

San Antonio Express-News

EXPRESSNEWS.COM

FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2026

VOL. 161, NO. 266

\$3.00

Camp leaders' flood response faulted

Legislative report: Lack of planning led to preventable deaths

By Megan Kimble
STAFF WRITER

Camp Mystic's leaders failed at almost every step to prepare for and respond to the devastating July 4 floods that ultimately killed 25 campers and two counselors, according to a report delivered Thursday to a special legislative committee formed to investigate the tragedy.

The report concluded that the Hill Country Christian camp did not have written emergency plans in violation of state requirements; did not adequately

prepare for the floods, despite storm warnings; and did not evacuate campers in advance of the flash floods, despite "ample opportunity" to do so.

"There was no plan," said Michael Massengale, a former district judge and one of the investigators hired by the committee. This lack of planning violated state licensing requirements for camps and led to preventable deaths, he said.

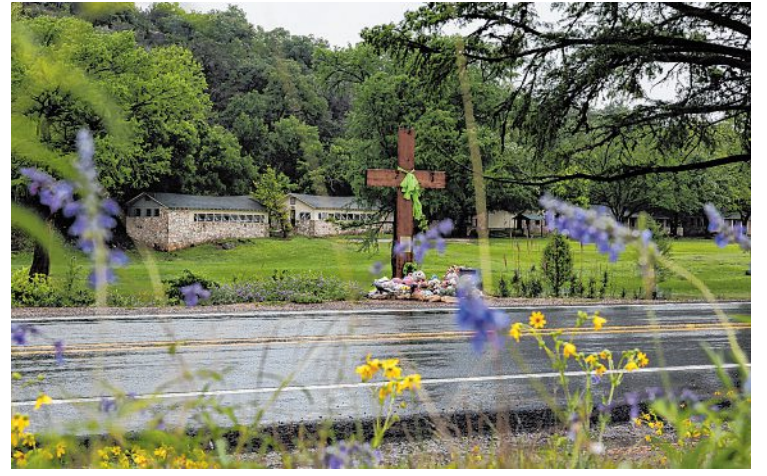
"A plan that existed only in Dick Eastland's head is not a plan that satisfied the state's rules for camps like Camp Mys-

tic," he said, referring to the camp's longtime leader who died in the floods.

The release of the report marks the end of a months-long investigation that lawmakers said was needed to fully understand what went wrong at Camp Mystic and offer families a chance to share their experiences.

Camp Mystic had initially planned to reopen this summer but abandoned those plans at the end of April after fierce opposition from lawmakers and

Camp continues on A4



Sam Owens/San Antonio Express-News

A memorial along Texas 39 near Camp Mystic in Hunt honors the 25 campers and two counselors killed in the July 4 floods.

STAGING JUNETEENTH



Bridget P. Lightbourne, portraying Queen Nandi, performs Thursday in the Juneteenth celebration "Past, Present and Future" at the Doris Griffin Senior Center in San Antonio. Story on page A2.

KATINA ZENTZ/SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS

Toyota incentive package gets OK

S.A. competing for new assembly line

By Molly Smith
STAFF WRITER

San Antonio's mayor and City Council voted unanimously Thursday to award Toyota Motor Corp. \$122 million in incentives to build a new vehicle assembly line at the company's South Side plant.

Toyota has not said publicly what it plans to assemble at the planned facility, but some industry experts say it could be the Tacoma pickup, which was made in San Antonio until 2021. The company currently manufactures Sequoia SUVs and full-size Tundra pickups at the South Side complex.

San Antonio is among the cities in the running for the new assembly line. Toyota has not identified the other contenders.

"We all have the goal to reduce generational poverty, and economic development is key to that goal," said Council Member Marina Alderete Gavito, who represents District 7 on the Northwest Side. "We have to continue landing big projects like this."

Toyota continues on A8

U.S. lifts blockade of Iran as part of deal

By Will Weissert, Seung Min Kim, Michelle L. Price and Mary Clare Jalonick
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The United States on Thursday lifted its blockade of Iran, and oil tankers began freely moving through the Strait of Hormuz after months of being unable to use the critical channel, as the tentative agreement to end the war took effect.

Meanwhile, Vice President JD



Jacquelyn Martin/Associated Press

Vice President JD Vance has been outspoken in defending the United States' tentative agreement to end the war with Iran.

Vance announced that he may postpone a trip to Switzerland that had been planned for today and included a ceremonial sign-

ing of the deal. And a Trump administration envoy told U.S. lawmakers in a private

Iran continues on A7

Jobs, services could be slashed without tax hike

By Megan Rodriguez
STAFF WRITER

San Antonio will have to slash hundreds of employees and make millions of dollars in cuts to local services if City Council doesn't OK a property tax rate hike, city budget writers warned Thursday.

Top city staff are recommending that San Antonio raise its property tax rate for the first time in more than three decades to help close a multi-million budget deficit over the next two years.

Budget writers have proposed raising the property tax rate from 54 cents per \$100 assessed value to nearly 58 cents per \$100 valuation.

The increase would cost the median homeowner \$70 more each year, according to city estimates.

Budget Director Freddy Martinez on Thursday outlined \$137.7 million in needed reductions if the council members — many of whom have been reluctant to the idea of a rate hike — do not approve the proposed increase.

Martinez told the City Council the cuts would have to include a 132-person reduction in current employees and removal

Tax hike continues on A8



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