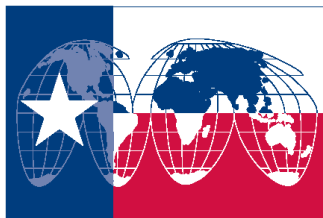


# International Hospitality Council of Austin



International Hospitality Council of Austin

## President

Mrs. Monica Benoit-Beatty

## Vice President

Ms Margaret Anderson

## Executive Director

Ms Margie Kidd

201 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Austin, TX 78701

IV Programs: Phone: (512)215-0146/Fax: (512)215-0157

IV Programs: e-mail: [ihcaprogofcr1@ihcaustin.com](mailto:ihcaprogofcr1@ihcaustin.com)

[www.ihcaustin.com](http://www.ihcaustin.com)

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## Secretary

Ms Lateefah Neal

## Former President

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## PROGRAM FOR:



## TRANSITION TO A LOW CARBON ECONOMY A Project for Vietnam

*These visitors are invited to the US under the auspices of the  
Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program.*



## Program Sponsor:

U.S. Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

International Visitor Leadership Program

## Program Administrator:

U.S. Department of State Voluntary Visitors Division

## Local Program Sponsor:

International Hospitality Council of Austin

## Mr. Dung Hai DANG

Deputy Director General, Technical Standards Division,  
Science and Technology Department, Ministry of Industry  
and Trade

## Mr. Thanh Vu DINH

Head of Technology Division, Department of Science,  
Technology and Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and  
Rural Development

## Mr. Nam Quang LE

Deputy Director General, Da Nang Department of Science  
and Technology

## Mr. Dong The NGUYEN

Deputy General Director, Vietnam Environment  
Administration, Ministry of Natural Resource and  
Environment

## Mrs. Hoai Thi Thu NGUYEN

Deputy Chief of Legal Financial and Budgetary  
Division, Legal Department, Ministry of Finance

## Mrs. Mai Tuyet TRAN

Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of National Assembly

## Mr. Tuan Anh TRAN

Project Officer, Project Management Board,  
Office of the Government

## Mr. Son Anh TRUONG

Department of Science, Education, Natural Resources  
and Environment, Ministry of Planning and Investment

**DATES OF VISIT: October 9 – 12, 2010**

## ACCOMMODATIONS:

Extended Stay America – Arboretum

10100 N. Capital of Texas Hwy.

Austin, TX 78759

Tel: 512-231-1520/Fax: 512-231-1545

US Department of State English Interpreters: Ms. Le-Thu Phan and Ms. Alice Glick, Vietnamese Interpreters, Mr. George Capps, English Language Officer

★★

Saturday, October 9 Arrive in Austin at 6:00PM on American Airlines, flight #1476 from Houston, Texas; itinerary originating in New Orleans, Louisiana.

**WELCOME TO AUSTIN!**

**Mrs. Pam Mohamed**, Program Officer, arranged your program. If you have any questions or need assistance, please call the International Hospitality Council of Austin office at (512)215-0146. In case of emergency you may reach her on her mobile phone at (512)569-9922.

**NOTE:** If you have difficulties with an appointment time please contact the person with whom you will be meeting to discuss options.

**NOTE:** A-1 Limousine and Sedan Service will be your ground transportation for all your appointments in Austin. The company's telephone number is (512)670-2233.

**PROGRAMME**

Sunday, October 10 Cultural Excursion

*Board ground transportation at 10:30AM. You will return to your hotel by 5:30PM.*

**No trip to Texas would be complete without a visit to San Antonio. Drive south on IH 35 and in just an hour and a half you will be in the center of real Texas history. Along the Riverwalk you'll enjoy great food, shopping and people watching. The Alamo is open for tours and the Texas Cultures Museum is just a short walk from the Riverwalk.**

Monday, October 11 *Board ground transportation at 10:00AM for first meeting.*

Mueller Visitor's Center  
455 Mueller Central Dr  
Austin, TX, 78723  
Tel: (512)-691-3416/Cell: (512)-619-2163

10:30AM – 12:00PM Mr. Colin Meehan  
Renewable Energy Specialist  
Website: [www.edf.org](http://www.edf.org)  
email: [cmeehan@edf.org](mailto:cmeehan@edf.org)

**Mission Statement**

Environmental Defense Fund is a leading national nonprofit organization representing more than 700,000 members. Since 1967, we have linked science, economics and law to create innovative, equitable and cost-effective solutions to society's most urgent environmental problems. Environmental Defense Fund is dedicated to protecting the environmental rights of all people, including future generations. Among these rights are access to clean air and water, healthy and nourishing food, and flourishing ecosystems. Guided by science, Environmental Defense Fund evaluates environmental problems and works to create and advocate solutions that win lasting political, economic and social support because they are nonpartisan, cost-efficient and fair. Environmental Defense Fund believes that a sustainable environment will require economic and social systems that are equitable and just. We affirm our commitment to the environmental rights of the poor and people of color. As an American organization, Environmental Defense Fund will always pay special attention to American environmental problems and to America's role in both causing and solving global environmental problems.



**Colin Meehan  
Renewable Energy Specialist, Climate & Air Program, Texas Office**

**Work**

Colin helps develop projects and policies to promote renewable energy development at the utility, industrial and retail levels in Texas and other regions of the U.S. He helps lead our multi-year campaign to significantly increase the use of renewable energy throughout the nation.

**Background Work Experience**

Before joining Environmental Defense Fund, Colin worked for: the Lower Colorado River Authority doing energy settlement analysis and nodal market implementation,

ICF International analyzing the economic impact of renewable energy and energy emissions policies and investment strategies in unregulated and regulated markets, and the U.S. Coast Guard in Washington, D.C. doing policy development and analysis.

**Education**

B.A. in Math and Economics from the University of Rochester in New York.

**Lunch**      A print-out of “Places to Eat in Downtown Austin” is included in your Welcome Packet.

**Monday, October 11**      *Board ground transportation at 1:30PM for next meeting. You will need to go through security. Your contact for this meeting is Mr. Ben Ramirez, International Program Manager, cell: (512)569-8261. You will meet Melodye Foust in the City Council Chambers at 2PM and after your tour of City Hall you will proceed to Room 2016 at 3:00PM.*

**City of Austin  
City Hall  
301 West 2nd Street  
Austin, Texas 78701  
Tel: (512)236-7819  
Website: [www.ci.austin.tx.us](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us)**

**2:00PM – 3:00PM**      **Ms Melodye Foust  
Administrative Specialist, Economic Growth and  
Redevelopment Services Office**

**3:00PM – 3:30PM**      **Mr. Kevin Johns  
Director, EGRSO**  
email: [kevin.johns@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:kevin.johns@ci.austin.tx.us)

**Mr. Ben Ramirez  
International Program Manager, EGRSO**  
email: [ben.ramirez@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:ben.ramirez@ci.austin.tx.us)

**Austin Energy Resource, Generation, and Climate Protection Plan to 2020  
April 22, 2010**

Austin Energy adopts the following changes and additions to its current resource planning goals, with a target of meeting these goals by 2020:

- Increase the energy efficiency goal from 700 MW to 800 MW
- Increase the renewable energy goal from 30% to 35%
- Increase the solar component of the renewable energy goal from 100 MW to 200 MW
- Establish a CO2 reduction goal of 20% below 2005 level

**Austin City Council Passes Landmark Energy Plan by: Katherine Haenschen  
Fri Apr 23, 2010 at 09:24 AM CDT**

With a 7-0 vote yesterday, the Austin City Council passed a landmark energy plan that sets our city on a path to a cleaner, greener future. By 2020, 35% of our energy will be produced from renewable sources. In the process, our home-grown Austin Energy will become one of the greenest, most sustainable utilities in the country.

The Statesman has a comment from Mayor Leffingwell on this great step forward for Austin:

"I believe that Austin has in the past shown leadership on environmental initiatives," Mayor Lee Leffingwell said. "And I think that we should keep ourselves in the forefront, recognizing that global climate change is, in my opinion, the environmental challenge of our time. This is a global problem, but the sum of local policy is global policy." This plan demonstrates that our city government is thinking both short- and long-term in its approach to the major challenges facing Austin. The economic downturn has folks watching every penny, so the increase in cost is certainly an issue. Council is on top of this, however -- the plan won't go into effect until specific cost-containment goals are adopted before year-end. It's also worth noting that potential increases in energy costs from renewables -- estimates run as high as a 20% increase -- don't factor in likely long-term increases in costs of natural gas and oil. (Or, might I add, the cost of cleaning up after our dirty sources of energy.)

Our entire planet needs to address climate change, declining fossil fuel stores, and environmental needs now, to prevent greater cost later on. We can invest today in a cleaner future, or pay dearly when our current sources of energy run out. Austin's green energy plan is a great way to accomplish all of these goals.

*Burnt Orange Report* also received a statement from the Sierra Club praising the landmark plan:

"While the resolution passed by Austin City Council isn't perfect, it sets up a process with the public to examine additional issues -- like how Austin can legally, economically and technically get out of our dependence on the Fayette Coal Plant and how we can create a local power plant through solar on roofs. The Sierra Club and its members will continue to be constructively involved in this discussion on affordable, clean, reliable energy." -- Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director, Lone Star Chapter, Sierra Club

Until we have enough alternate sources of energy, many experts think that the City of Austin can't afford to sell off the polluting coal plant -- otherwise at peak energy times (like 5:30 p.m. when folks return from work and turn on their air conditioners) -- we might end up in the dark. Currently, only 12% of our energy comes from renewables. This move to 35% over 10 years is ambitious *and* achievable, and will give Austin much more room to make the most sustainable energy decisions in the future.

So kudos to our City Council for giving Austin one of the best Earth Day presents possible: a cleaner, greener energy future. [Website: http://www.burntorangereport.com/diary/10286/austin-city-council-passes-landmark-energy-plan](http://www.burntorangereport.com/diary/10286/austin-city-council-passes-landmark-energy-plan)

**Monday, October 11**

*Board ground transportation at 3:40PM for next meeting.*

**Public Citizen**

**1303 San Antonio**

**Austin, TX 78701**

**Tel: (512) 477-1155**

**Web site: [www.citizen.org/texas](http://www.citizen.org/texas)**

**4:00PM – 5:00PM**

**Mr. Andy Wilson,**

**Global Warming Program Director**

**e-mail: [awilson@citizen.org](mailto:awilson@citizen.org)**

Public Citizen is a national, nonprofit consumer advocacy organization founded in 1971 to represent consumer interests in Congress, the executive branch and the courts.

We fight for openness and democratic accountability in government, for the right of consumers to seek redress in the courts; for clean, safe and sustainable energy sources; for social and economic justice in trade policies; for strong health, safety and environmental protections; and for safe, effective and affordable prescription drugs and health care.

We have six divisions and two state offices, one in Texas and one in California.

Since 1984, Public Citizen's Texas State Office has concerned itself with: environmental enforcement policies, global warming, promoting renewable/clean energy, product safety, nuclear safety, medical safety, auto safety/quality, pesticide safety, insurance reforms, campaign finance/ethics issues, improving state government agency operations and fair trade policies. We have trained over 175 interns and have worked with/mentored numerous grassroots organizations.

When you turn on your lights, file an insurance claim, file a complaint about your doctor or lawyer, inquire about political contributions to your legislators, buy gas, rent a car, buy or recycle a product, appear before a judge at an administrative agency, see a pesticide warning sign or hear about a dangerous product – your rights have been affected by the work of Public Citizen's Texas office.



**Andy Wilson, Research Associate and Community Organizer**

Andy Wilson works on global warming and campaign finance issues for Public Citizen. Born in San Diego, California, he has lived in many different places, including Delaware, Northern Virginia, Utah, New York City and 2 years in Southern Russia. He has a Bachelors Degree in Political Science from Brigham Young University, where he first became interested in campaign finance issues working with Dr. David Magleby researching BCRA. He then pursued a Masters Degree from Fordham University in Campaigns and Elections, where he also worked with Global Strategy Group, a top political consulting

and polling firm. Before coming to work with Public Citizen, Andy also worked for Unity08 as National Volunteer Coordinator. He currently lives in Austin with his wife and two children.

**Tuesday, October 12**      *Check out of your hotel and board ground transportation at 10:15AM for your first meeting.*

**Austin Energy**  
**Town Lake Center**  
**721 Barton Spring Rd.**  
**Austin, TX 78704**  
**Tel: (512)322-6041**  
**Website: [www.austinenergy.com](http://www.austinenergy.com)**

**11:00AM – 12:30PM**

**Ms Ester Matthews**  
**Director, Austin Climate Protection Program**  
**email: [ester.matthews@austinenergy.com](mailto:ester.matthews@austinenergy.com)**

## **About the Program**

### **Overview of the Austin Climate Protection Program**

The overarching goal of the Austin Climate Protection Program is to make Austin the leading city in the nation in the fight against climate change.

#### **1. The Austin Climate Protection Plan.**

In February 2007, the City Council passed a [resolution](#) that directed the City to begin taking action in a variety of areas. The five main components of the Plan are listed below. Click on each component for a more detailed description of the goals in that area.

- [Municipal Plan](#) - Make all City of Austin facilities, vehicles, and operations carbon-neutral by 2020. Also, in an effort to achieve carbon neutrality, all City departments completed their own climate protection plans. Check out [Departmental Climate Protection Plans](#).
- [Utility Plan](#) - Expand conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy programs to reduce Austin Energy's carbon footprint; cap carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants; and make any new electricity generation carbon-neutral.
- [Homes and Buildings](#) - Update building codes for new buildings to be the most energy-efficient in the nation, pursue energy efficiency upgrades for existing buildings, and enhance Austin Energy's Green Building program.
- [Community Plan](#) - Engage Austin citizens, community groups, and businesses to reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout the community.
- ["Go Neutral" Plan](#) - Provide tools and resources for citizens, businesses, organizations, and visitors to measure and reduce their carbon footprint.

#### **2. Creation of an inter-departmental Climate Action Team.**

The Climate Action Team first met on January 18, 2008, and currently includes representatives from many City departments. This team is developing a baseline carbon emissions inventory and creating recommendations for reducing the City of Austin's carbon footprint. Once these steps are complete, this group will be instrumental in setting and implementing reduction targets for all City departments. See what is happening with the [Climate Action Team](#).

#### **3. Working with the community to identify emission reduction opportunities.**

We will be working with the community to identify opportunities for greenhouse gas emissions reductions. We will also be establishing a dialogue with the Austin community to ensure that every individual has a chance to participate in climate protection efforts.

### **Progress on Climate Protection**

**Last updated: September 21, 2010**

#### **Municipal Plan**

1. A [Climate Action Team](#) was formed in January 2008. It includes representatives from a number of City departments. The team working to develop department specific climate action plans.
2. The City of Austin has completed a greenhouse gas inventory for all City departments. This inventory measures the City's carbon footprint and will allow assessment of the relative impact of various reduction measures. Tracking greenhouse gas emissions will allow the City to quantitatively monitor progress on achieving our greenhouse gas reductions goals.
3. The City of Austin has put all the General Fund departments on the GreenChoice® renewable energy program. Now more than 75% of the City departments are powered by clean energy.

## Utility Plan

1. Austin Energy launches a [Public Participation Process](#) to determine future energy generation. Reducing Austin Energy's carbon footprint through developing a sustainable energy portfolio is one piece of the Austin Climate Protection Program. In addition to this Public Participation Process, a stakeholder group representing diverse community interests will be convened to evaluate the magnitude of local impacts from climate change and develop greenhouse gas reduction measures to be implemented throughout the community.
2. Austin Energy continues to work in a variety of areas to achieve the goals set by the Austin Climate Protection Plan. These efforts include: the continuation of current residential and commercial energy efficiency programs, demand side management programs and efficiency improvements for power generation and transmission.

## Homes and Buildings

1. The City Council passed the [Energy Conservation Audit and Disclosure Ordinance](#) (PDF, 229 KB). This ordinance is based on the Energy Efficiency Upgrades Task Force recommendations and will go into effect June 1, 2009. For more information visit the [Energy Conservation Audit and Disclosure website](#). This program demonstrates the City of Austin's commitment to increasing energy efficiency, lowering home owners utility costs, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, and protecting our climate.

## Community Plan

1. The framework for a community coordinating committee is being created. This team will work to develop recommendations for community wide greenhouse gas reduction strategies.
2. The Climate Protection Team will collaborate with this committee to gather data and create a preliminary greenhouse gas inventory for the Austin community.

## "Go Neutral" Plan

1. The City of Austin is finalizing a request for proposals for development of an Austin specific [carbon footprint calculator](#). The calculator will be coming soon to this website.
2. The City's Climate Protection Team is also in the process of developing a Climate Leaders program to recognize citizens and businesses who take a leadership role in reducing emissions.

**Lunch**      **A print-out of "Places to Eat in Downtown Austin" is included in your Welcome Packet.**

**Tuesday, October 12**      ***Board ground transportation at 1:30PM for final Austin meeting.***

**Sunset Farm Landfill  
FORTISTAR Methane Group  
9912 Giles Road  
Austin, TX 78754  
Website: [www.fortistar.com](http://www.fortistar.com)**

**2:00PM – 3:30PM**

**Mark Wilton  
Plant Manager  
email: [mwilton@fortistar.com](mailto:mwilton@fortistar.com)**

**Mr. Larry Alford  
Austin Energy  
Cell: (512)217-7441  
email: [larry.alford@austinenergy.com](mailto:larry.alford@austinenergy.com)**

## Landfill Methane-to-Energy Facility—Austin, TX

Landfills produce methane gas as plant waste, wood, paper, and other organic materials buried in them decompose. Methane is a very powerful greenhouse gas and contributor to global warming. Therefore, controlling methane emissions from landfills is one of the most important actions a local government can take to help avert the threat of global warming. Collecting and using methane gas that escapes from landfills can also benefit local governments, as it can be used to produce electricity and generate revenue.

Recover Landfill Methane—the 4th R. The Sunset Farms Landfill in Austin, TX produces 2 million cubic feet of methane gas every day. In order to take advantage of this resource and to keep the harmful gas from reaching the atmosphere, the City entered into an arrangement with a private energy company to establish a methane-to-electricity facility in 1995. The facility has been so successful that the municipal utility in charge of the project, Austin Energy, is planning to open similar facilities at six other landfills in Texas—in Austin, Dallas, Galveston, San Antonio, and two in Houston.

Austin Energy is implementing the projects by entering into long-term, turn-key contracts with private energy companies to build and operate the facilities. This reduces risk and introduces competition. The private companies guarantee to supply

the power at a fixed rate for ten years. The rates negotiated have been higher than current rates from conventional power plants—but lower than rates are projected to be in five years.

Landfill Methane is Green Energy. By reusing landfill methane to produce electricity, the project is offsetting the need to burn coal or other fossil fuels at a conventional power plant, thus further cutting GHG emissions. Beginning in 2000, Austin's "Green

Choice" program will give consumers the option of paying 5% extra on their electrical bills now in return for a freeze on the fuel portion of their bills for the next ten years.

**Results**

- Sunset Farms now generates 3 MW of electrical power—enough to supply 2,000 homes
- Total capacity when 6 new generators are on line will be 21 MW—enough for 14,000 homes
- Greenhouse gas emissions will be cut by 4.5 tons when all generators are on-line

**Tuesday, October 12**      *Board ground transportation at 4:00PM for Austin Bergstrom International Airport.*

**NOTE:**      **We advise all guests to arrive at the Austin Bergstrom International Airport at least two hours prior to their scheduled departure flight.**

**Tuesday, October 12**      **Depart Austin at 7:05PM on Continental Airlines, flight #620 for Houston, Texas; changing flights and continuing to San Francisco, California.**

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**Evening:**      Your evening will be free for you to explore Austin. The downtown area is the central entertainment district where you will find restaurants, live music, and bars of a diverse nature. The greatest concentration of restaurants, nightclubs and theaters are found on Sixth Street (between Red River and Brazos), and Fourth Street (Between Colorado and Guadalupe).

**Here's a brief preview of some unique places.**

- Oasis Restaurant** -6550 Comanche Trail, Austin, TX 78732-1213 - 266-2442 The restaurant is perched on a cliff located 450 feet above Lake Travis, the view of the Texas Hill Country from The Oasis is breathtaking--the sunsets are spectacular! The restaurant has 28 outdoor decks, plus air-conditioned dining rooms.
- Pho Hoang** - 2521 Rutland Dr # 400, Austin, TX 78758-5287 - (512) 339-6002
- Sunflower Restaurant** - 8557 Research Blvd # 146, Austin, TX 78758-7855 - (512) 339-7860 (Vietnamese Cuisine)
- Artz Rib House** - 2330 S. Lamar - 442-8283 Country western music. Tue. evening – Texas Olde Time Fiddlers Jam
- The Broken Spoke** - 3201 S. Lamar Blvd. - 442-6189 Live country western music Tues thru Sun. Classic Texas cuisine.
- Athenian Grill** - 705 Colorado St. - (512) 482-8988 – good Greek food at moderate prices
- Eddie V's Edgewater Grille** - 301 E 5th St Austin, TX (512) 472-1860
- Capitol Brasserie** - 310 Colorado St Austin, TX (512) 472-6770 – French bistro fare
- Saba Blue Water Cafe** - 212 W 4th St Austin, TX (512) 478-7222
- Old Pecan Street Cafe** - 310 E 6th St Austin, TX (512) 478-2491
- Threadgills Restaurant** - 301 W Riverside Dr Austin, TX (512) 472-9304 – comfort food and live music at night
- Iron Cactus Restaurant** - 606 Trinity St Austin, TX (512) 472-9240
- Mekong River** - 215 E.6th Street - 512.236.8878 - Thai & Vietnamese Cuisine
- Vespaio** - 1610 S Congress Ave Austin, TX (512) 441-6100
- Stubb's** – 801 Red River – 480-8341 – Excellent barbecue and Austin music on Sunday
- Elephant Room** - 315 Congress Ave - 473-2279 - Jazz
- Katz's Deli** - 618 W. Sixth St. – 472-2037 - famous for their slogan, "Katz's Never Kloses". It's a good place to get food any time, even late at night. Serves New York deli style menu. Try their deep fried pickles!

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**Options:**      The **Texas State Capitol** is open to the public Monday to Friday from 7am to 10pm. Saturday and Sunday hours are 11AM – 4PM. Free Guided tours are from 8:30am to 4:30pm on weekdays.  
**The Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum** 1800 N. Congress Avenue; Monday through Saturday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sunday 1 - 6 p.m. Information: (512) 936-8746

SINGLE VENUE TICKETS	Exhibit Areas	IMAX Theatre	Texas Spirit Theater
Adult (ages 19 through 64)	\$7.00	\$7.00	\$5.00
COMBINATION TICKETS	Exhibits & IMAX Theatre	Exhibits & TX Spirit Theater	Exhibits & Both Theaters
Adult (ages 19 through 64)	\$12.00	\$10.00	\$15.00

Please visit the **Austin Convention and Visitor's Bureau**, 209 E.6<sup>th</sup> St., Austin, Info:(512)478-0098, if you need more information on events, activities or places to go in Austin and the surrounding areas.

The **Lyndon B. Johnson (Presidential) Museum** offers self tours everyday. You will be observing various rare and interesting exhibits on our Former President throughout his life. Only photographs without a flash are allowed. (See brochure for directions and information.) Tel: (512)721-0200

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**Austin Taxis**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT TAXIS IN AUSTIN ARE RADIO DISPATCHED AND DO NOT STOP IF FLAGGED ON STREET. TAXIS ARE READILY AVAILABLE AT HOTELS. YOUR HOTEL WILL ASSIST YOU IN CALLING A TAXI.**

**Austin Cab (512)478-2222 - \$2.05 to hire + \$2.10 per mile**

**Yellow Cab (512)452-9999 - \$3.75 to hire + \$2.05 per mile**

**Lone Star Cab (512)836-4900 - \$2.10 to hire + \$2.05 per mile**

**Medical Facilities**

**Austin Regional Clinic (Habla Espanol)**  
3828 S. First Street Tel.: 443-1311  
(after hours) 6835 Austin Center Blvd. Tel.: 346-6611

**South Austin Medical & Health Clinic (Habla Espanol)**  
1918 E Riverside Dr Tel.: 326-9200

**Hospitals**

**St. David's Medical Emergency Center(Habla Espanol)**  
9034 North I-35 Tel.: 397-4240

**Seton Medical Center(Habla Espanol)**  
1201 W. 38th Street Tel.: 323-1010

**Brackenridge Emergency Center(Habla Espanol)**  
601 E. 15th St. Tel.: 324-7010

**Austin, Texas**

**Austin** is the capital of the U.S. state of Texas and the seat of Travis County. Located in Central Texas on the eastern edge of the American Southwest,<sup>[7]</sup> it is the fourth-largest city in Texas and the 15th-largest in the United States. It was the third-fastest-growing large city in the nation from 2000 to 2006.<sup>[8]</sup> According to the 2009 U.S. Census estimate, Austin had a population of 757,688.<sup>[4]</sup> The city is the cultural and economic center of the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Area, with a population of approximately 1,660,000 as of the July 2009 U.S. Census estimate, making it the 36th-largest metropolitan area in the nation.

The area was settled in the 1830s on the banks of the Colorado River by pioneers who named the village Waterloo.<sup>[9]</sup> In 1839, Waterloo was chosen to become the capital of the newly independent Republic of Texas. The city was renamed after Stephen F. Austin, known as the father of Texas.<sup>[9]</sup> The city grew throughout the 19th century and became a center for government and education with the construction of the Texas State Capitol and the University of Texas.<sup>[10]</sup> After a lull in growth from the Great Depression, Austin resumed its development into a major city and emerged as a center for technology and business.<sup>[9]</sup> Today, Austin is home to many companies, high-tech and otherwise, including the headquarters of three Fortune 500 corporations, Dell, Whole Foods Market, and Freescale Semiconductor.<sup>[11]</sup> Austin was selected as the No. 2 Best Big City in "Best Places to Live" by *Money* magazine in 2006, and No. 3 in 2009, also the "Greenest City in America" by MSN.<sup>[12][13]</sup> According to CNN Headline News and Travel & Leisure magazine, Austin ranks No. 2 on the list of cities with the best people, referring to the personalities and attributes of the citizens.<sup>[14]</sup> Austin was also voted America's #1 College Town by the Travel Channel.<sup>[15]</sup> Austin was ranked the fifth-safest city in part because there are fewer than 3 murders per 100,000 people annually.<sup>[16][17]</sup> Furthermore, in 2009, Austin was determined to be the least stressful large metro area by *Forbes* magazine.<sup>[18]</sup> Residents of Austin are known as "Austinites" and include a diverse mix of university professors, students, politicians, musicians, state employees, high-tech workers, blue-collar workers, and white-collar workers. The main campus of the University of Texas is located in Austin. The city is home to enough large sites of major technology corporations to have earned it the nickname "Silicon Hills." Austin's official slogan promotes the city as "The Live Music Capital of the World," a reference to its status as home to many musicians and music venues.<sup>[1][2]</sup> In recent years, many Austinites have also adopted the unofficial slogan "Keep Austin Weird"; this refers partly to the eclectic and liberal lifestyle of many Austin residents but is also the slogan for a campaign to preserve smaller local businesses and resist excessive commercialization.<sup>[19]</sup>

**Stephan F. Austin**



Prior to the arrival of settlers from the United States, the area that later became Austin was inhabited by a variety of nomadic Native American tribes, including the Tonkawa tribe, the Comanches, and the Lipan Apaches.<sup>[20]</sup> When the Texas Congress formed a commission to seek a site for a new capital to be named Austin, Mirabeau Lamar, second President of the new formed Texas republic, advised the commissioners to investigate Waterloo, which was then indeed chosen. Edwin Waller was chosen by Lamar to survey the village and draft a plan laying out the new capital city. The original site for the capital was narrowed to 640 acres (259 ha) that fronted the



Colorado River between two creeks, Shoal Creek and Waller Creek, which was later named in his honor. The fourteen-block grid plan was bisected by a broad north-south thoroughfare, Congress Avenue, running up from the river to Capital Square, where the new Texas State Capitol was to be constructed. A temporary one-story capitol was erected on the corner of Colorado and 8th streets. On August 1, the first auction of 306 lots was held. The grid plan that Waller designed and surveyed now forms the basis of the streets of downtown Austin.

Initially, the new capital thrived. But Lamar's political enemy Sam Houston used two Mexican army incursions to San Antonio as an excuse to move the government to Washington-on-the-Brazos. Remaining Austin residents responded to the threat by forcibly keeping the national archives in their city in defiance of President Houston's attempts to bring them to Washington (Texas Archive War). Once the annexation of the Republic of Texas by the United States became official in 1845, delegates wrote a new state constitution in which Austin was again named the seat of state. The Texas State Capitol was completed in 1888, and claimed as the 7th largest building in the world.

In September 1881, Austin public schools held their first classes. The same year, Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute (now part of Huston-Tillotson University) opened its doors. The University of Texas at Austin held its first classes in 1883. The Austin music scene began attracting national attention in the 1970s with artists such as Willie Nelson and venues such as the Armadillo World Headquarters. Today, Austin is known as much for its cultural life as its high-tech innovations.<sup>[9]</sup> [Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austin\\_texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austin_texas)

**Texas** is the second-largest U.S. state in both area and population, and the largest state in the contiguous United States. The name had wide usage among native Americans, meaning "friends" or "allies"<sup>[7]</sup>. Located in the South Central United States, Texas is bordered by Mexico to the south, New Mexico to the west, Oklahoma to the north, Arkansas to the northeast, and Louisiana to the east. Texas has an area of 268,820 square miles (696,200 km<sup>2</sup>), and a growing population of 24.6 million residents.<sup>[8]</sup> Houston is the largest city in Texas and the fourth-largest in the United States, while Dallas–Fort Worth and Houston are the 4th and 6th largest United States metropolitan areas. Other major cities include San Antonio, El Paso, and Austin—the state capital. Texas is nicknamed the *Lone Star State* to signify Texas as an independent republic and as a reminder of the state's struggle for independence from Mexico. The "Lone Star" can be found on the Texas State Flag and on the Texas State Seal today.<sup>[9]</sup>

Due to its size and geologic features such as the Balcones Fault, Texas contains diverse landscapes that resemble both the American Southeast and the Southwest.<sup>[10]</sup> Although Texas is popularly associated with the Southwestern deserts, less than 10% of the land area is desert.<sup>[11]</sup> Most of the population centers are located in areas of former prairies, grasslands, forests, and the coastline. Traveling from east to west, one can observe terrain that ranges from coastal swamps and piney woods, to rolling plains and rugged hills, and finally the desert and mountains of the Big Bend. Due to its long history as a center of the American cattle industry, Texas is associated with the image of the cowboy.

The term "six flags over Texas" came from the several nations that had rule over the territory. Spain was the first European country to claim the area of Texas. France held a short-lived colony in Texas. Mexico controlled the territory until 1836 when Texas won its independence, becoming an independent Republic. In 1845 it joined the United States as the 28th state. The state's annexation set off a chain of events that caused the Mexican–American War in 1846. Texas declared its secession from the United States in early 1861, joining the Confederate States of America during the American Civil War. After the war and its restoration to the Union, Texas entered a long period of economic stagnation. In the early 1900s, oil discoveries initiated an economic boom in the state. Texas has since economically diversified. Today it has more Fortune 500 companies than any other U.S. state.<sup>[12][13]</sup> With a growing base of industry, the state is a leader in many, including agriculture, petrochemicals, energy, computers and electronics, aerospace, and biomedical sciences. It leads the nation in export revenue and has the second-highest gross state product.

[Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas)