

From the Heart. . .

...Life Skills for Today's Family

By Sharon L. Benedict MS



What do you see for our future? . . . Captured Conversations, part 1

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Nov 2, 2012)

Up to this issue, you have had the opportunity to hear from Paul Barwick, Special Projects Director, for the City of Boerne; Dan Rogers, President, Kendall County Economic Development Corporation, and David Brown, Security Service Vice President of Mortgage Services. I decided to highlight key parts of the conversations to offer some consensus of what these three community leaders offered for our future in Boerne and Kendall County. The focus will be question one for this article.

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

Paul, being an optimist by nature, believes Boerne has a bright future. The basis for his 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.

Dan Rogers sees Boerne and Kendall County continuing to significantly grow. Just in 20 years Kendall County has grown 141%. We were found. 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.

David Brown sees Boerne as a small town, suburban and rural community all in one and has started feeling the growing pains of our geographic location and historical roots in Kendall County. 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.

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. Both Dan and David believes we have been found and more on the way.

Next article will focus on highlights from question two. See you then.

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From the Heart. . .

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By Sharon L. Benedict MS



What do you see for our future? . . . Captured Conversations, part 2

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Nov 9, 2012)

After hearing from a number of our community leaders on five questions about our future, here are highlights from their responses from question two and three.

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

Paul Barwick , Boerne Special Projects Director, offered that 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.

Dan Rogers, EDC, believes there are three main challenges: 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.

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*.

David Brown, Security Service Vice President of Mortgage Services, feels we will need to manage 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.

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?

For a more sustainable and diverse downtown economy Paul 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.

Dan wants 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.

David would personally 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.

Next article will have final highlights from community leaders on question four and five. Stay tuned.

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From the Heart. . .

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What do you see for our future? . . . Captured Conversations, part 3

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Nov 16, 2012)

Here we are at the last installment of conversations with community leaders based on five questions about our future. We now focus on questions four and five highlights from Paul Barwick, Special Projects Director, for the City of Boerne; Dan Rogers, President, Kendall County Economic Development Corporation; and David H Brown, Security Service Vice President of Mortgage Services, board member of the Greater Boerne Chamber of Commerce, and President of the Board of Directors for the International Institute of Business Analysis, San Antonio Chapter.

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

Paul believes in order “. . . 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.”

Dan sees tourism continuing to be a big draw for Boerne and will help accomplish what he sees in our future. “As we maintain who we are and what we have here to help those businesses grow, we . . . 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. 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. 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.”

David sees 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>) . . . 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.

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

Paul and his family feel blessed to live 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."

Dan moved here in 2006 and considers the people and community to be very special. "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."

David deems himself ". . . 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.”

Hearing from these three community leaders representing our city, county, and local businesses, has been an honor and privilege for us all. Others I have personally spoken with concur with the thoughts and “how to’s” from these leaders, resulting in a growing consensus of our residents and community at-large. It truly is a noteworthy endeavor to work to preserve the past as we promote our future, together . . . as the EDC motto points us in the right direction.

I hope you have benefited from the conversation throughout October and this November. At this coming Thanksgiving holiday, may we all reflect on how blessed our community is. Be sure to thank all those around you who are contributing their insights, skills, and commitments to make Boerne and Kendall County a very special place to live indeed.

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From the Heart...

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What's in the word . . . Thanksgiving?

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This article will be short but sweet. Every year we celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday. Yet, what does it really mean to each of us? I decided to offer the word in an acrostic theme. Each letter will have its own special meaning. Here's goes.

"T" stands for Treasure each moment

"H" stands for Holding dear the memories

"A" stands for Appreciate those in your life

"N" stands for Notice how those you love care for you in unique ways

"K" stands for Kindness goes a long way to heal hearts and bring joy

"S" stands for being Satisfied with what you have

"G" stands for Gratitude that comes straight from the heart to others

"I" stands for Inspiration that touches those you love

"V" stands for Visiting those in need and less fortunate during this season

"I" stands for Invite someone to your gathering who needs encouragement

"N" stands for Numbering the times you were genuinely wished a Happy

Thanksgiving

"G" stands for Giggle for the joy and celebration of being with family and friends

HAVE A VERY HAPPY ONE!

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Reflections in the Mirror

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How did your Thanksgiving go? I know one thing. When family gets together, there are any number of interesting stories you hear. You may also see relatives . . . uncles, brothers, cousins, nieces and nephews you didn't know you had. For me, this Thanksgiving set in motion all kinds of encounters with my own set of near and distant relatives. I spent Thanksgiving with my sister and brother-in-law in California. My brother-in-law side of the family is large with many siblings, aunts, cousins, and more.

I hadn't seen this tribe in more than four years. One aunt is 99 years old and is determined to make the glorious number of 100 this coming year. The kids who came to the gathering were no longer the little ones I remember. They are all in their twenties and even thirties. Some are pilots, car repairmen, you name it, with families of their own or soon to be. Then I spent an evening with my brother who I hadn't seen for several years. My sister was also there. We both looked in the mirror to awaken to the years that have gone by. And spent the evening share stories about old friends we grew up with together.

With a few wrinkles here and there and a little bit of sagging in places not named, we definitely had to acknowledge we are now the seniors in the family. What an awakening that has been! I know that reality has been hanging around

for some time. Yet, with holiday gathering, you just can't hide it anymore no matter how much makeup and support undergarments you wear!

So, there was just one thing to do, and that was to just have a blast enjoying being around family who have their own aging signs surfacing, even for those in their thirties and have hit forty now. With all the wonderful food, music, and games played, it actually started to feel pretty nice just watching the young ones play with their toys and favorite dog, Dusty.

So, by all means for those of you who have been officially designated the seniors in your family as of this Thanksgiving, make the most of it! It is one of those times everyone is willing to hear your own stories of years gone by without yawning or saying, "I'm sorry, I must rush to an appointment." And just when the story was getting good too. So, take advantage of their entrapped attention with some of your best yarns. And let them know, their time will come sooner than they think to reflect in their mirror on how fast the time flew by.

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