



Strategic
Partnerships, Inc.

TEXAS GOVERNMENT INSIDER

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HUD allocates \$220M in grants for Texas' COVID-19 recovery programs



HUD headquarters

Texas is set to receive \$220 million of \$3.06 billion in grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).

HUD will distribute the funding through its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant, and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS programs.

Funding for Texas includes \$144 million through HUD's CDBG program that may be used to construct medical facilities for testing and treatment, acquire a motel or hotel building to expand capacity of hospitals to accommodate isolation of patients during recovery, or replace HVAC systems to temporarily transform commercial buildings or closed school buildings into clinics or treatment centers. CDBG funds also may be used to support businesses manufacturing medical supplies, construct a group living facility to centralize patients undergoing treatment, and support other initiatives.

Texas is set to receive \$71.7 million through HUD's Emergency Solutions Grant Program to build more emergency homeless shelters, operate emergency shelters, and provide other social services.

HUD will send \$4.2 million to Texas through its Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS program to help Americans with compromised immune systems.

Some specific allocations to Texas' metropolitan cities and counties are:

- Austin - \$7.85 million;
- Dallas - \$15.12 million;
- El Paso - \$6.39 million;
- Fort Worth - \$7.41 million;
- Houston - \$24.69 million;
- San Antonio - \$13.1 million;
- Harris County - \$14.1 million; and,
- Hidalgo County - \$7.75 million.

Texas also will receive \$68.08 million in nonentitlement grants.

Additional funds will follow this first tranche. The CARES Act allows HUD to broaden the reach of its existing grant programs for the remaining \$9.14 billion in relief funding. HUD began writing new formulas immediately and working quickly to

COVID-19 has not shut down government contracting

By Mary Scott Nabers, CEO of Strategic Partnerships, Inc.

With the COVID-19 pandemic still in full force, most government decisions are being made via teleconference. Public hearings, meetings, and conversations about business decisions must still meet all transparency statutes. Current conversations tend to revolve around whether to hold bond elections or postpone them a few months. Budget discussions are also very common. The SPI Team is following both COVID-19 and upcoming business conversations carefully.



Texas

The state of Texas holds bond elections in May and November. Several bond elections scheduled for May have now been moved to November because almost everything has been overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For public entities still planning to hold May bond elections, social distancing guidelines will be observed. The city of Amarillo has decided to postpone its \$275 million bond election until November. Included in that bond package is a proposed \$319 million Civic Center expansion project. Additionally, the bond includes \$155 million for a new arena, \$117.5 million for a convention center expansion, \$20 million for relocation of city services,

address communities' needs and ensure these funds are distributed soon and do not get delayed.

Selma council considers P3 for \$500M mixed-use town center development

Architects presented a conceptual master plan to Selma councilmembers at their March 12 meeting that envisions a 2 million-square-foot mixed-use town center on 50 acres near Lookout Road and Schertz Parkway off Interstate 35.

City leaders are considering a public-private partnership (P3) for the development that would be built in phases over 10 to 20 years and feature four districts of retail, residential, entertainment, and community use in the city north of San Antonio.



Rendering of Selma town center

The town center would feature about:

- 375,000 square feet of residential space for townhomes, apartments, parking, and parkland;
- 298,000 square feet for entertainment including space for a hotel and nightlife;
- 288,000 square feet for community space featuring a bandstand and large lawn; and,
- 192,000 square feet for retail use, including offices and restaurants.

Retail would be located on ground floors with office and residential square footage on upper floors with parking, bike trails, and green space located throughout the town center.

Upon approval of the master plan, Selma leaders will prepare land entitlements and a request for proposals (RFP) for developers that they expect to issue in about nine to 12 months.

FEMA denies state request for relief to DFW-area for tornado recovery effort



The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) denied Texas' request for federal aid to help finance disaster recovery efforts in the Dallas area stemming from October 2019 storm activity that included several tornadoes.

Gov. Greg Abbott's office is appealing the decision by FEMA Administrator Pete Gaynor.

Gaynor wrote in a March 31 letter that the severity and magnitude of damages suffered in North Texas did not exceed the state's and local governments' abilities to mitigate them.

In his January request for a presidential disaster declaration, Abbott wrote that Cameron, Dallas, and Erath counties reported \$192 million in public infrastructure damage.

The Insurance Council of Texas (ICT) estimated that the insured damages from the tornadoes alone would be approximately \$2 billion, making this disaster the costliest tornado outbreak in Texas history. The ICT also projected approximately 30,000 home and auto claims would be filed because of the storms.

Had FEMA approved the state's request for a major disaster declaration, the state would have met the criteria to receive a 75 percent reimbursement worth millions of

\$15 million for a parking garage, \$8 million for the restoration of the Santa Fe Depot, and \$3.5 million for a Central Plaza Park.

[click here for more](#)

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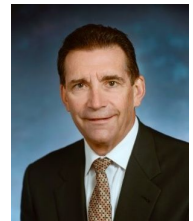


COVID-19
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Transit veteran joins SPI Team

Strategic Partnerships, Inc. (SPI) is pleased to announce the addition of transit veteran John Bartosiewicz to its consulting team



John Bartosiewicz

John possesses more than 40 years of experience in the transit industry that began in the town of Chapel Hill, North Carolina as its acting transit director.

He then became executive director of the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (The T) where in his 26 years of service there he was responsible for the complete operation of fixed-route bus service, paratransit service, and rideshare programs in four cities. He also played a key role in the planning, design, construction, and operation of RailTran, a commuter rail program linking Fort Worth and Dallas and a related Central Business District Intermodal Transportation Center.

His efforts at The T earned him recognition as Transit Manager of the Year by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) where he also served as chair.

John later accepted a position as chief operating officer and special assistant to the president at a private transit firm where he provided executive management oversight for client contracts, led the firm's consulting division, and assisted in business development.

dollars in relief.

Dallas's mayor wrote to a fellow councilmember that the rejection was possibly based on inadequate documentation of damages to Dallas ISD (DISD) schools. DISD officials said the delay was due to the time it took for the district's insurance company to make a final determination.

A FEMA spokesperson said the agency invites the state to submit its appeal with additional supporting documentation for reconsideration.

CAMPO to consider \$600M in project cuts to support I-35 Austin expansion

The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) transportation policy board is scheduled to review \$600 million in cuts to planned transportation projects on April 13 to free up \$600 million for the \$7.5 billion I-35 Capital Express Project in Austin.



Rendering of I-35 Capital Express Project

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) officials are proposing to add two non-tolled managed lanes in each direction along I-35 from US 290 East to SH 71/Ben White Boulevard. Managed lanes are proposed in high-congestion areas where right of way is limited. The project also includes additional safety and mobility improvements.

A Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) request for local funding to help finance the reconstruction project prompted CAMPO to evaluate projects for maintenance or deferral.

On Feb. 27, the TTC, which oversees TxDOT, discussed a plan to fund \$3.4 billion of the I-35 project. TTC commissioners are set to vote on that measure at their meeting on April 30.

Harris County, Houston partner to set up medical care shelter at NRG Park



NRG Park

Harris County Public Health announced a collaboration with the city of Houston and other local, state, and federal partners to begin building a medical shelter at NRG Park.

The facility will provide health and medical-related care to COVID-19 patients if hospitals exceed their capacities. The site outside NRG Stadium and adjacent to Texas Medical Center is estimated to cost \$60 million if used.

An April 6 press release from the Public Health office states the partnership has no plans to open the shelter at this time, but the county will provide additional support to the medical community and additional details will be available at a later date.

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo cited first responder data from a regional advisory council that showed hospitals in the greater Houston area were at 70 percent capacity collectively.



Patrick appoints Ryan to chair new business task force

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick established a new business task force on April 7 and appointed Brint Ryan as its chair.



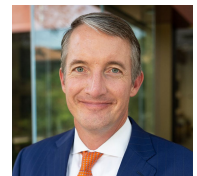
Brint Ryan

The task force will begin to work on a set of recommendations for restarting the economy, once President Trump and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott announce that businesses can begin the reopening process and Texans can go back to work.

Ryan currently is the chair of the Advisory Board on Tax Policy that reports to the lieutenant governor. He also serves on the board of regents of the University of North Texas System and is the founder and chief executive officer of a global tax services and software provider.

UT names Hartzell interim president

The University of Texas (UT) System board of regents named Jay Hartzell as interim president of The University of Texas at Austin. He succeeds Greg Fenves who will begin his new role as Emory University's president on August 1.



Jay Hartzell

Hartzell currently serves as dean of the McCombs School of Business at UT-Austin. He previously served at various times as senior associate dean for academic affairs, executive director of the McCombs School's Real Estate Finance and Investment Center, and chair of the Finance Department before becoming dean in 2016.

Our attempt to help people locate jobs

Strategic Partnerships, Inc. (SPI) publishes an electronic newsletter every Friday. It reaches tens of thousands of loyal readers. The government 'Job Board' gets lots of clicks.

We will now open the job board posting site to any private sector company, non-profit, start-up firm or individual with a need for employees.

Most people know someone looking for a job so we'll be working to get the word out about job postings. No charge and lots of eyeballs on the postings.

Help us spread the word and by next week, we hope to have an abundance of job postings people can check in the newsletter. Go here now to check out job postings on the SPI site at www.spipartnerships.com/job-board/

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Job

McKinstry to host facilities webinars

McKinstry is offering a series of free webinars to help you navigate through the pandemic's unprecedented effects on your facilities.



The coronavirus pandemic is uncharted territory, creating new facility management questions every day. What steps can we take to improve indoor air quality and safety? Do we need to upgrade filters before employees return to the office? Can we just lock the doors and walk away until shelter-in-place orders end?

McKinstry experts are ready to sift fact-based best practices from misinformation across engineering, commissioning, operations and maintenance, retrofits, and more. A follow up session dives deeper into proper facility operations while occupants are sheltering in place (and how to wake facilities back up before occupants return).

Gather your questions and register for our interactive question-and-answer sessions. Each webinar will be at 1 p.m. CDT. Click on the session titles below to learn more and register.

- April 10 - [Preparing Facilities for Coronavirus](#)
- April 15 - [Putting Facilities in Temporary Sleep Mode](#)
- April 17 - [Adapting Healthcare Facilities for COVID-19](#)

As an "essential business" during this time, McKinstry is taking all precautions to keep our employees and clients as safe as possible.

For more information, contact Betin Santos, South Region - Energy business development manager, at 469-724-7353 or betins@mckinstry.com.

Fort Worth obtains TCEQ preliminary approval for wastewater plant permit



Proposed wastewater treatment plant layout

The city of Fort Worth received a draft permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) that will allow it to conduct public hearings and move closer to designing a 25 million gallons a day (MGD) wastewater treatment facility.

After TCEQ issues the final permit, the city plans to seek proposals for detailed design of the planned Mary's Creek Water Reclamation Facility on Chapin Road.



Houston appoints Benton director of communications

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner appointed Mary Benton as the new director of communications effective immediately.



Mary Benton

Benton joined the Mayor's Office of Communications as the press secretary in 2018 after holding several communications and executive leadership roles in Harris County government. Prior to that, she worked more than two decades as a television news anchor and reporter in Waco, Austin, and Houston.

In her new role, she will oversee all functions of the Communications Office, including public and media relations, ceremonial documents, social media strategy, and compliance with the Texas Public Information Act.

WGU Texas selects Battles as director of South Region

Western Governor's University (WGU) Texas appointed Linda Battles as regional director, effective April 13.



Linda Battles

Battles joins WGU Texas after serving in various roles for 19 years at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) where she most recently was deputy commissioner for agency operations and communications and chief operating officer. Before joining the THECB, she served as chief of staff and legislative director for the now-late state Rep. Irma Rangel.

In her new role, Battles will assist the chancellor in the coordination of

The wastewater treatment facility will be a membrane bioreactor plant using an activated sludge process operated in the extended aeration mode, according to the TCEQ permit.

The permit application has an initial phase of 10 MGD with expansion up to 15 MGD. Future expansions, which would be timed dependent on growth, could increase the average day capacity up to 25 MGD.

The city purchased the site in 2011 to build a new facility to meet population growth on the west side of Fort Worth. The new facility also would serve parts of western Tarrant and eastern Parker counties within Fort Worth's current or future city limits.

City officials said it will take another four to five years to do the design engineering, bidding, and construction. The water utility projects the new treatment facility needs to be operational by 2026.

Texas dominates county population growth for Census data since 2010

Six of the 10 counties with the largest population gains this decade were in Texas - Harris, Tarrant, Bexar, Dallas, Collin, and Travis - according to the U.S. Census Bureau's July 1, 2019, population estimates released on March 26.

The statistics provide population estimates and components of change for the nation's 384 metropolitan statistical areas, 542 micropolitan statistical areas, and 3,142 counties.

Among the nation's counties, the top 10 with the largest numeric gains since 2010 are all located in the South and the West. The other four counties on the list are: Maricopa County, Arizona; King County, Washington; Clark County, Nevada; and Riverside County, California.

Texas counties also occupied the most spots of any state in the top 10 fastest growing since 2010, where Hays, Comal, Kendall, and Williamson all made the list.

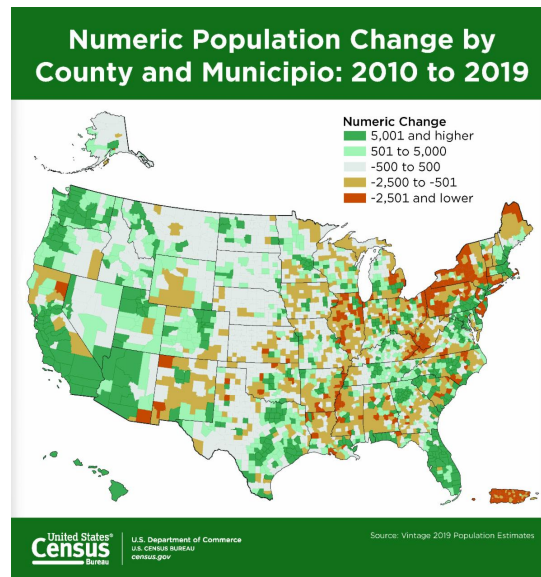
Three of top 10 metro areas with the largest gains in population between 2010 and 2019 were in Texas. Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington had the largest numeric growth, with its population increasing by more than 1.2 million (19 percent) to 7.57 million people as of July 1, 2019. It was followed in second by Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, increasing by 1.15 million (19.4 percent) to 7.07 million people, and eighth-place Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown, up by 510,760 (29.8 percent) to 2.23 million.

Out of 3,142 counties and county equivalents, 1,610 (51.2 percent) gained population between 2018 and 2019. Nine counties experienced no change in population during this time, while the remaining 1,523 (48.5 percent) lost population.

Magnolia mulls \$48.5 in wastewater, water infrastructure improvements

The city of Magnolia is considering improvements to its water and wastewater infrastructure that could total \$48.5 million.

Councilmembers reviewed financial options with the city's engineering consultants at a recent workshop

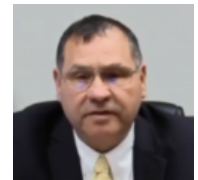


WGU Texas and the South Region, which comprises Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Oklahoma.



Perryton ISD taps Mireles as district superintendent

The Perryton ISD board of directors hired James Mireles as the district's superintendent on April 2. He succeeds Dr. Tim Little who resigned in January.



James Mireles

Mireles most recently served as superintendent of Texhoma ISD. Before that, he was principal at Perryton High School and held education leadership positions in Plainview, Texas, and Garden City, Kansas.

The Perryton ISD board named Mireles as the lone finalist at its meeting on March 10.

MPO names Hall as regional planner for transportation

The Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) selected Clifton Hall as its new regional transportation planner.



Clifton Hall

Hall joined AAMPO from the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) where he was a transportation planner. Prior to that, he was a senior GIS analyst in the private sector.



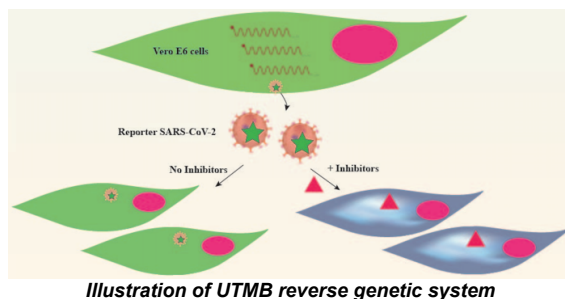
where they discussed how to meet the utility needs of a growing population and an increasing number of developments.

Consultants recommended building a \$38 million wastewater treatment plant and a \$10.5 million water plant that the city could finance by issuing bonds or applying for rural development loans from the federal government or the Texas Water Development Board.

City Council authorized the consultants to continue planning the improvements based on issuing bonds.

UTMB develops system to test future COVID-19 vaccines, when available

A multidisciplinary team at The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB) working to combat the COVID-19 virus has designed a system that will enable researchers to more quickly create and evaluate developing vaccines, diagnose infected patients, and understand the virus' evolution.



The scientists developed the system by engineering a reverse genetic system for SARS coronavirus 2, or SARS-CoV-2, that is causing the current COVID-19 pandemic.

A reverse genetic system allows researchers to make the virus in the lab and manipulate it in a petri dish. Using this system, the UTMB team has engineered a version of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that is labeled with neon green. When the labeled virus infects a cell, the infected cell turns green.

The labeled virus could be used to rapidly determine whether a patient has already been infected by the new coronavirus or evaluate how well developing vaccines are inducing antibodies that block infection of the virus. The level of antibodies induced by a vaccine is critical to predicting how well a vaccine works.

The neon green labeled virus system allows the scientists to test patients' samples in 12 hours in a high-throughput manner that tests many samples at once. The conventional method tests a few specimens at a time with a turnaround time of a week.



RECENT REPORTS & DATA

Legislative Budget Board - [Base Reconciliation Instructions 2020 - 2021](#)

Transportation Research Board - [Data's Critical Role in Transportation Decisions](#)

JOB BOARD

Dozens of public-sector jobs are available. [Click here](#) to view all job openings and guidelines for job submissions to SPI. New jobs added this week:

- **City of Dallas** - Programmer Analyst (Police Technology Support)
- **City of New Braunfels** - Assistant Library Director
- **Alamo Area Council of Governments** - Program Administrator

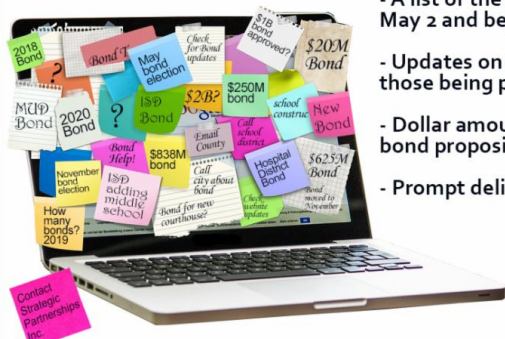
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SPI's Texas Bond Annual Subscription

With your purchase, you will receive monthly updated reports with valuable information on all Texas local bond elections, including:



- A list of the bond propositions planned for May 2 and beyond
- Updates on the status of the elections, including those being postponed to November
- Dollar amounts and project descriptions for each bond proposition
- Prompt delivery of election results

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Publisher: Mary Scott Nabers

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Note to media:

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