

# SEALY EDC NEWSLETTER

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Friday, April 12, 2024



## Sealy EDC News and Updates APRIL 2024

**1** Provide Quality  
Infrastructure

**2** Support Existing  
Business/  
Redevelopment and  
New Business

**3** Create Effective  
Marketing and  
Communications

**4** Enhance Amenities  
for Citizens and  
Tourism



We hope this message finds you well and filled with enthusiasm for the exciting developments ahead. During the March Meeting, the Board discussed the progress and took action on the items pertaining to our newly formed Strategic Plan. Following the meeting, the SEDC Executive Director worked to create a monthly Sales Tax Report. These actions propel us closer to our collective vision.

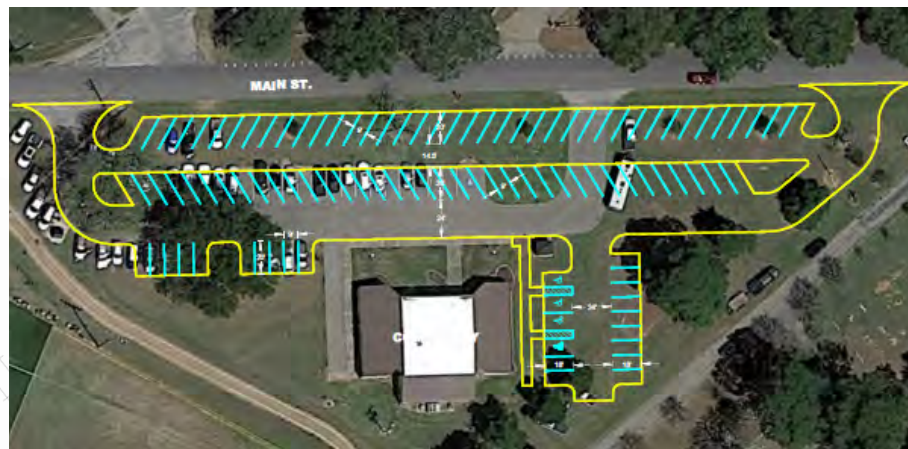
# News and Updates

## 1 Provide Quality Infrastructure

### 125 2nd Street Property

The City of Sealy recently demolished the secondary building behind the primary building at 125 2nd Street. This marks a significant step toward the goal of increased parking. The SEDC Board deliberated on the future of the remaining primary building. It was determined that the optimal course of action would be to sell and relocate the building from its current location. This will allow for additional parking spaces to enhance the flourishing downtown. The Sealy EDC staff is working to market the building, and will report progress to the SEDC Board of Directors during the April Meeting. The number of parking spaces available on the SEDC-owned property is 8-9 spaces. If EDC leases the adjacent property owned by the railroad, it would create a total of 32 spaces.

Downtown  
Parking  
Plan



Hill Center Parking Plan

### Hill Center Parking

The SEDC recently took part in a productive meeting with the city and a representative from the City's Civil Engineering firm, Strand Associates. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the existing plan and cost for the W.E. Hill Center Parking Project. The SEDC Board of Directors took action to recommend SEDC Staff move forward with a parking expansion plan which includes a total of 100 spaces.

The proposed expansion represents a significant increase in spaces addressing the growth needs of our community, the popularity of the park, and area activities. The Board voted to make the construction of the parking the first phase in the improvements to the B&PW Park drainage. These simultaneous projects should take advantage of economies of scale providing a cost savings.

# News and Updates Continued...

## Hill Center Parking Continued...

Moving forward, the EDC will continue to oversee the project's progress and provide regular updates. The first crucial step in this project is seeking SEDC Board approval for a task order and probable cost estimation for the parking project. The engineering task order from Strand Associates will outline the comprehensive plan of action and provide a projection of the associated costs for completion. The W.E. Hill Community Parking expansion project was identified as an SEDC priority for 2024.

## Cryan Park Pond

The Jacqueline A Cryan Park Pond has been a focal point of deliberation recently between the SEDC, the city, and the City Engineer. The pond may require substantial attention to address and mitigate two items: erosion and the capacity requirements.



During the March SEDC meeting, the Board of Directors recommended the EDC focus on the erosion and beautification of the pond. As a result of this recommendation, the team will be developing plans to address improvements that will initiate work on the pond and lighting improvements for the walking path.



## SEDC Developing Relationships



Sealy EDC staff recently had a productive meeting with representatives from the Blinn College Small Business Development Center,

and the Houston Small Business Administration (SBA) Office. As a result of this meeting, the Sealy Small Business Forum is being planned to take place in June. This forum aims to provide valuable assistance and programs to small businesses in the Sealy area. Here is a summary of the assistance and programs that will be offered:

**Business Advising Services:** The Blinn College SBDC offers free, one-on-one professional business advising services to business owners and entrepreneurs.

# News and Updates Continued...

## SEDC Developing Relationships continued...

These services can assist entrepreneurs and small business owners in various stages of the business life cycle, including pre-venture, startup, expansion, growth, and exit.

- **Business Planning and Strategy:** The SBDC advisors will help small business owners optimize their business strategy for long-term success. They will provide guidance on business planning, goal setting, financing, management, marketing, training, and more.
- **Loans and Funding:** The SBA Houston Office provides assistance in obtaining loans for small businesses. They set guidelines for loans and reduce lender risk, making it easier for small businesses to secure the funding they need. The SBA offers various loan programs, including the 7(a) Loan Program and the 504-loan program. These loans can be used for acquiring real estate, working capital, refinancing debt, purchasing equipment, and more.
- **Business Credit:** The SBA Houston Office also offers guidance on establishing and maintaining business credit. They provide information on how to apply for business credit and manage credit history effectively.
- **Business Counseling:** Small business owners can benefit from free business counseling provided by partnering organizations and experts. These counseling sessions offer valuable advice and guidance on various aspects of running a business.
- **Small Business Government Contracts:** The SBA Houston Office helps small businesses find and win government contracts. They provide information and resources on how to navigate the process of securing government contracts.
- **Microloans:** The SBA's microloan program offers loans up to \$50,000 to help small businesses and certain not-for-profit childcare centers start up and expand. These loans can be used for working capital, inventory, supplies, furniture, fixtures, machinery, and equipment.
- **The Sealy Small Business Forum in June** will provide an excellent opportunity for small business owners in the Sealy area to learn about these assistance programs and receive guidance from experts in the field. It will be a valuable event for entrepreneurs looking to start or grow their businesses. Stay tuned for more information to come.

# News and Updates Continued...

## Retail Coach/EDC Partnership

Sealy EDC staff is gearing up for further collaboration with The Retail Coach. In late March or early April, the Retail Coach will identify vacancies and retail development priorities.

The new market data provided by Retail Coach will be used to enhance our outreach. To maximize its impact, we're collaborating with the Greater Sealy Area Chamber of Commerce to feature two pages of content in the Chamber's annual periodical. These pages will specifically target Sealy's new residents, providing them with insights into our strategic plan and the latest market trends. Looking ahead, Retail Coach will assist us in utilizing an online software platform for real-time updates on retail recruitment progress and retailer responses. The platform will provide us with invaluable insights to drive our efforts forward.

Meetings with The Retail Coach include:

- 02.23.24 Completed our kick-off call
- 03.19.24 Retail Coach provided our Market Data and a list of possible retail businesses for our Sealy market.
- 04.17.24 Will meet for updates and progress made with retail recruitment since late March.

## 3 Create Effective Marketing and Communications

### SEDC Office Expansion

The SEDC recently signed a lease for an additional meeting space at the Sealy Professional Building. SEDC staff requested assistance from the city to facilitate the smooth transition of moving our conference table and other essential items from the W.E. Hill Center to the Professional Building. This move will allow us to better accommodate business and board meetings. Suite 5 is a 420 SQFT., one-room office with a sizable closet, which will serve as our primary meeting area. As we settle in to the new space, the SEDC Staff will explore the possibility of providing internet access and installing a large monitor for presentations.

# News and Updates Continued...

## Creating Effective Marketing

Sealy Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) has set a goal for this year to develop a comprehensive marketing plan to position Sealy as a destination for quality people and development. The plan focuses on four key strategies to achieve this goal.

- The first strategy is to establish a marketing theme and materials that support a consistent message for marketing Sealy. The plan emphasizes the strengths of Sealy, such as its talented workforce and commitment to sustainable development. Marketing materials will be developed, including industry profiles and a digital information packet, to highlight these strengths and attract potential businesses.
- The second strategy is to promote Sealy internally. The plan recognizes the importance of engaging existing residents and local business owners as the primary target audience. Efforts will be made to keep residents informed through community newsletters and local media coverage. Additionally, an Executive Club program will be established to build awareness among area business and community leaders and provide them with information to spread a positive image of Sealy.

- The third strategy is to market directly to multipliers, such as developers, brokers, and site consultants. Events will be organized to draw these multipliers to Sealy and showcase the development opportunities available. A public relations campaign will also be implemented to target regional publications and promote business successes in Sealy. Furthermore, partnerships will be formed with organizations that can refer prospect leads to Sealy.
- The fourth strategy is to build awareness among business leaders in target sectors. Sealy will identify and market to relevant target industry sectors, such as light industrial, retail, higher education, health-related offices, and professional services. Direct mail campaigns, telemarketing, and industry trade events will be utilized to reach decision-makers in these sectors.

Overall, the implementation schedule outlines the specific actions, budget, and timeline for each strategy. By following this marketing plan, Sealy aims to attract quality businesses and talent to the community, leading to economic growth and prosperity.



# News and Updates Continued...

## Strategic Signage Enhancements

In our continuous efforts to improve Marketing, Branding, and Reach, the SEDC has created and ordered new signage for both the interior and exterior of our office location at the Professional Building. The signage should be delivered, hung, and visible at the end of April. The new signage increases our visibility within the community, and will make it easier for residents and visitors alike to locate and engage with us.



## Sealy-Texas Welcome Sign Improvement

The Sealy EDC Staff collaborated with the City of Sealy, Master Gardener Renee Kofman, and Flag Poles Etc., to develop a comprehensive plan for improving the Sealy Texas Monument Sign area located at SH 36 and S. Circle Drive. Together, opportunities were evaluated to lower costs and explore ways to elevate this symbol in our town for the interim. After publishing a public notice, the project is scheduled to commence on May 21, 2024. This process ensures that we proceed with transparency and adherence to regulatory requirements.

The SEDC identified this project as a priority and was looking for ways to enhance the area for the next few years as TxDOT conducts studies for a possible new project that may later affect the Sealy Texas sign. The improvements will include the addition of portable, commercial solar lighting for flag poles, xeriscaping around the sign and fountain, and a fresh coat of black paint for the sign's letters, "Sealy – Texas". Master Gardner, Renee Kofman, has been consulted and she and the city have committed to heading the landscape portion of the project, ensuring success and sustainability.

## Interior Sign



## Outdoor Sign



# News and Updates Continued...

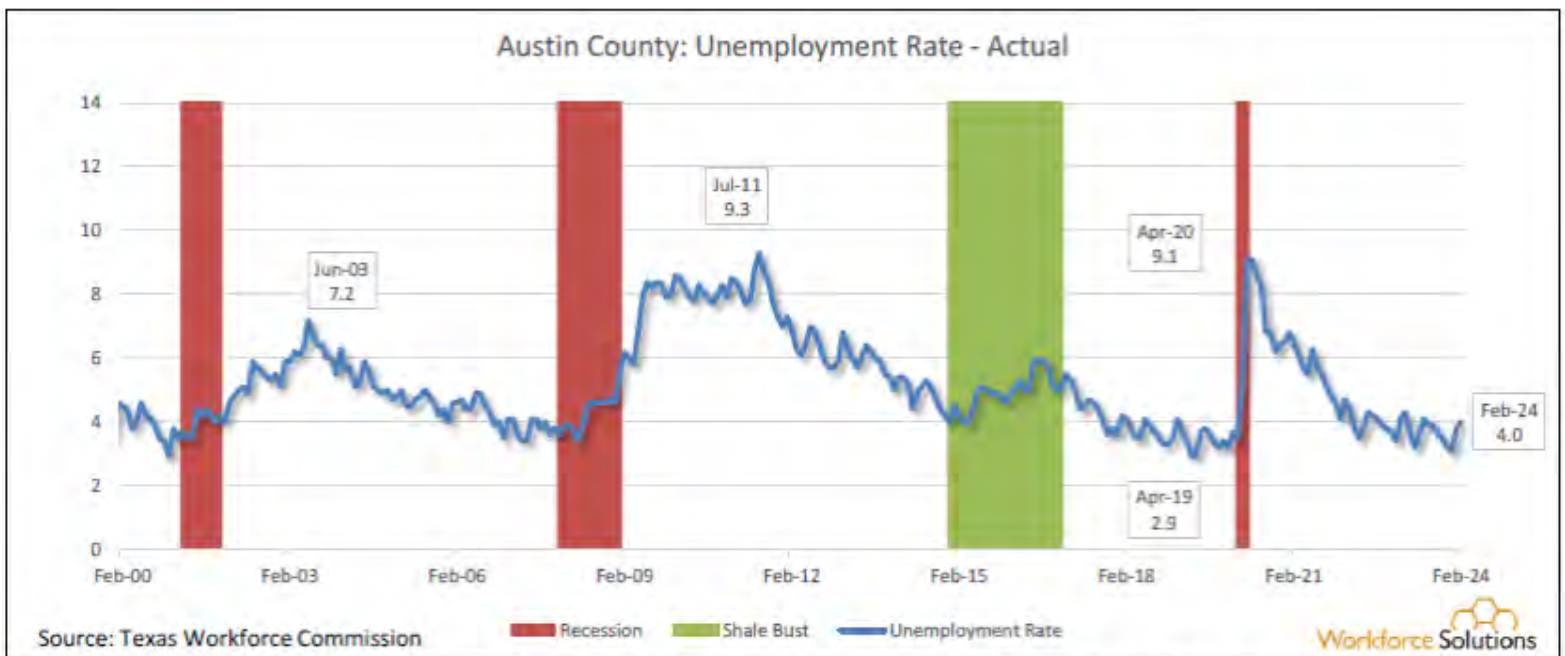
## The Ups and Downs of Austin County Workforce Since 2002

From the data in the Workforce Solutions County Employment Report, Austin County experienced some interesting trends and changes in its industrial sectors from the year 2002 to the present.

- In 2022, Austin County's total covered employment reached its all-time high of 12,933 jobs, reflecting strong economic growth and development. However, in 2023, there was a slight decrease in total employment, with a loss of 116 jobs or 0.9 percent.
- The Professional and Business Services sector showed significant growth, with an increase of 128 jobs or 9.5 percent in the third quarter of 2023. The Education and Health Services sector also saw positive growth, with an increase of 117 jobs or 10.6 percent in the same period.

- On the other hand, the Trade, Transportation, and Utilities sector experienced a decrease of 263 jobs or 7.6 percent in the third quarter of 2023. The Construction sector also faced a loss of 90 jobs or 8.6 percent. The Manufacturing sector showed positive growth, with an increase of 114 jobs or 6.5 percent in the third quarter of 2023.
- Looking at historical data, the Manufacturing sector reached its all-time high of 3,645 jobs in 2008 but experienced a decline in subsequent years, reaching a low of 1,284 jobs in 2015.

Overall, the data suggests that Austin County's labor market has experienced both positive and negative trends in its industrial sectors. The Professional and Business Services and Education and Health Services sectors have shown growth, while the Trade, Transportation, and Utilities and Construction sectors have faced challenges. The Manufacturing sector has shown resilience and growth over the years. These trends highlight the dynamic nature of the county's economy and the need for continuous monitoring and adaptation for sustainable economic development.



\*Estimates reflect actual (not seasonal adjusted) data. Civilian Labor Force includes wage and salary workers, self-employed, unpaid family, domestics in private households, agricultural workers, workers involved in labor disputes and the unemployed, all by place of residence. Covered employment data compiled from 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2023 contribution and wage reports submitted to the Texas Workforce Commission by employers' subject to the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act. Source: Texas Workforce Commission in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. All data is subject to revision.



## Upcoming Local Events

- Wade King Memorial Ride & Benefit, April 13th, 2 pm, at Creekmore's Sports Bar
- Sealy's Spring Fest, April 13th, 9 am-5 pm at the Sealy Historical Park
- Bluebonnet Master Gardner Annual Plant Sale, April 13th at Levine Park Pavilion
- Austin County Mixer, Business Networking, April 18th at Amsler Hills Winery, 6226 FM 969, Sealy, TX
- Shoot for a Cause, April 20th, Texas Premier Sporting Arms
- Edible and Medicinal Plants Walk, April 20th, 10 am - 11 am, at Stephen F Austin State Park
- Festival of Life, April 20th, 12 pm - 6 pm, 2368 Old Columbus Road N. Sealy, TX
- Inflatable Archery, April 27, 10 am - 11 am, at Stephen F Austin State Park
- Classic Car Show, April 28th, 10 am - 1 pm, at Saddleback Saloon
- Eastside Foundation, Pork Steak Fundraiser, April 28th, 10:30 am - 1:30 pm, at the American Legion Hall, Drive Through only

## Upcoming Agenda Items April 2024

- SEDC Budget Amendments FY'24
- Sealy EDC bylaw amendments
- Execution of a Master Contract with Strand Associates
- Task Order and Probable Cost for the W.E. Hill Center Parking Project in an amount not to exceed \$55k
- BNSF Railroad property lease payments and Blanket Insurance payments.

*Thank you!*

As we navigate through the intricacies of our Strategic Plan, we remain steadfast in our commitment to transparency, accountability, and progress. Together, we're shaping the future filled with promise and prosperity.

