

TEXAS PENSION PLANS

'We can handle this locally': Fort Worth wants to avoid Dallas' painful path on pension fix

August 12, 2018, By Samantha J. Gross

Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price would rather not spend any of her spring in Austin talking about city employees' pensions.

She watched Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings trek to the Capitol last year as he dealt with a crisis that threatened the city's finances and embroiled him in a messy political brouhaha. Price wants no part of that.

But she does have the pension problem, and Fort Worth has had credit downgrades because of it.

The Fort Worth Employees Retirement Fund is the latest public pension system to face an uncertain future. Without changes, the \$2.3 billion fund is on track to run out of money in the next 25 years.

[The Dallas Morning News](#)

Longview firefighter pension rebounds; trustees remove deployment pay from plan

August 21, 2018, By Jimmy Daniell Isaac

A rebound in a pension fund for Longview firefighters is good news for the city and the taxpayers who contribute to the fund.

The Longview Firefighters' Relief and Retirement Fund has reduced its unfunded liability burden, and its assets are now tied to considerably better performing funds than in prior years, consultants and directors said Tuesday.

"I think golfers call this crushing it," investment adviser Will Harrell told fund directors.

City taxpayers contribute to the pension fund. This year, the city increased its contribution by 1 percent of employees' pay, city spokesman Shawn Hara said.

[Longview News-Journal](#)

Austin City Employees' returns match or top benchmark for multiple periods

August 21, 2018, By Christine Williamson

Austin (Texas) City Employees' Retirement System's investment performance matched or was above that of its policy benchmark for reported periods ended June 30 over the prior 10 years.

Net returns of the \$2.6 billion pension fund and its policy benchmark were 0.9% for the quarter ended June 30. For other periods ended June 30, the pension fund's net return for the year was 7.8% vs. 7.2% for the benchmark; three years, 6.4% (benchmark, 6%); five years, 7.6% (7.2%); seven years, 6.8% (6.7%); and 10 years, 6.8% (5.9%). Multiyear returns are annualized.

The pension fund's net return for the year ended June 30, 2017, was 12.3% compared to 12.2% for the benchmark.

The defined benefit plan's asset allocation as of June 30 was 31.7% U.S. equity, 21% fixed income, 19.3% international equity, 9.3% emerging market equity, 8.9% real estate, 5% strategic partnership, 4.6% risk parity and 0.2% cash.

[Pensions & Investments](#)

TEXAS ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Texas olive oil producers want to grow industry

August 21, 2018, By Reena Diamante

There is a new type of oil that could help fuel the state's economy.

Farmers call it "golden oil." A group of olive oil producers are calling on Texas lawmakers to invest in what they believe is a growing industry.

Mary Goerner planted her olive trees in Lavaca County in 2013. Today, Goerner's Olive View Ranch has a 23-acre olive orchard with more than 4,000 trees.

"There is a movement, to eat healthier and want to know where your food comes from and I think that's where we're trying do in the olive industry is, you know, be transparent," Goerner said.

[Spectrum News Austin](#)

Economic development incentives do nothing for the economy or development

August 22, 2018, By Dean Stansel

According to a recent CNBC report, Dallas "could have a strong shot" at Amazon's \$5 billion project to build a second headquarters. Conventional wisdom says that landing the project will benefit the local economy. Economic research does not support that conclusion.

While state and local economic development incentives may seem to help the local economy, the offsetting costs are usually ignored, so the overall effect is unclear. Furthermore, from the perspective of the nation as a whole, these policies are clearly a net loss.

For example, the gains for Texas' economy when Toyota moved its North American headquarters from California last year were exactly offset by the losses for California. But, it's not just a zero-sum game, it's actually a negative-sum game because Texas and Plano used \$47 million taxpayer dollars to persuade Toyota to move here. Therefore, the net effect for the nation's economy is a loss of \$47 million.

[The Dallas Morning News](#)

AR & TX Governors to launch economic development organization

August 22, 2018, By John Walton

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson and Texas Governor Greg Abbott will appear together to announce the creation of the AR-TX Regional Economic Development Incorporation.

AR-TX REDI is an organization formed to serve as a catalyst for regional growth and a strengthened economy for southwest Arkansas and northeast Texas.

It's scheduled for Tuesday, September 4, 2018, at 3 p.m. on the steps of the United States Post Office and Courthouse.

The historical joint appearance by Abbott and Hutchinson will headline the launch of AR-TX REDI, a new nonprofit organization that aims to create jobs and expand the regional economic base by attracting new businesses and industries.

[ArkLaTex Homepage](#)

NATIONAL PENSION, INVESTMENTS & LEGAL

Chicago teachers pension fund divesting from private prisons

August 17, 2018, By Laila Kearney

The Chicago Teachers' Pension Fund's board of trustees voted on Friday to phase out investments in companies that run private prisons or immigrant detention centers, saying the businesses have an outsized negative impact on minorities and the poor.

The \$10.8 billion public pension fund's investment managers have been directed to liquidate holdings of the companies "as soon as reasonably practical," the statement said.

The fund did not identify the prison and detention center companies whose stock they own.

"We know these institutions disproportionately incarcerate people of color and those who live below the poverty line, house immigrant children and perpetuate the separation of immigrant families," Fund President Jay C. Rehak said.

[Reuters](#)

U.S. Stocks Poised to Enter Longest-Ever Bull Market

August 21, 2018, By Michael Wursthorn and Akane Otani

U.S. stocks are on the verge of surpassing their longest-running rally, ratifying a market rebound that began in the ashes of the financial crisis and defying those who have questioned its staying power.

Wednesday will mark 3,453 days since the S&P 500 hit its low of 666 on March 9, 2009. Since then, the broadest U.S. blue-chip index has more than quadrupled in price terms, outpacing most rival major indexes around the globe.

On Tuesday, the S&P rose to its first intraday record since January, adding 0.6% to trade at 2871. The Dow industrials rose 116 points to 25875. Tuesday's intraday S&P record shows the U.S. stock advance remains intact after nearly seven months of mostly sideways trading, traders and analysts said.

The latest leg of the bull run for the S&P has been driven by booming economic growth in the U.S., as well as renewed strength in quarterly corporate earnings. Investors have also bet that the global economy will continue to expand at a steady pace even amid turbulence in some emerging markets such as Turkey and Venezuela. The largest advances in recent months and years have been concentrated in the U.S. technology companies that have practically become synonymous with technical prowess and business dominance, notably Apple Inc., Amazon.com Inc. and Google parent Alphabet Inc.

[The Wall Street Journal](#)

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