City of Austin to revise water conservation codes

Rules to change consumers’ permitted activities at each stage of emergency drought restrictions

By Kevin Stich

With summer approaching, the City of Austin is looking to rework its water conservation codes to ensure it will be on par with future demands of residents and businesses while being better prepared to contend with imminent droughts. The city is taking steps to make certain it uses its water resources wisely looking out into the next year or two.

“Last summer, particularly around August or September, it looked very bad,” said Drema Gross, water conservation manager for the City of Austin. “We’ve certainly learned a lot about how this process works so that we’ll be better prepared the next time we find ourselves in a drought situation this severe.”

While officials predict that the advancing summer will be milder in comparison with 2011, public feedback indicates there’s anxiety at the prospect of facing another hot season under the city’s current water conservation codes.

“So far, a large part of the response from citizens has included a desire to see the city be more proactive and less reactive in addressing water conservation problems.

“Despite the fact that we have year-round restrictions, I think people want earlier notice where we start to build awareness before the lake levels get quite as low as they did under our current drought contingency plan,” she said. “In 2009, when we went into restrictions, we went into them for a relatively short period of time and three weeks in people started seeing rain. So, it didn’t have the sustained impact this past drought did.”

Federal agency green-lights rapid-transit bus routes

Oak Hill bus stop to move during road construction

By Amy Denney

With federal funds in place, Capital Metro is set to complete design work on MetroRapid, the two-route rapid-bus system that will run along North Lamar Boulevard to South Congress Avenue and Burnet Road to South Lamar.

Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff announced April 10 that the transit authority would receive funding for 80 percent of the total $47.6 million project cost. The $38 million grant comes from the FTA’s Very Small Starts program.

“The FTA has agreed to put forward 80 percent funding for this project because we know it’s going to have a real quality-of-life improvement for people throughout the Greater Austin area,” Rogoff said.

Capital Metro board members, CEO/President Linda Watson, and city transportation officials gathered on Republic Square Park for the announcement of the grant funding that effectively opens the door for the transit authority to move forward with planning and construction phases. Attendees toured a sample accordion-style bus that will run along North Lamar and South Congress and rode along part of the route the new bus will take.

Watson said 40 new buses will be delivered every six months starting 2014. Eventually, the 26-foot buses will replace many of the city’s older, 40-foot buses.

“The City of Austin is home to more than 38,000 small businesses that employ roughly 40 percent of the total workforce. City of Austin data predicts that this year, more than 7,000 small businesses will be created—a large number for the city’s size.”

Programs help grow small businesses

Local incubators connect companies with mentors, resources

By Joe Olivieri

Spuntino, a line of thick cut bread chips, started out as a creative way to use up day-old bread.

Mark Spedale, then co-owner of Primizie Osteria, had grilled and crisp-fried the leftover pieces.

The chips paired well with heavy dips and hummus, co-owner Lisa Spedale said.

“We thought about retailing them as a kind of higher-end chip,” she said. “To get calls asking about them, even after the restaurant closed [in 2010], was really validating."

The Spedales offered their chips through Southwest Austin catering company, Primizie, before branching out to retail. Spuntino chips are now in 16 local grocery stores.

Eventually, the Spedales’ all-under-one-roof business model hit a wall. If they were going to continue to grow their business, they were going to need some help.

Many small businesses sought funding and greater exposure during the South by Southwest Music and Media Conference in March. Now that the international spotlight has dimmed until next year, businesses have continued networking locally and seeking public programs and private groups to help them grow.

“The City of Austin is home to more than 38,000 small businesses that employ roughly 40 percent of the total workforce. City of Austin data predicts that this year, more than 7,000 small businesses will be created—a large number for the city’s size.”

See Businesses | 18

See Water | 17
St. David’s HealthCare has long been recognized as one of the top healthcare organizations in the nation for providing exceptional patient care and service to families throughout Central Texas. Now that care comes even closer to home.

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Making good on a bigger promise. Peace of mind comes with knowing that full-service emergency care—available 24 hours a day, seven days a week—is close to home. That’s why St. David’s HealthCare opened the area’s first Emergency Center.

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Board-Certified Emergency Medicine Physicians
Emergency Trauma Certified Nurses

St. David’s Emergency Center—providing exceptional care from the name you’ve come to trust.
This month’s stories reminded me of a line from Lewis Carroll’s book “Through the Looking Glass.”

The line, paraphrased, is that you have run as fast as you can to stay in the same place on the chess board. If you actually want to move forward, you had better run twice as fast as that.

All across Southwest Austin this month, people and institutions are doubling their efforts to keep moving forward.

In our lead story, Austin Water Utility is adopting new water conservation codes to meet future demands.

Local water authorities across the state will need $27 billion in state aid to follow the Texas Water Development Board’s new water plan. Austin will need to find 25 percent of its future water supply through conservation.

Meanwhile, Austin’s small businesses are using public programs and private funding to reach that next level. Entrepreneurs need cash and guidance to grow their operations beyond their garages and spare bedrooms.

Even school districts are trying not to run in place. Educators say they are suing the state to make sure schools are funded equally, or at least adequately.

There are always signs of hope on the horizon. Oak Hill residents have made great strides rebuilding from the 2011 Pinnacle wildfire, and rescued animals are recovering at the Austin Zoo after improper care elsewhere.

Progress is often slow but arrives eventually. Wherever you find yourself on the chess board this month, good luck and enjoy our April issue.

—Michelle Pelletier

AISD could join resolution that decries standardized testing

“I am so happy to read this article. Standardized testing drill and kill and ‘walk throughs’ by district associate superintendents and their ‘instructional specialists’ are absolutely robbing children of the joy of learning and robbing teachers of the joy of teaching. I could write a book on this subject, but suffice it to say that Pearson is seeing extraordinary profits while everyone else in the field of education, most importantly the students, are seeing the inside of schools as prisons holding their minds hostage to high stakes testing. I hope AISD does join the fight.”

—“Amanda”

Reader Feedback

The Greenwood School

“I adore Greenwood. Miss Tracy has done so much for the growth of the children as well as those who come in contact with her. An amazing sense of community and family. Kudos to Tracy and the entire Greenwood staff.”

—Michelle Pelletier

“I love Greenwood! The festivals that they have are a great time to share in the magic and sense of community that the school fosters (also great food and music). I know that both my children will benefit throughout their lives from having attended and gone to Greenwood.”

—Jennifer Butel
STAY SAFE. CALL BEFORE YOU DIG.

If you have digging or excavation work to do, call 811 at least 48 hours in advance.

The depth of natural gas and other utility lines varies. By calling 811, utility crews can mark locations of underground lines at no charge. The markings are done in paint and will eventually wash away. Marking line locations can help prevent you or a contractor from accidentally damaging a natural gas line.

Always call before you dig. It’s smart, it’s safe and it’s the law.

www.TexasGasService.com
City documents show that Ace Liquor is coming to 6400 S. First St., Ste. E.

Landera Hill Country Apartments, a 308-unit development, is being built by CMC Commercial Realty Group on 22 acres along S. I-35. Plans include a pool, clubhouse, gym with yoga room and dog park among its amenities. The project will reportedly take 16 to 18 months to build. 415-543-9400, www.cmcrealty.com

Pho-Natic Vietnamese Cuisine is coming to Southpark Meadows in 2013. The restaurant, which recently signed a lease, has a location on Anderson Lane in north Austin. www.pho-natic.com

The Preparatory School of Dripping Springs is building a 13,000-square-foot campus at 12610 Nutty Brown Road. The private preschool touts its enrichment classrooms and individual instruction. It plans to open this summer. 288-7737, www.theprepschools.com

Trader Joe's, a California-based grocery store, announced the eighth Texas location will be in Austin at the former Seaholm Power Plant, 211 Seaholm Drive, Ste. 100. The store, known for its Two-buck Chuck wine, will open in 2013. Trader Joe's carries domestic and imported foods and beverages. www.traderjoes.com

Relocations

On April 1, Dollar Tile Austin moved from 10812 S. I-35 near Onion Creek to 17020 S. I-35 in Buda. The vendor sells all types of tile, including ceramic, porcelain, slate and glass. 708-8453, www.dollartile.com

Roz Guitierrez, owner of Roz's Hot Tamales, is offering sweet and savory tamales at Skinny Pigs Food Truck, 927 E. Sixth St. Roz's Hot Tamales was formerly located at the Community Renaissance Market, 6800 West Gate Blvd.

Anniversary

Ace Pet Care will celebrate its sixth anniversary in June. The company provides pet sitting, dog walking, noon potty breaks and vacation care. 484-5840, www.acepetcare.net

Expansions

Full English Cafe opened its backyard garden area at its 2000 Southern Oaks Drive restaurant April 6. The outdoor patio area will include an area for dogs to play. The cafe serves interpretations of classic British meals. 240-2748, www.fullenglishfood.com

Community Service

Nonprofit affordable housing provider Foundation Communities is holding a volunteer open house from 5–7 p.m., May 8 at M Station Learning Center, 2906 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Volunteer opportunities include financial coaching and tax preparation. 447-2026, www.foundcom.org

Closing

SoCo Coffee closed its 6000 S. Congress Ave. location.

In the News

Manchaca Volunteer Fire Department held a grand opening for its 655 W. FM 1626 headquarters March 31. The department plans to hold a grand opening its rescue station on 12010 Brodie Lane on May 5 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. 282-7057, www.mvfd.org

The Village of San Leanna canceled its May election after only the three incumbents—Alderwomen Betty Korts, Molly Quirk and Tillie Trotter—ran for office. www.sanleannatx.com

Victor Adame, sales associate at The Tea Lounge, prepares one of the eatery’s tea-and-tapioca tea creations at the new Southpark Meadows location.

In addition to opening up shop on Hwy. 290, custom gunsmiths Underground Tactical Arms Company will close its Buda operation soon.
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Air Filter
Cabin Air Filter (may require additional labor)
Replace engine coolant
Pressure test cooling systems
Scan on-board computer for codes
Clean & Adjust Rear Brakes
Complete vehicle inspection (approx. 52 points)
Perform road test
Service Transmission (filter is additional if required)
Rotate Tires
Battery Service
We will scan your on-board computer for diagnostic codes free of charge

*When applicable. **Platinum plugs and extended plugs additional charge. Most cars and light trucks. Please call for appointment.
Add EPA waste disposal fee. ***Change transmission oil, clean filter/screen, install new pan gasket. Complete fluid exchange available. Filter extra.

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(in front of Home Depot)
512.819.9200

405 W. Slaughter Lane
Austin, TX 78748
512.291.6789

ALL LOCATIONS OPEN

Monday - Friday at 7:00 am | Saturday at 7:30 am
April

27–29 Austin Food & Wine Festival
Food & Wine Magazine presents a culinary showcase of demonstrations, presentations and competitions. Celebrity chefs, nationally recognized cooks and some of Austin’s top restaurateurs will be on hand throughout the festival. There will be musical performances by Lucinda Williams and Mayer Hawthorne & The County. Fri. 5:30–8 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.–9:30 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.–4 p.m. $85 VIP pass, $250 weekend pass. Auditorium Shores, 800 West Riverside Drive. Tickets, 1-888-512-7469. www.austinfoodandwinefestival.com

28 49th Annual Eyore’s Birthday Party
Residents of all ages don costumes and help celebrate the birthday of the fictional donkey from “Winnie the Pooh.” The event raises money for Austin nonprofits. Food and beverages are available. 11 a.m. until dark. Children’s area, 11 a.m.–4 p.m., Free. Pease Park, 1100 Kingsbury St. 448-5160. www.eyore.org

28 Global Sports Day
St. Edward’s University athletics invites grade-school students to celebrate Mexico’s and Brazil’s sports cultures. Participants learn about samba, Zumba, futvolley (a combination of soccer and volleyball) and sand soccer. 11:30 a.m. Free. St. Edward’s University’s Lewis-Chen Family Field, 3001 S. Congress Ave. 448-8484. www.stedwards.edu

29 Day of Remembrance
The Oak Hill Wildfire Relief Committee and the Scenic Brook and South Windmill Run neighborhood associations host an anniversary event of the April 17, 2011, Pinnacle wildfire. The blaze destroyed 10 homes and damaged others in the area. Live music and a potluck lunch are provided. Fire prevention information is available. Mayor Lee Leffingwell and Councilman Mike Martinez plan to attend. 3–6 p.m. Free. Windmill Run Park, 7306 Kirkman Drive. www.oakhillwildfirerelief.org

May

3 Opal Divine’s American Whiskey Festival
Opal Divine’s Penn Field hosts a tasting event to benefit Austin’s Meals on Wheels and More. The event features American bourbons, and Tennessee, Canadian and rye whiskies. Tickets are required. 7–10 p.m. $30 advance tickets, $35 at the door. Opal Divine’s Penn Field, 3601 S. Congress Ave. 707-0237. www.opaldivines.com

5 Cinco de Mayo celebration
The students of Jardín de Niños Interlingua, a Spanish immersion day school, celebrate the Mexican holiday at The Hill Country Galleria amphitheater. Students dress in costume and sing traditional songs. 3 p.m. Free. The Hill Country Galleria amphitheater, 12700 Hill Country Blvd., Bee Cave. 299-5731. www.austinbilingualschool.com

12 The Austin Flea
The Austin Flea is an art and curio market at Highball Austin. The Flea features handmade and vintage items. 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Free. Highball Austin, 1142 S. Lamar Blvd. 383-8309. www.thehighball.com

17 Martina McBride
Country music superstar Martina McBride performs an intimate concert at Austin City Limits at the Moody Theater. The Grammy Award–winning singer’s latest album is titled “Eleven.” 6:30 p.m. doors, 8 p.m. show. $42–$102. Austin City Limits at the Moody Theater, 310 W. Willie Nelson Blvd. 225-7999 information, 877-435-9849 tickets. www.acl-live.com

20 Seventh Annual Fire Fighters Feast
The Salt Lick hosts the Seventh Annual Fire Fighters Feast to benefit the Driftwood Volunteer Fire Department. Musical performances are by John Inmon Band from noon–2 p.m. and Johnny Nicholas from 2–4 p.m. There are children’s activities and appearances by Smokey the Bear and Star Flight, Travis County’s aerial emergency medical service. The Fire Fighter’s Feast was created to increase public awareness on fire safety while raising funds to support the department. Noon–4 p.m. Free. The Salt Lick, 18300 FM 1826, 288-5474. www.driftwoodvfd.com

Online Calendar
Find more or submit Southwest Austin events at www.impactnews.com/swa-calendar. For a full list of Central Texas events visit www.impactnews.com. To have Southwest Austin events considered for the print edition, they must be submitted online by the second Friday of the month.
Thirsty lawn?

Composting is an easy, cost-effective way to return nutrients to your rain-deprived lawn. Register for a FREE composting class hosted by the City of Austin at your neighborhood library or farmers’ market!

Sign up at austinrecycles.com

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<th>More coverage.</th>
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<td>Discounts up to 40%</td>
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Austin Animal Shelter waives adoption fees, city offers free pet microchips
The City of Austin announced April 12 that the Austin Animal Shelter is waiving the adoption fee for all ready-to-go pets in an effort to help reduce the overflow of animals.
According to the city, all available space is full, as there are almost 700 animals in the city’s care.
The pets ready for adoption will be spayed or neutered, vaccinated and will go home with a collar, tag and microchip—services valued at more than $200.
Pets are available either at the Austin Animal Center, 7201 Levander Loop, or at Town Lake Animal Center, 1156 W. Cesar Chavez St. All pets available for adoption or lost pets can be viewed at www.austinanimalcenter.org.
On April 5, the city’s Animal Services Office kicked off a citywide program offering free pet ID tags and microchips aimed at keeping pets out of the animal shelter system.

Austin Independent Business Alliance launches manifesto
On April 4, the Austin Independent Business Alliance launched April 4 its Local Business Manifesto aimed at addressing and providing solutions to obstacles facing local businesses.
AIBA Executive Director Rebecca Melançon said AIBA—a nonprofit advocacy group for local businesses—formed a leadership circle in 2011 comprising 10 local business owners tasked with writing the manifesto. She said the statement is the result of a year of research and includes three goals and several programs to achieve these goals.
Austin City Councilwoman Laura Morrison said the document’s ideas include creating a city government incentive program for small businesses.

Council approves new pedicab regulations, staging areas
The Austin City Council passed two ordinances April 12 relating to pedicabs in downtown Austin, including updating regulations and establishing staging areas to pick up passengers.
Councilman Chris Riley said work was done with various stakeholders on several new regulations, rules of the road and basic safety measures, such as requiring insurance.
The second ordinance calls for designating areas downtown where pedicabs will be allowed to stage for rides aimed at making the process safer and simpler.

Sunset Valley Utility subsidies now allowed after council changes policy
As of April 17, Sunset Valley’s practice of subsidizing utilities is no longer in conflict with its policy requiring the utility fund to be self-sufficient.
At the Finance Committee’s recommendation, the Sunset Valley City Council voted 4–0 to change its financial policies.
The policy now reads that the city can charge operating, personnel and capital costs to enterprise funds. The City Council will determine what to fund each year.

Meetings
- Austin City Council
  Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second St.
  974-2497, www.austintexas.gov/department/city-council
  May 2, 22 and 24, 10 a.m.
- Travis County Commissioners Court
  314 11th St., Austin, 854-9425, www.co.travis.tx.us/commissioners_court
  Meetings are every Tuesday at 9:00 a.m.
- Sunset Valley City Council
  Sunset Valley City Hall, 3205 Jones Road. 892-1383, www.sunsetvalley.org
  May 1 and 15, 6 p.m.

Belttara would like to invite you to attend our Spring Fling Market Day & Bazaar!
Saturday, May 12th from 10 am - 4 pm
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2012 ELECTION COVERAGE

2012 Sunset Valley City Council Election

Mayor

Rose Cardona
Age: 33
Occupation: Owner of law firm and pet furniture business
Years in Sunset Valley: Four

Barbara Wilson
Age: 90
Occupation: Assistant director, Alliance Work Partners
Years in Sunset Valley: 20

Jeff Burdett
Age: 40
Occupation: Government relations, Texas Cable Association
Years in Sunset Valley: Four

Zubair Humir
Age: 35
Occupation: Retired commercial banker
Years in Sunset Valley: Three

Walter Jenkins
Age: 63
Occupation: Managing director, real estate appraisal firm
Years in Sunset Valley: Six

City Council (two seats)

Vision: "Create more jobs; investing in our future; going coal free; … reforming City Hall"

Lee Leffingwell
Age: 72
Occupation: Mayor of Austin
Years in Austin: 20+

Brigid Shea
Age: 57
Occupation: Environmental advisor
Years in Austin: 23

Clay Dafoe
Age: 27
Occupation: Tax preparer
Years in Austin: one year, eight months

Laura Pressley
Age: 50
Occupation: Chemist
Years in Austin: 23 years, five months

Vision: "To give a voice to Austinites with regard to affordability, environmental stewardship and transparency of our city government."

Place 5

John F. Duffy
Age: 31
Occupation: Activist
Years in Austin: Two years, six months

John A. Rubine
Age: 41
Occupation: Hospitality professional
Years in Austin: 10 years, four months

R. A. “Bo” Prudente
Age: 60
Occupation: Safety professional, Capital Metro
Years in Austin: 28

Dominic “Dom” Chavez
Age: 37
Occupation: Government Affairs professional
Years in Austin: 10

Vision: "Austin remains affordable, safe, and thriving—not only today, but for the next generation."

Place 6

Audrey "Tina" Cannon
Age: 41
Occupation: Entrepreneur
Years in Austin: 19

Bill Spelman
Age: 55
Occupation: Council member, professor
Years in Austin: 23

David Y. Conley
Age: 36
Occupation: Art director
Years in Austin: 17 years, seven months

Sheryl Cole
Age: 48
Occupation: Council member
Years in Austin: 25

Vision: "As mayor pro tem, I am most proud of my efforts to bring a diversity of perspectives, opinions and experiences together to build an even stronger community."

Update: May 29 primary election

Texas’ long-awaited primary elections will take place May 29 with a runoff July 31, if needed. The date, having already been pushed back twice, could have been delayed again if the district court in Washington, D.C., charged with approving the interim maps, had ruled against them. While the court has still not ruled as of April 12, delaying the primary further would interfere with general election deadlines. Any possible court-ordered changes will likely pertain to the 2014 elections.

City of Austin election resources

Candidate video statements and other election resources are available at www.austintexas.gov/vote. Fliers about the May election will be available at city facilities such as libraries and recreation centers. Voters can also follow election news on the city’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/austintexasgov and on Twitter at www.twitter.com/austintexas.gov.

Vision: "An Austin where nearly all can achieve a meaningful and satisfying life."

Vision: “[Austin’s] growth must be managed in a clear and deliberate fashion, to plan for the future, all the while respecting and protecting the natural environment which is vital to Austin’s rise as a major American city.”
don’t leave buying or selling your home to chance.

When the stakes are high, play with the best. We have the winning strategy, and the scorecard to prove it. Our website is the #1 online resource for home searches, with the most visitors and listing exposure in Austin. We’ve also launched a game-changing new site with even faster ways to find what you’re looking for. Don’t just leave your biggest investment to the roll of the dice. Team up with Austin’s finest. We’ve handpicked 120 top-producing agents, so our clients get specialized expertise, faster sales, and top dollar for their listings. We know every inch of Austin – that’s because we’re Realty Austin, born and bred here. Visit realtyaustin.com, or call our Southwest Austin Real Estate Team at 512.551.1116.

It’s your move – now, let’s make that move together.

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Austin ISD board: STAAR test will not count toward students’ final grade this school year

By Kevin Stich

In April, many Texas elementary and middle school students, including those in Austin Independent School District, got their look at the new State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness tests, which replace the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. The March 26 AISD regular board meeting agenda did not contain any documents or mention of standardized testing reform, but that did not discourage several parents from advocating a resolution that denounces high-stakes standardized testing.

“I think if you talk to any parent, educator, student and now you have fiscal administrators speaking out all across the state, saying that we’ve gone way too far. We’re spending 45 days out of the school year preparing for benchmarks, drilling, and the whole thing, for the test,” resident Mike Corwin said during citizens communication. “I think there is a broad consensus that has come together to say we’ve overstepped on this issue.”

Already, one problem associated with TAKS dubbed “TAKS tummy” is now being rebranded as “STAAR tummy.” “STAAR tummy” is a term to describe the effects of high-stakes testing on some children, including nausea, vomiting, headaches, and in extreme cases, defecating.

“High-stakes testing is universally hated by most everyone—teachers, students, parents—everyone except the few who profit,” parent Cindy Beringer said. “The worst thing about high-stakes testing, in my opinion, is the mind-numbing boredom. I’m terrified at the thought of [my granddaughter] entering kindergarten, getting to the third grade, having to be taught a test and having the joy of learning completely killed for her.”

At a State Board of Education meeting in January, Texas Education Commissioner Robert Scott called the current system for standardized testing a “version” of its original intent. Scott announced Feb. 22 that the decision to require end-of-course exams to account for 15 percent of a student’s final grade would be left in Texas school districts’ hands for the 2011-12 school year.

At the Feb. 27 regular board meeting, the AISD board of trustees unanimously approved policy revisions stating that AISD students’ scores on this year’s STAAR exam would not affect students’ grades or class rank.

Now AISD may consider taking that cause a step further by joining a resolution to “de-escalate” high-stakes testing. They would unify with what has been reported as more than 160 other districts in favor of re-examining standardized testing.

“I think we’ll consider it. Our intergovernmental folks have looked at it, I was aware of it, we’ve asked the Texas Association of School Boards for guidance and what they are thinking,” board president Mark Williams said. “My own personal philosophy is I’m with them (the resolution). I think high-stakes testing, the pressure of accountability, the pressure of punitive sanctions, is not a productive way to run school districts.

“The question is: What do we do instead?” he said. “I don’t think the testing system right now does what people want it to be doing.”

Bond election

The AISD board will likely call for a bond election—though when is yet to be determined—to address maintenance and operating issues. The board created a Citizens Bond Advisory Committee.

“What we need the committee to do is start putting all this stuff together so that we can then start analyzing not if we go for a bond package, but when and how much,” Williams said.

He said it is possible that the bond amount AISD asks for could be affected by the need for a tax ratification election if both are held in the same year.
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Buses
Continued from 11

bus routes and the commuter rail line, which stops downtown at 401 E. Fourth St.

“We’re talking about more than 20,000 boardings a day on the two routes that it will operate on when it opens up in 2014,” she said. “We’re talking about mobility, and [Capital] MetroRapid will connect people to major hubs of education, government and business in the most densely populated areas of the city.”

The first route will run from the Tech Ridge Park and Ride along North Lamar Boulevard, pass through downtown and continue on South Congress Avenue to Southpark Meadows retail center.

The second route starts from North Austin Medical Center, down Burnet Road, onto South Lamar and stops at the Westgate Transit Center. The two routes will form an ‘X’ downtown, allowing for more frequent service and access to the other route.

Capital Metro plans to run the buses daily from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m. with fewer service hours on Saturday and Sunday.

Todd Hemingson, Capital Metro vice president of strategic planning and development, said he anticipates being able to start construction on the 77 bus stations by the end of summer. The stations will each have a bench, system map, standard route sign and a real-time digital display to show riders the anticipated arrival times of the next two buses. He said the real-time information would even be accessible by mobile phone.

Capital Metro also is partnering with the city on the project through the GPS system to communicate with the city’s traffic system and allow the buses to have a longer green light at intersections.

Mayor Lee Leffingwell said adding the bus rapid transit is just one of the methods the city is undertaking to combat traffic. Other solutions include commuter and urban rail and high-occupancy lanes on major roadways.

“We’re the 14th largest city in the country, and one of the fastest-growing regions in the entire United States of America,” he said. “With that growth, of course, comes problems that we have to address to make sure we maintain quality of life along the way. Primary among those problems we’re trying to address right now is transportation and congestion.”

A map of the two new routes can be found online.

Oak Hill Park and Ride
Capital Metro plans to relocate the Oak Hill Park and Ride in the near future due to the upcoming Hwy. 290 roadway.

Local governments and transportation authorities will spend $5.38 million to improve traffic flow along the Hwy. 290 corridor from FM 1826 to Joe Tanner Lane.

The plans include installing a continuous flow intersection—a design that separates turning traffic from through traffic—at William Cannon Drive.

Construction may begin in winter 2012 or spring 2013.

“We do know that the construction that [the Texas Department of Transportation] has planned will substantially impact the Oak Hill Park and Ride,” Capital Metro spokeswoman Misty Whited said. “It will reduce our capacity and possibly impact ingress and egress out of the facility.”

She said Capital Metro has not announced a date to close the park and ride but that the transportation authority would give riders plenty of notice.

She added that Capital Metro is considering a handful of locations around the Y at Oak Hill, the intersection of highways 290 and 71.

This is not the first time in recent memory that the park and ride has relocated. The park and ride moved from Oak Hill Plaza in 2009.

“We would prefer to stay in [the area near the Y]. There are a lot of things to look at: design, price, construction,” she said.

Joe Olivieri contributed to this article

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The city has gone through two droughts with the 2007 water restrictions.

Since then, Gross said the city learned what measures are difficult to enforce, what creates a burden on customers and what may actually be hindering conservation.

In the past, violation fines were trickled down through the court system into the city's general fund. The new revisions would have those fines show up on a citizen's water bill and be put back into the utility.

Gross said the city also found that if it had to sustain current Stage 3 restrictions—the most rigid level of regulation for now—for any extended period of time or stay in current Stage 2 restrictions for almost a year, the consequences could be dire. As a result, the codes would see changes to Stage 1, 2 and 3 water restrictions, and the possible addition of new Stage Four restrictions. These changes may be presented to city council in June, according to the Utility.

LCRA
Put simply, the City of Austin has prepaid the Lower Colorado River Authority for its water. If the city crosses a water-use threshold for two consecutive years, it will have to make payments in the multimillion-dollar range to LCRA. The hope is that the revisions of local codes will allow the city to stretch its dollars further through conservation and defer those payments.

"We're in very good position as far as water supply," Gross said. "Of course we're concerned about drought, but it makes financial sense for the city and the Utility to try and extend our pre-paid amount of water as long as possible."

In February, the LCRA board of directors approved a revision for its own Water Management Plan for lakes Buchanan and Travis, which saw record low inflows in 2011. As of April 20, the combined storage of lakes Buchanan and Travis was 978,893 acre-feet of water—691,107 acre-feet of water less than the usual 1.67 million.

The approval of the plan, which signals the end of an 18-month strategy to pare down water usage and should allow LCRA more flexibility to respond to severe droughts, has been passed on to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for final approval.

The plan revisions ask water customers, such as the City of Austin, to reduce water use consistent with their drought plans only after interruptible water (water available for contract sale for a specific period) from the Highland Lakes for agriculture is restricted. The current plan calls for voluntary restrictions by municipalities after agricultural water use is restricted.

In the currently approved water management plan, there is essentially one trigger point: In November, the LCRA predicts where the lake levels will be in January. If lake levels are above a certain point, then there is open supply for agricultural, interruptible customers, which means customers can take as much water as they want.

In a year like 2011, in which there is record low rainfall, record high heat and evaporation off the lakes, this is a recipe for lake levels dropping extremely rapidly when farms draw water for a second crop.

The revised plan adds a second trigger point in June that determines if the lakes can be tapped for more water.

"It's kind of a way of putting the brakes on in the middle of the year that hadn't been there previously," Gross said.

There is concern TCEQ may not approve the plan in time to make it effective.

"Last time, it took the TCEQ years to finalize it," Travis County Commissioner Karen Huber said. "It can still be a recipe for lake levels dropping extremely rapidly when farms draw water for a second crop."

"The thing that [we] are most concerned with is that the plan says 25 percent of our future water supply is going to come from conservation. I'd be good to have a game plan, right?"

Addressing root causes
That is why the city is attempting to change other aspects of its practices to help the cause.

As part of the conservation effort, Austin Water Utility kicked off Renewing Austin in early April to show its dedication to the cause.

Renewing Austin is a five-year program that will invest $125 million in target areas in the city that were chosen after reviewing historical data, visual inspections and testing water lines with special acoustic equipment that “listens” for leaks.

"One of the things that we've done in the last couple of years is dramatically reduce the time that it takes us to go out and fix leaks," Gross said. "It used to take us three days from the time they were reported. Now, we fix them on the same day."

"The state's water plan is a $53 billion unfunded list of projects and ideas at this point," said Laura Huffman, Texas director of The Nature Conservancy, during a January water use and management panel hosted by Leadership Austin. "The thing that [we] are most concerned with is that the plan says 25 percent of our future water supply is going to come from conservation. I'd be good to have a game plan, right?"

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Implementing state plans
In December, the Texas Water Development Board released its latest version of its state water plan detailing a scenario in which water population and demand in Texas increases by 80 percent and 22 percent by 2060, respectively, while existing water supply decreases by 10 percent.

The plan states that the capital cost to design, construct and implement the recommended water management strategies and projects will fall around $53 billion, with municipal water providers expected to need nearly $27 billion in state financial assistance to implement its strategies.

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Gross said there are proposals to further the cause of conservation and promote efficient irrigation technologies, and giving better deals to customers who install xeriscaping—a method of gardening that groups plants that need less water away from plants that need more.

She added that the city is trying to work with homebuilder associations to push for low-water-use landscapes as selling points for new home buyers.

"We don't, at this point in time, foresee more stringent restrictions, but we're proceeding cautiously," Gross said. "While we'll see some immediate relief in the next several months, I would say that it's very likely Austin will continue to experience periods of extreme drought. The water plan revisions through the LCRA will help us manage the supply in those times, and we're hoping that our code revisions will help us keep Austin's value through a more significant long-term drought."

Andrea L leptinsky contributed to this article

Community input for proposed revisions
Below are some of the proposed changes to the City of Austin's water code revisions. This list is feedback from community stakeholders, and was gathered by the city and will be drafted into the newest version of the codes for approval by city council.

1. Year round irrigation restrictions:
   - Conservation Stage 30 hours (twice)
     - Stage 1 - 20 hours /week (twice)
     - Stage 2 - 10 hours /week (once)
     - Stage 3 - 6 hours/week (once)

2. Exempt hand watering, drip, tree watering with bubbler, single-fill container:
   - exempt Conservation Stage through Stage 3; Prohibited in Stage 4

3. Facility irrigation assessments required on properties 1 acre or greater in size, every two years
   - Hotels and motels will be required to offer overnight guests towel and linen reuse options

4. Restaurants serve water only when requested will be a year-round requirement

5. Recreational Water use unrestricted: Splash Pad use and filling of spas prohibited in Stage 3 and 4.
   - Filling swimming pools and ponds in Stage 4 is prohibited

Source: City of Austin

Comment at impactnews.com
Businesses

Continued from | 1

The city’s Small Business Development Program offers coaching and research opportunities.

“What we try to do is provide information and references,” SBDP representative Joy Miller said. “Information is often one of the biggest needs that a small-business owner has.”

She said that business owners need to be educated and prepared, whether they are seeking loans or going through the city’s permitting process.

Mark Spedale said it was important for small businesses to know what resources are available to them.

Incubators

The newly minted small business faces many challenges in the process of starting up. Some of those challenges may be in subjects that are far from the founders’ areas of expertise.

Local incubators such as The University of Texas’ Austin Technology Incubator, Texas State University’s Small Business Development Center, Economic Growth of Texas’ Austin Technology Incubator, and others are connecting small businesses with the investors who will ultimately bankroll expansion.

The city hosts “Meet the Lender” events and invites banks, credit unions, community lenders and various private organizations. Connecting with groups such as Austin Ventures and the Central Texas Angel Network can mean the difference between rapid expansion and slow growth.

Incubation Station held a Showcase Day in mid-April to help its companies raise capital.

The next step

The path to growing a business is not a straight line or checklist. Local entrepreneurs say the necessary steps are different in each field and for each company.

Incubation Station Managing Director Shari Wynne said one of the biggest mistakes business owners make is to lose track of the big picture and focus too closely on the day-to-day businesses.

“It’s called working in your business instead of working on your business,” she said. “You get so caught up in the job that two years down the line, you look up and say, ‘I didn’t grow my business.’”

Longtime entrepreneur Gary Hoover, of business research company Hoover’s Inc., said small businesses should never lose touch with the customers’ experience and should always keep growing. Convenience is important, especially for technology and Web-based businesses.

The Spedales’ next steps are to partner with a packaging company and a distributor. Once they do that, they can expand to a few more stores.

Their goal is to have a whole line of chef-created products. Some of the restaurant’s popular dips have been in the works for more than 10 years.

They would love to go regional and get into southwest grocery stores. After that—who knows?—maybe go national one day, Lisa Spedale said.

“It’s fun,” she said of the business. “It’s different every day. I’m in charge and learning new things.”

Know your business terms

Start up business: An entrepreneur launching a business around a product

Limited Liability Co.: A type of business in which owners are not fully liable for debts

Bootstrapping: Financing a small business with one’s own resources

Incubator: Programs that offer training, space or support services to help businesses grow

Angel investor: Accredited high net worth investor who invests in startups

Accelerator: Similar to an incubator, but with an emphasis on fast-tracking startups into larger markets

Initial public offering: When a company first sells stock to the public on a stock exchange

Sources: Incubation Station, MWR Legal, www.sba.gov

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Local educators talk testing and school finance

By Joe Olivieri

Community Impact Newspaper hosted seven Central Texas public school superintendents in early April. A full transcript of the interview can be found at www.impactnews.com.

The discussion was focused on the new State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) tests, budget issues and lawsuits against the state government regarding school funding. The superintendents were: Meria Carstarphen, Austin; Bret Champion, Leander; Jesús Chávez, Round Rock; Charles Dupre, Pflugerville; Brad Lancaster, Lake Travis; Joe Dan Lee, Georgetown; and Doug Killian, Hutto.

STARR testing: What are you seeing right now as the difference between the old system and the new system?

Champion: It used to be that the 11th grade test was a gatekeeper. Now, all of a sudden, you have tests in all of your areas for three years, all of which have cumulative scores that accumulate in order for a kid to be able to graduate.

The Legislature has put in that 15 percent of students’ final score for the course will be calculated using that end-of-year exam. The Legislature is dipping into classroom teachers’ ability to assign grades, which is clearly defined in law that classroom teachers have the right to do that.

[Education] Commissioner [Robert] Scott did waive that for this school year. As I remind folks in the community, he waived it for this school year only.

How do you make sure you’re not teaching to the test?

Lee: I have people ask me all the time, ‘Are you teaching to the test?’ and I look at them and I go, ‘Well, that’s what the state has determined is important for our students to know and master. I know they’re going to be tested on it. So why would I not teach that?’

In my opinion, [STAAR] was rolled out a year too early. We didn’t have adequate time to allow our curriculum [to adapt to] what’s going to be tested.

The state Legislature isn’t going to be able to do anything to make the test itself better. Is there anything—implementation, timing, the tests themselves—you would recommend be changed?

Lancaster: We’re all running blind. We’re going to have our staff go through this first round of tests, regroup this summer and do our best to respond to that.

There has been so little information, intentionally, about the test.

Luckily, we’re not being rated on this first round of tests. We’re all relieved at the 15 percent rule [not being in effect this year]. It is a completely unnecessary added incentive.

Not being able to graduate based on passing this cumulative of 12 exams is incentive enough. All you have to do is look at the 10th grade passing rate statewide to the 11th grade passing rate statewide.

How are you balancing budget concerns and moving forward with preparedness?

Chávez: It’s extremely challenging when you think of the higher standard that has been set.

The state is saying, ‘We’re going to set higher standards [toward] college career readiness.’ Yes, we want more kids to go on and succeed at higher levels, at the university, at the college level. ‘Oh, and by the way, you’ll have to do it with fewer resources.’

They cut the budget, and it’s anticipated that they’re going to cut the budget even more because there is a shortage moving forward.

We’re really at a very bad time. You think of the perfect storm: budget cuts, higher standards, an economy that hopefully will do better but hasn’t done well, and a structural shortage when it comes to the restructuring of taxes a number of years ago. All of these things are impacting what we’re able to do.

Austin ISD has warned that the budget situation could get worse. Do you still see the next couple of budget cycles being difficult for AISD?

Carstarphen: Austin is tricky because we were the last ones in [the recession], even within the state, and we’ll probably be one of the first ones out, meaning there is a strong economy in Austin. So it gives you a false sense of security.

I think that we will see a few more rounds of some pretty brutal budget reductions across the state.

They have not changed that legislation in Senate Bill 1. And in Austin, that means we’re looking through school year 2017-18. If that bill doesn’t change, we will be cutting from last school year forward upwards of $150 million. It is, quite frankly, not sustainable.

The tax ratification election Hutto tried last year was turned down by voters.

What happens if Hutto doesn’t get a tax ratification election passed?

Killian: It’s kind of like slow death. We’re nibbling away at some of the programs and services we provide in our district. The quality is pretty much evaporating. That’s what the issue is if the TRE doesn’t pass [and] we don’t get relief from these lawsuits. I don’t see how a district like Hutto, who is stuck in the middle, is going to survive this whole process.

There’s actually been in public forums some folks who talked about ultimately, would this mean consolidation? I don’t know.

The economy wasn’t the issue in Texas. It was what was done to us in 2006 with the way that the formulas were changed. We wouldn’t have been in this place if we had progressive tax rates on property taxes and had not turned around and implemented this margin tax that didn’t generate the money that it said it was supposed to.

Lee: What no one understands is our revenues were frozen in 2006 with target revenue. In our system, with increased property values, when we generate a dollar locally, they take it away for the state. Our operational costs continue to increase.

When people think about lawsuits, they think about different sides. How are you unified in trying to get the resources you need to help students?

Dupre: The distinction you’re going to find in the Texas Taxpayer & Student Fairness Coalition is [about] equity. Because the districts that signed on to our lawsuit believe that the system itself is not equitable.

Previously, you could apply a formula and understand why Pflugerville was funded the way it was. You may not agree with that, and we might compare ourselves to other districts, but there was a reasonable approach, and you could understand why that was.

Today, you cannot point at any system or measure that explains why mine is substantially lower than someone else’s, and someone else’s is substantially higher than other districts. And so the message that sends is that the students in my district are not worth the same amount as students in other districts.

That’s a hard thing to say out loud because I know our legislators don’t really believe that. But the system they put in place is not equitable. It does not fund all students in all districts at the same level.

Carstarphen: For us, [equity] is the key difference between the lawsuit Pflugerville is in and the lawsuit we’re in. I was hopeful that all of the districts would be able to come together around the issue of adequacy. That it was about what is the appropriate level of funding to take care of all of our kids.

Equity, we believe, opens a door for leveling down. If it opens the door for everyone to say, ‘Fine, you want equity? You all have equity because we’re going to take the top and bring it to the lower level.’ That’s not going to do for kids.

So for us, we saw the Thompson & Horton [LLP] coalition as being more centered around the inadequacy discussion or perspective. That said, it’s not enough to do to address equity in funding.

Earlier, you said these lawsuits give legislators permission to do what they need to do. Can you explain that?

Chávez: That lacks courage—courage from the state Legislature, courage from the state leadership. Courage from the people we elect to do the right thing and stand by students and stand by quality education regardless.

They’re looking for political cover so they can get re-elected and say, ‘It wasn’t I who raised taxes. It wasn’t I who brought all of these changes. It was the Supreme Court that made us do it.’

Any idea of the timing of all this? Some of you are in dire need, and lawsuits can go forever, right?

Chávez: All of us are in that mode of how long can we hold it together? Remember, whatever side wins, it’s going to be appealed to the next level, to the Supreme Court. Then you have to go to the Supreme Court. That’s going to be after the legislative session. So really we’re two sessions away from fixing it.
Communication, preparedness have improved since Pinnacle wildfire

By Joe Olivieri
In April 2011, the Pinnacle wildfire destroyed 10 homes, damaged 11 homes and caused an estimated $5 million in damages across 100 acres.

A few months later, in September 2011, Central Texas residents watched as wildfires devastated the Steiner Ranch, Pedernales and Bastrop areas.

Since then, local governments and residents have become better prepared to handle wildfire threats.

Communication
The City of Austin and Travis County created the Travis County Wild Land Task Force Committee to better coordinate during emergencies.

Lisa Block, county emergency services spokeswoman, said Travis County will use social media to broadcast news updates as they happen.

“When neighborhoods are evacuating, we need a way to have people access that information when they are away from their homes,” Block said.

Travis County has improved media relations. It created a second spokesperson position for emergency services and set up a dedicated phone number for reporters to get the latest news.

Community awareness
Austin and nearby cities have promoted the “Ready, Set, Go” fire preparedness materials.

Windmill Run resident Tom Thayer said the Oak Hill Fire Department presented fire safety advice to neighbors.

Travis County Fire Marshal Hershel Lee said Travis County helped residents haul away debris from private property and promoted defensible space around homes. The brush is either hauled away to a landfill or chipped and turned into mulch.

The county has streamlined the process for getting rebuilding permits and new home value assessments.

Neighbors helping neighbors
Local charity Oak Hill Wildfire Relief ended up raising $60,000 for fire victims, Thayer said. Of that, the Austin Disaster Relief Network chipped in $5,000, and Coleman & Associates donated their $15,000 winnings from the recent Green Mobility Challenge design competition.

The charity issued rounds of checks to those affected. Neighbors organized cleanup days and rebuilt Lilly Henric’s home.

“I feel so blessed and so fortunate that they crossed my path,” she said. “The help that they gave me is beyond measure.

“It’s not just getting the four walls of the house back. They have been here a year, and they’re still coming around and checking in. It’s amazing, the size of the hearts of these people.”

Residents plan to create a memorial mosaic art wall.

Relief
The Federal Emergency Management Agency reports that it has distributed $13.8 million in recovery grants to Texas residents.

Of the $13.8 million: more than $11 million has been for rental assistance and repair grants; $2.7 million has been for personal property, medical care and funeral expenses; and $97,660 has been in disaster unemployment assistance for those who have been unable to work during the disaster.
Lone Star School of Music
Facility creates musicians ‘the Austin way’

By Kevin Stich

Kurt Phillips has always loved music. His wife, Atha Phillips, shares her husband’s enthusiasm in a slightly different way: While he keeps his fingers busy on a guitar, she keeps hers busy on the books.

Together, the couple runs Lone Star School of Music, a business dedicated to cultivating peoples’ love for the art.

From listening to albums in his adolescent bedroom, to pinballing around to different colleges studying guitar and theory, to writing a movie soundtrack, the musician’s career is a medley of different musical experiences.

“I started by playing Aerosmith tunes in my bedroom when I was in high school,” Kurt said. “I had seen MTV and thought, ‘Okay, I can probably play guitar.’ I was listening to the Eagles, Van Halen and even Janis Joplin.”

Kurt studied jazz guitar at Wichita State University and was studying music theory at Kansas University when he said he reached a point where he’d have a choice between homework and gigs.

He temporarily took a break from school, and eventually moved to Chicago where he met Atha and finished a degree in classical guitar at The Chicago College of Performing Arts.

Soon, the two moved to Austin where Kurt would rub elbows with other musicians downtown at The Elephant Room, eventually forming the TRES Latin jazz trio with bassist Mike Rosch and percussionist Noah Mosgofian.

In 2006, Kurt was giving lessons to students out of the couple’s house in East Austin. Atha had a career at Whole Foods—which just happens to be opening a location a few doors down from their school—when she asked her husband where he was taking his love for music.

“I knew that I could do the front end of it and he could do the programming end of it,” she explained. “It was sort of a perfect marriage.”

“Creating musicians the Austin way” is the banner that Lone Star School of Music is built upon and maintains. The school runs a relaxed, creativity-fostering environment that one might find uncommon in traditional music instruction.

“We’re not the ruler-on-the-knuckle kind of school,” Atha said. “There are those schools if you want that, but we want kids to love music. We don’t want it to be a chore.”

Lone Star offers a wide variety of classes for both adults and children. Instructors teach everything from banjo to violin.

The school’s programming includes a Wee Rock program for toddlers, Little Rock program for young children and a Rock Band program where children form bands and have gigs scheduled for them. Kurt also offers a “guitar dojo” which is structured like a karate class where students can earn different degrees of belts (guitar straps).

The school will also begin offering Skype lessons for those people who are short on time—something that is unique to Austin, according to the duo. It’s part of their strategy to expand their presence in the city, including two more locations in Austin and possibly diversifying elsewhere.
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Satellite Bistro & Bar
Retro eatery blends casual and upscale dining

By Tiffany Young

Mark and Marty Kamburis, the brothers behind the Barton Springs Road coffee shop Flipnotics, have created another Austin mainstay in Satellite Bistro & Bar.

While they sold Flipnotics in 2009, they are still involved in the food and beverage industry with their casual but upscale restaurant.

It was Mark who originally moved to Austin from the brothers’ hometown of Houston and came up with the concept of having a coffee shop upstairs and clothing boutique downstairs at the Barton Springs location. He asked Marty to join him.

Marty had been in the food and beverage industry since he was 14 years old and had done everything from working behind the counter at Chick-fil-A to managing a Houston’s Restaurant. With his experience in the kitchen, Marty began adding sandwiches to the coffee bar’s offerings.

In 1999, the Kamburis brothers bought a second “satellite” location of Flipnotics in Oak Hill, hence the name Satellite Cafe. But this time, Marty hired a chef and began extending the menu to include more and more food items.

“I just didn’t see myself owning a coffee shop in my 60s or 70s, so I thought we could kind of grow older with this concept,” Mark said.

When highway construction began around 2006 near the cafe, the brothers started looking for a new location, which is how they opened Satellite Bistro & Bar in October 2006 on Slaughter Lane.

“We decided to take it up a notch at night,” Mark said. “It’s a casual, upscale eatery with more of an ambience similar to downtown at night.”

In 2008, they closed the cafe, leaving them to focus on the bistro.

When asked to choose the top three menu items, Mark quickly says he knows what his favorite is, to which Marty says, “I know what your favorite is, too.”

Mark’s favorite dish is the orchid chicken ($14.99), which is on the dinner menu.

“Orchid chicken is a chicken breast stuffed with goat cheese and herbs pan-seared with an orchid flower buerre blanc, served with basmati rice and sautéed spinach and mushrooms, served with a flower garnish,” Marty said.

The other favorites are the champagne Gorgonzola salad ($4.99 small, $7.99 large) and the 10 oz. pork chop ($13.99), which is marinated for a demi-glaze. Chicken, tofu, shrimp, salmon or beef tenderloin tips can be added to a salad for an additional cost.

The brothers are not the only ones in the family with entrepreneurial success. In 1912, their grandfather George came to America from Greece to Montgomery, Ala., first pushing a cart around his neighborhood before opening the Coffee Pot, a cafe. After the cafe burnt down, he and his brother, Antonio, opened a larger restaurant, The Normandy Cafe.

Now Marty and Mark follow in their grandfather’s footsteps of serving food and coffee in their own cafe.

Retro-inspired ambience

Upon driving up to Satellite Bistro’s front door, one finds a large patio and courtyard shaded by trees with lots of seating.

Inside, the restaurant has a full-size bar near the entrance. The furniture is 1950s-inspired, including the starburst patterns known from the era and retro shades of blue and orange.

A lounge is open in the evening with a baby grand piano, where music is played on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. and Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. During the day, a curtain closes the room off from the dining area. A live music calendar can also be found at www.satellitebistroandbar.com.

The wallpaper in the lounge was made with two different photos of Austin—one taken in the 1950s of swimmers at Barton Springs and another of the Austin skyline in the 1960s. Look for things that don’t belong in the original photo, such as a golfer playing golf on the Barton Springs lawn, a billboard with Satellite Bistro’s name and a photo of one of the owner’s dogs.

The food menu

Co-owner Marty Kamburis said the bistro’s food is inspired by the idea that a family of six could all find something appealing on the menu.

During the day, Satellite Bistro serves burgers, salads and a few entrees. The night menu adds fancier fare to its offerings.

In addition to its lunch and dinner menus, as of Jan. 21, the restaurant serves a weekend brunch Saturday 11 a.m.–3 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

The orchid chicken ($14.99) is served with basmati rice and comes with a decorative flower.
Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women in the United States, and its symptoms are sometimes unexpected—jaw pain, cold sweats and nausea, to name a few. The Seton Heart Institute Women’s Heart Program is dedicated to helping women identify their risk factors for heart disease and providing care that is tailored to their unique needs.

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Austin Zoo
Zoo/sanctuary takes in rescued and surrendered animals

By Kevin Stich

The 400-pounder laid out in the middle of his enclosure, sunning himself and panting as warm April temperatures foreshadow the likely brutal summer to come. Scars of an old mange condition cover his coat, and it’s noticeable that his trademark mane is missing.

His name is Leroy, a 15-year-old African lion. The big cat is a former Arkansas junkyard guard lion for a man who also used a bobcat, cougar and Leroy’s mate as sentries for his property.

Leroy was seized by the state after the owner shot and killed the lion—ess. Now, the lion is a resident of the Austin Zoo, one of its many rescued animals that have taken sanctuary at the small facility.

Patti Clark called out to him in a babying voice, telling him to find some shade. The beast looks pleased, having just eaten several pounds of raw meat.

“He clearly had not led a happy life,” she said. “He was severely malnourished, and the second day he was here, he stood up and his ankle shattered under the weight of his own body. So, he’s come a long way.”

Clark joined the zoo’s board of directors in 2003 as board secretary and was elected president of the zoo in September 2007. She took over as executive director in November of the same year.

It begs the question: How does one buy a lion?

“There’s people that supply zoos and breed these animals,” she said. “You get on the Internet, and you can find a breeder, and you go to that breeder and tell them you want a lion cub.”

Most people can’t afford to build proper enclosures, provide the 15 pounds of meat or so per day, or find vets that can provide care to a full-grown lion—not to mention handling an animal that could playfully knock a person unconscious with the swipe of a paw. And that’s where the Austin Zoo comes in.

“I don’t think there is an average day,” head zookeeper Sara King said. “Working with the animals, building their habitats and improving their quality of life are the best things about this job.”

Not every case at the Austin Zoo is quite as serious as Leroy’s, but most all the animals at the facility have in one way or another come from situations that were less than ideal. The hybrid zoo/sanctuary is a nonprofit entity that does not buy or sell animals, but rescues or takes in surrendered animals.

Caring for the animals isn’t cheap, though, as it costs roughly $80,000 a month to run a park with more than 300 residents. The zoo is heavily reliant on admissions, which make up 60 percent of its revenue, with another 13 percent coming from its gift shop. The rest is made up through various gifts, charities and fundraising.

“We’re open as a zoo to fund our sanctuary and rescue operations,” she said. “Our animals are all rescued or surrendered to us, and we are open to the public to educate people about why it’s really not a good idea to get that little ring-tailed lemur as a pet.”
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Cheri Chase ’09 MAHS ’11 Started pursuing her BA in Organizational Communication at age 47. Won the St. Edward’s Presidential Award for Leadership. Went on to earn a master’s degree in Human Services. Serves the nonprofit community and plans to start a company to assist older adults and family caregivers.

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Spring has sprung!

Warmer weather is back, and Southwest Austin’s green thumbs are returning to their gardens. For the uninhibited, Austin can be a tricky place to dig in your trowel. Clay-like soil and the ever-present threat of drought means that not all plants and flowers will survive the blistering summer. However, there are many native species that can take the heat.

Community Impact Newspaper asked for advice from the following local experts:

- Andrea DeLong-Amaya, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
- Michael Cain, Vivero Growers
- Lyda Guz, The Natural Gardener
- Daryl Ramsey, Geo Growers

**Pests and other threats**

DeLong-Amaya: “Pest problems can be minimized by planting species that are well-adapted to the region. If you do have a mildew problem or an insect problem, it’s likely that it’s growing in the wrong place. It could be getting too much shade or water.”

Cain: “There is usually an organic solution that is safer to apply and effective against most things. Light horticultural oils will take care of most garden pests.”

Ramsey: “Vinegar doesn’t leave any poisonous residue in the soil. Avoid using synthetic herbicides and pesticides that do systemic harm to the soil.”

**Soil**

DeLong-Amaya: “Our soils tend to be fairly clay-like with a lot of rock in it. You can plant things that really like to grow in that soil naturally.”

Cain: “Often shallow and rocky.”

Guz: “If you’re trying to grow food, you need to open up the soil, have lots of air space and organic matter in it. What clay soils have is typically not much organic matter and not much air space.”

Ramsey: “Revitalize your soils with compost, soil activators and humus. Start mulching as the weather gets hotter, and add things to the soil that retain moisture.”

**Drought-resistant plants, grasses**

DeLong-Amaya: Prickly pear, agave, sotols, cedar elm trees, red oak trees, autumn sage, cherry sedge, mealy blue sage, turkscap (for dry shade)

Ramsey: “You could put seed down with your current grass and let the drought-resistant grasses take over.”

**Watering**

Cain: “Plants need regular water to become established. As they mature, you can back off watering many of the natives and adapted plants.”

**Xeriscaping**

DeLong-Amaya: “Basically, xeriscaping is designing a garden to use as little water as possible. If you have plants that need more water, you might gather them together so that you only have to water one spot and leave the drought-resistant stuff in other sections. If you water in the early morning or at night when there is higher humidity, plants will absorb more water.”

Cain: “Familiarize yourself with plants suited for xeriscaping and make your selections for the look you would like. A lot of people think xeriscaping means desert look. But it doesn’t have to be that way.”

**What to plant**

DeLong-Amaya: Gayfeather flower, Mexican plums, redbuds, Texas mountain laurels, Engelmann daisy, mealy blue sage

Cain: Peach, plum, pear and pomegranate

Guz: Red yuccas, lantana, blackfoot daisies

Ramsey: Beets, beets, cantaloupe, corn, cucumber, eggplant, lettuce, onions, peas, peppers, pumpkins, radishes, spinach, tomato, squash, watermelon
Top stories

**Austin pinpoints $1.5B in improvements**

**Central Austin** City of Austin staff have identified $1.5 billion in capital improvement projects, or enhancements to roads and buildings, and now it is up to a 15-member citizen task force to parse through and prioritize the projects for a bond package that could go before voters in November.

Projects in Central Austin that ranked high based on a scoring matrix used by city staff include infrastructure upgrades, such as new wheelchair lifts, at the Austin History Center and replacing Austin Central Fire Station No. 1 at 401 E. Fifth St. with a new Austin Fire Department and EMS headquarters. The Bond Election Advisory Task Force is using the city-appropriated score to inform the selection process, but it is not the only factor, Capital Planning Officer Mike Trimble said.

The task force has also been instructed to choose projects based on greatest need, timing and those that further the vision set out in the city’s new comprehensive plan, Imagine Austin, which is still in the works but would likely go before City Council for approval in spring.

Members of the task force were recently assigned to committees—such as transportation and mobility and affordable housing—and are going to come up with packages worth $400 million, $300 million and $200 million, Trimble said.

The size of the bond package, as well as other projects in need of funding that council is considering placing on the November ballot, such as an urban rail network for downtown Austin, will determine the increase to property taxes. According to Capital Planning Office staff, if the city issued $500 million in bonds it would result in a 1 cent tax increase per $100 of property value in the 2014 and 2015 fiscal years.

The task force is expected to present the packages to Austin City Council in May. A full list of projects is at www.austintexas.gov/bonddevelopment.

Full story by Sara Behnke

**FM 1626 among Hays County roadways set to undergo major transformations**

**San Marcos/Buda/Kyle** Among the four Hays County road projects on track to begin nearly simultaneously within the next few months is the single-longest project the county has undertaken.

The widening of FM 1626 from FM 2770 to just south of Brodie Lane will complete two construction contracts managed by Hays County and will include construction of a bridge over Little Bear Creek, the addition of shoulders and sidewalks, and the expansion of the roadway to two lanes in each direction with a dedicated center turn lane.

The 1626 project joins another set of long-discussed projects, the realignment of FM 150 in Kyle and the conversion of I-35 frontage roads in the area from two-way to one-way traffic from FM 1626 to Yarrington Road.

Jeff Watson, engineer for program managers HNTB Corp., said the projects will bring more than just road improvements to the area.

Precinct 2 Commissioner Mark Jones said the widening of FM 1626 has been discussed for nearly a decade and faced several delays, so residents and motorists may be a bit skeptical.

“They’ve been waiting on 1626 since ’03 and ’04, so it’s kind of a ‘We’ll believe it when we see it.’ They’re not going to get too excited until they see the bulldozers. I don’t blame them,” he said.

Full story by Annie Drabicky

**Dining**

**La Cocina de Consuelo brings the taste of Zacatecas, Mexico, to its Austin diners**

Central Austin

Tucked just off the side of Burnet Road, surrounded by a small parking lot with room for no more than about a dozen cars, is La Cocina de Consuelo.

Inside the quaint, house-like room, past the few worn tables and chairs that adorn the space opening up into a small kitchen, is owner Connie Rodriguez doing what she loves to do: cook.

She’s been catering for almost 30 years and still uses her mother’s tortilla recipe that she learned as a girl.

Originally from Zacatecas, Mexico, Rodriguez has always had a passion for cooking.

Six years ago, Rodriguez made enchiladas for her church, and what was supposed to be just a casual favor snowballed into orders to 20 people, each of whom recommended her to another 20. Pretty soon, she was filling hundreds of orders.

She will say it is more than hard work that got her to where she is—it is faith. The 69-year-old says she owes everything to God.

Full story by Kevin Stich

**Transportation**

**MetroRail introduces weekend service**

**Northwest Austin** Two years after Capital Metro’s MetroRail Red Line started rolling, MetroRail began offering Friday night and Saturday service to riders March 23.

Originally, the Red Line just ran during the morning and evening rush hours Monday through Friday. Then, in January 2011, MetroRail added midday service, which Capital Metro CEO Linda Watson said helps alleviate some potential ridership concerns.

Now, after action from the Capital Metro board Feb. 27 and the Austin City Council on March 1, the Red Line runs until midnight on Friday nights and offers service Saturday from 4 p.m. to midnight, though Leander is not served on Saturdays.

The additional trips are being provided through a $5.7 million interlocal agreement with the City of Austin.

Ridership for the Red Line averages 1,800 boardings per day.

MetroRail critics, especially former Urban Transportation Commission member Mike Dahmus, do not think it is equitable that the Lakeline and Howard stations are located so close to the Austin city limit with cities that do not contribute sales taxes to Capital Metro.

Watson said that passengers from nonmember cities who take the train spend money in Austin, a portion of whose sales tax is captured by Capital Metro.

Additional reporting by Amy Denney and Mitzie Stelte

Full story by Macy Hurwitz

**Impacts**

**Now Open**

**Central Austin Ice Cream Social**

A mobile ice cream bus, opened at the Jesse Street Eats Food Park at 415 Jessie St. in mid-February. The bus serves a variety of ice cream flavors along with a wide assortment of toppings. The bus also offers popsicles and sundaes. www.icecreamsocialbus.com, Twitter: @icecreamusbsatx

**Central Austin Mister Fruitcup**

opened March 2 at Jessie Street Eats, 441 Jessie St. The food trailer offers a variety of fresh fruit cups that can be mixed with herbs, sauce or whipped cream. 660-3343

**Central Austin Javelina Bar**

opened at 69 Rainey St. in early March. The bar serves food and drinks inspired by Hill Country spirits and fare such as brisket, pork tacos and burgers. www.facebook.com/javelinabar, Twitter: @javelinabar

**Name Change**

**Central Austin**

Threshold Furniture & Design, 801 W. Fifth St., Ste. 100, is now named Urbanspace Interiors. 476-0014, www.urbanspacefurniture.com

**San Marcos/Buda/Kyle**

Arveda Alzheimer’s Family Care, owned by Dana Tatsum is now Provident Memory Care, 645 FM 967, Buda. The facility provides assisted living, home health care and retirement options. 295-5600, www.providentmemorycare.com/buda, Twitter: @arvedacare

**Closed**

**Central Austin**

Fondue restaurant The Melting Pot announced Feb. 27 it would close its doors at 305 E. Third St. Owner Mike Lord said he accepted a buyout deal from the property’s landlord.
REAL ESTATE

Legend Oaks
78749

Overview

Build-out years: 1987–2006
Builders: Centex, Scott Fielder, HESI, Newmark, Doyle Wilson, David Weekley
Square footage: 1,340–4,059
Home values: $190,000–$316,000
HOA dues (estimated): $450
Amenities: Clubhouse, pool and tennis courts, hike and bike trails, sports court
Nearby attractions: Dick Nichols District Park, Escarpment Village, Alamo Drafthouse

Property taxes:
- Austin ISD: 1.2420
- Travis County: 0.4855
- City of Austin: 0.4811
- Austin Community College: 0.0948
- Central Health: 0.0789
Total (per $100 value): 2.3823

Schools:
- Patton Elementary School
- Mills Elementary School
- Small Middle School
- Bowie High School
- Austin High School

Featured homes

5917 Charles Schreiner Trail
3 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath
Agent: Carolyn Jeter
415-5275
Price: $249,900
Square footage: 2,000 sq. ft.

7902 Siringo Pass
4 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath
Agent: Szuping Wang
809-1743
Price: $279,950
Square footage: 2,648 sq. ft.

6007 Bel Fay Lane
3 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath
Agent: Ann Daughety
626-0160
Price: $265,000
Square footage: 2,594 sq. ft.

6409 Zadock Woods Drive
4 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath
Agent: Karen Buhrdorf
801-7782
Price: $339,900
Square footage: 3,464 sq. ft.

On the market (As of April 11)

No. of homes for sale
6
No. of homes under contract
5
Avg. days on the market
65

Home sales (April 2011–March 2012)

No. of homes sold
in the last year
51
Square footage
Low/High
1,389/3,500
Selling price
Low/High
$910,000/$316,000

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4br/2ba $279,900  
2,166 Jaymes Willoughby  
347-9599 Keller Williams Realty  

78748 Texas Oaks  
10604 Archdale Drive  
5br/2ba $145,000  
1,280 Benjamin Castelan  
669-1119 e-Executive Realty  

78748 Reserve at Slaughter Creek  
2032 Boyds Way  
3br/2ba $199,900  
2,444 Barbara Ditlow  
638-7977 Realty Austin  

78748 Olympic Heights  
11705 Johnny Weismuller Lane  
3br/2ba $205,950  
1,870 Marley Bautista  
608-1166 Coldwell Banker United Realtor  

78745 Independence Park  
5904 Rutledge Lane  
3br/2ba $275,000  
2,233 Aaron Farmer  
899-9520 Texas Discount Realty  

78745 Grand Oaks  
2300 Sweet Clover Drive  
3br/2ba $196,500  
2,200 Marley Bautista  
608-1166 Coldwell Banker United Realtor  

78745 Palomino Park  
10107 Dobbin Drive  
3br/2ba $261,000  
2,077 Bonnie Lewis  
217-5545 J.B. Goodwin  

78745 Parkwood  
8112 Huddleston Lane  
3br/2ba $130,000  
1,299 Knolly Williams  
206-0060 Keller Williams Realty  

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2,906 Gary Genby  
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78748 Maple Run  
8006 Tiffany Drive  
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2,166 Jaymes Willoughby  
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**Market Data**  
**Southwest Austin**  
**On the market** (As of April 5, 2012)  
**Market Data** includes condominiums, townhomes and houses.  

**Price Range**  | **Number of homes for sale/Average days on market**  | **Market Data** includes condominiums, townhomes and houses.  
---|---|---  
Less than $148,000 | 22/87  | 1/17  | 7/88  | 3/65  | 3/109  | -  
$200,000–$299,900 | 38/85  | 36/72  | 8/68  | 51/70  | 7/21  | 6/117  | 37/103  
$300,000–$399,900 | 2/247  | 6/46  | 25/53  | 4/87  | 11/27  | 4/81  | 40/77  
$400,000–$499,900 | 2/12  | -  | 1/45  | 3/190  | 3/70  | 4/33  | 27/102  
$500,000–$599,900 | -  | -  | 7/76  | 2/4  | -  | 6/78  |  
$600,000–$799,900 | -  | 1/101  | 2/203  | -  | 6/100  | 2/7  | 15/74  
$800,000–$999,900 | -  | -  | 1/13  | -  | 9/69  | 5/89  | 1/28  
$1 million + | -  | -  | -  | -  | 1/22  | 32/162 | 2/57  |  

*Market Data includes condominiums, townhomes and houses.*
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“When Seton first came out with new guidelines for labor and delivery, I was a little skeptical,” says Dr. David Reue.

“But the data was compelling. As a result, we've significantly changed the way we practice medicine, which has reduced admissions to the neonatal ICU and decreased complications.”

To read more about how Seton doctors are improving the way we care for moms and babies, please visit SetonBabyTalk.com/safety.