

2013 North Chamber speech

TRANSFORMING CAPITAL PROJECTS

- In 2008 Bexar County Commissioners Court directed the budget office to tighten spending while maintaining service levels and accelerating our capital projects.
- That helped us weather the recession better than most places in the United States.
- County Manager David Smith tells me we should start to see the improvements of the recovering economy with this next fiscal cycle.
- This region's resilience through the recession has made Bexar County an even more attractive place for companies to relocate or expand. We continue to pursue leads and offer incentives where we can.
- The Eagle Ford Shale also has been a boon for our economic development efforts.
- Because we've had such sound fiscal management and economic fortune, we have moved Bexar County beyond the basic functions of county government to embark on

transformative projects that are shaping the future of this region.

- And we aren't done yet.

SAN PEDRO CREEK

- Bexar County Commissioners Court funded some \$200 million to the 8-mile Mission Reach of the San Antonio River.
- With over 2,000 acres of land in the public domain this project is three times bigger than Central Park in NYC. It is the largest restoration of an urban waterway in the nation.
- The Mission Reach is a perfect mix of flood control, ecosystem restoration and quality of life.
- When you walk or bike down the 8 miles of trail you will see the evidence with residents – not to mention, egrets - pulling fish out of the river, turtles basking in the sun on rocks and the banks, and people soaking it all in.
- The four historic Spanish missions are now visibly tied to the river. I hope you will join us for the grand opening of the entire Mission Reach on August 17th.
- A year ago the Commissioners Court funded a “fatal flaw” and feasibility analysis of San Pedro Creek.

- San Pedro Creek is as important to our city's history and culture as the San Antonio River. The Spanish founded our community's first permanent settlements along the banks of this historic creek. In 1718 they built the Presidio on the creek where City Hall now stands.
- The study found no issues that would stop the project from moving forward.
- By widening and deepening the flood channel, we will be able to take 40 acres out of the floodplain.
- Based on what happened on the Museum Reach and the near south side reach of the San Antonio River, we could expect many properties along the creek to double and triple in value, as increasing private sector investment follows the public investment of the project.
- The study estimates that the cost of the San Pedro Creek project will be around \$175 million.
- This past Tuesday the Court approve \$125 million toward the project. But that will leave us about \$50 million short.
- We'll need to ask for help from our partners, both public and private sector, to complete the funding strategy. With our funding, will begin the process to work on the full

design of the project; it should be completed over the next 18 to 24 months.

- The improvements to the river both north and south should be a clear indicator that the San Pedro Creek project can achieve the same results.

BEXAR COUNTY HOSPITAL

Opened up 286,000 out patient center downtown. Hundreds of specialists offering expertise in health care including out patient surgery.

#This summer approximately 1000 new pediatric specialists will join our team taking children's health to a new level.

The new one million square foot state of the art trauma tower will open in the medical center in less than a year. The emergency center will more than doubled. There will be 30 advanced surgical suites and 401 patient rooms all private.

#It will be the most technologically advanced hospital in the region.

#With more than 5,000 employees, 700 resident physicians and 1000 doctors on the medical staff we

offered the best in medical services. We always rank as on the top 50 hospitals in the nation.

#Santa Rosa is currently building its downtown Children's hospital. They have an affiliation with Baylor Medical School and Texas Children's Hospital.

#The Baptist Hospital System's parent company Vanguard is partnering with the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in building a new children's hospital in the medical center.

#We will work with both of the Children's hospital to assure the best of services to critically ill children.

Bexar BiblioTech

- Inspired by Walter Isaacson's book on Steve Jobs I proposed to our special projects team to consider building an all-digital public library.
- Laura Cole, special projects coordinator for the County Manager, led an 8-month study, through which we received guidance and inspiration from the UTSA Dean of Libraries Krisellen Maloney.
- BiblioTech will be the nation's first all-digital public library. When we announced it in January of this year the story traveled the world in less than a day.

- We had stories in the Wall Street Journal, BBC radio, National Public Radio and even a Colombian radio program. With more milestones met, we continue to see BiblioTech news from Japan, Australia, Europe and Asia — just this week the BBC ran another story as did the LA Times.

- Located on the South Side on Pleasanton Road in a building we own, we will create a 4,800 sq. ft. digital library. It will include a café, children's area, lounge, a community room, two study rooms, central computer area. Construction is progressing well.

- We'll put in 50 computer stations with 25 laptops and 25 tablet computers for internal circulation, 50 pre-loaded children's e-readers and 300 e-book readers that patrons can check out to take home.

- Our collection from the 3M Cloud Library will start with 10,000 e-books and we'll have access to tens of thousands of classic titles.

- Some 75 percent of the households around BiblioTech have no Internet connection.
 - Literacy in the 21st Century includes an understanding of technology and how to use it every day.

- Our resources will help raise the level of technology literacy.
 - We will work with the school districts to collaborate on programming and meeting their students' needs.
 - We've hired an energetic team, including Librarian Ashley Eklof and community leader Catarina Velasquez, to develop programming for all BiblioTech patrons.
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- Soon we will begin a library card drive through our website [www DOT bexar bibliotech DOT org](http://www.DOT.bexar.bibliotech.DOT.org). If you already have an e-reader or a tablet, all you need to do is get your library card and start downloading books from wherever you are.
 - BiblioTech will be open for physical and virtual business in September.
 - Tracy, who has done an incredible job raising funds for the restoration of the Courthouse heading up the Hidalgo Foundation, will do the same to raise funds for BiblioTech.

Bexar County Courthouse

- Over the last 10 years we have undertaken a massive restoration and remodeling of our courthouse, which was built in 1892.

- It is the largest and oldest continually used court in Texas. Last fall we opened the new Presiding Courtroom, on the first floor and added an attorney conference area.
- We are now restoring the original two-story courtroom that dates back to 1896. We're restoring the rose windows, balcony, and attached exterior porch.
- We have begun preparations to remove the 1972 Gondek addition this November and will be completed early next year. This will be the first time this portion of the courthouse exterior has been visible since the early 70s.
- We will add landscaping to the south end of courthouse, create an attaching plaza to the Justice Center, and build a History Center within the courthouse.

BEXAR COUNTY GAMES

- Five years ago the voters approved the Commissioners Court proposal to build 13 regional amateur sports parks. We have completed 8 of them and the remaining five will open this year.
- We are partnering with San Antonio Sports and Ancira Enterprises to put on the first ever Bexar County Games in four of these venues.

- The Games will give all Bexar County kids the opportunity to compete in track & field, soccer, swimming and basketball. In some events, winners can even move onto state competition.

Urban living environment

- We have worked with the city and the private sector to create a dynamic and vibrant urban living environment in our city's core.
- We have momentum we haven't seen before and we're meeting our goals with initial success.
- There are many pieces to this puzzle of creating an environment that will attract and retain some of the country's brightest young professionals and entrepreneurs.
- Projects such as the Museum and Mission Reach of the San Antonio River, as well as San Pedro Creek provide attractive green spaces in an urban landscape.
- We contributed \$108 million to the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts, which will open in September 2014.

- The pavilion of the Briscoe Museum has been the scene of many beautiful events since last fall, and the Museum is planning a public opening event late this fall.
- The Alameda Theater is in the midst of its capital campaign while construction has started with the County's contribution.
- VIA's modern streetcar will further evolve our Downtown area. They have six proposed routes and will have it narrowed down and ready to announce the final routes in July.
- We continue to see housing being constructed in and around the Pearl, down South Flores and at Blue Star, and I know it won't be too long before an investor comes up with the right plan to redevelop the Lone Star Brewery at the edge of Southtown.
- Graham Weston will transform the Rand Building into a permanent home for Geekdom.
- All of these pieces are coming together perfectly to transform Downtown and attract the best and brightest of young professional and entrepreneurs who prefer an urban living environment. But there is still a major piece missing and that is the lack of a first class music scene.

Music

- We have a rich history in music: the Latin sounds of Conjunto featuring world famous Flaco Jimenez and Steve Jordan.
- There was a successful Tejano and Conjunto festival this past weekend at Rosedale Park.
- Country music star George Strait sold out an up-coming Alamodome event
- We have talent and we have several venues to showcase it: The historic Flores Country Store, The Alamodome, The AT&T Center, the coliseum, and several theaters.
- Yet we are on the losing end to Austin when it comes to attracting touring acts and festivals – witness Paul McCartney skipping San Antonio, where he helped open the Alamodome 20 years ago.
- We do not have any outside music festivals that rival Austin City Limits Music Festival. Over two weekends in October in Zilker Park, a city-owned park in Austin, more than 150 acts will play rock, country, folk, indie and electronic music on 8 stages.

#We need to get in the game and stay in the game. Three things we must do: Better relations with promoters,

create major outside musical festivals, and tune into the evolution of Indi bands.

- Spurs Sports & Entertainment has stepped forward to help by creating the one-day River City Rockfest featuring Guns N Roses and Alice in Chains. It will be held this Sunday on the Bexar County arena grounds.

- They hope to expand the festival in the future. We will complement their efforts to remodel our coliseum to make it more music friendly.

- Our best opportunity to rival Austin would be to stage a major musical festival along the Mission Reach of the San Antonio River. It could stretch from Roosevelt Park to Mission San Jose, some 2 ½ miles of cool, green space on the river's edge. We are working with the San Antonio River Authority to create music events along the river.

- Tomorrow we will open the Pavilions at Mission Park an outdoor music venue also on the banks of the River by Mission San Jose.

- The Pavilions at Mission Park are located on 60 acres park land that we own. Next door to us is the city-owned Mission Drive-In that could be used.

- We have just scratched the surface of tapping into the great potential of indie bands that have broken the mold

gaining large audiences through social media and the Internet.

- Follow the Puro Pinche blog by Stephanie Guerra to find the best new sounds in San Antonio – and there is plenty of music happening here.

- The first successful event to bring this music to us was the Maverick Music Festival held a couple of months ago that featured rising star Gary Clark Jr. and nine other great indie bands including San Antonio's own Girl in a Coma. More than 3,000 people attended the event.

- I want to thank promoter Blaine Tucker and his partner Matthew Wolff. They plan to expand the festival next year.

- We need to work our connections to promoters and provide promoter-friendly venues. Blain Tucker is working with Charles Attal with C-3 promoters based in Austin to bring more independent bands to San Antonio. C-3 puts on the Lollapalooza festival in Chicago as well as Austin City Limits.

- With all this talk of music and local talent, wouldn't it be nice to hear some it?

- Nina Diaz, her sister Phanie and their good friend Jenn Alva were signed by Joan Jett to Blackheart Records. They've played festivals large and small, including many showcases at **South** by Southwest.
- Their first single "Clumsy Sky" won best punk song at the Independent Music Awards in 2007 and their star trajectory hasn't stopped since.
- Let's welcome Girl in a Coma!