a community as education, roads, or reliable power,” said Tom Banning, CEO of Texas Academy of Family Physicians, which supports the proposed legislation. “Sadly Texas has stubbornly refused federal assistance to expand Medicaid, leaving millions of our fellow Texans to get their health care by waiting in a long line at a free clinic, ignoring a treatable problem, or using the ER when that treatable problem worsens. That isn’t just morally wrong, its economically dumb.”

With more than 5 million of its residents without coverage, Texas has the largest number of uninsured residents in the nation, many of them working adults who can’t afford private or subsidized insurance but

don’t qualify for Medicaid because they earn too much.

Roughly 20% of the state’s population lacks health insurance — a number health officials say has grown since more than a million Texans lost jobs and, in many cases, health coverage because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some 4.2 million people are on Medicaid in Texas — including more than 3 million children. The rest of the recipients are people with disabilities, pregnant women and parents living below 14% of the federal poverty level, or about \$300 per month for a family of four.

Adults with no disabilities or dependent children don’t qualify for Medicaid, and the vast majority of children on Medicaid have parents who do not qualify.

The ACA allows states to expand that threshold to 138% of the poverty level, or \$3,000 per month for a family of four.

In a University of Texas/Texas Tribune Poll conducted in April, 55% of Texas voters said they support Medicaid expansion, while 26% opposed it and another 20% said they didn’t know or had no opinion. Two recent polls by other groups show that 70% of Texans support Medicaid expansion.

The prospect of Texas leaders pushing for expansion any time soon is dim. None of the state’s top three Republicans has professed support, and their conservative base has been resisting it since the U.S. Supreme Court made it optional for states in 2012; it had been mandatory under the ACA until that provision was challenged in court.

It is unclear how long the federal incentives will be available, supporters of Medicaid expansion say, and there is also the uncertain future of the 1115 waiver, a temporary agreement to reimburse hospitals for uncompensated health care costs. It was meant to help Texas transition to Medicaid expansion before the state chose not to do it.

That waiver is set to expire in 18 months if Texas can’t persuade federal health officials to extend it.

The Texas Tribune is a non-profit, reader-supported news organization focused on statewide legislative and policy issues.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE of property to satisfy landlord’s lien. Sale is at 1:00 p.m. 07/07/2021, www.storage treasures.com. Property will be sold to highest bidder for cash. Cleanup and removal deposit required. Seller reserves right to withdraw property from sale.

Property includes contents of the following units:
Platson - Misc., Shelnut-Furniture
Ferraro - Boxes, clothes. Cameron-Misc, boxes

Contact Pleasant Hill Storage, 10987 E Crystal Falls Pkwy, Leander, TX 78641 512-744-5638

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 at 9am on July 7th, 2021 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 unit of Michael Bush. Items include misc household items including furniture, clothing, and minor appliances.

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

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

CITY OF LEANDER ROADWAY IMPACT FEE STUDY

will be received prior to 3:00 P.M., July 8, 2021 then be publicly acknowledged.

The City of Leander seeks an agreement with a qualified Individual, Firm, or Corporation to create the City’s Roadway Impact Fee study including, but not limited to, Impact Fee Land Use Assumptions, the Impact Fee Capital Improvement Program, the Impact Fee Schedules, and the Impact Fee Ordinance in accordance with the requirements of Texas laws and regulations.

Questions can be directed to the City of Leander Purchasing Department at kwenzel@leandertx.gov or 512-528-2792. Solicitation documents and complete specifications may be downloaded from the City website at <https://bids.leandertx.gov/>.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The City of Leander Planning and Zoning Commission will meet on Thursday, July 8, 2021 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, August 5, 2021 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 21-TOD-Z-001 to amend the current zoning of Interim SFR-1-B (Single-Family Rural) and PUD/TOD-CD (Planned Unit Development/Transit Oriented Development-Conventional Development Sector) to the Monarch PUD (Planned Unit Development) on two (2) parcels of land approximately 49.8 acres ± in size, more particularly described by Williamson Central Appraisal District Parcels R032221 and R032222; and generally located to the northwest with 183A Toll Road and CR 276, Leander, Williamson County, Texas. Applicant/Agent: Nakfoor FM 276 Investing LLC (Bruce Nakfoor) on behalf of MJAG Partnership, Ltd. a Texas Limited Partnership.

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

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ANTIQUES

Indian Artifact Show & Old Coins, Abilene Convention Center, 1100 N. 6th St., Abilene, TX 79601. Show time: 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat., July 10th. Call 979-218-3351.

AUCTION

Guadalupe County/Sheriff’s Annual Surplus Auction, Sat., June 26, 10 a.m., 2605 N. Guadalupe St., Seguin, TX. 10%-12% B.P. View: Fri., June 25, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and sale day 8-10 a.m. Bid live online or on-site. (2) Caterpillar steel wheel rollers, pickups, cars, TV’s, bikes, tools and much more. See website: www.siskauction.com, TXS#7425, John Sisk Auctioneers, Inc., 361-456-7771.

EVENT

Wylie – Bluegrass on Ballard, Sat. June 26. Music 1-9 p.m.; Arts & Crafts 10 a.m.-9 p.m. (WylieTexas.gov); Classic Car Show 4-9 p.m. (pre-register for car show at DiscoverWylie.com). Event will be held in Historic Downtown Wylie on Ballard Avenue. More information at DiscoverWylie.com.

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Kerrville, TX – Grand Opening Land Sale, Sat. & Sun., June 26 & 27. 3 to 10 Acre Homesites. Live and work from home! Nicely wooded homesites, low cost of living, panoramic 30-mile Hill Country views, gated entrance w/ underground electric & internet, situated on the Texas Wine Trail, within 10 min. of shopping/restaurants in Kerrville “Official Capital of Texas Hill Country.” 866-999-6616, ext. 41, LomaVistaRanchTX.com.

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ZACH SMITH/HCN File

As a senior at Rouse, Jared Southard won district MVP, striking out 100 batters in 55 innings pitched.

From Rouse to Texas, Jared Southard continues to grow

By ZACH SMITH
HCN SPORTS EDITOR

Texas pitcher Jared Southard has had a lot to root for this postseason. His high school alma mater Rouse made it to the state tournament for the first time in school history, while the Longhorns advanced to the College World Series for the

37th time in program history. "Having (Texas coach David) Pierce here and the other coaches and guys, it's the best thing for me," Southard said. They all got my back and I always have theirs. Just being here and doing anything I can to win. That's what it's about here, the same as it was at Rouse, just at another level." Southard made the Raiders' varsity

squad as a freshman, but Rouse won just three games all season, ended the year on a 14-game losing streak and didn't win a district game. Rouse made a remarkable turnaround after hiring Chad Krempin in 2017, winning the district title in his first season as

See **SOUTHARD**, page **A12**



Scott W. Coleman

A young supporter holds up a sign after a second-half stoppage time goal during the USA's 2-0 win over Nigeria in an international friendly match on June 16, 2021 in Austin, Texas.

U.S. blanks Nigeria with 2-0 win in first-ever game at Q2 Stadium

By ZACH SMITH
HCN SPORTS EDITOR

Austin has always been a soccer city, but Christen Press made it official on Wednesday night. The U.S. Women's team forward scored the first goal in Q2 Stadium history in front of a sold-out crowd of 20,500 fans as the four-time World Cup champions broke in the \$240 million stadium with a 2-0 win over Nigeria.

"It was a dream playing here," Press said. "It's been so long since we've played in a packed stadium. We missed the fans so much. It was truly special to get a match on this beautiful pitch and play in front of all our fans."

It took until stoppage time in the first half for Press to break through on an assist from Carli Lloyd. Lynn Williams added a second

See **SOCCER**, page **A12**

The Verde explosion

Fans make Austin FC debut at Q2 an 'incredible experience'

By ZACH SMITH
HCN SPORTS EDITOR

The soccer community in Austin and Austin FC majority owner Anthony Precourt had been waiting for professional soccer to arrive ever since Precourt announced his intentions to bring a Major League Soccer team to the city in September 2017.

When Matthew McConaughey walked onto the pitch in a bright green suit with a bongo drum at

Q2 Stadium on Saturday night, it finally did.

"It was an incredible experience," Austin FC head coach Josh Wolff said. "We've been working a long time to get to this day. The way we've been taken in from this community from day one, and certainly that relationship and how it's grown in the last six months — it's impressive."

Austin FC played San Jose to a

See **Q2**, page **A12**



Austin FC supporters during the second half of a Major League Soccer match between Austin FC and the San Jose Earthquakes on June 19, 2021 in Austin, Texas. The match finished a 0-0 draw.

Scott W. Coleman

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The Hill Country News will be closed on **July 2, 2021** in observance of Independence Day.

The deadline for all advertising and editorial copy in the **July 8** edition is **5 p.m.** on **Thursday, July 1.**

Have a safe and happy holiday from *The Hill Country News* staff

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Q2

from page A11

0-0 draw in the first MLS game at Q2 Stadium, but it was the sold-out crowd of 20,738 that truly stole the show.

Just before kickoff, Austin FC supporters unfurled the first tifo — a choreographed display of a colorful banner that normally depicts something important about the city or team.

The first-ever tifo, which was worked on by supporter groups Los Verdes, Austin Anthem and La Murga de Austin, featured McConaughy, Willie Nelson, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Barbara Jordan a Barton Creek Salamander and more.

“We have the best fanbase all

around the league,” midfielder Diego Fagundez said. “It was amazing. When I stepped out right before the game started, I got the chills. It was something special. The whole team was ready for it.”

Fagundez especially has a special relationship with the supporters.

After scoring the first-ever goal in club history on the road against Colorado, he sprinted to the mass of Verde-clad supporters and threw up an ‘LV’ hand sign to signify the Los Verdes supporters group.

“The atmosphere and energy, and their awareness of the game of

when they’re cheering and booing, it was incredible to see,” Wolff said. “I’m proud of the organization and all of those that made today possible.”

Since September 2017, so much has happened to make Q2 Stadium and Austin FC possible.

The fan rallies in front of Austin City Hall started early on, the late-night Council meetings lasted for weeks before a stadium site was approved in August 2018. McConaughy and a few other local investors joined the ownership group in August 2019, and the team broke ground on Q2 in September 2019.

Wolff and sporting director Claudio Reyna were hired in November 2019 and Rodney Redes became the first-ever player signing in June 2020.

Austin FC began its first MLS season in Los Angeles against LAFC and started the year with eight straight road games.

“It’s been such a long road to get to this moment that when you finally walk out of the tunnel and you finally hear the fireworks and the crowd erupt, it was kind of surreal,” forward Jon Gallagher said. “The fact that they were able to sustain that energy, a few of them were probably cramping up with

everything they were doing.”

After a midweek match in Minnesota, Austin FC returns to Q2 to take on defending MLS Cup Champion Columbus Crew SC, the team Precourt previously owned and the one he wanted to move that started this whole process in the first place.

It figures to be another emotional night, but the Verde Wall is sure to be just as loud.

“This is just the beginning,” Fagundez said. “We’re going to make this a place that no one wants to play at. We’re going to make this a fortress.”



ZACH SMITH/HCN File

Round Rock Express third baseman Charles Leblanc (12) rounds the bases after hitting a home run during a Minor League Baseball game between the Round Rock Express and the Oklahoma City Dodgers on Opening Day, May 6, 2021 in Round Rock, Texas. Round Rock won, 6-0.

LEBLANC

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and his teammates. So when the opportunity comes and you’re prepared, you just take advantage of it.”

Growing up, Leblanc’s dad was a big fan of the Montreal Expos, so he was born with a baseball hat on instead of a hockey stick in his hands.

“It wasn’t hockey season, it was baseball season all year long,” he said.

Leblanc said the baseball scene in Quebec is growing, and there are more kids playing baseball there now than ever before. Especially with a lot of young dynamic players to watch with the Toronto Blue Jays, the appreciation for the sport in Canada is high.

He said he doesn’t feel a responsibility to represent the country at the major-league level, but hopes to be able and have an impact on the younger generation and help bring them into baseball.

Leblanc said there hasn’t been a standout moment in his baseball career up to this point. Hopefully, that moment will come soon enough.

“I need to cut down those strikeouts, keep putting the ball in play and playing well on the other side of the ball,” Leblanc said. “As long as I keep doing that, I’m going to be on the right track.”

SOCCER

from page A11

goal for the U.S. Women’s team after a fantastic through ball from Press in stoppage time in the second half.

Wednesday was the first time the U.S. had played in front of a full crowd since March 2020, when it was coming off a World Cup victory and preparing for the Olympics.

“It was electric,” Becky Sauerbrunn said. “It was so amazing. It’s been a long time since I haven’t been able to hear the people yelling five yards away. The stadium is beautiful and Austin definitely delivered.”

Austin FC made its debut at the stadium on Saturday, drawing the San Jose Earthquakes 0-0 in front of 20,738 fans. Austin follows that up by welcoming Columbus Crew SC to Q2 Stadium next Sunday night.

The warmup to the rescheduled Olympics in Tokyo began last week for the U.S. Women’s National Team with wins over Portugal and Jamaica in Houston.

They will play two games against Mexico on July 1 and July 5 before the Tokyo Olympic tournament begins against Sweden on July 21. The U.S. will also face off against New Zealand and Australia in group play at the Olympics.

Between now and the beginning of July, U.S. head coach Vlatko Andonovski will narrow the roster from its current 23 players to the final 18 that will head to the Olympics.

“The confidence level going to the Olympic games is higher than it was before,” Andonovski said. “I feel very good about where we’re at and where the players are at. In terms of making a final decision, I feel pretty good. We have a good knowledge of the players.”

Despite holding nearly 70% of possession in the first half, the United States had a tough time breaking through. Nigeria had a couple of chances late in the first half when a shot went



ZACH SMITH/HCN File

The United States women’s national soccer team celebrates a 2-0 win over Nigeria in an international friendly match on June 16, 2021 in Austin, Texas.

just over the bar, and a free kick from just outside the box dribbled into the hands of U.S. keeper Alyssa Naeher.

Lloyd took one touch to get past a Nigerian defender two minutes into first-half stoppage time, and Press finished with a left-footed shot to the far post.

Late in the second half, with Nigeria pushing forward for an equalizer, Press chipped a perfect ball over the top to Williams, who ran around the Nigeria keeper and passed the ball into the back of the net.

“In terms of atmosphere and crowd, it was brilliant,” Andonovski said. “It was nice to have after 15 months (without full stadiums). It was a good reminder of how much the fans love soccer and how much they love

the U.S. Women’s National Team.”

It’s hard for Press to compare the growth of the U.S. team since the last World Cup as they prepare for another major tournament with high expectations.

The last 15 months have not only seen massive changes for the U.S. Soccer roster, but the world as a whole as the light at the end of the tunnel of the COVID-19 pandemic draws ever closer. It’s put a different perspective on what the Olympics mean.

“We were extremely grateful to be able to play, and play safely and see fans here in Austin,” Press said. “I think this is a tournament where we will be trying to safely reunite as a global community and give the world something to celebrate after a hard year.”

SOUTHARD

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head coach and making the playoffs in the final three years of Southard’s high school career.

Southard was an All-State pitcher and won District MVP in his senior season, striking out 100 batters in 55 innings.

“I don’t think a whole lot of (the turnaround) was me,” Southard said. “You’ve got people that have a certain kind of aura about them that make people better. I get that from the coaches at Rouse. They taught me a little more about how to win and what that takes. I took that to heart and made it into something I do every day.”

Southard said Krempin instilled in him and the Rouse program a different focus on

keeping the right mentality and focusing on the little things.

That helped the Raiders in their historic season this year. They started the year on a 12-game winning streak but struggled during district play and finished fourth. Rouse eliminated three state-ranked teams that won district championships before losing to Hallsville in the state semifinals.

“(Coach Krempin) helped make winning that much more of a priority,” Southard said. “It brought a sense of pride in Rouse. I still feel a tie in that it’s where I came into my own. It’s not always about how perfect you can do everything, it’s about what will you have to win and having pride in the school

you go to.”

The Los Angeles Angels drafted Southard with the 601st overall pick in the 20th round of the MLB draft in June 2019, but he elected to stay committed to the Longhorns.

He’s made 15 appearances in his Texas career and pitched 12.1 innings, allowing two runs on five hits with 22 strikeouts.

“I made the right decision coming here, and I love it,” Southard said. “Having people in your corner is the best feeling. It’s about the people you surround yourself with. If you surround yourself with great minds, and competitiveness and people that win, you’ll become that.”

The College World Series got underway

last weekend, and Texas was one of the hottest teams going into the tournament, outscoring its opponents 49-12 in the Regionals and Super Regionals and winning five straight games.

For Southard, it comes back to coaching. What started at Rouse with Krempin is continuing with Pierce and Troy Tulowitzki at Texas.

“You don’t just wake up one day and think you’re the best, you have to have preparation behind it,” he said. “You have to have work and the right mindset behind it. When you do all those things, you can really believe you’re the best because of all those things you’ve done to back it up.”

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