

# THE BULLETIN

## *Belterra Community News*

October 2020 Volume 2, Issue 10

News for the Residents of Belterra

## Is your child's workspace working for them?

What is the best way to set up a workspace for a child during remote learning due to COVID-19? Creating an effective working space will depend on your child's age, their learning preferences, and the specific demands of their curriculum.

It's important to include your student in making decisions on their learning environment. When students are able to make choices in their learning, they're more likely to take ownership of the process, and engagement will increase. For students grades K-2, try asking: what is your favorite thing about school? What is your favorite thing you do in school? Ask older students (grades 3-12) students to describe their favorite teacher or classroom. What is it about that space they like? When have they felt most successful in their learning? What is something that helps them be successful in the classroom? Through these discussions, students will often describe their ideal learning environment.

In thinking about personalized learning preferences, it's important to consider how to support your child's learning style by designing an environment that meets their needs.

Think about...

### **The auditory environment:**

Have headphones available for them to listen to their teacher or participate in virtual classrooms. This may help them to focus. Some students may prefer a quiet workspace, while other students need some background noise. Consider the use of a white noise machine or soft music playing for students who prefer a bit of sound.

### **The visual environment:**

Visual tools for organization are key. If they are in 4th grade and under: consider having folders for each subject in a different color might be helpful. If they are 5th grade and above: a written agenda will help students track what assignments are due, supply reminders, and provide a space for important information, - for example, digital learning app suggestions, teacher office hours, and log-in information.

### **The physical environment:**

Supply Desk Set Up for all kids, adolescents, teens and even some adults! When setting up a workspace it is preferable to set it up in a place where it will be quiet and , but also where there

is natural light. Exposure to natural sunlight wakes up our brain and helps us to mentally focus. Have your student help keep the space clean and organized. Daily decluttering of the space will help with organization of materials. Consider that some students may prefer to sit in a chair at a desk, while others may be more productive on the floor or a bed.. Students will need frequent breaks in order to move throughout the day and should have a few different options of where they can do their work. Consider providing "fidget" items that students can use while engaged in online learning- small squishy balls, Play-Doh, and doodling. Wobble cushions for Pre-K to elementary or a Flex-Space ergonomic bounce chair (5 year – adult) may help students or adults to pay attention during long Zoom sessions.

Here are some items you may consider purchasing in order to organize your student's workspace:

Acrylic Desktop File, STORI Clear Plastic Hanging File Organizer with Handles, Amazon, \$20. You can see at a glance what you need without having to dig through it. Best of all, it is versatile, has handles and is portable from room to room. It can hold hanging files, sort working files vertically, hold a 3 ring binder and a legal pad for notes.

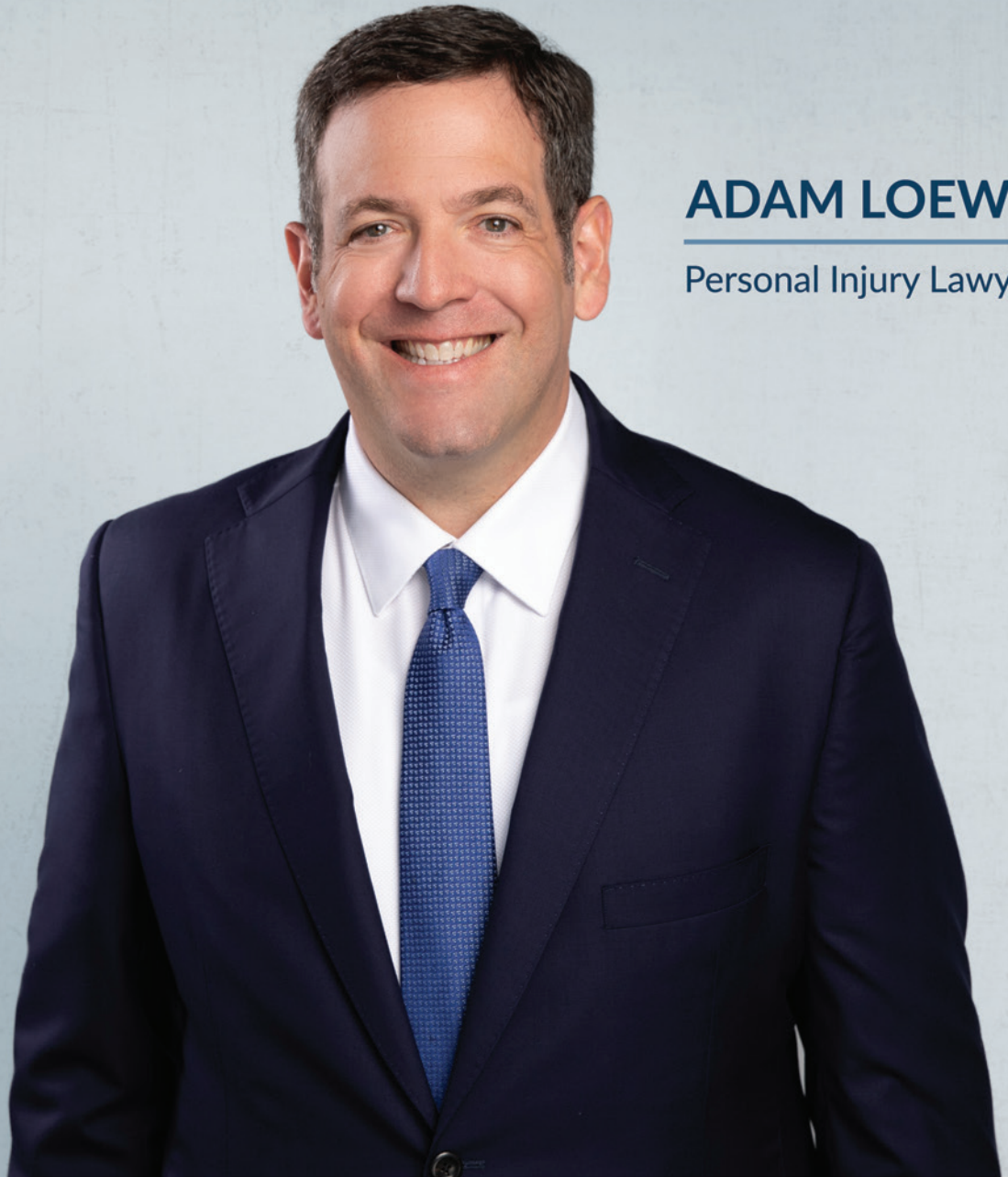
- A 1-1/2 inch notebook (with dividers) per child detailing: passwords to online platforms, app suggestions per class, emails from school that might need to be printed off, Agenda sheets, or college applications

- A laptop, Chromebook and Desktop if needed
- Dividers for a 3 ring binder
- Agenda Notebook or Agenda weekly Calendar to print
- Calendar for the wall (if needed)
- Dry Erase board to write out reminders/schedule or to work out problems

- Working and/or hanging file folders
- Pencil box and/or pen holder for taking notes
- Notebook Paper for kiddos needing to work out problems

Sally Grayum, is an Austin based professional organizer that lives in the Northwest Hills area and works with business professionals, working and stay at home parents. For more information please visit [OrganizeMeSally.com](http://OrganizeMeSally.com).

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Walnut Springs Elementary ..... 512-858-3800  
Rooster Springs Elementary..... 512-465-6200  
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Dripping Springs High School ..... 512-858-3100

### UTILITIES

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Gas – Texas Community Propane..... 512-272-5503  
Electricity – Pedernales Electric ..... 512-858-5611

### OTHER

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Animal Control..... 512-393-7896

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# **STOP THE MONEY TRAIN TO UNAFFORDABILITY**

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**\$7 BILLION IS TOO MUCH FOR SOMETHING THAT DOES TOO LITTLE**

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**THEY ARE TELLING YOU A FAIRY TALE:**

## **WHY SHOULD WE TRUST CAPMETRO TO MANAGE A MONUMENTALLY COMPLICATED AND EXPENSIVE PROJECT?**

They said the Leander-Convention Center line would cost \$60 million, but former Senator Kirk Watson said it wound up costing \$140 million, 133% more than was promised voters. They're asking you to vote on a marketing idea, just colored lines on a map, yet no significant engineering or environmental studies have been conducted. Plus, their plan includes a rail line in a tunnel under Congress Avenue, which they say will be very expensive, but they won't say how expensive because they don't have a clue.

**This suggests that Project Connect could wind up NOT costing \$7 billion but \$16 billion OR MORE.**

## **CAPMETRO HAS A DISMAL RECORD OF MANAGING MONEY AND CARING ABOUT SAFETY.**

A Texas State Legislature investigative staff reported that CapMetro mismanaged \$200 million in a reserve fund. They had to delay the opening of the Leander-Convention Center line for two years when federal safety regulators found an improper signal system, unsafe bridges, and other safety problems—all of which added \$30 million to the final cost of the line.

San Antonio's transit agency, VIA, moves 20% more riders than CapMetro in a service area that's twice as big, yet CapMetro spends 42% more per ride.

**From The Washington Post (August 10) on the D.C. rail system: "Officials use terms like 'catastrophic' and 'Armageddon' to describe the system's money woes."**

## **CAPMETRO PROMISED VOTERS THAT A PORTION OF THE LEANDER-CONVENTION CENTER LINE'S COST WOULD BE PAID FOR BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. THIS DID NOT HAPPEN.**

Now, CapMetro is making the exact same promise to voters for Project Connect. **This is a myth!** And if they don't get those federal dollars, they will still collect the taxes and do as much as they can—with no concrete completion plan.

## **WHO WILL RIDE THE MONEY TRAIN?**

The rail cars will be like all the empty buses we see every day. It will **NOT** increase the number of riders of public transportation. Too few people live close to the lines. An increasing number of people will be working remotely, and this kind of transport just won't be necessary. Downtown offices will no longer be a destination for as many workers as CapMetro is putting into its ridership estimates. **And don't forget our weather:** Would you walk a mile in Texas heat and cold and rain to a rail stop?

**PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns against being on crowded rail cars, such as the subways in New York City, which are seen as a principal cause of it being the epicenter of the global coronavirus pandemic. The Washington Post: "...They stand on station platforms and at bus stops, nervously waiting for rides in confined spaces with strangers—prime conditions for spreading the virus. They board thinking the virus could be lurking anywhere—on subway poles, bus seats or floating in the air around them from another passenger's uncovered cough or sneeze."**

Political ad paid for by Our Mobility Our Future PAC.

# VOTE NO FOR PROJECT CONNECT

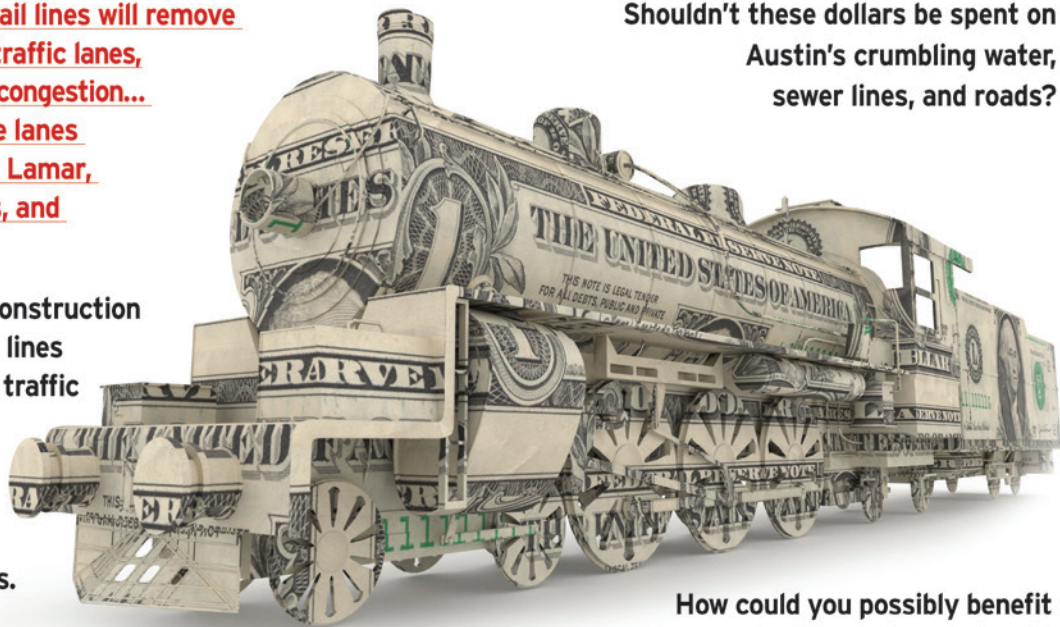
If Proposition A with Project Connect Passes...

## A **25%** PROPERTY TAX INCREASE TO PAY FOR THIS MONEY TRAIN

The \$460 million "Active Transportation" bond that's also on this ballot would cost even more. And taxes will yet again increase as property values inevitably rise. Landlords will raise rents to cover higher property taxes. This is all from the same mayor and council members who are "defunding" and "re-imagining" \$150 million of the APD budget, with a huge reduction in the number of officers on the streets. The mayor and council members obviously don't care about affordability or public safety.

Project Connect's rail lines will remove miles and miles of traffic lanes, creating even more congestion... Such as the outside lanes of North and South Lamar, The Drag, Congress, and South Congress.

The decades-long construction of the proposed rail lines would make Austin traffic even more of a nightmare and result in small businesses closing along the rail routes.



Shouldn't these dollars be spent on Austin's crumbling water, sewer lines, and roads?

How could you possibly benefit personally from this massive hit to your budget and your savings?

Say goodbye to hundreds of parking spaces.

**"This election will tell us how much BS Austin voters will believe and how much taxes they will pay to get it."**

*Retired Travis County Judge Bill Aleshire*

Listening to developers and lobbyists, city staff, and small activist groups has put the mayor and council so out of touch with reality. They don't understand why it's wrong to raise property taxes by 25% in the middle of a pandemic when so many people are out of work, behind on their mortgage and rent payments, and struggling to meet their necessities. **The mayor, a multi-millionaire, got elected promising affordability.** Instead, he wants to slam the 65+, the disabled, the retired, and those living paycheck to paycheck with a 25% tax increase.

Political ad paid for by Our Mobility Our Future PAC.

# THE BULLETIN

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## WELCOME

Oak Hill United Methodist Church is excited to welcome our new pastor, Stephen Sanders. We would love to have you join us in worship and fellowship each Sunday morning at 10 a.m. on [facebook.com/OakHillUMC](https://facebook.com/OakHillUMC). You don't need a Facebook account to join the service. All are welcome.



COVID-19 and so many other things seem to make this a particularly difficult time. This month we'll be exploring how to "Thrive in the Wilderness."

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## NATURE WATCH

## PROPHETS &amp; PHANTOMS

by Jim and Lynne Weber



While most think of fall as a time when nature is waning and lifecycles are nearing their end, some things are just beginning. This is the time of year when some of our most mysterious-looking insects, the praying mantids and the walking sticks, lay their eggs in anticipation of the next generation to hatch in the spring.

The scientific order for praying mantis (Mantodea) comes from the Greek meaning prophet, so named for its typical prayer-like stance. This term is often misspelled as 'preying mantis' since mantids are a predatory species. Several species exist in Texas, all of the genus *Stagmomantis*. Adult mantids are green to grayish brown, may reach 2 to 3 inches in length, and have well developed wings. They have two grasping, spiked forelegs in which prey are caught and held securely while eaten. Their hunting relies greatly on their vision, and they can rotate their head nearly 300 degrees. Consuming mostly insects, mantids are ambush predators that wait perfectly still until prey ambles near, and then strike with surprising quickness and agility.

Praying mantids are experts at concealment, using their protective coloration to blend in with or mimic foliage, better snare their victims, and avoid predation themselves. They do show a rocking behavior in which the insect makes a rhythmic, repetitive, side-to-side movement. It is thought that this behavior may help them resemble vegetation blowing in the wind, but also allows them to discriminate objects from their background by their relative movement. As generally sedentary insects, this behavior most likely replaces flying or running as a way to determine relative objects in their visual field. When threatened they will stand tall, spread their forelegs, and fan their wings out wide to appear larger, and if further provoked will strike with their forelegs and attempt to pinch or bite.

In the fall after mating, female mantids lay between 10 and 400 eggs, depending on the species. The eggs are typically laid in a frothy mass on the underside of a leaf or on a twig, which hardens to a tan or gray foam-like material called an 'ootheca.' If this egg case survives the winter, the nymphs emerge in the spring with voracious appetites, often devouring each other in their race to become mature adults.

Members of the Phasmatodea order of insects are commonly known as walking sticks, stick-bugs, ghost insects, leaf insects, and stick insects. This scientific name comes from the Greek 'phasma' which means apparition or phantom, and refers to many species closely resembling sticks and sometimes leaves. At 16 species, Texas walking stick diversity is second only to California. In fact, one species in Texas is the Giant Walkingstick (*Megaphasma dentricus*), which is the longest insect in the United States and grows to almost 7 inches!

Our most frequently seen phasmid is the Common or Northern Walking Stick (*Diaperomera femorata*). Adult males can be 3 inches long and are mostly brown, while females are larger at 4 inches and more of a greenish-brown. Their long, thread-like antennae are about to-thirds the size of their body. As part of their natural camouflage, their bodies are often further modified to include ridges resembling leaf veins and bark or bud-like tubercles, making them very difficult to spot. They are wingless, molt several times and may eat their shed skin as they grow to adult size.

Phasmids feed mostly on the leaves of trees and shrubs, and often exhibit the same rhythmic movement as mantids, presumably to blend in to their surroundings and as protection from predators. At this time of year, the females lay anywhere from 100 to 1200 eggs individually, sticking them to vegetation or simply depositing them on the ground. These eggs resemble tiny plant seeds and remain dormant until spring.

While no doubt strange-looking and mysterious, mantids and phasmids are harmless to humans and beneficial components to keeping balance in our natural landscape.

Send your nature-related questions to [naturewatch@austin.rr.com](mailto:naturewatch@austin.rr.com) and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, look for our books, *NatureWatch Austin*, *Nature Watch Big Bend*, and *Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies*, all published by Texas A&M University Press.





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