45 Southwest had faced opposition over environmental concerns for more than 30 years. The tollway’s position on the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone and a right-of-way with 19 caves, combined with other sensitive recharge features, posed unique challenges to the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority.

An ACEC Texas member firm used its Independent Environmental Compliance Management, rigorous compliance monitoring, and the project team’s extensive public engagement to deliver a successful project for the Mobility Authority, environmental stakeholders, and all central Texans.
Message from the President

TML News

Risk Pool News

City Lights

Small Cities’ Corner

Legal Q&A

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2020 Annual TML Taxation and Debt Survey Results Are Available

Elected Officials: Get the Recognition You Deserve

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Mr. Bennett Sandlin has entered into an agreement with Publication Printers Corp. for the printing of Texas Town & City magazine. Mr. Sandlin represents the member cities of the Texas Municipal League.
The Texas Municipal League exists solely to provide services to Texas cities. Since its formation in 1913, the League’s mission has remained the same: to serve the needs and advocate the interests of its members. Membership in the League is voluntary and is open to any city in Texas. From the original 14 members, TML’s membership has grown to more than 1,150 cities. Over 16,000 mayors, councilmembers, city managers, city attorneys, and department heads are member officials of the League by virtue of their cities’ participation.

The League provides a variety of services to its member cities. One of the principal purposes of the League is to advocate municipal interests at the state and federal levels. Among the thousands of bills introduced during each session of the Texas Legislature are hundreds of bills that would affect cities. The League, working through its Legislative Services Department, attempts to defeat detrimental city-related bills and to facilitate the passage of legislation designed to improve the ability of municipal governments to operate effectively.

The League employs full-time attorneys who are available to provide member cities with information on municipal legal matters. On a daily basis, the legal staff responds to member cities’ written and oral questions on a wide variety of legal matters. The League annually conducts a variety of conferences and training seminars to enhance the knowledge and skills of municipal officials in the state. In addition, the League also publishes a variety of printed materials to assist member cities in performing their duties. The best known of these is the League’s monthly magazine, Texas Town & City. Each issue focuses on a variety of contemporary municipal issues, including survey results to respond to member inquiries.

For additional information on any of these services, contact the Texas Municipal League at 512-231-7400 or visit our website, www.tml.org.

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TML Intergovernmental Risk Pool
Mary Gauer, Harker Heights

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Mary Gauer, Harker Heights
Dear Texas City Official,

The April issues of this magazine—devoted to tourism—are among my very favorite. As I’ve travelled around the state this past year-and-a-half as a TML officer, I’ve been thrilled to see how cities of all sizes roll out the red carpet to their visitors.

Cities can’t afford to just sit back and assume that tourism will happen on its own. It takes effort, because there’s a lot of competition for travel dollars not just across Texas but from surrounding states. In this month’s issue, you’ll read about tourism improvement districts, film and music friendly marketing for cities, and other tools that can help bring folks to your town.

Last October at the conference in San Antonio, we saw how one big city knocks it out of the park with tourism efforts. But we don’t all have to be a San Antonio or Dallas or Austin to have success with attracting visitors. Every Texas city, all 1,215 of us, has something special to offer. Let’s get busy figuring out what that is!

Eddie Daffern
CMO
Mayor
City of Staples
TML President
MUNICIPAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Apply Now for a Municipal Excellence Award

The TML Municipal Excellence Awards have been celebrating and inspiring municipal excellence and innovation for more than 25 years. Each year, awards are given in two population categories (cities under 25,000 and cities over 25,000) and in five subject categories (city spirit, communication programs, management innovations, public safety, and public works). Applying is easy and free. Discover how at www.tml.org/210/Municipal-Excellence-Awards.

Your Cure for the Budget Blues

If you have a role in developing or implementing your city’s budget, you’re invited to join us for the TML Budget and Tax Rate Workshop. Designed for elected officials and city staff, our experts will cover the basics of the budget and tax rate setting process, forecasting municipal revenue, implementing Senate Bill 2, expenditures and financial reporting, and more.

Save the Date: TML Annual Conference and Exhibition

Since 1913, city officials have gathered every year for the TML Annual Conference and Exhibition, the largest assembly of elected officials and city staff in Texas. Thousands of community leaders and city professionals attend the conference to learn, share, and network.

This year, TML and the City of Grapevine are teaming up to host the Annual Conference and Exhibition, October 14-16, at the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center. Conference registration and housing will open later in July. Make plans to join us in historic Grapevine!
Exhibit at the TML Annual Conference

Want to connect with thousands of prospects under one roof? Get your organization’s programs and services in front of municipal decision makers at the 2020 TML Annual Conference and Exhibition. Look for information about the exhibition, booth rates, sponsorship opportunities, and more at https://tmlexhibits.org. On May 4, booth sales will open exclusively to TML associate members. General booth sales will open at 10:00 a.m. on May 18.

TML Annual Conference and Exhibition sponsors and exhibitors provide financial support that helps the League provide services and resources to city officials across the state, while upholding our mission of empowering Texas cities to serve their citizens.

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And the Inaugural TMLIRP Partnership Award Goes to...

A partnership is a chain. A single link does no good in keeping the coyotes out of the chicken coop or marking a Friday night first down, and it takes each unit working harmoniously under tension to drag an axle-deep pickup truck out of east Texas clay. Celebrating the strong links is long overdue. It is with great pride that TMLIRP presents the inaugural Partnership Award to the Austin Police Department (APD) for its tireless approach to treating Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries (PTSI) in first responders.

PTSI: Defining the Problem

PTSI affects nearly eight million Americans on an annual basis, many of whom call the Lone Star State home. Due to the nature of their various backgrounds and the chronic stress and trauma experienced in their line of work, first responders are particularly susceptible to a litany of deleterious physical problems like poor sleep and weight gain. Left untreated, PTSI can result in anger management issues, substance abuse, divorce, and even suicide.

But behind every badge, there’s a son or daughter. Behind every stoic facade there’s a volunteer t-ball coach, a BBQ whiz, or someone with a tall fishing tale. Those suffering from PTSI are often people at their very finest, struggling in silence. APD Chaplain Rick Randal has seen the devastating effect that PTSI has on families and communities, and isn’t content to allow first responders to become another statistic.

“I’ve done seven funerals in my 22 years with APD,” Rick solemnly recalls. “When we started digging deeper, we noticed that we give our guys tools like a vest and a gun, but that doesn’t protect their minds or their spirits. I was doing classes on negotiating with tough supervisors and dealing with day-to-day stress, but then we started asking the bigger questions about cumulative mental trauma.”

A Passion for Outreach

From there, the problem was more clearly defined, and by partnering with TMLIRP, APD began developing relationships and establishing a network of concerned communities, united in their commitment to first responder outreach. Rick has also led nearly 30 Resiliency Strategies for First Responders courses all over the state.

“It’s been revolutionary to connect therapists and risk management professionals in a strategic partnership, all with the same goal of getting people treatment early so this isn’t a lifelong debilitating situation,” Rick says. “I’m blessed because working with officers and their families is my passion. That’s why I’m still doing this at 68- until I go horizontal.”

Concerned advocates have their work cut out for them. It’s estimated that 30-40 percent of first responders suffer from PTSI, and frankly, there just aren’t enough Rick Randals to go around. However, by leveraging APD’s experience with TMLIRP resources, and embracing cutting edge treatment methodology, the future of PTSI treatment for first responders in the state of Texas looks promising.

The TMLIRP Partnership Award is presented on a quarterly basis to members that exhibit exemplary service to their communities, strengthen the bond between risk pool partners and espouse the core values of integrity, public service, fiscal responsibility, and operational excellence. To nominate your city, reach out to your TMLIRP loss prevention representative.
TMLIRP is proud to recognize the Austin Police Department as the first recipient of our PARTNERSHIP AWARD.

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Houston Is Great for Women in Technology

In SmartAsset’s sixth annual study, the City of Houston is ranked number six among the top cities for women in technology – making Houston number one in Texas.

The largest 59 cities in the United States were studied to find the best places for women in technology to live and work. The study was based on gender pay gap, average earning, the percentage of women in the field, and four-year growth in employment.

Females in the technology field in Houston earn 99 percent of their male counterparts’ earnings, and hold nearly 26 percent of the jobs. After deducting the cost for housing, Houston has the eighth highest earnings average for women in technology among the largest cities.

Free Job Assistance Program in Mesquite

In an effort to promote employment opportunities in the community, the City of Mesquite Human Resources Department launched a new program to provide personalized training for residents looking for work.

The job assistance program offers attendees private one-on-one training to gain skills on writing a resume. Citizens also have access to the newest trends on interviews. The Human Resources Department has plans to build on the program and offer future training on other job application topics.

Director of Human Resources Rick French said, “We are excited to provide this job seeking training to the public. Our staff will sit down with each participant to have conversations about their resume. And, we will discuss tips and tactics to use in interviews. Our goal is to make Mesquite a more employable community.” French added that the program will help support the City Council’s goal of a vibrant economy by building more qualified job seekers.
Celebrating 60 Years in Sugar Land

The City of Sugar Land hosted an open house at the Sugar Land City Hall to celebrate its newly installed 60th anniversary artwork. The commemorative piece, titled Cultivate, celebrates the incorporation of Sugar Land on December 29, 1959. The artwork is composed of nearly 200 independent hanging glass ribbons.

A selection panel composed of residents, a regional artist, and an industry art professional reviewed more than 40 proposals and unanimously selected Texas artist Tim de Jong of Wimberley Glassworks studio to create the project.

The panel was impressed with the artist’s vision of a dynamic yet subtle selection of color and layout that is harmonious with the design of Sugar Land City Hall and creates a visual connect to the outside plaza. Cultivate is part of the city’s ongoing public art program, an effort identified by citizens to enhance destination centers and public places that attract visitors and residents.

“This public art project represents an important step in the ongoing implementation of our Public Art Program,” said Assistant City Manager Jennifer May. “It enhances the beauty of Sugar Land, and builds our reputation as an art and cultural destination. It’s our goal to create memorable, meaningful places that are focal points for our community and enhance the appearance of our public facilities. The appearance of our community and the amenities that we value contribute to what makes our city one of a kind. It’s part of what we call the Sugar Land way.”

★
Texas is known for its traditions and its ability to put on a great party. The I-35 corridor is already home to iconic annual events like San Antonio’s Fiesta or New Braunfels’ Wurstfest, but it felt like something was missing. We knew there was an opportunity to create another event for the region. The catch was that it had to be unique. It had to be something which people have heard of, yet unusual. This event also had to attract the attention of people of all ages and abilities. Finally, it had to be accessible and affordable. With all of this idea in mind, the RE/MAX Skylight Balloon Fest was born.

The RE/MAX Skylight Balloon Fest is a three-day regional event sponsored by RE/MAX and produced by The Chamber in partnership with River City Community Church, and the cities of Selma, Schertz, and Cibolo. The festival includes Chamber members, surrounding area businesses, as well as the three cities for the purpose of providing a fun, family-oriented event for residents and visitors to the Northeast San Antonio region. Located at River City Community Church grounds, the site of the former Verizon Wireless Amphitheater, the RE/MAX Skylight Balloon Fest is in a prime location to draw visitors from across the San Antonio area and beyond.

The event, which usually takes place in late October, begins Friday afternoon with opening ceremonies that have included introductions from local elected officials, a flyover formation from Randolph Air Force Base, and a skydiving team that carries the United States and Texas flags to the moving music of the Star-Spangled Banner. Once the opening festivities have concluded, visitors are free to enjoy delicious food from dozens of food trucks, listen to live music, shop at vendor booths featuring local businesses, or check out the Selma Fun Zone, complete with games, hayrides, a carnival, and a petting zoo. Visitors are also welcome to try out...
the tethered balloon rides, with two balloons staged and ready to take brave attendees 30 to 40 feet above festival grounds.

At night, the skies of Selma are alight with the highlight of the weekend, the Balloon Glow. Over twenty balloons and their pilots gather on the field, some coming from as far away as the United Kingdom. Led by Glen Moyer, world-famous balloon announcer and official announcer for the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, the pilots obey as he commands them to twinkle, all-burn, and dance their balloon lights to the beat of contemporary music. This magical scene is one-of-a-kind for the San Antonio area and the reason behind the festival’s name.

Saturday features several events, including balloon launches in which balloon pilots take off or land, a 5K race, a polo match, a Cirque Acrobat performance team, food, vendors, and three live concerts. The skydiving team also makes an appearance and jump with another spectacular Balloon Glow closing out Saturday for attendees.

Finishing off the weekend event is a Sunday morning balloon launch, concluding with awards and farewells to all of the pilots as we look forward to seeing them again next year.

Almost as important as the actual event is the interlocal cooperation between The Chamber, River City Community Church, member cities, county officials, and our local business community. The Chamber does a wonderful job of conceptualizing the event, gaining the buy-in from each partner, and bringing the festival to fruition. Each member city provided booths with information about their city, as well as entertainment for attendees, including games and tours of various emergency and quick response vehicles. Local businesses came out in droves to promote their products and support the event by volunteering. Additionally, Randolph Air Force Base got in on the fun by re-routing air traffic and flights, while the FAA and San Antonio Airport showed their support by doing the same. Guadalupe County provided their emergency management incident trailer to be used by law enforcement and emergency responders as a base of operations. Overall, cooperation among the participating agencies and organizations could not have been better or more instrumental to the success of the RE/MAX Skylight Balloon Fest. This just shows how neighboring agencies can work together to create a regional event that benefits everyone involved.

The balloon fest was not designed to replace or compete with other events. It is a collaboration to help create a regional identity and make our region a destination. We look forward to enjoying many years of continued success and partnership as we make each year better than the one before.

This year’s event will be on October 23-25. Come on out and take flight with the RE/MAX Skylight Balloon Fest! ★

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2020 ANNUAL TML TAXATION AND DEBT SURVEY RESULTS ARE AVAILABLE

The Texas Municipal League’s annual survey of municipal tax and debt is complete for the 2019-2020 budget year, and results are now posted on the Texas Municipal League (TML) website at www.tml.org under “Resources” and then “Surveys.” If you have difficulty accessing this information, please call the TML office at 512-231-7400.

This year, 571 cities responded to the survey (1,222 surveys were distributed). Please keep in mind that all data in this survey is self-reported, and TML cannot be responsible for errors made by the reporting entities.

The following information may be helpful when you review the survey results:

Limitations on Municipal Tax Rates

Municipal property tax rates are limited by the Texas Constitution (Article XI, Sections 4 and 5) and state law. Municipal tax rate ceilings are as follows:

- Cities of 5,000 or less in population (other than Type B general law cities and some Type C general law cities) can levy a maximum tax rate of $1.50 per $100 assessed valuation.
- Cities over 5,000 in population (other than Type B general law cities) can levy up to $2.50 per $100 assessed valuation. For a home rule city, a rate lower than $2.50 per $100 may be prescribed under the city charter.
- Type B general law cities can levy a maximum of $0.25 cents per $100 assessed valuation.
- Type C general law cities with a population of 201 to 501 inhabitants may levy a maximum tax rate of $0.25 per $100 assessed valuation. Other Type C general law cities may levy a maximum tax rate according to population as detailed above.

Definitions of Terms Used in the Survey

General obligation bonds are bonds that are secured by a pledge of the full faith and credit and the taxing power of the issuers. The term is synonymous with the term “tax-supported.”

Revenue bonds are special obligations of the issuer (as opposed to general obligations) that are payable solely from the revenues derived from an income-producing facility. Revenue bonds are sometimes further secured by a first mortgage on the physical plant or property whose revenues are pledged. Such bonds are called “first mortgage revenue bonds.”

Certificates of obligation are a financing mechanism a city may use to pay a contractual obligation incurred in: (1) a construction contract; (2) the purchase of materials, supplies, equipment, machinery, buildings, land, and rights-of-way for authorized needs and purposes; or (3) the payment of professional services, including services provided by tax appraisers, engineers, architects, attorneys, map makers, auditors, financial advisors, and fiscal agents.

Tax notes (also called “anticipation notes”) are a debt instrument that a city may sell to finance the construction of public works; to purchase supplies, land, and rights of way for public works; to pay for professional services; to pay operating expenses; or to pay off cash flow deficits. Tax notes used to pay for public works or professional services must mature before the seventh anniversary after the notes are approved by the attorney general. Tax notes used to pay operating expenses or to fund a city’s cumulative cash flow deficit must mature before the first anniversary after the notes are approved by the attorney general.

Tax rate is the rate at which taxes are levied per $100 of assessed valuation. In Texas, the ad valorem tax rate for local governments is expressed in terms of dollars or cents per $100 of assessed valuation.

When viewing the survey results online, the following key to municipal utilities and facilities referenced in the survey may be helpful:

Key to Municipal Utilities and Facilities

AM—Auditorium; AP—Airport; C—Cemetery; CE—Civic/Community Center; DR—Municipal Drainage Utility Fee; E—Electric System; FG—Fairgrounds; GC—Golf Course; GS—Gas System; H—Hospital; HR—Boat Harbor; J—Jail; L—Library/Museum; LK—Lake; M—Market; MB—Municipal Building; P—Parking Lot; PH—Public Housing Units; PK—Parks and Recreation; S—Sewer System; SC—Senior Center; SL—Solid Waste Disposal System; SP—Swimming Pool; T—Transit Bus System; TB—Toll Bridge; W—Water System; ZO—Zoo; ZZ—Other
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Service as an elected city official is a rewarding and challenging job – one that will give you tremendous satisfaction knowing that you are helping to make your city, and this great state, strong and vibrant. The Texas Municipal League (TML) and the Texas Association of Mayors, Councilmembers and Commissioners (TAMCC) encourage elected city officials to learn as much as possible about their governance roles and city government by attending a variety of educational opportunities offered throughout the year. These conferences, workshops, and webinars allow city officials to enhance their policy-making and leadership skills, and network with other city leaders from across the state.

TML and TAMCC sponsor the Texas Municipal League Institute (TMLI) to recognize elected city officials who commit to continuing their education and enhancing their service as city leaders. This voluntary certification program is open to elected city officials from TML member cities and offers levels of recognition for completing a specific number of continuing education units (CEUs) within a calendar year (January 1-December 31). One CEU is awarded for each 50 minutes of educational training.

How do I participate in TMLI?

Participation in TMLI is free and easy! Simply send a provided CEU form or agenda by mail to the TML conferences and training department or via email (tmli@tml.org). That’s it! Your CEUs will appear on the TMLI webpage after they are entered.

To view your CEUs at any time, go to www.tml.org and click on “Certification for Elected Officials” under the “Education” tab. Click on “Participants” and scroll down to your name. Your CEUs for the training year will be listed under your name.

What are the different award levels in TMLI?

TMLI offers four levels of yearly recognition, plus two special award levels for those receiving recognition on a recurring annual basis. The yearly levels of recognition include:

Certified Municipal Official – An elected official who completes 72 or more CEUs in one calendar year will obtain the designation of certified municipal official. The 72 CEUs must include two hours of open government training taken in the current award year (one hour of training on the Open Meetings Act and one hour of training on the Public Information Act). This training is required by the State of Texas, and proof of training must be provided in the manner of a certificate or other documentation.

Certificate of Outstanding Accomplishment – An elected official who completes 72 or more CEUs in one calendar year will obtain a certificate of outstanding accomplishment.

Certificate of Achievement – An elected official who completes 54 or more CEUs in one calendar year will obtain a certificate of achievement.

Certificate of Recognition – An elected official who completes 42 or more CEUs in one calendar year will obtain a certificate of recognition.

Those receiving recognition on a recurring annual basis are eligible for the following award levels:

Award of Excellence – An elected official who receives recognition in one of the above categories for five consecutive years will receive an award of excellence.

Award of Leadership – A city that has had an elected city official receive a TMLI certificate for five consecutive years will receive an award of leadership.

Where can I get more information on TMLI?

To learn more about TMLI and award levels, visit the website. For questions, contact tmli@tml.org or 512-231-7400.
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Q: What are some tools used by cities to finance tourism?

A: Cities use various tools to finance tourism. Some of them are:

**Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT):** A city is authorized to levy a tax on a person who pays for the use or possession or for the right to the use or possession of a room that is in a hotel, costs $2 or more each day, and is ordinarily used for sleep. Tex. Tax Code § 351.002(a). HOT revenue must be used to: (1) promote tourism and the convention and hotel industry; and (2) fall into one of several permissible categories of expenditures. Id. § 351.101.

**Sports and Community Venues:** A city, by resolution and with the approval of the qualified voters, is authorized to create sports and community venues and implement various taxes to fund venue projects. Tex. Loc. Gov’t Code §§ 334.021 -. 0242. For instance, a city may (1) levy a tax on the rental of motor vehicles for less than 30 days within the city at a rate not to exceed five percent; (2) levy tax not to exceed ten percent of the price of an admission ticket to a venue project facility event; and (3) levy a tax on each motor vehicle that parks at a venue project facility at a flat rate not to exceed three dollars. Id. §§ 334.102, 334.151, 334.201.

A venue project is defined as, and encompasses, a venue as well as all related infrastructure a city has planned, acquired, established, developed, constructed, or renovated. Id. § 334.001(5). A venue is an arena, coliseum, stadium, or other facilities that are used for sport or community events and for which a fee for admission to the events is charged or planned to be charged. Id. § 334.001(4). Also, the term includes convention and civic centers, civic center hotels, theaters, and museums within the vicinity of a convention center; tourism development areas; any authorized projects under the Development Corporation Act (Chapters 501-505 of the Local Government Code); municipal parks and recreation systems; and watershed protection and preservation projects.

**Economic Development Corporation Recreational or Community Facilities Projects:** A Type B Economic Development Corporation (EDC) may spend EDC sales tax revenue on land, buildings, equipment, facilities and improvements required or suitable for professional and amateur sports, athletic facilities, entertainment, tourist, convention facilities; and public parks and related open space improvements. Id. § 505.152. Voter approval is required for a Type A EDC to fund this type of project. Id. § 504.152.

**Tourism Public Improvement District (TPID):** A city may create a tourism public improvement district if it receives a petition signed by over 60 percent of the hotels within the district. Id. § 372.005(b-1). After receiving the petition, the city will determine an assessment for the properties within the district. Id. § 372.015. An assessment is the apportionment of the cost of an improvement assessed against property in the TPID made on the basis of special benefits accruing to the property because of the improvement. Id. § 372.015. The assessment collected from the hotels is used for only two primary purposes: (1) to undertake initiatives related to advertising and promotion directly related to hotels; and (2) to undertake sales (business recruitment) efforts directly related to hotels. Id. § 372.0035(e).

**Art and Entertainment Districts:** A city with a population of more than one million may designate a defined area in the city as an arts and entertainment district in which it may: (1) solicit grants and donations for the development of the district; (2) solicit grants and donations for the development of the district; and (3) provide tax breaks to persons in the district to develop the district for public purposes. Id. § 309.001. A city creates an art and entertainment districts to develop a public and private collaboration that plays a vital role in the cultural life and development of the community in the district. The district is required to contribute to the public through interpretive, educational, and recreational uses.

Q May a city appropriate from its general fund monies to advertise and promote the growth and development of the city?

A A city with a population of 900,000 or fewer may spend up to one percent of its general fund budget annually "for the purpose of advertising the municipality and promoting its growth and development." Id. § 371.001. Before spending the appropriated money, state law requires the creation of an advisory board consisting of five members appointed by the city council. Id. §§ 371.001(b), 371.002.

Additionally, a general-law city, with voter approval, may spend not more than five cents per $100 valuation for the purpose of "advertising the municipality and promoting its growth and development." Id. § 371.021.

Q What legal issues may accompany developing and maintaining a tourist industry in a city?

A The legal issues that may arise from developing and maintaining a tourist industry are dependent on the characteristics of the tourist activity, and are as varied as the type of business that makes up the industry (e.g. agricultural tourism, cultural/heritage/arts tourism, environmental tourism, sports/recreation tourism, and musical tourism).

The legal issues that typically arise are generally linked to the resulting pressures on: (1) public services, such as law enforcement, solid waste disposal, and code enforcement; and (2) other community resources, such as private lodging and transportation providers.

For example, the City of Austin prepared an evaluation of the South by Southwest Conference and Festival ("SXSW"), a large-scale conference, musical and film event:


Q What is the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of a city, and does a city have any authority over a tourist-related business that is located in the ETJ?

A The ETJ of a city is an area of land surrounding the city. Depending on the number of inhabitants of the city, the ETJ may range from one-half mile to five miles outside the city’s full-purpose, corporate limits. Id. § 42.021.

A city’s authority in the ETJ must come directly from a state statute. Tex. Att’y Gen. Op. No. JM-811(1987) ("It is axiomatic that all powers granted to a city may be exercise only with the corporate limits of the city unless expressly extended by statute to apply outside the corporate limits.") State law authorizes cities to do at least three things specifically aimed at tourist-related businesses in the ETJ. First, a city under 35,000 may extend the hotel occupancy tax to the ETJ. Tex. Tax Code § 351.0025. Second, a city may create a tourist public improvement district that includes the ETJ. Tex. Loc. Gov’t Code §§ 372.003, 372.0035. Third, a city may designate part of its ETJ as an “industrial district” and enter into agreements with landowners in that district. Id. § 42.044.

The term “industrial district” is not specifically defined in the statute, but the statute provides it “includes any area in which tourist-related businesses and facilities are located.” Id § 42.044(a). An industrial district agreement may include the following provisions: (1) agreement not to annex for up to 15 years; (2) “other lawful terms and considerations that the parties agree to be reasonable, appropriate and not unduly restrictive of business activities;” and (3) renewal for successive periods not to exceed 15 years each. Id. § 42.044(c), (d).

Q What is a convention and visitors bureau?

A A convention and visitors bureau (CVB) is an entity responsible for promoting a community as an attractive travel destination and enhancing its public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Generally, CVBs:

- Encourage groups to hold meetings, conventions, events and tradeshows in a city;
- Encourage tourists to visit and enjoy the historic, cultural, and recreational opportunities in a city; and
- Help market and promote the city’s assets to visitors.

In most cases, a CVB is an independent non-profit entity.
For example, the City of Dallas’s CVB is called Visit Dallas: https://www.visitdallas.com. In some medium-sized cities, a city department or board is responsible for providing CVB-type services. The City of Georgetown created a Convention and Visitor’s Board (https://visit.georgetown.org) to be responsible for these duties in November 2014. See Georgetown, Tex., Code of Ordinances, ch. 2.68 (2014) https://library.municode.com/TX/Georgetown/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_TIT2AD_CH2.68COVBUADBO.

A CVB, depending on how it is structured and the services it offers, can be supported by a hotel occupancy tax, budget allocations, private membership, or a combination of these and other sources. See Tex. Tax Code § 351.101(c) (authorizing a city to contract with a private organization for the management or supervision of its convention and visitors’ programs and activities).

**Q** Does the State of Texas help encourage and facilitate the growth of tourism?

**A** The State of Texas provides funding to state agencies to support and facilitate the growth of the state’s tourism industry. Five primary state agencies perform tourism related activities: Texas Commission on the Arts, Office of the Governor Economic Development and Tourism, Texas Historical Commission, Texas Department of Transportation, and Texas Parks and Wildlife. These state agencies conduct a variety of tourism related activities that fall into the following four functions: marketing, product development, program development, and customer services. These functions are considered essential for achieving an effective statewide tourism effort.


**Cultural Districts Program:** The Texas Commission on the Arts can designate cultural districts in cities. Cultural district are special zones that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community revitalization. These districts can become focal points for generating business, attracting tourists, stimulating cultural development and fostering civic pride. Details about the program are available at https://www.arts.texas.gov/initiatives/cultural-districts.

**Event Trust Funds Program:** The Event Trust Fund program is comprised of three separate funds: the Events Trust Fund, Major Events Reimbursement Program, and Motor Sports Racing Trust Fund; which is targeted at attracting various types of events to the State of Texas.

The program, administered by the Office of the Governor’s Economic Development Division, can assist Texas communities with paying cost related to preparing for or conducting an eligible event. Projected gains from various local and state taxes generated from the event are deposited in a dedicated event-specific trust fund to cover allowable expenses. Details about this program are available at https://gov.texas.gov/business/page/event-trust-funds-program.

**Travel Texas Research Program:** This program, administered by the Office of the Governor, directs a comprehensive research effort to provide primary data on travel industry research topics including domestic and international travel, economic impacts of travel and tourism, and hotel performance, among many others. Details about this program are available at https://gov.texas.gov/travel-texas/page/travel-research.

**Heritage Tourism Program:** The Texas Historical Commission is charged with assisting local governments and others “in the preservation, enhancement, and promotion of heritage and cultural attractions in this state.” Program staff, in collaboration with cities, develop digital and printed travel-related products to strengthen a visitor’s experience. Details about this program are available at https://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/heritage-tourism.

**Q** Are there any state programs that foster tourism in or promote a city?

**A** Various state programs foster tourism in or help promote a city. Some of them include:
City Pride Sign Program: The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) developed this program to give cities the opportunity to display the names and logos of the city’s civic organizations along state highways without interfering with official highway signs. Details about this program are available at https://www.txdot.gov/business/signs/city-pride.html.

Logo and Directional Signs Program: Also administered by TxDOT, this program provides information to motorists about traveler services on Texas highways. Eligible businesses, major shopping areas, and attractions can lease space on these signs for tourist attractions and services, such as gas, food, lodging, camping, and 24-hour pharmacies. Details about this program are available at https://www.txdot.gov/business/signs/logo-directional.html.

GO TEXAN Program: This program administered by Texas Department of Agriculture, promotes the products, culture, and communities that call Texas home. The program represents Texas agri-business on state, national, and international levels by building recognition for the GO TEXAN mark, and helping consumers and tourists find Texas products, communities, restaurants, services, and events. Details about this program are available at http://www.gotexan.org/Home.aspx and https://issuu.com/gotexan/docs/txngotexan_eversion-2.

Nature Tourism Program: Administered by the Texas Park and Wildlife Department, this program promotes habitat conservation, sustainable economic development, and it builds broad-based public support for wildlife conservation programs. The program assigns a nature tourism manager who is available for site visits and assessments to communities interested in developing a nature tourism program. Site visits and technical guidance for communities involves a tour of potential or existing nature tourism destinations in an area, meeting with chamber of commerce leaders or city officials, and developing some practical goals for the community in order to provide another tourism draw to their area, thus increasing the reasons for travelers to visit. Details about this program are available at https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/programs/tourism.

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NEW AUTHORITY FOR ALL TEXAS CITIES TO CREATE TOURISM PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

By Scott Joslove
President and CEO
Texas Hotel & Lodging Association
Tourism public improvement districts (PID) are a relatively new concept for Texas cities. Until 2012, Texas cities most commonly created downtown and neighborhood PIDs. In both cases, the district is located within a defined geographic area of the city and includes all the property owners within the defined area. Beginning in 2012, the Texas hotel industry and Texas cities began working together to secure passage of a new state law that would allow a PID to include one type of business: hotels. In creating the tourism district legislation, Texas emulated the tourism PID authority that has been successfully implemented in California and other states.

What does the creation of these tourism districts cost the municipalities?
Nothing. The districts are solely funded through an assessment made against the cost of each taxable hotel room night. For example, if a hotel within the district sells a hotel room with a $100 room rate, and the room sale is subject to a two percent tourism PID assessment, the hotel collects $102 for that hotel night. This $102 charge becomes the new base amount subject to state and local hotel tax. How are the tourism PID assessments remitted? The hotel remits the tourism PID assessments to the city monthly along with the hotel’s local hotel occupancy tax. Additionally, the limited administrative costs the city may have incident to the creation and administration of the tourism PID are fully reimbursed by the district once the district is operating.

How does the use of tourism PID revenues differ from the permitted uses of local hotel occupancy tax revenues and local venue tax funds?

Use of Hotel Tax: The use of local hotel occupancy tax revenue is controlled by Chapter 351 of the Texas Tax Code. The Tax Code outlines nine eligible categories for use of the local hotel tax. These categories include: 1) convention and visitor information centers; 2) registration of convention delegates; 3) advertising and promotion; 4) promotion of the arts; 5) historical restoration and preservation; 6) eligible sporting events in cities located in counties with a population less than one million residents; 7) sporting related facilities in certain bracketed cities; 8) tourism related wayfinding signage; and 9) certain transportation costs to transport tourists to area attractions. City councils approve an annual hotel tax budget that includes hotel tax expenditures within these eligible categories. Furthermore, state law requires that every hotel tax expenditure must also directly enhance and promote tourism and the convention and hotel industry.

Use of Venue Project Funds: Venue project funds are only enabled by voters through a ballot proposition. The ballot proposition authorizes an increase in the local hotel tax rate of up to two percent to fund a specific type of facility such as a convention center, a sports facility, and certain other facilities that promote tourism and hotel activity. The types of venue project facilities that can be pursued are covered in Chapter 334 of the Texas Local Government Code. The cities choose which eligible type of facility they want to pursue and include wording in the ballot proposition that will accomplish this purpose.

Use of Tourism PID Funds: The tourism PID assessments are controlled by a different state law: the Public Improvement District Assessment Act found in Chapter 372 of the Texas Local Government Code. This Act limits the use of tourism public improvement district revenues to only two primary purposes: 1) marketing initiatives; and 2) sales initiatives. Both of these purposes are generally accompanied by a direct return-on-investment standard that must be met for an expenditure of tourism PID funds.

Evolution of Tourism Districts in Texas
When the Texas Legislature first approved tourism PID authority in 2011, the authority applied only to the City of Dallas. After passage of the Dallas legislation, nearly 70 percent of the eligible Dallas area hotels presented a
petition to the City of Dallas to create the Dallas Tourism PID. The City Council unanimously approved the creation of the district, making Dallas the home of the first tourism public improvement in Texas.

In its first seven years of operation, the Dallas Tourism PID had the following results:

1. Nearly doubled Dallas’ conversion rate for winning conventions from 23 percent to securing over 41 percent of the conventions that they bid on with the supplemental tourism PID funding.

2. Created over $14 in hotel room night revenue for every dollar spent on incentives.

3. Increased hotel occupancy by an average of 17 percent throughout the City, yielding additional city sales tax, alcoholic beverage sales tax, and property tax growth.

The Dallas Tourism PID was such a success that the Texas Legislature amended state law in 2013 to give authority to create tourism public improvement districts to the cities of Fort Worth, Arlington, Austin, and San Antonio. Today there are operating districts in Arlington, Fort Worth, and San Antonio. The City of Austin is currently in the process of creating its own tourism PID.

Tourism PID development has not stopped there. At the request of the lodging industry and a number of Texas cities, the Texas Legislature extended the power to create tourism PIDs to all Texas cities, upon petition of over 60 percent of the hotels within the district. It should be noted that state law also now allows the inclusion of hotels of any size within the district. Initially, districts were required to be comprised of only hotels with more than 75 or 100 rooms.

The 2019 tourism PID state legislation, House Bill 1136, also added and clarified several important requirements.

First is a provision that limits the use of tourism PID funds in future districts to two primary purposes: 1) to undertake initiatives related to advertising and promotion directly related to hotels; and 2) to undertake sales (business recruitment) efforts directly related to hotels.

Second, the new state law allows tourism districts to add new hotel properties to its assessment roll during the existing term of the district. This statutory authority becomes especially important as newly constructed hotels open for occupancy within the term of an operating tourism PID.

How are these tourism PIDs managed?

Tourism PID expenditures are overseen by a nonprofit oversight corporation board of directors that is solely composed of area hoteliers. This means that the industry that raises the funds also oversees the expenditure of the funds. The success of the tourism districts have shown that the hoteliers that serve on these boards have been shrewd judges of how to effectively promote hotel activity, and their engagement has been integral to the success of these districts.

Tourism PIDs are the next frontier for generating additional resources to promote group meetings and grow tourism and hotel activity in Texas cities. We anticipate the interest in tourism PIDs to only increase due to the tremendous value that these districts have provided for local economies.

Texas cities and their convention and visitor bureaus frequently call Texas Hotel & Lodging Association (THLA) attorneys for legal advice on the process for creating a tourism PID. The THLA legal team can produce documents to assist in the creation and administration of tourism PID operations, including draft petitions, service plans, and other related documents and policies. If your city leaders want to consider a tourism PID, please contact the THLA for support and assistance. ★
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Studies show that travel provides numerous personal and professional benefits.

Many of us set ambitious goals for our professional lives, whether that’s seeking a promotion or a raise, or taking on new responsibilities at work. Browse LinkedIn and you’ll see countless career coaches sharing “secrets” to achieving goals or the habits of successful CEOs.

But take it from this CEO: running yourself ragged isn’t the key to getting ahead at work.

In fact, my advice is the opposite: plan a vacation.

It’s the simplest thing you can do for your career, and too few people make it a priority. America’s workforce left 768 million vacation days on the table in 2018 and 236 million of those days were forfeited completely. In addition to sacrificing their time—and more than $65.5 billion in lost benefits and an individual average of $571 in donated work time—American workers missed out on the countless personal and professional benefits of travel.

We’re all better employees—and better people—when we travel and unwind. And in a state with diverse cities, unique historical sites, exciting sports teams, and world-class food and music, Texans don’t have far to look to find a respite from the daily grind.

Getting ahead at the office isn’t quite as simple as stepping out to catch a Rangers or Astros game—it’s a little more nuanced than that. But studies show that taking time off to travel can improve your job performance and overall sense of well-being. Stressed and overworked employees can create a challenging work environment where little can be accomplished. Burnout is real; avoiding it is the top reason why Americans choose to travel.

Taking time off can help: 61 percent of American workers who plan their vacation time for the year say they are happy with their job compared to just 49 percent of non-planners. Further, planning your time off ensures that you use it well, whether that’s a drive on I-35 or a trip to Luckenbach; 76 percent of planners versus just 54 percent of non-planners cite satisfaction with how their paid time off is used.

Unplugging from your emails and traveling has personal benefits, too. More than 80 percent of vacation planners say they’re happy with their personal relationships with friends and family compared to 68 percent of non-planners. And 63 percent of planners versus 51 percent of non-planners...
say they’re satisfied with their overall physical health and well-being: positive growth in the workplace simply cannot happen unless there is support and happiness at home.

Unfortunately, only half of American families take the important step of planning their time off to travel. I get it—we’re all busy. Planning ahead of time gives everyone a chance to coordinate schedules and ensures you won’t be stuck in the office during big life moments. I wouldn’t have dreamed of missing my daughter’s wedding this past year, but it took planning and coordination to get my family there for the week to celebrate.

No one should be a work martyr, and that promotion or raise won’t happen if you burn out first. Getting away from our desks is crucial to maintaining a positive work-life balance and achieving professional and personal success. Take some time today to sit down with family and friends and plan your vacation. It’s your time off—use it to your advantage.

DESTINATION MARKETING 101

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS

Since the first Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), now known as Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), formed in Detroit, Michigan, in 1896, cities and towns around the world have recognized the importance of travel and tourism-oriented economic development and the need to pursue it. In the 1800s, a group of businessmen decided that promoting visitors to come to Detroit for conventions would be profitable for the City, and they were right. Visitors to a community contribute new dollars to the city, decreasing the amount of taxes that residents pay annually per household.

By Diann Bayes
Executive Director
San Angelo Convention & Visitors Bureau
How We Operate

In the DMO world, no cookie cutter approach exists. Operations can include not-for-profit 501(c) 6, independent organizations, city departments, local chamber of commerce divisions, member driven entities, and more. The majority of DMO funding is comprised of hotel occupancy taxes, but other funding sources may include memberships, taxes on restaurants, car rentals and venues, booking engines, co-op advertising with industry partners, merchandise, and sponsorship fees. While a majority of Texas DMOs are funded primarily by hotel tax dollars, the sales tax revenue generated by visitors helps to fund other projects in the city, enhancing the quality of life for citizens. Currently, more than 200 DMOs exist in the state of Texas.

Our Role in the Community

Defined simply, a DMO’s job is to tell the story of our cities and towns in order to attract visitors. Our strategies vary based on the products we have to offer, products over which we have little to no control. The Lone Star State contains a wide variety of products. Some DMOs sell resort settings, while others promote bustling urban cities, quaint rural towns, or scenic nature-based attractions. Some have rich histories dating back to the founding of Texas while others were incorporated just a few decades ago. Some DMOs focus primarily on leisure activities, while others work heavily with corporate travelers and the convention market. We may not be all things to all visitors, but the key to our success is identifying our specific niche markets then developing and promoting them to potential visitors.

DMOs effectively serve as the city’s promotional arm, through regional, statewide, and international marketing efforts. Who better to do this type of work than those who live in the community? No other organization in the city works in this capacity, telling the positive story of our communities to interested visitors and potential residents and businesses. We work with our hotel partners, attractions, restaurants, retail, sports facilities, music venues, and many others to create itineraries to attract visitors. We wear various hats, from economic developers to marketing experts, from destination managers to sales and service specialists, and from educators to community developers.

How Do We Do It?

Conduct a Community Inventory

A thorough community inventory is one of a DMO’s most valuable assets. Before we can promote our product, we must first identify what we have to offer visitors. It is critical during this process that we wear “visitor goggles” to prevent our views from being obscured by the things we personally enjoy. While we may not personally like to hunt or fish, if there is lake in our community, it is critical to know about its recreational areas and what kinds of wildlife populate the land and water.

A community inventory must include all meeting space and area hotel specifics. Additional focus should be on attractions, campgrounds, parks, nature, sports venues, restaurants, retail, transportation options, geography, and even infrastructure. Architecture, music, events, and so much more is involved in learning what your community offers and how to package it for visitors to want to travel to your destination and spend money.

Determine Clientele

After completing the community inventory and educating staff and your community ambassadors on what is available, we package the product and then determine clients to whom we can sell our packages. DMOs in small communities with limited meeting facilities and breakout space will have difficulty booking large convention groups. Conversely, smaller groups may be overwhelmed by a big city atmosphere, preferring to host their meetings in quaint towns with one-of-a-kind facilities.
Methods for prospecting customers could include memberships, corporate sales calls, local ambassadors, sales blitzes, internet research to include social media sites, and trade show participation. Potential clients include leisure travelers, associations, corporations, group tour operators, sporting event coordinators, event planners, wedding coordinators, travel writers, and more.

**Dates, Space, and Rates**

DMOs must know dates, space availability, and rates to compete with other cities for business. Some hotels do well on weekdays with corporate and association business but struggle to fill on weekends. Other hotels may be full of leisure guests on weekends but suffer during the week. By getting to know the hotels, we are best poised to positively impact their occupancy numbers.

Developing positive relationships with our tourism partners - hotels, attractions, restaurants, vendors, and event venues - is a critical factor to our sales strategies and negotiations. DMOs occasionally serve as the broker when negotiating contracts with meeting planners, working directly with hoteliers, venues, and planners to get the best deal for all parties and to secure signed contracts. Knowledgeable planners turn to DMO staff because they know we have developed relationships with our partners and are their best-choice liaisons.

**Special Events**

Many special events occur on weekends, taking place on just one day. While they are important in promoting a community, DMOs prefer multi-day events, as they are more likely to impact hotel occupancy and give the visitor more opportunity to eat at restaurants, visit attractions, purchase items at retail shops, and buy fuel or airline tickets for more than one day of activity. Because there are 365 days in a year, it is imperative that DMO staff focus on filling hotels and meeting space over the entire year rather than placing their focus on single-day activities.

**Marketing the Community**

No matter the budget of the DMO, marketing the destination requires a strategy. Advertising is imperative and determining the best methods can be a challenge. Gone are the days when DMOs could only rely on traditional marketing like leisure and trade magazines, visitor guides, rack cards, and direct mail marketing. While those marketing options are still important, we now also tap newer tools like social media, search engine optimization, and third-party marketing like TripAdvisor.

Digital marketing is ever-changing, so keeping up with best practices is extremely important to the DMO. From social media postings to geofencing in order to target the market the community wants to attract to specific events, DMO staff are getting more and more creative with how they spend hotel tax dollars in their marketing efforts.

Working with travel writers, bloggers, and journalists to tell the story of the destinations gives the visitor a better glance at what there is to see and do based on other’s experience, rather than just the DMO.

Convenience is important to the visitor, particularly if searching for places to visit. DMOs provide the official calendar of events for a community so visitors and residents have a convenient “one-stop-shop” for learning what there is to see and do instead of scanning multiple locations for this information.

Trade shows are also critical, particularly for the meetings market, as they provide planners with important face-to-face contacts with staff who can answer questions about a community. It is critical that DMOs employ professionals with exceptional customer service skills.

**Greeting and Receiving Guests**

When visitors arrive in their destination, whether for business or pleasure, DMO staff and volunteers
serve as the community concierge. Leisure travelers frequent DMO offices, visitor centers, and chambers of commerce to collect information highlighting activities in a community, maps, dining options, and attraction materials.

DMO staff and volunteers greet convention and meeting attendees at meeting facilities and hotels, offering them a variety of services including VIP welcome speeches, visitor bags, registration assistance, signage, brochures, and tour step-on guides. DMO staff and volunteers are also available to provide continuing services to planners during their entire stay.

From the food server at the restaurant to the housekeeping staff at the hotel, all employees who encounter visitors will impact whether that person wants to return. A majority of DMOs offer customer service training to hospitality partners, educating them on how to ensure the guest’s stay is positive and, as the guests are leaving the destination, to always extend the invitation to return.

**Measuring Success**

Advertising and marketing are an investment in your community. If the DMO is not telling the story of your city, who will?

It is difficult to track return on investment in some areas of the DMO industry, particularly in the leisure market. Consumer trade shows are important for brand awareness of a community as is advertising in leisure publications. However, a potential customer may see an advertisement one year and wait a few years to plan a trip to that community.

Tracking convention business is easier as trade shows and sales calls generate sales leads. Tracking the number of hotel rooms used is a simpler process once bids are presented, contracts are signed, and hotel blocks are put in place. DMOs also record lost business and/or cancellations based on bids presented and sites selected in other communities.

Regarding advertising efforts, many publications provide leads from individuals and organizations interested in coming to a city. Digital marketing provides statistics including traffic, new versus returning visitors, page views, time spent on the site, advertisement conversions, impressions, and much more.

**Community Role of DMOs**

DMOs work collaboratively with city leaders and community partners to ensure successful promotion of a destination. The DMO shares their marketing plan with leadership that clearly states DMO goals and strategies to help ensure no duplication of efforts.

Because DMOs bolster and safeguard the city’s image outside their community, city staff are encouraged to involve the DMO in developing and implementing a crisis management plan that addresses the most likely challenges. Whether the crisis is natural or man-made, the safety and security of visitors is important. DMOs can play a pivotal role in ensuring that the city’s key messages are clearly communicated to visitor during a crisis.

DMO staff members work with leisure and business travelers daily. DMOs know what travelers love about our destinations and what they would like to see improved, based on research and comments. Because visitors come to our communities, spend money and leave, they contribute to the tax base, decreasing the amount residents pay annually in taxes. Travel and tourism-oriented economic development is part of the solution to budget woes. Working with DMOs to develop a quality product increases the likelihood of a visitor returning, in addition to sharing the wonderful experience they had in a community with their friends and family. ★
PLANNING FOR VACATION OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

By Nate Gieryn, Tourism Research Manager, Travel Texas

Texas enjoys a diversity of travel experiences that is hard to match. Maybe you’ve been feeling some wanderlust lately and an itch to plan a summer vacation or quick getaway weekend? You may already be thinking about filling up your tank and hitting the road or maybe purchasing a flight, shopping for bargains or possibly antiques, finding a new restaurant, or revisiting an old favorite. Perhaps a special event has piqued your interest or you’ve got a business trip you’re thinking about extending. Maybe you’ve always wanted to visit one of the state’s many natural, historical and cultural attractions. Ready to join the millions of travelers visiting destinations across the state each year? Don’t forget to visit the award-winning travel website www.traveltexas.com for inspiration and information to help guide your next Texas adventure.
Or as a city leader, you might be thinking more about how these travel dollars create jobs in your community and generate tax revenues to pay for government services. Pursuing tourism as an economic development strategy can result in significant economic returns and in many cases improve quality of life by providing for amenities enjoyed by residents and visitors. A thriving travel industry and successful tourism promotions can also create a halo effect for a community by improving awareness and perceptions of the area as a tourism destination and a place to do business, pursue an education, or perhaps relocate.

Travel in Texas is booming, and growing local economies

Let’s take a deeper look at the economic impacts of the travel and tourism industry. In 2018, travelers to and within Texas spent an estimated $80.3 billion. Since the Great Recession, travel spending across the state has boomed. Back in 2009, travel spending was estimated at $51.3 billion – in current dollars, this is an increase of 57 percent from 2009 to 2018. The majority of travel spending involves the purchase of transportation, accommodations, and food services, with significant amounts spent on retail, arts, entertainment, and recreation.

The travel and tourism industry is unique in that the spending generated by travelers affects many different sectors of the economy. For the United States, the Bureau of Economic Analysis has created a Travel and Tourism Satellite Account (TTSA) to estimate the impacts of travel in a way that is comparable to other industries. Tourism research firm Dean Runyan and Associates provides similar estimates for Texas and other states using a Regional Travel Impact Model that is comparable to the national TTSA. Travel is an export-oriented industry bringing outside dollars into communities. For Texas, the impact of travel on the state’s gross domestic product is second to oil and gas and ahead of other export-oriented industries like agriculture and microelectronics.

Spending by travelers at the point of sale primarily affects the following industries: accommodation and food services, transportation, retail trade, professional and business services and arts, entertainment and recreation. The dollars generated by travel produce secondary impacts through indirect or business-to-business spending. Secondary impacts also include induced impacts, which derive from wages earned by travel industry employees. Secondary impacts from travel spending impact the industries listed above as well as finance, real estate and construction, manufacturing and utilities, education and health services, information services and more.

Tourism and travel in Texas create local jobs

The economic impact of $80.3 billion in direct travel spending is estimated to create an additional $83.9 billion in economic activity through secondary impacts for a total impact of $164 billion. The economic impact of travel supports 1.2 million Texas jobs with earnings of $59 billion across a range of advanced, intermediate, and entry-level positions. In total, roughly one out of every ten Texas jobs are supported by travel.

Past research on travel industry jobs and wages has shown that the travel industry has a higher share of entry-level positions when compared to other industries. After controlling for entry-level positions, intermediate and advanced travel positions pay slightly lower but comparable salaries to other industries. They often have significantly lower barriers to entry.

It is important to remember that entry-level jobs, including part-time and seasonal employment, play an important role in the economy. In many cases, they offer employment opportunities to those struggling with unemployment, pursuing an education, or retirees looking for ways to transition out of the workforce. For young Texans, the travel industry often provides a first job and an opportunity to learn about hospitality and customer service. Soft skills like these are important in their future.

Travel generates critical tax revenues

Travel is a jobs creator while also positively impacting government revenue. The $80.3 billion spent by travelers across Texas in 2018 was an important source of tax revenue for local and state governments generating an estimated $7.5 billion in combined tax revenues. Without travel, every Texas household would pay $740 more in local and state taxes per year to maintain current levels of service.

Travel spending generates tax revenue across many different categories. The largest share of state taxes come from the sales tax followed by motor fuel, hotel occupancy, and other taxes like auto rental, alcoholic beverage, and franchise. At the local level, travel generates significant sales, lodging, auto rental, and property tax revenues. In
fiscal year 2018, travel spending contributed an estimated 7.3 percent of overall state tax revenues and 4.5 percent of local tax revenues.

How to grow tourism in your community

If you made it this far, you would probably be interested in learning more about the impact of travel on your community. Economic impact estimates are available online for all 254 Texas counties, tourism regions, metropolitan statistical areas, legislative districts, and more than 300 Texas cities. To access this data, please visit www.travel.texas.gov and click on “Travel Research”.

The travel and tourism industry brings a significant economic impact to the state and can have a similar impact on local communities. Travelers respond favorably to tourism development and promotions. Spending by travelers creates jobs in your community, supports local businesses, and generates tax dollars that pay for important government services and public sector jobs like firefighters, police officers, and teachers. Is travel and tourism a good economic development strategy for your community?

That’s something to ponder on your next vacation.

About Travel Texas

The Travel Texas program in the Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism division promotes Texas as a premier travel destination in out-of-state domestic and international markets. The program is funded through state hotel occupancy tax dollars and generates a proven return on investment. Out-of-state leisure travel to Texas influenced by Travel Texas advertising and marketing activities brings additional travel spending, taxes, hotel room nights, and jobs to Texas.

About Dean Runyan and Associates

Dean Runyan and Associates is under contract to provide the economic impact of travel research services for the Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism division. Dean Runyan and Associates is a leading tourism research company based in Portland, Oregon that has conducted research on the impacts of travel for states and cities around the country since 1984.
LIVE MUSIC AWAITS YOU
Looking at the City of Waco, it is easy to see the positive economic impact that one popular television show can create for a community and region. Chip and Joanna Gaines, Waco residents and owners of Magnolia Homes, a remodeling and design business that renovates distressed properties and converts them to modern homes, caught the attention of a television production company. That is how the television show *Fixer Upper* got its start in 2013. In fact, the show was so successful that similar programs are now being produced across the country.

While not every city is fortunate enough to have Chip and Joanna as residents, other film and television opportunities exist. Many Texas communities have historic areas that are ideal for movie locations. The movie *Bonnie and Clyde*, used historic areas from numerous communities. Your city may have an industrial area that would be perfect for a television commercial. One example is the Pepsi Max commercial where professional race car driver Jeff Gordon pranked a used car salesman with some fancy driving maneuvers.

Televising producers from CBS flew a helicopter across Texas in 1976-77 looking for the ideal ranch that would serve as the home of a Texas oil industry tycoon and his family. In April 1978, a five-part miniseries appeared on CBS with no plans for expansion. However, due to the show’s popularity, it was subsequently turned into a regular series and broadcast for 13 full seasons from September 1978 until May 1991. The series, known as *Dallas*, and the 200-acre tract Duncan Acres, owned by Joe Duncan and his family, became the “Southfork Ranch.” In addition to the economic benefit generated from the production, hundreds of thousands of visitors worldwide have traveled to North Central Texas to see Southfork, visit the various Texas filming locations, and experience the lifestyle of the rich and famous Ewing Family during the show’s 13-year run.

During the 1950s, the movie *Giant* was filmed on a Texas ranch in the Marfa area. The ranch headquarters called “Reata” was a movie set built on vacant ranchland.

Every Texas community has the resources and facilities that could be used for filming a one-time television commercial, a television series, or even a full-length movie.

The economic impact for a community, once a production company arrives, can be staggering. As an example, in 2017, *Fixer Upper’s* Magnolia Market at the Silos attracted more than 30,000 visitors a week. That’s 1.6 million visitors per year, which is more than the Alamo, one of Texas’s best-known tourism attractions.

Hotel occupancy rates in Waco during the second quarter of 2017 were 75 percent, the second highest in Texas.

Visitors to attractions across Waco were estimated at 2.6 million in 2017, four times what they were in 2015, which was prior to Magnolia Market at the Silos opening.

Chip and Joanna Gaines employ more than 600 people locally in Waco.

Clint Harp, a furniture craftsman featured on the show and owner of Harp Design Company, has his own TV series called *Wood Work*. The show is also set in Waco.


The Film Friendly certified community of Lockhart is another successful example. Lockhart served as the key filming location for HBO’s TV series *The Leftovers* in 2016. Lockhart was chosen as a filming destination for a wide range of reasons including its historic downtown and restored courthouse, its proximity to Austin, and its rich production history as a film friendly, production savvy community.

Leading up to and during the course of production, *The Leftovers* was responsible for generating just under 1.5 million dollars of direct economic impact to Lockhart’s
local economy. The production creating more than 300 local jobs; and The Leftovers spent 40 days of preparatory and construction work in Lockhart, 45 days of filming on location, and 10 days wrapping up and striking production. The Leftovers’ production company spent more than 30 million dollars in Lockhart and the greater Austin area.

Even small productions are worthwhile. In March 2017, American Ninja Warrior set up an entire obstacle course for the filming of two episodes in downtown San Antonio. During the 10-day shoot, the production employed 38 local crew members and brought in nearly 3.5 million dollars to the City.

If the film industry appears to be a fit for your community, you have a friend in the film industry. Check out The Texas Film Commission’s Film Friendly Texas program at https://gov.texas.gov/film. This program connects media industry professionals with skilled community liaisons across the state to provide local expertise and production support. Participation in the Film Friendly Texas program provides Texas communities with a network for fostering media production in their cities and sends a clear message to film and media industry professionals that Film Friendly certified communities are serious about attracting their business.

With an emphasis on working with Texas’ rural and suburban communities, the Film Friendly Texas program provides an elevated platform for statewide certified communities to market their unique attributes and resources directly to media industry professionals working in Texas.

Media industry professionals reaching out to Film Friendly certified communities can expect to connect with skilled community liaisons who have attended a Film Friendly Texas training workshop and received ongoing training and guidance from the Texas Film Commission. Communities must pass administratively enforceable filming guidelines that promote media production in a way that is mutually beneficial for residents and industry professionals. The community liaison should submit photos of filming locations in their community for inclusion in the Texas Film Commission location database.

Texas has a rich and fascinating film history that spans over 100 years, with iconic features, films, and television shows produced in every corner of the state. Become a Texas Film Friendly Community . . . your city could be the next location that benefits economically, and that the world sees through the lens with other celebrated Texas films!
As destination marketing organizations (DMOs), our mission is to promote the attractions and attributes of our communities. We are always searching for what makes our community unique, that hook which will resonate with residents and attract visitors.

Before I accepted the director’s position at Visit Conroe, my husband and I came to Conroe for an overnight visit on our way to a concert in Houston. We had lunch at one of the downtown restaurants and my husband who’s a musician noticed there was a permanent stage in the restaurant. The waitress told us that they had live music seven days a week! In fact, walking around downtown, we discovered several live music venues.

Fast forward a couple of months after I accepted and started the job, and I met Frank Jackson, a businessman and musician, who proposed that Conroe apply to become a Texas Music Friendly Community by the Texas Music Office, Office of the Governor. Over the next year, Frank and I worked with the Texas Music Office to host Town Hall Meetings and visit with venue owners and musicians. We then took the idea of the designation to the Conroe City Council for input. The City Council understands what music means to our community and fully supported the entire program.

In January of this year, we celebrated Conroe’s one year anniversary of receiving the designation. And I must say, we could not be happier with the process and the results. In just over a year, Visit Conroe has seen new music venues being built, and changes in city ordinances that help promote Conroe for new music venues or for existing businesses to offer music. We have also seen more interest from festival promoters and musicians. And the fact that we have live music from a variety of genres – Texas country, classical, rock, hip hop and everything in between – to offer visitors is a huge plus!

To date, 10 cities in the state of Texas have been certified a Music Friendly Community – Abilene, Austin, San Antonio, Conroe, Denton, Fort Worth, Lindale, Nacogdoches, Stephenville, and San Angelo. Other Texas cities like Corpus Christi and El Paso are currently working through the process.

Participation in the program provides Texas communities with a network for fostering music industry development, and sends a clear message to industry professionals that certified communities are serious about attracting and developing the music industry.

"With support from the Texas Music Office, the Texas music industry created more than 209,000 direct and indirect permanent jobs in communities all across the Lone Star State last year and generated $23.4 billion in economic activity," said Governor Greg Abbott. "Music Friendly Communities, certified by the Texas Music Office are serious about attracting and developing local music industry growth, and I’m proud of the work of the Texas Music Office in helping communities like Conroe to grow their local economy."

To find out how to become a Music Friendly Community, visit the Texas Music Office at https://gov.texas.gov/music.
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WHEN GOOD HABITS GO BAD

By Sara Canaday, Leadership Speaker and Author

Sometimes we get into the habit of doing the same things we’ve always done. Personal and workplace habits, that once served us, can become stale and even obsolete.

I’ll use my father as an example. Since I can remember, my dad has kept a handy little logbook in his glove compartment to document the dashboard mileage reading every time he fills up the car with gas. It doesn’t matter if he’s in a hurry or on vacation. He dutifully records the mileage at each fill-up to track his miles per gallon.

Ever the engineer, he loves keeping precise records. On the other hand, every car made after 2012 (including his) automatically tracks the miles per gallon. I suspect he already knows this, but mileage-tracking has become a deeply ingrained habit. Why trust the system when he can calculate that himself?

Is my dad’s outdated habit hurting anyone? No! But it is a classic example of how we, as humans, tend to cling to the familiar. We get used to doing the same thing over and over again. We get comfortable with it. Even look forward to it.

Think about the work habits and practices you’ve accumulated over time. We all have those near-and-dear processes that have become “baked in” to our workdays. Maybe you have been producing a monthly report for years that, quite frankly, no one is still reading.

It can be uncomfortable (and sometimes even daunting) to re-examine our workplace habits and narrow our focus. But don’t let yourself become intimidated by the process of changing your routine. It’s the key to your future success.

Organizations do this all the time. In 2018, Ford Motor Company stunned the auto industry by announcing that it was phasing out its small car and sedan lines, narrowing production to the Mustang (because a classic never goes out of style) and the Ford Focus Active crossover/SUV. Despite the fact that cars were certainly a “habit” for Ford, the organization stepped back and reevaluated how to better serve its customers during challenging economic times. Industry experts are calling this decision a brilliant move, and I predict we are going to see more and more organizations getting greater clarity on their core markets.

If you think you may be relying on old habits, take a closer look at the things that occupy your workday. Then apply these three filtering questions:

1. Does this practice, meeting, project, or even product still add value to what I am trying to accomplish?
2. Am I doing this to drive results or to make someone else comfortable?
3. Is this the best use of my time?
4. If I were to make a “STOP” doing list, what would be on it?

The ability to break free from outdated habits is just one of the strategies used by today’s leaders. To learn more, I invite you to read my book, Leadership Unchained: Defy Conventional Wisdom for Breakthrough Performance.

Sara Canaday is a leadership keynote speaker and award-winning author. To book her for your next conference, contact her at sara@saracanaday.com or 512-343-7991.
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INSTAGRAM HIGHLIGHTS ★ CELEBRATING CITIES

@palestinetx
The beginning of the most colorful time of the year.
#palestinetx #bloom #prettyinpink #texastodo #rsroadtrip

@gograpevine
This week’s featured park is Casey’s Clubhouse! This park is fully accessible and offers an imaginative playground your child has only dreamed of. Situated in Dove Park, this location is perfect for parties and events with rental pavilions and athletic fields nearby.

@cityoflewisville
The community is invited to participate in reCOLORcycle and turn recycling bins into art for #LVColorPalooza. Blank recycling bins will be provided by the City, and decorated bins will be displayed at the event on April 18. #publicart #recycledart #recycle #reducereuserecycle
sensory overload

Quenching more than your appetite

Taste what lies behind the pine curtain and experience the foodie scene from fine dining to pub fare to dining on the rails with the Texas State Railroad - one of the Top Texas Travel Destinations by Texas Highways Magazine

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