

2018 FALL MEMBERS MEETING *RECAP*



TBLC Chairman Gay Gaddis delivering welcome remarks at the start of the meeting.



TWSP's Heather Harward kicked off the meeting with a briefing on water supply in Texas.



A quick morning break between panels gave members the opportunity to catch up and interact with speakers.



Thank you to Hillwood Properties for sponsoring our meeting.



Nikhil Goel of Uber Elevate discussing the future of commuting with Dr. Chris Poe of TAMU, Holly Reed of Texas Central Railroad and moderator Mike Berry.



TxDOT's James Bass discussing gridlock and transportation priorities with North Texas Commission CEO Chris Wallace and moderator Bobby Jenkins.



Political pundit Brendan Steinhauser discusses the 2018 midterms laying out the issues and the races to pay close attention to.



TBLC member Mike Berry introducing the lunch keynote, Ross Perot, Jr.



Above: Ross Perot, Jr. delivers luncheon keynote remarks, laying out why Texas has been able to capitalize on a decade's worth of growth.

Left: Ross Perot, Jr. closes keynote quoting Charles Schwab, "San Francisco is a great place to live, but Texas is a better place to raise a family."



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The Texas Business Leadership Council convened its 2018 Fall Members Meeting on Wednesday, October 17th at the Crescent Court Hotel in Dallas. Having seen unprecedented growth this past decade in population, business relocation, and new development, Texans are facing a “good problem.” On one hand unemployment is low; demand for skilled and unskilled labor – especially in construction – is high; and wages are on the rise – especially in mining, manufacturing, and trucking. On the other hand, increased pressure is being put on our road and water infrastructure. The Council explored the question, “Is Texas prepared to grow?”

Chairman Gay Gaddis of T3 in Austin opened the meeting, welcomed guests, and thanked the meeting’s sponsor – Hillwood Properties. She then turned emcee duties over to Justin Yancy, President of the TBLC, who introduced the Founder of Texas Water Supply Partners, Heather Harward. The briefing from Heather served as a general primer on the state of water supply in Texas and how the TBLC is working with water districts and river authorities, which span five water basins from the Red River to the Gulf. Recent achievements include securing permits and working on the development of two new reservoirs. These new reservoirs will be the first in Texas in the last 30 years.

Mike Berry of Hillwood Properties in Fort Worth hosted our first panel. “The Future of Transportation in Texas” outlined some of the exciting technology coming online within the next decade, revolutionizing transportation and taking the daily commute from crowded city road networks to the air. On the panel sat Nikhil Goel, Head of Product for Aviation Programs at Uber; Holly Reed, Managing Director for External Affairs for Texas Central Railroad; and Dr. Christopher Poe, Assistant Agency Director for Connected and Automated Transportation Strategy at Texas A&M Transportation Institute who discussed how these technologies can interconnect with high speed rail and automated driverless vehicles.

Our next panel discussed the here and now. Bobby Jenkins of ABC Home and Commercial Services in Austin moderated, “Gridlock: Is Texas Facing a Transportation Crisis?” featuring TxDOT Executive Director James Bass and Chris Wallace, CEO of the North Texas Commission. The panel discussed the politics behind transportation policy, the priorities, and the political will (or lack thereof) behind using all of the “tools in the tool box” especially as it pertains to toll roads and managed lanes.

Finally, before we broke for lunch, we received a briefing from Austin political pundit, Brendan Steinhauser of Steinhauser Strategies. Brendan reviewed the November midterms and reviewed what business leaders should know in regard to the election. Brendan predicted that the Republicans will remain in control of the U.S. Senate, but stand a better than average chance of losing the U.S. House of Representatives. Brendan also predicted a Ted Cruz win, but not by much – maybe 100,000 votes.

After a short break, Chairman Gaddis reconvened the meeting and brought up Mike Berry to introduce our keynote speaker, Ross Perot, Jr. Mr. Perot talked about the success at Alliance Texas, Hillwood’s master planned community and inland port which has facilitated a lot of North Texas’ expansion. He continued to discuss Texas’ successes and how policies like low taxes, predictable regulatory climate and respect for the free market makes Texas an attractive place to land for both business and employees – admitting that his favorite anecdote came from Charles Schwab at the opening of their Westlake facility, ad-libbing a quote, “San Francisco is a great place to live, but Texas is a better place to raise a family.”