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ASKS COURT
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CHARGE B3**
**2ND SUSPECT
BEING SOUGHT
IN GAS STATION
ROBBERY B6**

CENTRAL TEXAS WEATHER



Rebekah Scrogin takes a plunge into the spillway waters below Barton Springs Pool as she seeks relief Wednesday from temperatures in the upper 90s and a heat index of 106. Even though summer itself is a few days away, hot weather already has arrived in force. RALPH BARRERA / AMERICAN-STATESMAN

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT AUSTIN'S HEAT THIS WEEK



High humidity combined with some of the hottest temperatures we've seen in Austin so far this year could send heat index values soaring to about **106 degrees** Thursday, the National Weather Service says. Here are five things you need to know about the heat:

IT'S NOT THE HEAT, IT'S THE HUMIDITY

Thermometers don't tell the whole story. Humidity from the Gulf Coast makes everything feel hotter because your body can't cool down as easily through evaporating sweat because evaporation isn't as effective if there's too much moisture in the air.

RECOGNIZE SYMPTOMS OF HEAT EXHAUSTION

Watch out for symptoms of heat exhaustion: dizziness, nausea and fainting. Before heatstroke occurs, there's confusion or an altered mental state and a rapid, strong pulse as blood flow to the brain drops.

BLOOD CIRCULATION KEEPS YOU COOL

Blood flow is your body's coolant. On hot days, the body decreases blood flow from organs and increases it toward the skin, so heat in the blood can escape. The very young, the very old and the very overweight have less efficient circulatory systems, which makes them more vulnerable to illness.

CAR INTERIORS CAN BE DANGEROUS

Don't leave children or pets in a car. Even when it's just 80 degrees outside, temperatures inside a car can rise to deadly triple-digit temperatures within 15 minutes.

DRINK LOTS OF WATER, WEAR LIGHT CLOTHING

Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, and stay cooler by wearing light-colored or loose clothing.

American-Statesman staff

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ROUND ROCK DEVELOPMENT

Round Rock plans convention center, resort, water park

350-acre complex projected to employ 700 by 2020 opening.

By Nicole Barrios
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A resort company with indoor water parks in Wisconsin, Ohio and Pennsylvania announced plans Wednesday to establish a resort, convention center and water park in Round Rock.

The family-run Kalahari Resorts and Conventions says the Africa-themed resort in Texas will be its first venture in the Southwest after establishing some of the largest indoor water parks in the country.

The proposed 350-acre site is across U.S. 79 from Dell Diamond. "We could not be any happier to

be here," Kalahari Resorts owner Todd Nelson said. "Basically the city's attitude was a big factor. It's a wonderfully led city, and they welcomed us with open arms."

Round Rock officials said they expect Kalahari to invest a minimum of \$250 million into the project, creating significant property tax revenue for the city, Williamson County and the Round Rock school district. They said Kalahari is expected to generate millions of dollars in annual revenue.

The city and Kalahari are negotiating possible economic incentives, officials said, and are exploring sharing tax revenues and possibly providing financial support.

Nelson said he expects a 990-room resort hotel. The indoor water park should be 200,000

Round Rock continued on B5

NEW DETAILS WILLIAMSON COUNTY DA

Dietz to preside over Duty removal lawsuit

Williamson DA accused of incompetency and official misconduct.

By Claire Osborn
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Williamson County District Attorney Jana Duty's case has been assigned to former Travis County state District Court Judge John Dietz.

Former Travis County state District Court Judge John Dietz has been tapped to preside over the lawsuit to remove Williamson County District Attorney Jana Duty from office.

The presiding judge of the 3rd Administrative Judicial Region, Billy Ray Stubblefield, assigned Dietz as a visiting judge after Williamson County state District Judge Betsy Lambeth recused herself from the case.

The lawsuit against Duty, filed Monday morning, accuses her of incompetency and official misconduct after she spent five days in jail last year for violating a gag

order and after the State Bar of Texas on June 1 put her on probation for 18 months for professional misconduct.

Dietz is retired from the 250th District Court, where he presided over a number of significant cases, including in 2004 when he declared the state's school finance system unconstitutional.

A district judge is required to

DA continued on B3

BASTROP GOVERNMENT

Bastrop manager resigns for 2nd time

Mike Talbot says City Council kept him from doing his job.

By Andy Sevilla
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Bastrop City Manager Mike Talbot announced Wednesday he will resign, saying the City Council has overstepped its boundaries and infiltrated day-to-day management of the city, effectively handicapping him from doing his job.

"Over the past year the gradual erosion of the home rule charter's segregation of responsibilities between the council and the manager ... has culminated in a level of mental and physical stress that is seriously affecting my health and well-being," Talbot said in his resignation letter. Talbot's resignation is effective Sept. 1.

Wednesday's resignation was the second time Talbot quit the city manager's job this year. He resigned for similar reasons in February, telling council members during a meeting, "You are getting into the administration of the city. If you're going to do that, just let me go then."

But council members refused to accept his resignation in February, and in March they extended his contract through 2018. This time, however, Talbot said his resignation "is final."

"I just feel like it isn't working,

Talbot continued on B6

HEART OF TEXAS

Impact Austin awards \$426,000 to charities

Women's philanthropy organization presents gifts to 5 area groups.

By James Barragán
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Impact Austin, a women's philanthropy organization, awarded a total of \$426,000 in grants to help advance the missions of five Central Texas charity groups at a check presentation Wednesday.

The philanthropic group, one of the largest of its kind in the country, awarded four \$94,000 grants and one \$50,000 "Catalyst Grant" to a group that had previously achieved finalist status in Impact Austin's grant giving process.

The four recipients of the \$94,000 grants are TreeFolks, the Arc of the Capital Area, Part-



TreeFolks volunteers plant saplings in Bastrop in 2014. The group will use its \$94,000 grant from Impact Austin to plant trees in areas of Hays County hit by floods in 2015. Impact Austin has awarded \$5.5 million to area groups since 2003. CONTRIBUTED BY CARLY BLANKENSHIP 2014

nerships for Children and Capital IDEA. The winner of the catalyst grant is LifeWorks, which helps youths and families struggling with poverty toward self-sufficiency.

"Our grants really help those organizations effect change in four areas: environment, culture, family and education," said Donna Benson-Chan, executive direc-

tor of Impact Austin. "We know and have a really deep level of confidence that every grant will change lives."

TreeFolks will use the money from its grant to plant trees in areas of Hays County that were hit by floods in 2015. The Arc of the Capital Area will use its grant to fund a studio where 83 students with disabilities will get an arts education.

Partnerships for Children will fund a traveling portrait exhibit that will teach the public about children in the foster care system and the adoption process. Capital IDEA will use its award money to pay for the community college tuition of 100 rural-area mothers as part of its goal to get those women out of unemployment or underemployment and

Grants continued on B5

AUSTIN BILLBOARDS



A Reagan National Advertising billboard stands on South Lamar Boulevard in Austin. A state appeals court ruled Wednesday that the city of Austin's annual fee of \$190 per billboard is taxation to an unconstitutional degree. JESSALYN TAMEZ / AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Appeals court: Austin owes billboard owner \$200,000

By Chuck Lindell
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Ruling that the city of Austin's billboard registration fee was an unconstitutional tax, a state appeals court Wednesday ordered the city to refund almost \$200,000 to an advertising company that had sued to challenge the annual charge.

The Texas Constitution requires local governments to limit taxes to no more than 50 percent of a tax charged by the state. Because Texas doesn't tax billboards, Austin's \$190-per-sign annual fee is

well beyond the 50 percent limit and is therefore unconstitutional and "void from its inception," the Austin-based 3rd Court of Appeals ruled.

Reagan National Advertising, the court said, would have been entitled to a refund on all the money it paid Austin — almost \$480,000 from 2009 to 2014, the latest year figures were available when Reagan filed its appeal.

Instead, the court ordered Austin to pay what Reagan requested — \$198,450, the amount the com-

Billboards continued on B3

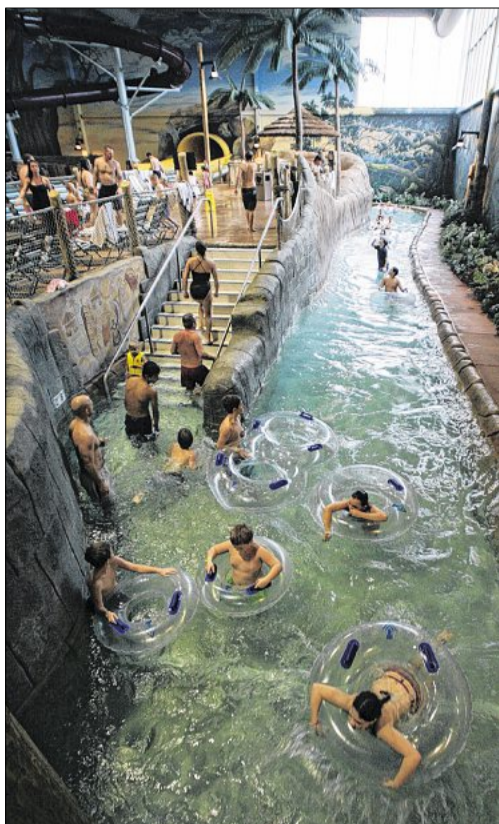


COURTESY PHOTO

OTHER KALAHARI RESORTS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Above: The 100,000-square-foot water park at Kalahari Resorts in the Pocono Mountains, Pa., is the largest in the state.

Right: Patrons on a cold December day in Ohio enjoy the warm water at the Kalahari Resort in Sandusky, the largest indoor water park in the United States under one roof.



KEN LOVE / AKRON BEACON JOURNAL 2007

GULF COAST

Fish-friendly pyramids part of artificial reef

381-acre reef will be largest ever placed in Texas waters.

Associated Press

PORT O'CONNOR — A 381-acre artificial reef planned for the Gulf of Mexico off the Texas coast will include pyramid-style concrete structures friendly to fish.

The Victoria Advocate reported Tuesday that the site 6 miles from the Port O'Connor jetties will be home to the largest artificial reef ever placed in Texas waters.

The "Keeping It Wild Reef" is a \$1 million project of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, an affiliated foundation and Coastal Conservation Association Texas. It's expected to be in place in 2017.

Chris Ledford, an artificial reef program specialist with the Parks and Wildlife Department, said the concrete pyramids will be 10 feet wide on each side and 8 feet high. About 500 pyr-

amids will be included in the reef.

Round holes on the sides will make the interiors accessible to small fish, and a large triangle opening will allow turtles to escape the structures. The artificial reef will also provide hard surfaces for barnacles and clams to latch onto and grow.

The reef will be the largest ever placed in Texas waters because decks from two derelict petroleum platforms in the area will be removed, leaving the bare metal legs of the structure. The platforms will be placed on their sides or their top parts will be cut off. If the top parts of the structure are cut off, they can be placed in the water to create more reef material.

Ledford said the Port O'Connor site is one of a series of artificial reefs the Parks and Wildlife Department aims to build along the Gulf coast.

The department is still waiting on some permits for the project.

Round Rock

continued from B1

square feet, "which is really a very huge indoor water park," he said. The project is also expected to include a moderate-sized outdoor water park and a large "family fun center," he said.

The resort, which will feature art, furniture and other décor from Africa, is projected to employ at least 700 when it opens, according to information posted on the city website.

The Round Rock Kalahari resort is expected to open sometime between May 2020 and October 2020.

Nelson said the company anticipates building a few 5- to 10-acre lakes with four or five restaurants near the water. It also plans to offer a full-service spa in the resort. A 150,000-square-foot convention center is also planned, but Nelson said that it could be larger.

"There's really no downside to us coming here," Nelson said. "Literally, restaurants flourish more, bars, shopping, retail, you name it. Literally every business should do much better once



Round Rock Mayor Alan McGraw (far right) sits with City Council Members Craig Morgan (from left), Writ Baese, City Manager Laurie Hadley and Council Member Kris Whitfield at the announcement Wednesday. NICOLE BARRIOS / AUSTIN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

we get here."

Nelson said the company looked at sites in Dallas, Frisco, Houston and San Antonio before deciding on Round Rock. "We think we have the best site in Texas," he said.

Mayor Alan McGraw said the resort and convention center was the main reason the city pursued Kalahari. "There's water parks around, but this is not what that is," he said. "Round Rock is just super excited about this and what it's going to do for the community."

McGraw said bringing Kalahari to Round Rock is

another step in the city's goal to diversify the local economy. He echoed Nelson in saying Kalahari will truly be a recession-proof business.

"This resort will be within a three-hour drive to 80 to 85 percent of the population of Texas," McGraw said. "That's what this brings to us now that we don't have. It's not about the water park; it is about the resort and convention center."

The mayor said he expects the complex to bring conventions to Round Rock, and that organizations based in Austin with annual gather-

ings, as well as events such as Formula One races and the Austin City Limits music festival, all need hotel and gathering space.

The city and the Round Rock Chamber have been working with Kalahari on the project for the past two years as the company decided on a location, McGraw said.

Officials expect a memorandum of understanding to come before the Round Rock City Council during its June 23 meeting.

Contact Nicole Barrios at 512-255-5827.

Ledford said the Port O'Connor site is one of a series of artificial reefs the Parks and Wildlife Department aims to build along the Gulf coast.

Grants

continued from B1

into skilled careers.

This year's grants bring Impact Austin's total giving to Central Texas philanthropy groups to \$5.5 million since 2003. In that time, the group has given 56 grants to 47 nonprofits.

"We are thrilled to surpass \$5.5 million, and our

members are just over-the-top proud," Benson-Chan said. "That's a really large number, and it represents much more than money to us, it really symbolizes thousands of hours over the last 13 years that our members have invested into understanding our community."

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