

# Best Southwest Partnership

2019-20 Update

August 2020



**BEST SOUTHWEST**  
PARTNERSHIP

*Where Growth and Opportunity Meet*

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## Welcome from the President

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Best Southwest Partnership. The history of BSWP has included many milestones and achievements, and there's no doubt that our response to the COVID-19 pandemic stands as a testament to our core vision of creating a thriving region for future generations. The challenges presented by this pandemic are many, including those that potentially have a detrimental effect on our workforce and economic development priorities. I am excited every day to be working with a team that is tirelessly committed to advancing our region while overcoming barriers and obstacles. I am very proud to say I represent the Best Southwest.

I look forward to working with our Board of Directors in 2020-21 as we continue to make history as the Best Southwest Partnership.

Sincerely,  
Cory Lacy



# History

The two-county Best Southwest Partnership region is a dynamic and growing area of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The communities of Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville and Lancaster have been joined by Ferris, Glenn Heights, Hutchins, Ovilla, Red Oak, Wilmer and Balch Springs to partner in promoting the advantages and benefits of living in and investing in Southern Dallas County and Northern Ellis County.

The Best Southwest Partnership was formed in 1986 by four cities – Cedar Hill, DeSoto, Duncanville and Lancaster. There are 11 city partners and 18 other partners that include hospitals, colleges and universities, banks, utilities and other businesses, all interested in improving the quality of life in this region, thereby promoting economic development.

- **Core Initiatives:** Education, Healthcare, Transportation, and Workforce and Economic Development
- **BSWP Vision:** “Thriving Region for Future Generations”
- ↳ **Objectives:**
  - ↳ We bring different perspectives to energize and strengthen the development of the region.
  - ↳ We market the area as a whole to create significant opportunities.
  - ↳ We are a unified group of influential leaders who are passionate about the growth and success of this region.
  - ↳ Together, we’re even stronger.

“

**By producing locally, we can get them to the front lines quickly. Since most masks have been made overseas up until now, this local response is critical. It is not an easy time right now, but we are proud to do our small part in helping our country during this unprecedented crisis, and hopefully helping to keep people healthy.**

”

*Bruce Birnbach, CEO of American Leather Holdings*



American Leather manufacturing plants, including one in the Best Southwest region, shifted to producing protective face masks and gowns during the pandemic.

## Welcome from the Chair

Greetings! It has been my distinct pleasure to serve as 2020 Chair of the Best Southwest Partnership Board of Directors. As you know, it has been a most challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty it has caused in all facets of our lives. We all agree that health and safety is our top priority, and I want to express my deepest sympathy and condolences if you have been touched directly by this insidious virus. Seeing our community come together in response to the pandemic clearly illustrates that we will overcome this challenge and achieve even greater things in the future.

I am proud that as an organization, we were able to pivot quickly and adjust our priorities when the pandemic hit our region. This report will summarize our pre- and post-COVID priorities and the progress we've made with our core objectives, as well as taking a quick look at 2020 and beyond. I am thrilled to pass the gavel to Robyn Mota with Republic Services, who is supremely prepared to guide our talented Board as we look forward to a time when COVID-19 is more of a historical footnote than an everyday reality. Please continue to lend your full support to the Best Southwest Partnership as we strive to become even stronger post-COVID!



Take Care,  
Dr. Joe Seabrooks

# Leadership

## Executive Committee

- Dr. Joe Seabrooks,  
Dallas College Cedar Valley - Chair
- Robyn Mota,  
Republic Services – Chair-Elect
- Alfonso Hernandez, Atmos Energy –  
Immediate Past Chair
- Dr. Cynthia Mickens Ross, Methodist  
Charlton – Previous Past Chair
- Abdiel Ruiz,  
Ruiz Financial – Treasurer
- Trudy Lewis,  
City of Hutchins – Secretary
- Steve Martin,  
Duncanville Chamber – Vice Chair
- Randall Chase,  
Cedar Hill Chamber – Vice Chair
- Bridgette Taylor,  
Lancaster Chamber (Legacy Texas  
Bank) – Vice Chair
- Kenneth Govan, DeSoto Chamber  
(Oncor) – Vice Chair
- Honorable Curtistene McCowan,  
Mayor, City of DeSoto
- Cory Lacy, President,  
Best Southwest Partnership

## Board Members (Voting)

- Honorable Barry Gordon,  
City of Duncanville
- Honorable Carrie Gordon,  
City of Balch Springs
- Honorable Clyde Hairston,  
City of Lancaster
- Honorable Doug Hunt, City of Ovilla
- Honorable Chad McCurdy,  
City of Cedar Hill
- Honorable Michael Williams,  
UNT Dallas
- Dustin Anthamatten, Methodist  
Charlton Medical Center
- Kim Buttram, Cedar Hill EDC
- Paul Frederiksen, City of Duncanville
- Marlon Goff, City of Glenn Heights
- Tom Huth, Palladium USA
- Monica Kenney, Frost Bank
- Opal Maudin Jones,  
City of Lancaster
- Bob Mong, UNT Dallas
- Joe Newman, DeSoto EDC
- Stephanie Starrett,  
Plains Capital Bank

‣ **Board Members (Non-Voting)**

- Honorable Mark Stanfill, City of Red Oak
- Honorable Emmanuel Wealthy-Williams, City of Wilmer
- Marcus Balch, Texas State Technical College
- Felecia Benton, Zoe Communications
- Kim Britton, STAR Transit
- Cheryl Brown, CIGNA
- Guy Brown, City of Hutchins
- Michael Flusche, Office of U.S. Senator Ted Cruz
- Dr. Beatriz Joseph, Dallas College Mountain View
- Kimberly Hilley, TXU Energy
- Leonor Marquez, Los Barrios Unidos Community Clinic
- Patricia Coleman, Marketing/Branding Chair (Bank of DeSoto)
- Patricia Davis, Workforce/Economic Development Chair (Dallas College Cedar Valley)
- Sherese Lightfoot, Education Co-Chair (Lancaster ISD)
- Dr. Brenda Richardson Rowe, Health Care Chair (Harmony Community Development Corp.)
- Tierney Tinnin, Education Co-Chair (Cedar Hill ISD)



## 2020 Goals

### ‣ Pre-COVID

- Align BSWP Priorities with Dallas Regional Chamber (participate in DRC Southern Dallas Taskforce)
- Develop a Regional Housing Strategy (Executive/Middle Class/Affordable)
- Focus on Strengthening Our Regional Workforce (e.g., First Responders, Teachers, Advanced Manufacturing, etc.)
- Finalize Our Regional Transportation Plan
- Develop a Comprehensive Childcare/Early Childhood Strategy
- Develop a Customer Service Training Program for Regional Retail/Hospitality Industry

### ‣ Post-COVID

- Find Ways to Add Value for Our Members
- Become a Leading Information Resource for the Region
- Examine our Social Media Presence
- Evaluate our Website
- Become Involved in Local Transportation Initiatives
- Expand our Workforce/Economic Development Opportunities
- Continue to Support Our Local ISDs and Students with Our Scholarship Program
- Expand Our TGIF Legislative Series

# Value for Our Members

- Leading Information Resource
- **Pandemic Champions Series**
  - Social Media Campaign Highlighting the Efforts of Members During COVID-19 Global Pandemic
  - Promoting What Our Members are Doing to Serve the Region
  
- Created a New Website, [www.bestsouthwestresources.com](http://www.bestsouthwestresources.com), to Serve as an Information Clearinghouse for the Region
- Compiled List of All Essential Businesses
- Ran Our Pandemic Champions Video Series
- Promoted Our Education Scholarships
- Created a Place to House Community Information
  
- Social Media Expansion
- **Examined Current Social Media Platform**
  - Personal Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts That Were Not Updated
  - Created New Business Facebook Account
  - Relaunched Twitter and Instagram
  - Created BSWP LinkedIn Page
  
- Website Overhaul



# Core Initiatives

## ✎ Education

- ✎ Annual Education Luncheon Cancelled Due to COVID
- ✎ Created New Program to Award Scholarships to One Deserving Student in Each BSWP Member City

## ✎ Health

- ✎ Focus on Mental Health Awareness and Treatment

## ✎ Transportation

- ✎ Continue to Support Programs that Enhance Transportation for All Residents and Businesses in the BSWP Region
  - ✎ Partnered with NCTOG and USDOT to Sponsor a Study to Enhance Mobility at the Inland Port
- ✎ IH-45 in Hutchins
  - ✎ Interstate 45 at Dowdy Ferry intersection is a Key Crossing Location for Industrial, Residential, Commercial, and Retail traffic in the City of Hutchins, Immediately South of Interstate 20 and Just East of Dallas Inland Port Rail Line
  - ✎ Site Ensures Commuter Access in every direction
  - ✎ Crossing is Main Access Route for FedEx Ground (which employs 1,600 people), 3 Georgia Pacific Warehouses (encompassing over 2 million square feet), Republic Sanitation Services, 3 hotels, 6 quick service restaurants, as well as many travelers entering the Dallas Metropolitan Area

- IH-45 in Hutchins
  - DeSoto Mayor Curtistene McCowan Serves as Best Southwest Regional Transportation Council Representative
  - City of Hutchins Requested Her Assistance to Provide Advocacy and Support for Our Request with NCTCOG and TXDOT
  - She Quickly Coordinated a Meeting Between All Parties; City's Request That was Dormant for 6 years Received an Approved Project with Funding and Schematics in Less Than 2 Months



**Without the support, advocacy, relationship, and connection to our neighboring community, this project would not have been resolved. The Best Southwest Partnership has been an incredible value to the City of Hutchins and solidifies our understanding of the importance of membership.**



*Trudy Lewis, Hutchins City Administrator*

- Workforce and Economic Development
- **Partnered with Dallas College to Introduce the “Jobtimize” Program to the Region**

- Program Evaluates Applicants for Open Positions in Any Field Based on Soft Skills as well as Past Experience and Education
- Also Works for Existing Employees to Confirm They are in the Best Position for Success



- **Post-COVID Response**

- Financial Assistance to Regional Businesses Affected by Pandemic Through a Texas Workforce Commission Skills Development Fund
- Partnered with Employers During Pandemic on Retraining Initiatives to Help Ensure Positive Workforce Outcomes

- **Secured \$500,000 to Support Businesses in the BSWP and Southern Sector of Dallas County**

- 282 Trainees Scheduled to Participate
- 15 Companies Participating
- Developed a iCSI Program That Would Provide a Consistent Customer Service Training Program for Local Businesses

- Legislative – TGIF Series
- ↘ **Moved Annual TGIF Event to Virtual Format Available on Zoom and Facebook Live**
  - ↘ Aug. 7 – **Economic Development**
    - ↘ Speaker: Adriana Cruz, Governor’s Office of Economic Development
    - ↘ Facilitator: State Rep Carl Sherman
  - ↘ Aug. 14 – **Mental Health/Healthcare**
    - ↘ Speakers: Sabrina Conner, Director of External Affairs, North Texas Behavioral Health Authority and Sonja Gaines, Deputy Executive Commissioner, Texas Health and Human Services Commission
    - ↘ Facilitator: State Rep. Toni Rose
  - ↘ Aug. 21 – **Education**
    - ↘ Speakers: BSWP Superintendents Panel
    - ↘ Facilitator: State Senator Royce West
  - ↘ Aug. 28 – **Law Enforcement**
    - ↘ Speakers: BSWP Police Chiefs Panel
    - ↘ Facilitators: State Rep. Carl Sherman and State Senator Royce West

# TGIF

# LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST SERIES

Virtual Sessions: 8-9:15 a.m.

Aug. 7

Economic Development

Series Sponsor: 

Aug. 14

Mental Health/Health Care

Series Sponsor: 


Aug. 21

Education During the Pandemic

Honorable Series Sponsor: **Michael Williams**

Aug. 28

Law Enforcement

Series Sponsor: 

Title Sponsor



Presenting Sponsors



Silver Sponsors

- Aug. 7
  - Cedar Hill EDC
  - DeSoto EDC
  - Duncanville Community and Economic Development Corporation
  - Balch Springs EDC
  - City of Wilmer
  - Bank of DeSoto
  - City of Glenn Heights

- Aug. 14
  - City of Balch Springs
  - Los Barrios Unidos Community Clinic
- Aug. 21
  - Balch Springs EDC
  - Lancaster ISD
- Aug. 28
  - City of Balch Springs

Registration Link: [bestsouthwestresources.com](http://bestsouthwestresources.com)

# 2020 and Beyond →

Virtual Passing of Gavel to New Chair, Dec. 10, Noon (tentative)

Advance Progress of Core Objectives

Continued Proactive Response to COVID-19 Crisis

BSWP Retreat, Nov. 20, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. (tentative)



**The benefits of the Best Southwest Partnership are many, but given a core focus of the partnership is health care, Methodist Charlton considers it a natural fit to be at the table to provide resources that will address the health disparities and drive health and wellness initiatives in the region.**



*Dr. Cynthia Mickens Ross, Director of Community Relations & External Affairs, Methodist Charlton Medical Center*





**I firmly believe in order to feel included, you have to be included. Thus the reason, as Mayor of the All-America City of DeSoto, I made a commitment to represent my city with the spirit of asking not only what the Best Southwest Partnership could do for DeSoto, but also what DeSoto could do to strengthen the Partnership. I am honored I have had the opportunity to serve and collaborate with such a phenomenal group of leaders focused on ‘Uplifting the Region Together.’**



*Curtistene S. McCowan, Mayor, City of DeSoto*

“

**When I think about the Best Southwest Partnership, I think about my famous quote: ‘Positive, Progressive Partnership, Produces Prosperity for All.’ Working together in a collaborative atmosphere always benefits the whole.**

”

*Clyde C. Hairston, Mayor, City of Lancaster*

“

**The Best Southwest Partnership allows us to rely on relationships and discuss the efforts that could be consistent throughout our region, while also working together to streamline ideas to equip our legislators.**

*Stephen Mason, Mayor, City of Cedar Hill*

”



**The stated objectives of the Best Southwest Partnership are not mere words crafted to fulfill an organizational need. The objectives are real and actionable, both for the BSWP and its members at the local level. I am pleased to attest personally to their efficacy. The unity and comradery evidenced among the members is truly extraordinary, and may I say, unique among municipalities. The relationships are synergistic serving to enhance the region as well as each city.**

**We truly are stronger together.**



*Barry L. Gordon, Mayor, City of Duncanville*