

she'll climb up on the table and stay until she gets bored."

Bella loves people, and they love her. Like Ruby and Miss C.C., she has become well-known in San Antonio, so her fan base worried when she had a health scare in 2021.

"She was overheated and either jumped or fell into a dumpster one day," Rodriguez says. "Her vet suggested that we take her to the emergency vet. They kept her for several days. She was mostly dehydrated and had to take antibiotics."

Her Alamo friends set up a GoFundMe campaign to pay her vet bills. Her adoring public came through and paid her bills in full, raising more than \$3,500.

It's no surprise that Bella merchandise is popular. And every April during the Alamo City's 10-day Fiesta celebration, when collecting and trading medals is part of the fun, Bella's medal sells out. The proceeds go toward her medical care and other expenses.

The Alamo kitty probably misses greeting visitors as much as they miss seeing her. But she's around, caring for the caretakers of this state treasure when she's not posting on social media.

Texas film workers discuss the industry's future

By Thom Denton

When Will Mederski moved to Austin from Ohio in 2015, he was enjoying the climate and culture, working mostly as a freelance photographer, and spending his days off munching breakfast tacos and hanging out at Barton Springs. One day at a friend's house, a new neighbor stopped by to introduce himself. He was a film director, new in town, and asked if anyone would like to make some extra money working on a film set. The proposition seemed too good to be true, but within a few months Mederski found himself working as a lighting technician in a lucrative new industry.

"I could work three or four days a week and make a week's worth of pay," Mederski says. "It was a pretty easy option for work. The flexibility was definitely an attraction; I've never been one for the nine-to-five jobs."

As in any other industry, Mederski had to work his way up. He started out logging long hours, lighting sets for music videos and PSAs as side gigs, then the occasional low-budget indie film would come his way. In 2017 he managed to get a regular job working as an electrician and lighting tech on the set of Fear the Walking Dead, one of the biggest productions in Austin at that time. By 2019, he was working full-time on the show. Then in 2021, production was shifted to Savannah, Georgia, to reap the benefits of that state's incentive program. Georgia's lawmakers have approved \$1.3 billion in tax credits for filmmakers who opt to make movies and TV shows in the Peach State. When the

production migrated to Savannah, the entire crew was left without steady work. Mederski's story is the same as hundreds of other workers in the Texas film industry: They had found a good job and had worked hard, long hours to get ahead, just for the jobs to leave the state when incentives dried up.

To say the Texas film industry has been a roller coaster ride

would be an understatement. Film incentives are financial benefits that encourage in-state film productions. The offerings vary by state and can range from movie production incentives, to cash rebates or grants, and even sales tax and lodging exemptions. In Texas, the incentive program is overseen by the Texas Film Commission, a state agency. Applicants must meet criteria such as 70 percent

of the crew must be Texas residents and 60 percent of production days must be completed in the state. A lot of the aid goes to things like construction jobs to build sets which buy supplies from Texas businesses, lodging for workers who travel, and catering for entire crews multiple times a day means that money is spread around to dozens of local businesses.

In 2008, the state offered grants to offset 5 percent of filmmaking costs; the program had \$22 million to allocate. By 2013 the program's budget had increased to cover 20 percent of costs—its total allocations rose to \$95 million over the biennium—in an effort to compete with the neighboring states of New Mexico, Louisiana, and even (cough) Oklahoma.

(Continued on page 11)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX INCREASE

A tax rate of \$0.438261 per \$100 valuation has been proposed by the governing body of COKE COUNTY.

PROPOSED TAX RATE	\$0.438261 per \$100
NO-NEW-REVENUE TAX RATE	\$0.423291 per \$100
VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE	\$0.438263 per \$100

The no-new-revenue tax rate is the tax rate for the 2023 tax year that will raise the same amount of property tax revenue for COKE COUNTY from the same properties in both the 2022 tax year and the 2023 tax year.

The voter-approval rate is the highest tax rate that COKE COUNTY may adopt without holding an election to seek voter approval of the rate.

The proposed tax rate is greater than the no-new-revenue tax rate. This means that COKE COUNTY is proposing to increase property taxes for the 2023 tax year.

A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TAX RATE WILL BE HELD ON August 28, 2023 AT 9:00AM AT Commissioner's Court Room13 E 7th Street Robert Lee, Texas.

The proposed tax rate is not greater than the voter-approval tax rate. As a result, COKE COUNTY is not required to hold an election at which voters may accept or reject the proposed tax rate. However, you may express your support for or opposition to the proposed tax rate by contacting the members of the Commissioner's Court of COKE COUNTY at their offices or by attending the public hearing mentioned above.

YOUR TAXES OWED UNDER ANY OF THE RATES MENTIONED ABOVE CAN BE CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:

Property tax amount= (tax rate) x (taxable value of your property)/100

FOR the proposal: Henry Chisholm Marshall Millican
Ray Sparks Hal Spain

AGAINST the proposal:

PRESENT and not voting:

ABSENT: Donald Robertson

Visit [Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes](https://www.texas.gov/PropertyTaxes) to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

The following table compares the taxes imposed on the average residence homestead by COKE COUNTY last year to the taxes proposed to be imposed on the average residence homestead by COKE COUNTY this year.

	2022	2023	Change
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.444930	\$0.438261	decrease of -0.006669, or -1.50%
Average homestead taxable value	\$61,350	\$62,205	increase of 855, or 1.39%
Tax on average homestead	\$272.96	\$272.62	decrease of -0.34, or -0.12%
Total tax levy on all properties	\$2,335,373	\$2,503,415	increase of 168,042, or 7.20%

For assistance with tax calculations, please contact the tax assessor for COKE COUNTY at or , or visit www.co.coke.tx.us for more information.