Southwest Elementary prompts AISD boundary changes

Parents, school district work to compromise on revised boundaries

By Yvonne Lim Wilson

The boundaries for Austin Independent School District elementary schools in the southwest Austin area are being redrawn, and the process is bringing up some of the most fundamental issues about education: equal access, proximity to neighborhood schools and maintaining a diverse student population.

Construction of a new, unnamed elementary school created from a 2004 bond election to alleviate overcrowding in southwest Austin prompted the need for school boundary changes. The school, referred to as Southwest Elementary School, is located at 12200 Meridian Park Blvd., east of FM 1826 and south of IH 35.

Proposed boundaries of southwest Austin ISD elementary schools

Eco-friendly housing projects flourish in southwest Austin

Story Highlights

• Austin’s first LEED-certified home goes low-tech to curb energy consumption, cut construction costs
• Las Casa Verdes development features solar panels, rainwater harvesting, recycled materials

By Eric Pulsifer

From energy-saving light bulbs to dual-flush toilets, the modern American home is getting greener, thanks to technological advances. But when Laurel Trevino began planning her eco-friendly home in Hays County, she looked to the past. Her low-tech, highly energy-efficient house—built with the surrounding area in mind to maximize cooling from shade and wind—was the first LEED-certified home and the first LEED Platinum-certified building in Austin.

“We weren’t aiming for LEED certification,” Trevino said. “It just happened to turn out that way.”

An acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, LEED is a rating system used as the benchmark for environmentally friendly construction, scoring projects on a 100-point scale based on environmental impact.

Trevino, a biologist with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, drew inspiration from rural houses made of wood and adobe she grew up around in Mexico.

“I always wanted an environmentally friendly home,” she said. “I read books, visited houses, spoke to people, took workshops and kept the idea in the back of my head.”

For Trevino and her husband, University of Texas professor Carlos Torres-Verdin, that idea became a reality in 2007. The couple worked with design firm LaVerne Williams of Houston to design an energy efficient, self-sustainable home using local resources, such as adobe made from clay on site and wood and rock native to Texas. They named the project Tonalaacalli, which translates to “the house of sun and water” in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs.

While newly constructed LEED homes can carry a hefty price tag, Trevino said Tonalaacalli is proof a sustainable home is not necessarily more expensive than any other house.

“If you build a house by hand with the help of builders and friends and out of local materials—locally grown hay for straw-bales, adobe or cob made from the soil on your site—it will be cheaper than a regular house,” she said. “This is a low-tech and low-budget house that is just as green, eco- or environmentally friendly as a high-tech, high-budget house. It’s the way native people have made houses around the world for millennia.”

A greener suburbia

A new neighborhood under development in southwest Austin is taking a more high-tech approach to going green. Las Casas Verdes will feature 20 homes designed to meet LEED certification and Austin Green Building program standards.

The model home is expected to be finished in February, and construction of other homes...
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General Manager's Note

This month, I attended the South Austin and Northwest Business Council luncheon, an event sponsored by local businesses and the Austin Chamber of Commerce. It was a panel discussion about economic development with lawyer Pike Powers—who helped to establish Central Texas as a high-tech hub—and Tim Crowley of Frost Bank.

While the topic of economic development may sound a little highbrow, I did glean a few down-to-earth takeaways.

First, Austin continues to do well while other cities struggle because of our people. Major employers go where the workforce is, and the caliber of young, highly educated people in Austin is crucial in continuing to attract employers to our city. Luring talented workers to the city is one part of that, but more importantly is making sure our future workforce is prepared for whatever is next.

Second, Austin’s environmentally friendly reputation could usher in the city’s next economic boom: the green industry. This is a sector that Powers and other local leaders say will be a huge industry over the coming years.

From parents working with AISD to establish new school boundaries to homeowners making their houses more energy efficient, these are issues Austinites are dealing with right now that will shape the region for years to come.

Janice Vail
jvallin@impactnews.com

Reader Feedback

Objections to AISD boundary changes

“It is... reprehensible to even imply that [Boone students] are unworthy to be classmates with any other children in the area. They deserve to continue going to an exemplary school in their neighborhood and be represented in this discussion. While we all live in our own smaller communities... we are all part of the same larger [community].”

—Charla MacDonald

How long do you expect to keep your New Year’s resolutions?

1 year 19%
6 months 19%
1 month 6%
Already gave up 13%
Did not make one 44%

Results from an unscientific web survey; collected 1/1/2010-1/18/2010

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Contents

4 Community Impact
6 Business Profiles
Anchor-Ventana Glass
KoaKoa Kuddles
8 Transportation Report
Ben White Boulevard/IH 35 flyover
9 Neighborhood Dining
Red’s Porch
10 Vote 2010
Money, politics and voting
11 City Notes
Texting ban, urban rail update
13 News Update
New air quality standards
14 Local History
Evitas Botanitas
18 Neighborhood at a Glance
19 Residential Real Estate

In This Issue

“I never understood why people would come to vote for the top offices and then drop off before voting on the positions closest to them.”

—Dana DeBeauvoir, Travis County clerk

“It is, for me, about public safety and it truly is about doing everything you can to be as attentive as possible when you’re driving your car.”

—Councilman Mike Martinez, on the city’s ban on texting while driving

“We are not where we need to be in terms of safe, clean air. There has to be accountability from the state’s leadership, the Legislature and the TCEQ.”

—Eddie Rodriguez, State Representative

“Back then, it was all Tex-Mex. I had real Mexican enchiladas with mole, but I still kept a Tex-Mex enchilada with cheese because you have to. People enjoy it.”

—Ruben Rodriguez, Evitas Botanitas owner

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1 South Asian grocery
From snake gourd to tandoori paste and idli rice, you can find it here at Man Pasand Grocery, located at 3601 W. William Cannon Drive, suites 750 and 850 (behind Hollywood Video). Owner Suresh Sitapara also plans on serving Indian fast food through a “chaat corner” inside the store, which opened in October. Call 892-9600.

2 Something’s brewing
Jeffrey Stuffings ditched his full-time job as a lawyer to open Jester King Craft Brewery in Dripping Springs, offering unique ales like La Danse Macabre, Impaler Vlad and Rex Machina as well as other more classic tastes. The brewery, located at 1305 Fitzhugh Road, is scheduled to open this summer. For updates on tours, tastings and live music events, call 364-7278 or visit www.jesterkingbrewery.com.

3 Float through the air
Trapeze Austin opened last fall at 9501 Manchaca Road inside SoccerZone. Children and adults at beginner and advanced levels can sign up for flying trapeze lessons and “frequent flier” passes. Trapeze Austin is the only indoor trapeze facility in the south central region of the country. Call 507-7920 or visit www.trapezeaustin.com.

4 Engineering a move
Espey Consultants Inc. moved from South Second Street to 4801 Southwest Parkway, Parkway 2, Ste. 150 last fall. The Austin company provides engineering services in fields including municipal infrastructure, environmental services and comprehensive planning. Call 326-5659 or visit www.espeyconsultants.com.

5 Colonial change
The Colonial Bank at 4220 W. William Cannon, Ste. 300 became BB&T last fall. Open Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Call 358-2300.

6 Diaper changing on the go
When Kenneth Chuah and his wife found themselves having to change their son’s diaper on the floor of a subway station, it was the last straw. Chuah invented Abbie, the first stroller with a built-in changing pad. The Abbie stroller debuted late last year at Walmart, Babies R’ Us and other retailers. Abbie’s main office is located at 8708 S. Congress Ave., Ste. A-170. Call 514-6325 or visit www.abbie.com.

7 Walgreens on the way
A new Walgreens is being constructed at 120 Slaughter Lane, at the corner of Congress and Slaughter. The store is scheduled to open this fall. Visit www.walgreens.com.

8 Life is sweet
In December, Sweet Leaf Tea Company relocated its headquarters from Congress and Riverside to its new location at 3601 S. Congress Ave., Ste. D-100, inside the Penn Field business park. The new location double the space of the former and features amenities like showers for employees who bike to work. Call 628-2106 or visit www.sweetleaftea.com.

9 Subs on SoCo
Thundercloud Subs opened a new location at 3801 S. Congress Ave., Ste. 109 in November. This is the local chain’s 27th restaurant in Texas. Call 447-7827 or visit www.thundercloud.com.

10 Higher power
In October, Bishop Paul Ojeda led his 800-member congregation of the Austin Power House Church to transform an industrial magazine warehouse into a church. The church moved from its former location at 2201 W. William Cannon Drive to 4414 E. St. Elmo Road. Call 416-1600 or visit www.austinpowerhouse.com.

11 Hospital expansion
St. David’s South Austin Hospital, located at 901 W. Ben White Blvd., will begin a $72 million renovation and expansion project in April. The expansion will increase the hospital by three floors, more than 100,000 square feet and 25 percent more beds. In addition, the hospital is changing its name to St. David’s South Austin Medical Center. Call 447-2211 or visit www.stdavids.com.

12 Food to go
Albert Garcia launched ATX Delivery, a restaurant delivery service, in January, delivering from local restaurants to South Austin homes, hotels and offices. Customers order directly from ATX by phone or online, where full restaurant menus are available. Participating restaurants include major chains and local restaurants such as Waterloo Ice House and Thai Passion. ATX Delivery is based at 4719 S. Congress Ave., Ste. 208. Visit www.atxdelivery.com or call 443-TOGO.

13 Zen comfort
Sam Chen wanted to offer peace and tranquility to lodgers, so he named his new hotel casulo, which means “cocoon” or “pod” in Portuguese and connotes quiet restfulness. Casulo Hotel, located at 3017 S. IH 35, opened in October. The hotel offers 52 rooms ranging from $80 to $160 a night. Call 610-1116 or visit www.casulohotel.com.

14 Moving southwest
Nationwide agent Michael Lezam opened up The Lezam Agency, a Nationwide Insurance branch, at 4301 W. William Cannon Drive, Ste. B-120. The office was previously located in the Lakeway area and moved to the southwest Austin location on Jan. 1. Call 263-4333 or visit www.thelezamagency.com.

15 New principal
On Dec. 15, Dr. Rosa Peña was appointed principal of the new Southwest Elementary School, located on Meridian Park Boulevard at Espina Drive. Dr. Peña is the principal at Zavala Elementary School, a post she has held for the past nine years.

Closings
Yassas (Greek for “goodbye”) South Austin said goodbye last month to Dimassi’s Mediterranean Buffet, 4301 W. William Cannon Drive. Dimassi’s has locations in Houston, Dallas and one in north Austin at 12636 Research Blvd. Call 258-0395 or visit www.dimassiaustin.com.

Wine online
National wine boutique Wine Styles closed its retail store location at 4301 W. William Cannon Drive in November. To shop online, visit www.winestylesstore.com.

News or questions about Southwest Austin?
E-mail swanews@impactnews.com.
April Riggs, Sweet Leaf consumer services manager, enjoys the extra space inside the company’s new headquarters. “I can bike to work,” she said. “There’s a lot of natural light, and I can bike to work.”

Kenneth Chua invented the Abie stroller with built-in changing pad after he was fed up with unsanitary changing options for his son.

Owner Russell Cage (right) catches one of his students on the trapeze.

“God had given us this place, and He would help us turn it around and make it a home,” Bishop Paul Ojeda said inside his office at the Austin Power House Church.

Man-Pasadri Grocery (which means “pleasing to the mind” in Hindi) stocks hard-to-find items like Indian bittersweet melon.

Community Events

**Sponsored by Roger Beasley**

**January**

9–Mar. 7 | “Shadows, Memory and Spirit” art exhibit
Enjoy Eliza Thomas’s evocative winter paintings of Vermont winter, along with a seeds and pods sculpture by T.J. Mabrey. McComerritt Learning Center at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave.
Tue.–Sat. 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m., Sun. noon–5:30 p.m. Admission to the center is free throughout January. Regular prices: $7 (adults), $6 (seniors and students), $3 (children 5–12), free for members, children 4 and under 232-1011 • www.wildflower.org

13–Feb. 7 | Soup Bowl of Caring
Purchase a prepackaged bag of a nonperishable food item at any H-E-B, Central Market or Randalls. Present your cashier with a scan-coupon at checkout and take your receipt to the Austin Sosns box office before Feb. 7. To receive two-for-one Austin Sosns tickets.
282-1111 • www.austinfoodbank.org

25–Feb. 5 | BookSpring 2010 Read-A-Thon
Children can experience the joy of reading as well as the pride of community service through the Read-A-Thon, benefiting children in need of books. Participants set a goal, ask for pledges of support, and raise money for two weeks, log pages and collect donations. BookSpring is a nonprofit that supports early literacy.
472-1791 • www.bookspring.org

29 | Oak Hill Al-Ann
This support group welcomes relatives and friends of alcoholics to share their stories. Times recently have changed. Western Hills Church of Christ, 6211 Parkwood Drive Tue. at 7 p.m. and Fri. at noon • 301-2028 www.austinal anon.org

30 | Austindia
Enjoy Indian dance performances by the Austin Dance India & Arts. The Dance Company, plus Indian food and items for sale. All proceeds will go to nonprofit group Association for India’s Development. Small Middle School, 4801 Montrey Oaks Blvd.
6–9 p.m. • 301-7145 • $10 (adults), $5 (children ages 6–18), free (children under 6) www.austindia.org

30 & Feb. 6 | Waterfowl identification class
Learn how to identify ducks. Two classes include lecture, photo presentations and field trips. Locations to be announced.
Saturday 8–10 a.m. • $45 (members), $60 (nonmembers) 343-7053 • www.texasaudubon.org

**February**

4 | Northwest and South Austin Business Council luncheon
Gene Binder, Stimulus Manager for Austin Community College, will discuss opportunities for businesses to access available stimulus money.
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. • $20 (members), $25 (nonmembers) www.austincouncil.com/events

6 | A drug-free approach to AD/HD
Learn about safe, natural solutions to help improve behavior and performance for those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. This class is part of a series of workshops from the Austin Public Library and the Foundation for Wellness to help people achieve their New Year’s resolutions. Hampton Branch at Oak Hill, 5125 Convict Hill Road 10 a.m. • 744-7528 • www.cityofaustin.org/library

11 | One Book, One Community: The novels of Sarah Bird
The third annual One Book, One Community program, features the work of award-winning novelist and screenwriter Sarah Bird. Read any of her seven novels, many of which are set in Austin, then come and meet the author. Bee Cave Public Library, 4000 Galleria Parkway

7 p.m. • Free • 767-6620 • www.laketrevorreads.org

11–21 | “Peer Gynt”
In the tradition of great Norwegian fairy tales, Henrik Ibsen’s play is about a man’s journey of self-discovery from boyhood to old age. The fantasy comes alive with puppetry and music. Featuring Equity guest artist Sheila M. Gordon, directed by Everett Lunning Jr. Mary Moody Northington Theatre at St. Edward’s University, 3001 S. Congress Ave. – Thurs.–Sat. 7:30 p.m., Sun. 2 p.m. $15 (advance), $18 (at door) 488-8484 • www.stedwards.edu/market/calendar/arts

12 | Dance Dance Revolution Supernova
Dance your heart out at the Dance Dance Revolution spring tournament, for ages 6–17. Tournament events though April at various library locations are seed tournaments for the championship finals at the Manchaca Library in May. Hampton Branch at Oak Hill, 5125 Convict Hill Road 2 p.m. • 974-8240 • www.cityofaustin.org/library

14 | Valentine Show at the Wild Basin
Albert & Gage perform their mix of French and Texas music in a special Valentine show.
The Wild Basin, 805 K. Capital of Texas Hwy. Doors open 6:30 p.m., show begins 7:30 p.m.
$25 (advance), $30 (at door) • 327-7622 www.wildbasin.org

19 | TACC Lunar New Year Soiree
Celebrate the Lunar New Year at this cocktail reception hosted by the Texas Asian Chamber of Commerce. Enjoy Asian hors d’oeuvres, music, dance and entertainment. Bob Bullock Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. 6:30 p.m. • 485-1090 • www.taccclubexpress.com

21 | The Obama Administration’s Economic Policies
U.S. and foreign diplomats as well as other policy makers—including Dr. Graciela del Castillo, Dr. James Galbraith, Dr. Claudia Lover, Dr. Heta Kot. Dr. Carol O’Dreacain and Dr. Seamus O’Dreacain—analyze the Obama Administration’s economic policy initiatives. St. Edward’s University, Jones Auditorium, Ragdale Center at 3001 S. Congress Ave. • 7 p.m. • Free 232-1278 • www.stedwards.edu

24 | Lemonade Day Kickoff Event
Join the fun at this kickoff party and register to participate in Austin’s second annual Lemonade Day, May 2. This free community-wide program teaches children entrepreneurship through the simplicity of a lemonade stand. Round Rock Express mascot Spike will also be on hand giving out free ballgame tickets. All ages are welcome. Austin Children’s Museum, 201 Colorado St., 5–8 p.m. • Community night admission by donation 472-2499 • www.austinkids.org

27 | CASA/Melanca Gala
This evening will feature casino games, live and silent auctions, live music by Jabarvy and a dinner. This event commemorates CASA’s (Court Appointed Special Advocates) 25 years as a voice for children in Travis County. The Four Seasons Hotel, 90 Jacinto Blvd. 7 p.m. • $100 per person • www.casaofaustin.org

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**March**

5 | College Scholarship Essay Contest deadline
The Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District is seeking essays discussing ground water issues. Open to high school juniors, seniors and immediate graduates from schools within the conservation district boundaries. The author of the winning essay will receive a $1,500 scholarship to the college, community college or training institution of his or her choice.
8 a.m.–10 p.m. • 488-8484 • www.bradex.org/events/scholarships

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☐ Do they get disoriented when driving or make unsafe maneuvers?

☐ Is the thermostat set in inappropriate temperatures?

☐ Do they sleep most of the day?

☐ Have they stopped socially interacting?

☐ Is their laundry piling up or the housekeeping neglected?

☐ Are they forgetting appointments or to make payments on time?

☐ Have they stopped cooking or eating nutritious meals?

☐ Are they unstable when getting up or walking?

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Senior Care Live-In Specialists
Anchor-Ventana Glass started as a small neighborhood window company in Round Rock and has since grown to be one of the largest glass distributors in Central Texas.

With a location in Oak Hill, Anchor-Ventana now processes and installs more than 75,000 sq. ft. of glass and mirrors each month. Projects include shower doors, wall mirrors, glass counter tops and architectural glass, and the company services everyone from homeowners and homebuilders, to designers and commercial businesses.

“A lot of people don’t realize how much you can do with glass,” owner Felix Munson said. “It can be a room divider, or a stairwell. The designer world loves it, and the architecture world loves it.”

The glass supplier was started by Round Rock couple Joyce and Dennis Dobias in 1977. Munson bought the company in 1984, and slowly turned the residential window company into the diverse glass distributor it is today.

“The market in Austin trended toward the change in product,” Munson said. “We still do window glass replacement, but the showroom focuses on people who remodel their homes or are building new homes and want their own special character.”

The second location—a showroom—originally opened in the Lakeway area in 2001 to showcase Anchor-Ventana’s products. Two years later, they moved the showroom to its Oak Hill location.

“Austin has developed into a pretty creative community, so being able to accommodate customers and potential customers helps us encapsulate the whole market from Temple to San Marcos, and from Bastrop to Dripping Springs,” Munson said.

 Though the Oak Hill location is purely a selection facility, the business does do some custom fabrication at the Round Rock store. There, Munson and his team can create custom mirrors, do in-house beveling and cut glass up to half-an-inch thick for tables and counter tops.

“When it comes to showroom and machinery, there is no competition in Austin,” said Kayvon Leath, marketing manager for Anchor-Ventana. “We just have the best of the best; we try to brand ourselves as setting the standard.”

The glass distributor has seen so much business in recent months that Munson was able to open a private designer showroom. Backdoor to the Trade opened in December on Burnet Road and is a collaborative effort involving eight entities to showcase ideas to designers. The showroom is open only to designers and by appointment only.

*Offer ends 01/31/10. Valid for new residential customers and residential use only. Digital Cable for $25 price applies when All The Best bundle is purchased for $99.99 per month for 12 months. All The Best bundle includes Digital Cable, Road Runner High Speed Online 3.0 Mbps and Digital Phone Unlimited Nationwide. Price will increase $10 every 12 months until package price is reached. $7.99 charge for Digital set-top box is not included. May not be combined with any other offer. All services not available in all areas. Additional charges apply for equipment, taxes, fees. Directory Assistance, Operator Services and calls to International locations. To receive all services, Digital Cable: remove and lease of a Digital set-top box are required. Some services are not available to CableCARD customers. Not all equipment supports all services. HDTV set and an HD set-top box required for HD service. Subscription to Road Runner Standard or Turbo is required for PowerBoost®. Actual speeds may vary. Not all service tiers are available in all areas. Many factors affect speed. Road Runner with PowerBoost® provides a burst of download speed when capacity is available above the customer’s provisioned download speeds for the first 10 MB/s of a file. It then reverts to your provisioned speed for the remainder of the download. PowerBoost® is a registered trademark of Comcast Corporation. Used with Permission. Road Runner reserves the right to discontinue any feature or offer at any time. Not all Road Runner products and services are available to customers using the Microsoft® Windows Vista™ operating systems. A one time $10.99 phone activation charge will apply for new customers. Subject to change without notice. Some restrictions apply. Call for details. ©2010 Time Warner Cable Inc. All Rights Reserved. TM & © Warner Bros. Entertainment, Inc. (c)13
Impact News January 2010 | 7

By Yvonne Lim Wilson

When Diana Cregan found herself giving away all of her Australian baby blankets to friends, she knew she was onto something.

“That’s when I thought about doing my own business. When I had the idea, I didn’t see anyone else doing it,” Cregan said.

Traditional Australian swaddling blankets are very different from American receiving blankets. They are larger and made with a fine, loose weave. The thin material helps keep babies from getting overheated.

“It’s very soft and loose, and when you wrap, you are able to swaddle far more effectively. There’s a lot more give,” Cregan said. “It will keep a baby swaddled a lot longer; the baby can sleep longer and mom can sleep longer.”

A native Australian, Cregan had worked various corporate and government jobs and “did a lot of things I hated,” she said. When she got into operations management for a small business, she discovered her own entrepreneurial passion.

“I found a lot of satisfaction working for a small business where you could have an impact on what was going on. Every day was a new challenge,” she said. Her husband’s job took the family from Australia to Kansas and eventually to Austin. The Cregans, who live in Circle C, have two children: Grace, 6, and Will, 3.

The move to the United States helped encourage that entrepreneurial spirit.

“There is a very strong sense of entrepreneurialism [in the U.S.]. I probably have more confidence to give it a go here,” Cregan said. “People will say, you’re a mom—good on you.”

When Cregan first started research for her business, Australian swaddling blankets were unavailable in the United States. Another company has since sprouted, proving there is a strong market for these blankets.

Originally, Cregan wanted to make the blankets herself. Taking a trip to a local fabric store, she discovered they did not carry the right muslin. Six weeks of calls later, she realized no textile mills in the country manufactured the cloth she needed. Cregan eventually found a supplier in China, and after four months of back and forth to get the sample just right, Koala Kuddles was born.

Cregan said the response has been great, and the blankets have uses beyond swaddling. With their long length and light texture, they can be used for the stroller, as a cover for nursing mothers and can be draped over car seats to help shield babies from the sun.

“Most people who buy a box buy a second box because you really need more than three. They use it and use it,” Cregan said. Right now, the biggest challenge is gaining greater exposure, Cregan said. Her next step is taking her blankets to trade shows to expand her market nationwide.

For now, Koala Kuddles is very much Cregan’s personal business. Her home is filled with boxes of blankets everywhere: in the study, garage, bedroom and living room. She hand packages each box herself.

For now, Cregan said she is happy knowing that her creations are keeping babies cuddled, warm and—most importantly for tired moms—sleepy.

Swaddling 101

The age-old practice of swaddling, or wrapping a baby snugly to restrict movement, helps soothe infants and encourage longer sleep periods. A swaddle restricts the baby’s arm and leg “startle reflex,” which could disrupt the baby’s sleep. Without a secure swaddle, a sleeping baby may kick the blanket off, which could present a suffocation risk to newborns.

Where to find them

Koala Kuddles baby blankets ($30 for a 3-pack) are available online and at Austin boutiques including Austin Baby! at 701 S. Lamar Blvd.; Baby Bugaloo at 5700 W. Slaughter Lane, Ste. 220; and Postmark’d at 9600 Escarpment Blvd. Ste. 745.

**Koala Kuddles**

301-8855

www.koalakuddles.com
Ramps to be built at IH 35 and Ben White interchange

With four new ramps, commuters will soon have an easier drive crossing from IH 35 to Ben White Boulevard. The Texas Department of Transportation expects to begin the $30 to $35 million project in May and complete it November 2011. The project is funded by Proposition 14 state legislative bonds, approved by voters in 2003.

The ramps will eliminate the need for drivers to stop at a light when they are crossing from eastbound Ben White Boulevard to southbound IH 35, westbound Ben White to southbound IH 35, northbound IH 35 to eastbound Ben White and northbound IH 35 to westbound Ben White. The new ramps should save drivers time each way, TxDOT engineer Don Nyland said.

“You have to sit at that light, which is five to 10 minutes, depending on the morning and afternoon rush hour. It backs up pretty good on the frontage road,” Nyland said.

The project experienced a delay when the original contractor found an error in his bid in November. The project is again open for bid in February. The impact of the delay is minimized because work would have been limited anyway during the wet winter weather, Nyland said.

The four ramps complete the project connecting IH 35 and Ben White Boulevard that began in the ’90s. The ramps on the north side and work on the frontage roads were completed in an earlier phase. When money became available, the four remaining ramps servicing the south side were added, TxDOT spokesman Chris Bishop said.

Coalition continues push for SH 45 SW

Residents in far south Austin and northern Hays County are not giving up the fight to construct SH 45 SW, a proposed stretch of highway that would connect SH 45 and FM 1626. When officials from the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization recently declared there are no funds for this road, the coalition got to work mobilizing people and getting the message out.

Currently, commuters from Hays County on FM 1626 take Brodie Lane to get to Austin, with no other highway option. The resulting traffic can sometimes be so bad that residents who live on Brodie must wait 15 to 20 minutes just to take a left at Brodie.

“You have all of Hays County funneling to Travis County through residential roads,” coalition member Neil Heisal said.

The coalition consists of about 40 members from 20 different neighborhoods. Within one month, the group gathered 953 signatures on an online petition. Organizers say their next step is to focus on getting an environment impact study completed for the road, and to keep the message alive with elected officials.

The coalition meets monthly at the Shady Hollow Community Center at 3303 Doe Run. The next meeting is Feb. 15 at 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.thepetitionsite.com/1/Build-SH45.
Neighborhood Dining | Red’s Porch

By Tiffany Young

After creating a successful restaurant in north Austin, North by Northwest, Davis Tucker decided to try a new concept in south Austin. His new restaurant and bar, Red’s Porch, opened in December and mixes a little bit of Southern flair with Tex-Mex and Cajun flavors for a unique menu of traditional country favorites, combination hamburgers and numerous Mexican dishes.

Located on South Lamar Boulevard, just north of the Hwy. 290 intersection, it is easy to miss the building, but its large, red and gray ’50s diner-style sign points the way. The parking lot and restaurant face west of Lamar Boulevard behind a bank to take advantage of the beautiful Barton Creek Greenbelt.

There are plenty of seating options, depending on the occasion. To fully appreciate the view, take the stairs and enjoy overlooking the greenery from a 2,200 sq. ft. heated patio. Or, downstairs, sit near darts or shuffle board games with friends while sipping on one of the many specialty drinks offered. There is also an additional patio downstairs.

Like North by Northwest, Red’s has a large assortment of brews, with 29 beers on tap and full bars upstairs and downstairs.

On a recent Saturday afternoon, the dining area was calm with just a few tables filled. The waitress was friendly and made room for a party of seven immediately. Silverware was wrapped in red and white hand towels instead of napkins for that nice, homey feel.

Fried olives ($6.95) were a big hit as an appetizer. The eight beer-battered olives were big, stuffed with blue cheese and with marinara sauce for dipping.

The Veggie Veggie Enchiladas ($8.50) are packed with grilled zucchini, wild mushrooms and red onion and smothered with arbol cream and jack cheese. For those who like a little (or a lot of) meat with their meals, their are plenty of burgers from which to choose. If you’ve got a serious appetite or a hungry friend to split it with, try the Red’s Big Burger ($19.95). A double patty weighing in at one pound, along with four slices of bacon, grilled onions, sliced mushrooms, Swiss, cheddar, cilantro mayonnaise and a pair of goat cheese jalapeño poppers, it’s a serious meal. Each burger comes with a side of fries and a choice of bun: whole wheat, sourdough or jalapeño.

Finish the meal with one of the “finals.” The New Orleans Chocolate Bread Pudding ($4.95) is enough for two and is drizzled with caramel sauce.

If Tucker’s first Austin restaurant is any indicator, Red’s will become to south Austin what North by Northwest is to north Austin: a great place to meet with friends, dine and have a drink.

Cocktail concoctions

Happy hour is Monday through Friday 3 to 7 p.m., with $2 Lone Star pencils, $3.25 Red’s Frozen Ritas, $6 House Texcian Martinis along with appetizer, house wine and Texas draft specials. Happy hour on weekends is 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., with Dark n’ Stormy and Voodoo Queen cocktails on special.

Some of Red’s Porch’s specialty drinks include: Texas Tornado ($6.75): Tito’s Vodka, Paula’s Texas Lemon, fresh mint with a splash of soda

Dark n’ Stormy ($6.75): Gosling’s Rum & Maine Root Ginger Beer over ice

South Side Hurricane ($7.25) Old New Orleans Amber & Mount Gay rums with a secret juice blend

Voodoo Queen ($6) House-made bloody Mary mix with Red’s Pepper Infused Vodka and spicy green beans.

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3508 South Lamar Blvd.
Sun.-Fri. 11 a.m.-midnight
Sat. 11 a.m.-1 a.m.
440-REDS (7337)
www.redsporch.com

While Red’s Porch offers a view of the Barton Creek Greenbelt, the two-story restaurant can be tough to spot from the road. Red’s is located behind the Citibank on South Lamar Boulevard.
By Patrick Brendel

Going into the March primaries, political advertisements will fill television, radio and mailboxes, paid for with donations from individuals and organizations.

Top-ballot campaigns for governor and U.S. Senate will dominate fundraising and the media, while candidates for local offices and judgships will struggle to make themselves known, especially non-incumbents.

With little to no knowledge of the people on the bottom of the ballot, primary voters are often left to choose on the merits of someone’s name, without the option to vote a straight partisan ticket. Many do not cast votes for lesser-known offices, even if those positions are more likely to have direct consequences on voters’ everyday lives.

“I never understood why people would come to vote for the top offices and then drop off before voting on the positions closest to them,” Travis County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir said.

In March 2008, the intense battle between presidential hopefuls Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama drew 185,838 votes from Travis County Democrats. On the same ballot, the tight four-way contest for district attorney drew nearly 25 percent fewer votes (140,468), without popular incumbent Ronnie Earle in the running. That is also 10 percent fewer votes than were cast for county tax assessor-collector, a race won easily by longtime officeholder Nelda Wells Spears.

“Citizens’ recognition of people down ballot is notoriously bad,” University of Texas government professor Brian Roberts said, explaining that 29 percent of respondents to a national poll could not correctly identify the current U.S. vice president as Joe Biden.

In the same poll, conducted by Roberts and professor Daron Shaw, 51 percent did not identify the current U.S. house speaker as Nancy Pelosi.

“You can imagine how much that number drops as you go down ballot,” he said. However, despite (or maybe because of) their relative anonymity, local and state officeholders are perceived as less corrupt than their national counterparts. According to Roberts’ poll, 67 percent of respondents said corruption is most widespread in national government, compared to 12 percent for state and 6 percent for local.

Also, while 67 percent of respondents say the average U.S. congressman has a “poor” or “not so good” level of ethics and honesty, only 36 percent said that about their own U.S. senator, and 33 percent about their own U.S. representative.

“In part, it’s a reflection of respondents’ lack of knowledge. It’s also a national reflection of human nature,” he said. “As a voter, you feel accountable for your own roster of politicians and somewhat culpable in sustaining a more corrupt group than your neighbors.”

A League of Women Voters study has given the best explanation to DeBeauvoir as to why people are less likely to vote for local offices. Basically, the more connections a person has with the community, the more likely that individual is to know their local officials and to vote for them.

Further removed from the public, top-level state and federal candidates rely on news stories and advertising to get voters’ attention. Bigger campaigns attract more news media attention and can afford to buy more advertising than typical local candidates. On the other hand, successful fundraising can expose candidates to suspicions of corruption, as the identities of donors are reported by the media.

According to Roberts’ survey, a relatively small donation ($50,000) from a controversial donor affects voters’ opinions of a candidate just as much as a large donation ($20 million) from the same donor.

“People are much more attuned to sources of money rather than amounts of money,” he said.

**Important primary election dates**

- Feb. 1 • Last day to register to vote
- Feb. 16-26 • Early voting period
- March 2 • Primary Election Day

**Money, politics and voting**

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City Notes

City begins enforcement of texting while driving ban, launches news program
Compiled by Staff

Upcoming Austin City Council meetings
Feb. 4, 11 and 25
Sessions begin at 10 a.m.
301 W. Second St.
Meetings are broadcast on municipal TV cable channel 6 and on 88.7 FM radio, starting at 1:30 p.m. Meetings are streamed live on the channel 6 website, www.ci.austin.tx.us/channel6. Visit www.ci.austin.tx.us/council for more information, including transcripts, schedules, agendas and archived video.

Urban rail update

Austin Transportation Director Robert Spillar is expected to give an update on the city’s urban rail project at the council’s Feb. 25 meeting. He could present a system plan that may include the limits of the urban rail projects as currently envisioned. Preliminary costs of the first segment could also be available by the February update with additional cost details possibly available in May 2010.

The council approved hiring Austin Urban Rail Partners to complete a $1 million preliminary engineering study for the city’s urban rail project at its Dec. 10 meeting. The city is currently negotiating the contract.

The study will help identify the rail’s route through downtown and the costs. The rail, a 15.3-mile streetcar and light-rail hybrid to stretch from the Mueller development to Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, is scheduled to be part of a city bond election this November.

Construction on the line could be up to two years away, but Spillar said the city needs to be planning now.

“We really have a circulation problem here in central Austin, and when I say central Austin, I mean downtown, the university district and the capitol complex,” Spillar said.

The rail is expected to help improve access to the downtown area.

Texting while driving ban

The City of Austin’s ban on texting while driving went into effect Jan. 1, and beginning Feb. 1—after a month-long grace period—offenders could be charged up to $500 for doing so.

The new ordinance makes it illegal for drivers to use a wireless communication device for purposes other than making a phone call, including texting, playing games, using GPS or adjusting a music player. Exceptions to the ban include:

• Using the device while stopped
• Making a call, ending a call or using the device’s address book to look up a phone number prior to dialing
• Using the device as a navigation system affixed to the vehicle
• In the reasonable belief that a person’s life or safety is in immediate danger
• If the device is permanently installed inside the vehicle
• If the device is in a voice-activated or hands-free mode

Councilwoman Laura Morrison said she would like to have the Austin Police Department report back in six months to examine any problems with the ordinance or its enforcement.

Mayor Pro Tem Mike Martinez said the ban may be modified as the city sees what works and what does not.

“This, like any other piece of legislation, evolves and it has life,” he said. “As we move forward, I think you’ll see some improvements. But, it is, for me, about public safety and it truly is about you doing everything you can to be as attentive as possible when you’re driving your car.”

City launches original news program

The city launched an original news program called “CityView” in January. The 10-minute program is produced by Channel 6 and includes updates on recent city council actions, news conference recaps and features about city programs and services. A new episode will premiere on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at 5:30 p.m. and replay daily at 8 a.m., noon, 5:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. on Channel 6.

“CityView” is available online via the city’s YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/austintxgov) or at www.cityofaustin.org/channel6.

Source: City of Austin

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*Qualified customers within the Austin, Sunset Valley, Rollingwood, West Lake Hills, Kyle and Cedar Park city limits with existing gas furnaces can earn this incentive.
By Eric Pulsifer

On Jan. 7, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed the most stringent standards to date for smog, a move that could result in negative consequences for businesses and limits to federal transportation funds in Texas. The proposed regulations would lower the allowable amount of ozone from 75 to somewhere between 60 and 70 parts per billion. This new benchmark would place Austin in "nonattainment" status based off the current levels if they become official in 2010.

Perry said the new standard could result in economic problems for Texas. "From cap and tax legislation to regulating CO2 to moving ozone targets, the Obama administration seems intent upon following flawed science down a road that will lead to the loss of hundreds of thousands of Texas jobs, while doing nothing more to protect human health," he said.

State Rep. Eddie Rodriguez welcomed the new target as an opportunity to improve air quality. "We are not where we need to be in terms of safe, clean air," Rodriguez said. "There has to be a statewide effort, and there has to be accountability from the state's leadership, the Legislature and [Texas Commission on Environmental Quality]."

Environmental groups view the move as a chance to halt the development of coal plants, the largest categorical source of ozone in the state.

"Central Texas is currently on the edge of nonattainment," said Eva Hernandez, of the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign. "The tough part is that the number of areas that are nonattainment in Texas are going to double."

Twice as many counties would hold nonattainment status, including El Paso, East Texas/Longview, Tyler/Marshall, El Paso, San Antonio and possibly Corpus Christi, Victoria/Goliad and Waco/ Temple. DFW, Houston/Galveston, and Beaumont/Port Arthur are currently in nonattainment of air quality standards.

"TCEQ has really been a rubber stamp for coal plants and other major industrial sources of air pollution across the state for years," Hernandez said. "Unfortunately, because of that Texas asthma rates have doubled in the last 10 years."

If the proposal becomes the new standard this August, the EPA will require the TCEQ to prepare an implementation plan that must drastically reduce ozone pollution.

Mary Tuma contributed to this story.

Eva Hernandez of the Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal Campaign said the state now has the opportunity to halt the building of coal plants and urged review of the existing permits as a way to reduce ozone pollution.

What is smog?

Smog, also known as ground-level ozone, forms when emissions from industrial facilities, landfills and motor vehicles react in the sun. It has been linked to a number of health problems, particularly for those with lung or heart issues.
Enjoy six types of salsas and a basket of chips. The Rodriguez family closed the restaurant in December after 21 years.

Evitas Botanitas owners Juanita and Ruben Rodriguez display their Salsa Tower, which was placed at every table for diners to enjoy six types of salsas and a basket of chips. The Rodriguez family closed the restaurant in December after 21 years.

**By Yvonne Lim Wilson**

In the 1980s, interior Mexican food was a rarity in Austin. Back then, Tex-Mex restaurants serving tacos, fajitas and nachos dominated the culinary landscape. Only a handful of restaurants served interior Mexican food, which features a wider variety of meats, as well as seafood dishes and more complex sauces, such as mole.

Ruben Rodriguez, the owner of Evitas Botanitas, is one of these pioneering restaurateurs. The restaurant, located at 6400 S. First St., closed its doors Dec. 28 after more than 21 years of business.

Loyal customers came out to share memories on the last day.

Michael and Linda Von Hatten and their daughter Angela had been coming to Evitas for the past 15 years.

“The food was always delicious—for birthdays, anniversaries, after church on Sundays,” Michael said. “When you find a neighborhood restaurant or store you like, it becomes a part of your life.”

Several people compared the warm environment to “Cheers,” where everyone knows your name, and your favorite dishes.

“I fell in love with the food,” long-time customer Jennifer Oshel said. “I get a hug when I come in. I’ll really miss it.”

Rodriguez always had a great passion for food and had worked as a hotel banquet chef for about 15 years before he went to work at Evitas Botanitas, which was struggling at the time. He bought it in 1988 and began introducing food from his native Guanajuato, Mexico.

“Back then, it was all Tex-Mex,” Rodriguez said. “I had real Mexican enchiladas with mole … but I still kept Tex-Mex (enchiladas) with cheese because you have to. It worked out good. People enjoy it, and I enjoy it myself.”

Rodriguez added lime cilantro rice, lamb chops, seafood dishes, seven types of enchiladas—including a vegetarian option—and a choice of beans to the menu. He even sold tchotchkes and trinkets.

But the main key to his success, Rodriguez said, was the salsa tower, an entirely original creation. He had a carpenter friend create wooden stands with six circular grooves on the bottom for six small cups. A basket of fresh, hot chips was placed on the top of the stand and six kinds of sauces and dips were placed at the bottom. The salsa tower became Evitas Botanitas’ trademark, and the contents of those six little cups brought a host of awards and fans.

In 2008, the family was hit with personal tragedy when Rodriguez was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Furthermore, he had no insurance.

Fans organized a “Tower of Salsa” benefit concert at Antone’s in May 2009 featuring eight local bands.

“It was huge. We had a good response,” Rodriguez said, proudly showing off a T-shirt commemorating the event. “It helped to pay off a big part of the bills.”

Rodriguez realized he could not operate the restaurant full time. He found a buyer to continue the business, but the deal fell through. So, Rodriguez made plans to further develop his catering business.

“We can work less hours and enjoy things more,” Rodriguez said. He added that he was looking forward to having more time with family. He and his wife, Juanita, have three children and two grandchildren.

Things were looking good until Dec. 28, the day the family planned to close the restaurant, when Rodriguez had a stroke. An update on his status was not available by press time.

Earlier in December, Rodriguez was enjoying good health and looked forward to continue his work through catering. His daughter Veronica talked about publishing a cookbook with his famous recipes.

“To hear customers say that you help them—they say they were feeling down, but then you make them feel good,” Rodriguez said. “As many times as I can tell my customers, I just want to say ‘thank you.’”

Through the years, Evitas Botanitas has garnered numerous awards for their enchiladas and salsa.

“Texas Monthly executive editor and food critic Patricia Sharpe shared her thoughts in an e-mail: “I loved Evitas Botanitas. They were one of the first in Austin to have more than one table salsa, which seems so ordinary now, but when they started, it was revolutionary,”” she said. “They were one of the restaurants that took Austin to the next level. They helped lead the way toward a more authentic Mexican cuisine in this city.”

A sample of menu items from Evitas Botanitas

- *Huevos a la Mexicana*
- *Homemade Mole Puebla Enchiladas*
- *Milanesa Laredo*
- *Lamb Chops Enchilada Combo*
- *Shrimp a La Diabla*
- *All-day breakfast: Huevos Rancheros, Migas or Huevos a la Mexicana*

For a complete catering menu, visit www.evitasbotanitas.com.
Establishing new boundaries

To examine the issue, AISD created the Facilities Use and Boundary Task Force, which includes 10 core members appointed by the AISD board of trustees to provide a district-wide perspective, as well as 16 geographic members representing each of the eight area schools: Boone, Clayton, Cowan, Kiker, Mills, Oak Hill, Patton and Sunset Valley elementary schools. The school district hired an independent third-party facilitator to help guide the process.

On Jan. 21, the task force finalized its recommended boundaries, known as Plan 3. Plan 3 would alleviate overcrowding at Clayton, Mills and Oak Hill, and bring Patton, which had been slightly low, up to ideal capacity range. Grandfathering of reassigned fourth graders who wish to remain at their current school for fifth grade is allowed under the plan.

However, Plan 3 would not help underenrolled schools Boone and Sunset Valley. Sunset Valley is currently at 65 percent capacity and Boone is currently at 58 percent. Ideally, a school should have 75 percent. Ideally, a school should have 75 to 115 percent enrollment.

Boone task force representative Jennifer Waits said she was disappointed that school overcrowding issues took precedence over underenrollment issues.

“I’m really proud of the task force as a whole for looking holistically at things,” Waits said. “[But] it’s a sad day for Boone and Sunset Valley. Kids became unequal today.”

Joe Silva, assistant director for planning services for AISD, congratulated the all-volunteer task force on its many months of hard work.

“There’s always a slight uneasiness that you can’t accomplish everything you want because you’re dealing with very difficult decisions,” Silva said.

A new east-west divide

Typically, east Austin refers to the area east of IH 35. But the school boundary process in southwest Austin is creating a new “east Austin” cleared by MoPac.

Families who live west of MoPac, where the overenrolled schools are, objected to moving east of MoPac, where the underenrolled schools are, for various reasons.

Clayton, Kiker, Mills and Oak Hill elementary schools, which lie west of MoPac, are overcrowded. Without adjusting their boundaries, population numbers would grow to unacceptably levels, with Clayton being the highest, reaching 160 percent in 2012. In some ways, these schools are victims of their own successes. Mills, Clayton and Kiker are all categorized as exemplary, the highest ranking for schools by the State of Texas, and attract families to move nearby.

In contrast, Sunset Valley and Boone, both east of MoPac, have low student numbers. These schools are in older neighborhoods with fewer young children.

“We’re not underutilized. We just have mature neighborhoods. People who move to Sunset Valley want 1, 2 or 3 acres, so there’s not a lot of houses,” said Molly Wentworth, task force representative for Sunset Valley.

Funding and resources for schools are based on population numbers: More students mean more staff. Wentworth said Sunset Valley families have had to fundraise to pay for their assistant principal, counselors and clerks.

Wentworth had proposed shifting a large portion of students from Oak Hill to bring Sunset Valley up to 100 percent. In turn, Sunset Valley would have given extra students to neighboring Boone to bring Boone closer to 100 percent capacity.

“My overall goal is equal access numbers and equal education for every child,” she said.

While Wentworth’s proposal would have addressed both overcapacity and undercapacity at multiple schools, it would have been a dramatic shift for too many students. Traffic, tracking and tradition, which are not stated AISD criteria, are important factors for a school community.

“You’re splintering what is a very important part of Oak Hill; then you’re doing a huge disservice to Oak Hill and it becomes underutilized,” Molly Austin, a task force member representing Oak Hill, said in response to Wentworth’s proposal.

The proposal in its various forms had been defeated several times, but it illustrates how complicated it can be to simply move students from an overcrowded school to an underenrolled one.

No easy solutions

In addition to the Plan 3 map, the task force is presenting three additional recommendations.

To address equity, the task force recommends that the district provide at least one full-time assistant principal, full-time counselor and full-time clerk to every school, regardless of student population.

Also, the task force recommended that for future task forces, the board should weight or prioritize criteria so that task force members will have a clearer idea on how to proceed when criteria conflict with one another.

Finally, the task force recommended maintaining current staffing levels at Sunset Valley and Boone for at least one year at district expense.

“This task force worked extremely hard to reach an equitable [solution],” core task force member Pat Epstein said. “I hope AISD works very hard to address this issue [of under-enrollment].”

Underenrollment and equitable distribution of resources are major issues for the district.

“I want to help Sunset Valley and Boone, but there are lots of schools we need to look at. There are schools at 20 percent capacity in our district,” core task force member Kathy Mauro said.

There are no easy solutions, especially with a recent announcement from AISD Superintendent Meria Carstarphen, who is facing a $15 million budget shortfall and wants to cut administrative jobs.

The task force presents its recommendations Feb. 8, and the board will vote on the final boundaries Feb. 22.
will follow. Sales associate Lorin Martin said the project should be completed within two years.

Homes will be made from recycled materials and feature environmentally friendly amenities, such as 3-kilowatt solar panel systems, 2,200-gallon rainwater collection systems, metal roofs, bamboo floors and concrete countertops.

The 1,800 sq. ft. homes will each have a unique layout but will feature a unified design. Prices start in the mid-$300,000s.

Increasing efficiency

While developers of projects like Tonalacalli and Las Casas Verdes are getting creative to lessen environmental impact, more efficient appliances and better-constructed houses have made the average home more eco-friendly.

“A home in the ’70s used about 9.5-kilowatt hours per square foot per year, a home built today is using a little bit more than 6,” said Richard Morgan, green building and sustainability manager with Austin Energy’s Green Building program. “That’s just your average home built in the 2000s, not a green-built home.”

Houses built in the ’70s tend to be the biggest energy-wasting culprits, Morgan said, as homes built prior to that have likely seen renovations and those built after are more thoroughly insulated and sealed.

“Energy efficiency has improved by at least 30 percent over that time, and that’s also over a period of time when we have added an incredible number of appliances and energy-using devices into our homes,” he said.

While there are more electricity-using appliances and gadgets in our homes than ever before, many of these devices are labeled Energy Star, meaning they meet a government standard in efficiency.

“The implied promise of Energy Star is supposed to be 15 percent more efficient than current minimum standards,” Morgan said. “A refrigerator meeting today’s minimum manufacturing standards for energy efficiency uses less than half of the energy of a refrigerator from 1992.”

With or without the Energy Star label, most new appliances consume less energy than those from a decade ago, but one appliance has actually gotten less energy efficient: the television. While LCD sets use less power than the televisions of yesteryear, plasma and projection sets, use more electricity.

Starters to LEED

Start in 1990, Austin’s Green Building program was the first in the country and served as an early model for the national LEED certification system, which did not come about until 1998. The City of Austin was also a charter member in the U.S. Green Building Council, the nonprofit that developed the LEED rating system.

The Green Building program started off working on single-family homes, but by 1994, the program was tasked with developing sustainable building guidelines for city projects such as the airport and the convention center. The program’s focus has now shifted from homeowners to homebuilders and designers, but Morgan said they still offer recommendations about materials and systems or offer plan and specification reviews.

Building green, saving green

While many developers and homebuilders may choose to go eco-friendly for marketing purposes, Morgan said energy savings can also make building green a wise investment.

“The only cost is in improved design, and in some cases, upgraded equipment,” he said. “Our experience is that the initial incremental cost is almost always paid back in five years, and often in two years or less.”

Mary Tuma contributed to this story.
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Residential Real Estate | Neighborhood at a Glance

78735 - Lantana

Just north of the Y in Oak Hill, Lantana is a West Oak Hill subdivision near AMD’s Lone Star Campus with scenic views of the Hill Country.

Schools
- Oak Hill Elementary School
- Clint Small Middle School
- Austin High School

Featured homes

7813 Oteka Cove
4 Br/2.5 Ba | 2,537 sq. ft.
Agent: Greg Young
$355,688
587-1337

7909 Journeyville Drive
5 Br/3.5 Ba | 3,824 sq. ft.
Agent: Malini Patel
$409,900
892-0392

7604 Menler Drive
4 Br/3.5 Ba | 3,358 sq. ft.
Agent: Vince Martinez
$400,000
785-4288

5721 Kempson Drive
5 Br/3.5 Ba | 4,407 sq. ft.
Agent: Raina Gibson
$475,000
757-5353

Market Data

On the market (December 1–31)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price range</th>
<th>No. of homes for sale</th>
<th>Avg. days on market</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$149,999 or under</td>
<td>24/47</td>
<td>2/89</td>
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<tr>
<td>$150,000-$199,999</td>
<td>55/81</td>
<td>16/57</td>
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<td>$200,000-$299,999</td>
<td>43/102</td>
<td>50/77</td>
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<td>$300,000-$399,999</td>
<td>5/232</td>
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<tr>
<td>$400,000-$499,999</td>
<td>1/37</td>
<td>11/36</td>
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<tr>
<td>$500,000-$599,999</td>
<td>1/145</td>
<td>1/53</td>
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<tr>
<td>$600,000-$799,999</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>$800,000-$999,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1 million +</td>
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Monthly home sales

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<th>78739</th>
<th>78738</th>
<th>78735</th>
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<th>78737</th>
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<td>Dec. 2009</td>
<td>30/182,000</td>
<td>30/246,900</td>
<td>20/358,950</td>
<td>35/194,500</td>
<td>35/194,500</td>
<td>45/179,000</td>
<td>45/179,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 2008</td>
<td>43/160,000</td>
<td>28/224,750</td>
<td>19/327,990</td>
<td>19/327,990</td>
<td>45/179,000</td>
<td>45/179,000</td>
<td>45/179,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2. Call and set an appointment
3. Come in ask to see my invoice
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZIP code</th>
<th>Subdivision</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Bed/Bath</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Sq. Ft</th>
<th>Agent</th>
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<th>Phone</th>
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<td>8370 Dahl Road Drive</td>
<td>4br/2ba</td>
<td>$2,100,000</td>
<td>5,528</td>
<td>Mary Linkenberg</td>
<td>Keller Williams Realty</td>
<td>512-696-0757</td>
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<td>Lantara</td>
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<td>6203 Mahala Drive</td>
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<td>1,900</td>
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<td>Handy Reality</td>
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ZIP code guide

- **Southwest Austin**
- **Southwest Austin**
- **South of Ben White, Sunset Valley**
- **Shady Hollow / Manorca area**
- **MoPac / William Cannon**
- **Falls State Park**
- **Restaurants & Entertainment**
- **I  Austin-Bergstrom International Airport**
- **I  Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center**
- **I  McKinney Falls State Park**

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Expires 2/28/10. One per table. Not available with any other offers or on Valentine’s Day.

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Buy 2 entrees & 2 beverages, get $5 OFF!
Expires 2/28/10. One per table. Not available with any other offers or on Valentine’s Day.

MONDAY
Buy one entree & two beverages get one entree FREE!
(up to $10 value)
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