

From the Heart...

...Life Skills for Today's Family

By Sharon L. Benedict MS



What do you see for our future?

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 5, 2012)

As we all know, our nation is in very challenging times both economically, politically, and culturally. Bringing these together for the wellbeing of our families and communities is no easy task at the national or local levels. Yet, in the midst of seemingly monumental challenges, concerns, and outright fears for our future, for Kendall County residents we live in a very unique region of Texas and our nation.

Along with the challenges, the opportunities are also right in front of us. The question is "Are we each willing and ready in our way to step up to contribute to the possibilities for our neighborhoods and communities? What do our community leaders see for our future? To get a glimpse through their eyes and heart, I decided to interview some of our more prominent community leaders (both public and private entities) during the month of October and November.

I hope the interviews in aggregate will offer us an opportunity to consider what our community leaders see and want, the complexities of what they have to manage, and also what it will take to see it happen, from their professional and personal perspectives. Seeing it happen includes offering our own time, talents, and persevering patience to stay the course together.



The first community leader to step up happens to be our very own Paul Barwick, Special Projects Director for the city of Boerne. Paul has graciously responded to the following questions, not just as a Boerne city official, but also as a resident in Kendall County.

1. What do you see for Boerne's future? Kendall County?

I am naturally optimistic, which I inherited from my mother, so I wholeheartedly believe Boerne has a bright future. The basis for this optimism stems from the quality and high level of public and private investment in our city and downtown is positioning Boerne for increased economic vitality of downtown and paving the way for continued private real estate investment in our community. All of which contributes to the improvement in our quality of life and enhanced downtown experience for guests and residents alike.

Coming off the heels of the completion of the City's Trails and River Road Park improvements project and downtown sidewalk project, I see the acceleration of a much more walkable and pedestrian friendly downtown environment. Starting early next year there will be several more projects that the City will be involved with including new and replacement sidewalks near Theissen and Main Street, and a series of substantial pedestrian safety mobility improvements with the Texas Department of Transportation beginning early next year. These project will include the widening of Cibolo Creek bridge both for vehicles and pedestrians, crosswalk banding, pedestrian crosswalk countdown timers new traffic signals and storm water improvements.

2. What challenges do you see for Boerne right now and in the future? Kendall County?

One of the primary challenges will be water quantity and quality. We live in the southern Edwards Plateau which has semi arid weather conditions, so we need to be very wise on how we use and conserve this ever precious resource for human use. In addition, this region has tremendous natural resources, and I believe we should be careful so as to maintain the quality of this water which equates directly to quality of life.

Another challenge will be the next wave of growth that will occur. As this happens, attention should be given to find new and interesting ways to continue promoting and preserving the rich historic and cultural identity of this area. Looking for ways to engage new residents into the community and providing them with a greater awareness of what surrounds them I feel is important.

3. What would you like to see happen to make Boerne a more vibrant community for you and your family? Kendall County Communities?

For a more sustainable and diverse downtown economy I would like to see some infill development that embraces higher density downtown residential units which would provide an opportunity for people to live, work and play in downtown and along the Hill Country Mile.

For the younger generations, it would be beneficial to have additional venues or businesses that cater to young adults where they can socialize and entertain themselves locally. The movie theater currently being constructed is a

step in the right direction. There are more opportunities to keep the youth nearby with venues such as a miniature golf course, commercial sports park, local museum with interactive and rotating exhibits, and possibly an amphitheatre for outdoor concerts.

4. How do you see these things being accomplished? short-term and long-term?

For me, to get anything accomplished that is lasting and worthwhile, it's all about partnerships. It makes no difference at what scale, either world or local affairs, it takes strategic planning and partnerships to make the most of every opportunity. By leveraging the resources and skills of a variety of organizations there is much that can be accomplished. One local example was the success of the inaugural Best of BoerneFest 2012 celebrating culture, community and commerce that included the Greater Boerne Chamber of Commerce, City of Boerne, Hill Country Mile, and Hill Country Council for the Arts. Next year's event will include additional partners and promises to be even better.

5. Any final thoughts you want to share with my readers?

My family and I feel blessed to live here in Kendall County, it is a wonderful place to work and raise a family, in large part to the strong sense of community spirit and engagement embodied in the people of this area. I have no doubt the area will continue to grow and grow gracefully because of the generous and passionate people that make this county such a special place.

Thank you Paul for sharing your thoughts and insights for our future. To my readers, be sure to say hello to Paul to personally thank him for his special

expertise and willingness to give us a glimpse into our future right here in Boerne, Kendall County. And by all means offer your help (not just complaints, please) in whatever way will continue to make Boerne and Kendall County an exceptional place to live and work. Stay tuned for some timely and insightful input you won't want to miss with the next interview.

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From the Heart...

...Life Skills for Today's Family
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What does EDC see for our future? part 1

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 12, 2012)

Here is your opportunity to hear from one of our Kendall County's economic development leaders on what he sees for Boerne and Kendall County's future. Based on five questions I will be asking throughout October and part of the November, here is another community leader's perspective for Boerne and Kendall County. Dan Rogers has been our President/CEO for the Kendall County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) since 2006. In a two part article, his insights and expertise are offered to give us a glimpse into what is happening right now and what may be on the horizon.

1. What do you see for Boerne's future? Kendall County?

Let's start back in time a bit. The EDC started with a group of individuals who went before the city and county in 2004 to ask if they would partner with them to develop a more full scale economic development plan. The city and county agreed to partner. In 2006, we opened the doors with the motto, "*Preserving the Past, Promoting the Future.*" That has lead us to some very good wins, such as keeping Albany Engineered Composites here, where the building on North Main would have been closed and over 200 jobs lost to this community. We kept Texas Star Fruit and Nut from moving to San Antonio. They have more than 50 employees now, have expanded significantly and will probably again.

Boerne has a long story but is a good story. There are economic development corporations in most cities in Texas, even small cities, with ordinances and controls put in place, and where they generate sales and property tax. Since the 1980's many cities use a ½ cent sales tax for economic development. Boerne does not. They use ½ cent for property tax stabilization.

Economic development is about growth of the tax base. Yet, it's the right kind of growth we want. And that is what Kendall County EDC is all about—managed growth with the right kind of growth. We look at Boerne and Kendall County as a special place where people come for the quality of life. And we want that quality of life to continue even though we know we are going to grow in size.

What do I see in Boerne and Kendall County's future? In 20 years Kendall County has grown 141%. We were founded. Boerne at 12,000 is a third of the county's 34,000 population right now. In 30 years, the county may be 70,000 people. Over this 30 year period, the City has told us they have enough water to supply a population of 35,000 with all the amenities, retail, manufacturing, and businesses.

Where are those 35,000 people coming from? Historically, Kendall County has been 3.25% of the growth of San Antonio. For every thousand people San Antonio gets, we will get 32 people coming to Boerne. If 600,000 people move into Bexar county in the next eight years, we will see 19,500 people or 7800 households move into Kendall County. You ask why Kendall County is growing. There are two reasons: One, quality of life that is in the Hill Country; two, the

school districts, mainly Boerne Independent School District (BISD). The draw comes from mid to upper management, military, and other professionals.

The next area of growth in the county will be in the Comfort area where there is also water availability. I see parts of western Kendall County growing in the next 5 to 20 years, probably in and around the new Kendall West Utility. Tapatio Springs may even be another Boerne in the future.

The other area of growth will probably occur in the 3351/Bergheim area because of Cordillera, Waterstone, and other subdivisions. Hwy 46, within 20 years or more, will be an outer loop to San Antonio. Why? Because it starts at Sequin/east side of I10 and ends up on the west side of I10. It goes around San Antonio. Bergheim and Boerne may grow together at some point in the future. I don't see anything growing in the rest of the county, with the large ranches and small areas like Kendalia and Sisterdale; maybe upscaled a bit. The main reason is infrastructure. Water availability is limited, unless another pipeline comes in. But, these ranches and small towns are part of the Hill Country character and quality we want to preserve.

2. What challenges do you see for Boerne and Kendall County right now and in the future?

Our three main challenges are: infrastructure (including water availability and waste water), land availability (such as providing sufficient pad sites as well as the right retail climate area), and land cost. One of the most important things about growth is to place your infrastructure where you want the growth to occur.

Yet, water and waste water are the two key elements that keep outlying areas from growing together.

Regarding land, we are handicapped in that the City does not have the funds to buy property for a business technology park or offer large incentives. We have lost companies to other counties who gave large attractive incentives. Offering incentives are used as a motivational tool to come to our area. As a result, these new businesses create completely new revenue streams. In this day and time, you better have incentives or you won't attract new businesses. You don't give incentives to every company. You give them to those who have a return on investment benefiting the City and keep the quality of life.

There are some areas of Boerne that need to be worked on for higher quality than they are right now. Look what happened to North Main. There were not the ordinances or controls in place like there are now. The same is true for South Main. Yet, over time, as the City continues the River Road improvements and other major enhancement projects, both the North and South Main districts will change and evolve for the better as people buy properties in those districts, changing the look as well.

Another major challenge is with the national chain stores. If they can put up a standard box store, they will do it. But what if we say no? HEB is a prime example. They wanted to build a different type of store than what is there today. The city council said no. We want you to be Boerne, not Bulverde or south San Antonio. And HEB did it our way. We are going to do that with all the new businesses with the help of the city ordinances, city council, and city manager

and staff. We are going to strongly encourage buildings being built and renovated to last, look good 20 to 30 years from now, and fit the culture of Boerne. The EDC will continue our motto, *Preserving the Past, Promoting the Future*.

We need to bring in retail to supplement what we already have. This is the biggest negative in Kendall County now. We lose millions of dollars to San Antonio/Bexar County because we don't have the full range of retail. That is not to say we don't have good retail. We do. We had Buxton Company, a retail consulting firm, do a study that told us we are doing good in certain areas but fall flat in others. We have three to four major stores that create a lot of money in sales tax, such as Wal-Mart, Home Depot, and HEB. We definitely do not want to negatively impact our historic downtown stores that the Buxton study reported focus on tourism. Tourism is a valuable asset for Boerne and Kendall County. However, a number of historic downtown store owners ask why local people don't shop in Boerne more and buy from us? They would buy if the people carried the products that they shop for outside of Boerne.

Be sure to catch part two of this valuable interview with Dan, offering his perspective on Boerne and Kendall County's future.

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From the Heart. . .

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By Sharon L. Benedict MS



What does EDC see for our future? part 2

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 19, 2012)

In this part two interview article, Dan Rogers, President/CEO, Kendall County Economic Development Corporation offers his insights and expertise on what is happening right now and what may be on the horizon.

3. What would you like to see happen to make Boerne and other Kendall County communities more vibrant for you and your family?

I want to see our growth stretch out for hundreds of years . . . continue to grow moderately that will keep our quality of life with the communities we have, with the land we have available. Based on land availability limits we have today, I see moderate growth of businesses over the next 20 years bringing in 10 to 20 businesses that will employ 100 to 250 employees each. With this kind of moderate growth, people will come here and say, "What a great way to run a city and have a city grow." Bringing the right type of businesses, retail, and corporate headquarters that will continue to make the city and county a better place to live for everyone.

Boerne and the County both have the right ideas about this type of growth, with the quality of life bonds that were passed. The County with the parks did a good job with that. So, we have those in place.

4. How do you see these things being accomplished? short-term and long-term?

Tourism is still a big draw for Boerne and will contribute to accomplishing what I see in our future. As we maintain who we are and what we have here to help those businesses grow, we need to continue to bring in quality types of companies and quality jobs we need. Our goal is to bring in specific types of companies from target markets. We want to see corporate headquarters coming to Boerne and Kendall County, medical and medical related businesses like a new hospital, or manufacturing of pharmaceuticals or medical devices, advanced technology companies—hardware/software, higher education that will supplement what is offered at UTSA.

We need to bring in what we call Project 500 on the retail side. If we brought in 500,000 square feet of the right retail to fill the gap we have, we could generate in Boerne an additional three million dollars of sales tax revenue on top of the four to five million we currently bring in. And, also a million dollars for the County. Where would the businesses be located? All over. Certain types would be clustered in an area that would be in the south quadrant of the city.

The first step of success for this is probably the Starplex Theatre coming here. That is stating to developers that Boerne and Kendall County have now met the population threshold they need to support a successful retail environment and climate. Buxton study also showed us that within an 11 minute drive time from Boerne's Wal-Mart there is over an half-billion dollars in buying power, and we are losing millions of dollars in what is called gap or leakage. With

the stats we have now, we can actually help our downtown stores know what people are buying. As our motto supports, we want to preserve our downtown historic district and shops.

Let me say something that is near and dear to my heart. There are people within every community who move here, or have been here for years, who don't want to see any more growth occur. Yet, we need to ask ourselves, "What is the impact of growth on my quality of life in this community and county?" Everything that the EDC does is to preserve the quality of life of Boerne and Kendall County, and make it better. One example is when we stepped in and helped bring Boerne Performing Arts to Boerne. It's all about quality of life.

I have been in this business for over 45 years and been all over the world. Picking business sites is about picking the best. You choose those that support the highest quality of life. As a site selector, you are putting businesses into a new location and want them to be welcomed and able to hire a qualified workforce. You want the quality of life to be good such as having the Boerne Performing Arts, the walkability trails that are here, and parks. Even the movie theatre coming makes it happen. So, instead of San Antonio where you didn't want to have your kids driving back at midnight or dropping them off and leaving them, it is here as part of the local quality of life in this community.

5. Any final thoughts you want to share with my readers?

I moved here in 2006. When we interviewed for this job and opened EDC, the one thing my wife, Jana, and I said, besides really wanting the job, is the people here are special. We want to keep it that way. We want to be part of those

special people. The key to our job is to look at the type of businesses that are here and the businesses that need to be brought here . . . bring in the quality of all of those. I believe if we look back at the founding fathers of this community, they would look at it the way we are looking at it today.

Stay tuned for the next interview of one of our prominent business leaders in Boerne and Kendall County who will respond to these five questions about our future.

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From the Heart. . .

...Life Skills for Today's Family

By Sharon L. Benedict MS



What do you see for our future? . . . the conversation continues

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Oct 26, 2012)

In the last three articles, you have heard from Paul Barwick, Special Projects Director, for the City of Boerne; and Dan Rogers, President, Kendall County Economic Development Corporation. The conversation continues on what our community leaders see for our future in Boerne and Kendall County.

This time, we have the opportunity to hear from David H Brown, Security Service Vice President of Mortgage Services. David's business and community affiliations include being a board member of the Greater Boerne Chamber of Commerce, a Board of Directors' Trustee for Friends of the Cibolo Wilderness, and President of the Board of Directors for the International Institute of Business Analysis, San Antonio Chapter. David resides in Fair Oaks Ranch with my wife, Pam. Here are the five questions again. Let's see how David sees our future.

1. What do you see for Boerne and Kendall County's future?

We are a small town, suburban and rural community all in one and have started feeling the growing pains of our geographic location and historical roots. Adjacent to IH10 and less than 50 miles from the center of San Antonio we have many forces influencing our future. I think it is safe to say we will see continuous

population growth, primarily in the greater Boerne area but also out in the county at large.

Historically, at least in recent decades, for every 100 new residents moving into greater San Antonio we have experienced three new residents moving to our area. With this growth will come increased and more diversified commercial activity (generally in Boerne and along the IH10 corridor) coupled with housing and school expansion to meet the areas demands. On the plus side, the residential percentage of taxes collected to support city, county and school needs will decrease as commercial tax receipts increase. On the negative side increasing population puts pressure on our housing, water, schools and transportation infrastructure. I do not believe “if we do not build it they will not come.” They are already here and more are on the way.

2. What challenges do you see for Boerne and Kendall County right now and in the future?

We will need to manage this growth thoughtfully, with an eye to long term sustainability if we want to preserve our unique historical and cultural heritage, while retaining the quality of life we enjoy in our community. Land use, water availability, transportation infrastructure, school and elder population considerations all must be taken into consideration as we manage the progress of our community. By in large I think our political and community leaders are doing a pretty good job working together. However, for long term success these partnerships will need to strengthen further and continue to mature for us to overcome our challenges and reach our potential.

The city and county need to anchor the community's partnerships; coupled with BISD, private community organizations, commercial interests, nonprofit groups and engaged citizens. Melding this accumulation of talent and energy together into a cohesive community partnership will be the ongoing challenge for our more visionary political and community leaders. Based on what I have seen and what is at stake, I am optimistic we will succeed.

3. What would you like to see happen to make Boerne and other Kendall County communities a more vibrant community for you and your family?

I personally would like to see Boerne's Downtown district become more pedestrian friendly and destination oriented, instead of a busy traffic corridor. If this vision was shared by the community, then over time the "Downtown" could be a place to go for shopping and entertainment and not for traffic merely passing through. Rerouting traffic, creating off street parking either side of Main Street would expand downtown's live, work and play opportunities by expanding the vision of what is Boerne's Downtown. I believe we have a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our past, foster a rich and diverse destination venue in our City center, and create an area that attracts young and old to the vibrant heart of Boerne for generations to come.

4. How do you see these things being accomplished? Short-term and long-term?

The development of the Boerne Master Plan followed by the "Boerne by Design RUDAT Report" started focusing public dialogue four or five years ago

about what the future might bring to the heart of Boerne and its Downtown district (source: <http://www.ci.boerne.tx.us/Search.aspx?SearchString=rudat>). I must admit I was inspired by this report and I think it is a great resource for anyone interested in what the heart of Boerne could be in the future. The vision I have articulated is just one alternative under consideration. So, in the near term, it makes sense to seek out like minded folks who believe in a pedestrian friendly, destination oriented downtown who would like to see the idea pursued.

The Hill Country Mile will incrementally add small improvements to the downtown, raising the community's awareness of this important area of town, and resulting in more people being brought into the conversation. Long term it will require the engagement of public and private area leaders to forge community consensus, build the necessary partnerships to leverage the private and public resources needed to plan and implement such a magical transformation of Boerne's Downtown. One step at a time, first we have to refine the concept and seek out others who share the vision.

5. Any final thoughts you want to share with my readers?

We are fortunate to live in an area with a rich history, a wealth of natural resources and many smart, caring and talented people. We can maintain our quality of life by preserving our past, thoughtfully managing our precious resources while still crafting a future which allows for sustainable, managed growth. Our greatest resource remains the creative energy of our citizens and their commitment to the community and its best interests. I am thrilled to be a part of this grand adventure.

Some may be asking, “why ask the same questions? Aren’t they all going to say the same thing?” That depends. We all know that when we get into a group and something is shared from one person to the next, what comes out at the end of the line is often different than what was first said. We also know that responding to these five open-ended questions often depends on the person’s occupation, job responsibilities, and community interests. We are now halfway with the interviews. What do you think might be the consensus at the end of this collective conversation? Stay tuned for the next episode.

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