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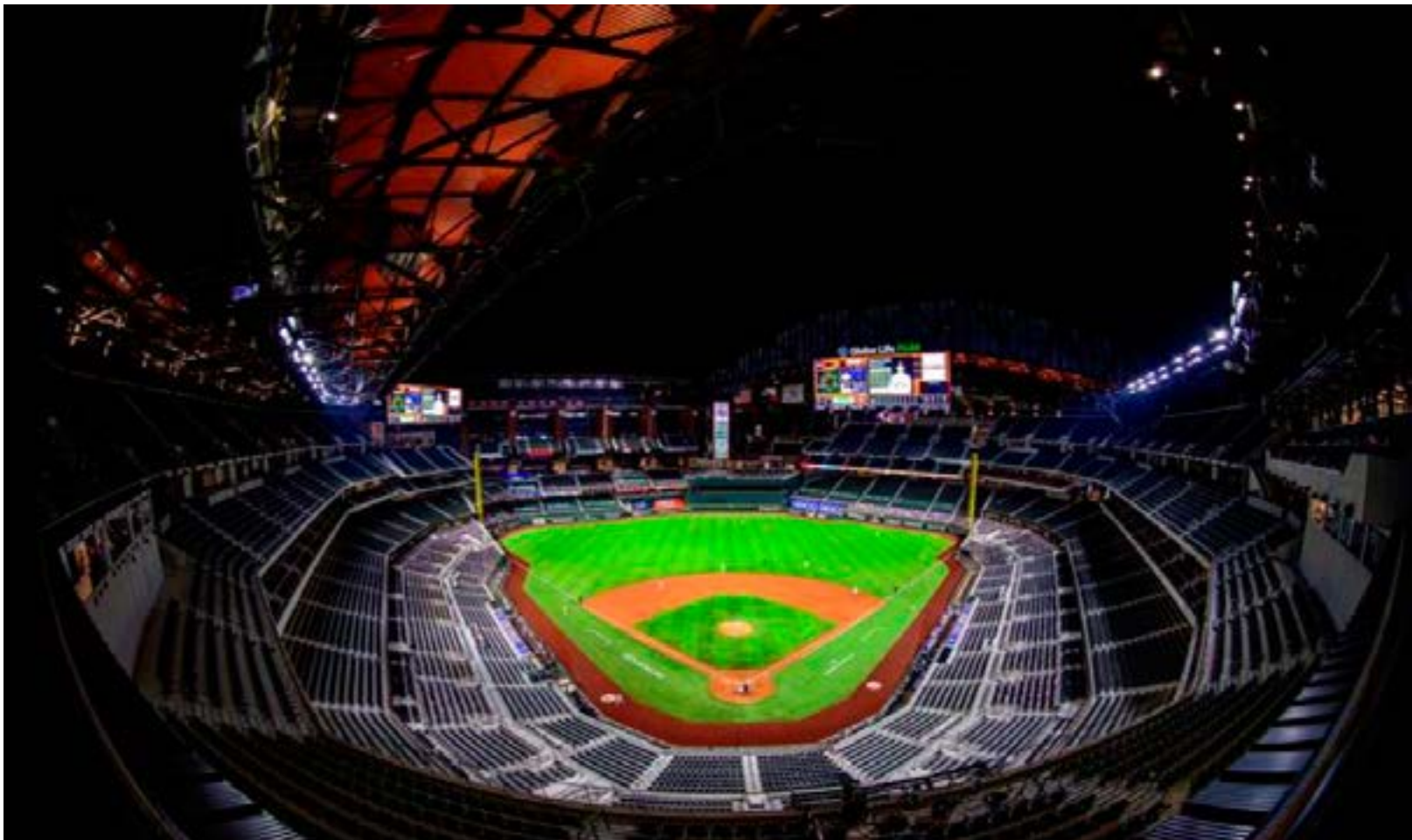
# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

Southern Daily News is published by Southern News Group Daily

Tuesday, April 06 2021|

## Texas Governor Abbott declines Rangers' first pitch invite amid All-Star Game controversy



(Reuters) - Texas Governor Greg Abbott said he would not throw out the ceremonial opening pitch at the Texas Rangers' home opener Monday, after Major League Baseball (MLB) removed July's All-Star Game from Atlanta in a protest over Georgia's new voting restrictions.

MLB's announcement on Friday marked one of the most high-profile reactions after Georgia last month strengthened identification requirements for absentee ballots, shortened early voting periods for runoffs and made it a crime to offer food and water to voters waiting in line.

The voting law, which Georgia's Republican Governor Brian Kemp endorsed, faces legal challenges from civil rights groups and others who say it aims to suppress voting among Black people and other racial minorities, who tend to vote Democratic.

Abbott, who is also a Republican, said in an open letter to the Texas Rangers that he would "not participate in an event held by MLB" and that the state would not "seek to host the All-Star Game or any other MLB special events."

"I was looking forward to (throwing the pitch) - until Major League Baseball

adopted what has turned out to be a false narrative about the election law reforms in Georgia," Abbott said in his letter.

"It's shameful that America's pastime is not only being influenced by partisan political politics, but also perpetuating false political narratives."

MLB and the Rangers did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Rangers are expected to welcome back fans for their home opener Monday against the Toronto Blue Jays, the only team in the league to operate at 100% capacity after playing the entirety of last year's regular season to empty stands amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Minneapolis police chief testifies Chauvin violated policy, ethics code in George Floyd arrest

MINNEAPOLIS (Reuters) - Derek Chauvin broke Minneapolis police department rules and its ethics code governing the "sanctity of life" in his deadly arrest of George Floyd last May, the city's police chief testified at the former officer's murder trial on Monday.

"It's not part of our training, and it is certainly not part of our ethics and our values," Chief Medaria Arradondo told the jury as prosecutors sought to undermine a central plank of Chauvin's defense.

Arradondo said he was alarmed when, a few hours after the arrest, he first saw a bystander's video showing Chauvin, who is white, kneeling on the neck of Floyd, a 46-year-old handcuffed Black man, for more than nine minutes. The video sparked global protests against police brutality.

Chauvin has pleaded not guilty to murder and manslaughter charges. Prosecutors have called Arradondo and other police officers to weaken Chauvin's defense that he did only what he was trained to do in his 19 years as a police officer.

Here are some important moments from the sixth day of testimony in Chauvin's trial. Arradondo, who in 2017 became the first Black person to lead the city's police force, fired Chauvin and three other officers who were involved the day after Floyd's death.

He also castigated Chauvin in a statement last year, saying: "This was murder — it wasn't a lack of training."

On Monday, Arradondo said it was unusual for police to take someone into custody where the alleged crime was as minor as in the case of Floyd,

who was suspected of using a counterfeit \$20 to buy cigarettes at the Cup Foods grocery store, a non-violent misdemeanor.

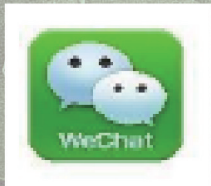
A prosecutor asked him to explain to the jury how police officers receive extensive training on how to use force and to reduce tensions. "We are oftentimes the first face of government our community will see, and we will often meet them at their worst moments," he told the jury when asked to describe the meaning of the badge the city's roughly 700 sworn officers wear. "That has to count for something." Officers carry tourniquets and are trained how to use them to treat gunshot wounds, they are taught how to do chest compressions, and they are given naloxone inhalers that can be used to rapidly reverse an opioid overdose, Arradondo said.

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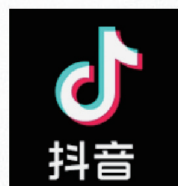
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# WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

## CORONAVIRUS DIARY

04/05/2021



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## Let's Unite The Asian Community

After the so called "China virus" statements by President Trump last year, the whole nation was covered with many incidents including the Black Lives Matter attacks, the Atlanta murders of seven Asian people and more than five thousand hate crimes against Asian Americans. The whole country, especially in the Asian community were full of fear and insecurity.

Last week we joined Congressman Al Green and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee's anti-hate crime news conference. I felt so sad and outraged because we felt like now we were second class citizens.

Many of us came to this land because of political reasons or we were looking for a better future for the next



generation. Through hard work and higher education we became middle class, but we have to admit that a lot of our people didn't make a significant contribution to our community and we didn't participate in many local activities. In other words, we still did not assimilate into the society.

Many immigrants wanted to go back to their old country. I really agree with what they wanted to do, but this is our nation and we all belong here. We need to overcome all the difficulties and be united to build a new confidence and to build a great country together.



**Southern DAILY** Make Today Different

## Editor's Choice



Women clash with police officers behind riot shields during a protest in support of Victoria Salazar, a Salvadoran woman who died after a Mexican female police officer was seen in a video kneeling on her back, in Mexico City. REUTERS/Raquel Cunha



People ride a roller coaster at Six Flags Magic Mountain amusement park on the first day of opening in Valencia, California. REUTERS/Lucy Nicholson



Women hide their faces in a night club during a civil police operation tackling COVID-19 restrictions violations, amid a rise in coronavirus cases and deaths in Sao Paulo, Brazil. REUTERS/Amanda Perobelli



A blue car is seen after ramming a police barricade outside the U.S. Capitol building in an incident that reportedly resulted in the death of one Capitol police officer, the injury of another



Carlos Scott and his two-year-old son Zaire visit the "Say Their Names" cemetery, while the fourth day of trial continues for Derek Chauvin, who is facing murder charges in the death of George Floyd, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. REUTERS/Octavio Jones



Demonstrators wearing red costumes protest in London, Britain. REUTERS/Toby Melville



## Warren Buffett Group Lobbying Texas Lawmakers For \$8 Billion To Build Emergency Power Plants



Billionaire Warren Buffett head of Berkshire Hathaway Energy

### Key Points

*If approved, the deal would signal a move away from decades of a competitive electricity market in Texas in which all power generators in Texas are paid for the energy they produce and sell, rather than the power they could potentially generate.*

*In return, lawmakers would agree to create a revenue stream for Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway through an additional charge on Texans' power bills.*

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

As the Texas Legislature debated how to respond to last month's winter storm-driven power crisis, executives at billionaire Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Energy were pitching lawmakers an idea: The group would spend over \$8 billion to build 10 new natural gas power plants in the state. Lawmakers would agree to create a revenue stream to provide Berkshire a return on its investment through an additional charge on Texans' power bills. Representatives for Berkshire Hathaway Energy have been in Austin meeting with lawmakers and state leaders for the past week and a half, according to a person working closely on the issue. The proposed company, which would likely be known as the Texas Emergency Power Reserve, would build and maintain plants that sit idle during normal times, according to a slide deck obtained by The Texas Tribune. Whenever demand for power in the state threatened to surpass supply, these new plants would kick in to make up the difference, if ordered to do so by the state's grid operator. "When you flip that switch and say, look, demand has exceeded supply, it has to come on in 10 minutes," Chris

Brown, CEO of Berkshire Hathaway Energy, said in an interview Thursday with the Tribune. "That's the Texas Emergency Power Reserve Promise — that's the promise that we're making to the citizens of Texas."



In the presentation, the representatives estimated the cost of that new charge to consumers as \$1.42 per month for residential customers, \$9.61 for commercial customers and \$58.94 for industrial customers. The pitch to state leaders also included a poll conducted by Republican pollster Mike Baseslice suggesting that Texans would be broadly supportive of paying a little more on their power bills to increase reliability. The poll was conducted from March 17-21 among 800 likely voters

in Texas, according to topline of the poll obtained by the Tribune.

A senior adviser for Patrick confirmed the lieutenant governor met with Berkshire Hathaway executives earlier this month. And a spokesperson for Phelan said the speaker met with the executives recently. A spokesperson for Gov. Greg Abbott did not immediately respond to a request for comment. If approved, the deal would signal a move away from decades of a competitive electricity market in Texas in which all power generators in Texas are paid for the energy they produce and sell, rather than the power they could potentially generate. Berkshire Hathaway Energy executives say their plan would not create a "capacity" market, but instead, serve as highly regulated back-up electricity generation. The company says that building extra power generation in Texas would help ease fears of a repeat of the February power outages during which dozens of people died. "We're not in favor at all of getting rid of [the deregulated market]," Brown said. "We think competition is to Texas' benefit. We're not dipping into the market at all."



Power grids must keep energy demand and supply in balance at every moment or risk uncontrolled blackouts. The February outages were ordered by the grid operator, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, in a move to prevent a bigger catastrophe that could have left most of the state without power for weeks.

Under Berkshire Hathaway's plan, ERCOT would control when the new power plants are activated to avoid the threat of such widespread power outages, and customers would pay a fixed fee only to cover the project's costs, while the price for energy supplied to the market would go to the state, not the company. It's a similar model to how transmission and distribution utility companies are regulated. Brown said that while the company is not against the state's procurement process, it believes it's "uniquely suited" to carry out the idea because of its \$8.3 billion investment and a commitment to have those 10 plants operational by November 2023. "Certainly there's other entities out there that could potentially do it," he said, "that list is pretty short." Texas deregulated its electricity market decades ago, theorizing that the price of electricity in the market — based on demand — would attract a sufficient amount of power supply. When demand for power is high, the price for power increases, and companies that can supply electricity to the grid make more money. The more

cheaply a power plant can generate electricity, the higher the profit margin when they sell it in the wholesale market. Conversely, a plant that has been expensively weatherized to be able to operate in the extreme cold, or a plant that only operates on the few hottest days of the year, represents a big upfront investment for what may be little return in Texas.



Power companies did not prepare plants to withstand severe winter weather, in part because companies build plants as cheaply as possible to maximize their profit margins. When the plants tripped offline during the winter storm, unprepared for the extreme cold, there wasn't enough power generation available to the grid. Power prices spiked, and the Public Utility Commission of Texas ordered ERCOT to set prices at the artificial cap — \$9,000 per megawatt-hour — to signal to power companies that any and all power was desperately needed. But energy experts have expressed doubt that merely having more power plants would have prevented the crisis. Electric generation tripped offline due to freezing temperatures and a shortage of natural gas, which fuels many plants in the state.

"We didn't have a shortage of power plants, we had a shortage of power plants that could work in the cold, and the gas to run them," said Dan Cohan, an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering at Rice University. "Texas has an enormous amount of natural gas plants already. It's not at all clear that there's a need to have more power plants built."

Berkshire Hathaway's presentation argues that adding power generation capacity would be more cost effective for the state than upgrading existing plants to withstand extreme weather. Brown, the CEO, said that the natural gas plants would be winterized and maintain seven days of natural gas storage on site to ensure it could operate during an emergency. Last Thursday, the Texas Senate Jurisprudence Committee advanced Senate Bill 3, a wide-ranging winter storm bill that also mandates winterization for power plants and the natural gas supply chain.



J.P. Urban, senior vice president and acting CEO of the Association of Electric Companies of Texas, a trade association

tion of electric companies in the state, warned lawmakers earlier this week against subsidizing new power plants in their response to last month's outages.

"We believe the program should only focus on bolstering resiliency and existing facilities to avoid disruption in the competitive market," Urban said during a committee meeting Tuesday.

But lawmakers responded that they want more power generation on Texas' grid, not just for future storms, but generally for the growing state population.

"We're going to be a little bit more open to the types of investments that need to be made," said Rep. Richard Peña Raymond, D-Laredo, responding to Urban. "We're going to need more power in Texas, period. Freeze or no freeze." The committee left the legislation pending on Tuesday, but witnesses and lawmakers indicated they would support the Huberty bill.

Even with the support of the Legislature's top leaders, the Berkshire Hathaway deal will need to win the approval of the rank-and-file members — a lesson Buffett learned in a past session. In 2017, after the billionaire met with Abbott and Patrick at the Capitol, the Senate used emergency powers to quickly craft legislation that became known as the "Buffett Bill," a special interest carve-out allowing Buffett to be exempt from a state law that was barring people from owning both a vehicle manufacturing company and auto dealerships.



The bill was effectively killed after Tea Party activists blasted it — and the attempt to fast-track it — as special treatment for a rich and powerful business owner. Other lawmakers and officials have expressed doubts about letting Buffett and his companies play too big of a role in Texas. Speaking at Texas Energy Day at the Capitol Wednesday morning, Texas Railroad Commissioner Wayne Christian, one of the state's oil and gas regulators, criticized President Joe Biden over his energy policies and in doing so, swiped at "Warren Buffett's company." Christian said canceling oil and natural gas pipelines would put more trains on railroad tracks, and "Warren Buffett's company makes a lot of money from it." (Courtesy <https://www.texastribune.org/>)

## New Alief Neighborhood Center Represents Future Cultural Reality Of Area

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



The Alief Neighborhood Center combines three City of Houston departments (Library, Parks, & Health) to create a civic center at the heart of the redeveloped 37-acre urban park. Raised out of the floodplain, the building's elevated 'front porch' frames a space for the diverse community to come together, share ideas, and express an identity unique to Alief. The Center is a model for resilient design in a post-hurricane Harvey environment — a 'Lilly-pad' for those seeking shelter from the storm. **BUILDING AWARDS-** Rethinking The Future Awards 2020 First Award | Public Building (Concept) The \$52 million, 63,000-square-foot multi-purpose facility at 11903 Bellaire will combine a health clinic, community center and library into one space. The structure, which will sit in 37-acre Alief Park, will consolidate the Hennington-Alief Regional Library at 7979 South Kirkwood and the park's existing community center, both of which are aging. It also will replace the area's Women, Infants and Children Center, which today leases space at 12660 Beechnut. City council passed one item appropriating \$4.8 million for contractor EYP Inc. to begin construction on the new center, and another item giving Manhattan Construction \$100,000 for construction management services. The 70,000sf 2-story new building is elevated over a parking area providing convenient access to the building programs directly above. Health Department programs provided include W.I.C. (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), DAWN (Diabetes

Awareness Network) that provides support for a variety of chronic illnesses, and a Senior Center. The Parks Department programs include a full-size competition gymnasium with a perimeter elevated walking track above, a community fitness center and spaces to support youth after-school and summer programs.



The library, located on the second floor, and accessed through a grand 'stair-a-torium' in the lobby contains light-filled stack-space and reading

areas with expansive views both to the park to the south and to the existing grove of preserved trees on the north. Directly adjacent to the library, HPL's technology-rich TechLINK youth maker-doer program contains spaces for collaboration, the 'Tiny Techs' children's area, music recording studio, virtual reality stations, photo/video lab, and a maker space.

Site amenities include a competition soccer field, two full-size practice soccer fields, two futsal courts (fast-paced soccer played on a hard-surfaced smaller court) baseball field, skate park, tennis courts, children's playground, outdoor swimming pool facility, community gardens, a marketplace venue, and outdoor event space areas. The Alief Neighborhood Center is

scheduled to open in early 2022.

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Community Empowerment Organization's  
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Building a stronger community through information and access to resources

**SPECIAL GUEST**  
**U.S. CONGRESSMAN AL GREEN**

Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021  
Time: 12NOON-1:00PM  
Venue: Southern News Group Building  
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For details call: 346-888-7577 or 281-7269888  
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### Related

## Community Resource Center Opens

Sponsored by the ITC Community Empowerment Organization with the collaboration of the SEONE Corporation, the Community Resource Center opens its door on Tuesday, April 6, 2021, at the Southern News Group building. The mission of the Community Resource Center is to serve as a "one stop-shop" for the underserved minority population in the southwest area of Houston. The Center will provide members of the community with information that will empower them to improve their quality of life and to also serve as a way for participants to access the rich pool of resources available to them.



Members of the community who have questions about any of the variety of issues the Center will address are encouraged to schedule interviews with the Center. The Center will link the person with a professional who can best address their needs. The areas the Center will address include disaster assistance, loans and grants, small business development, tax information, immigration, legal issues, workforce, housing and renting, veterans issues, medical, healthcare service, education, skills development, children and child welfare and services. The Center's services will be led by senior educator, Dr. Tina Agosa and many other assistants.

