

Austin

CONSTRUCTION NEWS

The Industry's Newspaper

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SpawGlass Supports Future Builders



SpawGlass was proud to present a \$25,000 contribution to the **Texas State Technical College (TSTC)** Foundation to establish an endowed scholarship fund benefiting students from Comal, Guadalupe and surrounding counties enrolled in construction-related programs at Texas State Technical College's New Braunfels campus. The gift reflects SpawGlass' ongoing commitment to workforce development and investing in the next generation of skilled construction professionals.

On hand to present the donation were several members of the SpawGlass San Antonio team, including Intern **Lance Pool** – a proud TSTC student who is currently participating in their intern development program working on the Texas State University Juniper & Verbena Halls project they are constructing.



Spraying Texas since 1996

Growing up, **Tommy Toman, Milam Toman, Ross Toman** and **Burt Toman** worked for their dad, learning the ins and outs of sprayed fireproofing and sprayed insulation and what it took to be a good, highly respected contractor. As the four brothers developed their knowledge and skills, the boys realized they were ready to take the next step.

On Aug. 8, 1996, Tommy, Milam, Ross, and Burt incorporated their business into

Toman Brothers Inc. Now 30 years later, the Toman Brothers have made a name for themselves in the sprayed fireproofing and sprayed insulation industry, specializing in spray applied fireproofing, sprayed applied intumescent fireproofing and spray-on insulation.

When the company was incorporated 30 years ago, Toman Brothers Inc. was a team of six. Today, the company has grown to a team of 15-plus and covers the entire state of Texas. The company's experience

ranges in a wide range of projects from the smallest to the largest. This would include projects such as hospitals, apartments, stadiums, medical offices, k-12, and more. Employees **Tony Belmarez** and **JR Belmarez**, specializing in Cementitious Sprayed Fireproofing, have been employed with Toman Brothers Inc. for 29 years. **Lee Toman, Cody Shaw,** and **Blake Killingsworth**, specializing in Sprayed Intumescent Fireproofing and Sprayed Insulation, have been employed

with Toman Brothers Inc. for eight years.

To celebrate their 30th anniversary, the Toman brothers plan to host a party with their parents with an employee party to follow. -cwr



L-R: Tommy Toman, Ross Toman, Milam Toman, and Burt Toman



L-R: Blake Killingsworth, Cody Shaw, and Lee Toman



L-R: Tony Belmarez and JR Belmarez

Dust 'Em

The Nitsche Group team had an incredible time at the Austin Regional Manufacturers Association (ARMA) 2026 Summer Sporting Clays Tournament serving as the Comfort Table Sponsor.

On Jul. 16 The event brought together many industry professionals for a great day of friendly competition at Staccato Ranch in Florence on an 80-target sporting clays course. Everyone enjoyed great food, beverages, and the chance to connect between rounds. Nitsche would like to extend a huge thanks to **LandCare** for teaming up with their crew out on the course!



Team (L-R) Brigette Burttschell, **The Nitsche Group**; Danny DeBeikes, **The Nitsche Group**; Aristeu Lucas, **LandCare**; Shelby Crysler, **LandCare**

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ON THE JOB



Beyer Boys Air Conditioning, Heating, and Plumbing's Lisandro Reyes
arrives to install a new air conditioning unit in Olmos Heights, TX. -cwr

The Perfect Ride For Every Adventure

Mission Golf Cars showed up and showed out on Jul. 25 at the Inaugural Aransas Pass Boat Show at the Aransas Pass Civic Center. Visitors were able to check out the latest from Club Car, E-Z-GO, and Denago.



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Adolfson & Peterson starts 2 Texas high school projects

Adolfson & Peterson Construction (AP) has broken ground on two high school renovation projects in Austin, Texas, worth approximately \$114 million combined, the contractor announced on June 18.

The projects, at McCallum and Anderson high schools in the Austin Independent School District, come to a combined total of almost 100,000 square feet, according to a news release sent to Construction Dive. PBK Architects, headquartered in Houston, designed both schools.

At McCallum High School, the almost \$67 million expansion includes the Science and Career & Technology Education department, according to the release. AP will construct a three-story, 54,000-square-foot building with computer labs, robotics, wood shop, biology, chemistry and physics spaces.

Additionally, the contractor will demolish the existing 30,000-square-foot science wing, reconfigure the secure entry

vestibule and remodel the front office. AP is contracted for \$32 million.

Meanwhile, the simultaneous renovation at Anderson High School includes a 43,350-square-foot competition gym with an 1,800-seat capacity and locker rooms with coaches' offices, training rooms, officials' dressing rooms and laundry, according to the release. Common spaces will feature a Hall of Honor and trophy cases, while the entry vestibule and front office will be reconfigured for security.

AP is contracted at \$24 million, and the Anderson project will cost more than \$47 million total, according to the release.

"Schools are the heart of the community, fostering growth and connection and we are dedicated to providing exceptional work to support these campuses," said **Tommy Meserole**, AP's senior director of preconstruction, in the release.

AP targets completion for the construction and renovation projects in January 2027.



A rendering of Anderson High School's forthcoming Athletics and Wellness complex. Courtesy of Adolfson & Peterson / PBK Architects



A rendering of McCallum High School in Austin, Texas. Adolfson & Peterson is renovating the school. Courtesy of Adolfson and Peterson / PBK Architects

Towering Progress

The **SpawGlass** Austin team continues making steady progress on The University of Texas at Austin Main Building and

Tower Renovation.

Scaffolding has been removed from the west side of the Main Building, revealing the restored exterior, and

tower scaffolding is now fully in place.

The east roof installation has been completed, and demolition of the observation deck enclosure marks

another milestone as the project moves into its next phase. Stay tuned for more updates as work continues on the University's iconic landmark.



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Texas First Rentals Expands Specialty Offerings with Creation of Energy Solutions Division



Texas First Rentals has announced that **HOLT Industrial Rentals** will transition to the Energy Solutions division of Texas First Rentals, bringing the company’s specialty rental capabilities under the Texas First Rentals brand while maintaining the same experienced team and trusted customer service.

The new Energy Solutions division will continue providing temporary power generation, compressed air systems, HVAC and climate control equipment, and battery energy storage solutions. Customers will also benefit from seamless access to Texas First Rentals’ full fleet of construction and industrial rental equipment through a single organization.

According to the announcement, the transition represents a branding and organizational integration rather than a change in personnel or service. Existing customers can expect the same expertise and support while gaining expanded rental options through Texas First Rentals.

As part of the transition, HOLT Industrial Rentals’ social media channels will be archived, with future updates and company news shared through Texas First Rentals.

“Same team, same trusted service—just under a new name,” the company stated in announcing the transition.

The move further strengthens Texas First Rentals’ position as a comprehensive equipment rental provider, offering everything from earthmoving and aerial equipment to specialized energy, power, air, HVAC, and battery solutions under one brand.

Heavy-Lift Teamwork

TNT Crane & Rigging crews perform heavy-lift operations on the TxDOT I-10 expansion project near Seguin. Multiple cranes were mobilized to support bridge construction as work continues on the \$245 million interstate widening project between FM 464 and SH 130.





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“The Rock”



Switch is moving forward with the next phase of its massive “The Rock” data center campus in Round Rock, reinforcing Central Texas’ position as one of the nation’s fastest-growing markets for artificial intelligence and cloud infrastructure.

According to a recent Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) filing, Switch plans to construct a 72,600-square-foot data center at 300 Dell Way, adjacent to Dell Technologies’ global headquarters. The project carries an estimated construction value of \$20 million, with construction beginning in 2026 and anticipated completion in mid-2028.

The new building is part of Switch’s long-term vision for “The Rock,” a campus expected to exceed 1.5 million square feet of Tier 5® data center space and provide approximately 185 megawatts of capacity upon full buildout. The development is designed to support hyperscale cloud providers, enterprise customers and the rapidly growing demand for artificial intelligence computing.

While the TDLR filing confirms the project’s size, location and schedule, it does not publicly identify the general contractor, architect or engineering

team. As is common with mission-critical facilities, those project partners may not be disclosed until additional permits are issued or construction advances.

The project is expected to create opportunities for civil and site contractors, utility contractors, concrete contractors, structural steel erectors, mechanical/HVAC contractors, high-voltage electrical contractors, fire protection contractors, security and access-control specialists, and commissioning and controls contractors.

Data centers remain one of the fastest-growing sectors in Texas construction, fueled by increasing demand for AI computing, cloud services and digital infrastructure. Round Rock has become a focal point for that growth, with multiple large-scale developments expanding throughout the region.

As construction progresses, additional trade permits and local building records may reveal the project’s general contractor and key subcontractors, providing further insight into one of Central Texas’s most significant mission-critical construction projects.

Mission Golf Cars Rolls into New Braunfels

Mission Golf Cars has expanded into New Braunfels, bringing one of Texas’ leading golf car dealerships to one of the fastest-growing communities in the Hill Country. The new location offers sales, service, rentals, parts, and accessories for a wide variety of personal and commercial golf vehicles.

The dealership carries popular brands including E-Z-GO, Cushman, Garia, and Denago, serving homeowners, golf enthusiasts, neighborhoods, resorts, commercial businesses, and industrial customers. Customers can also take advantage of maintenance and repair services performed by factory-trained technicians.

Mission Golf Cars has served South Central Texas for more than 40 years and continues to expand its footprint across the state with locations in San Antonio, Boerne, Marble Falls, Waco, Tyler, Corpus Christi,



Port Aransas, and now New Braunfels.

The New Braunfels operation provides residents and businesses with a convenient local source for new and pre-owned golf cars, utility vehicles, rentals, and replacement parts, eliminating the need to travel to neighboring cities for sales and service.

ON THE JOB



Gilbert Hernandez with Bluebonnet Traffic Safety takes down traffic barricades in Olmos Park, TX after visiting with Construction News. -cwr



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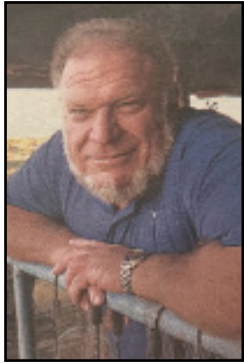
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The Great Outdoors



Ken Milam

Ken Milam's Fishing Line

Since 1981, Ken Milam has been guiding fishing trips for striped bass on Lake Buchanan in the Texas Hill Country.



August on Lake Buchanan

August on Lake Buchanan is the grindmonth — hot, bright, and unforgiving — but it's also one of the most underrated producers of the entire summer. For construction crews who spend their days working in the heat, August offers a familiar rhythm: tough conditions, steady payoff, and a bite that rewards anyone willing to show up early and put in a little work.

As the summer heat peaks, stripers, hybrids, and white bass slide deeper and settle into tight, predictable patterns. They're not scattered. They're not inconsistent. They're grouped up, holding on structure, and feeding in controlled bursts that make August a surprisingly reliable month for crews who want action without the chaos of June. It's a precision month — find them, stay on them, and the cooler fills fast.

August mornings are where the magic happens. Before the sun gets high, the lake is calm, the bait is active, and the fish respond. It's a short window, but a productive one, perfect for construction teams who want to get out, catch fish, and still make afternoon plans. The bite is focused, the patterns are stable, and the results come from timing rather than luck.

For crews who've been grinding through tripledigit days, an August trip feels familiar in the best way. You're working with the heat

instead of against it. The lake is predictable, the fish are consistent, and the action is steady enough to keep everyone engaged without burning anyone out. It's a month where experience pays off — but newcomers still catch plenty.

The takehome fillets in August are solid, too. Summer fish are thick, strong, and full of clean meat. It's not the freezerfilling frenzy of June, but it's a dependable haul that sends everyone home with fresh meals and a break from the jobsite routine. For foremen treating the crew, contractors hosting clients, or teams simply wanting a morning away from the grind, August delivers exactly what you expect: steady catching and a cooler worth carrying.

August is the month where Lake Buchanan rewards discipline. Show up early, beat the heat, stay on the pattern, and the lake pays out. For construction crews who live in the rhythm of long days and tough conditions, it's a natural fit — a month that matches the work ethic and delivers results.

If your crew wants a focused outing, predictable action, and a chance to put fresh fillets on the table before the fall transition begins, August is the time to make it happen. The bite is steady, the patterns are locked in, and the lake is ready for anyone willing to meet it on its terms.

Happy 250th America



4th of July weekend was good for the family fishing. (L-R) Colton, Clint, Nannette and **Klaire Williams of A-1 Fire & Safety** with their whopper tarpon catch.



There's never a bad time to catch up with the news. **EquipmentShare** Territory Manager **Stan Rothman** and Country Music Singer and Entertainer **Kevin Black** read the June and July issues of Construction News while waiting to tee off at the Burns Park golf course in Little Rock, AR. -cwr



Bass for days. **Tucker Mathews, KCS**, enjoying private-property fishing at its finest.





Texas Sight Fishing: Where Every Cast Is One You Can See

There are few places in the country where anglers can consistently watch a fish before they ever make a cast. Along the Texas Gulf Coast, shallow bays, expansive grass flats and gin-clear water create one of the premier sight-fishing destinations in North America. Whether you're chasing tailing redfish with a fly rod or working a soft plastic into a cruising school with spinning tackle, the experience is as visual as it is exciting.

Unlike deeper-water fishing where anglers rely on electronics or blind casting, sight fishing is all about patience, observation and precision. On the right tide and under favorable weather conditions, redfish can often be seen pushing wakes, tailing as they feed in skinny water or cruising across sand pockets searching for shrimp and baitfish.

Fly or Spin? There Isn't a Wrong Answer

Fly anglers appreciate the challenge of presenting lightweight flies to visible fish, while spinning anglers enjoy the versatility of soft plastics and other artificial lures. Both techniques are highly effective, and many guides carry both setups to match changing conditions.

Conditions Make the Difference

Successful sight fishing depends on clear water, light winds, healthy grass flats, favorable tides and bright sunlight. When those conditions align, anglers can spend

the day stalking visible fish rather than casting blindly.

More Than Just Catching Fish

Sight fishing is about far more than catching fish. Every cast is deliberate, every presentation matters, and watching a redfish react before it eats creates an experience unlike any other in saltwater fishing.

Whether your preference is a fly rod or spinning tackle, the Texas coast delivers unforgettable opportunities to experience redfish in their natural habitat. On these shallow flats, there truly isn't a wrong choice—only different ways to enjoy one of the Gulf Coast's premier fisheries.

Guide Spotlight: Dylan Mendoza, DM Flyfishing

If you're looking to experience Texas coast sight fishing with an experienced guide, look no further than Dylan Mendoza of DM Flyfishing. Based in Rockport, Texas, Mendoza has built a reputation for helping anglers target redfish in the shallow flats that have made the Texas coast a world-class fishery.

Whether you're an accomplished fly angler wanting to sight-cast to tailing reds or a newcomer who prefers spinning tackle, Mendoza tailors each trip to his clients' experience level and the day's conditions. His local knowledge of tides, weather patterns and productive flats helps put anglers in position for unforgettable visual strikes.



Capt. Dylan Mendoza

512.423.7941

dylanmendoza@flyfishing@gmail.com

• Rockport

• Aransas Pass

• Port Aransas

• Port O' Connor

Beat the Heat



August is back, and every spot you could think of has had a boat over it. Spots that you might have looked at on Google Maps while lying in bed one night have had a boat over it. Wading spots with so many footprints the flounder doesn't have to make his own bed. So what do we do? I look towards a couple of options. If you have the ability to pick when you'll be down, playing the tides when they go to ripping out in the afternoon is a great way to find reds lined up along the channel edges near the bottom of the tide. If you don't have the option to wait on tides, I look far and super close to the boat ramp. Far being the bays most don't run to because it's a long trip. The surf when it's calm

enough. But super close is a fun one. This is where you find spots that pay off on the "one last stop" routine. Looking for spots within 3 minutes of your ramp. Little reefs, or ledges, rocks, an old piece of a pier. Old drains that have a deep pocket underneath them. How many times have you ran by a spot that looked interesting but it was so close to the ramp you said no way there's a fish there. I'd wager the opposite is true. Same goes for those who are wading, spots close by can pay off greatly, I like to move toward top waters that are small but have large beads for a heavy thud. I also like top waters because they keep you out of the grass when it's getting to its tallest point in the year. If you're in a back bay or over in the super flats wading, keep an eye out for the famous dark dorsal fin with a little tail. Juvenile tarpon making their way around the edge of the flats will bite your lure and be ready. Whether it lasts 8 seconds or you manage to bring it all the way in, it's some of the most fun you get to have! Stay safe out there, wear your lanyard and tight lines!



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Construction Meets Art

Construction projects are often judged by their functionality, but throughout Austin, many new developments are also becoming works of art.

Through the City of Austin’s Art in Public Places (AIPP) program, more than \$900,000 in new public art commissions are being integrated into parks, civic buildings, transportation projects and public infrastructure. The initiative is creating unique opportunities for contractors, fabricators and specialty trades that traditionally have not been associated with public art. The program is funded through a portion of eligible City capital improvement projects, ensuring art is incorporated into public construction from the earliest stages of design.

Rather than installing artwork after a project is complete, Austin’s approach embeds artists into the design process, allowing sculptures, decorative concrete, architectural lighting, custom steel fabrication and artistic landscape features to become permanent elements of new public facilities.

As a result, construction teams are increasingly collaborating with artists, architects and engineers to deliver projects that are both functional and visually engaging.

Construction trades benefiting from these projects include structural steel fabricators, decorative concrete specialists, stone and masonry contractors, electrical contractors,

custom metal fabricators, specialty coating professionals, landscape contractors, and crane and rigging companies responsible for installing large-scale artwork.

Public art has become an important component of municipal construction projects because it enhances public spaces while reflecting local history, culture and community identity. Austin has incorporated artwork into parks, trails, libraries, recreation centers, transit facilities, public buildings and gathering spaces.

As cities continue investing in quality public spaces, demand is growing for contractors capable of delivering both technical construction expertise and architectural craftsmanship. For specialty fabricators, concrete contractors, electricians, landscape professionals and steel erectors, public art projects represent a growing niche where creativity and construction intersect.

With additional capital improvement projects planned throughout Austin, opportunities for contractors experienced in specialty fabrication and artistic construction are expected to continue expanding. For Central Texas contractors, Austin’s Art in Public Places program demonstrates that today’s construction industry is about more than building infrastructure—it’s also helping shape the character and identity of the communities those projects serve.



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Building Momentum

The 22nd annual **Austin Build Expo** took place May 27–28 at the Palmer Events Center, bringing together exhibitors and attendees from across the building and construction industry. Over two productive days, the event welcomed contractors, developers, architects, suppliers, engineers, and other industry professionals eager to connect, learn, and discover new opportunities.

The show successfully connected qualified buyers with leading exhibitors. General contractors, home builders, building owners, property managers, engineers, architects, government agencies, and other decision-makers met directly with top manufacturers, suppliers, and service providers. Attendees explored thousands of innovative products, technologies, and solutions designed to improve efficiency, increase profitability, and help drive business growth.

In addition to the expansive exhibit hall, attendees had access to more than 35 expert-led educational sessions. These seminars covered a wide range of topics, including business development, artificial intelligence, sales and marketing strategies, regulatory compliance, workforce challenges, and industry best practices. The educational program provided valuable insights and practical

takeaways that participants could immediately apply to their businesses.

A highlight of the event was recognizing the Home Builders Association of Greater Austin and the Texas Construction Association as key industry partners. Appreciation awards were presented in recognition of their continued support and collaboration. These partnerships help strengthen the construction community throughout the region and contribute to the ongoing growth of both the industry and the event—Building Better, Together!

The enthusiasm, networking opportunities, and educational value experienced throughout the two-day expo reinforced Austin Build Expo’s role as a premier gathering for construction professionals in Central Texas. From discovering new products and technologies to building meaningful business relationships, exhibitors and attendees alike left with valuable connections and fresh ideas for the future.

Mark your calendars! Austin Build Expo will return to the Palmer Events Center on March 24–25, 2027, moving to an earlier spring date. We look forward to welcoming the industry back as we continue Building Austin, Together!



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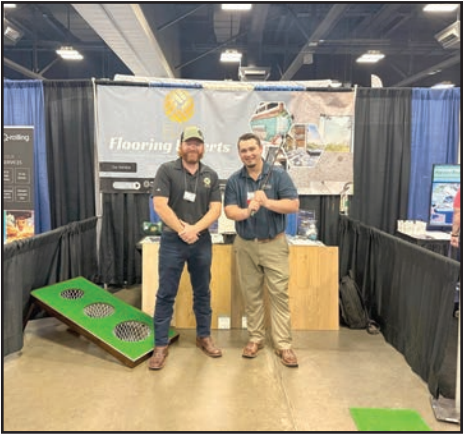
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Awards were presented by **Tom Woodcock** from **Seal the Deal**, longtime keynote speaker of Build Expo



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Sunken Gardens

One of Austin’s historic public landscapes is receiving new life through an ongoing rehabilitation effort designed to preserve the character of the city’s beloved Sunken Gardens while improving safety, accessibility and long-term sustainability.

The project, funded through the City of Austin’s Historic Preservation Fund and Parks and Recreation Department Capital Improvement Program, focuses on restoring aging infrastructure while protecting the garden’s historic architecture and landscape features. The rehabilitation is part of a broader initiative to preserve some of Austin’s most treasured public spaces for future generations.

Leading the design effort is **HDR Engineering, Inc.**, which was awarded an engineering services contract of up to \$850,000 by the Austin City Council to provide planning, engineering and restoration design services for the project. HDR’s responsibilities include habitat enhancement, hydraulic analysis, stream stabilization, erosion control, restoration of historic stone features and environmental improvements that will protect the area’s sensitive ecosystem while preserving its historic character.

The rehabilitation project includes stabilization and repair of historic limestone retaining walls, restoration of pathways and stairways, drainage improvements to reduce erosion, irrigation upgrades and landscape restoration using historically appropriate plant materials. Accessibility improvements are also being incorporated where feasible without compromising the site’s historic integrity.

Unlike new construction, historic rehabilitation requires a specialized approach that balances



preservation with modernization. Contractors working on projects like the Sunken Gardens must carefully restore original materials whenever possible, using techniques that maintain the site’s historical appearance while meeting today’s safety and construction standards.

The rehabilitation will eventually provide opportunities for historic masonry restoration firms, landscape contractors, civil and drainage specialists, irrigation installers and concrete craftsmen experienced in preservation work. Native plant experts will also play an important role in restoring the gardens while supporting Central Texas’ unique ecosystem.

At this time, no construction contractor has been selected. The project remains in the design

and permitting phase, with construction anticipated following completion of final engineering and the public bidding process.

Historic park rehabilitation has become an increasingly important segment of the construction industry as cities invest in preserving community landmarks rather than replacing them. These projects require close coordination between architects, engineers, preservation specialists and skilled tradespeople.

The Sunken Gardens project is one of several preservation efforts underway through Austin’s Historic Preservation Fund, demonstrating the city’s commitment to protecting its architectural heritage while providing safe, functional public spaces for residents and visitors.

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Just outside of Waco, in the small town of Hewitt, TX is where Todd Laningham was born and raised. As a young man, Todd was interested in anything artistic. He had a love for music from an early age. Growing up, his dad would always play Van Halen and AC/DC for him. “I wasn’t great at sports so I went the music route.”

He graduated from Midway High School before attending college in San Marcos, TX at Texas State University. “I absolutely loved college life while balancing it with touring. Throughout college, I played with country music artist **Granger Smith** on the weekends.”

In 2012, with one three classes needed to get his degree, Todd dropped out at the end of his senior year to tour full time with **Wade Bowen**. “Life as a touring musician was amazing for the most part. Sleeping in a twin size bunk on a tour bus going from town to town, getting to experience the culture and food of every stop, we made some of the best memories!”

“I toured with Wade Bowen from 2012-2022. Prior to that I played with Granger Smith. I got to share the stage with acts such as **Chris Stapleton, Miranda Lambert, Dwight Yoakham, ZZ Top, and Randy Rogers**, just to name a few. I was lucky enough to turn a hobby into a full blown profession.”

Todd toured nationally, playing guitar, from 2008-2022. He played with Wade Bowen for 10 years, and with Granger Smith for four years. After over a decade touring with Wade Bowen, Todd and Bowen parted ways due to artistic and professional differences. “It’s wasn’t the ending I would have expected but it led me into a new chapter of life that I am truly grateful for today. I had been thinking about a way to become more lucrative and successful for myself so the change came at a perfect timing.”

When CoVID hit in 2020, Todd completed those three classes and earned his degree in Sociology with a minor in Mass Communications. “I didn’t want to major in music since I was already doing music professionally so I randomly picked two majors that I found interesting.”

Todd is currently engaged to Casey Lester, whom he dated around 2013. They reconnected when he got off the road in 2022 and have been together since. They have two children in their lives: Casey’s son Lucas who just turned 18 and college bond. Starting his own journey, Lucas will be attending The University of North Texas to Study Music Education in August 2026. Together, they have a two-year-old daughter. He name is Hartley Mae Laningham and is the light of their life.



“Watching her learn and discover something new every day has been one of the greatest joys of my life. She’s smart, beautiful, strong, and very inspiring for such a tiny human. Casey and I always wanted a daughter and we finally got our wish!”

If a college student and a two-year-old aren’t enough to keep them busy, they also have two dogs and a tortoise. They have a Cocker Spaniel named Lucy, and an Australian Sheppard named Miles, and their Tortoise lives in their back yard.

After getting off the road from touring, Todd wanted to try something new and had always heard the construction industry was interesting and rewarding. He started with Texas First Rentals in early 2025 as a rental coordinator.

Currently as an outside sales representative for TFR with a specialty for south airports, his territories are the San Antonio and Austin Airports. “I’ve always had a thing for aviation so having the airports as my territories is really cool for me. I always said if I didn’t do music, I would have been a pilot. So getting to work around airports has been rewarding.”

“I don’t sit still well. Being on the road is in my blood. Being a sales rep allows me to be a social butterfly and to be in multiple places during the day which is rewarding for me. Helping people is also really rewarding for me - coming through for a customer and getting them exactly what they need and exceeding time frames brings me joy.”

Todd’s best friend Jon has been a huge positive influence in Todd’s life. They have been friends since middle school. “He’s always reminding me to never take anything too seriously in life and to remember to have fun, no matter what it is you are doing.” He’s also been the kind of friend to push Todd to try new things and take chances.

When it comes to relaxation, he and his fiancé, Casey, love late night conversations on their porch with a glass of wine in their hands. And aside from music, Todd loves the water. You might say he is obsessed with it. He is an avid scuba diver and loves anything aquatic. But best of all, Todd says, “the best hobby is being a girl dad!” -cwr



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INSURANCE



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Allison De Paoli
Founder & Principal
Altique Consulting
San Antonio, TX

AEC leaders are meticulous about risk. You have specs, submittals, RFIs, contingency budgets, and contract language reviewed by three attorneys. You plan for the things that can go wrong before they go wrong.

So why does the average AEC firm treat its health plan like a line item to be renewed and forgotten?

The workforce you're insuring is one of the most complex in any industry. A single firm might carry licensed architects, structural PEs, field superintendents, project managers, and administrative staff - all under one benefits plan that was probably designed for none of them specifically. That's not a benefits problem. That's a strategy problem.

Your Field and Office Staff Don't Have the Same Risk Profile

Field personnel and design staff need almost nothing in common when it comes to benefits.

A superintendent who tears a rotator cuff on a job site needs disability coverage - real disability coverage, short and long-term - that protects their income while they're out. Without it, you don't just have a labor gap. You have a person in financial crisis trying to figure out if they can afford to wait on surgery. Those two things don't stay separate for long.

Your design staff are carrying a different kind of risk. The AEC industry has a burnout problem (anyone who's navigated a design-build deadline sprint knows this firsthand), and it shows up in turnover before it shows up anywhere else. Mental health support, EAPs, flexible spending - these aren't soft benefits. They're retention infrastructure for the people doing the creative and technical work that wins you projects.

One undifferentiated plan trying to serve both groups usually does a mediocre job for everyone.

There's a Compliance Exposure Most Firms Are Sitting On

If your firm bids public work, you know the words "prevailing wage" and "Davis-Bacon." What fewer firms optimize

is the fringe benefit piece.

A portion of the required prevailing wage can be satisfied through bona fide fringe benefits - health insurance, retirement contributions - rather than cash wages. Done right, this reduces payroll taxes and sharpens your bids. Done wrong (or not at all), you're leaving money on the table on every public project you win. This isn't obscure. It's just rarely built into the benefits strategy from the start.

Then there's the geographic problem. Your Texas-based firm sends an engineering team to Ohio for a six-month project oversight. Their health plan's network covers Texas. Someone needs a specialist in Columbus and finds out mid-project they're out of network. It happens constantly - and it's entirely avoidable if someone's actually thinking about it ahead of time.

Retention Is a Design Problem

Losing a senior PM mid-project doesn't just hurt morale. It delays delivery, strains client relationships, and costs you the institutional knowledge that took years to build.

Retirement design - structured 401(k) matching, profit-sharing tied to project performance, deferred compensation for principals eyeing succession - is one of the most underused retention tools in AEC. The firms doing it well aren't just attracting talent. They're making it financially irrational to leave.

There's also a fiduciary piece most AEC principals don't know about. Under ERISA, you are personally liable for how your health plan is run - the vendors you choose, the plan design, what your broker earns on your account. That liability pierces the corporate veil. Most plan sponsors find this out during a DOL audit or an employee lawsuit. Not before.

Your benefits plan is either being managed with that level of rigor - or it isn't.

AEC leadership thinks in blueprints and risk matrices. The health plan deserves the same treatment.

LEGAL



Data Center Construction: When the Texas Grid Becomes the Critical Path

Christopher L. Ross
Attorney
Cokinis/Young
Austin, TX

For the typical construction project, the critical path primarily runs through the jobsite. For a data center, which can draw as much electricity and water as a small city, the path runs through ERCOT (the "Electric Reliability Council of Texas"). As of July 2026, ERCOT is tracking more than 438 gigawatts of grid interconnection requests, and nearly 89 percent of that comes from data centers. That is a staggering number. For scale, the entire ERCOT grid peaked at 85 gigawatts in 2023.

Water procurement adds more complexity. A Research Center analysis found that Texas data centers already consume 25 billion gallons of water a year—a figure that could grow to 160 billion gallons by 2030, representing roughly 3 percent of Texas's total use. Data centers generate massive amounts of heat due to densely packed servers and electrical equipment, and require water for cooling purposes in a closed loop system. For a state already struggling with water consumption, local water-service agreements are proving difficult to negotiate.

The equipment side poses its own unique challenges. Lead times for large power transformers exceeded 160 weeks in early 2026, while high-voltage circuit breakers took 125 weeks to procure. Utilities are buying equipment three to five years ahead of schedule. Complicating matters, local city councils are taking action to prevent data center construction entirely.

For a contractor running a schedule, delayed equipment, unresolved water agreements, stalled grid interconnection, and related permitting delays all contribute to project delays, with the potential for significant general conditions and liquidated damages exposure.

SB 6 and ERCOT

For background, Senate Bill 6, signed into law on June 20, 2025, put the first regulatory framework around large-load interconnection in Texas. Any project seeking 75 megawatts or more of new grid capacity must clear certain hurdles: among other things, an initial transmission fee of at least \$100,000, proof of site control, disclosure of substantially similar service requests, and financial commitment requirements for transmission infrastructure needed to serve the large load.

ERCOT's "Batch Zero," approved on June 18, 2026, is how that framework now works in practice. Instead of allocating projects one at a time, Batch

Zero groups qualifying 75-plus-megawatt projects together in "batches." ERCOT expects to notify applicants of their status by August 2026, with a final transmission plan due in fall 2027.

Stargate Data Center

The Stargate data center campus outside Abilene illustrates the massive scale of these projects. The \$500 billion nationwide project, backed by OpenAI, Oracle, and SoftBank, is building a 1,100-acre, four-million-square-foot campus expected to house millions of GPUs. The city of Abilene granted the developers an 85 percent property tax abatement over ten years to finalize construction.

Rather than go exclusively through ERCOT, the developers applied for permits for 360 megawatts of on-site gas power generation, later bought another 4.5 gigawatts of power capacity, and announced a 600-megawatt grid expansion large enough to power roughly half a million homes.

Project contractors have to sequence natural gas turbines and related electrical equipment alongside the data center construction itself. Turbines alone are effectively sold out through 2028—GE Vernova, a key beneficiary, has a record 100-gigawatt backlog. Standard equipment procurement is now a high-stakes, multi-year critical path driven by a massive surge in power requirements and a severely constrained supply chain and grid.

Local Government

Because data center construction impacts Texas communities, local governments are increasingly becoming more involved. In San Marcos, the city council voted 4-3 in June 2026 to ban data centers after denying a service agreement that would have used 70,000 gallons of water a day.

Fort Worth proposed rules requiring 250-foot setbacks from residential property, closed-loop cooling, and wastewater pretreatment permits. Hill County also attempted to pass a data center moratorium in May 2026, rescinding it a month later after a developer sued for \$100 million. The County replaced the moratorium with a compliance checklist.

Local government delays and related moratoriums impact the construction schedule directly. Contractors that mobilize crews and commit to long-lead equipment items may bear the risk if the approval process unravels due to a local council vote.

See **LEGAL**, page 14

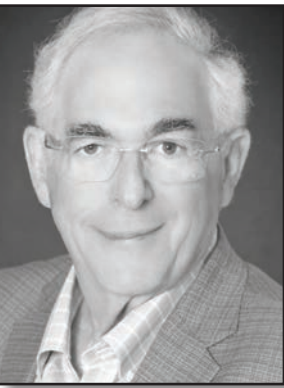
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ACCOUNTING



New IRS Calculator Simplifies Percentage-of-Completion Accuracy

Steven Bankler, CPA, PFS, Cr.FA, CFF, CGMA
Senior Partner
Bankler Partners
San Antonio, TX

The IRS recently released a new Excel-based Look-Back Interest Calculator that automates the percentage-of-completion (POC) look-back method for long-term contracts. But it's not a home run. The calculator may be a welcome quality-control tool—a secondary check to validate your Form 8697 lookback interest numbers—but it's not a replacement for your existing POC process.

The tool is designed around Form 8697 and IRC Section 460(b)(2), where you reconcile the taxes you paid as you went (based on estimates) with the taxes you would have paid if you had known the final, actual profit each year (Note: Residential home builders and small construction companies currently under \$31 million in revenue are exempt). Enter the contract data and the tool recomputes the "what if" tax for prior years and then applies IRS underpayment/overpayment interest rates using daily compounding to arrive at interest due or interest refundable. In other words, it can help solve a highly technical, mechanical problem—checking your tax math over multiple years.

But it doesn't help you determine what work qualifies for percentage-of-completion in the first place. Under Section 460, most contractors with larger or longer jobs must use the POC method for longterm contracts unless they qualify for an exception. Others elect it for business reasons, including larger, multi-year projects in which it makes sense to align income with work performed to create more predictability with taxes and finances. Additional reasons include creating a truer snapshot for bonding and banking relationships and better job costing.

The POC method can accelerate taxes by recognizing income as you go (even, sometimes, before cash is collected). So, it's important, if you have the flexibility, to always thoughtfully determine which projects must, may, or should be on the POC method for both tax and cash-flow purposes.

And you still must determine POC using accepted methods (typically costto cost for tax), track job costs accurately, and choose an overall accounting method that fits your size, projects, and planning goals. The calculator won't help you with that, either.

Most construction firms that are either required to use POC or choose it voluntarily already rely on job cost systems, construction accounting software, or CPAbuilt spreadsheets to

calculate costs incurred to date, total estimated contract cost, and percentage complete and related revenue, cost, and gross profit.

The calculator assumes you have already done those computations correctly, then steps in later to compute a lookback interest once the job is finished and actual results are known. It's another layer of verification in that final step, but the IRS states, "using the calculator does not guarantee compliance with the law and does not replace authoritative guidance, as the tool does not address all fact patterns or complexities associated with look-back interest calculations."

Many small- and mid-size contractors have homegrown lookback spreadsheets that may carry forward old interest rates or outdated formulas. Running a few past contracts through the IRS calculator could be an easy way to test whether your current tool is still accurate. And since the calculator mirrors the December 2025 Form 8697 instructions and uses official rate logic, printing or saving its output in your workpapers gives an IRS agent something familiar and reliable to tie into. That might, in theory, shorten an exam and reduce debate over pure math.

However, it's still an Excel file itself. You will have to keep it updated with current interest rates and make sure your team inputs data consistently.

A practical approach to using the new calculator would be to:

Keep your current POC engine in place. Do not abandon proven job costing and processes. Your primary focus should remain on accurate estimates, tight cost tracking, and timely reporting.

Use the IRS tool as a "second set of eyes." When a longterm contract closes and Form 8697 is required, run the project through both your usual method and the IRS workbook. If results match, you gain confidence. If not, you have an early chance to investigate before the IRS gets involved.

Review prior years for missed lookbacks. The IRS reminds taxpayers that not all longterm contracts trigger lookbacks, but also encourages contractors to review the past five years for gaps. Where you find missed Form 8697 filings, the new tool can help you quantify and correct interest more efficiently.

Used this way, the new Look-Back Interest Calculator is as good as any level on your job site: It won't design the build or pour the concrete for you, but it can help ensure what you have already built is straight.

OSHA



Every Crew Has a Role in Safety

Michael Middleton
Compliance Safety & Health Officer
OSHA
Harker Heights, TX

Construction projects succeed when everyone works together. The same is true for safety. Safe & Sound Week, taking place August 10–16, 2026, is a chance for construction employers and workers to focus on what keeps jobsites safe every day.

This year's theme takes inspiration from sports, reminding us that safety is a team effort. Winning teams don't succeed by chance. They prepare, communicate, develop plans, and work together. On a construction site, the same principles apply. Every worker, supervisor, contractor, and manager has a role in preventing injuries and illnesses.

Safe & Sound Week recognizes employees and safety programs that make a difference every day. It also encourages companies to strengthen their safety and health programs by involving workers and reinforcing safe work practices. Whether you're building a corporate office, paving roads, renovating homes, or working on utility projects, safety depends on everyone doing their part.

The week brings together employers, workers, labor organizations, and safety professionals from across the country to highlight the importance of strong safety and health programs. Organizations of every size can participate, from small contractors to large construction firms.

Employers can hold toolbox talks, safety stand-downs, hazard hunts, equipment inspections, recognition events, team challenges, or refresher training. These activities give crews the opportunity to identify hazards, discuss lessons learned, and recognize workers who help create a safer jobsite. Even small efforts can reinforce the importance of

making safety part of every day's work.

Safe & Sound Week can also be the starting point for enhancing workplace safety. Companies can use the week to launch a new safety initiative, strengthen an existing program, or celebrate important safety successes. The goal isn't just one successful week—it's building habits that last all year.

Safe + Sound is a year-round campaign that encourages every workplace to develop and maintain an effective safety and health program. Strong programs help employers identify and correct hazards before someone gets hurt. They also improve communication, increase worker involvement, and create a consistent approach to managing risk.

The campaign focuses on three key elements of an effective safety and health program:

- Management leadership
- Worker participation
- A systematic approach to finding and fixing hazards

When these elements work together, construction companies are better prepared to prevent injuries, improve productivity, and keep projects moving safely.

Registration and free resources for Safe & Sound Week, including planning tools, promotional materials, and participation guides, will be available in July on OSHA's Safe & Sound Week website.

No matter the size of your company or the type of work you do, Safe & Sound Week is an opportunity to bring your team together, strengthen your safety culture, and make sure everyone returns home safe at the end of the day.

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AUGUST

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1 — Adrian Flores / Core Electrical Group

12 — Mike Sellers / Alamo 1

16 — Letty Sanchez / Wilborn Steel

16 — Dema Hanson / Baker Triangle

16 — Joe Ramon III / 1 Priority Environmental Services

17 — Lauren Castle / Core Electrical Group

19 — Drew Pressentin / VIP Staffing

21 — Kristina Rangel / Middleman Construction

25 — Shelley Rappmund / JC Stoddard

26 — Lori Green / Acrisure

28 — Brad Gillaudeau / Alterman

29 — Stacey Taliancich / Middleman Construction

30 — Karin Wasylw / Asel & Associated PLLC

Know someone celebrating a birthday next month? Let us know!

Email Andi Mathews, andi@constructionnews.net

Building Strong Leaders

Leadership in construction is about more than managing projects—it is about building people, creating opportunities and strengthening the industry for the next generation. **Amy Rico**, President of the **National Association of Women in Construction** (NAWIC) Austin Chapter #7 for the 2025–2026 chapter year, is embracing that mission through service, mentorship and advocacy.

Professionally, Rico serves as Lead Service Administrator for **Texas AirSystems**, where she supports service operations, payroll, dispatch, billing and office administration across multiple Texas locations. Her role requires organization, collaboration and a commitment to keeping daily operations running efficiently—

qualities that also define her leadership within NAWIC.

As chapter president, Rico is passionate about advancing women in the construction industry by creating opportunities for professional growth, encouraging leadership development and fostering an environment where members can succeed. She believes that empowering others strengthens not only individual careers but the construction industry as a whole.

During her term, Rico has placed a strong emphasis on increasing member engagement, supporting workforce development initiatives and expanding scholarship opportunities. Working under the chapter theme, “Level Up & Build Strong,” she is focused on helping members develop their skills, grow

their professional networks and inspire future leaders in the trades and construction professions.

Beyond her professional and volunteer leadership, Rico is the owner of Creations by LKV, where she channels her creativity through custom projects and services. She also enjoys spending time with her family, giving back to her community and encouraging others to pursue their passions.

Her dedication to both her career and her community reflects the values NAWIC promotes across the nation—leadership, education, service and advocacy for women in construction.

As the Austin Chapter continues to expand its impact, Rico’s leadership is helping position the organization as a



catalyst for workforce development, scholarship support and professional advancement, ensuring today’s members and tomorrow’s construction leaders have the tools they need to succeed.

Association Calendar

Content submitted by Associations to Construction News

ABC CTX

Associated Builders & Contractors
Central Texas Chapter
Aug. 20: Tropic Like It’s Hot Pickleball Tournament presented by Loenbro, 4-7pm, Austin Pickle Ranch, 11000 Middle Fiskville Building B, Austin
Aug. 26: Coffee and Contractors, 8-9:30am

ACEA

Greater Austin Contractors & Engineers Association
Aug. 28: Clay Shoot, 8am-2pm, Reunion Ranch, 850 County Rd., 255, Georgetown



AGC

Associated General Contractors Austin
Aug. 13: TopGolf Networking event
Aug. 21: Construction Leadership Council (CLC) Community Service Event, Central Texas Food Bank

ASA

American Subcontractors Association Austin
Aug. 17: Austin Education: The Lien Playbook with Josh Condon of Lone Star Paving. 8-10am, 1805 Rutherford Ln., Austin. Breakfast and coffee included.
Aug. 27: ASA Austin Clay Shoot, 11:30am-4pm, Capital City Clays, 8707 Lindell Ln., Austin.
To register or learn more about these events, visit <https://subcontractorsaustintexas.com>.

CTRCA

Central Texas Roofing Contractors Association
Aug. 18: Lunch & Learn, Speaker Marco Flores, Stormiex Law Group LLC, 11am-1pm, QXO, 108 Denso Dr., Austin

LEGAL con’t.

Impact on Contractors

For contractors, the name of the game is risk allocation. Thankfully, owners are increasingly using early procurement packages, standalone purchase orders, and separate equipment provisions before finalizing the full construction contract.

Once finalized, construction contracts should clearly identify which party bears the risk of grid delays, utility approvals, water-service agreements, and related permitting delays. If those items are controlled by the owner or a separate entity, the contractor should not become the unintended insurer of those risks through broad general conditions or liquidated-damages language.

While EPC (“Engineering, Procurement, and Construction”) and design-build contracts may provide efficiency and a single point of responsibility, they become much riskier when the contractor absorbs procurement and grid delays. EPCM (“Engineering, Procurement, and Construction Management”) and hybrid structures give owners more procurement flexibility, but if the owner controls key deliveries, it should also own the corresponding coordination and risk.

The same care must be taken with substantial completion clauses. Given the complexity at play, contractors should avoid definitions that make substantial completion conditioned on the owner’s ability to operate a fully

functioning data center and instead limit the clause to the scope of the contractor’s work. Liquidated damage clauses should also be tied to milestones the contractor can control. Excusable or compensable delays should be specified, and dispute provisions can help keep the project moving—continue-to-perform clauses and reservations of rights can help preserve progress without waiving claims.

So too with Force Majeure (“FM”) clauses. A standard FM clause might include natural disasters or other so-called “Acts of God.” But in data center construction, contractors should look to include utility interconnection and grid-related delays within FM clauses, as well as state and local government moratoriums in the event of political pushback.

The takeaway for contractors is straightforward: the risk profile has changed. Power, water, and long-lead equipment items are no longer peripheral development issues; instead, they have become part of the critical path. Fundamentally, data center projects will succeed where power, water, and procurement risks are addressed before mobilization. Contractors should research and weigh their insurance options and seek to secure specialized insurance, such as for systems integration coverage. In a Texas construction market increasingly shaped by data center demand, careful front-end risk allocation may be the difference between a managed delay and a project-defining dispute.



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Finished site rendering



Groundbreaking

Progress is rolling into the final stretch at Gregg-Clarke Park as the City of Kyle nears completion of its new \$3.1 million All-Wheels Skatepark. Spanning 34,000 square feet of custom-poured concrete, the facility is on track to become one of the largest and most versatile skateparks in Central Texas.

The project features specialized skatepark construction by **SPA Skateparks** (SPA), an internationally recognized designer and builder of action sports facilities. Known for creating high-performance skateparks across North America, SPA has brought its expertise in precision concrete construction, rider-focused design and custom transitions to Kyle's newest recreational destination.

When completed, the park will feature a high-performance pump track, street-style technical sections and deep transition bowls designed for skateboarders, BMX riders, scooter enthusiasts and inline skaters of all skill levels. The variety of features is intended to provide a challenging yet welcoming environment for both recreational users and competitive athletes.

From a construction perspective, the project showcases the specialized craftsmanship required to build world-class skateparks. Unlike conventional flatwork, skatepark construction demands precision concrete placement, custom-formed bowls, engineered drainage systems and carefully finished riding surfaces that meet the expectations of today's riders while providing long-term durability.

Construction crews are now completing the final phases of the project, including finish work and site improvements, with a grand opening anticipated in late summer 2026.

WaterWork Returns



See the iconic façade of the historic **Seaholm Intake Facility** transform into a vibrant canvas of art, light, and motion. WaterWork is a unique, immersive art experience co-created by **The Trail Conservancy**, **City of Austin ACME** (Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment), and **Design Austin**, that celebrates the dynamic relationship between Austin's urban landscape and its cherished natural environment.

Using state-of-the-art projection mapping technology, the Seaholm Waterfront will come alive with captivating artworks from twenty-two talented Central Texas artists: Alexis Hunter, Beili Liu, Bethany Johnson, Brandon LeJeune, Brian Skalak, Cathy Le, Chris Tobar Rodriguez, Eric Schoenborn, Mishka Westell, Jesse Ebaugh, Essentials Creative (team), Hillerbrand+Magsamen, Lauren Schroeder, Lisa B Woods+Jerome Martinez, Mandy Mandelstein, Taylor Speed+Greg D'Amico, and Terra Henderson.

Each artist's work explores and illuminates the vibrant coexistence between Austin's bustling cityscape and its restorative natural spaces.

The immersive display will take place at dusk on Friday, September 25, and Saturday, September 26, 2026. Shoal Beach at Town Lake Metropolitan Park, 707 W Cesar Chavez St, Austin



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