

2018 NORTH SAN ANTONIO CHAMBER

STATE OF THE COUNTY

MAY 30, 2018

Thank you, John Casstevens. How about that? Does Bexar County know how to celebrate 300 years or what?

Last year 34,000 net new jobs

Unemployment rate: 3.5%, lower than the average in Texas and the United States.

Last year through our partnership with Economic Development Foundation, we successfully worked on 17 projects that created 5,210 new jobs. 53% were recruited companies and 47% expansion. New firms included T.J. Maxx and Marshall, Ernest and Young, and Hulu. \$355 million in capital was made.

Not so bad. In fact, super. But we have challenges and opportunities to address to keep our economic engine going.

Challenges:

1. GET MORE BUCKS FROM LEGISLATURE FOR ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Lack of state funding has made local governments have to step up provide funding for highways. The Alamo Regional Mobility Authority, appointed by the Commissioners Court, has

partnered with TXDOT to deliver 14 regional projects totaling \$179 million, all non-tolled.

Bexar County has invested another \$262m in Hwy. 281, 1604 and IH10.

The Loop 1604 West expansion project is currently under construction with expected completion by November of 2019.

Hwy 281 from Loop 1604 to Stone Oak and should be open to traffic in 2020. The 2nd segment will go all the way to the County line and should be open by 2022.

Construction underway on IH 10 project. The project will add an additional general-purpose lane and HOV lane in each direction essentially doubling the existing size from 4 lanes to 8 totals.

MPO is considering a plan to build 2 elevated general-purpose lanes and 1 HOV lane in each direction on IH 35 from just south of Loop 410 to FM 3009. Plan to award contract in 2020.

Thank you to Commissioner Kevin Wolff, Chairman of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Renee Green, Public Works Director for Bexar County.

But there are not enough resources for highways and roads to meet demand of increasing population. It was just released that San Antonio is first in the nation in the number of

new residents from July 2016 to July 2017. We expect another one million more people in our region in the next 20 years.

In our region over the next 25 years \$20 billion is needed but based on current projected transportation revenue only \$7 billion is available. The state is not meeting its obligations to keep our highway system in top shape. Let's keep the pressure on them for more resources. But even if we get additional funding we cannot build our way out of the coming traffic congestion. We must address public transit.

2. THROW DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY AT OUR TRANSIT SYSTEM

We need a consumer and choice-driven public transit system focused on mobility, innovation, frequency, efficiency, and decongestion. To improve service delivery and reduce system costs, the current fixed-route bus system must evolve into a truly multi-modal system.

The Commissioners Court recently appointed 3 new members to VIA, Jordana Matthews, Mariana Gavito, and Akeem Brown. Oldest is 36 youngest is 26. We wanted new ideas from a younger generation. All have some experience in technology.

Give people a choice in public transit: VIA should re-allocate resources to create a demand driven Micro Transit

System in a partnership with the private sector. The private Micro Transit System operates along select routes and also connects the last mile. Many public transit companies are partnering with firms like Lyft Shuttle, Bridj, chariot, and Split. They use cars, vans, small shuttle buses, and SUVs. VIA has stepped its toe into the water with a proposed pilot project. VIA needs to get more aggressive.

Mayor Nirenberg has taken the lead on public transit, giving it his top priority in recent state of the City address. He stated that we need to leap frog light rail to a trackless transit to run on a HOV, express and transit lane.

The testing of an automated trackless train is taking place in Zhuzhou, China. It can run up to 43 miles per hour and can couple train cars that carry up to 300 people. It is expected to come into use next year. Broadway, San Pedro, and Fredericksburg road are among 7 routes being considered for rapid transit.

We are working on a plan to submit to voters sometime next year. With a forward-looking VIA board of directors and management team we hope to accomplish the above.

Thank VIA Chair Hope Andrade and President Jeff Arndt for their leadership.

3. BUILD A STAND ALONE NATIONAL SECURITY COLLABORATION CENTER AND SCHOOL OF DATA SCIENCE DOWNTOWN.

I have visited several times with UTSA President Taylor Eighmy and let me tell you he is a visionary. He is considering building a National Security Collaboration Center as part of the downtown UTSA campus that would bring together universities, private sector tech firms, and military and federal cyber security agencies to focus on research to improve national security and global defense.

On the same location he would locate the new School of Data Science to include a cyber center for security and analytics, the Open Cloud Institute, and departments of computer science, computer engineering, information systems and cybersecurity. Close to 5000 students could attend the school.

The campus would complement the evolving downtown tech district and USAA's Innovation Center. It would take our city to a new level in technology and cyber security. The City and County and all of us should do all we can to help Eighmy's vision come true.

4. CREATE A STATE OF THE ART WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

In 2008, Commissioners Court invested \$900 million in the Bexar County Hospital dba as University hospital. The new 1 million 20-story sq. Ft. Sky tower and our new downtown 6-story clinic are state of the art buildings with the best in equipment and technology.

Last year the Commissioners Court took another step and authorized \$309 million in bonds to build a new Women's and Children's hospital. It will be the only women and children's hospital in our city. The project will be built without a tax increase.

The new tower will focus on the unique needs of moms and children. A team of maternal, neonatal and pediatric specialists, led by UT Health San Antonio physician experts, will work together to care for mother and baby through every step before, during and after pregnancy.

The new hospital will provide state-of-the-art facilities for University Hospital's busy Level IV NICU, a dedicated pediatric emergency department that has nationally recognized programs in pediatric kidney and liver transplantation, childhood cancer, congenital heart disease and surgery, cystic fibrosis and other complex conditions.

The project also includes a new outpatient advanced endoscopy suite and a heart and vascular center to be built next to the new tower on the first floor of the Sky Tower.

As part of University Health System's mission of teaching and discovery, they will work to find new and better treatments through research and innovation. They will teach the next generation of healthcare professionals that will be needed to care for our families in the future.

Thank you to President George Hernandez and the Board of Managers led by Chairman Jim Adams and University of Texas Health Sciences President Bill Heinrich.

5. DEVELOP A HUMANISTIC MAGISTRATION, INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT CENTER

If you are arrested, you are first taken to the City/County Magistration Center. It is currently located in a City building that is described by Dr. Tony Fabelo, Director of Research for the Council of State Governments, as a 3rd world facility. A horrible place to be introduced into our legal system.

After several years of failed negotiations with the City of San Antonio, we decided to build our own facility. On April 4, 2017, Commissioners Court approved the building of a new Magistration, Justice Intake and Assessment Center on the first

floor of new 500 bed jail. It is 3 times larger than the current facility. We plan to open it this Fall.

A covered sally port will allow easy transfer into the building. The arrested person, as needed will be assisted by nurses, mental health clinicians and Public Defenders. District Attorney's office will review the complaint and then arrested person will be taken before a magistrate. He then maybe eligible for a personal recognizant bond or bail bond. Several phone lines will be available, free of charge, so he or she can call his family or friends and bail bond man.

Pending the arrestee's disposition, he or she will be able to sit in an open section that is not available in the city facility. If the arrestee presents a problem we have holding cells available.

If the arrestee is bailed out or issued a personal recognizant bond they will then exit the facility. If not, they will transfer through a door to be incarcerated.

We will be judged by how we treat our arrestees in a humane way. With a strong team will provide better mental health and substance abuse assessments of arrestees. We will be able to increase use of diversion programs for non-violent inmates.

Due to the streamlining at the County's new intake facility, law enforcement's time is minimized allowing for them to get back to their substations and patrols.

At this point the City has not agreed to join us but we are keeping the door open for them to join later.

Thank you Mike Lozito, Director of Judicial Services, Sheriff Javier Salazar, and DA Nico Lahood

Furthermore, the Commissioners Court approved two permanent patrol substations for the Bexar County Sheriff's Office. One is southwest on Cagnon Road near Loop 1604 and U.S. 90 and the other is northeast on 1604 and Rocket Lane. They will be completed before the end of the year.

6. STAY ON TOP OF THE OPIOID CRISES

Legal prescriptions of opioid painkillers have quadrupled since 1999. In 2016 more than 10 million people have reported non-medical use of prescription opioids. Deaths from over doses exceeded 59,000 in 2016.

In June 2017, the Bexar County Commissioners Court created the Joint Opioid Task Force. The Task Force has made great strides in addressing the opioid crises.

The Task Force has received federal grants to purchase of 16,000 doses of the reversal drug, Naloxone. Last year first responders administered 1,800 doses of Naloxone.

The hospital emergency rooms have adopted voluntary guidelines for the prescription of opioids. A two-day symposium attracted 200 medical and treatment providers to discuss pain management and opioid treatment techniques.

Public service announcements are airing that warn parents about the dangers of leaving unused medication in homes where adolescents are present. The Task Force is collaborating with the San Antonio Police Department to create permanent drug disposal boxes at SAPD substations.

A comprehensive neonatal abstinence syndrome prevention and recovery strategy has been adopted.

Bexar County will soon be the only County in Texas with a legal syringe exchange program. National studies demonstrate that syringe exchange programs save lives, prevent costly diseases like Hepatitis C, and increase utilization of treatment.

And lastly this month Bexar County has sued dozens of manufacturers and distributors of opioids for negligence and deceptive trade practices in the distribution of opioids. The proceeds from this lawsuit will fund a comprehensive prevention and treatment program.

Thank you to Task Force co-chairs Dr. Colleen Bridger and Dr. Bryan Alsip and my Chief of Staff T.J. Mays for the great work they are doing.

7. CONTINUE THE RESTORATION OF SAN PEDRO CREEK

In 2013 Bexar County committed \$125 million to the restoration of San Pedro creek.

As seen in our opening, on our 300th birthday on May 5, Bexar and the San Antonio River Authority hosted the grand opening of the first phase of San Pedro Creek. It was a night to

remember as the lights were turned on and a digital replicate the night time sky of May 5, 1718 illuminated above the tunnel inlet. Journalist Jim Forsythe stated that the creek restoration will be remembered as the capstone of our 300th anniversary as the Tower was for our 250th anniversary.

It has improved flood control, restored natural habitat, improved water quality, stimulate economic development, and celebrate San Antonio's unique history and culture. It includes public arts projects that tell the story of the creek and our heritage and is transforming the creek into a world-class linear park.

In the first phase 10,950 aquatic plants and 17,436 trees, shrubs and grasses were planted. The \$142 million frost tower is located in the first phase.

We have started work on the second phase from Houston Street to Cesar Chavez. Along the banks are City Hall, the Alameda Theater and the Spanish Governor's Palace.

The third and fourth phase is under design. Along the banks will be the new \$16 million Linda pace foundation museum, known as Ruby City and the \$132.5 million new U.S. Federal Courthouse.

Thank you to Commissioner Paul Elizondo and Suzanne Scott General Manager of the River Authority and County Manager David Smith.

8. DEVELOP EDUCATION AND CULTURE VENUES

In a partnership with Texas A&M University San Antonio and the Daughters of the Republic last October we opened an exhibit of the Alamo Collection of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. Located in the Bexar County Arches Building the collection includes 38,000 historical artifacts. It is co-located with Bexar County's Spanish Archives. This offers research opportunities for students and historians.

In March of this year the River foundation opened Confluence Park, located at a confluence of San Pedro Creek and the Mission Reach of the river. It includes an education pavilion, a large-scale water catchment system, and ecotype demonstration areas. The \$10-million project will provide a unique learning environment for everyone. The County contributed \$1.7 million toward the project.

Bexar County is partnering with the City of San Antonio, the Alameda Theater Conservancy, and Texas Public Radio (TPR) on a plan that will renovate the historic Alameda Theater in downtown San Antonio. Located on West Houston Street along the San Pedro Creek, the iconic Theater is poised to reclaim its place as a cultural treasure of the community.

Later this year the County will be opening its first Culture park. The historic Hot Wells resort, a popular spa, hotel, bathhouse, and health resort is located on the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River. We are currently under construction.

Next month, we will be hosting *Designing America: Spain's Imprint in the U.S.*, an exhibition presented by the Fundación Consejo España-Estados Unidos and hosted by Bexar County at the County Courthouse. The exhibit is an interactive exploration of Spain's architectural and cultural legacy in the United States and will be open to the public starting Monday, June 18, 2018.

Thank you to Betty Bueche, Director of Heritage and Parks.

Later in the year we will open the Bexar County Heritage Center located in the Bexar County Courthouse with an entrance off the plaza between the courthouse and the Justice Center. A series of displays along with inter-active computer-generated-programing will tell the story of Bexar County government's role in our community. A series of dioramas, projections, and interactives using the latest technology would capture the attention of visitors to the center.

Through Bibliotech, the nation's first all-digital public library, we assist our patrons in developing technology skills through problem solving and hands-on learning. This year we have focused on digital equity and strategic technology. We are making available WIFI hot spots by free check out to our patrons.

Bexar County's BiblioTech Just opened third location on east side Located on Walters street. We included a maker's station

featuring a 3-D printers, robotics, and film making. First two weeks 3,000 patrons came to library.

We are developing a vegetable demonstration garden on 10 acres of land a couple of blocks away from our east side BiblioTech. Will teach young people about the growing of plant based eatable foods and the preparation of them.

Thank you to Tracy Wolff who raised some \$1 million for the library. Thank you to Bibliotech Administrator Laura Cole. Thank you to Commissioner Calvert on Bibliotech East and vegetable garden and Commissioner Rodriquez on Hot Wells resort.

9. CREATE A MILITARY TRANSITION CENTER FOCUSING ON JOBS.

Through our public private partnership, S.A. Works, we have focused on skill training. Alamo College Chancellor Mike Flores is leading the effort in a partnership with private sector and school districts to graduate high school with a College Associate degree that emphasizes skills. Non-profit university, Hallmark University, will provide technical skills training in cybersecurity and healthcare. Public schools are stepping up with more career and skill classes. The CAST high school in SAISD School district and the Advanced Manufacturing School in Southwest District are providing specialized training and education.

The private and public sector are working to double the number of summer interns, apprenticeships, and job shadowing days. Give your employees opportunity to acquire additional skill training.

One of our best opportunities to attract skilled labor lies with veterans transiting out of the military. We want the veterans after their discharge to stay in Bexar County. Bexar County staff is presently working with the military inside the gates of Ft. Sam, six months before their discharge.

Outside the gate we will establish a center to help connect them with employers and job training agencies. The Commissioners Court provided the funding in this year's budget.

I am happy to announce a partnership, the first of its kind, with the North San Antonio Chamber. The North San Antonio Chamber will connect our veterans to local businesses for employment. It will be the first direct pipeline to helping them secure employment outside the gate. Our veterans served us and now we want to provide opportunities for them.

Thank you to Commissioner Kevin Wolff and thank you North San Antonio Chamber for your contributions and support.

If we can meet these 9 challenges and address each issues, we will be on the road to building a first class city.