

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin One Hundred Fifteen (115)



September 1, 2026

The opinions expressed in this bulletin are those of the Board of Directors of the Sul Ross Group and do not represent the opinions of The Association of Former Students, its officers, or leadership. The SRG is a nonpartisan organization. Our intention is in keeping with one of our four charged SRG Constitution's purposes, to keep the Sul Ross Group membership informed on pertinent topics and occurrences at TAMU in a timely manner and enlist their support when required.

Howdy Ags,

Here is the Sul Ross Group's Bulletin 115. The SRG Board hopes you enjoy this bulletin and find it informative. We encourage you to distribute it to your classmates, Aggie buddies, and friends. Thank you.

Gig 'Em!

Sul Ross Group Board

LYLE LOVETT VIDEO CELEBRATING AGGIE TRADITIONS AND THE POWER OF WORKING TOGETHER

Laura McKenzie/Texas A&M University

Houstonian, and Klein native, Lyle Lovett '79 leads a new Texas A&M video campaign celebrating Aggie traditions and the power of working together ahead of the university's 150th anniversary. He plays the music for a new Texas A&M University video campaign celebrating time-honored Aggie traditions. The two-minute film is titled "[Working Together for the Good of the Nation](#)," and is a part of Texas A&M's brand platform, "Together, We Stand as a Force for Good," according to a news release from the university.



[Click on image to view video](#)

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"Higher education is very good at telling people what institutions contain: rankings, research, programs, facilities and accomplishments," said R. Ethan Braden, vice president and chief marketing and communications officer at Texas A&M. "Those things matter, but they do not always tell people what an institution means. We want people to see Texas A&M and understand something meaningful about us when they do. 'Together, We Stand as a Force for Good' is intended to connect the extraordinary work of Aggies through one clear idea people can understand and remember."

The film is available on [Texas A&M's YouTube channel](#). On August 23rd, it was played nationally as a two-minute commercial during the Fox broadcast of the Freedom 250 Grand Prix IndyCar race in Washington, D.C. The race featured a [Texas A&M 'Together We Stand' IndyCar](#) driven by Felix Rosenqvist.

Scenes in the film include researchers pursuing treatments for Alzheimer's disease and dementia, members of the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets raising the American flag, students serving their community through a yearly service event and Aggie sports teams working together.

TEXAS A&M-FORT WORTH OPENS FIRST ACADEMIC BUILDING, BREAKS GROUND ON NEXT PHASE OF DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

The Texas A&M University System News, August 5, 2026

Synopsis:

On **August 5, 2026**, the Texas A&M University System officially inaugurated its highly anticipated **downtown Fort Worth campus**, celebrating a dual milestone that marks a multi-million-dollar commitment to urban education and regional economic development. System regents, Chancellor Glenn Hegar, and civic leaders gathered for the ribbon-cutting of the **eight-story, 228,000-square-foot Law & Education Building**, which represents the first completed phase of the downtown development project. Immediately following the grand opening ceremony, leaders broke ground on the **Research & Innovation Building-A**, an 11-story facility scheduled for completion in 2029. Both structures will serve as the premier academic and research anchors for the **Switchyard Innovation District** in southeast downtown Fort Worth, establishing a central hub designed to merge advanced research, entrepreneurship, and public-private industry collaboration.



[Click on image to view video](#)

The Law & Education Building is designed to offer a multidisciplinary learning ecosystem. It houses academic programs from both **Texas A&M University** and **Tarleton State University**, including the Texas A&M School of Law, Mays Business School, engineering, biotechnology, health sciences, and medical laboratory sciences. The facility is also home to **six Texas A&M System agencies**—including the Texas A&M Transportation Institute and the Texas Division of Emergency Management—extending academic training into applied public service and

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technology development. According to system leaders, this campus is not merely a collection of classrooms, but a collaborative space where students interface with future employers, and researchers work directly with private companies to solve industry problems. An economic impact study projects that once the campus is fully realized, it will support **more than 25,000 direct and indirect jobs** and stimulate **over \$3 billion in annual economic activity** for the region.

To read the complete article, visit the link below.

<https://news.tamug.edu/stories/texas-am-fort-worth-opens-first-academic-building-breaks-ground-on-next-phase-of-downtown-campus/>

TEXAS A&M AND BUC-EE'S HISTORIC CO-BRANDED MERCHANDISE COLLABORATION

Texas A&M Stories (Newsroom), August 4, 2026

Synopsis:

On **August 4, 2026**, Texas A&M University and the iconic Texas travel center chain **Buc-ee's** announced a major branding milestone with the launch of their first-ever co-branded **merchandise line**. The debut item of this creative partnership is a custom maroon T-shirt featuring both the Texas A&M University logo and Buc-ee's world-famous cartoon beaver mascot. Unlike typical licensing arrangements, this marks the first time that both brand identities have been featured simultaneously on a single product. To ensure exclusivity, the shirts were released only at **20 select Buc-ee's locations** across Texas and at the Barnes & Noble campus bookstore on Texas A&M's main campus in College Station.



The commercial milestone builds on a long-standing, deepening relationship between the university and Buc-ee's founder, **Arch "Beaver" Aplin III**, a prominent member of Texas A&M's Class of 1980. Aplin, who founded the travel center giant in 1982 just two years after graduation, has remained a dedicated supporter of the university. This merchandise launch serves as a creative preview of the upcoming **Aplin Center**, an academic and hands-on learning facility currently under construction in the heart of the College Station campus. Supported by a **\$60 million personal contribution from Aplin**, the center is designed to offer students unique experiential learning opportunities in retail, hospitality, customer experience, food innovation,

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and merchandising. Earlier in the year, Texas A&M became the first university in the country to offer over 45 official Buc-ee's products on campus. This new joint merchandise expands that retail relationship, and the university has already hinted that additional co-branded product releases are planned to coincide with Texas A&M's upcoming **150th (sesquicentennial) anniversary celebration**.

To read the complete article, visit the link below.

<https://stories.tamu.edu/news/2026/08/04/texas-am-university-and-buc-ees-launch-co-branded-merchandise/>

PAVING THE WAY TO CRITICAL MINERALS

Texas A&M University System News, and Texas A&M Stories (Newsroom), August 22, 2026

Synopsis:

Texas A&M researchers are leading an engineering effort to develop a faster, cost-effective method to identify critical minerals, which are essential components for everyday technologies. These rare minerals are in high demand globally to manufacture crucial consumer and strategic products, including wind turbines, electric vehicle batteries, military equipment, and smartphones. Currently, the United States is heavily reliant on foreign imports for these raw materials, which are highly susceptible to supply chain disruptions. Finding reliable domestic sources of critical minerals has therefore become a national priority.

To address this challenge, researchers are developing and testing a new technology prototype to streamline detection and extraction processes. This prototype is scheduled to undergo initial testing at the National Oilwell Varco (NOV) STC facility. By drastically reducing the cost and increasing the speed of subterranean mineral identification, this Texas A&M project aims to bolster domestic manufacturing, secure critical supply chains, and support the next generation of global clean energy and defense technologies.

To read the complete article, visit the link below.

<https://news.engineering.tamu.edu/news/2026/08/22/paving-the-way-to-critical-minerals/>

FORMER MARATHON OIL CEO LEE TILLMAN ENDOWS NUCLEAR FACULTY SUPPORT

Texas A&M Engineering News, : August 21, 2026

Synopsis:

Lee Tillman '84, a chemical engineering graduate and the former CEO of Marathon Oil, has established key faculty endowments in the Department of Nuclear Engineering to support the future of global clean energy. Tillman, who served as Marathon's chief executive for over 11 years before stepping down in 2024, designed the endowments to recognize the increasingly critical role that nuclear energy is set to play in meeting future global power and environmental demands.

Growing up in the small town of Teague, Texas, Tillman attended Texas A&M on a President's Endowed Scholarship and spent all four years of his undergraduate studies living in the same Dunn Hall room. He later earned a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from Auburn University, focusing on supercritical fluids and reactor engineering. Tillman credits Texas A&M's core

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values, particularly honesty and integrity, as foundational to his executive success. Alongside his wife, Ty, and their son, Trace, Tillman established this endowment to strengthen faculty recruitment, retention, and research within the nuclear engineering department, ensuring that Aggies remain leaders in advanced nuclear technology.

To read the complete article, visit the link below.

<https://news.engineering.tamu.edu/news/2026/08/21/former-marathon-oil-ceo-and-family-pour-into-texas-am/>

TEXAS A&M RESEARCHERS DEVELOP INNOVATIVE FISH-LIKE NANOROBOTS FOR SEAWATER LITHIUM HARVESTING

Texas A&M Stories / College of Engineering, July 29, 2026

Synopsis:

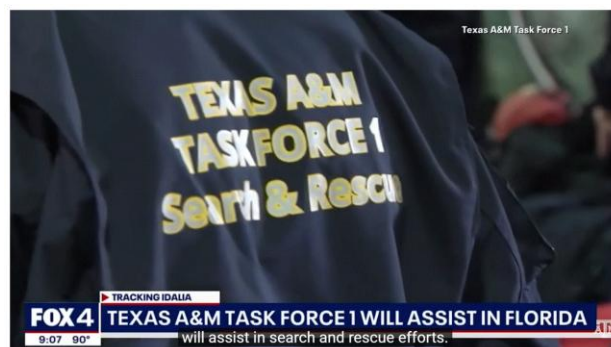
Backed by a prestigious **\$1 million award from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)** Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation, a multidisciplinary engineering team at Texas A&M University is developing groundbreaking technology: microscopic, **fish-like swimming nanorobots** designed to harvest dissolved lithium ions directly from seawater. Led by Dr. Shiren Wang of the Wm Michael Barnes '64 Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering and Dr. Jingjing (Jenny) Qiu of the J. Mike Walker '66 Department of Mechanical Engineering, this research aims to build a sustainable, efficient domestic supply chain for lithium—a critical mineral essential for the manufacturing of advanced batteries, electric vehicles, and clean energy storage technologies. Unlike traditional land-based mining or underground brine pumping, which are highly energy-intensive and ecologically disruptive, these autonomous micro- and nanoparticles move freely through the water. When stimulated by external forces, such as light, they swim to actively "hunt" and selectively bind to dissolved lithium ions. Once the nanorobots capture the lithium, researchers retrieve them from the seawater using magnetic fields, resulting in a harvesting process with **virtually zero land footprint** and minimal environmental impact. Given that the oceans hold an estimated 230 billion tons of dissolved lithium, this innovative approach could revolutionize the global critical mineral landscape and decrease U.S. reliance on foreign mining imports.

To read the complete article, visit the link below.

<https://stories.tamu.edu/news/2026/07/29/researchers-develop-fish-like-nanorobots-to-recover-lithium-from-seawater/>

TEXAS A&M TASK FORCE ONE

Texas A&M Task Force One has responded to every major disaster in the United States for the last 20 years with 200 deployments. It consists of 850 members from 165 different agencies. Skills include collapsed structure rescue, swift water and flood rescue, and helicopter search and rescue.



Click on image to view video

TEXAS A&M, SPACE FORCE SET TO KEEP OFFICER LEARNING PROGRAM IN COLLEGE STATION

STEPHEN WHITAKER, Aggie Nation.com, Jul 31, 2026 Updated Aug 4, 2026

The Texas A&M University System is currently negotiating a 10-year agreement with the U.S. Space Force to host the Captain's Leadership Course through 2036. This four-week education program, designed to train Space Force officers (known as Guardians) in space operations and joint military leadership, originally launched at College Station as a highly successful pilot program in January.

Key Highlights:

- **Long-Term Extension:** Following the success of the initial cohorts, the A&M Board of Regents unanimously authorized Chancellor Glenn Hegar to finalize a long-term contract to make the university the permanent home for the course.
- **Competitive Selection:** Texas A&M originally won the \$1.8 million pilot program bid over several other universities, chosen for its world-renowned faculty, academic rigor, and strong legacy of developing military and civilian leaders.
- **Broader Space Initiatives:** The Space Force partnership is a cornerstone of A&M's aggressive expansion into the space sector. This broader initiative includes a new Master's degree in space engineering, advanced aerospace research facilities at the RELLIS campus in Bryan, and the upcoming \$200 million Texas A&M Space Institute at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.



Ultimately, this extended partnership reflects a mutual goal to prepare Guardians for greater responsibilities while cementing Texas A&M's position as a leader in the next era of national security and space exploration.

To read the complete article, visit the link below.

https://myaggienation.com/am_news/texas-a-m-space-force-set-to-keep-officer-learning-program-in-college-station/article_daa5b2d1-43a5-564f-83ff-30465ef03dd7.html

R.C. SLOCUM TO BE HONORED WITH STATUE OUTSIDE KYLE FIELD

Richard Zane, TexAgs, August 20, 2026

Synopsis:

Texas A&M will unveil a bronze statue honoring R.C. Slocum on Friday, September 4, at 2 p.m. CT. The celebration will take place outside Kyle Field's Entry 5 on the north end of the stadium, just ahead of the Aggies' season opener against Missouri State.

Slocum is the first head coach in Texas A&M history to receive a statue. He becomes just the third football program member to be honored with a bronze monument, joining 12th Man E. King Gill and 1957 Heisman Trophy winner John David Crow. The statue was crafted by Steven Whyte, who also sculpted the John David Crow and War Hymn monuments at Kyle Field.



The monument permanently cements a career that has shaped Texas A&M football for more than half a century:

- **The Winningest Coach:** Serving as head coach from 1989 to 2002, Slocum compiled 123 victories without a single losing season.
- **Championship Pedigree:** He led the Aggies to four conference titles, including three straight Southwest Conference (SWC) championships (1991–1993) and the 1998 Big 12 title. His 44-6-2 SWC record stands as the highest winning percentage in the league's history.
- **The "Wrecking Crew":** Slocum was instrumental in birthing the Aggies' legendary defense. Under his watch, Kyle Field became a fortress where he lost only 12 home games in 14 seasons.
- **Decades of Service:** His impact dates back to his hiring as an assistant in 1972 and continues today, having stepped up as the university's interim athletic director in 2019 and 2024.

To read the complete article, visit the link below.

<https://12thman.com/news/2026/08/21/texas-aandm-honors-rc-slocum-with-statue-and-dedication>

2028 DETROIT (MI) CASS TECH QB DONALD TABRON II COMMITS TO TEXAS A&M

Ryan Brauningner, TexAgs, August 15, 2026

Mike Elko and the Fightin' Texas Aggies have made their second addition to the class of 2028 as Detroit (MI) Cass Tech quarterback Donald Tabron II has committed to Texas A&M. At 6-foot-4 and 180 pounds, Tabron picks the Aggies over LSU, Miami, Ohio State, Oregon and many others.

Texas A&M has landed its signal-caller in the 2028 recruiting cycle today as standout [Donald Tabron II](#) out of Cass Tech High School in Detroit, Mich., has made the call for the Aggies.

The 6-foot-4, 180-pounder is the second commitment in the class for the Maroon & White.

It's easy to see why Tabron was so highly coveted (to the tune of 30 offers) after just two seasons of high school football. His stature and overall frame jump off the page before he even picks up a football. As a thrower, he's fluid and efficient — coordinating longer levers into easy arm strength. He has also shown advanced feel for trajectory and an ability to layer throws up-and-down to avoid defenders. There's also plenty of athletic upside and mobility present. He eats up yardage with long strides and shows good power and contact balance in traffic.

You can view his highlights below.

A significant get for Mike Elko in the 2028 cycle, Tabron chose the Aggies over LSU, Miami, Ohio State, Oregon and many others.

TEXAS A&M RECEIVES \$25M TO BUILD AUTONOMOUS ROBOTIC PLATFORM

Stephen Whitaker THE EAGLE 7 August 2026

Synopsis:

Texas A&M is building a first-of-its-kind national research facility at RELLIS that combines robotics and AI to dramatically accelerate the discovery of new metal alloys. The goal is to **turn metallurgy into an automated, continuously operating discovery process**. Instead of scientists manually deciding what alloy to make, producing it, testing it and then designing the next experiment, ARM-MIP creates a closed loop:

simulate → manufacture → test → analyze → choose the next alloy → repeat.

Key points:

- The Texas A&M University System received a **six-year, \$24.9 million NSF grant** to establish the **Autonomous Robotic Metallurgist Materials Innovation Platform (ARM-MIP)** at RELLIS in Bryan.
- ARM-MIP will use **robots, artificial intelligence and computer simulations** to automate much of the alloy-discovery process, allowing researchers to spend more time on scientific analysis and innovation.
- When completed, it will be the **fifth NSF Materials Innovation Platform** and the **first focused specifically on metals**.
- **Raymundo Arroyave**, a Texas A&M materials science and engineering professor, will direct the facility and oversee a team of 15 faculty and staff.
- The facility will operate as a **national user facility**, meaning researchers from universities, U.S. companies and national laboratories can conduct experiments there, including remotely.
- By the sixth year, the project expects **half of its equipment capacity to be devoted to outside researchers** and more than **300 researchers to receive training** in metallurgy and AI-driven materials discovery.
- ARM-MIP also plans to establish an **industrial and national-laboratory consortium** to help guide research, share results and sustain the facility after the NSF grant ends.
- Industry partner **Multiscale Technologies** will provide its Mind 3.0 platform as the facility's data and knowledge-sharing backbone.
- The robotic system will be capable of **melting, shaping, heat-treating and testing alloys 24/7**. AI will evaluate results and determine which experiment should happen next, while simulations will help eliminate experiments unlikely to produce useful results.

The significance for Bryan-College Station is substantial. RELLIS is increasingly becoming a location where **AI, advanced manufacturing, semiconductor research and now autonomous materials discovery** intersect. This project also gives Texas A&M a national role in developing the materials that could ultimately support technologies ranging from aerospace and energy to semiconductors and advanced manufacturing.

TERAFAB OFFICIALLY COMING TO GRIMES COUNTY

Joe Southern, The Eagle, 7 August 2026

It's official, Terafab, the \$119 billion, 100 million square-foot vertically integrated semiconductor fabrication plant, will be built in Grimes County.

The formal announcement was made Thursday by Gov. Greg Abbott.

SpaceX's Terafab semiconductor fabrication facility is moving forward in Grimes County, representing one of the largest technology and manufacturing investments in Texas history. Announced by Gov. Greg Abbott, the project's first phase includes a \$16.8 billion investment, 3,000 jobs, and plans for a future 100-million-square-foot facility valued at up to \$119 billion.



Developed through a partnership involving SpaceX, xAI, Tesla and Intel, Terafab will focus on producing advanced semiconductor chips for artificial intelligence, robotics, autonomous vehicles and space technologies. The project is intended to strengthen U.S. semiconductor manufacturing capacity and reduce reliance on overseas supply chains.

The development has received support from local officials and school districts, which approved tax incentives intended to generate long-term economic benefits, workforce opportunities and increased investment. While supporters view Terafab as a transformational project for Grimes County and the surrounding region, opponents have expressed concerns about tax abatements, rapid industrial growth and community impacts.

SpaceX plans to hire much of the workforce locally, with an estimated 60–80% of employees coming from Grimes and Brazos counties. The company also outlined environmental commitments, including water conservation efforts, wastewater treatment and the use of Gibbons Creek Reservoir water for industrial operations.

With site preparation already underway, Terafab is positioned as a key component of Texas' growing role in artificial intelligence, semiconductor manufacturing and advanced technology industries.



Reveille X - April 2021 - Texas A&M Today - Jesse Everett – Texas A&M Marketing & Communication

WHO, WHY, AND HOW TO RECEIVE THE SRG BULLETINS?

To provide our thoughts and communication with our membership, the SRG board has decided to communicate directly through bulletins sent by email to the Class Agents who will then share with those in their Classes. Anyone is free to pass these bulletins to any Aggie, friends of Aggies, or just friends. The Board plans to maintain our policy of complete transparency and that is the reason we have inserted the disclaimer on the front page of this bulletin. **You can contact us at:**

SRGbulletin@gmail.com

The Sul Ross Group (SRG) Board of Directors (BoD) are solely responsible for producing the SRG Bulletins. We do so in keeping with one of our four charged SRG Constitution's purposes, which is to ensure our represented SRG Membership is kept informed on pertinent topics in a timely manner.

Note: All the Bulletins from Bulletin #1 to the current Bulletin are available to be viewed on the SRG Website at www.ferrata.net/srg/portal.aspx. Click on 'Uploaded Files.'

Suggest you use “Google Chrome”, “Firefox”, or “Microsoft Edge” as a browser.

To access information about us as the elected SRG Board of Directors, and our Constitution and By-Laws, and the SRG's history and what we are about, please refer to our new “**SRG Tab**” (Under “Programs”) on **aggienetwork.com**.

If you wish to comment to those who decide:

Chancellor Glen Hegar: **chancellor@tamus.edu**

The Board of Regents: **vickie@tamus.edu** or **jbell@tamus.edu**

President: Dr. Susan Ballabina: **president@tamu.edu**

Provost Alan Sams: **asams@tamu.edu**

Athletic Director Trev Alberts: **rrabun@athletics.tamu.edu**

VPSA Dr. Bill Kibler: **vpsa@tamu.edu**

Commandant LTG J.W. Bierman: **commandant@corps.tamu.edu**

SRG Board of Directors' Resolutions for: 2024 – 2026

- To keep the Sul Ross Group (SRG) membership informed of pertinent topics and activities on campus through periodic SRG Bulletins.
- As investors of A&M, to continue to meet with and to offer our support and assistance to the leadership of TAMUS, TAMU, the Association of Former Students, A&M Foundation, the Commandant, the Corps Commander, and student government leaders.
- To support A&M's Core Values and traditions and share these with all we meet, especially students, stressing unity of purpose and effort within the A&M community.
- To continue the ongoing review, execution and improvement of new student integration and assimilation into TAMU, working with and assisting the V.P. of Student Affairs, if invited, by periodically observing new student orientation – avoiding “not too much nor too little” oversight of student run organizations.
- Be it resolved that the SRG support their strategic goal of preserving what sets TAMU apart as distinctive and transcendent, as elder statesmen, and in accordance with the SRG's four established Constitutional objectives while serving TAMU, the Association, and our membership.