



What's Ahead

APRIL 24 The Sixth Annual Red Poppy Bike Ride allows bikers to ride in support of the Georgetown SERTOMA Club. | 5

MAY 1 The Taylor Zest Fest, hosted by the Taylor Main Street Program, promises entertainment, food and family-friendly fun for the "Zest of Texas" community. | 5

What's News



The Williamson Museum director, Chris Dyer, is leaving his leadership post and taking a new job in College Station. | 5

The Autism Project at the University of Texas Department of Kinesiology and Health Education is working to teach life and vocational skills to children while educating students at the same time. | 14



The Wall that Heals, a replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial located in Washington, D.C., came to Taylor in March. The memorial honors more than 58,000 veterans who died in the Vietnam War. | 5

Construction is gearing up for the warm Texas spring and summer seasons. Understanding how roads are built is key to realizing why construction can take so long. | 30

What's Inside

Meet your area's candidates in the Local Elections Guide. | 24



What's Online

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Hippo Academy was temporarily closed March 30 by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services after the Child Licensing division received a complaint. more.impactnews.com/7837

Eric Visser, vice president of the Downtown Georgetown Association, will soon open Three Legged Willie's, a downtown restaurant that pays homage to Williamson County's namesake, Robert McAlpin Williamson. more.impactnews.com/7773

Biotech company wins grant, continues innovative project

Intralink-Spine Inc. creating injection to help millions

By Andrea Leptinsky

One of the first companies to move into the Texas Life-Sciences Collaboration Center in Georgetown was awarded a \$750,000 grant to continue developing its breakthrough product that has the potential to help millions of patients around the world.

Intralink-Spine Inc. received the Small Business Innovation Research Grant from the National Institutes of Health for preclinical trials of its technology called NEXT, or nonsurgical exogenous crosslink therapy. NEXT works as an injection for people with lower back pain, a result of degenerative disk disease.

"About 11 years ago I came up with this idea to inject a chemical reagent into the disk that modifies the properties of the tissue, but leaves the tissue there," said Dr. Tom Hedman, founder and chief scientific officer of

Intralink-Spine. "Instead, the reagent improves the tissue's characteristics. It boils down to a compound that's inexpensive to make."

Once the chemical is injected into the spine between two intervertebral disks, it modifies the collagen in the tissue by augmenting the crosslinking of the collagen. This revitalizes the tissue around the disks, almost to a "like new" state. With this improved tissue, joint stability increases and disk bulge reduces, all of which lessen the occurrence of lower back pain.

"We're like an implant, but we're not," Hedman said. "We take the existing tissue and we stabilize it, like a [medical] device would."

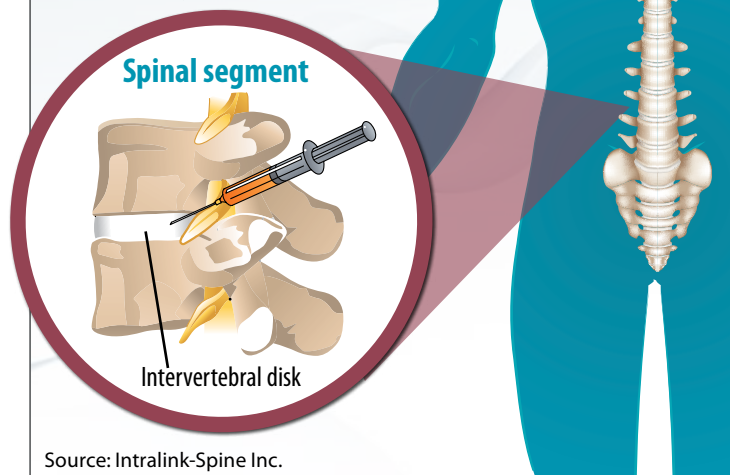
Hedman said NEXT works on the spine in the same way as if you took a 30,000-mile tire and upgraded, or improved it, to a

Inside Intralink-Spine's technology

Step 1 In the onset of degenerative disk disease, nutritional deficiencies, bulges, fissures and cracks affect spinal disks. Disks then can collapse, producing joint pain and bulges.

Step 2 A doctor injects the NEXT crosslinking agent into the patient's spinal disk. The chemical reagent augments the collagen matrix in the native spinal tissue, bringing the tissue and spinal disks to a "like new" status.

Step 3 The patient sees a 50 percent increase in tear resistance within the tissue, brought about by increased stability and a reduction in disk bulge.



Source: Intralink-Spine Inc.

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Taylor to vote on recreation center; quality of life weighed against taxes

Story Highlights

- \$3 million, 15,000-sq.-ft. center proposed
- Taylor Family YMCA may operate facility
- Potential tax increase sparks debate within council

By Suzanne Haberman

Taylor voters will decide in the May 8 general election if the City of Taylor should issue \$3 million in bonds to build a recreation center.

If approved, the city will issue debt to design and build a 15,000-sq.-ft. building with an indoor swimming pool on 4 acres near the Taylor Regional Park and Sports Complex on land donated by Williamson County. The facility would be Taylor's first city-owned recreation center.

City officials called for the bond election during the March 4 city council meeting, rescheduled from late February.

"We're trying to meet a need that's in our 2004 Overall Parks and Recreation Master Plan in the most cost-efficient way for the public," Taylor City Manager Jim Dunaway said.

City council voted to hold the election this spring because several time-sensitive factors could allow the recreation center to be obtained at a relatively low cost. The decision

was not unanimous, however, as city council members weighed the inevitable property tax increase against having a community feature that could enhance peoples' wellbeing.

"This is a quality-of-life concern that we're talking about," said Councilman Donald Hill, who voted in support of holding the bond election.

Favorable financial climate

Market conditions for issuing bonds, building and operating the facility are favorable, said Jennifer Douglas, the city's financial counselor. Temporarily low interest rates on bonds are a prime factor. If the city issued debt soon, rates would be as low as 4 to 6 percent.

"There certainly are rumblings that by the fall of this year interest rates could start to go up," Douglas said.

Also, bids for construction projects such as municipal roads and

buildings have been coming in below budget. Those rates are "inching back up" as well, Dunaway said.

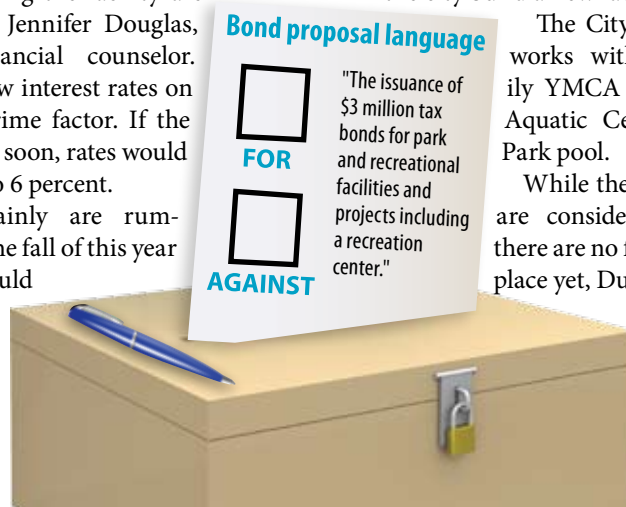
Operation costs could also be kept to a minimum through a potential partnership with the Taylor Family YMCA, Dunaway said. The Taylor branch of the YMCA of Williamson County opened in 2004 on West Lake Drive and has since exceeded its capacity by 300 members, leading the organization to suggest the city build a new facility it could rent.

The City of Taylor currently works with the Taylor Family YMCA to run the Murphy Aquatic Center and Robinson Park pool.

While the city and the YMCA are considering a partnership, there are no formal agreements in place yet, Dunaway said.

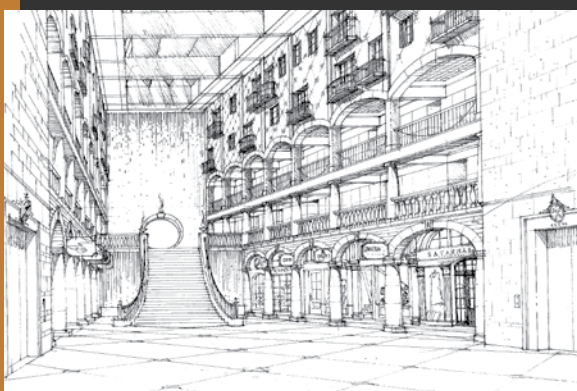
"If the bond election is successful, the council will explore that possibility," he said.

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