

NEWS

6 IMPACTS

10 TECHNOLOGY

SXSW Interactive addresses local gaming industry, entrepreneurship

11 EDUCATION

In May, Austin ISD to ask voters for \$892M in upgrades

12 CITY & COUNTY UPDATE

13 TRANSPORTATION

Paid parking enforced in Rainey Street district

15 AT THE CAPITOL

Freshman lawmakers learning of life at the Capitol

FEATURES

17 CALENDAR

18 BUSINESS

Precision Camera & Video



19 DINING

Southside Flying Pizza

20 NONPROFIT

Texas 4000



21 HISTORY

O. Henry

22 GUIDE

Summer camps

27 REAL ESTATE

360 Condos

COUPONS

29 IMPACT DEALS

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Food truck industry at crossroads

Despite challenges, aficionados optimistic

By Gene Davis

Mobile food vendors and connoisseurs both say they think the number of food trucks and trailers has potentially rolled to its peak in Austin.

The South Congress Food Trailer Park, the city's most recognizable mobile food vendor hub, is scheduled to close soon to make room for a hotel. The expected closure follows years of rapid growth within the local mobile food vendor industry.

The number of registered mobile food vendors in Travis County has grown to more than 1,400 in 2012, up from 955 in 2008, according to the City of Austin Health and Human Services Department. Andy Potter, co-owner of Austin Eats Food



Customers line up at the South Congress Food Trailer Park during the South by Southwest Music and Media Conference.

Tours, leads guided tours of local food trucks and estimates that out of the licensed mobile food vendors, approximately 600 are currently active in Austin. He said he expects that number to drop.

"I am a bit concerned about the saturation [of mobile food vendors]," he said. "I personally think ... about 40 trucks do really well, about 300 make ends meet and the other 250–300 are [struggling]."

Wes Hurt said that when he opened the Hey Cupcake! food trailer in 2007, his friends thought he had lost his mind.

At the time, there were almost no other modern mobile food vendors, and most people could not comprehend the idea of only selling cupcakes out of a trailer, he said.

Hey Cupcake! has since opened six locations, including a new location at 1511 S. Congress Ave.

Hurt said the mobile food vendor industry, which includes movable food trucks and stationary food trailers, has grown dramatically since he opened.

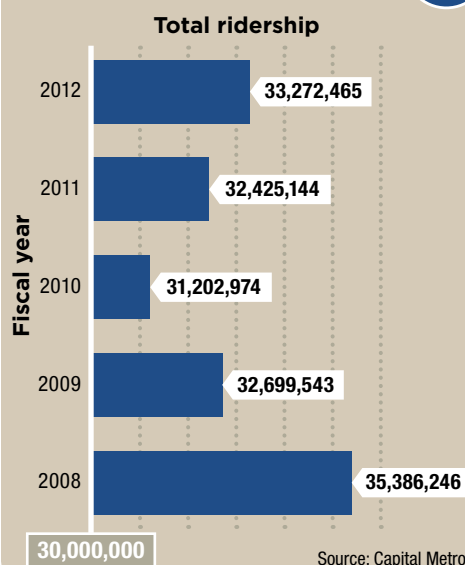
However, he said he does not think that growth is sustainable.

"I think that the market will slowly be thinned out and that the cream will rise," he said. "This business is way tougher than many people thought."

See **Food trucks** | 24

RIDERSHIP ON THE RISE

In 2012, Capital Metro saw a 4.7 percent increase in total ridership, but the numbers have been up and down during the past five years. Staff said changes may be attributed to gas prices topping \$4 per gallon in 2008 and the agency feeling the effects of the recession in 2009 and 2010.



Capital Metro touts efficiency

By Amy Denney

The picture of Capital Metro in 2013 is quite different from just three years ago.

In 2010, Capital Metro was running on \$7 million in its operating reserves and struggling with its public image. It had seven new members on its board of directors and a new president and CEO, Linda Watson.

The Sunset Advisory Commission—which is made up of state Senate and House of Representatives members and reviews state government agencies to identify waste, duplication and inefficiencies—had just released its recommendations on changes Capital Metro needed to make, including an overhaul of its labor structure. The report detailed how the agency mishandled \$200 million in its reserves and rushed through implementing the MetroRail project.

See **Capital Metro** | 25

Building permit review bottleneck hindering construction projects

Small reduction seen in residential and commercial application stockpile

By Peter McCrady

Progress is being made on a permitting backlog in the City of Austin's Planning and Development Review Department, but the continued bottleneck could hinder home construction, remodels and growth in the construction industry.

Kathey Comer, executive vice president of the Home Builders Association of Greater Austin, said housing construction is a critical issue for Austin and an integral part of the economy, making it important to address the backlog as fast as possible.

"It will become worse as we progress into the year. It will become worse each

See **Backlog** | 26

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John and Jennifer Garrett began *Community Impact Newspaper* in 2005 in Pflugerville, Texas. The company's mission is to build communities of informed citizens and thriving businesses through the collaboration of a passionate team. Now, with 13 markets in the Austin, Houston and Dallas/Fort Worth metro areas, the paper is distributed to more than 870,000 homes and businesses.

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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER



When people reference change in Austin, as Editor Gene Davis highlights in his front-page article on the mobile food vendor industry, the word that comes to my mind is "evolve." I think of change in the context of Austin's evolution.

I guess I prefer to use evolve over the word change

because the former seems to be far more open-ended and active than the latter. When something evolves, by definition, it develops. And when you look up develop, you find a host of definitions such as "expand, enlarge or strengthen," and "to bring into being gradually." This second definition is helpful to remember because as things change, or rather, evolve, in Austin, it gives us a chance to anticipate, adjust and plan for that which is new or different.

South Congress Avenue, the home to the South Congress Food Trailer Park that is expected to close soon,

is a perfect example of such evolution. The area has dramatically evolved over the years, and the food trailer park has played a critical role in how South Congress has developed. The park has contributed to the area's vibrancy and sense of place. It has created a culturally rich community and has undoubtedly made South Congress better.

Austinites will miss the brightly colored trailers and picnic tables in that location for sure. But I am confident in the creativity, resourcefulness and perseverance of Austinites. I know we will embrace and make the most of whatever follows the park. It, too, will make a contribution to the area's evolution. And as far as the food trailers are concerned, as Davis' article explains it, the industry, too, will evolve as it rolls into the future.

Pamela Power
GENERAL MANAGER
ppower@impactnews.com

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

READER COMMENTS

"Retailer's association questions Austin bag ordinance"

"The intent of the ordinance is a zero-waste Austin, to make it cleaner in the long term, and people are complaining about 'filthy reusable bags?' Um... really? Being in a public place already mandates (by common sense) washing your hands before you touch your face—I don't think touching a reusable bag to fill it will spread disease. And 'I won't be shopping in Austin?' Selfish selfish I'm proud of Austin for implementing this."

— "Amanda"

"This [is] not right. A city should not dictate rules like this. I do not think reusable bags [are] a good idea. How do you know how many to bring in? And they will get germs, bacteria and viruses. Then what? This is disgusting. I say let Austin vote."

— "Wells"

"I, too, will be taking my shopping out of Austin. I will be going to Buda. ... The city will lose my tax revenue. The stores in Austin will lose my business. And the city will still have to deal with any plastic bags I choose to throw away. As the impact of this ban becomes apparent to shoppers, I can't help but wonder if others will make the same choice."

— "Shopper in South Austin"

"We have some nice reusable canvas bags for our groceries. I prefer them. But even if I didn't prefer them, I doubt I'd use this ban as an excuse to drive further."

— "jkay"

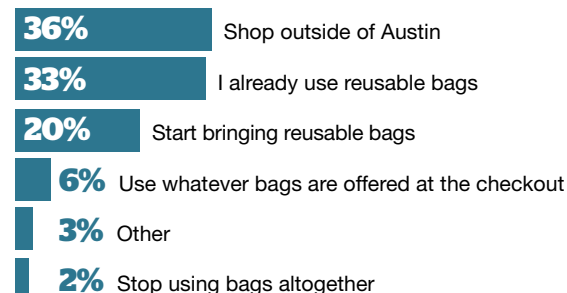
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What services would you like to see Capital Metro work on in the near future?

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How will you change your behavior in response to the new single-use carryout bag ordinance?



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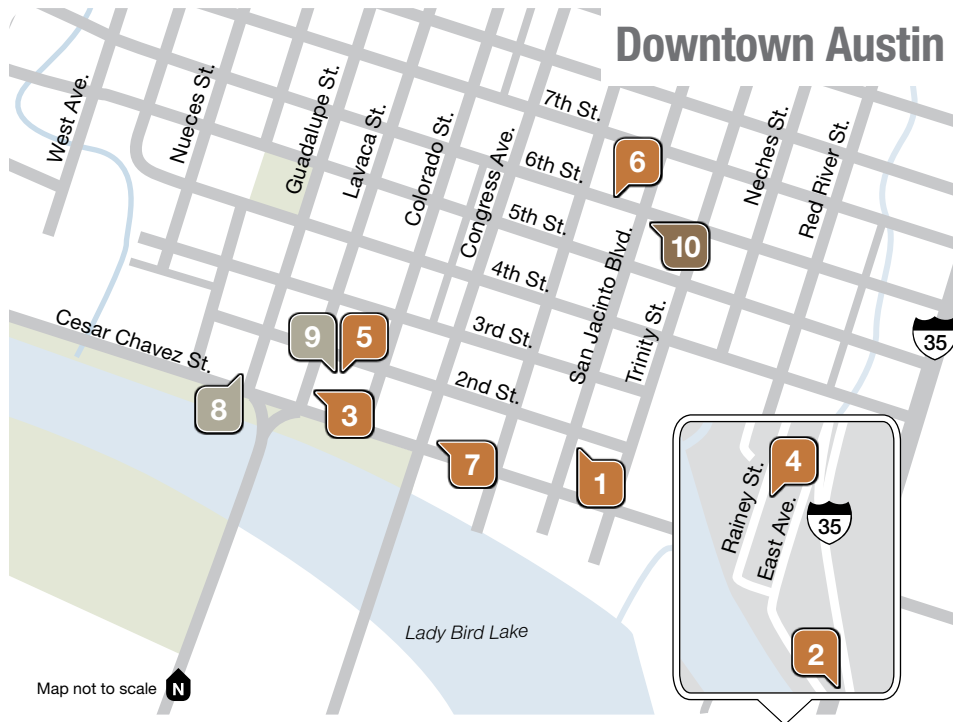
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IMPACTS



Downtown Austin

Downtown Austin

Now Open

1 Jazz and blues lounge **Brass House** opened Feb. 8 at 115 San Jacinto Blvd. The venue features live jazz music, a full-service bar and will soon start serving food. 512-649-1253. www.brasshouseaustin.com. Twitter: @atxbrasshouse

2 Serving Chinese dumplings and Asian street food, **Dumpling Happiness** opened Feb. 22 at 30 N. I-35. The food truck is open Thursday–Saturday. www.dumplinghappiness.com

3 **Ride Indoor Cycling**, a 37-bike studio featuring Schwinn AC Performance bikes, opened Feb. 25 at 117 Lavaca St. The studio was started by Kim and Tim Dowling, who moved from New York to Austin. Single classes, which are 45 minutes long, cost \$22 and the first class for customers is free. 512-322-5252. www.ride-indoorcycling.com

4 Serving from 54 taps and 2 casks of Texas beer, **Craft Pride**, 61 Rainey St., celebrated its grand opening Feb. 28. Most beers are served in 20-ounce U.K. pub-style pints. 512-428-5571. www.craftprideaustin.com

5 **Flor**, which sells carpet squares that can be assembled into a rug, opened March 7 at 209 W. Second St. Flor was launched in 2003 by Greg Colando, and allows customers to create custom floor designs. www.flor.com

6 **Bourbon Girl**, 212 E. Sixth St., had a grand opening Feb. 20. The country rock bar has two private karaoke rooms and live music every night. www.bourbongirlaustin.com. Twitter: @bourbongirl6th

7 The social commerce application company **ScanSee**, based at 111 Congress Ave., Ste. 483, launched in Austin on Feb. 21. ScanSee builds application sites for businesses to improve their mobile presence and connect with customers. 512-681-4537. www.scansee.com. Twitter: @scansee

Relocations

8 Day spa **milk + honey** relocated from Colorado Street to 100A Guadalupe St. on Dec. 12, merging with Salon by milk + honey. The new location offers massages, body treatments, hair care, and manicures and pedicures. 512-236-1115. www.milkandhoneyspa.com. Twitter: @milkandhoneyspa

9 On Jan. 12, **Mercury Design Studio** opened in its new location at 225 W. Second St. Mercury Design Studio moved just several spaces away from its location at 209

W. Second St., where it had been open for seven years. The store sells gifts and home accessories. 512-236-0100. www.mercurydesignstudio.com

Anniversaries

10 On Feb. 11, **Parkside** celebrated its five-year anniversary by giving diners free oysters and champagne. The New American eatery, located at 301 E. Sixth St., is owned by chef Shawn Cirkiel, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America who became the founding chef of the Sustainable Food Center's farmers market in Austin. 512-474-9898. www.parkside-austin.com. Twitter: @parksideaustin

Central Austin

Now Open

11 **The Clean Bedroom**, which sells organic mattresses and bedding, opened a showroom in late December at 500 N. Lamar Blvd. The mattress retailer is based in Maine and carries bedding from manufacturers such as Royal-Pedic, Green Sleep and Savvy Rest. 512-476-1919. www.thecleanbedroom.com. Twitter: @thecleanbedroom

12 Offering vintage, fashion, gold and silver jewelry, **JK Gold Exchange and Jewelry**, 3630 S. Congress Ave., Ste. B, opened March 1. The jewelry store also buys silver, gold and coins as well as sells silver coins and bars. 512-913-8511. www.jkgoldexchangeandjewelry.com

13 In February, **Cow Tipping Creamery** opened in the Rancho Rio Eatery, 2512 Rio Grande St. The family-owned food cart specializes in gourmet soft-serve ice cream and has toppings such as sweet lemon Vietnamese curried toasted coconut. Cow Tipping Creamery is owned by Tim and Corey Sorensen. 512-538-4039. www.cowtippingcreamery.com. Twitter: @cowtippcreamery

14 **Thai of the Town**, which serves traditional Thai food as well as its own Thai-inspired dishes, had a grand opening Feb. 16. The food truck is in the Rancho Rio Eatery, 2512 Rio Grande St. www.facebook.com/thaiofthetown

Amy Shank opened **Game Time Dog Services** in late 2012. She offers dog-sitting services for clients who are out of town or at work. Services include running, walking, playing aerobic games and exercising. 512-995-9255. www.dogserviceaustin.com or www.gametimedogservices.com

15 Eliz Perez opened **Yoga Con Amor** on Feb. 4 at 8440 Burnet Road, Ste. 114. She offers several yoga classes, including Hatha, beginner's Vinyasa and power yoga, as well as specialty classes such as Yoga on Vinyl, where each class is set to a different record.



Central Austin

Map not to scale

All classes are \$10. 512-750-7337.
www.yogaconamor.com

16 Burro Cheese Kitchen, 1603 S. Congress Ave., opened in February. The restaurant serves artisan grilled-cheese sandwiches in a “mobile container eatery.” The sandwiches use local artisan bread, Texas small-batch cheeses and custom-blended sauces. 512-565-1963.
www.burrocheesekitchen.com

17 Fit & Finish, a skin care and workout facility, opened in February. Started by Georgia Nixon, an Austin native who has taught CrossFit and is a licensed aesthetician, Fit & Finish is located at 625 Brentwood St. The facility offers personal and group training, skin care and waxing services, nutritional education and fitness apparel. 512-917-5371.
www.fitandfinishaustin.com

18 Marakesh Cafe & Grill, a Middle Eastern and Greek restaurant, opened its new location Feb. 11 at 3301 Steck Ave., Ste. 106. The previous location at 906 Congress Ave. closed in August. 512-476-7735. www.facebook.com/pages/marakesh-cafe-grill/257964703135

19 Austin Cancer Centers opened a multidisciplinary **Breast and Oncology Center** in February at Park St. David's, 900 E. 30th St., Ste. 100. The clinic has a medical oncologist, radiation oncologist, breast surgeon and an on-site oncology nurse navigator who helps guide patients through treatment. 512-505-5500.
www.austincancercenters.com

Coming Soon

20A,B EcoClean, an eco-friendly dry-cleaning business based in Austin, is expected to open two new locations this spring. The locations will be at 2438 W. Anderson Lane, Ste. C3, and 2149 S. Lamar Blvd. EcoClean is opening the locations because there is a demand in the area, co-owner Mark Hess said.
www.ecocleanaustin.com
Twitter: @ecocleanaustin

21 A **Chick-fil-A** is scheduled to open May 30 at 503 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. The restaurant sells chicken sandwiches, chicken nuggets and chicken strips, along with milkshakes and lemonade. www.chick-fil-a.com/universityoftexasdto

22 Chef Daniel Olivella, a native of Spain who has opened restaurants in San Francisco, plans to open **Barlata Tapas Bar** in late May. The Spanish tapas bar will be at 1500 S. Lamar Blvd.
www.barlataaustin.com.
Twitter: @barlatatx

23 Zero Gravity Institute is scheduled to open May 4 at 2919 Manchaca Road, Ste. 105. At the spa, customers will go into sensory deprivation tanks and float for an hour in a zero-gravity pools made in part by a saturated Epsom salts solution, which is five times denser than seawater.
www.zerogravityinstitute.com

Relocations

24 Images of Austin and the Southwest, which sells original artwork and prints of local iconic places, moved in February to 5933 Burnet Road. The business, owned by artist Robin Doerr, is also a full-service custom frame shop. The store was previously located at 4612 Burnet Road. 512-451-1229. www.imagesofaustin.com

25 Custom design cake bakery **Coco Paloma Desserts** has moved to a bigger location at 8711 Burnet Road. The new bakery is twice as big as the previous location, which was at 6701 Burnet Road, and has a client consulting room. Paloma Efron opened Coco Paloma in 2006, and the business is open by appointment. 512-419-1582. www.cocopalomadesserts.com

Anniversaries

26 Large-scale pet boutique **Lofty Dog** had its one-year anniversary March 2 in The Village Shopping Center, 2700 W. Anderson Lane, Ste. 402. Lofty Dog sells pet-friendly food, toys, bedding and

clothes. Veronique Michalik and Jon Michelson co-own the business.
512-451-1858. www.austinloftydog.com

27 Cafe Josie, which serves New American, French and seafood dishes, celebrated its 16th anniversary March 4. Cafe Josie, 1200 W. Sixth St., Ste. B, opened in 1997, and co-owner Cody Taylor started in the restaurant industry as a 13-year-old busboy. 512-322-9226.
www.cafejosie.com

Closings

28 On Dec. 31, the **Tammy's Cleaners and Alterations** location at 1232 S. Lamar Blvd. closed. The dry cleaner's sister store at 7327 Burnet Road is still in business. 512-452-5945

29 Another Broken Egg, 3016 Guadalupe St., closed in February. The breakfast restaurant chain has multiple locations throughout the nation, but the Guadalupe Street store was the only location in Austin.
www.anotherbrokenegg.com

30 The **Blockbuster Video** at 5716 Burnet Road, Ste. B, is scheduled to close April 7. 512-454-8785. www.blockbuster.com

In the News

31 Starting in February, **Ramen Tatsuya**, 8557 Research Blvd., Ste. 126, is open Sundays. The ramen restaurant's Sunday hours are 5–10 p.m. The restaurant—which is run by owner and chef Tatsuya Aikawa and serves traditional ramen with pork, mushrooms, scallions and noodles in a broth—is still closed on Mondays.
www.ramen-tatsuya.com.
Twitter: @ramentatsu_ya

32 Hopfields, 3110 Guadalupe St., in February started opening on Mondays. The gastropub sells French-inspired food and craft beers and opened its new dining room in January. 512-537-0467,
www.hopfieldsaustin.com.
Twitter: @hopfieldsaustin

Compiled by Gene Davis and Peter McCrady



Ride Indoor Cycling, 117 Lavaca St., offers a 36-bike studio and 45 minute-classes for \$22.



Day spa **milk+honey** relocated to 100A Guadalupe St. on Dec. 12, merging with Salon by milk+honey.



Burro Cheese Kitchen, 1603 S. Congress Ave., serves artisan grilled cheese sandwiches.



Lofty Dog is a boutique pet store carrying products for both dogs and cats, including food, treats, toys, collars and leashes.

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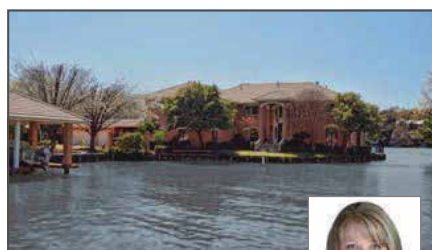
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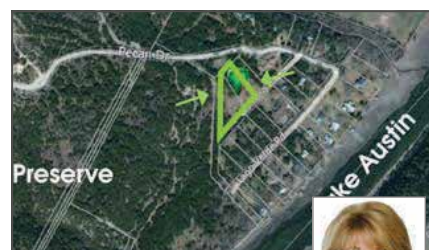
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Catherine Prather 297-8150



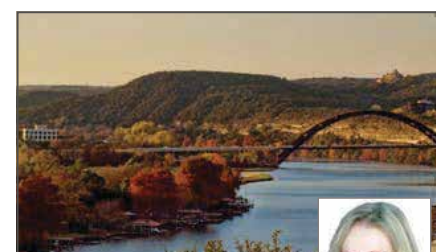
3702 GILBERT ST
5 Bdrm | 4.5 Ba | \$1,900,000
Joanie Capalupo 470-7467



14034 ROBIN'S RUN
3 Bdrm | 2.5 Bath | \$495,000
Ellen Helweg 992-9900



3 STEGNER LANE
5 Bdrm | 5 Bath | \$1,700,000
Cord Shiflet 751-2673



5606 CRAGGY POINT
Waterfront | 5Bd 4Ba | \$1,750,000
Patrice Duff 413-5478



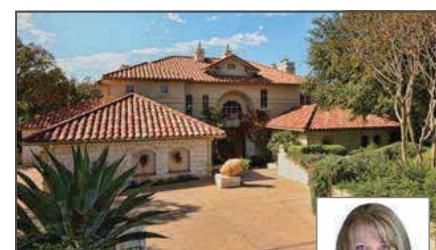
1008 WILD BASIN LEDGE
5 Bdrm | 5F+2H Bath | \$3,500,000
Doug Roberts 731-5105



4404 SILENT TRAIL
5 Bdrm | 6 Bath | \$2,999,000
Maru Davis 971-3797



17803 NAVIGATION LANE
5 Bdrm | 5F+2H Bath | \$1,715,000
Jean Phillips 924-0175



3313 LAKE CLIFF CT
5 Bdrm | 5.5 Bath | \$2,950,000
Mary Briggie 658-8705



1606 POQUONOCK RD
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Cord Shiflet 751-2673



11222 PINEHURST DR
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Dianne Johnson 699-0619



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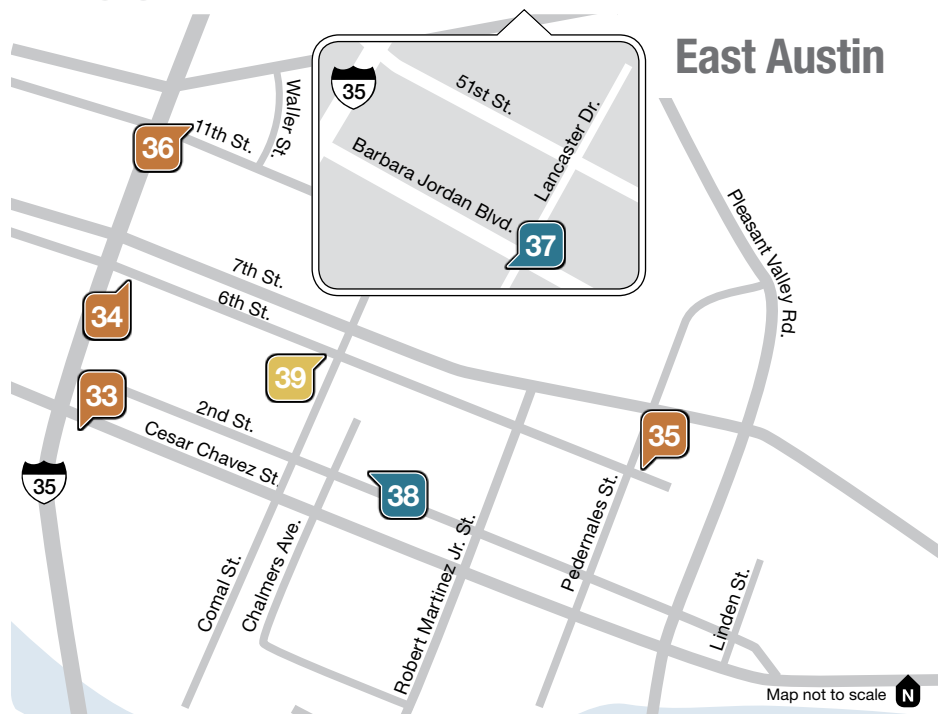
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IMPACTS

Compiled by Gene Davis and Peter McCrady



Travis Kent (left) and Mikaylah Bowman are co-owners of the recently opened **Farewell Books**.



Guests celebrate the March grand opening of the **African American Cultural and Heritage Facility**.

East Austin

Now Open

33 Farewell Books, a new and used bookstore and art gallery at 913 E. Cesar Chavez St., had a grand opening celebration Feb. 14. The store takes the place of Domy Books, which focused on national and international contemporary art, literature and culture. Farewell Books is run by former Domy employees Travis Kent and Mikaylah Bowman. 512-473-2665. www.facebook.com/farewellbooks

34 Austin Juicy Jerk opened in late January at 907 E. Sixth St. The food truck serves jerk chicken, curried chicken, curried goat, oxtail and several sides. Quincy Henry and Robert Douglas, who previously worked in the catering business, co-own Austin Juicy Jerk. 512-699-1494. www.facebook.com/austinjuicyjerk

35 John Mueller Meat Co., a barbecue food truck from third-generation pitmaster John Mueller located at 2500 E. Sixth St., opened Feb. 23. The food trailer serves traditional smoked brisket, sausage, beef ribs, pork shoulder and turkey, as well as sides such as potato salad and pinto beans. www.johnmuellermeatco.com

36 On March 1, the City of Austin celebrated the grand opening of the

African American Cultural and Heritage Facility located at 912 E. 11th St. The restored historic house serves as the African American Visitors Center. The 4,000-square-foot building includes meeting space, offices and a multipurpose room. www.austintexas.gov/department/african-american-cultural-heritage-facility

Coming Soon

37 This summer, **Smashburger**, a Colorado-based burger chain, is scheduled to open its first Austin-area location in the Mueller development at the intersection of Barbara Jordan Boulevard and Lancaster Drive. www.smashburger.com

38 **Al Fico**, an Italian restaurant at 1700 E. Second St., is expected to open in June. The restaurant is owned by Jeff Courington, who also owns Vino Vino, and will feature classic and innovative Italian dishes and an all-Italian wine list. 512-465-9282. www.alficoaustin.com

Closings

39 **Nuevo Leon**, a Tex-Mex restaurant at 1501 E. Sixth St., closed March 2 after 31 years in business. Owner Rachel Davila said she was retiring. www.nuevoleoninaustin.com

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TECHNOLOGY

SXSW Interactive addresses local gaming industry, entrepreneurship

By Joe Olivieri and Amy Denney

If Austin wants to grow its significant but mercurial gaming industry, it could offer economic development deals to smaller companies and try to lure publishers to headquarter in the capital city, Fred Schmidt said.

Schmidt was an executive partner in Origin Systems, the company that produced “Ultima,” “Wing Commander” and “Omega.” He is the co-founder/CEO of Portalarium, a company that makes games for mobile and social networks, and CEO of Wild About Music Galleries, a store on Sixth Street.

He spoke during “Building Headquarter Gaming Companies in Austin,” a panel held on March 12 during the South by Southwest Interactive festival.

The creative industries—everything from video games to the arts—have a \$4.3 billion economic impact on Austin, Schmidt said.

While Austin game developers have had a hand in producing successful titles such as “Epic Mickey,” the city has not generated a blockbuster hit the way that “Angry Birds” has benefited Finland’s Rovio Entertainment Ltd. or “World of Tanks”

has benefited Belarus’ Wargaming.net.

Austin is home to game development and various studios, but the publishers and parent companies are located elsewhere, Schmidt said.

Schmidt said he believes that getting or cultivating an anchor company or long-term entrepreneurial effort would make it easier to recruit talent.

Gaming is a \$200 billion global industry, Schmidt said.

2012 was a rough year for gaming nationwide, Schmidt said. Gaming attracted \$835 million in venture capital, down 58 percent from 2011’s record \$2 billion, Schmidt said.

2012 was also a rough year for Austin game development, he said. Austin lost about 1,000 jobs in gaming; the total local industry has 7,000–8,000 jobs, he said.

Red Fly Studios, Heatwave Interactive, Zynga, Edge of Reality, LightBox Interactive and Portalarium had to lay off some employees in recent years, Schmidt said.

There are new companies arriving, however: Kabam, Bethesda Softworks and Cloud Imperium. Schmidt said it is easy to convince talent to relocate, settle or return to Austin.



Fred Schmidt, CEO of mobile and social network game company Portalarium, discusses Austin’s gaming industry at SXSW Interactive on March 12.

Austin called an entrepreneurial hub

In a separate SXSW Interactive panel, two Austin startup veterans and representatives from the City of Austin and Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce said the city has a healthy environment that encourages entrepreneurship.

“This is one of the best entrepreneurial hubs in the country,” said Susan Davenport, the chamber’s senior vice president for Global Technologies Strategy.

Davenport said Austin added 5,500 new technology jobs in the first three quarters of 2012 and has more than 4,400

tech companies.

Jim Butler, creative industries development manager for the city’s Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office, said the city partners with the chamber to offer a host of services for small businesses and to retain and help companies grow in Austin.

Bijoy Goswami, who founded BootstrapU as well as several startups, said Austin is about being yourself.

“What people are doing in Austin is all of us are working on that, figuring out our identity,” he said.



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A City of Austin Program

EDUCATION

In May, voters will consider \$892M for Austin ISD facilities improvements

Ballot will include four propositions for repairs and upgrades

By Kelli Weldon

On Feb. 25, the Austin ISD board of trustees unanimously approved an order calling for a May 11 bond election, leaving it up to voters to decide whether to approve \$892 million for new schools and upgrades to AISD facilities.

Board President Vincent Torres said that even if the bond passes, it will not undo the damage done by legislative cuts to public education.

"The cuts were on the [maintenance and operations] side and the personnel side," he said. "With what the Legislature did, we have to try to fund and make repairs out of the M&O side, and we lose 45 cents for every dollar we collect [because of state recapture]."

Bond dollars, on the other hand, are not subject to state recapture, so all funds collected for facilities improvements go directly to the district. If Austin voters approve all four propositions, the bond would provide funding for improvements in categories including technology, building infrastructure, academic initiatives, fine arts, athletics and relief from overcrowding. The district's Citizens'

Bond Advisory Committee developed the propositions.

During citizens communication, many attendees said they supported the bond.

Ronda Roach, a mother of three, said she is willing to work tirelessly to spread the word about it in the community.

"My children will not see the improvements made by this bond package, but it is crucial for the future success of AISD and its students to have our facilities brought up to date," she said. "I am not alone in my willingness to work hard and get this bond passed. You will have an army of concerned parents throughout AISD working on behalf of our students to get the bond passed."

Representatives from McCallum High School attended with colorful signs thanking the board for its addition of a dedicated dance studio to the bond package following many requests for the studio from students, staff and parents at the school.

Attendee Cynthia Valadez questioned the functional equity of the bond and said the board should consider conducting an economic assessment of bond funding

allocation compared with the need on the east and west sides of I-35.

Parent Jill Spencer said that if the district does not address facilities problems, AISD could see more families opting to move to Austin suburbs or to private schools.

"We need the bond sooner rather than later," she said. "The CBAC did their homework, and there is no need for a drawn-out study."

Torres thanked members of the board, the CBAC and the community for their input in the bond process.

"This [feedback] is so valuable to us to make sure that we're grounded in making sure we're doing the right thing for students in this district," Torres said.

For an Austin resident with a \$200,000 home, property tax bills would increase by about \$70 per year, or \$5.83 per month, according to Austin ISD.

Homeowners older than 65 who have an existing, approved tax ceiling certification would not see any change on their property tax bills. The effect on Austin businesses' property taxes would be approximately \$178 annually for a business valued at \$509,385, according to the district. If the proposed 3.5 cent tax increase is approved for the 2013 bond program, AISD would still have the second-lowest tax rate among Austin-area districts. Early voting will begin April 29 and last through May 7.

What the bond would pay for

Proposition 1: \$140,566,000 for health, environment, safety, security, equipment and technology

- Science programs
- Technology systems and equipment
- Promotion of energy conservation and efficiency
- Cafeteria and food service facilities
- District maintenance and facilities services
- Purchasing new school buses

Proposition 2: \$233,950,000 for safety and security, and relief from overcrowding

- Three new elementary schools
- Promotion of safety and security
- Expansion, renovation and addition of classrooms, as well as fine arts and physical education and athletics facilities
- Purchase of sites for school buildings

Proposition 3: \$349,165,000 for academic and building infrastructure renovations

- Repair, improve and replace facility systems throughout the district including roofing, plumbing, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, electric and flooring systems
- Rehabilitation, renovation and improvement of libraries
- Traffic safety improvements

Proposition 4: \$168,564,000 for academic initiatives, fine arts and athletics

- Career and technology education and development
- Fine arts
- Physical education and athletics
- Special education
- Converting the Ridgeview Campus (the former Anderson High School campus) to a school for young men, and purchasing new school buses

For more information about the AISD bond, visit www.austinisd.org/bond.

Source: Austin ISD

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CITY & COUNTY

News from Austin and Travis County

Compiled by Gene Davis, Peter McCrady, Joe Olivieri and Kyle Webb

National Instruments to create 1,000 jobs and receive economic incentives from city, county

TRAVIS COUNTY The City of Austin and Travis County approved in March economic development agreements with National Instruments Corp. in exchange for the company creating 1,000 jobs and expanding its headquarters.

NI plans to create 1,000 jobs—35 percent of which would be filled locally—and build a 300,000-square-foot facility at 11500 N. MoPac for office space and research and development. The company has been headquartered in Austin since 1976, and 2,440 of its 6,850 employees work locally.

Mayor Lee Leffingwell said the agreement is good for the city and will make money for the city in the long run.

Travis County Commissioners Court approved its agreement March 12 and City Council gave its approval March 7. Through the city's deal, NI will receive \$1.7 million over 10 years, and the company agreed to pay all construction workers and full-time employees at least \$11 per hour. The average worker's annual salary would start at \$63,000, with a median salary of \$55,667. Workers



National Instruments employs 2,440 people locally and plans to add 1,000 more in the coming decade.

being paid the lowest 10 percent of all new salaries would earn \$40,000.

In the deal with Travis County, the county would offer the company grants equivalent of up to 43 percent of the company's property taxes over 10 years in exchange for meeting certain investment and job creation criteria.

The deals are expected to have a \$7.6 million net benefit to the city and \$3.9 million net benefit to the county. The State of Texas announced in February that it plans to contribute \$4.4 million in economic development incentives.

Leaders postpone vote on Austin Energy governance, request study of other utilities

AUSTIN City Council unanimously approved 7-0 on March 21 a study that would compare Austin Energy to other municipally owned utilities throughout the nation. The decision came after City Manager Marc Ott told council that he and his staff would not be able to provide an ordinance outlining an independent governing board for the utility until April.

Some metrics in the study include utilities governed by councils and independent boards, size of service area and diversity of power supply. The study will come back to council by the second week of April.

Councilman Mike Martinez said he hopes the study does not bog down the consideration process as the deadline for considering the ordinance gets pushed back.

Council takes action on Riverside corridor plan

AUSTIN The East Riverside Corridor Regulating Plan is one step closer to implementation after Austin City Council approved a first reading of the plan along with individual zoning exemptions on March 7.

"Vision was really needed to guide that change that was already under way," said Erica Leak, project manager with Austin's Planning and Development Review Department.

The master plan project was started in 2007, and City Council adopted a master plan in 2010 focused on increasing pedestrian safety and mobility.

The purpose of the regulating plan is to designate design, land use and development bonuses to promote affordable housing, business growth and concentrated development in the area.

Mayor Lee Leffingwell offered to



The East Riverside Corridor regulating plan aims to make East Riverside Drive pedestrian-friendly.

amend the plan to allow the number of drive-thru lanes at businesses such as cleaners and fast food restaurants to be increased using a conditional-use permit.

"This just provides a potential outlet in case there is strong justification for [additional lanes] instead of going back and revising the plan," Leffingwell said.

Meetings

► **Austin City Council**
Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second St.
512-974-2210 • www.austintexas.gov/departments/city-council

Meets April 11 and 25, 10 a.m.

► **Travis County Commissioners Court**
700 Lavaca St., Austin
www.co.travis.tx.us/commissioners_court

Meets every Tuesday at 9 a.m.

Tweetings

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TRANSPORTATION

Paid parking begins in Rainey Street district

City says effort aims to improve mobility

By Gene Davis

Rainey Street district bar patrons, owners and employees say they are adapting to having to pay to park in the area.

On Feb. 28, the City of Austin activated paid parking in the district. For Austinites such as Jim Read, a self-described regular at the bar Lustre Pearl, paying for parking takes some getting used to.

“I’ve been coming here for a while, and it’s still a little weird,” he said. “But it’s not a huge deal.”

The Rainey Street district has 31 on-street pay stations, and four pay stations for approximately 125 parking spaces at the Mexican American Cultural Center, 600 River St. On-street parking costs the same as downtown, which is \$1 per hour during certain times, and MACC parking cost \$1 per hour from 8 a.m.–6 p.m. or a \$5 flat fee from 6 p.m.–3 a.m.

Nicholas Benson, manager of Banger’s, a bar located at 79 Rainey St., said although the paid parking has not significantly affected business, it has created some disruption.

“I think it organizes the street a little better, but it’s not great for our employees,” he said. “They are usually here longer than five hours, and they have to go out in the middle of their shift just to put money in their meter.”

Implementing paid parking was an effort by the city



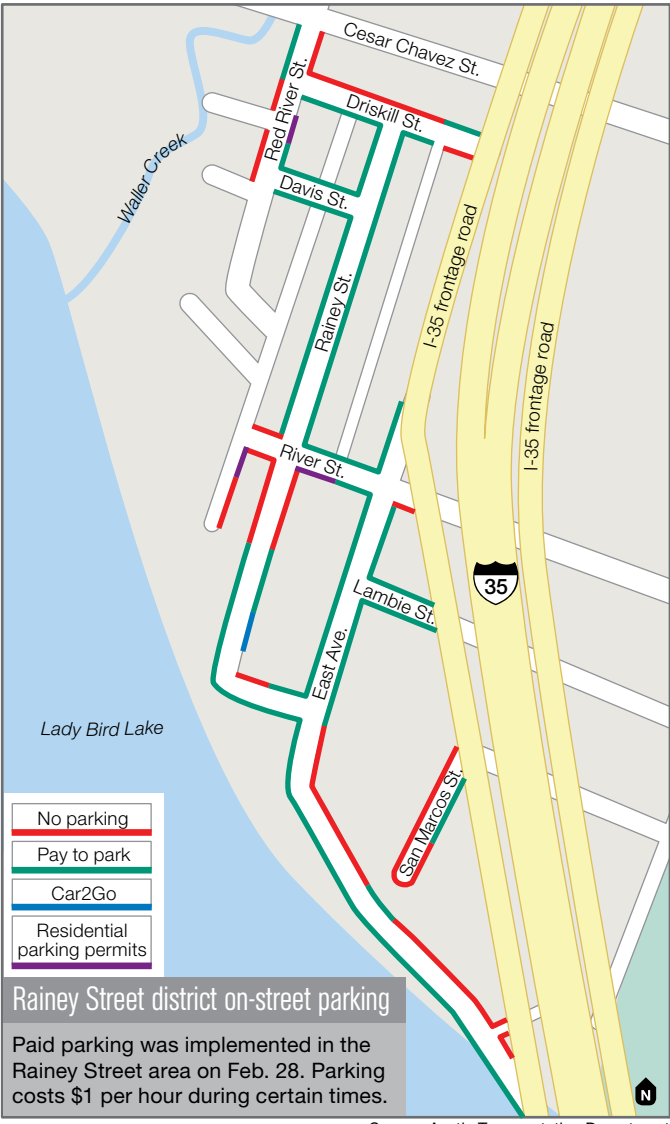
Paid parking is now enforced in the Rainey Street area.

to improve mobility in the Rainey Street district. Without paid parking, people would leave cars parked in the area all day and cause congestion, Austin Transportation Department spokeswoman Leah Fillion said.

REATX owner Jude Galligan, whose realtor firm is based in the Rainey Street area, said paid parking has accomplished the goal of not having cars in the same spot for a long period of time. He added that the biggest benefit is opening up the MACC parking lot to Rainey Street visitors.

“I think [paid parking is] an overwhelmingly positive addition to the neighborhood,” he said.

The city is considering long-term mobility projects for the Rainey Street area, including making Rainey Street one-way and adding sidewalks and a bike lane, Fillion said. The development of Rainey Street, which was rezoned in 2004 as a part of the Central Business District, has necessitated transportation fixes in the area, Fillion said.



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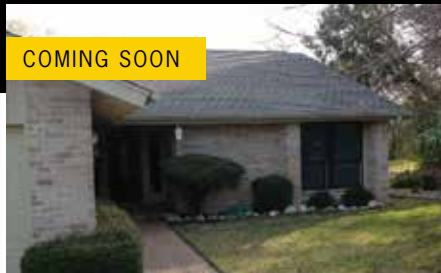
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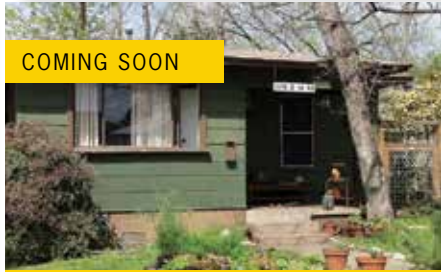
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AT THE CAPITOL

News from the 83rd Legislative Session

By Karen Brooks Harper
Capitol Correspondent

Freshman lawmakers learning of life at Capitol

Ask a freshman legislator in the Texas Capitol how the first several weeks of the session are going, and his or her answer is usually a variation of this:

"I just feel like I'm drinking from a fire hydrant," said newly elected Sen. Donna Campbell, R-New Braunfels, whose district includes parts of southern Travis County. "I've got my work cut out for me."

By that, she said she means learning the issues, navigating the marble halls of the "Pink Dome," meeting hundreds of new people every day and doing it all under the watchful eye of the media inside a frenetic 140-day legislative session that can make or break even the most seasoned lawmaker.

These are the trials of the newly elected, and it is not lost on the new crop of state legislators that voters replaced more incumbents during the past election cycle in Texas than at any other time in memory.

New faces

There are 40 freshmen in the 150-member House of Representatives, and one in the Senate, not including a few House members who won Senate seats last year for the first time. Together, they are a diverse bunch whose first round of legislation reflects not only local priorities, but

also a willingness to weigh in on controversial or complex issues affecting the state.

Expected to listen, learn and not file more than about a dozen bills during their first session, freshman lawmakers tend to have a legislative agenda that reflects their campaign priorities and goes for big projects—but rarely will they pass any major legislation their first time out of the gate.

Instead, their constituents can expect them to be able to pass some local bills that are uncontested and affect only their districts, a good way for freshmen to make their mark within the more than 7,000 pieces of legislation that have been filed this session.

Filed bills

Campbell is involved in myriad issues ranging from gun rights to transportation funding. Senators have larger districts and more legislative ground to cover than House members, so it is common for them to have several areas of interest.

Among bills she has filed or co-authored, her favorite pieces of legislation deal with "keeping Texas strong," she said: Affirming Texans' Second Amendment rights, supporting campus-gun legislation, tightening restrictions on where



From left, Reading Clerk Ilissa Nolan reads a resolution while freshman state Rep. Cecil Bell Jr., R-Paris, talks with state Rep. Jason Isaac, R-Dripping Springs, on Feb. 21.

abortions can be performed, and outlining the rights of Texans and Texas businesses to decline President Barack Obama's health care program. Campbell said gun rights, for example, protect Texans by allowing them to protect themselves, which is why she is supporting legislation allowing concealed-carry license holders to have weapons on campus.

She is also a member of the Senate

Transportation Committee and would like to explore new funding ideas such as using vehicle sales taxes for building highways.

But though her interests are broad, she said, she is also focused on state spending.

"The first priority, being a conservative, is to target our spending inefficiency," she said. "That's what I'm looking at. I think budget talks require budget hawks, and that's what I'm trying to learn."



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CALENDAR

April

03 through 28
'Mad Beat Hip & Gone'

The world premiere play from Steven Dietz is a coming-of-age comedy about two fictional characters immersed in the Beat Generation. Dietz is an Austin resident who is one of America's most widely produced and published contemporary playwrights, according to The University of Texas. 8 p.m. most dates. \$25–\$65. Zach Theatre, 1510 Tomey Road. 512-476-0541. www.zachtheatre.org

04 **Demetri Martin**

The stand-up comedian known for his one-liners makes an in-store appearance to read from and sign his new book, *Point Your Face at This*. The book combines Martin's drawings, jokes and page-long musings. 3:30 p.m. Free. Book People, 603 N. Lamar Blvd. 512-472-5050. www.bookpeople.com/event/demetri-martin-point-your-face

05 through 20
Hats Off to Dr. Seuss

An exhibition featuring the hat collection of Theodor Seuss Geisel, aka Dr. Seuss, is on display in honor of the 75th anniversary of his second book, "The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins." The exhibition also features prints and replicas of Seuss' secret art collection, which includes Seuss' original drawings, paintings and sculptures. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Free. Art on 5th Gallery, 3005 S. Lamar Blvd. 512-481-1111. www.arton5th.com. Twitter: @arton5th

07 **Statesman Capitol 10K**

The largest 10K in Texas and fifth-largest in the nation celebrates its 36th year in downtown Austin. Donations from the race benefit Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas. Start time 8 a.m. Registration April 1–4 is \$50 (adults), \$25 (12 and younger). Ann B. Richards Bridge. www.statesman.com/s/cap10k

13 through 14
Art City Austin 2013

The event features nationally recognized artists, local food, music and children's activities. Free (volunteers, children age 12 and younger), \$8 (adults at the gate). Cesar Chavez Street at Austin City Hall. 512-609-8591. www.artallianceaustin.org

14 **Petcasso - Animal Art from the Heart**

The annual event benefitting the Animal Trustees of Austin features a runway show with local celebrities and their pets, professional artwork inspired by pets, dinner from AT&T Center Executive Chef Josh Watkins and an auction. 6 p.m. \$200 for individual tickets, tickets start at \$2,000 for table sponsorship for preferred seating. AT&T Conference Center, 1900 University Ave. www.petcassoaustin.org

Worth the **TRIP**

Courtesy John Grubbs

18 through 21
Old Settler's Music Festival

The 26th annual festival features Americana, acoustic jazz, blues and bluegrass music as well as camping,

food, drinks, and arts and crafts. The lineup includes Elephant Revival, Green Mountain Grass, Terri Hendrix and Peter Rowan's Twang an' Groove. \$25 for a one-day wristband, up to \$519 for a platinum pass. Salt Lick Barbecue Pavilion and Camp Ben McCulloch, 18300 FM 1826, Driftwood. 888-512-7469. www.oldsettlersmusicfest.org. Twitter: @oldsettler

19 through 21
Austin Reggae Festival

Bands including The Wailers will perform at the three-day concert event, which is in its 20th year. \$35 (three-day pass), \$15 (single-day pass). Auditorium Shores, 800 W. Riverside Drive. www.austinreggaefest.com

19 through 21
Moto GP World Championship

The world's elite motorcycle racers compete at Circuit of The Americas. Gates open at 7:30 a.m. \$89–\$1,123. Circuit of The Americas, 9201 Circuit of The Americas Blvd. 512-301-6600. www.circuitoftheamericas.com, www.motogp.com



Courtesy Camp Mabry

20 through 21
Texas Military Forces Annual Open House

Camp Mabry's largest annual event includes an air show, family activities, military re-enactments and admission to the veterans museum. 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Free. Camp Mabry, 2200 W. 35th St. www.txmf.us

20 **Record Store Day**

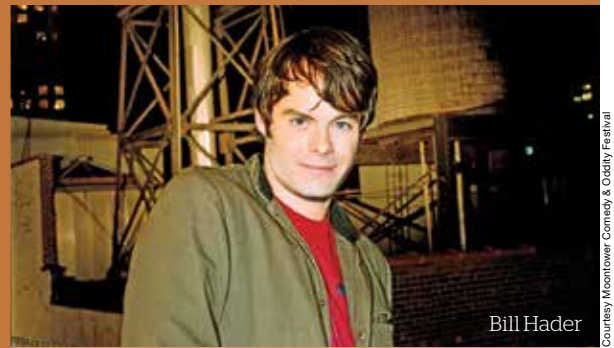
Independently owned record stores throughout the nation highlight music and the vinyl and CD medium. Special releases and promotional products accompany the event. Various locations throughout Austin. www.recordstoreday.com



Courtesy Austin Food and Wine Festival

26 through 28
Austin Food and Wine Festival

Local chefs and restaurants lead demonstrations, seminars and tastings. 7–9:30 p.m. April 26, 10 a.m.–9:30 p.m. April 27, 11 a.m.–1:45 p.m. April 28. \$250 (two-day pass), \$850 (three-day pass). Auditorium Shores, 800 W. Riverside Drive; Republic Square Park, 422 Guadalupe St. www.austinfoodandwinefestival.com

Featured **EVENT**

Bill Hader

Courtesy Moontower Comedy & Oddity Festival

APR 24 through 27
Moontower Comedy & Oddity Festival

Bill Hader, Jim Gaffigan, Reggie Watts and Dana Carvey headline the festival that features more than 100 comics during four days at 12 venues, 10 of which are within a five-block radius of downtown.

The inaugural Moontower Festival in 2012 drew approximately 20,000 people, which organizer Jim Ritts said far exceeded his expectations.

"When we stood here [last year] and we boldly and confidently announced that we were going to do [Moontower] and our hope was that it would be one of the top three or four comedy festivals in all of North America, I would be lying to you if I said our actual sense of confidence was equal to the bravado we showed that day," Ritts said. "The truth is that it was a giant gamble."

\$129 (Fan Badge), \$299 (Ace Badge), \$599 (VIP Badge). Multiple venues. www.moontowercomedyfestival.com

27 **Eeyore's Birthday Party**

The all-ages birthday celebration of the fictional donkey from "Winnie the Pooh" raises money for Austin nonprofits. The 50th annual event features live music, a children's area, costume contest and face painting. 11 a.m.–dark. Free. Pease Park, 1100 Kingsbury St. 512-448-5160. www.eeyores.org

28 **Schlotsky's Bun Run**

The 5K and 10K race is family-friendly and open to casual and serious racers alike. Children and pets can race in the run that benefits the Austin Sunshine Camps. 7 a.m. \$35 (10K), \$30 (5K), \$15 (Kid's K), Fastest Dog in Austin (\$10 per dog). Starting at the corner of Riverside Drive and South First Street. www.bunrun.com

May

12 **Feed Your Spirit**

The fair features metaphysical and holistic practitioners, body workers, astrologers and vendors to support the body, mind and spirit. The fair is hosted by the Sanctuary of the Awakened Soul, and additional events are planned for May, July, September and November. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Free. Holiday Inn Town Lake, 20 N. I-35. www.sanctuaryoftheawakenedsoul.com

Online Calendar

Find more or submit Central Austin events at www.impactnews.com/cta-calendar.

To have Central Austin events considered for the print edition, they must be submitted online by the second Wednesday of the month.

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BUSINESS

Precision Camera & Video

Family-owned store moves into larger location

By Gene Davis

Since he started repairing cameras in his spare bedroom as a college graduate with a degree in Japanese history, Jerry Sullivan has focused on building his own job and business.

After learning about camera repair from mentors Steve Gamboa and Bob Bacon, Sullivan opened Precision Camera Repair and Rental in 1976. The 750-square-foot repair shop had a small photo gallery, and Sullivan laughed when asked about his first location.

"It was ridiculous," he said. "We would have a sale, and people would have to leave the building before anyone else could come in [because the building was so small]."

Precision Camera, which Sullivan co-owns with his wife, Rosemary, expanded before moving in 1999 to 3800 N. Lamar Blvd. Sullivan was told last year that the North Lamar shopping center would be bulldozed, and after not finding any other available spaces in the same area, he relocated the store to the intersection of Anderson Lane and Burnet Road.

Sullivan said he is still in disbelief about the new 20,000-square foot building, which opened March 1, and called the old building being bulldozed a blessing

in disguise.

"[Customers] walk in here and are like, 'Wow,'" he said. "It's pretty amazing compared to the old place."

Precision Camera offers camera sales, rentals, repairs, classes and photo printing. The store carries brands such as Nikon, Canon, Sony and Olympus and also sells camera accessories.

The new location has a frame shop, on-site classes, darkroom, a larger rental department and photo lab with six self-service kiosks and an instant printer.

"We are a complete camera shop," Sullivan said. "There isn't anything else like it in Texas."

Professional photographer Kirk Tuck, a frequent Precision Camera customer, said the store's growth is even more impressive considering that most other camera shops have gone out of business. Having a camera shop that caters to both professionals and novices is priceless in a town such as Austin, he said.

"I think it's a real testament to how well Rosemary and Jerry run the place, not just as photographers, but as a business, to not just tread water but to increase sales and increase profitability," he said.



Photos by Gene Davis

Precision Camera & Video co-owners Jerry and Rosemary Sullivan say customers like the new store.

On-site photography classes

Photography classes are held on-site at the new Precision Camera & Video location.

Owner Jerry Sullivan said the demand for classes seems to outpace the supply.

"That's been the largest need of the photography business," he said. "People buy all these cameras, and they are so sophisticated that they really are overwhelming, they don't know how to use them."

Customers who purchase a camera at Precision Camera get a credit for a free class taught by trained professionals. In addition to beginner classes on subjects such as basic point-and-shoot camera skills, Precision Camera University holds intermediate and advanced classes on subjects such as studio lighting and food photography.

April classes scheduled for Precision Camera's on-site learning facility include:

- April 3: Intermediate Photo Class 1
- April 8: Intro to Studio Lighting
- April 9: Basic DSLR Class
- April 13: The Art of Food Photography
- April 15: Intermediate Studio Lighting
- April 18: Digital Camera Workshop
- April 20: Basic Point and Shoot Class
- April 23: Adobe Photoshop 101
- April 27: Composition, Angle, Lighting & Lens



A Precision Camera & Video staff member (left) helps a customer with his camera.

Camera repairs

Precision Camera & Video offers repairs on classic and digital cameras.

Co-owner Jerry Sullivan, who started in the camera industry doing repairs, trained Dave Edwards to do the repairs at Precision Camera. Sullivan and Edwards do all the repairs at the camera store.

Sullivan said the digital cameras have gotten to the point where they are impossible for most people to repair themselves. Canon, for instance, has \$150,000 worth of equipment it uses just to diagnose what is wrong with a camera, he said.

For repairs the store cannot do, Precision Camera sends the camera to other certified repair centers to have the work completed. Precision Camera also offers rush service, which costs twice as much as a regular repair but means the work will usually be done the same day.



Dave Edwards does the majority of repairs at Precision Camera & Video.

Precision Camera & Video



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David Hatley, general manager of Southside Flying Pizza, says staff uses fresh ingredients in its pizzas.

DINING

Southside Flying Pizza

Pizzeria spins pies, gives back to area school

By Peter McCrady

There are a lot of things going on at Southside Flying Pizza, from airborne pizza dough to colorful murals surrounding the building, but David Hatley, general manager of the restaurant, said the real show is the pizza. “The brick oven and the shows of the cooks are big reasons why people come in here, but mostly, it’s our pizza,” Hatley said. “It’s fantastic.”

The pizzeria, which has been open for about seven years, makes its own Italian sausage, pizza sauces, salad dressings and gluten-free dough. Hatley said the pizzeria tries to get local ingredients whenever possible, and staff makes sure everything the shop gets is fresh.

Hatley, who had been in pizza delivery for 17 years, came to the pizzeria about four years ago and took the general manager position in February. Hatley said it is a team effort to deliver quality pizza, and each member of the team takes his or her job seriously.

“Our prep guy is kind of the heart of this place,” Hatley said. “He’s more important than me, really. He’s been here since close to the beginning, and he’s really, really particular. ... Our pizza guys, our cooks, it’s an art what they do. The cooks are just about as important as anybody here. Everybody definitely has their very, very important role.”

Participating in the community is something Hatley said is important to the restaurant and its staff.

“That’s one of the major aspects of this town,” he said. “We like our stuff that is local. We like our homegrown stuff, and it matters to people in this town.”

Hatley said he is trying to put his own mark on the restaurant and generate more business. He wants to start a late-night special of a large, three-topping pizza for \$12.99 after 9 p.m.

“We’re just trying to make sure we’re sending out quality food,” he said. “Our pizza takes time and care.”

The pizza

Southside Flying Pizza offers a variety of pizzas, from traditional, hand-tossed dough to gluten-free options. Customers can build their own or choose from a variety of specialty pies.

General Manager David Hatley said the most popular specialty pizza is the Southsider, which includes chopped pepperoni, Canadian bacon, sausage, red onions, bell peppers and mushrooms.

The salads

David Hatley said salads are another popular item at Southside Flying Pizza, and the most popular salad is probably the Greek salad.

“I just think there’s a uniqueness to it, and all these different flavors complement themselves really well,” he said.

The restaurant offers Caesar, house, spinach and Greek salads.



The community

Southside Flying Pizza donates 5 percent of all its Internet orders to the Texas School for the Deaf, which is located at 1102 S. Congress Ave. David Hatley said the business has been donating to the school since about 2009, and children from the school painted the mural on the fence.

“This is our community,” he said. “You’re supposed to do that sort of stuff.”



On the menu

Personal cheese pizza **\$5.25**

\$9.50 Medium cheese pizza

Large cheese pizza **\$11.50**

Additional toppings are **\$1.75** per topping for a large pizza

Meat, fruit and vegetable toppings include pepperoni, Italian sausage, Canadian bacon, prosciutto, Roma tomatoes, Kalamata olives and sun-dried tomatoes—prices range from 50 cents per topping for a slice to \$1.75 per topping for a large pizza

Appetizers include spinach artichoke dip, oven-baked chicken wings and garlic knots—prices range from \$2.95 to \$8.95.

Specialty pizzas include basil pesto and the Southsider—\$15 medium, \$17 large

Southside Flying Pizza

2206 S. Congress Ave.
Mon.–Thu. 11 a.m.–11 p.m.,
Fri.–Sat. 11 a.m.–midnight,
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Nonprofit Texas 4000 cycling team will ride from Austin to Anchorage, Alaska, in 70 days starting June 2.

NONPROFIT

Texas 4000

Austin cycling team rides to Alaska for cancer

By Lyndsey Taylor

This summer, 71 University of Texas at Austin students will take a 70-day journey to Anchorage, Alaska, on a charity bicycle ride that is more than twice as long as the Tour de France.

The students are part of Texas 4000, an organization that hosts the longest charity bicycle ride for cancer awareness in the world. On June 2, the Texas 4000 team will split into three groups, each with their own route to Alaska. The team will sleep in churches, gymnasiums, campsites and homes of host families throughout the trip.

Austin-based Jack & Adam's Bicycles offers the cyclists a discount on their bikes, and most lodging is donated by various benefactors, Texas 4000 Program Director Lance Pyburn said.

At each of their stops, riders will give presentations to inform people about cancer, prevention and healthy living.

"We're trying to inspire people we meet across the country," Pyburn said.

Prior to their departure, students must raise at least \$4,500 and ride at least 1,500 miles with their teammates.

So far, rider and cancer survivor Bucky Ribbeck has raised more than \$21,000 for the trip with a goal of reaching \$25,000. Ribbeck said he does not consider himself to be a cyclist but that Texas 4000 is a good reason to become one.

"It's great because this organization opens up the opportunity for people who aren't necessarily the best cyclists to come out and show that they are willing to become cyclists for an extended period of time to fight this disease," Ribbeck said.

Ribbeck was diagnosed in May 2009 with a bone cancer called Ewing's sarcoma; he was 17 years old. He joined Texas 4000 to be an example to others fighting cancer. Ribbeck reached out to social connections, wrote letters to friends and family, and panhandled on Fifth Street and Lamar

Boulevard to raise the funds, he said.

"[It's] being able to fight back and do something to show that I'm a survivor, and this is what you can do with your life after you have survived cancer," he said. "You can go on and do great things like this. You can give back, and you can live."


As part of the June 1 kickoff for the trip, the nonprofit hosts the Atlas Ride, which allows Central Texans to ride with the team in the first 25, 50 or 75 miles from Cedar Park to Lampasas, Pyburn said.

For information on the Atlas Ride, visit www.texas4000.org.

Burnin' rubber

Texas 4000 team members have ridden
4,500 miles from Austin to Anchorage
2 million miles in 10 years

5 flat tires per day (average)
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Texas 4000



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HISTORY ★ AUSTIN

O. Henry (William Porter)

Writer's life has as much legend as his fiction

By Peter McCrady

William Sydney Porter, more commonly known by his pen name O. Henry, is widely recognized for his short stories. His work is distinguished by its wit, characterization and often a plot twist at the end of a story.

"That twist ending is something O. Henry is known for," said Michael Hoinski, culture and arts education coordinator with the Austin Parks and Recreation Department's O. Henry Museum. "Kind of pulling the rug out from underneath you."

But outside the world of writing, the story of O. Henry's life also includes plenty of its own elements of fiction and fantastic situations.

"If you ask five different people who know about O. Henry, you might get five slightly different answers. That's the beauty of O. Henry," Hoinski said. "He's this really dynamic character who's ... been in a lot of really interesting situations and defining moments in his life."

O. Henry was born Sept. 11, 1862, in Greensboro N.C., and moved to Cotulla, south of San Antonio, in 1882 for health

reasons. He moved to Austin in 1884 and married Athol Estes in 1887. O. Henry held several jobs while in Austin, including working as a draftsman at the General Land Office, a teller at the First National Bank of Austin and publisher of a weekly satirical paper called "The Rolling Stone" for a year.

O. Henry lost his job at the bank after discrepancies were found in his bank records, and he was indicted on federal embezzlement charges. Before his trial, O. Henry went to Honduras for six months and then returned to Austin to attend to his ailing wife. O. Henry was found guilty of embezzlement in February 1898 and sentenced to five years in prison at a federal penitentiary in Ohio.

Hoinski said there still is debate as to

whether O. Henry was guilty and fled to Honduras to escape trial, but it was the trip that turned the jury against him.

Hoinski said myths around O. Henry continued during his time in prison, including that he was allowed to drink beer during his incarceration and that he saved the warden's life. While in prison, O. Henry created his famous pen name, though its exact origins are unknown.

"That's the story of O. Henry," Hoinski said. "A lot of elements of his story, you're kind of left guessing."

After his release in 1902, O. Henry moved to New York and was contracted to write one story a week for *The New York World Sunday Magazine*. O. Henry published 381 short stories, including *The Gift of the Magi*, before he died in 1910.

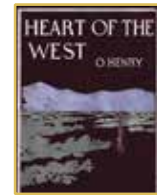
(1862) O. Henry is born

William Porter, later known by his pen name O. Henry, is born near Greensboro, N.C., to Algernon and Mary Jane Porter.



(1887) Marriage and work

O. Henry elopes with Athol Estes in Austin, where he lives and works for the next 10 years, including jobs as a bank teller and publisher of "The Rolling Stone."



(1902) O. Henry's release

O. Henry is released from prison and soon moves to New York City, where he writes and publishes 381 short stories while working for *The New York World Sunday Magazine*.

1860

1870

1880

1890

1900



(1882) The move to Texas

O. Henry moves to Texas after developing a cough. He works on Richard Hall's ranch near Cotulla, a town south of San Antonio.

(1898) Imprisonment

After a six-month stay in Honduras, O. Henry returns to care for his ailing wife. He is found guilty of embezzlement and goes to prison in Columbus, Ohio, where he serves about three years of his five-year sentence.



(1910) Death

O. Henry was a heavy drinker, and his health declined because of it. He dies of cirrhosis of the liver, complications of diabetes and an enlarged heart at 47.

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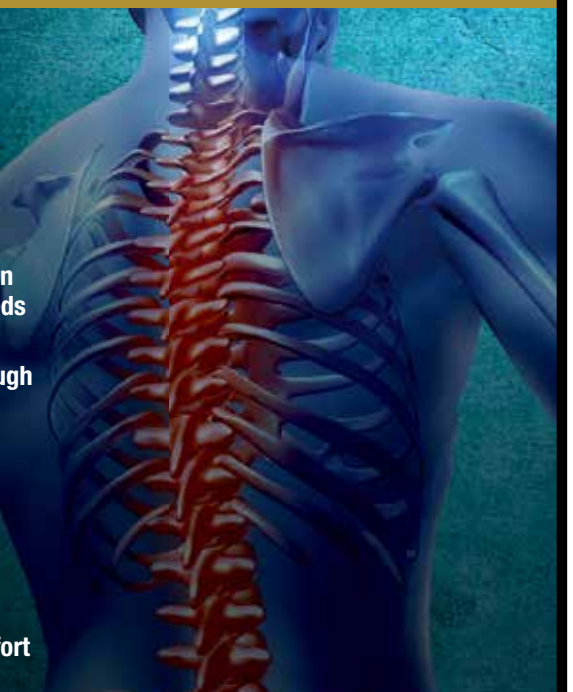
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- Provide information about health education
- Meet adaptive equipment needs for mobility and comfort



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SUMMER CAMP *guide*

Compiled by Gene Davis and Peter McCrady



Astro Camp

All Saints' Episcopal Church, 209 W. 27th St.
512-961-5333, www.austinplanetarium.org

Astro Camp I

Campers learn about the galaxy through hands-on activities, building a basic telescope and spending time in the Austin Planetarium's Discovery Dome mobile planetarium.

When: July 22–26, 1–5 p.m.

Ages: 8–11

Cost: \$210

Astro Camp II

During the mini space camp, campers build rockets, design rovers, talk to an astronaut and work on a fictional space mission.

When: June 24–28, 12:30–4:30 p.m.

Ages: 9–12

Cost: \$210

Astro Camp Junior

The camp is similar to Astro Camp I, but geared toward younger campers.

When: July 22–26, 9 a.m.–noon

Ages: 6–8

Cost: \$160



Courtesy Camp Khabele

Camp Khabele

Camp Khabele

Campers spend several hours learning about art or science and the rest of the day doing activities such as swimming.

Where: 801 Rio Grande St.

When: June 10–July 12, half-day camps are either 8:30 a.m.–noon or 12:30–3:30 p.m.

Full-day camps are 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Ages: Students entering fourth–eighth grades
Cost: \$175 per week for half-day camp, \$250 per week for full-day camp

Information: www.khabele.org



Growin' Together

Courtesy Growin' Together

Growin' Together

4105 Manchaca Road • 512-537-0955,
www.growintogether.org/Growin_Together

Art of Green Technology camps

Campers work with ecologists, landscape architects, engineers and artists to design and build projects that conserve energy, water and soil.

When: June 24–July 26, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Ages: 8–14

Cost: \$300 per week

Hands-on summer day camps

During the three age-based camps, campers learn about hunting and gathering skills, how to use natural building materials and how people lived in the past.

When: June 17–July 26, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Ages: Ages 5–10

Cost: \$195 per week

Mad Science Camp

Mad Science Camp offers nine camps that combine in-class learning, outdoor games, physical activities and hands-on applications of principles of science.

Where: Bryker Woods Elementary School, 3309 Kerbey Lane

When: Weeklong camps June 10–Aug. 9

Ages: Most camps designed for ages 6–12

Cost: Starting at \$160

Information: 512-892-1143,
www.austin.madscience.org

STEM Innovation Camps

Austin Discovery School, 8509 FM 969

All camps are \$325 per week

www.skillpointalliance.org/stepup

Globaloria

Campers work together to invent, build and share their own interactive video games.

When: July 8–26, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Ages: 11–14

Future City

Campers imagine, design and build cities of the future.

When: July 8–26, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Ages: 10–14



Austin Film Festival Summer Film Camp

Camps cover claymation, an introduction to filmmaking and genre-based short films. Most camps last a week.

Where: St. Austin Catholic School, 1911 San Antonio St.

When: June 17–Aug. 2

Ages: 9–18

Cost: \$175–\$390

Information: 512-478-4795,
www.austinfilmfestival.com



Courtesy Austin Film Society

Austin Film Society

Austin Film Society's Summer Filmmaking Camp

Austin Studios, 1901 E. 51st St. • 512-322-0145 • Camps cost \$275 for members, \$325 for nonmembers • www.austinfilm.org

Animation Creation

Campers learn about animation through activities that look into the basic history, theory and practice of the art.

When: July 8–12, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Ages: 9–11

Indie Filmmaking

Campers learn how to create narrative film projects and write and film their own stories in the weeklong camp divided in three sections.

When: June 10–28, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Ages: Multiple age ranges

Scary Filmmaking

Campers learn about the fundamentals of scary movies, create their own short films and learn about visual effects.

When: July 15–19, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Ages: 12–15

Dougherty Arts Camp

1110 Barton Springs Road • Students are put into two age groups, 7–8 years old and 9–12 years old • 512-974-4040, www.austintexas.gov/page/dougherty-summer-camp

Art Crime Scene

The camp combines crime scene investigation skills with art instruction.

When: July 15–26, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Cost: \$415 for two weeks

Don't Be Afraid of the Dark

Campers use materials that glow, shimmer and shine and learn about photography, painting and sculpture.

When: July 29–Aug. 9, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Cost: \$415 for two weeks

The Fragile Earth

Campers practice printmaking, photography, T-shirt making and sculpture while learning about the impact of life on Earth.

When: July 1–12, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Cost: \$373 for two weeks

Griffin School Arts Summer Camp

Campers participate in a variety of art workshops, work with local artists and have their work appear in an art exhibit at the end of camp.

Where: The Griffin School, 5001 Evans Ave.

When: July 15–Aug. 2, 12:30–3:30 p.m.

Ages: Students in sixth–ninth grade

Cost: \$500 for three weeks

Information: www.studiogriffin.org

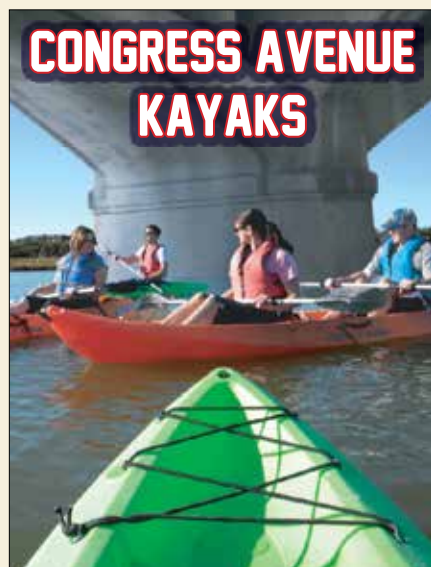


Courtesy School of Rock

School of Rock

School of Rock Summer Camp

School of Rock hosts five summer camps for aspiring young musicians. The Beginner Camp is for students who are new to their



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www.violinsetc.com

instrument, while the Performance Camps are two-week intensive camps that culminate in a live performance at an Austin venue.

Where: School of Rock, 2525 W. Anderson Lane, Ste. 138

When: June 17–Aug. 17

Ages: Multiple age ranges

Cost: \$550 for one-week Beginner Camp, \$1,100 for two-week Performance Camp

Information: 512-670-8521, www.austin.schoolofrock.com/camp-signup

Performing arts

Hideout Theatre Improv summer camps

Children learn the basics of improv, storytelling and stagecraft, and play games, perform scenes and make crafts.

Where: The Hideout Theatre, 617 Congress Ave.

When: Weeklong sessions from June 17–Aug. 16, multiple time frames

Ages: Various age groups

Cost: \$175 for half-day weeklong camp, \$275 for full-day weeklong camp

Information: 512-443-3688, www.hideouttheatre.com/improv-for-kids/summercamp



Courtesy Kids in Motion

Kids in Motion

Butler Dance Education Center, 501 W. Third St. • \$265 per week

www.balletaustin.org/community/camps.php

The Broadway Kids

Campers learn child-friendly choreography and songs from popular Disney musicals.

When: June 10–14, Aug. 5–9, 9 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Ages: 5–10

Dance Discoveries

Campers learn about what goes into popular fairy tale–based ballets.

When: Aug. 12–16, 8:30 a.m.–noon

Ages: 5–10

Performing Arts Camp for Kids

Campers are immersed in creative movement, music, singing and art.

When: June 17–21, Aug. 19–23, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Ages: 4–8

Summer Dance Camp



Lori MacDougall

Summer Dance Camp and Breakdance Summer Camp

Break dance camp teaches children dance stances to create high-energy routines and gives participants a range of dancing instruction.

Where: 1700 S. Lamar Blvd., Ste. 338

When: Summer Dance Camp is June 17–July 26 from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. (half day) or 9 a.m.–5 p.m. (full day), break dance camp is June 10–July 26, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

Ages: Ages 4–10 for Summer Dance Camp and 7–12 for Breakdance Summer Camp

Cost: Breakdance Summer Camp is \$150 per week, Summer Dance Camp is \$150 (half day) or \$200 (full day) per week

Information: 512-442-5299, www.galaxydances.com/camps.html

Zach Theatre summer camps

Zach Theatre Performing Arts School, 1510 Toomey Road • 512-476-0541, <http://www.zachtheatre.org/education/zach-summer-camps>

Intro to Musical Theatre

Campers spend half the day with an acting teacher learning theater games, character creation and story structure, and the other half with a vocal coach and choreographer.

When: June 24–28 and July 22–26, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Ages: Grades 3–5

Cost: \$325

Story Drama

The camp focuses on a new children's story every day and has campers explore its themes and characters.

When: July 15–19, July 17–24, various times

Ages: 3 1/2–4 1/2

Cost: \$95

Outdoors



Austin Outdoor Kids



Courtesy Austin Outdoor Kids

Austin Outdoor Kids summer camps

This traveling day camp goes to various locations, including Hancock Springs, Emma Long Metropolitan Park and Pedernales Falls State Park, and aims to foster enjoyment and exploration of outdoor spaces.

Where: Multiple locations

When: June 17–Aug. 2, 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Ages: 5–13

Cost: \$305–\$320 per week

Information: www.sites.google.com/site/austinoutdoorkids

Camacho Youth Summer Camp

Children learn archery, mountain biking, kayaking, rock climbing, swimming, geocaching and hiking in various sessions.

Where: Camacho Activity Center, 34 Robert Martinez Jr. St.

When: Weekly sessions June 10–Aug. 16

Ages: 5–12

Cost: \$75 per week

Information: 512-391-1863, www.austincamps.org

Sports



University of Texas sports camps

The University of Texas holds summer sports camps for baseball, basketball, diving, football, golf, rowing, soccer, softball, track, sports medicine, strength and conditioning, swimming, tennis, track and field, and volleyball. Many of the camps require completed medical forms. Age range, cost, location and dates vary.

Information: www.texasports.com/camps/tex-camps.html

Worth the trip



Iron Horse Country Ranch Dirt Bike Camp

The camp teaches children the fundamentals of riding motorcycles and takes them on motocross-style tracks. Shuttles are available at two locations, Cedar Park High School and Steiner Ranch Elementary School.

Where: 9100 E. FM 243, Bertram

When: Weekly from June 10–Aug. 23, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

Ages: 8–15

Cost: \$460

Information: 512-917-5733, www.ironhorsecountry.com

Writing/language



Badgerdog Creative Writing Summer Camp

Workshops allow children to work with a professional writer to explore fiction, poetry, nonfiction and playwriting.

Where: Various locations

When: Multiple three-week sessions starting June 10, 9 a.m.–noon

Ages: Grades 3–12

Cost: \$450

Information: www.austinlibrary.org/site/PageNavigator/Badgerdog/bdog_summer_camp.html

Camp ¡Vámonos!

This Spanish language camp is taught by Megan Baker, a bilingual mother with more than 25 years of child care experience.

Where: 6919 Reese Lane

When: June 10–Aug. 16, 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Ages: 5–11

Cost: \$155 per week

Information: 512-453-8382, www.campvamonos.com

Chinese-Spanish Bilingual Summer Camp

Hosted by Meggie Chou, this camp teaches Mandarin Chinese and Spanish to students of all skill levels. Children will learn the languages while exploring the cultures with native Chinese and Spanish instructors.

Where: 710 E. 41st St.

When: July 8–12, July 15–19, 9 a.m.–noon

Ages: 5–10

Cost: \$265 per week, \$25 registration

Information: www.chinesewithmeggie.com



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Food trucks

Continued from I 1

Food-trailer parks

Despite the expected closure of the South Congress Food Trailer Park and closure of the East Side Drive In Food Trailer Park in 2012, Alex King, manager of the Downtown Austin Food Park that recently opened at 30 N. I-35, said he expects food-trailer parks to continue opening.

“I think there will always be entrepreneurs who want to invest in the culture and see it succeed and find locations,” he said.

King said mobile food vendors benefit from being grouped together because they can share customers and resources. Mobile food vendors also have many ideas or tips they can learn from each other, he said.

Likewise, the food-trailer park landowner gets to collect rent after making an initial investment in getting the permits and installation needed to provide electricity, King said. Some food-trailer parks also set up live music and marketing for the park, he said.

“[Food-trailer parks] create a community environment where everyone can work together and play off each others customers,” he said.

However, King said Austin’s rapid development has made it more difficult to find open land suitable for a food-trailer park. Mobile food vendors were a good option for landowners during the economic downturn, but now that financing is more readily

available for bigger projects, the short-term, relatively low-profit option of having a food-trailer park becomes less appealing, Hurt said.

“I think just from a practical standpoint, real estate will become more scarce, therefore decreasing the number of ... food trailers,” Hurt said.

Meanwhile, food-trailer parks have opened in Round Rock and Pflugerville. Parks are also planned for Georgetown, Hutto and Cedar Park.

Potter said he expects the saturation of mobile food vendors in Central Austin to cause more food trucks to open outside the city limits.

Brewing partnership

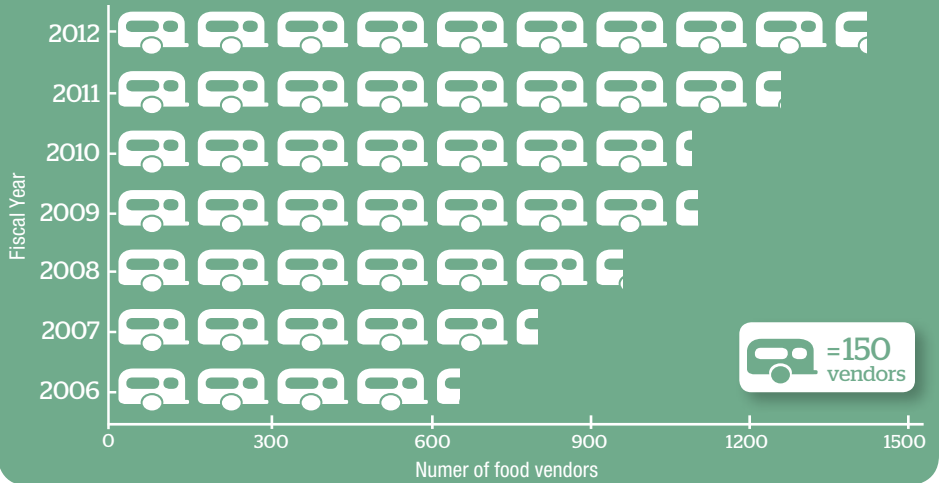
As available, affordable land becomes more scarce, a growing number of mobile food vendors have been opening or operating in collaboration with new or established bars in Central Austin.

Within the past two months, The Bacon Bus opened on the patio of Craft Pride, 61 Rainey St., and The Blue Ox opened on the patio of The Buzz Mill, 1505 Town Creek Drive.

Shilpa Bakre, Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau spokeswoman, said she thinks the area’s food trucks have helped spur the rapid development of the Rainey Street area. By teaming up with a mobile food vendor, a bar does not have to go through the lengthy process of getting food permits and can

The growth of mobile food vendors in Travis County

The number of registered mobile food vendors, which includes food trucks and food trailers, nearly doubled between 2006 and 2012.



Source: Austin Health and Human Services Department

open sooner, she said.

“One of the reasons [the Rainey Street] district has been able to develop as quickly as it has is because it didn’t actually have to be mired down with the food permitting part of it in getting it up and running,” she said.

Meanwhile, mobile food vendors such as Melvin’s Deli Comfort, 501 E. 53rd St., are operating by themselves in parking lots, while others, such as Garbo’s Lobster Truck, travel around on a daily basis.

that increased the inspections and fees on the industry.

Texas Restaurant Association spokeswoman Wendy Saari credited a general lack of conflict between the brick-and-mortar restaurants and mobile food vendors for Austin’s prevalent food truck culture and the regulations that have been put in place.

“I think that the food culture kind of came up here in Austin a lot differently than it did in other cities,” she said. “I think it’s a part of the Austin culture.”

Regulations

Austin City Council passed a set of regulations on mobile food vendors in 2011

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Food trailers



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austintexas.gov/water



Capital Metro

Continued from I 1

In 2012, the agency outsourced all its bus operators and maintenance workers to third-party contractors. Capital Metro data shows ridership also jumped 4.7 percent in 2012 compared with a national average increase of 2.6 percent. MetroRail ridership has tripled since launching in March 2010, much of which is attributed to Capital Metro expanding its hours to include Friday night and Saturday service in 2012.

The agency is also close to having two months of operating expenses in its reserves, one of the recommendations from the Sunset review, as well as creating five-year capital and financial plans.

"We put a lot of discipline in the organization: holding our employees accountable, new business practices and processes where we looked very critically at everything," Watson said. "All of that together led us to make some decisions that have sort of righted the ship, if you will, on the finances."

Righting the ship

One of the changes Watson implemented was including public participation and performance measures during the budgeting process. Interim Chief Financial Officer Billy Hamilton said the board and Watson also constantly review the agency's finances on how to do a better job with its resources.

"Linda came in and really took the attitude that we have to look at [the budget] from top to bottom," he said. "I can remember a lot of meetings on the budget where a lot of hard decisions were made [asking], 'Can we get by without this?'"

As part of the Sunset recommendations, the agency had to adopt a five-year capital improvement plan, a balanced budget each year and a five-year strategic plan that drives the budget.

"You can make what seems like reasonable decisions now that can have massive implications 10 years down the road," Hamilton said. "The one thing I've learned with transit is you have to look both at the near term and over the horizon."

In August, Capital Metro outsourced its bus operators and mechanics to third-party contractors. The workers previously were

under StarTran, which was a nonprofit arm of Capital Metro and cost the agency too much money, according to the Sunset report. Using third-party contractors will save the agency \$34 million over seven years after one-time expenses of \$2.1 million in fiscal year 2012, mainly for legal fees and sick and vacation leave payouts, staff reported.

State Sen. Kirk Watson, D-Austin, who wrote the bill that put Capital Metro under Sunset review, said he is pleased with the work the agency has done in taking the Sunset recommendations seriously.

"They have also gone beyond the recommendations in some areas such as transparency, becoming in 2010 the first transit agency in Texas to earn the comptroller's Gold Circle designation for measures such as posting the agency checkbook online," he said via email.

Regional transit plans

Just a few years ago, Linda Watson said, Capital Metro was not included in urban rail discussions. Now the agency is spearheading Project Connect, a regional transportation plan that includes urban and commuter rail and bus-rapid transit.

The Transit Working Group, which the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization created to provide input on regional high-capacity transit plans in Central Texas, is still meeting to discuss financing the plan. Representatives from Capital Metro, the city and Lone Star Rail District are members of TWG.

"Now it's weekly, multiple meetings. The relationships between Capital Metro, the City of Austin and Lone Star Rail are dramatically improved," she said.

Kirk Watson said the agency has become a serious player in regional transportation discussions.

"The agency must be an integral part of any team that's working on transportation solutions," he said. "Our future is bleak if [public] transit isn't an integral part of the picture."

In 2014, Capital Metro will roll out the first leg of Project Connect with MetroRapid, its bus-rapid transit system that will run on North Lamar Boulevard to South Congress Avenue and on Burnet Road to South Lamar Boulevard.

Q&A WITH LINDA WATSON, CAPITAL METRO PRESIDENT/CEO



plan [called Project Connect], and we hope to have that finalized this spring, including financing mechanisms, so we can start with prioritized projects that we can work to start implementing.

Q Why did you take this job and the challenge?

A What I saw was an agency that needed leadership, that probably had morale problems because of all the issues and negative publicity, and also, an agency that needed its image improved in the community. It was [similar work] that I did in Orlando. ... When I came in and talked to people [in Austin] and saw the potential for transit in this community, I got very excited about it. I was very ready for this position.

Q What are some of the job's unexpected challenges?

A I didn't know the finances were as bad as they were. I had the benefit of the Sunset audit. ... when Billy [Hamilton, interim CFO] would walk into my office and say, 'You're not going to believe this,' [I knew] the finances were in much worse shape than I thought.

Q What are some of Capital Metro's goals for the next year?

A This is a pivotal year for us because ... everything we've done in the last two years has put us in the perfect position to start looking externally and regionally. ... We've been working with the City of Austin [and] Lone Star Rail on a regional transit system

Q How close do you think Austin is to having an urban rail system?

A I see that path moving forward as getting much better. As I mentioned, the three entities—the city, Lone Star Rail and us—are working daily to make the kind of progress that's needed. I think we're on the right path.

Q Is there anything else you would like the public to know about Capital Metro now?

A We're a different organization. My goal is to really become a solution in this community for mobility and congestion. I want this agency to be seen as a solution rather than what we've been viewed as in the past, as a social service agency.

As part of Project Connect, Lone Star Rail is planning a commuter rail line from San Antonio to Georgetown.

Mike Martinez, Capital Metro board of directors chairman who also sits on City Council, said Capital Metro plans to hire a regional rail coordinator to be a liaison among all the transportation partners to get the next phase of rail on the ballot for voters.

"That is something I think is a high, high priority," he said.

Rebuilding an image

Celia Israel, outgoing president of the nonprofit Alliance for Public Transportation, which promotes public transportation in Central Texas, said that considering all the scrutiny and stress Capital Metro has undergone, its staff is doing a great job.

"I'm more hopeful than I ever have been

that they'll be able to help regional transit," she said.

Martinez said staff and board members are not done improving Capital Metro because the region deserves a world-class transportation agency.

"Trust has increased, but Capital Metro still carries this negative connotation because for decades it has been beat around as an agency in trouble and spending past [its] tax dollars," he said. "We're trying to rebrand and create a different vision around the agency, but it's not easy."

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What services would you like to see Capital Metro work on in the near future?

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Backlog

Continued from I 1

month,” Comer said. “Traditionally, June and July are the heaviest permitting months [because of] longer days and fewer weather issues. We anticipate the problem becoming even more critical.”

Comer said the review backlog has already affected home starts in the Austin area, citing that housing starts in the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area in January were up 1.7 percent compared with December but were down in the City of Austin. The Austin MSA consists of Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis and Williamson counties.

According to information from Metrostudy, a research provider for housing, retail and related industries, Austin housing starts were up 30 percent in 2012—to 7,981 units, compared with 2011. A home start is the beginning of construction of a new house.

“We’ve got some immediate issues to work through,” Austin City Councilman Chris Riley said at a council meeting in March. “We’ve got backlogs that we really want to get cleared out just in a matter of months.”

Getting through the backlog

City staff said the bulk of the backlog is in zoning review for new one- to two-family home construction. The department is running about eight weeks behind on standard seven-day and two-day review processes for new construction and remodeling projects. Ideally, staff said, there would be no backlog, but on March 21, there were 342 pending residential review applications.

“[The backlog] has personally delayed a couple of projects,” said Ray Tonjes, owner of Ray Tonjes Builder Inc., a local custom home building and remodeling company. “It has caused builders and subcontractors to not be able to work. For a lot of smaller remodel projects, it’s taking far longer to get the permit than it does to do the work.”

Comer said the HBA has heard of builders and remodelers who have

not been able to get a permit for four months, which directly affects their livelihood and the timeline for customers.

“You cannot build without a permit,” Comer said. “If you are a builder and you cannot build, you have no income. If you’re a customer who needs a home built by a specific date, you’re probably out of luck.”

Comer said the backlog has an effect on more than just builders and remodelers.

“The trickle-down effect also should not be overlooked,” Comer said. “If you can’t build a home or remodel a project, no one needs carpet, no one needs lighting, no one needs plumbing, no one needs lumber, so many industries are affected.”

Though there are still a large number of backlogged applications, city staffers have already taken measures to help reduce the number of pending reviews and have seen some progress.

In February, Austin City Council approved four additional employees to address the backlog. The additional hires are dedicated to intake and consultation, so review staff can be free to focus on the backlog.

City staff members have also created a temporary Certificate of Compliance program in which plans that meet certain requirements and are submitted and sealed by Texas licensed architects or certified building designers will be approved with limited review. About 12 percent of applications in the backlog have been through the process as of March 15.

John McDonald, development service manager with the city’s Planning and Development Review Department, said the “popularity is not too great” for the program because some architects have been leery of assuming the extra liability.

Tonjes said he had a project that was waiting for a review for more than a month. When he went through the expedited process, the plan was reviewed in two weeks.

Causes of the backlog

According to a November memo to City Council from Greg Guernsey, director of the Planning and Development Review Department, the backlog exists because of a 44 percent increase in applications for review and an unexpected loss of about 75 percent of the residential review staff.

J.B. Meier, chief plans examiner with PDRD, said commercial plan review is in a similar situation as residential plan review, but not to the same extent. He said the high point of the backlog was around May with between 150 and 160 plans waiting for review, but the backlog was down to 117 applications by Christmas.

“Well, [the backlog] is slowing [business development] down,” he said. “They can’t get started as quick as they anticipate. In all cases, I’m sure it’s costing them money. They’re having to pay interest on loans—money they may have borrowed to build a big project.”

McDonald said the staff, which filled all the positions it lost in 2012 by mid-January of this year, has been trying to “expedite the easier projects” such as swimming pools, fences, additions of decks and interior remodels, along with holding stakeholder meetings to field new solutions to the backlog, considering revisions to the Land Development Code and implementing an electronic application process.

Tonjes said he has seen improvements in the reviewing process but that the situation is still serious.

“At the end of the day, if they were a private business, they’d be out of business,” Tonjes said.

McDonald said that as the number of applications continues to increase, it is going to be difficult for the department to clear the entire backlog in a “timely manner,” estimating about eight months before the department is caught up as a worst-case scenario.

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

One program the City of Austin implemented to help deal with the backlog of permits is the Certificate of Compliance program. The program allows an applicant to submit a plan that meets certain requirements and is sealed by a certified building designer or architect so the plan can go through an expedited review process.

Program requirements for new homes or additions to single-family homes

- ☐ The project is at or below the 36 percent floor-to-area ratio—the floor area of a home cannot take up more than 36 percent of the area of the lot
- ☐ The project is on a lot with a floor area of 2,070 square feet or less

Program requirements for an interior remodel on a single-family home

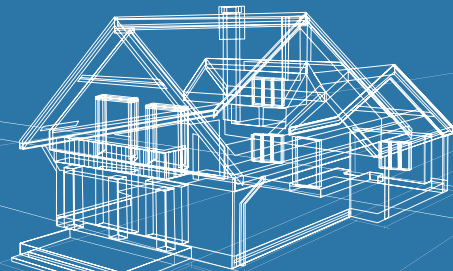
- ☐ No square footage increase to any building

What review staff is looking for

- ☐ Projects within 150 feet of the 100-year flood plain require a flood plain review
- ☐ Buildings 40 years or older undergo a historic review
- ☐ Projects close to a hazardous pipeline require further review
- ☐ If a piece of land is not platted in a recorded subdivision, the applicant will be sent to the Development Assistance Center for consideration of a platting exception
- ☐ Land-use zoning will be checked to make sure the project fits with allowed uses

Applications for residential plan review are accepted from 8-11 a.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday with an additional period of submission available from 1-3 p.m. on Wednesdays.

For more information or to download the required forms, visit www.austintexas.gov/department/certificate-compliance-program.



Source: City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department

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Overview

Build-out year: 2008
Builders: Novare-Andrews Urban
Square footage: 715–2,002
Home values: \$290,000–\$1.45 million
HOA dues (estimated): \$0.41 per square foot
Amenities: Pool, gym, concierge
Nearby attractions: Royal Blue Grocery, Shoal Creek Trail, Ballet Austin
Property taxes:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Austin ISD | 1.242000 |
| City of Austin | 0.502900 |
| Travis County | 0.500100 |
| Travis County Central Health | 0.078946 |
| Austin Community College District | 0.095100 |
| Total (per \$100 value) | \$2.419046 |

Homes on the market (As of 03/01/2013)

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| No. of homes for sale | 4 |
| No. of homes under contract | 7 |
| Average days on the market | 10 |

Annual home sales (03/01/2012–3/01/2013)

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| No. of homes sold | 60 |
| Square footage (low/high) | 715 / 1,280 |
| Selling price (low/high) | \$290,000 / \$598,500 |

Featured homes

360 Nueces St., Apt. 1710

1 Bedroom / 1 Bath 765 sq. ft. \$499,000
Agent: Clayton Bullock 512-797-6446

360 Nueces St., Apt. 2906

1 Bedroom / 1 Bath 748 sq. ft. \$459,000
Agent: Michael Carpenter 512-522-6683

360 Nueces St., Apt. 4109

2 Bedroom / 2 Bath 1,244 sq. ft. \$599,900
Agent: Carl Shurr 512-944-5977

360 Nueces St., Apt. 1206

1 Bedroom / 1 Bath 753 sq. ft. \$307,700
Agent: Krystle Copulos 512-659-9329

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and Ben Richards,
Senior Vice President-Austin

REAL ESTATE

Market Data

Market Data provided by
the Austin Board of Realtors

On the market (February 2013)

| Price Range | Number of homes for sale/Average days on market | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 78701 | 78703 | 78704 | 78731 | 78751 | 78756 | 78757 |
| Less than \$100,000 | 3/445 | - | 5/34 | 2/46 | 3/110 | 3/21 | 14/54 |
| \$100,000–\$149,999 | 2/11 | 4/65 | 5/71 | 2/27 | 2/42 | 2/16 | - |
| \$150,000–\$199,999 | 4/24 | 7/76 | 5/57 | 3/106 | 5/26 | - | 6/55 |
| \$200,000–\$299,999 | 13/29 | 4/44 | 19/51 | 7/53 | 5/83 | 2/47 | 8/75 |
| \$300,000–\$399,999 | 5/113 | 10/117 | 20/68 | 7/144 | 3/14 | 4/38 | 5/47 |
| \$400,000–\$499,999 | 6/65 | 5/33 | 7/107 | 4/258 | 4/14 | 3/79 | 2/110 |
| \$500,000–\$749,999 | 9/82 | 13/78 | 15/44 | 13/67 | 4/58 | 3/90 | 1/32 |
| \$750,000–\$999,999 | 3/205 | 9/46 | 6/74 | 5/90 | - | - | - |
| \$1 million + | 19/121 | 29/161 | 4/187 | 16/103 | - | - | - |

Monthly home sales

| Month | Number of homes sold/Average price | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 78701 | 78703 | 78704 | 78731 | 78751 | 78756 | 78757 |
| February 2013 | 15/\$380,000 | 33/\$525,000 | 47/\$297,000 | 12/\$355,400 | 11/\$340,000 | 10/\$445,000 | 25/\$277,000 |
| February 2012 | 11/\$320,500 | 30/\$569,500 | 31/\$334,000 | 21/\$375,000 | 11/\$210,000 | 9/\$445,000 | 26/\$248,000 |
| January 2013 | 8/\$453,750 | 16/\$391,925 | 30/\$254,250 | 22/\$354,800 | 7/\$313,500 | 9/\$321,800 | 19/\$227,000 |
| December 2012 | 22/\$381,500 | 30/\$629,000 | 55/\$417,000 | 28/\$570,000 | 14/\$253,450 | 6/\$352,225 | 27/\$279,570 |
| November 2012 | 15/\$328,000 | 16/\$548,750 | 33/\$292,100 | 29/\$465,693 | 11/\$220,000 | 5/\$175,000 | 35/\$251,000 |
| October 2012 | 11/\$385,000 | 21/\$615,000 | 44/\$360,500 | 45/\$520,000 | 13/\$275,000 | 2/\$241,250 | 33/\$266,500 |
| September 2012 | 15/\$325,000 | 22/\$531,825 | 41/\$380,000 | 22/\$515,000 | 11/\$310,000 | 10/\$387,850 | 29/\$252,400 |
| August 2012 | 17/\$291,000 | 39/\$487,000 | 51/\$339,900 | 28/\$424,600 | 20/\$327,500 | 18/\$446,500 | 28/\$245,000 |
| July 2012 | 25/\$335,000 | 45/\$625,650 | 63/\$372,500 | 39/\$559,250 | 17/\$275,000 | 14/\$303,500 | 38/\$259,000 |

Recent Property Listings

| ZIP code | Subdivision | Address | Bed/Bath | Price | Sq. ft. | Agent | Agency | Phone |
|----------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 78701 | Austonian | 200 Congress Ave. | 3br/4ba | \$1,950,000 | 2,898 | Sarah Railey | Moreland Properties | 512-623-3633 |
| 78701 | Austonian | 200 Congress Ave. | 2br/2ba | \$1,035,000 | 1,918 | Sarah Railey | Moreland Properties | 512-623-3633 |
| 78701 | Cambridge Condo | 1801 Lavaca St. | 1br/1ba | \$151,500 | 345 | Doug Harrison | Coldwell Banker United Realtor | 512-694-1551 |
| 78701 | Cambridge Condo | 1801 Lavaca St. | 2br/2ba | \$309,000 | 1,377 | Doug Harrison | Coldwell Banker United Realtor | 512-694-1551 |
| 78701 | Five Fifty 05 Condo | 555 Fifth St. | 2br/2ba | \$994,950 | 2,099 | Joshua Baellow | Austin City Living | 512-627-4937 |
| 78701 | Milago Condo | 54 Rainey St. | 1br/1ba | \$375,000 | 893 | Joanne Flynn | Amelia Bullock, Realtors | 512-633-7015 |
| 78701 | Towers Town Lake Condo | 40 N. I-35 | 3br/2ba | \$600,000 | 1,743 | Laura Olesen | Realty Austin | 512-663-5776 |
| 78703 | Bello Vista | 2507 Velasquez Drive | 5br/3ba | \$1,495,000 | 3,913 | Kim Collins | Moreland Properties | 512-576-2847 |
| 78703 | Marlton Place | 1008 Meriden Lane | 4br/3ba | \$1,790,000 | 2,548 | Lindsay Wynn | Keller Williams Realty | 512-777-1205 |
| 78703 | Spring Condo | 300 Bowie St. | 1br/1ba | \$315,000 | 565 | Delfin Ward | Keller Williams Realty | 512-775-9264 |
| 78703 | Sunset Hill Enfield | 2321 Hartford Road | 5br/4ba | \$1,500,000 | 3,454 | Stacy Brunson | Amelia Bullock, Realtors | 512-626-0733 |
| 78704 | Barton Hills | 2807 Oakhaven Drive | 3br/2ba | \$444,900 | 1,606 | Delilah Fuentes | Keller Williams Realty | 512-415-5364 |
| 78704 | Barton Terrace | 2508 Spring Creek Drive | 4br/3ba | \$847,000 | 2,693 | Donna Miller | Blairfield Realty | 512-968-9080 |
| 78704 | Kinney Mues Condo | 1605 Ravey St. | 3br/3ba | \$589,000 | 1,854 | Richard Caprioli | Turnquist Partners, Realtors | 512-294-8968 |
| 78704 | Low Theodore Heights | 2811 Del Curto | 3br/3ba | \$584,900 | 2,303 | L.C. Nino | Keller Williams Realty | 512-415-2197 |
| 78704 | Sanctuary | 3601 Manchaca Road | 1br/1ba | \$165,000 | 720 | Ryanne Vaughan | Keller Williams Realty | 512-619-5034 |
| 78731 | Highland Hills | 5961 Highland Hills Drive | 5br/3ba | \$745,000 | 2,812 | Michele Turnquist | Turnquist Partners, Realtors | 512-431-1121 |
| 78731 | Highland Hills | 6108 Highland Hills Drive | 4br/2ba | \$599,000 | 2,538 | John Lairsen | Travis Real Estate | 512-789-7801 |
| 78731 | Meadow Mountain | 4303 Canyonside Trail | 3br/2ba | \$449,500 | 2,108 | Joanne Senyk | Amelia Bullock, Realtors | 512-844-1302 |
| 78731 | Oakmont Heights | 1900 42nd St. | 4br/3ba | \$569,000 | 2,390 | Lionel Laday | Keller Williams Realty | 512-745-0032 |
| 78751 | Guadalupe Condo | 5502 Guadalupe St. | 2br/2ba | \$290,000 | 1,265 | Steven Lofaro | Prudential Texas Realty | 512-507-6086 |
| 78757 | Foster Lane Townhomes | 3214 Foster Lane | 3br/2ba | \$259,900 | 1,913 | Alvin Bolf | Prudential Texas Realty | 512-293-2455 |

ZIP code guide

- 78701 Downtown
- 78703 West Austin
- 78704 South/Central
- 78731 Northwest/Central
- 78751 Hyde Park
- 78756 Brentwood
- 78757 Burnet Road/Anderson Lane

2321 Hartford Road



1900 42nd St.



Residential real estate listings added to the market between 03/12/13 and 3/19/13 were included and provided by the Austin Board of Realtors, www.abor.com. Although every effort has been made to ensure the timeliness and accuracy of this listing, *Community Impact Newspaper* assumes no liability for errors or omissions. Contact the property's agent or seller for the most current information.

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