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Google pledges \$10M for Texas water

Investment offered as backlash grows to massive AI data center development

By Rebekah F. Ward and Megan Kimble
STAFF WRITERS

Google will spend \$10 million on water projects in Texas communities where it plans to build data centers, the company an-

nounced Wednesday — a first-of-its-kind investment that comes amid growing backlash to the resource-intensive projects.

The company also said it will replenish more water than its data centers consume by 2030, and report usage numbers pub-

licly as part of an effort to craft a “blueprint” for responsible water management. Google has emerged as one of the biggest data center developers in the state, with plans to invest \$40 billion over the coming years.

Critics said the initiative is a good start but isn’t aggressive enough to address concerns that data centers will deplete the state’s already stressed rivers

and aquifers and strain the electric grid. Top Republican lawmakers are studying the issue ahead of the next session, and some local communities are trying to halt the projects altogether.

“\$10 million doesn’t buy much of anything,” said Perry Fowler, the executive director of the Texas Water Infrastructure Network, a construction trade coal-

ition. “It may help one little town with their system, but if you’re talking about any significant investment in infrastructure, that’s a drop in the bucket.”

Data center developers have flocked to Texas in the past year, lured by cheap land, few regulations and a path to low-cost energy. Hundreds of computing centers, with servers that power ar-

Water continues on A7

BRINGING THE NOISE



The Spurs Jackals, a group of high-energy, soccer-style fans, perform chants for the media hours before Game 1 of the NBA Finals on Wednesday at Frost Bank Center on Wednesday. San Antonio faces the New York Knicks in the championship matchup. **IN SPORTS: Finals rivals give Filipino community a place on NBA's biggest stage. B1**

For coverage of Wednesday night’s Game 1 of the NBA Finals, go to express-news.com/spurs

ANDREW J. WHITAKER/SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS

Proposal would add Bible lessons

Curriculum puts focus on Christianity at all grade levels

By Isaac Yu
STAFF WRITER

The Republican-led State Board of Education is weighing plans to weave Christianity into classroom instruction more directly than ever before, asking teachers across nearly every grade level to teach and test students on a broad swath of Christian history and biblical figures.

Conservative proponents of the proposed overhaul say the changes are designed to help students better understand how religion has shaped the country’s culture and foundations. But experts say some of the lessons are at odds with the historical record or inflate the role of Christianity in major events.

Bible continues on A8

Families say they’ll stay with S.A. schools

By Noah Alcala Bach
STAFF WRITER

Most families at four chronically underperforming San Antonio schools have opted to stay next year as a new charter operator takes control of the campuses.

When trustees in San Antonio and Edgewood independent school districts agreed earlier this year to turn over four campuses to Third Future Schools, a charter network with a track record of quickly improving academic performance, some community members questioned the decisions.

Critics worried that beloved teachers at their campuses would lose jobs in staffing

Schools continues on A5

Pundits forecast tighter race for Texas seat

By James Osborne
WASHINGTON BUREAU

After three decades of Democratic candidates failing to win statewide in Texas, Democrats and Republicans alike were abuzz Wednesday that this could be the year.

The morning after Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton defeated U.S. Sen. John Cornyn in the GOP runoff, political analysts predicted Paxton’s history of scandal would be a problem that could potentially scuttle his chances in November. Two of the more prominent election forecasters, the Cook Political Report and the University of Virginia’s Center for Politics, both changed their outlook on the race from “likely Republican” to “leans Republican.”

“Paxton has a litany of ethical lapses for Democrats to exploit — from allegations of brib-



John Moore/Getty Images

Texas Senate candidate James Talarico, a Democrat, is a “dangerous candidate,” says U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz.

ery and misuse of his office to marital infidelity,” read analysis by the Cook Political Report. “Given the national environment, this is a race that certain-

ly may have become competitive even if Cornyn had won, but Paxton’s flaws warrant an immediate move to the Lean column.”

It is not exactly a resounding vote of confidence in Democratic state Rep. James Talarico’s chances to do what Democrats like Beto O’Rourke and Wendy Davis could not. But it nonetheless marks a new openness to the idea that the long Republican-dominated state could potentially be in play.

At issue is not only Paxton himself — who has weathered criminal indictments, impeachment and personal scandal — but questions around the strength of President Donald Trump’s brand following his decision to invade Iran, driving up global oil prices at a time many Americans were already struggling with persistent inflation. A recent poll by Quinnipiac University gave the president an approval rating of 33%, with just 73% of Republicans supporting the president’s per-

Senate continues on A8

