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TEXAS GOVERNMENT INSIDER

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Many new projects related to health care will launch in 2025 and 2026

Hospitals and specialized health care services in rural areas and small towns have been declining for many years, and that has become a serious concern. Financial stress is the primary reason for the decline. The federal government has provided financial support for health care through various programs, but that support has now been reduced. Fortunately, state and local officials are aggressively stepping up to address the issue.

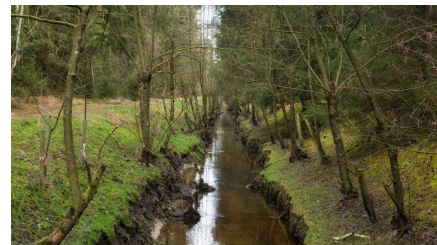


The absence of health care doesn't just affect residents; it also impacts the broader local economy. Growth is hindered as residents travel or move to other cities to access health care services. To address this, there is a move for private sector investors and large, well-established hospital systems to step in and provide funding for new health care projects. The opportunities that follow provide a quick look into some upcoming opportunities that will be launched soon.

City officials in Ontario, Oregon, will oversee construction of a new behavioral health facility designed to address longstanding service gaps in crisis response and residential treatment. The health care clinic will be constructed to accommodate both a 24-hour crisis stabilization center and a secure residential treatment facility. It will serve as a crisis center and a point of first contact for individuals in mental health distress, offering short-term stabilization and observation.

The residential unit will provide longer-term care for individuals discharged from the state hospital, particularly those under the jurisdiction of the Psychiatric Security Review Board. Together, the facilities will increase access to appropriate, non-carceral treatment in eastern Oregon. The facility will also include detox services and transitional housing options for individuals recovering from substance use disorders. Currently in the pre-

San Antonio to allocate \$38 million to infrastructure, drainage, mobility projects



The city of San Antonio will invest \$38.3 million into a series of roadway, drainage and railroad improvement projects.

The Toepperwein Road project will cost a total of \$14.8 million. Plans call for implementing roadway improvements along the route between Nacogdoches Road and Raintree Forest. These include building sidewalks, curbs, driveway approaches and drainage improvements. Construction is expected to begin in 2026.

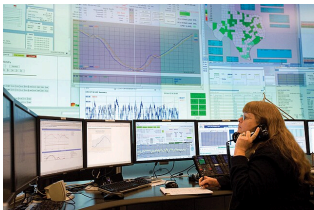
The city will invest \$12.1 million in similar work along Roosevelt Avenue. The work covers nearly four miles of roadway. Improvements will focus on

construction design phase, construction solicitations may be delayed until late 2026 or early 2027.

A \$30 million health care project has been announced by officials in the city of Kirksville, Missouri. The new facility will specialize in cancer treatment, and it will be designed to address a significant regional gap in oncology services. A specific emphasis on radiology will be addressed since citizens in Kirksville lost local access to radiology services in 2022.

[Click here for more](#)

Texas Senate approves measure to bolster grid against growing power demands



The Texas Senate has approved a priority bill to harden the state's electrical grid, advancing solutions to ensure residents will benefit from fewer outages, greater flexibility and enhanced resilience.

Power demand on the Texas grid is at an all-time high, and only expected to expand as the state's population grows, extreme weather worsens and large users such as data centers, crypto mines and electrified oil and gas producers tap deeper into the grid.

According to the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), the state is on track to have its electric demand outpace supply by 2026. The council has projected that demand will grow up to 150,000 megawatts by 2030, nearly doubling the current record.

Senate Bill 6 was recently passed by the Senate to bolster the state's grid, setting new standards to ensure the grid can handle increasingly larger loads. One of the bill's most notable features is the requirement for entities that use 75 megawatts of power or more to shift to backup generators during emergency situations, reducing strain on the grid.

Larger users would also be required to install equipment, enabling remote power disconnection from state-run facilities. These measures will ensure utilities can better manage non-critical loads during emergencies and enhance overall flexibility to provide power where it's needed most.

In addition, all large customers will be required to have generator facilities reviewed and approved by the Public Utility Commission of Texas before implementation. This authorization will ensure that all power used is above board and does not draw from the energy market. These customers will also be required to return power from generators to the grid during emergencies or when power is scarce.

(Photo courtesy of Dpysh W.)

the street section's sidewalks, curbs, driveway approaches and drainage systems. The project vision calls for building bike facilities and making traffic improvements. Construction is slated for fall 2026.

San Antonio will spend \$8.9 million to complete the second phase of the Probandt Street reconstruction project. The street is currently in poor condition with worn pavement, broken sidewalks and curbs, limited pedestrian mobility and lack of ADA-compliant infrastructure. Construction is expected to begin in 2027.

The project vision calls for starting with interim improvements to the street section. These include replacing pedestrian crossings with LED flashing signs, refreshing pavement markings and paint and leveling asphalt where crosswalks meet the railroad crossing.

Permanent improvements will involve fully reconstructing the street to install updated curbs and sidewalks, improving pedestrian crossing and safety, fixing driveway approaches and installing an advanced warning system at the railroad. New signals, a shared-use path, drainage improvements and utility adjustments are also planned for the street.




The South Zarzamora Street Overpass project will use \$2.5 million to build a railroad overpass. Aside from overpass construction, the city will realign the street, block several closures, improve the aesthetics and lighting and integrate railroad signal communication to traffic signals.

Additional work includes improving drainage, upgrading signalized intersections and improving bicycle and pedestrian amenities. Finally, the city will replace and adjust utilities, relocate bus stops and install retaining walls, landscaping and trees. Construction is expected to begin in winter 2026.

(Photo courtesy of Manfred Antranias Zimmer from Pixabay)

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 Season 2 of
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Episode 1: Richard Wade, Deputy Executive Administrator of the TxGIO, on how states are using LIDAR to tackle floods, fires, & climate change.

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Georgetown plans \$16 million road reconstruction effort to enhance safety, mobility along key corridor

The city of Georgetown will spend \$15.8 million to improve Leander Road. The improvements are part of an ongoing safety and mobility enhancement initiative and will predominantly involve upgrading the roadway and expanding non-motorized traveler amenities. Construction is expected to begin in February 2026.



The existing 1-mile stretch of road between Southwest Bypass and Norwood Drive does not meet the needs of Georgetown’s growing population. The road has a single travel lane in each direction, a continuous center-turn lane and shoulders that vary in width, limiting overall traffic capacity. The current design leads to congestion, reduced mobility, unpredictable driving and a lack of accommodation for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The city will start by widening the road, installing two travel lanes in each direction. To supplement the expanded road, plans include building raised medians with dedicated turn lanes to reduce conflicts. A major effort will involve reconstructing the Southwest Bypass intersection, building continuous shared-use paths and safe crossings and installing new traffic signals.

The roadway will also feature curb and gutter drainage along the outer edge of the pavement. The city will install raised grassy berms to direct water runoff and prevent flooding. The curbs, gutters and berms will provide a buffer between non-motorized travelers and vehicular traffic.

(Photo courtesy of PIRO from Pixabay)

Midland reveals interactive online platform covering capital improvement, community initiatives

FEMA terminates \$1 billion infrastructure resilience program



The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is concluding a nearly \$1 billion grant program. The agency says the decision was made to reduce federal spending and improve the delivery of emergency services to Americans.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem announced the end of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program — a federal grant initiative that funds local infrastructure and climate resilience projects around the nation. As part of an effort to eliminate waste and improve efficiency, FEMA will cancel all BRIC applications for fiscal years 2020-2023.

Find out where the remaining \$882M will go

(Photo courtesy of Magda Ehlers via Pexels)

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Killeen approves \$128 million water



The city of Midland has launched an interactive online tool to keep residents in the loop about the latest projects, developments and strategic vision.

Vision Midland will provide a critical bridge between the city's residents and the government, offering a roadmap of what

Midland is currently working on and where it is going. The platform showcases key initiatives, projects and developments integral to the city's five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Through Vision Midland, users can track how much progress is being made through the CIP to view the city's vision to enhance communities, improve quality of life and bolster economic growth. The city plans to consistently update the dashboard's content on all recent and ongoing initiatives.

The platform is organized into a series of categories, including:

- Parks.
- Schools.
- Healthcare.
- CIP.
- Transportation.

These categories provide additional information on projects. All projects will be organized as either "recently completed," "in process now" or "for the future."

Users are also be able to observe recently completed investments and developments, charting the city's successful efforts to energize local communities. The Midland Experience and Dining & Eateries tabs provide additional information about cultural highlights and events.

(Photo courtesy of hellorawr)

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Saluting Texas Lone Stars

Julie Parsley
CEO
Pedernales Electric Cooperative

improvement plan through 2050



The Killeen City Council recently approved a 25-year water and wastewater master plan that recommends \$128 million in improvements between now and 2050.

The plan also includes projections for the city's growth, estimating that the population will rise from about 165,000 in 2025 to 223,000 in 2050.

"This is really the foundation of the master plan," said Stephanie Neises, a group manager for Freese and Nichols, an engineering firm the city hired to author the plan.

The plan recommends spending slightly less than \$79 million, divided across three phases. First-phase projects, which would total about \$37 million, include replacing and adding water lines plus a new storage tank.

Explore the full \$128 million infrastructure plan

(Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

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Public career highlights and education: I have served as CEO of Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC) since December 2017. Prior to PEC, I was commissioner on the Public Utility Commission (PUC) of Texas, and before that, I served as the first female Solicitor General of Texas. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Distribution from Texas A&M University, and I received my JD from Texas Tech School of Law.



What I like best about my public service is:

I have always felt a keen calling to public service, and the fact that it involves the electricity market in Texas has been the icing on the cake. Being part of such a vital service like providing electricity to Texans is incredibly rewarding, and I enjoy tackling the challenges while fostering collaboration, transparency and resiliency.

The best advice I've received: If a new opportunity scares you, you should take it. That means it's a challenge, and to grow you must be challenged.

Something people might be surprised to know about me: My early career was all over the place. My first "real" job out of college was selling toilets for a commercial plumbing company. From there, I became the clerk of the Energy Committee of the Texas House of Representatives.

Later, I clerked at the Texas Supreme Court, argued in front of the U.S. Supreme Court as Texas Solicitor General, led Texas electric deregulation as a PUC commissioner and led the nation's largest electric cooperative through COVID, Winter Storm Uri and challenging economic times. I'm proof that taking on challenges in your career choices is necessary if you want to grow (and it can be fun, too).

One thing I wish more people knew about the PEC: PEC is the largest and fastest-growing electric distribution and transmission cooperative in the country, serving approximately 1 million Central Texans. But we're more than just a utility provider. PEC is a lifetime partner to the families, businesses and communities that comprise our region. PEC's territory spans 8,100 square miles, which is bigger than the states of Rhode Island and Connecticut combined. Our members always have been and always will be the heart of everything we do.

Austin Energy study estimates \$50 billion cost, decades of work to bury city's electrical lines



Austin Energy recently conducted a study on the feasibility of undergrounding the city's expansive overhead electrical distribution line system. After receiving the results, the utility determined that placing all the city's lines underground would cost \$50 billion and would take years of work to complete.

Continuous rises in extreme weather—meaning hotter summers and colder winters—impose a predictable risk to the reliability of Austin's energy supply. Austin Energy's study, in collaboration with an engineering firm, determined

SMU appoints new vice president and provost

Southern Methodist University (SMU) has selected Rachel Davis Mersey to take over as its next vice president and provost.



She most recently served as executive vice president and provost of The University of Texas (UT) at Austin. Mersey has been with the university since 2020, originally working as the associate dean for research and a professor before transitioning to dean of the Moody College of Communication.

Mersey spent the majority of her career in higher education, beginning as an assistant professor for the University of Minnesota in 2007. From there, she transferred to Northwestern University, where she worked for 12 years as an assistant professor, associate professor and professor.

Wichita Falls welcomes two new city leaders

Wichita Falls has made two new city leadership appointments – Jeff Jenkins as city manager and Kalee Robinson as parks director.

Jenkins will take over as Wichita Falls' next city manager. He currently serves as deputy/assistant city manager of Taylor; a role he has held since 2017. Prior to Taylor, Jenkins was city manager for the cities of Lucas and Henrietta and assistant city manager for Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. His first day will be June 9.



Robinson is joining the city of Wichita Falls as its next parks director. Robinson previously worked in Lubbock's Department of Parks and Recreation Department, most recently as its park development superintendent. She was with the city



undergrounding lines to cope with climate change would be prohibitively expensive and inefficient.

Rather than burying the entire electrical distribution line system underground, the study recommended that Austin Energy determine where strategic undergrounding would be most feasible versus where overhead alternatives may be more beneficial. As it stands, there are several challenges to undergrounding that make a large-scale operation impractical, including:

- Environmentally sensitive or protected areas.
- Limited space within underground easements.
- Acquiring permits.
- Telecommunication line relocation.
- Rocky soils.
- Traffic disruption.

The report concludes that approximately 120 miles of the 5,000-mile line system would be suitable for undergrounding operations, although other resiliency alternatives may be more effective and affordable.

The study was the first of two centered around electric lines. The second study, expected to conclude in May, focuses on potentially strengthening existing overhead lines in areas vulnerable to outages and wildfires. These findings will inform Austin Energy's efforts to develop a comprehensive Distribution Resiliency Plan, providing the city with a holistic strategy to enhance reliability and resilience. Austin Energy will present its findings to the Austin City Council by the end of 2025.

(Photo courtesy of Bishnu Sarangi from Pixabay)



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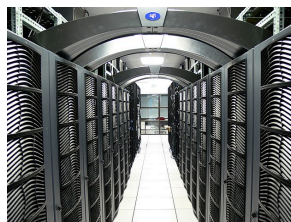
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DOE seeks partners for data center development on federal land

The federal government is exploring opportunities to become the landlord for America's artificial intelligence boom by co-locating data centers with energy infrastructure on public lands. In a Request for Information announced this month, the Department of Energy (DOE) identified 16 sites across the country primed for rapid data center construction, with existing energy infrastructure and streamlined permitting processes for new power generation.



for nearly eight years, starting out as an athletic and assistant recreation coordinator before transitioning to parks program coordinator. Her first day will be April 14.

Cheryl Dowden comes out of retirement to rejoin Nederland as interim city manager

The city of Nederland has selected Cheryl Dowden to serve as its interim city manager. Dowden retired in 2024 after working with the city for 32 years as finance director and assistant city manager. She will fill the vacancy that will be left by Chris Duque following his last day on April 30. Dowden will assume her responsibilities May 5.



Theodore Chancellor selected as Plainview's next city manager

The city of Plainview has appointed Theodore Chancellor as city manager. Chancellor currently works as manager of airport operations for the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport in North Carolina. He has been with the airport for more than a decade, previously serving as joint operations center assistant manager, joint operations center supervisor, airside operations supervisor and airport operations officer. His first day in the new roll will be May 5.



This initiative follows recent executive orders on American AI leadership and energy production, with DOE seeking public-private partnerships that can accelerate both AI capabilities and energy infrastructure development. The strategy involves leveraging DOE's extensive land holdings and the expertise of its National Laboratories system.

DOE is looking to enable construction of AI infrastructure at select sites to begin by the end of 2025, with operations expected to start by the end of 2027. The department anticipates authorizing land use rights through either a long-term ground lease or an easement for selected projects.

Artificial intelligence systems are demanding increasingly large computing resources and power consumption. At the same time, the U.S. is racing to maintain leadership in this transformative technology. The DOE's approach intends to simultaneously address the immense energy requirements of AI systems while strategically positioning the country to lead in both energy innovation and computational capabilities.

What this public-private AI partnership means for tech

(Photo courtesy of Christopher Bowns)

Corpus Christi receives millions in federal funding to combat homelessness, improve parks



The city of Corpus Christi will invest \$5.2 million to address homelessness and make critical park improvements.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded Corpus Christi grants to support underserved residents battling homelessness and to make

improvements to community parks and facilities.

Corpus Christi will allocate \$3.8 million from the funding to supplement homelessness initiatives, providing:

- \$1.4 million to the Corpus Christi Housing Authority for tenant-based rental assistance.
- \$1.2 million to Endeavors for supportive services.
- \$1.2 million to Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living for supportive services.

The remaining \$1.4 million will enable the city to make improvements to local parks, infrastructure and recreational amenities. Plans for the allocated funds include:

- Improving basketball courts across three parks.
- Installing swings, tables, benches and barbeques at 24 parks.
- Renovating a pool.
- Making roof repairs for recreation centers.
- Installing fencing.
- Improving lighting.
- Enhancing playgrounds.
- Designing a gym generator.

(Photo courtesy of wal_172619 from Pixabay)



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GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENTS

Gov. Greg Abbott announced these appointments and reappointments from **April 4 through April 10:**

Commission On Fire Protection

James Mallinger - Cedar Park
John Ortega - San Antonio
Sue De Villez - Georgetown
Paul Hamilton - Amarillo
Brandon Wade - Corpus Christi
Michael Glynn - Roanoke

Physician Assistant Board

Lyle Grimes - Cedar Park
Chad Moody - Hemphill
Rao Ali, M.D. - Southlake
(reappointed)
Sandra Longoria, D.M.Sc. - Harlingen
(reappointed)

Board Of Chiropractic Examiners

Shellie Gardner - Fort Worth
Michael P. Henry, D.C. - Austin
(reappointed)
Scott Wofford, D.C. - Abilene
(reappointed)

Employee Charitable Campaign Policy Committee

Daniel Bivens - Austin
Vanessa Cortez Tanner - Austin
(both: reappointed)

Risk Management Board

Jason Boatright - Dallas
Jeffrey Houston - Dripping Springs
(reappointed)
Jason Hartgraves - Frisco

\$429 million bond package targets aging Texas school infrastructure

Tomball Independent School District (TISD) will hold a \$429.1 million bond election May 3 after the TISD Board of Trustees unanimously voted in favor of it. The election comes following a recommendation from a community-based Bond Steering Committee, which met in December 2024 and January 2025 to discuss the topic.



The vote will occur in May rather than in November with other elections to account for limited construction windows, material delivery times and rising costs due to inflation. TISD Superintendent Martha Salazar-Zamora said the bond would fund projects to meet the district's growth and infrastructure needs.

The \$429,095,000 bond aims to fund new facilities and technologies. It will also provide upgrades and address needs throughout the district, including refreshing aging campuses and facilities, meeting state-mandated safety and security guidelines, accounting for new student growth, addressing transportation needs and refreshing and replacing outdated technology.

[View all four propositions and what they'll fund](#)

(Photo courtesy of StockSnap from Pixabay)

Jefferson And Orange Counties Board Of Pilot Commissioners

Brandy Bergeron, M.D.- Beaumont
Amy Townsend, M.D. - Orange
Shawn Sparrow of Beaumont
(reappointed)
Craig Sherlock - Beaumont
Charles "Charlie" Holder - Beaumont
(reappointed)

Diabetes Council

K. Renee' Yarbrough-Yale, D.N.P. -
North Richland Hills
Dirrell Jones - Farmers Branch
(reappointed)
Michael Kelly, Ph.D. - El Paso
(reappointed)
Jason Ryan - Houston
(reappointed)

Sex Offender Treatment Council

Jeffery K. Fletcher - Plano
Elizabeth Cox - San Antonio
(reappointed)
Grover C. Rollins, Psy.D. - McAllen



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Infrastructure: [Ohio voters to decide on \\$2.5 billion infrastructure bond package.](#)

Budget: [Baltimore mayor's \\$4.69 billion budget plan targets public safety, neighborhood development.](#)

Insights: [America confronts urgent water infrastructure needs.](#)

Broadband: [Rhode Island launches \\$108 million initiative to bridge digital divide.](#)

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Profiles in Power: ['Happiness yields success:' Tolleson city manager encourages perspective.](#)



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