# HILL COUNTRY NEWS

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SERVING CEDAR PARK, LEANDER AND NORTHWEST AUSTIN SINCE 1968 ■ hillcountrynews.com

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024

**CEDAR PARK CHAMBER SURVEY** 

# **Businesses** positive about future, growth

BY JOSH MONIZ SENIOR REPORTER

A majority of Cedar Park's businesses feel Cedar Park is heading in the right direction and feel they are doing better or the same as they did last year, according to over 300 individuals associated with Cedar Park businesses in a recent business climate survey conducted by the Cedar Park

Chamber of Commerce. The respondents were evenly split - 45% each - between feeling they were doing better than last year or doing just the same

On the other end of the spectrum, only 5% said they were doing worse than last year, and only 10% said Cedar Park was moving in the wrong direction.

An overwhelming majority of respondents said they feel the Chamber is doing a good job advocating for local businesses and supporting its efforts to lobby for more transportation upgrades that will impact Cedar Park and against bills damaging to "Texas' reputation as a 'business-friendly'

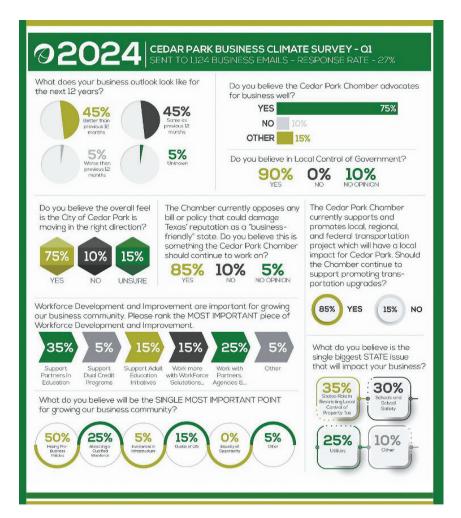
A major new law still hovering over local businesses is the so-called "Death Star bill," named after the planet-destroying space station from "Star Wars" by its critics because they believe it will destroy the entire concept of local control in Texas. Passed by the Texas Legislature last year,

the law eliminates and blocks future passage of any local ordinances by cities or counties that exceed or conflict with laws passed by the Legislature, such as ordinances that would establish a minimum wage, paid parental leave or mandatory water breaks.

The survey found 90% of respondents said they "believe in local control of government' and 35% of them listed state restriction of local control of property taxes as the statewide issue most likely to impact their business - the highest cited statewide issues in the survey.

Additionally, 30% cited school and school safety being the most impactful statewide

See **BUSINESS**, page **A5** 





Construction workers are seen building homes in The Reserve at North Fork subdivision in north Leander on May 23, 2022.

# Texas counties lead the U.S. in population growth, Census says

Texas' four most populous metro areas — Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio and Austin – were among the top 10 metro areas with the biggest population increases from 2022 to 2023.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Vintage 2023 estimates Credit: Chris Essig

Population:

#### BY MADALEINE RUBIN THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Six out of the 10 fastest-growing counties in the U.S. from 2022 to 2023 are in Texas, according to recent estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Kaufman County, just east of Dallas, led the list with a 7.6% increase that brought its population over 185,000, Census data shows. Rockwall and Liberty counties followed closely behind, each with growth bursts of 6.5% and 5.7%, respectively.

Population increases across the southern U.S. were largely due to people relocating from other parts of the country, Census officials said. On average, counties in the

See **CENSUS**, page **A5** 

	Metro area	July 1, 2022	July 1, 2023	Numeric growth
1	Dallas-Fort Worth- Arlington TX	7,947,439	8,100,037	152,598
2	Houston-Pasadena- The Woodlands TX	7,370,464	7,510,253	139,789
3	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell GA	6,238,676	6,307,261	68,585
4	Orlando-Kissimmee- Sanford FL	2,763,017	2,817,933	54,916
5	Tampa-St. Petersburg- Clearwater FL	3,291,341	3,342,963	51,622
6	Charlotte-Concord- Gastonia NC-SC	2,754,657	2,805,115	50,458
7	Austin-Round Rock- San Marcos TX	2,423,170	2,473,275	50,105
8	Phoenix-Mesa- Chandler AZ	5,020,870	5,070,110	49,240
9	San Antonio-New Braunfels TX	2,655,928	2,703,999	48,071
10	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach FL	6,139,812	6,183,199	43,387

# Man sentenced in St. David's parking lot pipe bomb explosion

BY JOSH MONIZ SENIOR REPORTER

A Jonestown man was sentenced to two and a half years in federal prison last Friday in federal court for possessing a pipe bomb that exploded back on Aug. 9, 2023, in his pickup truck while it was in the parking garage at St. David's Hospital in Austin.

Raymond Luke Garner, 39, pleaded guilty back on Oct. 2, 2023, to possessing an unregistered destructive device.

"Garner's use of unregistered and unstable explosive material jeopardized the safety of individuals who may have been near his vehicle," said Special Agent in Charge Aaron Tapp of the FBI's San Antonio Field Office. "We are grateful to our partners at the



**RAYMOND LUKE GARNER** 

ATF, members of our Joint Terrorism Task Force, and the Austin and Cedar Park Police Departments, for their vigilant work to keep our communities safe."

According to court documents, the pipe bomb exploded in the back of Garner's pickup a short time after he parked in the parking garage. Investigators later found the remains of the pipe bomb at the scene, including evidence that the pipe bomb

See **SENTENCING**, page **A3** 

**LEANDER CITY COUNCIL** 

# **Roussel-Methena** challenging incumbent **Thompson for Place 4 seat**

BY JOSH MONIZ SENIOR REPORTER

Leander City Council Place 4 incumbent Na'Cole Thompson, a Leander small business owner, is being challenged by newcomer candidate Monica Roussel-Methena, a rental management business owner and state employee, in the upcoming May 4 municipal elections.

Early voting for these races

starts on April 22. Roussel-Methena did not respond to requests for an interview about her candidacy for this article, and she did not send any written statements. For the last month, the Hill Country News repeatedly tried to contact her via her listed campaign phone, email, social media accounts, and even her mutual contacts.

She is the only candidate running for council this year - and the only Leander candidate in more than a decade - not to participate in an interview about how she will vote on specific issues if

### **CANDIDATES**

elected.

Thompson, owner of Leander Beauty Supply in Leander, is proud of what she and the council accomplished during her first term. In addition to securing progress on new commercial development projects like Home Depot, Southside Market and light industrial developments, she feels she accomplished many of the priorities voters sent her to work on while on the council, including:

See CANDIDATES, page A5

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March 21, 2024

\$1.50







# **State sales tax** revenue totaled \$3.7B in February

### **STAFF REPORTS**

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar's office announced that state sales tax revenue totaled \$3.69 billion in February, up half a percent from February 2023.

'Overall monthly state sales tax collections slightly surpassed those of a year ago," Hegar said. "The trends we have seen recently continued last month, with the sectors that have been slowing continuing to slide and others that have been growing showing persistent strength.

Hotel occupancy taxes rose 38% from last year, the largest increase in a major category, reporting in at \$58 million.

The largest single category, motor vehicle sales and rental taxes, came in at \$586 million

up 8% from a year ago. "Among sectors primarily driven by business spending, remittances from the construction sector continued to grow, while receipts from the manufacturing and wholesale trade sectors were both down from February last year. Receipts from the oil and gas mining sector were modestly up compared with a year ago," Hegar said.

Alcoholic beverage taxes reporting at \$128 million were down 1% percent from February 2023.

"Remittances from the consumer-driven retail trade sector were once again slightly above

year ago totals," Hegar said. "In contrast to last month, collections from most major subsectors within the retail trade grew, the exceptions being remittances from building materials and furniture and home goods stores. Both of those subsectors declined by low double-digits compared with February 2023."

Receipts from electronics and appliance stores saw a large increase compared with a year ago, driven by a better than expected post-holiday shopping season. Remittances from the electronic shopping subsector continued to climb strongly, as growth in online merchandising continued to outpace that of in-

"Receipts from restaurants grew in the mid-single digits and higher than the inflation rate for food away from home."

Oil production taxes were down 7% to \$458 million. Natural gas production taxes were down 39% to \$186 million.

Motor fuel taxes were down 1% to \$302 million.

Total sales tax revenue for the three months ending in February 2024 was up 0.4% compared with the same period a year ago. Sales tax is the largest source of state funding for the state budget, accounting for 57% of all tax

The majority of February sales tax revenue is based on sales made in January and remitted to the agency in February.



Cedar Park City Council members participate in a ribbon cutting for the Anderson Mill Road Phase 2 project last week.

# **Cedar Park celebrates Anderson Mill Road Phase 2 project completion**

### **STAFF REPORTS**

Cedar Park dignitaries were joined last week by design and construction partners Kimley Horn, Binkley Barfield, Cash Construction Company and D.L. Dial and Associates to officially cut the ribbon on an expansion of Anderson Mill Road.

The \$12,756,224 Anderson Mill Road Phase 2 construction project, funded primarily from the voter-approved General Obligation 2022 Bond Program, transformed a section of the heavily traveled Anderson Mill Road between Cypress Creek Road and Whitestone Boulevard (RM 1431).

Improvements included an additional north and southbound lane, right turn lanes, curb, gutter and inlets to improve drainage, improved sidewalks, a pedestrian crossing at Lime Creek Road, a 6-foot sidewalk along the preserve between Zeppelin and Lime Creek and a traffic signal at the Grand Falls intersection.

Mayor Jim Penniman-Morin



Cedar Park Mayor Jim Penniman-Morin speaks at the ribbon cutting for the Anderson Mill Road Phase 2 construction project on March 5.

said "The Anderson Mill Road Phase 2 project enhances mobility in Cedar Park. It adds capacity to a major north-south arterial and completes road widening between RM 620 and RM 1431 and the addition of a traffic light and pedestrian crossing are in



An intersection between Anderson Mill Road and Quiet Moon Trail in Cedar Park, which was the site of a ribbon cutting for the Anderson Mill Road Phase 2 construction project.

keeping with the Council's and City's greater vision for safety and multi-modal mobility set out in our Mobility Master Plan."

Project construction began in January 2023 and was completed in February 2024 on time and under budget.



From left: Keith Geer (Wilco Park Operations Manager), Geri Bischoff (TETRA, Past President), Russell Fishbeck (Wilco Parks Director), Rick Haley (RRCP Maintenance Technician), Robert Moss (RCCP Park Supervisor), Bill Corbett (Sun City Hiking Club), Richard Powe (RRCP Park Maintenance Technician), Carissa Anderson (RRCP Park Maintenance Technician), Debra Sannwaldt (TETRA, Secretary), Don Shawhan (Sun City

# **River Ranch County Park** receives TETRA Award

The Texas Equestrian Trail Riders Association has awarded Williamson County's River Ranch County Park the Ned Granger Award in appreciation for providing outstanding facilities for the equestrian public.

The Texas Equestrian Trail Riders Association (TETRA) is a statewide non-profit organization that partners with public land managers for the betterment of equestrian opportunities and facilities throughout its twelve districts across Texas. Ned Granger, whom the award was named for. worked to promote and develop trails and equestrian campsites on public lands. Maintaining a

strong link between Texas history and equestrians played a major role in his efforts.

River Ranch County Park has 16 miles of equestrian trails throughout its more than 1,300 acres. The equestrian area includes parking for horse trailers, conveniently located hitching posts and water troughs. Before visiting the park, guests who intend to ride horseback should review the Horse Riders Guide to River Ranch County Park brochure and submit the required Equine Release form.

To learn more about River Ranch County Park visit wilcotx.

# WCRAS assists with multiple cruelty cases, asks for support from community

### STAFF REPORTS

The Williamson County Regional Animal Shelter is currently caring for animals from three separate cruelty cases, all of whom are in need of elevated care due to their conditions.

There are multiple species involved in these cases, and some of the conditions seen are emaciation, loss of fur, tumors, and severe undersocialization. All of the animals will need to remain at the shelter for the duration of their court cases, making space for the remaining shelter animals

harder to come by. "The shelter is here to care for those animals with the greatest needs," Misty Valenta, animal services director, said, "and these animals most certainly fall into that category. We hope the community can help us help them by adopting, fostering, or donating.

The shelter is asking the community to help by adopting or



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

fostering a medium-to-large dog, like Parker.

Parker arrived at the shelter in the recent past, in need of elevated care. Her eye was severely injured, and she was in pain and afraid, not understanding that staff wanted only to help her. Her eye needed to be removed, and once that was healed up, Parker quickly realized she was in safe hands. She's now one of the dogs waiting for a loving new home. Adopting or fostering Parker is just one way that the community

can help - by making room for

these new dogs. Donations to the shelter's medical fund, known as Jane's Fund, will also be needed to help get the animals involved in the cruelty cases the elevated care they need.

Fosters who can assist in this way are invited to come to the shelter where the animal care staff will help find a dog suitable for that family's lifestyle. Adoptions are just \$3 for all dogs 30 pounds and over, and all adoption fees include the pet's spay or neuter surgery, age-appropriate vaccinations, a microchip the shelter will register for you, and a voucher towards a wellness exam with a participating veterinary

clinic. To donate and to preview adoptable animals, go to the shelter's website, wilcotx.gov/pets. Appointments are available by emailing adoption@wilco.org, to save wait time. Walk-ins are also welcome daily from 12-6 p.m.

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8

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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!

### **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.



# **Court upholds law requiring minors** get parental consent for contraception

A three-judge panel in New Orleans ruled that a Texas law requiring minors to obtain parental consent to obtain birth control does not conflict with the goals of the federally-funded Title X program, which has given teens birth control confidentially.

### BY POOJA SALHOTRA

THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a Texas law requiring parental consent to obtain contraception for

The decision from a three-judge panel of the federal appeals court in New Orleans largely affirms a 2022 ruling from U.S. District Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk in Amarillo, that ended one of the only avenues for Texas teens to confidentially obtain birth control, through federally funded family planning clinics. Since 1970, the federal Title X program has provided free contraception to anyone regardless of age, income or immigration status.

The 5th Circuit panel, which heard the case last year, found parental consent required for minors' medical treatment under the Texas Family Code does not conflict with federal law that allows U.S. teens to obtain contraception confidentially at federally-funded family planning clinics.

"Moreover, Title X's goal (encouraging family participation in teens' receiving family planning services) is not undermined by Texas's goal (empowering parents to consent to their teen's receiving contraceptives)," wrote Judge Stuart Kyle Duncan. "To the contrary, the two laws reinforce each other."

The decision, from Duncan and Circuit Judges Priscilla Richman and Catharina Haynes, mostly affirms the findings by Kacsmaryk, who ruled that the Title X program violates parents' rights and state and federal law. Texas law requires minors to get parental permission before obtaining medical treatment but Title X clinics were previously exempt from that law.

The case was filed by Jonathan Mitchell, a former Texas solicitor general, the legal architect behind the 2021 Texas law that banned abortion after the sixth week of pregnancy.

Mitchell represented Alexander eanda, an Amarillo father who said he raised his three minor daughters in accordance with his Christian beliefs to abstain from premarital sex. Although Deanda didn't show that his daughters obtained birth control without his consent, he still argued that the program

violated his rights as a parent in Texas. Under Title X, clinics are to "encourage family participation...to the extent



The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals largely affirmed a 2022 U.S. District Court ruling that ended one of the only avenues for Texas teens to confidentially obtain birth control, through federally funded family planning

practical." Federal courts have repeatedly held that clinics cannot require parental consent.

U.S. Department of Justice attorneys had argued in 2022 and again last year in New Orleans that Deanda had no standing to bring the case forward. The three-judge panel ruled Deanda did have standing because the program prevents him from exercising his parental rights to consent to his child's medical care.

The three-judge panel did reverse part of Kacsmaryk's ruling. The district judge had struck down a regulation that barred Title X-funded groups from notifying parents or obtaining consent. The 5th Circuit said it was too soon to rule on the new regulation.

Every Body Texas is the nonprofit that administers the Title X grant in Texas. Since 2022, the group has advised its 156 clinics in Texas to require parental consent for minors "out of an abundance of caution" as it awaits further guidance from the federal

The Texas Title X administrator filed an amicus brief in the case before the 5th Circuit. On Wednesday, the group issued a statement, pointing out the mixed ruling from the 5th Circuit was "not a clear statement on whether minors in Texas can legally access confidential contraceptive care without parental consent in Title X clinics" or whether the clinics must continue to comply with Texas state parental consent law.

For now, Every Body Texas believes its clinics should continue operating as they had after Kascmaryk's ruling, by requiring parental consent for minors seeking hirth control, as the group consults with the federal government as to how to proceed.

"While we agree with the court's decision to keep in place the 2021 Title X rule that prohibits clinics from requiring parental consent, we remain concerned that the ambiguity of the ruling continues to impose barriers for young people in Texas who are trying

to access birth control." said Stephanie LeBleu, Title X Project Director.

"Minors have been unable to access confidential contraceptive care in our network of Title X clinics for more than a year," said LeBleu. "Title X encourages young people to involve a parent or guardian in their healthcare decision-making. However, not all teens have a trusted adult with whom they can have those important conversations, and they turn to their healthcare provider for confidential care."

Last Wednesday, they had little comment about the ruling issued the previous day.

"We are currently working to understand the full implications of the opinion from the 5th circuit today," Mimi Garcia, spokesperson for Every Body Texas, said in a statement. "We continue to operate under previous guidance at this time."

DOJ attorneys also declined to comment on the ruling or appeal plans.

The decision could have ripple effects across the country if other states adopt similar parental consent policies, said Lucie Arvallo, executive director of Jane's Due Process, an organization that helps young people access abortions and contraceptives.

"We know from over two decades of working with teens that young people will frequently include parents in their reproductive health care decisions, but for some, parental involvement and legal decisions like this one are insurmountable barriers," Arvallo said. "Teens should be able to access birth control, no matter their circumstances or where they live."

Arvallo added that abortion rights groups will likely be hesitant to appeal the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, which in 2022 revoked a constitutional right to abortion. She said a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that affirms the 5th Circuit's decision could decimate teen access to birth control nationwide.

-- Reporter Neelam Bohra contributed to this story.

### CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

### Texas counties among fastest growing in U.S.

Recent estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that six of the 10 fastest-growing counties in the United States from 2022 to 2023 were in Texas. According to the Texas Tribune, Kaufman County, just east of Dallas, led the list with a 7.6% increase in new residents that brought its population to more than 185,000. Census data shows that Rockwall and Liberty counties closed out the top three, with growth rates of 6.5% and 5.7%, respectively.

Also in the top 10 with the largest residential growth rates are Chambers, Comal and Ellis counties. All 10 of the fastest-growing counties are in the South, Census officials said, and are due to people relocating from other parts of the country.

"Domestic migration patterns are changing, and the impact on counties is especially evident," said Lauren Bowers, chief of the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Branch.

Texas also holds eight of the 10 counties that added the most residents from 2022 to 2023, with Harris, Collin and Montgomery counties leading nationwide. Harris County added 53,788 residents, more than any other county in the U.S.

### Major wildfires nearly contained

The largest wildfire in Texas history is 89% contained as of Sunday, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service, after burning more than a million acres. The Smokehouse Creek fire in Hutchinson County is one of two active wildfires in the state. The only other wildfire not contained is the Windy Deuce Fire in Moore County, 94% contained and consuming 144,045 acres.

There are currently 70 counties with burn bans in place. The U.S. Small Business Administration has approved Gov. Greg Abbott's disaster declaration request for the following Panhandle counties: Armstrong, Carson, Donley, Gray, Hansford, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman and Wheeler.

"These disaster declarations will help Texans in communities affected by the Smokehouse Creek and Windy Deuce wildfires receive critical financial assistance they need as they continue to recover and rebuild," Abbott said.

Applications can be downloaded at sba.gov/disaster.

### Texas challenges federal methane rule

The state is challenging a tougher methane emissions rule recently put in place by the Environmental Protection Agency through a lawsuit filed by the Texas attorney general's office last week. The regulations force oil and gas companies to reduce emissions in the next two years.

Texas oil and gas operators emit more methane than any other state, according to the EPA. A report in the Houston Chronicle said the program would reduce negative climate impacts and improve health, saving up to \$7.6 billion annually through 2038.

The Texas Railroad Commission claims the rule is detrimental to the oil and gas industry, and maintains the industry has made great strides to reduce emissions.

"Texas is taking action against the federal govrnment's egregious overreach," said RRC Chairma Christi Craddick. "The latest attack on oil and gas is nothing more than an attempt to shut down the industry that creates hundreds of thousands of jobs, funds one-third of our state's economy, and produces clean and reliable energy for the world."

### Court: Minors need parental consent for contraceptives

A federal appellate court upheld a state law requiring parental consent for minor seeking access to birth control, the Austin American-Statesman reported. The ruling partially upholds a late 2022 ruling that blocked federally funded clinics from providing contraceptives to teens without proof of parental consent.

Teens have the right to access confidential contraception services at Title X clinics under a program established in 1970. A lawsuit filed in 2022 challenged the Title X regulation, arguing it violates state law and infringes on parental rights.

"Minors have been unable to access confidential contraceptive care in our network of Title X clinics for more than a year," Stephanie LeBleu, a project director at Every Body, a nonprofit that administers federal funds to more than 150 Title X clinics across the state, said in a news release.

### Paxton, Cornyn still exchanging barbs

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is possibly considering a run against incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn following a streak of successes in ousting Republican House incumbents in the March primary, The Dallas Morning News reported. Paxton has repeatedly attacked Cornyn, up for reelection in 2026, as being too moderate.

"Super Tuesday showed there is a large base of Paxton-friendly voters who not only admire him but want his kind of unapologetic aggressive conservatism in the United States Senate, said conservative radio talk show host Mark Davis.

The two have clashed several times on social media. When Cornyn announced he would run to replace Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, as the Republican leader in the Senate, Paxton posted on X, formerly Twitter, "Republicans deserve better in their next leader and Texans deserve another conservative senator."

Cornyn replied, "Hard to run from prison, Ken." Paxton faces a trial this spring for securities fraud and is under federal investigation for his ties to a since-indicted real estate investor.

### **Third anniversary of Operation Lone Star**

Operation Lone Star, the state's border initiative, recently marked its third anniversary. According to Abbott's office, the multi-agency effort has led to apprehension of more than a half-million people believed to be here illegally. More than 36,100 felony charges have been filed and more than 100,000 migrants have been transported to other cities, the governor's office said. In addition, more than 469 million doses of fentanyl have been seized during that three-year period.

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.

### SENTENCING

from page A1

had contained a homemade high explosive, circuit boards/timers and electric matches.

While detained by police, Garner contacted another individual to ask that person to move a box out of Garner's home, according to court records, and law enforcement later recovered the box, finding it contained high explosives, precursor chemicals and electric matches. Police searches at other locations revealed a recipe for the high explosive, remote control devices and other components for destructive

The Cedar Park Police Department, along with the FBI and Austin Police Department (APD) Bomb Squad, also investigated the Cypress Garden apartment complex located at 335 Cypress Creek Road on Aug. 10, 2023. They temporarily evacuated nearby residents out of caution after finding "an object at the scene."

Public records show Garner previously had the apartment complex as an address, and police interviewed the unnamed individual on Aug. 10. But it has still not been confirmed whether the investigated apartment had any direct connection to either man listed in the court records. However, the Austin Police Department did previously confirm the apartment and explosion investigations are related to each other.



#### · 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. Meetings are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register.

### • LEANDER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT LEANDERISD.ORG

Leander ISD Board of Trustees meet the second and fourth Thursday each month at Concordia University, 11400 Concordia University Drive in Austin. (Meeting Room: Incubator CTX located in Building B) at 6:15 p.m. Meetings are open to the public. If you wish to speak, arrive early and register. Agendas, board meeting packets and a live stream

### are 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

### · 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.

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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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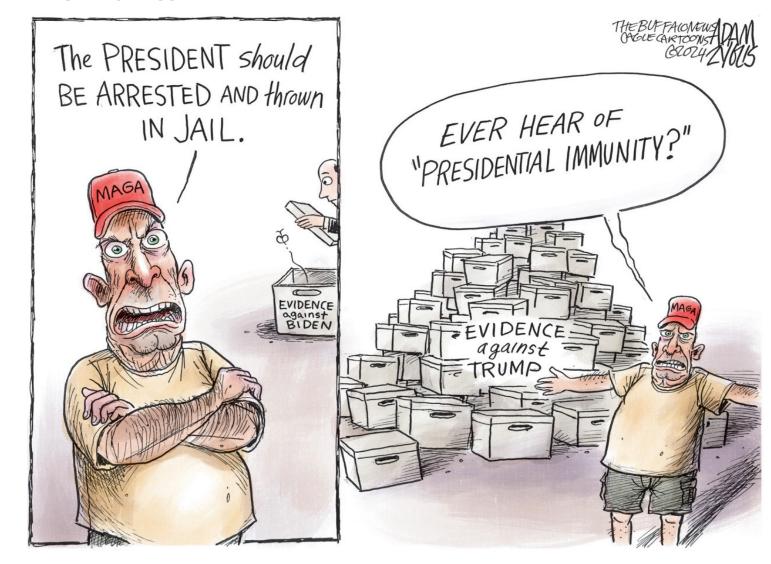
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#### **EDITORIAL CARTOON**



# More for them, less for us

Tesla, Ford, Netflix, and T-Mobile are among scores of profitable U.S. firms that pay their top executives more than they pay in federal taxes.

# BY SARAH ANDERSON, WILLIAM RICE AND ZACHARY TASHMAN

n his State of the Union address, President Biden called out "massive executive pay" and vowed to "make big corporations and the very wealthy finally pay their share" of

Corporate tax dodging and CEO pay have gotten so out of control that many major U.S. companies are paying their top executives more than they're paying Uncle Sam.

Tesla is perhaps the most dramatic example. Over the period 2018-2022, the electric car maker raked in \$4.4 billion in profits but paid no federal income taxes. Meanwhile, Tesla CEO Elon Musk became one of the world's richest men.

When it comes to fleecing taxpayers while overpaying executives, Tesla is hardly alone. A new report we co-authored for the Institute for Policy Studies and Americans for Tax Fairness analyzes executive pay data for some of the country's most notorious corporate tax dodgers.

What did we find? In addition to Tesla, 34 other large and profitable U.S. firms - including household names like Ford, Netflix, and T-Mobile — paid less in federal income taxes between 2018 and 2022 than they paid their



SARAH **ANDERSON** 

**GUEST COLUMNIST** 

top five executives.

Another 29 profitable corporations paid their top executives more than they paid Uncle Sam in at least two of the five years of the study One company on our list stands out for

the infamous role its executives played in the 2008 financial crisis: American International Group. Back then, the insurance giant ignited a firestorm by pocketing a \$180 billion taxpayer bailout and then announcing plans to hand out \$165 million in bonuses to the very same executives responsible for pushing the compa-– and the nation — to the brink of collapse. Today, AIG is playing the same greedy

game of overpaying its top brass and sticking taxpayers with the bill. Between 2018 and 2022, the company paid its top five executives more than it paid in federal income taxes, despite collecting \$17.7 billion in U.S. profits. In 2022, CEO Peter Zaffino alone made \$75 million.

Lavish executive compensation packages and skimpy corporate tax payments are not unrelated. Executives have a huge personal incentive to hire armies of lobbyists to push for corporate tax cuts because the windfalls from these cuts often wind up in their own pockets.

The 2017 Republican tax law slashed the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent and failed to close loopholes that whittle down IRS bills even further. Many large, profitable corporations ended up paying no federal taxes at all.

Corporations took the savings from those tax cuts and spent a record-breaking \$1 trillion on stock buybacks, a financial maneuver that artificially inflates the value of executives' stock-based pay.

Wealthy executives became even wealthier while the nation lost billions of dollars in corporate revenue that could have been used to lower costs and improve services for ordinary people. Until this self-reinforcing cycle is broken, we'll have a corporate tax and compensation system that works for top executives and no one else.

What can we do to break this cycle? Congress can tackle the entwined problems of inadequate corporate tax payments and excess executive pay on several fronts. Raising the corporate tax rate to 28 percent (just halfway back to Obama-era levels) would generate \$1.3 trillion in new revenue over the next decade.

Congress must also close loopholes and eliminate wasteful tax breaks, for instance by removing the incentives for American firms to shift profits and production offshore

Policymakers also have a wealth of tools to curb excessive executive pay, from tax and contracting reforms to stronger regulations to rein in stock buybacks and banker bonuses.

We know we need change when corporations are rewarding a handful of top executives more than they are contributing to the cost of public services needed for our economy to

> Sarah Anderson directs the Global Economy Project and co-edits Inequality.org at the Institute for Policy Studies. William Rice is a senior writer and Zachary Tashman is a Senior Research and Policy Associate at Americans for Tax Fairness.

COMMENTARY

# Texas off base to go after Catholic halfway house

**7**hen Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro engaged in a legal battle with the Little Sisters of the Poor over their refusal to subsidize birth control for their employees, I got very angry.

As a Catholic who takes her faith very seriously and an asylum lawyer who knows a little something about religious persecution, it seemed to me that the then-attorney general was violating the rights of some women who just wanted to be left alone to serve God's

Of course, there are those who will disagree and believe that Shapiro was fighting to preserve the civil rights of those female employees who, for whatever reason, refused to buy their own birth control, but it's clear that going after nuns is not a good look.

I thought I'd seen the last of that kind of chicanery from a state official, but last week brought another example of what I truly believe is anti-Catholic bigotry.

The irony is that this time it's a Republican attorney general from Texas acting under orders from a Republican governor from Texas.

Bigotry and illegality are, apparently, We all know that Greg Abbott is waging his

own war against the tide of illegal immigration that is making life unlivable at the southern border. He's tried to use constitutional arguments to support his claim that he can interfere with the federal jurisdiction over

As a lawyer, I have to give him credit for his ingenuity. Also, as a lawyer, I have to say he's completely off base on that one.

And now there's something else he's wrong about. On Feb. 20, Attorney General Ken Paxton, the one they couldn't impeach, has decided to go after Annunciation House, a private organization that acts as a halfway



**CHRISTINE FLOWERS** 

**GUEST COLUMNIST** 

house and temporary shelter for people who have crossed the border.

It was founded in 1978 by a few young Catholics in the El Paso Diocese who, ironically enough, wanted to help what was then called INS to deal with the human crisis at the border.

Back then it wasn't as serious as it is today and involved mostly single Mexican men instead of entire families from Central and South America, but there was a need to provide some humanitarian aid to the surge of human cargo.

But Paxton has decided to redefine these unpaid workers as human smugglers.

According to Paxton, "Annunciation House knows that at least some of the aliens it provides services to are present illegally and are trying to avoid Border Patrol ... Annunciation House's transportation of those aliens presents a very significant likelihood of human smuggling.

It's a bit disingenuous for Paxton to accuse this shelter of human smuggling. While the Texas law that prohibits human smuggling does include acts involving the transportation of undocumented aliens across the border and within the state itself, he would then have to charge his own governor with human smuggling in order to be consistent with the word of the law.

Remember when Abbott was buying bus tickets to send aliens to Northeastern cities

like New York, Boston and Philadelphia?

smuggling.

Under the letter of the law, that is also human

What Annunciation House is doing is not illegal. It's Catholic and Christian. It provides temporary shelter, food, clothing and medical care to people who are in need of it.

I am actually more offended by this attack on Annunciation House after having visited a similar facility outside of McAllen, Texas, last year. I spent an afternoon reading books to little girls from Venezuela, Brazil and Colombia, braiding their hair, and drawing pictures with them.

In a couple of days, they and their parents would be on a bus to meet with their sponsors in the United States, usually family.

I also attended a Mass in a large gymnasium and helped a frantic father search for his missing toddler, who it turns out was hanging out with a nun.

Come to think of it, I suppose I was involved in human smuggling too. I'm more than ready for my mug shot.

I think it is a dangerous and counterproductive thing to go after religious organizations that are operating within the law and are fulfilling their spiritual mission.

Paxton can try and paint Annunciation House and places like it as centers of human trafficking, gang members, drug smugglers and all other sorts of undesirables, but the truth is that they are simply a small, humane attempt to deal with one aspect of a larger, complicated crisis.

I am in full support of laws that will stop this overflow of humanity at the border, but attacking people of faith is a despicable and ineffective way of doing that.

So, until I see Abbott's mug shot on Fox News, I will condemn the ridiculous assault on my church and its mission.

> Christine Flowers is a Philadelphiabased attorney and nationally-syndicated conservative columnist.

# Austin seeking federal boost to support airport-area trail

### **STAFF REPORTS**

Austin may receive up to \$25 million to transform a stretch of abandoned urban railway into a 6.5-mile trail system. The Bergstrom Spur Trail Network would connect parks, neighborhoods and establish pedestrian and bike connectivity in a recreationally underserved area of South Austin. The city applied for funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program.

The trail is planned in a high-density, low-income and park-deficient area, according to city officials. Currently in the design phase, federal funding would allow construction to "begin promptly" if federal support is

In addition to potentially extending to Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, the trail would provide safe east-west pedestrian and bike connectivity where none currently exists. It would also add key transit connections, including the South Congress Transit Center, 11 existing Capital Metro Local bus routes, a future Capital Metro Rapid bus route and the upcoming Project Connect Light Rail line on Riverside Drive.

Individual awards can tap the program up to \$25 million. Austin will contribute \$6.25 million in city funds drawn from the Urban Trails fund sourced by a \$460 million 2020 Mobility Bond approved by voters. Completion of the project "will provide more ways for people in a historically underserved area to safely access transit, schools, employment centers, and other key destinations," according to the city.

Backed by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the RAISE discretionary grant program will provide \$1.5 billion annually -split exactly between urban and rural areas- for Fiscal Years 2024-26. Designed to support the completion of critical freight and passenger transportation infrastructure, RAISE supported 162 projects nationwide, in addition to Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands. Awardees for the latest round of funding will be announced no later than June 27.

National projects that have received RAISE grants include New Orleans' downtown transit center, reconstructing South Dakota's Route 6 on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation and redeveloping a 2.5-mile stretch of road to reconnect historic neighborhoods in Birmingham, Alabama.



A Southwest Airlines flight lands at Austin Bergstrom

International Airport on July 13, 2023. The City of Austin announced that a stretch of abandoned urban railway may be converted into a 6.5-mile trail system that would provide pedestrian and bike connectivity where none currently exists, also adding key transit connections to

### **BUSINESS**

from page A1

issue, followed by 25% citing utilities as the biggest issue and 10% citing all other issues under the "Other" category.

Lastly, the survey noted the importance of workforce development and improvement for growing the local business community. When indicating the workforce development priority most important to them, the respondents' answers included:

- 35% who cited supporting partnerships in education.
- 25% who cited working with partners, agencies and others to support a competitive workforce,
- ullet 15% who cited supporting education
- 15% who cited working more with Workforce Solutions, SCORE and other organizations,
- 5% who cited supporting dual credit programs; and
- 5% who cited items under the "Other" category.

## CENSUS

from page A1

South experienced faster growth in 2023 than in 2022.

"Domestic migration patterns are changing, and the impact on counties is especially evident," said Lauren Bowers, chief of the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Branch, in a Thursday state-

#### **BIG COUNTIES SEE MAJOR POPULATION INCREASES**

Texas also holds eight out of the ten counties across the country that added the most residents from 2022 to 2023. Harris, Collin and Montgomery counties led the pack.

Harris County added 53,788 residents, more than any other county in the U.S. With nearly 5 million total residents, it's now the third most populous county in the country. Harris also saw the second-highest gains from international migration of all counties nationwide.

Collin, Denton and Tarrant counties in the Dallas-Fort Worth area also had significant gains, bringing in tens of thousands of new people. Denton is now the seventh county in Texas to surpass 1 million residents.

Notably, Dallas County didn't make the Census' top ten list.

Growth in the state's major counties boosted Texas' overall population. The state grew more than any other in the country in 2023, by nearly half a million people, according to earlier Census

### **TEXAS' CITIES ARE BOOMING**

Texas' four most populous metro areas — Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio and Austin — were among the top 10 metro areas with the biggest population increases from 2022 to 2023.

The greater Dallas area saw the highest jump. It added 152,598 residents, bringing its total population over 8 million. The greater Houston area followed closely behind, adding 139,789 over the same period. Its total population is now over 7.5 million residents.

Nearly 70% of Texas residents live in the state's four largest metro areas, according to estimates from the Texas Demographic Center.

But the Midland metro area grew more rapidly than any of them. From 2022 to 2023, Midland's population increased by nearly 3% — making it the seventh fastest-growing metro area in the

Midland is part of the Permian Basin, the highest-producing oil field in the U.S., and is home to much of Texas' oil and gas production.

Tracee Bentley, CEO of Permian Strategic Partnership — a collaboration between Permian Basin communities and oil and gas companies — said job growth in the energy sector could be driving population increases in Midland.

The nature of the jobs that you're seeing in the oil and gas space are attracting some of the younger professionals who want to come here," Bentley said.

Overall, more U.S. counties saw population gains than losses in 2023, but the South saw faster growth than much of the rest of the country, according to Census

### **CANDIDATES**

from page A1

• making progress on Leander's water infrastructure by funding and completing eight water-related projects plus funding and starting critical expansion projects for Leander's two water sources - the Brushy



**NACOLE THOMPSON** 



**MONICA ROUSSEL-METHENA** 

Creek Regional Utility Authority (BCRUA) water plant and the Sandy Creek Water Treatment

 starting the work to finally begin construction this summer on the long-stalled Leander Senior Center,

• securing an Interlocal Agreement with the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CapMetro) system that returns millions of dollars annually to Leander for infrastructure projects,

 completing traffic signal projects at some of the city's busiest intersections; and

· leading the charge in creating new community events - the City of Leander now annu-

ally celebrates MLK Day and Juneteenth, a community safety forum after the Uvalde school shooting and an annual Citizens University where citizens learn about city "When it comes to reelecting our city

council, you should think about the work that has already been done (since 2021) and the things that have been put in place," Thompson said. "We have work we need to do. We need to keep it going in the right direction and not get turned around or stalled as things were previously (on the council).'

Thompson also serves as Leander's representative on the boards for the BCRUA and the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG). She also serves on the boards for the Leander Educational Excellence Foundation, the Leander Black Business Alliance and the nonprofit Kids Helping Kids of Texas.

She is running on finishing the work on Leander's long-term water planning projects, creating a centralized city resource to connect residents with locally available resources, increasing support for small business programming and funding and continuing to support Leander's public safety departments so it can expand enough to meet Leander's future buildout size of over 230,000 people.

With connecting residents to resources, Thompson wants a single, centralized city resource that residents can use to help them find resources they may not realize are already available in Leander or through the county, such as mental health services or other general purpose services that help them maintain their quality of life. She points to how the Leander Police Department has already had success with a similar approach of providing mental health and grief resources during their interactions with residents.

With public safety, she argues the city needs to eventually hire more staff and build new facilities to house them while maintaining these department's strong tradition of community engagement.

She feels that requires not only hiring enough public safety employees to keep the current staff from being overburdened but also offering competitive wages that allow them to attract and retain new, talented public safety employees, especially since the city expects a large number of retirements in the coming years. She believes that the council's recent passage of a STEP Plan pay increase will make a big difference in this area.

"We don't want to lose any depth of talent in our public safety departments (with these retirements). We want to be able to attract quality folks with sound experience," Thompson said.

With helping small businesses, she wants the city and the council to be looking for opportunities to support and collaborate with local small businesses. She cited the council's passage of the long-sought overhaul of the city's Sign Ordinance. She listed how even items like allowing swooper flags - tall, large flag signs - can be a major help for small businesses in locations not on a street by helping them make

people aware they exist. She feels small business owners should be the ones bringing forward any additional changes to the sign ordinance or other improvements to city regulations.



"Small businesses are the backbone of our city and the backbone of the U.S., so anything we can do to help small businesses grow is a huge benefit to our city," Thompson said.

Roussel-Methena, the owner and general manager for rental management company Mojama and a program specialist with the Texas Health and Human Services department, wrote on her campaign website about how she moved away from her childhood home in a suburb of Paris, France and later California due to the cost and regulatory burden she faced there, eventually settling in Texas.

"My goal is to give this city a solid foundation it can trust for the next 25 years. I want our children to want to stay here, raise their own families here. I don't want Leander to just be on the way to Austin. I want it to be our hometown," Roussel-Methena wrote on her website

She also previously served on the Leander Charter Review Board, Leander Public Arts Commission and Leander Board of Adjustments.

Her campaign website and Facebook page list "work on solutions to promote healthy business growth," "work on infrastructure solutions like water, roads and safety" and "protect homeowners from rising taxes" as her platforms.

She did not submit for an interview for this article to explain what her specific campaign goals and priorities would be to reach these goals. Her campaign website and Facebook page also do not answer these questions.

### WATER



Leander is currently imposing Stage 4 water restrictions, which prohibits all nonessential outdoor water usage, as a precaution to avoid water outages while the BCRUA takes its aging, deteriorating raw water intake pipeline offline so they can install a replacement pipeline. The BCRUA plant provides 60% of Leander's

The original pipeline had three unplanned breaks since 2020, the cause of Leander's recent, frequent water restrictions. The replacement project has been planned for more than a year and aims to finally fix

Longer term, the BCRUA is building a massive "Deep Water Intake" pipeline starting in April 2027, which will address Leander's water needs by increasing how much water the plant can pump from its future total capacity of 42 million gallons per day for all three members to 145 million gallons per day. It will also make the plant drought resilient by pulling from a deeper part of Lake Travis.

"Everyone is using Lake Travis and we've seen over the last several years how much the lake's levels have dropped each summer," Thompson said. "Looking for new water (sources and technologies) should be at the forefront of mind for every city in this area. Water is not an infinite resource, when we run out, we run out. As a city, we need to be proactively looking for ways to ensure that our long-term water needs are met."

While she acknowledges that Leander won't run out of water in the immediate

future - especially with the planned BCRUA and Sandy Creek water plant expansions, she believes the key to long-term water security of Leander is creating regional partnerships with area cities.

'These plants are extremely expensive to build for a city our size...and take a great amount of time and expertise to execute. Partnership is key to maximizing the benefits while minimizing risks and costs," Thompson said. "As a council, I think we've done the heavy lifting in 2021 and 2022 by making sure these projects got on the books and budgets got approved of them. Now, it's about staying on top of them... and ensuring the work continues on time... When all of those projects are complete in 2027, we're be sitting pretty nice in terms of (increased) water capacity."

Because Roussel-Methena did not participate in an interview and her website doesn't list any specific information on the issue, it is unknown what her position is on

### **CAPMETRO**

CapMetro provides busing, pickup service and a single rail service from the Leander Station to downtown Austin. Recently, a new rail station near the Q2 Stadium was added, plus double tracking near Leander to speed up the train.

However, CapMetro rail ridership is low due to the rail route being slow and having few notable stops before downtown Austin. Originally envisioned as a comprehensive network, CapMetro missed out on federal funding after a key Austin vote failed by a narrow margin in 2000. Consequently, expanding the system was slow until there was a revenue boost due to the recent pop-

ulation boom. Under state law, Leander pays half of its sales tax revenues to CapMetro in exchange for membership. As the city has grown, the amount has also grown to approximately \$10 million annually. Without the Texas Legislature passing a new law, CapMetro cannot change the terms of membership.

Approximately 60% or more of Leander voters cast a ballot in favor of joining CapMetro in 1985 and twice again to remain in the system in 2000 and in 2022. During the most recent vote, Leander entered an Interlocal Agreement with CapMetro that returns approximately \$2 million and growing annually to the city the amount Leander pays in excess of its share of CapMetro's maintenance costs.

Thompson said that if voters make it clear in 2027 that they want Leander's membership in CapMetro put up for a vote again, she believes the council will make the right choice on behalf of residents.

However, she reiterated that Leander voters overwhelmingly voted three times to stay in CapMetro, including in 2022 - when the largest number of voters yet approved

Leander cannot legally put its membership in CapMetro up for a vote until 2027.

She feels the "real change will happen when there are legislative updates (to the Texas Legislature) to transportation rules around what member cities pay in exchange for membership with organizations like Capital Metro."

She also feels Leander citizens need to be the ones advocating for changes at the Texas Legislature so any change that might occur will be the change they actually want

Because Roussel-Methena did not participate in an interview and her website doesn't list any specific information on the issue, it is unknown what her position is on

The municipal elections will be held on May 4, with Early Voting starting on April

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## **Notice of Public Sale**

Sale of property to satisfy a landlord's lien. Sale to be held at American Self Storage-Liberty Hill at 13740 Hwy 29, Liberty Hill, TX 78642 on Friday, March 29th, 2024 at 11:00 am. Cleanup deposit required. Contents of 2 storage units sold for cash to highest bidder. Property includes the unit contents of the following tenants: Josie Moreno: 1 unit (10x20) containing furniture, wood shelving, boxes. Becky Bedow & Bonnie Phoung: 1 unit (10x10) containing boxes, furniture, mattresses.

**PUBLIC NOTICE** 

Cellco Partnership and its controlled affiliates doing business as Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless) proposes to build a 315-foot self-supporting lattice Communications Tower. Anticipated lighting application is medium intensity red strobes. The Site location is off County Road 282, Liberty Hill, Williamson County, Texas, 78842, 30° 39' 14.9"N , 97° 56' 47.5"W. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Antenna Structure Registration (ASR, Form 854) filing number is A1277496.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS -Interested persons may review the application (www.fcc.gov/asr/applications) by entering the filing number. Environmental concerns may be raised by filing a Request for Environmental Review (www.fcc.gov/asr/environmentalrequest) and online filings are strongly encouraged. The mailing address to file a paper copy is: FCC Requests for Environmental Review, Attn: Ramon Williams, 445 12th Street SW, Washington, DC 20554.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES EFFECTS - Public comments regarding potential effects on historic properties may be submitted within 30 days from the date of this publication to: Environmental Corporation of America, ATTN: Annamarie Howell, 1375 Union Hill Industrial Court, Suite A, Alpharetta, GA 30004, (770) 667-2040 x 108, publicnotice@eca-usa.com.

### **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS, THAT:

The City of Lago Vista, Texas proposes to institute annexation proceedings to enlarge and extend the boundary limits of said city to include the following described territory, to-wit:

10.814 ACRES (CALLED 10.926 ACRES) OF LAND SITUATED IN THE MARY CAMPBELL SURVEY NO. 98, ABSTRACT NO. 189 IN TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS BEING THE TRACT CONVEYED TO LEONARD STRICKLER BY INSTRUMENT OF **RECORD IN DOCUMENT NO. 2013057516 AND THE** 2.691 ACRE TRACT DESCRIBED IN DOCUMENT NO. 2023076820 AND THE 0.127 ACRE TRACT DESCRIBED IN DOCUMENT NO. 2023076766. save and except THE 2.691 ACRE TRACT DESCRIBED IN DOCUMENT NO. 2023076808 IN THE OFFICIAL PUBLIC RECORDS OF TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS, as more particularly described in metes and bounds on file with the City Secretary of the City of Lago Vista.

A public hearing will be held by and before the City Council of the City of Lago Vista, Texas on the 4th day of April, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chamber of the City Hall, 5803 Thunderbird of the City of Lago Vista, Texas, for all persons interested in the above proposed annexation. At said time and place all such persons shall have the right to appear and be heard. Of all said matters and things, all persons interested in the things and matters herein mentioned, will take notice.

By order of the City Council of the City of Lago Vista, Texas this the 21st day of March, 2024.



## **NEED TO PLACE A LEGAL NOTICE?**

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# **Notice of Public Hearings**

The Lago Vista Board of Adjustment will hold a Public Hearing on Monday April 15, 2024, at 6:30 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 5803 Thunderbird St., Lago Vista, Texas and/or using an online videoconferencing tool to receive citizen input on the following item. Additional information, details, and instructions on how to participate will be included in the agenda posted at City Hall and on the City website (lagovistatexas.gov) prior to the scheduled meeting date in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

23-2604-SP-E: Consideration of a special exception request pursuant to Section 1160(d) of Chapter 14 to allow an increase in height of 4.95 feet above the height of the existing principal residence and 1.91 feet above the height permitted in the zoning district for an accessory garage as well as an increase in the maximum number of accessory structures otherwise permitted by Section 6.10 of Chapter 14 at 5017 Green Shore Circle (Dunham Acres, Lot 1A).

23-2613-SP-E: Consideration of a special exception application pursuant to Section 11.60 of Chapter 14 to allow an increase in the maximum height allowed by Table A of Chapter 14 from 18 feet to 21 feet for a single-family residence at 3603 High Mountain Drive (Country Club Estates, Section 8, Lot 1696).

The Lago Vista Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, April 11, 2024, at 6:30 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 5803 Thunderbird Street, Lago Vista, Texas and/or using an online videoconferencing tool to receive citizen input on the following items. Additional information, details, and instructions on how to participate will be included in the agenda posted at City Hall and on the City website (lagovistatexas.org) prior to the scheduled meeting date in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

23-2603-PDD-MOD: Consideration of a recommendation regarding a zoning change request to amend the existing "Turnback Ranch Planned Development District" (PDD) established by Ordinance No. 07-04-05-03 as amended by Ordinance No. 23-09-21-01 to include a detail plan approval for the "SFD parcel" (approximately 241.541 acres of a tract within the Texas-Mexico Survey, Abstract Number 2291, the Christian Fehrenkamp Survey, Abstract Number 286, and the Lewis Goodwin Survey, Abstract Number 336).

23-2607-R-REZ: Consideration of a recommendation regarding a zoning change request from the C-1A "Professional Office, Neighborhood Retail" zoning district to the C-1A (SUP) "Professional Office, Neighborhood Retail" zoning district with a special use permit approval to sell "specialty and novelty items" identified in Section 18.20(f) at 20811 Dawn Drive, Suite 100 and 150 (Lago Vista Travis Plaza, Lot 8-C, 9-C, and 10-C).

23-2617-R-REZ: Consideration of a recommendation regarding a zoning change request from the TR-1 ("Temporary Restricted") zoning district to the P-2 ("Park and Greenbelt, Passive") zoning district at 7602 Bar-K Ranch Road, commonly referred to as the "Dodge Trail extension" (approximately 2.267 acres of a tract within the Dallas & Wichita Railroad Company Survey Number 9, Abstract Number 245).

Following the recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Lago Vista City Council will hold a Public Hearing during the meeting scheduled for May 2, 2024, that begins at 5:30 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 5803 Thunderbird St., Lago Vista, Texas to receive citizen input prior to potential action on the items referenced immediately above.

The Lago Vista Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, April 22, 2024, at 4:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 5803 Thunderbird Street, Lago Vista, Texas and/or using an online videoconferencing tool to receive citizen input on the following items. Additional information, details, and instructions on how to participate will be included in the agenda posted at City Hall and on the City website (lagovistatexas.org) prior to the scheduled meeting date in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

23-2621-PDD-MOD: Consideration of a recommendation regarding a zoning change request to amend the existing "Marshall's Harbor Planned Development District" (PDD) established by Ordinance No. 01-01-18-01 as amended by Ordinance No. 05-11-03-01 and Ordinance No. 06-06-08-02 to modify the uses permitted on the approximately 65.618 acres of undeveloped property consisting of Lot 49-AA, Lot 49-BB, and Lots 67 through 74 of Marshall's Harbor subdivision.

23-2622-R-REZ: Consideration of a recommendation regarding a zoning change request from the CR ("Commercial Resort") zoning district to the R-1M ("Single-Family Residential, Medium Lot") zoning district for the approximately 17.2879 acres of undeveloped property commonly referred to as being located at 20990 Waterside Drive (legally described as the "amended boat house dockominiums lot" within the Village III at Highland Lake Estates subdivision, Phase 2 revised).

23-2623-R-REZ: Consideration of a recommendation regarding a zoning change request from the Planned Development District (PDD) referred to as "The Majestic" in the concept plan approved in Ordinance No. 08-06-19-01 to the P-1B ("Developed Park, Active") zoning district for the approximately 8.9092 acres of undeveloped property located on the north side of Boggy Ford Road west of Poe Cove (Highland Lake Estates, Section 21, all of Lots 21234 through 21264 and portions of Lots 21231 through 21233).

23-2624: Consideration of a recommendation to amend the Future Land Use Map component of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan adopted by Ordinance No. 16-05-05-02 as amended to change the designation of the property at 8116 Chestnut Cove (Bar-K Ranches Plat 10, 64.96-acre "Golf Course Tract") from "POA Park" to "Estate Residential."

Consideration of a potential amendment to Section 2.10, Section 4, Section 18, and Section 20 of Chapter 14 to update the references to various zoning districts for consistency with Ordinance Number 23-09-07-04 and to accommodate the relocation of the provisions related to the industrialized housing to Chapter 3.

Consideration of a potential amendment to Section 11.60(b)(4) of Chapter 14 to correct an error relating to the expiration of special exception approvals.

Following the recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Lago Vista City Council will hold a Public Hearing during the meeting scheduled for May 16, 2024, that begins at 5:30 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 5803 Thunderbird St., Lago Vista, Texas to receive citizen input prior to potential action on the items referenced immediately above.

All interested parties are invited to participate.

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### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

On March 7, 2024, the City Council of the City of Lago Vista, Texas passed and approved the following Ordinances:

ORDINANCE NO. 24-03-07-01

ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF CITY OF LAGO VISTA, TEXAS GENERAL OBLIGATION REFUNDING BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$7,800,000 IN ONE OR MORE SERIES; APPROVING AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT, A PAYING AGENT/REGISTRAR AGREEMENT, A BOND PURCHASE AGREEMENT AND AN ESCROW AGREEMENT, AS NEEDED FOR THE SALE OF BONDS; ESTABLISHING THE PROCEDURES FOR SELLING AND DELIVERING ONE OR MORE SERIES OF THE BONDS; PROVIDING FOR THE APPROVAL OF THIS ORDINANCE ON ONE READING ONLY AS AUTHORIZED BY STATE LAW; AND AUTHORIZING OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO THE BONDS.

ORDINANCE NO. 24-03-07-03

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF LAGO VISTA, TEXAS, AMENDING SECTION 15.10 OF CHAPTER 14 OF THE LAGO VISTA CODE ORDINANCES REGARDING WITHDRAWALS OF APPLICATIONS OR APPEALS SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE; AND PROVIDING FOR RELATED MATTERS.

ORDINANCE NO. 24-03-07-04

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF LAGO VISTA, TEXAS, AMENDING SECTION 3.118 OF ARTICLE 3.100 AND ARTICLE 3.200 OF CHAPTER 3, AND SECTION 6.75 AND SECTION 19 OF CHAPTER 14 OF THE LAGO VISTA CODE OF ORDINANCES TO UPDATE REGULATIONS RELATED TO THE USE OF A RIGHT-OF-WAY OR EASEMENT AND THE REGULATION OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATION SYSTEM COMPONENTS; AND PROVIDING FOR RELATED MATTERS.

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Soren Leavitt

Srihan Ledalla

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Jackson Trimble Alice Tygrett

Emmanuel Ugo

Iman Umatiya

Kaira Vance

Sarah Tran

Christian Vasquez Ruiz Maya Vaughn Nicholas Wheeler Blake Williams Carlie Williams Nicholas Winton Darek Zhang

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Karthikeyan Natarajan Sakthivel Sara Nishimura Arnav Nomula Jack Nowicki Jilianne Nuevo Paulina Olalde Zarate Angela O'neal Siri Pemberton Jennifer Pena Gallegos Aoife Perrott Casey Phillips Madalyn Pirri Lavoy Pollins Rahul Ramadugu Ava Ramirez Ayden Reich Sydney Reisdorph Chloe Rhee Peyton Rhoton Adrian Rosales Paulo Rubio Ibarra Blake Runyan Maggie Ryder Kaden Sako Andrew Satterfield Gael Saucedo Hudson Schwab Jack Serrano Tristan Shoemaker Ayush Singh Arnav Sivakumar Chloe Smith Claire Smith Aiden Spicer Trinity Spiering-Huebsch Bryson Suggs Samantha Svetlik

Sienna Martin

Lainey Mason

Alexa Mata

Sahil Mehta

Emma Martinez

Gabriela McIntosh

Alison Mendoza

Kayla Metcalf

Christina Milne

Gianna Mitchell

Nikitasri Nagendran

Oscar Morin

Jovie Mise

Kiana Thompson Elizabeth Torres Socorro Maithili Trivedi Pavithra Vellengar Brody Wafford Lily Walker Luke Webster Jack Wood Abigail Yeung Madison Young Kaley Zambrano

Grade 12 Ananth Abbaraju Ayaan Ahsan Hunter Albracht Jessica Aldape Ashalina Ali

Esha Ali

Continued next page

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Gorostieta-Garcia William Harmon Sophia Harper Cameron Haynes Rylie Heil Rilee Henneck Marisol Hernandez Jocelyn Higas Susie Huh Paul Hui Elijah Huntsman Julia Hutton Emily Jensen Madeline Johnson Kensley Knauf Austen Kuhn Datta Kurapati Mollie Laws Ellery Leavitt Julia Lemes Hannah Long Andrew Maing Asiya Maredia Taylor Marshall Sean McColl Rebecca McKinnon Rachel McNew

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Kate Roseberry Andres Salazar Landon Saunders Maarken Saxer Alexandra Schiller Kenedy Schimcek Sashwatha Senthilkumar Sri Lahari Siddabathula Haadi Siddiqui Kennedi Smith Coral Spicer Madalyn Strader Taya Sturdevant Danya Taha Harrison Thayer Frances Thompson Mary Thompson Randy Tran Ishaan Trehan Shivam Trivedi Axel Troncoso Vazquez Aziah Walker Chase Weyerman Carson Wheeler Jude Wilson Emily Yeung Abby Young Iazmine Zajac Talitha Zuniga

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Manasa Hariharasudhan

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Srisamarth Kolnati Madeline Krause

Jacob Letkeman

Sarah Loranger

Shu-Fei Liu

Kriti Madan

Jackson Mann

Sudith Marti

Logan Matic

Gagan Mannam

Alexandra Martin

Hannah Maryott

Sydney McNair

Gabriel Melo

David Moon

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Colby Nash

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Tyson Nguyen

Raven Norris

Cori Northcut

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Christian Palacios

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Gavin Pedroza

Jacob Peters

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Kaetlyn Perkins

Krishna Chaitanya Perla

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Tanish Muralidhar

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Bhuvana Lingineni

Callum Lucas Ashmita Madabusi

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Dvlan Hansanuwat

Lakshitha Vengadeswaran Lily Walsh Logan Washam Lillian Welch Jaehee Yoon

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Simon King

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Yumin Cho Hankyul Choi Sarah Choi Yuria Cohaila Avdin Cokal Andrew Collins Daniela

Contreras Villareal Daelyn Cooley Brody Copple Cael Cornwell Jesus Corpus John Costello

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Ivan Young

Ji Min Yu ْ

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Jasmin Dion

Minh Do

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Matthew Flores

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Continued next page

# San Antonio sells out Moody Center again



Nuggets center Nikola Jokic shoots the ball over Spurs center Victor Wembanyama in last Friday's game at the Moody Center, where Denver beat San Antonio 117-106.

#### STAFF REPORTS

The Austin metro area continues to show love for the San Antonio Spurs, selling out the Moody Center for both NBA regular season games last weekend.

Friday's game saw the defending NBA champion Denver Nuggets down San Antonio on the strength of a 31-point outing by Nikola Jokic. Last year's NBA Finals MVP added seven rebounds, five assists and three steals to help the Nuggets to a 117-106 win in the opener of the Spurs' I-35 series.

Spurs rookie sensation Victor Wembanyama finished just short of a double-double on Friday, scoring 19 points and recording nine rebounds plus a pair of assists, two steals and three blocks.

Jokic had good things to say about San Antonio's game-chang-

"He's learning with time," Jokic said. "He's going to have a bad period, a good period. He's really young, so he's going to learn. Like I said last time, we just need to enjoy his process and he's going to change the game for sure.

On Sunday, San Antonio Wembanyama went off for 33 points and 15 rebounds in a 122-115 overtime win against the Brooklyn Nets. The big man also notched seven blocks and seven assists in just over 36 minutes of play.

Wembanyama said he really enjoys close games like Sunday's, where every second counts.

"I love it. It's those moments where we progress, where we get better, rather than any other moment in the game," Wembanyama said. "So, it's really, really enjoyable. Especially when we win."

Devin Vassell had 25 points and Keldon Johnson had 24 for the

Spurs, while guard Cam Thomas led the Nets with 31 points.

Thomas gave the Spurs inside play credit for the edge at the end

"We just kept letting them get to the paint. When they get into the paint, it's tough... they would just find the center and would just dunk everything. So, it was tough. We tried to keep them out of the lane as much as we could, but we just couldn't," Thomas said.

Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said controlling the pace down the stretch was key.

"It's a double-edged sword," Popovich said. "It depends on the situation. Sometimes you get a rebound in those situations, and you look and if you've got an easy break - we threw one full court one time to, was that [Victor Wemban-

See SPURS, page A10

# **Tucson completes** sweep over Texas Stars

### STAFF REPORTS

TUCSON, Arizona - The Texas Stars, American Hockey League affiliate of the NHL's Dallas Stars, fell victim of a two-game weekend sweep with a 6-3 loss to the Tucson Roadrunners on Sunday evening at Tucson Convention Center Arena.

The Roadrunners scored the game's first goal with 16:52 elapsed in the opening period when Travis Barron fired a shot off a two-on-one rush past Matt Murray from just inside the top of the left circle.

Texas tied the game 5:04 into the

See STARS, page A10



The Texas Stars lost the first two games of their five-game western road trip, falling 4-1 and 6-3 to the Tucson Roadrunners. The Stars return to H-E-B Center at Cedar Park to start a six-game home stand on Friday, March 29.

Austin FC defender Jon Gallagher, seen here in a photo from Austin's match against the Seattle Sounders on March 2, scored a 58th minute goal to take a lead in Saturday's game against the Philadelphia Union, but a 65th minute equalizer by Philadelphia set up Austin's third straight draw in four games this season.

# **Austin Spurs sweep Capital City Go-Go**

### **STAFF REPORTS**

The Austin Spurs (16-11) swept the Capital City Go-Go (16-13), 120-112, on Sunday afternoon at the H-E-B Center at Cedar Park.

Two-way guard David Duke Jr. finished with a final stat line of 22 points, 7 rebounds and 4 assists. On assignment from the Spurs, Sidy Cissoko also tallied 22 points on 7-of-11 shooting from the field and 5-of-6 from beyond the arc. Paul Watson contributed 20 points for the Silver and Black.

The Spurs took charge in the first frame to outscore the Go-Go, 31-24. Austin kept up the pace in the second quarter to extend their lead to 16 at the break, 61-45. In the third quarter,

Hamidou Diallo notched 14 points for Capital City, but Austin shot 63.2% from the field and 83.3% from the three to keep the advantage, 93-72.

The Go-Go used a 26-10 run midway through the final quarter, cutting the deficit to 6, 106-100, but wouldn't get any closer. Diallo led Capital City with 41 points on 13-of-20 shooting from the field. Michael Foster Jr. tallied 22 points while Davion Mintz finished with 15 points for Go-Go.

The Spurs return to H-E-B Center at Cedar Park for a 7 p.m. game against the Mexico City Capitanes Thursday night. They'll play a pair of home games this weekend against the Rip City Remix, with a 7 p.m. tip on Saturday and a 4 p.m tip on Sunday.

# Austin FC continues winless streak to start 2024 season

BY SCOTT W. COLEMAN

Five goals, four scored by defenders. Two leads lost to late goals by opposing teams. Three draws and a loss.

It's fair to say that Austin FC hasn't gotten off to the best start this season.

After a number of offseason roster changes, the squad taking the pitch this season has looked a little different, but results haven't.

In last Saturday's match against the winless Philadelphia Union, the Verde & Black

saw a promising 2-1 advantage get erased by a Union equalizer in the 65th minute as Austin salvaged just a point in a 2-2 draw.

The home side surrendered a penalty kick early in the game after Jon Gallagher was called for a handball in the box but Brad Stuver kept the deficit at one with a crucial save in the 22nd minute one of the two saves he made in the first half.

Austin rebounded and scored twice inside two minutes in the early going of the second half, with newcomer

Logan Lear

Luke Lee

Olivia Legrand

Sidney Lummus

Samira Mannan

Sidney Masgras

Sonia Mason

Ty Mastrian

Aaron Matt

Zoe McCaskey

Caleb Measeles

Dylan Meath

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Georgie Milligan Jacob Mills

Sebastian Molnar

Jacob Montey

Andres Mora

Cole Morris

Olivia Morrison

Eugenio

Sridhanush Mittapalli Maxfield Mohney

Morales Tijerina

Abenicio Martinez

Sarah Lellis

Karol Lopez

Katie Luu

Diego Rubio scoring on a header with an assist from Hector Jiminez just moments after Iimenez entered the match for an injured Zan

Kolmanic. Rubio, a veteran forward who plays for the Chilean national team, joined Austin ahead of this season on a one-year guaranteed deal after spending three seasons with Sporting Kansas City and five with the Colorado Rapids. His 55 goals and 35 assists heading into this season rank

See SOCCER, page A10

Manas Singh

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## **STARS**

from page A9

middle frame when Matej Blumel snapped a shot from the top of the slot past Dylan Wells following a face-off win by Oskar Back three seconds into a power play. The Roadrunners reclaimed the lead when Josh Doan pounced on a rebound near the crease with 12.7 seconds left to make it 2-1.

Doan scored again for the Roadrunners 33 seconds into the third period to give Tucson a 3-1 lead. Aku Raty scored another insurance marker for the Roadrunners 5:11 into the frame to make it 4-1. Then at 8:03, Ben McCartney scored on a breakaway to extend it to 5-1. Cody Haiskanen shaved the deficit to 5-2 by scoring his first goal as a Star from the top of the zone with 9:21 remaining in regulation. With their goaltender pulled for an extra attacker, the Stars cut it to a pair

when Mavrik Bourque scored from the slot with 6:04 left on the clock. However, Tucson eventually secured a 6-3 victory and sweep of the weekend series thanks to an empty-net goal from Vladislav Kolyachonok with five seconds to spare.

Picking up the win in goal for the Roadrunners, Wells improved to 8-4-2 on the campaign after making 32 saves on 35 shots. Murray came down with the loss on Sunday to fall to 13-13-2 after logging 24 stops in the contest.

The Stars are in California this week, with a Wednesday match against the Coachella Valley Firebirds, a meeting with San Diego on Friday before returning to play Coachella Valley to conclude the five-game road trip on Saturday night.

## **SPURS**

from page A9

yama]? Whoever it was, I can't remember. But you've got to look for that break to get an easy score when defenses aren't set. But it's not there then you pull it back and hopefully execute something that makes some sense. So, it's a little bit of both."

The I-35 Series is proving a success, with sellouts of all four games between last year and this year, the Spurs set new attendance records in both seasons. Friday's meeting with the Nuggets set a new Moody Center record for a sporting event with 16,223 in

attendance, breaking their own record set last year against the Trail Blazers.

The crowd of Spurs faithful also drew praise from Popovich.

"They were very helpful, I'll tell you that. I could hear it. Our guys never quit. We'll have games where we turn it over too much or don't shoot well or might even get our butts kicked. But even in those games, they come back and do everything they can. They went down by 11 tonight and came back and did what they did. So, I'm proud of them. I'm happy for them."

### **SOCCER**

from page A9

him among the most prolific MLS strikers in

Rubio's score on Saturday is the lone goal netted by an Austin player who is not a

Two minutes later, in the 58th, Gallagher scored on a right-footed shot from the left side of the box to put Austin ahead. Gallagher's six goals since the start of

the 2023 season are the most by any MLS defender. Mikael Uhre scored the equalizer for the

Union in the 65th minute.

Sebastian Driussi substituted on for Jader Obrian to make his season debut with 19 minutes remaining after spending the first three matches on the bench recovering from an injury. The MVP candidate from the 2022 season made a noticeable change in Austin's aggressiveness, but shot attempts by Driussi, Owen Wolff, Emi Rigano, Daniel Pereira and

Matt Hedges, all in the closing minutes, were unable to net Austin a game winner.

Brad Stuver remained the brightest spot for Austin, facing 18 total shot attempts and seven shots on goal and making five crucial saves on Saturday. He's now recorded 22 saves in four games against 28 shots on goal.

The Verde & Black (0-1-3) travel to Orlando City (0-3-1) for the first time in franchise history on Saturday, where a chance to get a first win of the season on the wish list for both squads. The last meeting of the teams ended in a 2-2 draw on May 22, 2022 in

Also winless this season, in the last three MLS regular season matches — against Inter Miami, Minnesota United and Atlanta United — Orlando City has been outscored 9-3.

Austin FC returns to Q2 Stadium for a March 30 match against FC Dallas, with a 7:30 p.m. start time.

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