

Liveable City  
Community News  
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**Follow the Money: Liveable City Deconstructs Austin's Economic Incentives**

Liveable City has released a first-of-its-kind report, "Building a More Sustainable Economy: Economic Development Strategy and Public Incentives in Austin." Authored by economist Michael Oden with assistance from Liveable City's Board, Advisory Council and others, the report offers an in-depth look at Austin's economic development and answers key questions: where does our economic development strategy come from, how is it implemented, and what institutions shape our local economic policies and programs?

Focusing on tax incentives and how they fit in the broader economic picture, the study examines why incentives are used, how much the city is giving, and what taxpayers are

getting in return. The report also identifies reforms needed to create a unified, sustainable economic strategy with strong public support to better position Austin for future economic challenges and opportunities.

Download the full report or executive summary at [www.liveablecity.org](http://www.liveablecity.org)

### **Health Insurance a Problem?**

#### **Take the Small Business Health Insurance Survey Today**

It's not a ranking to inspire pride, but Texas tops the nation in uninsured residents, with one in four Texans having no health care coverage at all. Among the reasons for our high uninsured rates are the number of small Texas businesses and nonprofits unable to offer coverage to their employees due to the prohibitive costs of group health plans.

In response, the Central Texas Regional Health Coverage Project is developing low-cost Health Coverage Plans for small Texas employers (2 to 50 employees) to be offered later this year. To ensure the plans will meet employee health coverage needs at a price small businesses can afford, the Project needs your input.

To weigh in on health care plans, please visit [www.healthcarecentraltexas.com](http://www.healthcarecentraltexas.com) and scroll down to click on the Survey button. Ten minutes of your time will improve access to health care in our community and help our small businesses remain competitive.

The survey closes August 8 so don't delay. Questions? Contact Ann Kitchen at [akitchen@icc-centex.org](mailto:akitchen@icc-centex.org) or call 512-804-2090.

### **It's a Wrap: 2008 Liveable Vision Awards a Success!**

A festive throng gathered at the Carver Museum on May 21 to honor the winners of the 2008 Liveable City's Annual Vision Awards. Recognized for outstanding achievements in the following categories were:

- Equity – Austin Voices for Education and Youth
- Engagement – The CreateAustin Cultural Plan
- Esthetics – Butler Park (formerly Town Lake)
- Economy – HelioVolt Solar Manufacturing
- Environment - Texas Campaign for the Environment & Dell's Computer Recycling Program

This event was made possible by the generous support of many who share our commitment to building a better future for all of Austin. Heartfelt thanks to our visionary sponsors: Austin Chronicle, KUT Radio, Capital Metro, Southwest Strategies Group, Earth Tech, Family Connections, Fisterra, Glazer's, Ignite Consulting, Little City, Momark Development, People Fund, Perry Lorenz, Rick Cofer, Rodney Gibbs, AB Porter, Stubb's Legendary Kitchens, Texas Disposal Systems, Dwyer Realty, Baer

Engineering, Big Night Catering, and the Institute for Community, University, and School Partnerships.

**Keeping Austin Family Friendly:  
Task Force Recommendations Expected This Week**

After input from child care experts, a citywide survey, numerous focus groups and a review of successful programs in other cities, the City of Austin Task Force on Families and Children is poised to release its “family friendly” recommendations this week. Created through the efforts of former Council Member Jennifer Kim, the task force was formed in recognition of the critical role families and children play in Austin’s continued vitality and the special challenges that unprecedented growth is presenting for this sector of our community.

Task Force members represented a broad cross-section of the Austin community, including members of Liveable City’s Board and Advisory Council (<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/council/fctf.htm>). The Task Force’s recommendations will be available at [www.liveablecity.org](http://www.liveablecity.org) following the report’s release.

**Join Jimmy LaFave and Rock Stubb’s for Health Care:  
Friday, August 15, 7pm**

On Friday, August 15, health care takes center stage with a benefit for the Representation Alliance at Stubb’s Bar-B-Q, 801 Red River. Doors open at 7pm for a show featuring red-dirt troubadour Jimmy LaFave, along with Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Lonesome Dave Fisher, and the Hydmen. Highlights of the evening include a raffle for a signed Epiphone Hummingbird acoustic guitar and a barbecue buffet by Stubbs.

All proceeds benefit the Representation Alliance, a new nonprofit organization that provides free legal services to individuals with low income who have been denied authorization for professionally prescribed health care. Sponsors include Stubb’s Bar-B-Q, Front Gate Tickets, the Austin Chronicle, Epiphone, WaMu, Collection Agency Films and Liveable City.

Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for 18 and under, and are available at the door or online at [www.frontgatetickets.com](http://www.frontgatetickets.com). For more about the Representation Alliance, please visit <http://representationalliance.org/>.

**What Keeps Austin a Good Place to Live? You Tell Us!**

With fall approaching, Liveable City is preparing to launch its new 2008 Quality of Life Visual Survey. Conducted door-to-door with a representative sample of Austinites, this

unique survey uses picture cards to find out what makes our city a good place to live and what folks see as the biggest threats to our quality of life today.

The original survey, conducted in 2002, was key in identifying widespread concerns about rising housing costs in Austin. Those results led to a broad community conversation about affordable housing and helped build momentum for passing the first affordable housing bond in Austin's history.

After five years, it's time to hit the streets again and find out what's on our minds as a city. The new survey will be conducted in both English and Spanish and will include a diverse range of neighborhoods to ensure that all voices that make up our community are heard. There will be an online version as well. Stay tuned for details!

### **Liveable City's Speaker Series Gears Up for Fall**

Liveable City's speaker series, "Imagining the Next City," will kick off in late September with a panel discussion on the use of public economic incentives. The conversation is expected to draw on LC's recently released report on the topic, with a look ahead to a November ballot proposal that would ban city incentives for retail businesses. Watch for time and location of this important discussion in our September newsletter!

Created in partnership with the University of Texas Community and Regional Planning Department and the LBJ School of Public Affairs Urban Program, the jointly-sponsored speaker's series is open to the general public. Forums will cover Liveable City's five "E's of Sustainability" - Environment, Engagement, Equity, Economy, and Esthetics - with an additional "E" in the area of Ethics. LC hopes these discussions will spark and support new collaborations, projects and solutions to major issues facing our community.

### **A Fond Farewell to Liveable City's Wendi White**

LC's Board, Advisory Council, and many friends join in wishing a fond farewell to Wendi White, our departing Development and Membership Director. Austin's loss is Virginia's gain, as Wendi and family will join her husband at his new job at Old Dominion University. Wendi has played a central role during Liveable City's formative years, helping to build LC from a fledgling organization to an established nonprofit. Wendi's many contributions to the Austin community include her work with Zilker Elementary, Austin Interfaith, the Mother's Milk Bank, Texas C-Bar, the Austin Children's Museum and countless other community efforts. Please join us in wishing Wendi and family the best and letting them know that there will always be a place for them deep in the heart of Texas.

**Save the Date!**

Real Community Is Real Art: A Texas Workshop on the Arts and Urban Development, September 19-20. For info, email [TWTxRealArtWorkshop@gmail.com](mailto:TWTxRealArtWorkshop@gmail.com)

**Shout Outs:**

- To the **Moondays Project** for leading the charge against light pollution in Austin.  
<http://www.moondaysproject.com/>
- To new City Council Members **Laura Morrison** and **Randi Shade** and returning CM **Lee Leffingwell**. Best wishes for a productive term of office!

**And now, a word *for* our Sponsors...**

Building a more Liveable City isn't cheap! Special recognition goes to the Shield-Ayers Foundation, the Rather Family Trust, the Trull Foundation, and the Greater Houston Family Foundation's Gray Family Fund whose generous help makes our work possible. For a complete list of our wonderful partners and supporters, please visit [www.liveablecity.org](http://www.liveablecity.org).