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ELECTRIC RELIABILITY COUNCIL

ERCOT's new CEO ready to take charge

Vegas says Texas power grid is in better condition today after system's near collapse in 2021

By PHILIP JANKOWSKI
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AUSTIN — New ERCOT CEO Pablo Vegas starts work Monday overseeing Texas' beleaguered electricity grid, aiming to make it so reliable that Texans don't think about it, even in frigid or scorching temperatures.

Vegas, 49, comes to an agency that continues to absorb blame for the catastrophic February 2021 winter storm. More than 200 Texans died, according to official estimates, although others put that number much higher.



PABLO VEGAS starts work this week.

"What ERCOT has been doing over the last 12 to 18 months has been executing," Vegas said. "They've been improving the way that they operate the grid so that they never come to a place where they have to ask somebody not to have power."

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, which has around 800 employees, has been without a permanent CEO since its board fired Bill Magness in March 2021.

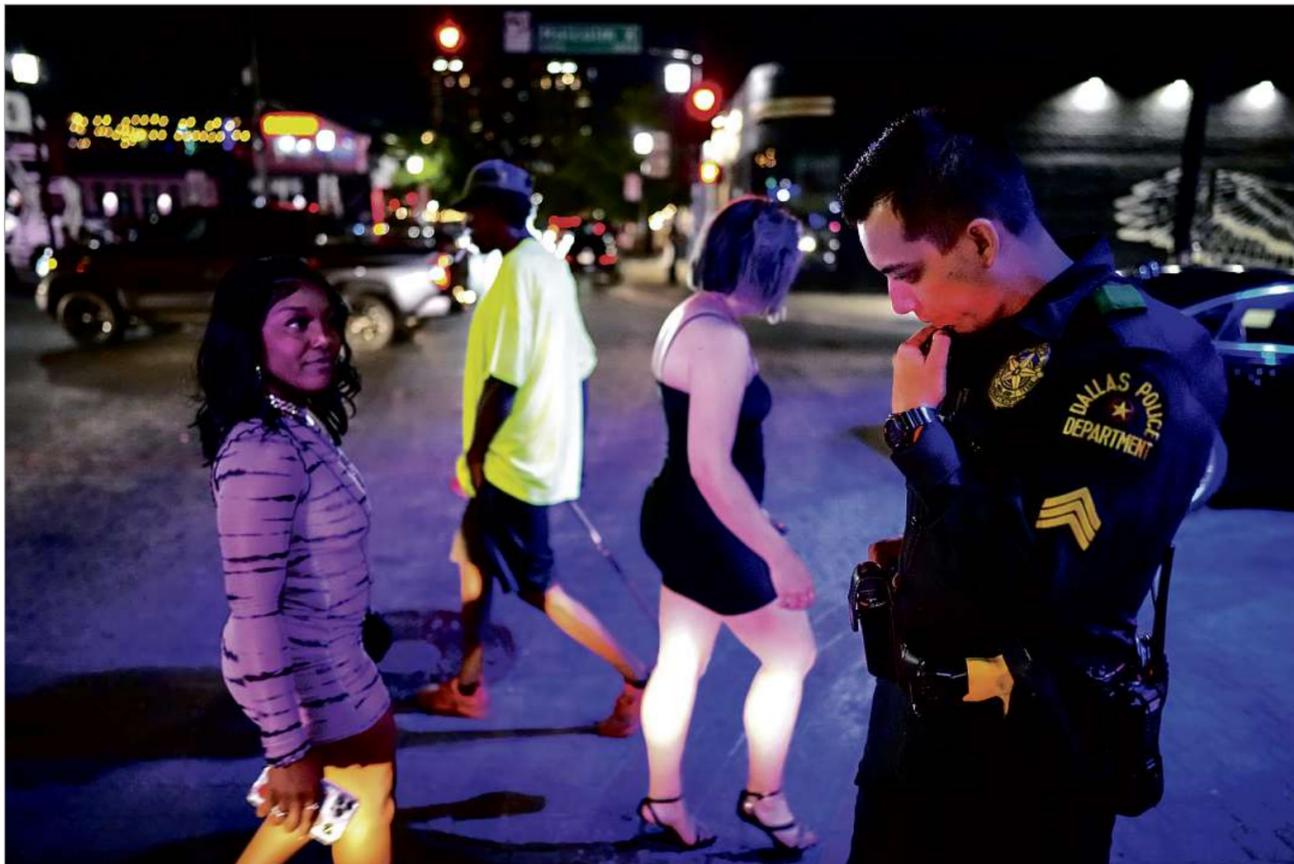
Vegas' salary, incentives and other payments will exceed \$3 million, making him one of Texas' top paid government workers — though not on the level of the state's highest-paid football coach, Texas A&M's Jimbo Fisher, who earns \$9 million a year.

Born in Peru, Vegas was raised in Indiana and studied electrical engineering at the University of Michigan. He moved into

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Operation Deep Ellum



Smiley N. Pool/Staff Photographer

Dallas police Sgt. Boz Rojas prepared to close the intersection of Main Street at Malcolm X Boulevard in Deep Ellum on Sept. 17. Certain streets are closed to all but pedestrian traffic at 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights, when thousands flock to bars and restaurants.

By KELLI SMITH
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Unmistakable *pop-pop-pops* rang out around 3:30 a.m. this summer moments after Phil Jahnke left a pizza joint in Deep Ellum.

The 33-year-old tour manager ran to his bus, but not fast enough. He collapsed on Elm Street, a "giant hole" in his leg oozing blood.

"My body has never gone through that kind of shock before,"

Despite crime fears, violence is down in entertainment districts

said Jahnke, who was on tour with the artist he manages, Essenger. "I go, 'Oh, my God, I've been shot.'"

Dallas' premier entertainment district outside downtown is home to more than 3,000 residents and draws thousands every weekend to its shops, bars and restaurants. But safety concerns scared off some

artists, visitors and event hosts, leading business owners, community groups and residents to say misperceptions about the amount of violence in Deep Ellum have hurt the neighborhood.

Earlier this year, rapper T-Pain moved a concert from Deep Ellum to Grand Prairie; more recently,

the Deep Ellum Arts Festival called it quits, citing economic and security concerns.

Despite increased fears, violence is down across the city's main nightlife areas, according to police data comparing crime in 2022 with this time last year. In the Central Division, which includes Fair Park, Deep Ellum, downtown, Uptown and Lower Greenville, overall violent crime is down about 4.3%

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Elias Valverde II/Staff Photographer

PepsiCo Foods North America CEO Steven Williams, shown at Frito-Lay North America's Plano headquarters, oversees some 70,000 employees in the U.S. and Canada.

LEADERSHIP

Humble roots to boardrooms

Passion, heart have lifted PepsiCo Foods CEO to corporate heights

By CHERYL HALL
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If you want to see Steven Williams' eyes light up, mention Nacho Cheese Doritos.

As CEO of PepsiCo Foods North America, the 56-year-old oversees a \$21 billion portfolio of chips, dips and convenience foods: Doritos, Lay's, Cheetos, Tostitos, Ruffles, Fritos, Stacy's Pita Chips, Sun-Chips, Quaker snacks and hot breakfast cereals.

But of the thousands of offerings, Williams' go-to snack is a bag

of nacho cheese triangles. He likes to pair them with an ice-cold Pepsi Zero.

"I'm old school," Williams said unapologetically.

As head of the nation's largest snack food company, Williams is one of the highest-ranked minority executives in corporate America.

PepsiCo Foods has some 70,000 employees working at 500-plus locations throughout the United States and Canada, including 6,500 employees in the Dallas metro area working at Frito-Lay North America headquarters in Plano, its R&D

center, global IT unit, multiple plants and warehouse facilities.

Williams travels extensively to meet with customers and check on operations but is based at the Frito-Lay headquarters campus on Legacy Drive in Plano. All of Frito-Lay and Quaker in North America reports to him.

But beyond his company and the upper echelon of D-FW business communities, Williams is not well known.

He says he doesn't see the value

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Metro, back page

NATION & WORLD
Focus turns to rescue, recovery

Rescuers in Florida continued to search for survivors in the wake of Hurricane Ian, while authorities in the Carolinas began taking stock of their losses. **4A**

METRO
Cemetery needs city's assistance

A 170-year-old Black graveyard holds a trove of Dallas history, writes columnist Sharon Grigsby. **1B**

BUSINESS
Finding success in helping others

Joseph Akintolayo has a history of creating companies to help others. His latest, Deposits, is one of two area firms selected for Google's 2022 Black Founders Fund program. **1D**

OPINION
Courage and leadership

Think America is too polarized to get big things done? These two politicians disagree. **1P**

SPORTSDAY

Saying farewell to a class act

After 55 years as a player, executive and broadcaster, Tom Grieve will officially retire from the Texas Rangers organization at the end of the season. Rather than sum up Grieve's career, Evan Grant allows some of those who know him to sum up the man instead. **7C**



Ben Torres/Special Contributor

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