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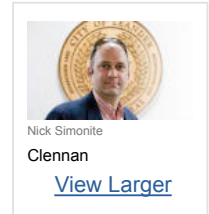
Kirk Clennan

Director of economic development, City of Leander

Austin Business Journal - by [Kate Harrington](#) ABJ Staff

In the years that Kirk Clennan has been at the helm of Leander's economic development, the city 25 miles north of Austin has gone from a sleepy Williamson County suburb to one of the region's growth hubs. Clennan is humble about his role in the region's growth, but his colleagues aren't slow to attribute much of the area's successes to his energy and creativity. For someone who once aspired to work as one of the country's most famous sports mascots, a career in economic development may seem like a subdued choice. But those who work with Clennan say he's anything but subdued.

"It's a pleasure to work with someone like [Clennan]," said Mary Bradshaw, president of Leander's Chamber of Commerce. And anyone who has been on his email list can attest that Clennan, the force behind Leander's "famous" bus tours and economic development roundtables, is not shy about forging relationships and blazing new paths.



Are you a native Texan?

No. I was born in Wooster, Ohio, raised in Long Beach, Miss., and moved to Richardson, Texas, when I was 12.

If you couldn't live in Austin, where would you live?

Along the north and west coast of Spain or Portugal, New Zealand or the South Pacific.

How long have you been the economic development director in Leander?

Since February 28, 2005.

What was your first thought upon initially starting that job?

What an opportunity.

What's the most promising industry or company in Leander right now — the one most likely to break out of the box and be huge?

I would like to think it has not arrived yet, but Design & Assembly Concepts for its technological innovation and Austin Wood Works for its gritty determination.

Do you think Capital Metro's Metrorail delays dealt a blow to Leander's transit-oriented development?

No.

Why not?

The global economic malaise has affected the transit-oriented development more than Capital Metro delays. If anything, the transit-oriented development landowners and Leander's public partners have utilized the time provided to refine Smart Code details and resources.

What's next on the horizon for the long-planned development around Leander's train stop?

Going vertical ... My best guesstimate is a minimum six months after the trains start to run officially. But probably more like nine to 12 months.

What are you most proud of?

Professionally, opportunities to make a difference and be a part of something greater than me. Personally, a commitment and ongoing effort to make a family, and a house a home.

What was your first job?

Mechanic's assistant at an Exxon station on the northeast corner of Plano Road and Beltline Road in Richardson.

As a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

The San Diego Chicken.

What do you do to unwind?

Bicycle whenever I can or watch Discovery Channel, Speed TV, History Channel, Food TV, The Learning Channel, ESPN, VS, Fox Soccer Channel or the Golf Channel.

If you could time travel, where in time would you go?

The Renaissance or into the future to see if the transporter ever gets created.

What's the most influential book you've read?

"E=mc²: A Biography of the World's Most Famous Equation."

What are you most afraid of?

Failure and disappointment.

What do you think the best invention is in the past 50 years?

Realizing a digital future.

What's the first thing you do when you wake up?

Kiss my wife, pet the dogs, hug my son — not always in that order.

What's bookmarked on your computer?

The list goes from 'advertising' to 'venture capital' and all points in between.

What motivates you?

A desire to make a difference.

What really annoys you?

Lack of perspective.

Who is your mentor?

Anyone who thinks constructively.

Dogs or cats?

Pterosaurs and/or birds of prey because it would be awesome to fly so high, so far and so well. But if it has to be dogs or cats, I will go with dogs.

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