

# AUSTIN NEWS kxan.com

## MEMORANDUM

TO: KXAN Public Files

RE: Issues and Programs Report – Third Quarter  
July 1 – September 30

DATE: October 7, 2009

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The top ten ascertained significant problems and needs of the Austin community are:

1. Transportation/traffic
2. Education quality
3. Growth
4. Crime
5. Gangs
6. High-tech Education
7. Teaching good citizenship/responsibility
8. Focus on positive/good news
9. Family Values
10. Poverty

Attached are examples of local news reports, public service efforts, local programming, and syndicated programs that have addressed these issues. Additionally, as an NBC affiliate, we broadcast network programs that discuss these problems and needs from a national perspective. These include “Dateline” and “Meet the Press.”

**PROGRAMS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST**

<b>NAME OF PROGRAM</b>	<b>DAYS AIRED</b>	<b>TIME AIRED</b>
Austin News Today	Monday-Sunday	(M-F) 5:00-7:00 a.m. (Sat) 7:00-9:00 a.m. (Sun) 7 & 9 a.m.
Austin News Today Show Cut-ins	Monday-Friday	7:26-7:30 a.m. 7:56-8:00 a.m. 8:26-8:30 a.m. 8:56-9:00 a.m.
Austin News @ noon	Monday-Friday	12-1:00 p.m.
Austin News @ 5	Monday-Friday + Sunday	5:00-5:30 p.m.
Austin News @ 6	Monday - Saturday	6-6:30 p.m.
Austin News @ 10	Monday-Friday Saturday-Sunday	10:00-10:35 p.m. 10:00-10:30 p.m.

All of these programs are produced locally and are a mix of news, weather and sports.

KXAN also airs NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams, Monday – Friday at 5:30 – 6:00 p.m., and NBC Nightly News on Saturday and Sunday at 5:30 – 6:00 p.m.

NBC Nightly News has two ongoing reports that are relevant to the community we serve.

***NBC Nightly News – Making a Difference synopsis:***

”Making a Difference” stories air every Friday on “NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams.” The series was conceived in response to viewers who complain that the broadcast features only "bad" news. Viewers can also read and watch the stories on the NBC Nightly News website and use the mailbag to tell NBC about someone they know who is making a difference.

***NBC Nightly News – What Works synopsis:***

“What Works” is a continuing series on "NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams." These are "reports which spotlight ideas or innovations that are solving various problems in communities across the country." Viewers can read and watch all the stories from the series on NBC Nightly News website.

**Transportation/Traffic**

Look for higher fares and fewer routes as "Capital Metro" tries to balance a budget with declining revenue. Today, Capital Metro's board of directors heard from staff on some of the proposals - one of which is to suspend the 'Dillo' service altogether. The trolley currently takes riders through the downtown area for fifty cents. The agency also wants to increase bus fares starting in January. A day pass would double, from 3 to 6 dollars. The cost of a month pass would rise from 18 to 28 bucks. The proposals are sparking heated

opposition - especially from those representing the disabled community. Capital Metro says it still plans to take the proposed fare increases out to the community before they get final approval.

08/19/09 MetroRail should open soon, according to the vice president of Capital Metro. They're conducting a final "validation" of the 32 mile long rail line which will carry passengers from Leander to Austin. The rail was supposed to open in 5 months ago - but a glitch in the system forced Cap Metro to delay it. The agency says they are still within the 105 million dollar budget. Meanwhile, the agency is looking to hire musicians to play for the grand opening. The agency will pay each performer between 75 and 100 dollars an hour.

09/03/09 Capital Metro Budget - Sometime today, we're expect to get our first look at Capital Metro's new budget. We know that Cap Metro hopes to make up part of their shortfall with stimulus money. They say they hope the 2.6 million dollars in federal funds will help them stave off fare hikes for a while longer. We'll bring you more details on Capital Metro's new budget plans when they're released on kxan.com.

09/05/09 Cap Metro Budget - The new budget is 76 pages and details decreases in both expenses and revenue. Cap Metro submitted 2009 numbers this time, last year, but has revised that budget a number of times. That makes it difficult to determine exactly how the organizations actual expenses performed against its original budget. So, here's what is planned for next year. Cap metro wants to spend \$164.7 million dollars on public transportation and \$6.8 million in capital projects. The 2010 budget includes a fare increase beginning next August. A local one-way bus fare goes from 75-cents to one dollar and other fares will increase as well. Cap Metro is also expecting to finally get the multi-million dollar Metro Rail commuter train up and running. The estimated timeline now--- is October 2009. The trains were originally slated to start running on March 30th of this year. Cap Metro's budget shows it expects Metro Rail to bring in more than \$405-thousand dollars in revenue. They estimate more than 403-thousand passengers will ride the commuter train next year. The overall budget shows total revenue will drop by 2.6% ...and total expenses will drop by 2.3%. The new budget shows more than \$7-million dollars will be set aside for cash reserves.

### **Education quality**

07/07/09 Student Loans - If your paycheck is barely covering your college loans.. listen up. The federal government just rolled out a new program that sets your monthly payment. It's all based on your income and family size. After a while... the government will even pay it off!

07/08/09 Pearce Middle School Closing - The Austin Independent School District is scrambling to come up with a plan after the state ordered the closure of "Pearce Middle School". The campus was doomed by failing TAKS test scores for the FIFTH straight year. The news comes less than a month before 62 teachers start preparing their

classrooms for more than 800 kids. 95-percent of Pearce's students come from economically disadvantaged homes.

07/08/09 Johnston High School - It's taken one full school year to repurpose the old Johnston High School, after the state forced closure there. This year, the campus will break into three different schools: one focusing on green energy, one on global studies, and another housing foreign students. The state closed Johnston High after five years of failing test scores and poor attendance. But one of the new principals at what's now "Eastside Memorial" said a new project-based learning model, combined with lots of hard work, will help students learn more than they did in the past. TAKS test scores are not out from this past year at Eastside. Those will come out July 31st.

07/10/10 High School Steroid Tests - New results in after Texas tested tens-of-thousands of high school athletes for steroids. Over the past two years, 45-thousand tests have led to only 19 confirmed cases of steroid use. Since the program has caught so few cheaters, state lawmakers have decided to slash spending for the program over the next two years from 6-million to 2-million dollars.

07/31/09 Pearce Plan to stay open - There is a large emphasis on creating a family-like environment between students and staff... in this 40-page plan. The district also lays out how they plan on attracting stronger staff members. As far as current students at Pearce... the district says they'll be sending each parent a copy of the plan... and a letter explaining their choices. Students can remain at Pearce... or choose one of 11 other campuses rated "acceptable." At a press conference this afternoon... the Texas Commissioner of Education...who closed Pearce... said something drastic needs to happen.

08/01/09 TEA Numbers - Taking a closer look at AISD, 54 campuses rated exemplary or recognized - that's an all-time high. But nine campuses came in as academically unacceptable - including Eastside Memorial. It was opened just this year - after the state shut down "Johnston High". Online now, you can read the complete report on Texas school accountability.

08/06/09 AISD Fed Failure – A new set-back for the Austin Independent School District. The district has failed to meet federal standards set by the 'No Child Left Behind' Act. It's the first time that's happened. The state released the ratings this afternoon - about the time Austin's new school superintendent was taking center stage at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon. "Dr. Meria Carstarphen" spoke about the six schools that did not make the federal grade. They are: Lanier, Akins, Crockett, LBJ, Reagan high school and Mendez Middle School. The superintendent called it a major improvement from last year... when 14 schools missed the mark. Here's the formula the feds use to come up with the ratings: TAKS scores, test participation, attendance rates and graduation rates are all taken into consideration.

08/18/09 AISD Budget - The Austin Independent School District held a 25 thousand dollar convocation today where they looked into cost-cutting measures for the budget. AISD's new superintendent has no qualms about the price tag for today's event - pointing

out the "Dallas Independent School District" recently spent three times that amount for a similar gathering. The 11-thousand employees were able to vote via text message about cost-cutting measures like adjusting medical insurance or consolidating schools with low enrollment. Superintendent Carstarphen plans to present data collected at the convocation to the AISD board of trustees.

08/20/09 Tax Free Shopping - Back-to-school shoppers hope to save extra cash over the next three days during the state's tax-free weekend. For the first time, state lawmakers added school supplies to the list of tax exempt items.

08/25/09 Financial Aid Increase - The amount of need for financial aid has increased for college students in Austin. At Austin Community College, applications for financial aid are up 73 percent this year. At UT, the director of financial aid says more families are filling out special circumstance forms because of the recession. And though the state has given UT more money for grants, the number of students applying for money is growing. UT says it has an emergency loan program for students who need it. Those who qualify can receive money for tuition or books, and pay it back within 90 days.

08/25/09 Sept. 1 Laws - Starting September 1st, there will be new rules on Texas roads. That's when some laws passed by the Legislature kick into effect. You won't be able to use your cell phone while driving through a school zone any more, unless you're using a hands free device. Another law will require everyone under 17 years old in your car or truck be buckled up - including those in the backseat. There will be a bit of a "grace period" for both of these - but not for long. We have a more comprehensive list of the new Texas driving laws with this story on the local news page of kxan dot com.

09/02/09 Angry AHS Parents - There are 21-hundred students enrolled at Austin High; about 200 of them spend part of their day in AGS, the Academy for Global Studies, a strenuous advanced studies program begun last year. All the students here had the opportunity to apply for AGS....but now parents of some kids who didn't.....are crying foul...and they want the program splintered off into a separate school. Funded by the Gates Foundation and the Asia Society, AGS offers advanced global studies, international perspectives and language tutoring. But does this hands-on, special teaching give those students an advantage against the others, who chose not to apply for the program? Some parents say it's not fair academic competition....that the deck is stacked. Some of those parents want the Academy of Global Studies to be splintered off into its own school, so AGS students do not compete grade-wise with the other kids, with precious college admissions at stake. But parents of the AGS students say nonsense, the complainers are just afraid of a little competition. Austin principal Dr. Lucio Calzada says every one of his students has equal educational opportunities and that there are many variables that impact grades and class rankings. He adds, the district will not splinter off AGS. That's good news to one parent, who says the academy has motivated and changed his son's life. Last year every student who applied to AGS was accepted. If too many apply for the limited slots next time around, a blind lottery will choose the students. As for the argument these resources should be used elsewhere in the district, this grant money is specifically for AGS. If the program goes away...so does the money.

09/16/09 Fall Enrollment - Part of the problem - UT is bursting at the seams. Enrollment at the University of Texas is up by 2-percent this fall. Just over 51-thousand students are registered this semester, up a thousand from last year.

09/17/10 Board of Education - Keep Christmas... That looks like what the State Board of Education will do, after getting quite an earful on a curriculum change today. It concerns a draft proposal for the 6th grade social studies curriculum for the next decade. The section currently instructs students to explain the significance of religious holidays Christmas, Easter, Ramadan, Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah. But the proposal crosses out "Christmas" and "Rosh Hashanah" and adds "Diwali" to cover all 4 major religions. Today - the board says Christmas and Rosh Hashanah will stay. The Board is also considering increasing the number of electives in two of the state's three high school graduation plans. The move would eliminate requirements for courses in health, computer technology and physical education. The final curriculum will be adopted in March.

09/17/09 PTA Theft - A second grade teacher in South Austin is accused of stealing from her school's PTA. Police say 32 year old "Kia Matthews" admitted to stealing nearly 4-thousand dollars from the St. Elmo Elementary school P.T.A. fund. An affidavit says Matthews withdrew money 22 times from the schools fund. She served as the vice president of the P.T.A. The principal became suspicious when she received a bank statement with only \$7 dollars in the account. Parents of kids in Matthews class say Matthews was a model teacher. Matthews turned herself into police and could face up to 10 years in jail.

09/18/09 Hudson Bend MRSA - A dangerous drug-resistant staph infection has the Lake Travis school district on alert. A student at "Hudson Bend Middle School" is being treated for MRSA. Lake Travis ISD custodial staff is taking immediate action to aggressively disinfect classrooms and other facilities at the campus. They're wiping down surfaces and misting with hospital-grade disinfectants.

09/18/09 RR Test Retakes - A new testing policy in Round Rock schools is causing controversy. From now on any student who fails a test in Round Rock MUST retake the exam. A new state law says students "may" do retakes, but Round Rock is taking that policy a step further. Some parents say it would be unfair if a retaken exam results in a better grade than that of students who passed the first time. But the district won't let that happen. Students will not, however, be allowed to re-take a failed TAKS test.

09/23/09 Westlake Choking - A Westlake High School student got arrested for choking another student this afternoon. The suspect was taken to the "Gardner Betts Juvenile Detention Center", and charged with "assault with injury." The other student went to the hospital with minor injuries.

## Crime

07/05/09 West Campus Killings - We're getting our first look at the mug shot of man accused of killing two recent University of Texas graduates in West Campus last month. According to an arrest warrant, 19-year-old "James Ricky Thompson" admitted to shooting "John Goosey" and "Stacy Barnett" in the head in a dispute over drug money. "Goosey" and "Barnett" were found dead in their condominium on West 21st street on July 21st. Thompson is scheduled to appear in court on August 31st. He faces two charges of "capital murder".

07/05/09 Sanders Grand Jury - A Travis County Grand Jury clears an Austin Police officer of criminal wrong doing in the shooting of an Northeast Austin teenager on May 11. A key piece of evidence in the case is an APD dash-cam video. You're about to see that clip unedited, starting from when the Officer "Leonardo Quintana" tries to wake "Nathaniel Sanders". That video is just one of the pieces of evidence the Grand jury considered.

07/06/09 Walnut Creek Substation - "Crime" - cut in half - at a spot that lit up the 9-1-1 dispatch office in recent months. The spotlight on the Walnut Creek Apartments started back on May 11th. That's when Austin officer "Leonardo Quintana" shot 18-year-old "Nathaniel Sanders" while investigating a suspicious vehicle. "Quintana" says he shot "Sanders" when the teenager reached for a gun.

07/08/09 Human Trafficking - After a 10-month investigation, Austin Police believe they have put the brakes on a human trafficking ring that tortured victims brought into the country illegally. Ismael Alvarez is charged with three counts of aggravated kidnapping in the case. Luis Adrian Alegria faces federal charges. Austin Police the case started last September, when a man was found naked and beaten in a truck along F-M 973. Another victim turned up in a local hospital. Then in March, another man jumped from a second story apartment balcony in the 19-hundred block of Hearthstone Drive. When investigators connected the victims, they helped police finds the suspects. Police are still looking for Tereso Lopez-Leon, the third suspect in this ring.

07/26/09 Arrest in the West Campus Killings - Police say a drug debt led to the killings of the young couple... both recent UT graduates. 19-year-old Ricky Thompson is charged with two counts of capital murder. Tonight in Houston... friends and family held a vigil for 22-year-old Stacy Barnett... and her 21-year-old boyfriend John Goosey. The two were found shot to death Tuesday in her West Campus condo.

07/29/09 Therapist Sex Assault - Austin Police have charged a physical therapist with sexually assaulting one of his patients. 47-year old "Terrill Jenkerson" admitted to police that he forced a female patient to perform oral sex during an office visit back in March. Even though it took the woman about a month to report what happened behind closed doors at "Jenkerson Physical Therapy, detectives started immediately collecting evidence. She was referred to "Jenkerson" by her doctor for treatment after a car accident. After numerous visits the victim reports the therapist assaulted her. Jenkerson admitted to

waiting until the patient was on the table, then walking in and sexually attacking her. Police have contacted the state licensing board and alerted them of the felony charges against "Jenkerson". Meanwhile his practice is no longer open.

08/04/09 Robbery Spree - Police are looking for a woman who may be responsible for a string of store robberies. On Friday, July 17th - a woman walked into an Amy's Ice Cream in the 99-hundred block of I-35. She showed a knife, demanded money and got away with an undisclosed amount of cash. On Monday, August 3rd, a woman threatened a clerk with a knife at the Wal-Mart located along South I-35. Police think that same woman may also be linked to another robbery today at the Walgreens on West Slaughter Lane. The suspect is described as a white female in her early 30s, 5-2 to 5-4 with sandy colored hair.

08/14/09 Child Capital Murder - A Bastrop County man will spend the rest of his life in prison... for the beating death of his girlfriend's toddler son. A jury found Christopher Murray guilty of capital murder in the death of 2-year-old Robbie Faske back in 2007. Investigators say Murray staged a car accident to cover up the child's injuries - a fractured skull and a lacerated liver. Murray will not be eligible for parole.

08/17/09 Beer Theft Death - A convenience store clerk is charged with murder tonight after police say he shot a man who tried to steal beer. Police say this man, 23-year-old "Juan Romero", shot 22-year-old "Jorge Luis Vielma", as Vielma and another man ran - unarmed - out of his Shell Gas Station. "Vielma" later died as a result. Police say "Romero" chased "Vielma" and another man from the store at Ben White and South First Sunday morning, shooting a gun. One of the shots hit "Vielma" before he and the other man drove away. Officers located their car nine miles away in the Airport and Bolm Road area, with "Vielma" dead inside. Police say businesses do have a right to protect their property, but only if it's "reasonable". In this case, the unarmed thieves were taking a 12-pack of Budweiser worth about 15-dollars. Police say the other man involved is cooperating with the investigation and, at this time, is not charged with a crime.

08/17/09 Child Death Charges - The father of an 18-month old boy who died in a hot car last week is now charged with "endangering a child." "Kesen Hu" was arrested yesterday. His son Daniel was found dead Wednesday in a car in a Northwest Austin parking lot. The temperature in the area that day climbed to 106 degrees. If convicted "Hu" could face up to two years in prison.

08/18/09 McDade Mom Killed - Bastrop County authorities charged a 14-year old girl and her boyfriend with first degree murder today. The victim -- the girl's mother -- 42-year old Tracy Bellard from McDade. While investigators have yet to determine a motive, Bellard's family says it was a teen romance that led to her death.

08/20/09 Baby Car Death - A "missed opportunity" could have saved a little boy's life. Austin Police today confirmed talking to a woman who saw 18-month old "Daniel Hu" alive nearly seven hours before he was discovered dead in a hot car. The little boy was strapped in his car seat and his father says he "forgot" to drop him off at the daycare

center. "Kessan Hu" reportedly arrived at work between nine and 9-30 that morning. A woman who parked next to Hu's car went to the security guards on the "Freescale Semiconductor" parking lot and reported seeing the child in the car. A search was done, but perhaps not in the right area. Police believe if the little boy had been found during that search, he may have survived.

08/21/09 APD Murders - Police have closed the case on all 14 Austin murders this year. The department has a one hundred percent close rate... using some unique resources to crack cases.

09/22/09 Execution - Texas executed a convicted hit man tonight for a triple slaying in Houston nearly 14 years ago. Christopher Coleman was put to death for his part in a scheme by a Colombian man who hoped to eliminate a drug debt by staging a robbery. Four people wound up getting shot in a car on a dead-end Houston street. Three of them died, including a 3-year-old boy.

09/25/09 Terror Alert - There's a push for extra vigilance among local law enforcement this weekend. That's after the FBI and Department of Homeland Security issued a warning, saying "soft targets" like stadiums, hotels and mass transit are vulnerable to terrorist attacks. We're told there will be hundreds of police officers from multiple agencies at UT's football stadium tomorrow, including FBI agents. That's in addition to the 101 thousand people expected to pack in to watch UT face off with UTEP. Police will also be checking purses and are not allowing other bags.

### Gangs

07/28/09 Gang Rape Investigation - Police are looking for several men who reportedly gang-raped a woman visiting a relative in Austin. The sexual assault happened last Valentines Day at this North Austin apartment complex. The victim says she was taken from a restaurant and woke up inside an empty apartment with up to five men raping her. When she was able to scream, the attack stopped and the men left. She was able to get help from police, who gathered DNA. The DNA is how detectives were able to identify two suspects. Detectives believe there are four to five suspects... three of which have not been identified." One suspect has been deported to Mexico on other charges. A man named "Junior Cruz" is the other known suspect, but police are still looking for him.

09/05/09 Gang Home Invasions - Austin Police believe gang members are behind two home invasions and a sexual assault this week. One break-in happened last Sunday on South Congress, near Oltorf. The following Tuesday, a group of men forced a couple inside their apartment on Wood Hollow Drive nearby - and sexually assaulted a woman before taking cash and property. Police believe the suspects are members of the "Los Cholos" criminal street gang. Two are in custody in connection with these crimes.

09/18/09 RX Drug Ring - APD busted a prescription drug ring. Detectives say these four people bought painkillers and Xanax using stolen prescription pads, then sold the drugs. Police are also still looking for a fifth suspect.

### Teaching good citizenship/responsibility

07/16/09 Heat Death - A construction worker died Wednesday from what Austin Travis County EMS says may have been a lack of basic heat precautions like adequate water. A co-worker says the man was disoriented. He went into "cardiac arrest" at this Wendy's on Slaughter Lane, and later died at "St. David's South Austin Hospital." His core body temperature had risen to 108 degrees. Anyone spending time outdoors should take heat precautions and look for tell tale signs of danger such as Dizziness, lightheaded, start getting a headache. You need to stop and re-hydrate. If you stop sweating, that's a tell tale sign of heat stroke and you need to stop immediately and seek medical attention.

07/25/09 Green Forum - Hundreds of people are becoming more eco-friendly with the help of more than 500 exhibitors displaying sustainable, green living options at the Dell Diamond today. The Smart Texas Mobile Experience Center showcased the "eco-meter." It displays real-time information on energy use. Texas homes average 13-hundred kilowatt-hours of electricity-use per month, which breaks down to \$65.74 on air conditioning. A Plasma TV in Power Save Mode for 21 and a half hours a day... equates to \$30.94 Running your computer 24/7 costs \$25.27 Leaving your lights on costs about \$15.88 a month.

08/12/09 LCRA Water Restriction - By the end of this week, the LCRA plans to tell all of its customers, it's time to undergo mandatory water restrictions. The move comes as lakes Buchanan and Travis drop close to 900-thousand acre-feet. Communities like "Meadowlakes" that not already under restriction will have to make changes, like implementing lawn watering schedules. The LCRA is looking to decrease water use by 10 to 25 percent. There is a long list of LCRA customers this move affects. You can see them all, plus an email warning customers about the new restrictions, with this story in the local news section of KXAN.com.

08/14/09 Water Conservation - You can also share ideas on how to conserve water inside and outside your home in comment sections on our drought stories online. Here are some suggestions our staff shared today: Install water-saving shower heads and low-flow faucet aerators. If you don't have a low-flow toilet already, get a float booster for your tank. This could save ten or more gallons per day. And collect the water you use for rinsing fruits and vegetables - or your pet's old water that you're going to refresh - then reuse it to water plants.

08/17/09 Amber Alert - If you see any of these children in the area - call 9-1-1. Investigators in Bexar County, south of Austin, issued Amber Alerts for Brianna, Nichelle, Kenneth and "Dantae Harris" earlier today. They believe their 53-year old father and grandfather, "Alphonse Harris", has them, and may hurt them. He's likely

driving a Tan Dodge Caravan - with Texas License plate 52P-GX5. Investigators have reason to believe they could be in the Austin or Seguin area.

09/04/09 Drought Deep Eddy - drought conditions are threatening one of Austin's historic landmarks. Deep Eddy Pool off Lake Austin Boulevard is the oldest pool in Texas and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Two wells feed that pool... And city just discovered that the well that feeds the shallow end of the pool has run dry... and the well the pumps water into the deep end is running out of water. For now, the pool will stay open, but if the second well runs dry, the city says they'll have to close it...and Deep Eddy will remain closed until we get enough rain to replenish the well.

09/04/09 68 days of triples - Triple-digit temperatures are just one of the factors contributing to our extreme drought conditions. Yesterday, we hit our 68th day of triple-digit temperatures. We're not expected to hit 100 today, but it looks like we're likely to break the all-time record sometime next week.

### **Focus on positive/good news**

07/10/09 Boys Rescued - The Austin Fire Department rescued two teenage boys from the Colorado River under the Montopolis Bridge. The swimmers were on bridge pilings, but trapped by the fast current at about 5:45 this afternoon. Rescuers borrowed two kayaks, placed life jackets on the boys, and towed them safely back to shore.

07/11/09 Brown Santa - Despite today's triple digit heat, folks at Georgetown's Regional Park celebrated Christmas in July. They are raising money for Williamson County's "Brown Santa" program. There was a 5-K run and a family fair with law enforcement displays. With the 4th annual summer run, organizers hope to make up for last year's low donations. Last year "Brown Santa" helped some 750 families.

07/24/09 Minimum Wage Change - Minimum wage workers got a pay raise today. With Friday's additional 70-cents, minimum wage workers in Texas will make 7 dollars and 25 cents an hour. Before the increase, baristas at "Dominican Joe's" on South Congress made just above the old minimum wage. The managers hope to eventually give all their employees that same extra percentage. For businesses, the increase means an extra expense. But workers... like college student Elena Weinberg... are looking forward to a little extra cash in their pockets. This is the last phase of 3-step legislation. It raised the minimum wage to 5.85 an hour in 2007. The next year, the minimum wage went up to 6.55. 2009 is the final year included in the legislation.

08/08/09 Recession Job - Many industries are starting to rebound out of the recession and unemployment numbers are showing it. For the first time in 15-months unemployment numbers dropped slightly from 9-point-5 percent in June to 9-point-4 percent last month. This contradicts expert predictions of 9-point-6 percent.

08/13/09 Movie Shoot - Some big guns flashing in the streets of downtown Austin today... This is part of the film shoot for Robert Rodriguez's latest film - "Machete." We saw a few familiar faces out there today... but early reports say the film also stars Robert Deniro, Lindsay Lohan, Jessica Alba and more. Machete is slated for release sometime next year.

08/15/09 Years of Antones - Antones Record Shop is celebrating 22-years in Austin. There was live music and Bar-B-Q to celebrate today. The store was founded in 19-87 by Austin blues patriarch Clifford Antone. After his death employees bought the shop in order to carry on his legacy.

### **Family Values**

08/05/09 Dental Issues - The Texas auditor's office is biting down on the "State Board of Dental Examiners" today - releasing findings that show how little the agency releases to the public. The audit shows the board fails to verify and update information in its databases - even an important system the public uses to check up on dentists and hygienists. A new state audit shows inaccurate, incomplete and inconsistent data leaving the public in the dark. The Board of Dental Examiners current site also has profiles for each professional, but it only tells users if the board has revoked a license - no other details. For that, you have to file an Open Records Request, which can take up to 10 working days to respond - days you might need a dentist.

08/22/09 Job Fair - The latest unemployment numbers have Texas nearing 8-percent even though the state added more jobs in July for the first time since late last year which makes job fairs like the one in Cedar Park very popular. Organizers say about 300-people showed up for this 3rd and final job fair. The arena will employ 50-full time positions and about 200-part timers. Those positions include security, parking attendants, ushers and ticket takers.

09/19/09 Healthy Kids - The Boys and Girls Club in East Austin is working to help get kids in shape. Through rock climbing, soccer and tennis, kids of all ages learned today how to fight fat through being active. The event by Empower-ME Movement seeks to combat obesity by promoting better eating habits and exercise. The empower-ME organization says kids are facing large rates of obesity and its important for all of us to help them to get out and stay active.

09/21/09 Flu at Dell Children's - They had 340 people come in yesterday and more than 200 of those cases were confirmed as the swine flu. Hundreds more came through today; so they've set up tents as a triage unit to handle the milder cases and ease the overcrowding in the emergency room. The seasonal flu is not here yet, this is the swine flu. But fortunately the cases have been mild. Doctors here do not yet have the H-1-N-1 vaccine so they are urging everyone to use the normal precautions, including washing your hands often and rigorously. Moms like Tiasha Brown were told today there was a 4-to-5 hour wait to see the doctor.