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Dear Client:

“Last year, Austin Energy’s rate case settlement financed the shuttering of the coal-fired Fayette power plant.” This is a direct quote from Austin Mayor Steve Adler and former NYC mayor Mike Bloomberg taken from a co-written commentary about a “coal-free America.” When you re-read the phrase above, “*financed the shuttering of the coal-fired Fayette power plant,*” doesn’t the use of the word *shuttering* make it sound like the plant just 66 miles from Austin is already closed -- or could be shut down as a result of Austin’s action? Nothing could be further from the truth. Let’s examine the facts.

First of all, a portion of the electricity you are using as we speak is more than likely generated by the coal-fired Fayette Power Project (FPP) just east of La Grange, about an hour from Austin. **And no matter what Austin Energy does, the coal-fired plant will keep generating electricity. FPP will *not* be shuttered.** Here’s the situation.

FPP has three units capable of generating about 1,615 megawatts of electricity on its 10-sq.-mile Central Texas site. Austin Energy and the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) co-own units 1 and 2. LCRA owns Unit 3. **Obviously Austin Energy owns less than half of FPP. And LCRA has indicated privately and publicly that no matter what Austin does, FPP will keep generating power.**

Adler and Bloomberg deride “coal pollution” and they claim “coal is still the single largest driver of climate change” in the commentary. What they *don’t* say in the commentary titled “Why Austin is leading the charge to create a coal-free America” is **even if Austin Energy does not use electricity from FPP, the plant will continue to operate as it has since 1979.**

FPP uses low-sulfur coal, delivered by rail, from the Powder River Basin of Wyoming which contains less ash than other types of coal or lignite. FPP uses **electrostatic precipitators to filter fine particles like dust and smoke from the flow of gases through the units. At a cost of \$400 million, desulfurization equipment known as scrubbers,** was also installed to reduce emissions.

The City of Austin is one of the nation’s leaders in switching to solar and wind. In fact, it has an ambitious pledge to have **more than 50% of its power come from renewable energy by 2025** – and to achieve **net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050**. But, FPP has indicated it will continue to generate electricity from coal in Central Texas, no matter what Austin does.

Here's another way you know you are in Austin. Sure, Austin is noted for its infrastructure in support of tech, healthcare, education, etc. But now an "office" building for nonprofits and social ventures is opening to provide "open, flexible and affordable office space that encourages collaboration with Austin's social impact community." It's called The Center for Social Innovation.

It is located ten minutes from downtown at 1023 Springdale Rd. in East Austin, near Airport Blvd. Clustered at Springdale General, the Center will feature a 50,000 sq.ft. campus of office and meeting space and 10,000 sq.ft. of co-working space. All of this, say the founders, is to bring **"together nonprofits, social enterprises and capital providers in the same physical space to foster collaboration, innovation and entrepreneurship."**

So how did this come about? The company's name is Notley. It was co-founded in 2015 by **Dan and Lisa Graham**. Notley's mission is to "fund and support businesses, nonprofits, and programs making positive systemic change and social impact in the world."

The Graham name may be familiar as founders of BuildASign.com. Notley was a way for them to leverage their own business and investing success. And BuildASign.com is quite a success story, founded in 2005. **Over the past dozen years, it has grown to more than 350 employees in Austin with sales generated in the US, Canada and the UK.** And, the way it operates the online company tells you all you need to know about founding Notley.

BuildASign.com has made **more than \$1 million of cash and in-kind donations to more than 1,700 nonprofits** to help them keep overhead costs down. It received national recognition for its donation **of more than 345,000 "Welcome Home" banners and signs to friends and families of military service members returning home from a deployment.**

The creation of Philanthropitch was also spearheaded by BuildASign.com. This is a **fast pitch forum for Austin's most promising nonprofit organizations looking for access to human and financial capital.** Since 2013, more than \$300,000 has been donated to deserving Central Texas nonprofit organizations through this event.

And Dan Graham? **He has personally been on more civic and charitable boards than a termite with a glandular condition.** So it is no wonder the Center for Social Innovation is a logical product of his business and personal DNA.

"I really think that in 10 years what we'll have is an **entrepreneurial area, or district**, that's centered in East Austin as a hub for socially-minded businesses in every stage of development," Graham says. "Austin is a well-positioned city to leverage its **capital**, wealth of **nonprofits** and the entrepreneurial nature of the city to become a global leader in the field of social innovation."

Planning to hop on a plane at Austin's airport this summer? Well, get ready. Summer travel is traditionally the busiest travel season, and this could be the busiest summer ever at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA). There are a number of reasons *this* summer travel season is different.

First of all, the trend is already in place. **Passenger traffic is up 6.5% over the record-setting year of 2016.** There is no sign this heavy travel will let up. And, there are other changes in place that were not present last year.

There are "new" airlines, new destinations and new flights not available last summer – more seats to accommodate more butts to more destinations. Added to this, is the fact that some airlines are using **larger jets with more passenger capacity.**

There is a new terminal in a different location – that could lead to a bit of confusion. It's the South Terminal, 10000 Logistics Lane, and accessed only from the south boundary of ABIA. All Allegiant flights operate out of this terminal.

Construction is now moving full speed ahead on expansion of the original main Barbara Jordan Terminal. While construction is mostly out of the way, at the east end of the terminal, vehicular travel and parking is impacted.

As a result of all this, **longer than normal lines are likely** in ticketing and baggage-checkin, as well as at the TSA security checkpoints. Arrive early – and take a Valium.

While on the topic of travel, Trip Advisor's 2017 Summer Vacation Value Report ranked three Texas destinations as among America's top summer hotspots.

The report is based on the greatest increase in seasonal hotel booking, including the average one-week vacation costs for hotels and airfare. **Corpus Christi** ranked #43 (\$1,614 average weeklong per person vacation cost), **South Padre Island** ranked #44 (\$2,204) and **Galveston** ranked #47 (\$1,944). The top-ranked destinations were primarily in the northeast US.

With shoppers flocking to Amazon and other online retailers to buy everything from furniture to computers to suits, it's easy to predict the death knell of big box retailers. Not so fast.

Even though big name retailers such as Macy's, Sears and J.C.Penney are announcing closures, commercial real estate firm CBRE reported 5/18/17 **hundreds of new stores, spanning tens of millions of square feet, will open nationally this year.**

“Let it be said: We are living, deliciously and indisputably, in the golden age of barbecue,” proclaims the arbiter of all things Texan, *Texas Monthly* (TM). “By our own declaration, we’ve entered into an unparalleled era of Texas ’cue,” enthused the Austin-based statewide magazine. And if you live in Central Texas, you may be in BBQ heaven. Check out the wisdom of their rankings.

TM has spent four years eating, eating, and eating more BBQ all across miles and miles of Texas. Its fifth list of the current top fifty barbecue joints in Texas is what it calls **“our most exhaustive (and delicious) list to date.** The competition was fierce, with ten places ranked as the best of the best.” Okay, okay, get to it. What are *TM*’s top choices?

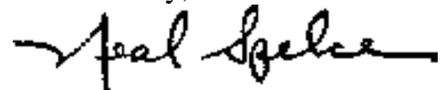
“Franklin Barbecue, the Austin spot known for its fabled brisket and serpentine queue, slipped down to number two after topping our last list,” reported the mag. Number two! C’mon! Which outfit beat out Franklin? **Another Central Texas favorite – Snow’s BBQ in Lexington,** the number three BBQ joint last year.

Texas Monthly takes this BBQ business seriously. In 2013, it named a barbecue editor, **Daniel Vaughan.** For this year’s tally, Vaughan traveled 65,000 miles and chowed down at more than 400 places. Then last fall, Vaughan put two dozen ’cue crew members together (after a training session) and they, in turn, armed with score sheets, covered 23,000 miles, visiting more than 350 places. (There is no hard data on the amount of Tums ingested).

What are the other Austin barbecue joints near the top of the *TM* list? **Micklethwait Craft Meats** nailed the #8 spot. Only the top ten are ranked, but the other five Austin spots were listed alphabetically: **Freedmen’s, La Barbecue, Stiles Switch BBQ & Brew, Terry Black’s Barbecue** (the one on Barton Springs Road) and **Valentina’s Tex Mex BBQ.** (If your favorite is not on this list, toss the magazine and just be grateful to live in a state where BBQ reigns!) By the way, Taylor’s **Louie Mueller Barbecue** (that opened way back in 1949) was #4.

Dr. Louis Overholster: *Good BBQ* comes from experience and experience comes from *poor BBQ.*

Sincerely,



Editor/Publisher