

ELECTION 2025



George Garcia, center, leads a cheer during the Win Together PAC's election night watch party on Tuesday.

Photos by Sam Owens/San Antonio Express-News

Spurs get the W

Bexar County voters approve downtown basketball arena

By Molly Smith, Madison Iszler and Saul Pink

STAFF WRITERS

A publicly financed downtown arena for the Spurs is on its way to becoming a reality.

About 52% of Bexar County voters approved Proposition B in Tuesday's election, which will raise the county's taxes on hotel rooms and car rentals to generate up to \$311 million to help pay for a \$1.3 billion arena.

That means the Spurs will eventually leave the county-owned Frost Bank Center on the East Side for a home court to be built at the former Institute of Texan Cultures site at Hemisfair.

Supporters of the measure broke out into cheers and chants of "Go Spurs Go" at a packed River North Icehouse when early voting returns showed the measure passing with 53% support.

"The community has spoken: we love this city and we love this county, and the city and the county love us back," Spurs Sports & Entertainment managing partner Peter J. Holt told reporters.

"We're ready to do something really special that's going to help the Spurs, that's going to help the rodeo and that's going to help all sectors of the community, and it's going to be right in our heart of



Peter J. Holt, managing partner and chairman of Spurs Sports & Entertainment, announces Prop B would pass.

MORE INSIDE

Boerne ISD tax increase gets voter approval. **A2**

Hays schools' proposed tax hike rejected. **A2**

NEISD bond package mostly gets OK. **A3**

Judson, East Central ISD tax hikes voted down. **A3**

our city," Holt said.

Voters also gave the green light to a bid to help prevent the Frost Bank Center, where the Spurs have played since 2002, from struggling to land bookings when the team leaves for downtown. The team's lease with the county is up in 2032.

Proposition A, which will devote \$192 million in county tax dollars to renovate the arena, Freeman Coliseum and surrounding facilities, passed with nearly 56% support. The proposal will make

way for the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo to expand its programming to host Western events year-round.

"I'm so happy our residents believed in us," Cody Davenport, the rodeo's executive director and CEO, said at an election party at the coliseum.

Davenport said the organization's longevity on the East Side — the coliseum hosted the first stock show and rodeo in 1950 — and its plan to spruce up the grounds and

draw more events resonated with voters.

"We're committed to being here, regardless of what development's around us," he said. "This is our home."

The stakes were high for the Spurs on Tuesday because the arena financing deal that they worked out with the city and county was tied to the passage of Prop B — the only portion of the deal that, under state law, requires voter approval.

Public financing will cover 61.5% of the arena's total construction costs. The city has agreed to contribute up to \$489 million through a combination of its share of state hotel taxes, property tax revenue from new development around the arena and ground leases for that development.

The Spurs will kick in \$500 million and cover cost overruns.

The Win Together campaign to pass both ballot measures had raised more than \$7 million as of Oct. 25 — with most of that money coming from the Spurs. The campaign blanketed voters' homes with numerous mailers, door hangers, and TV and online ads. It recruited actress Eva Longoria to film a social media ad urging residents to vote for Props A and B, and sent a text message on her behalf reminding regis-

Props continues on A15

GOP claims victory as all measures on ballot pass

By Isaac Yu

STAFF WRITER

All 17 constitutional amendments on the statewide ballot passed in Tuesday's election, including measures aimed at providing property tax relief and shoring up the water supply, according to unofficial returns.

Propositions that would expand the homestead exemption for property taxpayers and funnel \$1 billion a year into a statewide water fund led by wide margins. So did amendments championed by Gov. Greg Abbott, including one that would let judges deny bail to people accused of serious crimes and another that would greatly expand the governor's power over a panel that polices state judges.

A \$3 billion fund for dementia research pushed by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick won nearly 70% of the vote.

The state's top two Republican leaders declared victory on all 17 propositions late Tuesday.

"This legislative session, we delivered the conservative victories Texans demanded," Abbott wrote in a statement. "And this November, Texans showed up to enshrine them in the Texas Constitution."

While all the amendments passed, some were far less popular with voters. Propositions to ban taxes on stock exchanges and to give tax breaks to certain border properties had the tightest mar-

Measures continues on A15

Shutdown costing U.S. \$15B a week

By Jarrell Dillard and Josyana Joshua

BLOOMBERG NEWS

The U.S. government shutdown has become the longest in history, and with no sign of a resolution soon its economic toll is deepening.

Now in its 36th day, the shutdown has surpassed the previous record set in early 2019 during President Donald Trump's first term. Every week that passes costs the economy anywhere from \$10 billion to \$30 billion, based on analysts' estimates, with several landing in the \$15 billion range.

In the past, the hit to economic growth has been temporary, with furloughed employees getting back pay and the federal government making up for the halted spending once reopened.

This one stands to inflict more damage, and not just because of its length, economists say. The economy is more fragile than seven years ago, with many Americans fretting about inflation and job prospects. And unlike during the 2018-2019 shutdown, the fallout extends beyond federal workers missing paychecks to millions of Americans losing full access to

Shutdown continues on A15

Hill Country land buy would add 54,000 acres to state parks



Josie Norris/San Antonio Express-News file photo

Texas' soon-to-be newest state park would be second in size only to Big Bend Ranch State Park, shown here in 2020.

By John C. Moritz

STAFF WRITER

Texas is poised to make the second-largest acquisition of parkland in its history this week under an ambitious program that seeks pull the state up from the bottom tier when it comes to state-owned lands for public outdoor recreation.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission is scheduled to vote Thursday on a plan to purchase the sprawling 54,000-acre Silver Lake Ranch from the Moody Foundation for a yet to be disclosed price.

The ranch, about 125 miles west of San Antonio, is home to a lake and abundant white-tailed deer, turkeys, javelinas and doves. The Parks and Wildlife website said its "steep canyons and rolling hills" would "create additional recreational opportunities and habitat pro-

tection for native wildlife" and "provide greater outdoor experiences and opportunities for the citizens of Texas."

The parcel that straddles across Kinney and Edwards counties would be second in size only to the 300,000-acre Big Bend Ranch State Park, which was purchased in 1988. It is part of a land-buying surge under the state's new Centennial Parks Conservation Fund, established in 2023 after voters agreed to set aside \$1 billion of surplus revenue to set up a dedicated revenue stream to boost Texas' parks inventory.

Luke Metzger, who runs the nonprofit advocacy organization Environment Texas and lobbied for the legislation that established the park fund, called the planned acquisition "a milestone for all Texans" because of the size of the tract and its diverse habitats for wildlife

and vegetation.

"This is exactly that kind of property that could really help expand or meet the demand for recreational opportunities on public land in Texas," Metzger said. "I swear, that's just some of the prettiest country I've ever seen in Texas. It's just gorgeous out there."

The land on the western tier of the Texas Hill Country is owned by the Moody Foundation, established by the prominent Galveston family whose wealth from cotton, railroads and banking dates back to the years after the Civil War. No purchase price is listed on the commission meeting agenda,

Parks continues on A15

