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Texas is one of the most fun states to visit in America, according to WalletHub



Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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## Apple hits record high after Buffett's Berkshire increases stake

(Reuters) - Apple Inc's stock hit an all-time high on Friday after Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc disclosed it had bought 75 million more shares of the iPhone maker in the first three months of the year. Buffett's increased stake, confirmed by a representative of the billionaire investor, pushed Apple's shares up as much as 3.8 percent to \$183.65. It was the stock's second significant gain this week after the Cupertino, California-based firm surprised Wall Street on Tuesday with resilient iPhone sales and quarterly results that topped expectations. "If you look at Apple, I think it earns almost twice as much as the second most profitable company in the United States," Buffett told CNBC, which first reported here the news on Thursday. Buffett's Apple commitment over the past two years has surprised many, given his historical aversion to companies associated with the technology sector. Berkshire's initial investment in Apple was small, suggesting it was made by one of Buffett's investment deputies, but with the latest stake purchase, it has grown to a massive 240.3 million shares worth \$42.5 billion. In February, Berkshire had said its Apple stake grew by about 23 percent since the end of September to roughly 165.3 million shares. The billionaire investor recently sold out of an unsuccessful investment in IBM Corp, at the same time he was buying Apple. Buffett has praised Apple Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook and suggested he views Apple more as a consumer company, despite its Silicon Valley pedigree. However, there may also be another reason for the investment: Berkshire's cash position. Buying Apple accomplishes that, even though Buffett would rather buy whole companies than their stocks. Berkshire typically discloses its largest common stock holdings and percentage stakes in its quarterly and annual reports. The report for the first quarter is scheduled for release



FILE PHOTO - An Apple logo hangs above the entrance to the Apple store on 5th Avenue in the Manhattan borough of New York City

on Saturday morning, just before Berkshire's annual shareholder meeting in its Omaha, Nebraska hometown. Apple reported \$61.1 billion in revenue for the March quarter, up from \$52.9 billion last year, and promised \$100 billion in additional stock buybacks. Apple did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Friday. Up to Thursday's close, Apple stock had risen more than 5 percent since Berkshire disclosed on Feb. 14 that it had raised its stake in the company. "We're at a point now where big data is helping optimize inspection programs, so we don't have to send guys into the field," King said. Drones and crawlers may be a stepping stone. Norwegian oil producer Statoil is eyeing an unmanned, remotely operated production concept. Noble Drilling and General Electric Co this year launched a partnership to produce a fully digitized drilling vessel, work the companies said paves the way for an autonomous drilling fleet. "We have the technology. It's just a matter of getting these projects executed. We're not there yet on unmanned platforms for deepwater, but it's coming," said Statoil's Lockhart.

### STV 15.3 Now Broadcasting Globally

View Television Programming  
24-Hours A Day, 7 Days A Week  
Non-Stop On Your Mobile Phone!

(By Tina Huang / Southern Daily )

For the added convenience, dependability and enjoyment for our global audience, mobile cell phone users can now simply scan the QR code printed in our newspaper and they will be directly connected to our digital television station STV15.3 on their mobile cell phones. Users can then enjoy immediate access to a wide range of broadband television programming including breaking news, entertainment and education which can be reached non-stop,



24-hours a day, 7 days a week from local, domestic U.S. and global locations. Additionally, users will now be able to

listen to radio stations from television broadcasts while driving, an experience which can be even more greatly enhanced when users' mobile cell phones are connected with a Bluetooth device in their cars.



Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York, U.S., May 3, 2018. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid

## Texas is one of the most fun states to visit in America, according to WalletHub

By William Axford

WalletHub knows something every Texan already knows: The Lone Star State is a fun time.

Instead of anecdotal evidence however, WalletHub backs up its claims with metrics involving nightlife, entertainment and recreation in their study of 2018's most fun states in America. Of the 50 states, Texas ranks at No. 7.

Texas also ranks high for most restaurants per capita, tying for first with California, Florida and New York. Texas also scores high for most movies per capita, tying for first with California and New York. Texas ranks fifth for most fitness centers per

capita.

From Big Bend to the Guadalupe Mountains, check out the most beautiful places in Texas. WalletHub ranks California as the most fun state to visit, followed by New York and Nevada. Florida ranks at No. 4 overall, followed by Illinois (um ... ok?) and then Washington.

West Virginia ranks as the least fun state to visit in America. Mississippi clocks in at No. 49 and Delaware at No. 48.

WalletHub said it used 26 different metrics for each state, grading them on a 100-point scale with 100 indicating the greatest number of variety of fun and cost-effective options.

Weather, amusement parks, arcades, beer prices and access to national parks are other metrics used in the rankings.



The water can be as cold as 50 degrees in some parts! Depending on when you go, there could be a wait, however, because a limit is put on the number of people allowed.



WalletHub ranks Texas as the seventh most fun state to visit in America.



Take a tour of the NASA Johnson Space Center grounds, get a look at both current and historic mission control rooms, and see pieces of space history.

Editor's Choice



Members of a caravan of migrants from Central America, line up to enter the United States border and customs facility, where they are expected to apply for asylum, in Tijuana



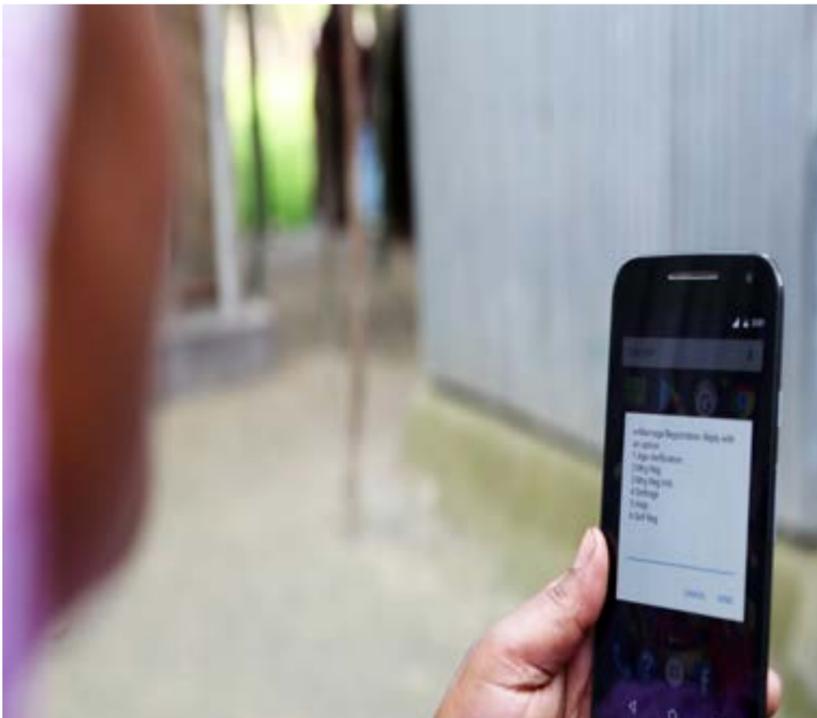
US Marine Corps Lt. Col. (Ret.) Oliver North speaks at an NRA convention in Dallas



May 4, 2018; Louisville, KY, USA; Fans from left Heather Marks , Alexa Blitz and Danielle Dehetre pose for a photo in their derby hats during the 2018 Kentucky Oaks at Churchill Downs. Mandatory Credit: Jamie Rhodes-USA TODAY Sports



Supporters of the Al Sairun Party, which is backed by Iraqi Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, attend a campaign rally, ahead of the parliamentary election in Tahrir Square, central Baghdad, Iraq May 4, 2018. REUTERS/Thaier Al-Sudani



Mosamat Julekha Begum, a Bangladeshi matchmaker, looking at the phone application in Kurigram, Bangladesh, September, 2017. Plan International / Ehsan Kabir



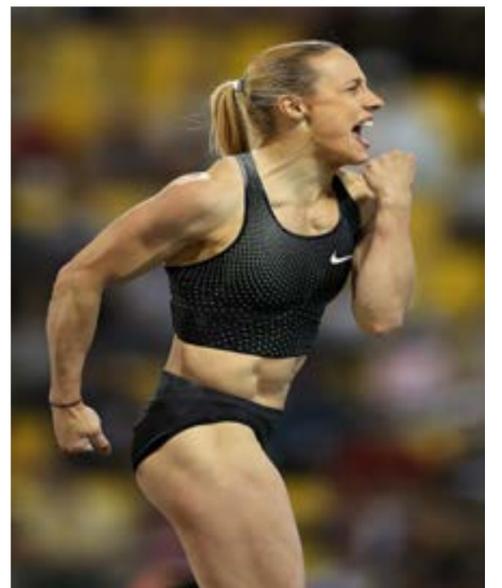
Invitations for the opening of the exhibition for Karl Marx 200th anniversary celebrations are seen at the Basilica of Constantine in Trier



Workers arrange stacks of freshly printed newspapers at the printing house of Dailynews newspaper in Bangkok



A worker controls the printer at the printing house of Dailynews newspaper in Bangkok



Athletics - Diamond League - Doha - Qatar Sports Club, Doha, Qatar - May 4, 2018 Greece's Nikoleta Kiriakopoulou celebrates during the women's pole vault REUTERS/Ibraheem Al Omari

Houston and Harris County with the fourth most-populous city in the U.S. will decriminalize low-level marijuana possession, with officials saying last Thursday that throwing people in jail for having small amounts of pot has “no tangible public safety benefit.”

The policy, which takes effect March 1, 2018, means in most circumstances there will be no jail, no tickets, no court appearances and no criminal record for possession of an ounce or two of marijuana in the city and its surrounding county, home to about 4.5 million people.

More than two dozen U.S. states have legalized some form of marijuana for medical or recreational use, but the drug remains illegal at the federal level and in Texas.

The new “Misdemeanor Marijuana Diversion Program” for Harris County applies to people 17 and older facing no additional charges other than misdemeanor marijuana possession, county and city law enforcement officials said in a statement.

“Harris County has spent more than \$200 million in the past decade on more than 100,000 cases of misdemeanor marijuana possession,” District Attorney Kim Ogg, a Democrat who took office this year, said in a statement.



**Officials look at a graph describing the estimated \$26 million Harris County spends on low-level marijuana enforcement every year as district attorney Kim Ogg, not pictured, announced a new policy to decriminalize some possession of marijuana Thursday, Feb. 16, 2017 in Houston. The new policy means that most misdemeanor offenders with less than four ounces of marijuana will not be arrested, ticketed or required to appear in court if they agree to take a four-hour drug education class.**

She added that the effort “has deprived neighborhoods of officers’ time that could be spent patrolling communities; jail beds that could be used for violent criminals... and judicial court time that should be spent bringing serious criminals to justice.”

The Texas Attorney General’s office could not immediately be reached for comment.

The move is also aimed at preventing people from being denied education, employment and housing opportunities due to having a criminal record for marijuana possession.

A main provision is for those caught with low-level possession to complete a four-hour course on decision-making at a cost of \$150, which will be waived for the indigent. If people eligible for the program do not want to participate, they will be taken to jail and charged with possession.

The county and Houston will give police officers discretion to bring criminal charges. Individuals under court supervision through bond, probation, or deferred adjudication are not eligible since they have agreements not to violate

## No More Arrests For Marijuana Possession In Harris County, Texas Starting March 1st

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



the law, the county and city said.



**Harris County district attorney Kim Ogg announces a new policy to decriminalize low-level possession of marijuana Thursday, Feb. 16, 2017 in Houston. The new policy means that most misdemeanor offenders with less than four ounces of marijuana will not be arrested, ticketed or required to appear in court if they agree to take a four-hour drug education class.**

Ogg said the move falls under the Texas Code of Criminal Procedures that says it is the duty of a district attorney “not to convict, but to see that justice is done.”

“With limited resources, we need to be efficient, smart and thoughtful on fighting crime,” Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo said in a statement. (Courtesy <https://thejointblog.com>)

### Related

**New policy to decriminalize marijuana in Harris County will save time, money, DA’s office says**

Houston and Harris County are poised to decriminalize low-level possession of marijuana in a sweeping move that puts the area at the forefront of efforts in Texas to halt minor drug arrests that clog jails and courts.



**Mayor Sylvester Turner (center at podium) with District Attorney Kim Ogg to his right, announces the city’s new marijuana policy set to begin March 1. The new policy means that misdemeanor offenders with less than four ounces of marijuana will not be arrested, ticketed or required to appear in court if they agree to take a four-hour drug education class, officials said.**

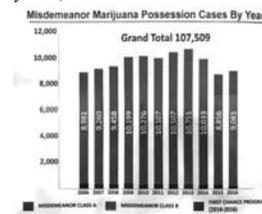
District Attorney Kim Ogg announced the new

policy Thursday with Mayor Sylvester Turner, Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo and Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez.

Ogg said the county has spent \$25 million a year for the past 10 years locking up people for having less than 4 ounces of marijuana. She said those resources would be better spent arresting serious criminals such as burglars, robbers and rapists.

“We have spent in excess of \$250 million, over a quarter-billion dollars, prosecuting a crime that has produced no tangible evidence of improved public safety,” she said. “We have disqualified, unnecessarily, thousands of people from greater job, housing and educational opportunities by giving them a criminal record for what is, in effect, a minor law violation.”

Officials have said it could divert an estimated 12,000 people a year out of the criminal justice system and would save officers hours of processing time now spent on low-level cases. More than 107,000 cases of misdemeanor marijuana cases have been handled in the past 10 years, officials said.



Since there is no arrest, there is no arrest record. Since there is no court date, there are no court documents connected to the encounter. The plan calls for officers to seize the marijuana and drop it off at a police station at the end of their shift, along with a record of the encounter in case the suspect does not take the class.

“You do not get charged with anything,” Assistant District Attorney David Mitcham, who heads the DA’s trial bureau, said Wednesday. “You have a pathway where you can avoid going to court.”

Every Harris County law enforcement agency would be affected, since they rely on the district attorney’s office to prosecute their cases.

Ogg, a Democrat who beat incumbent Republican District Attorney Devon Anderson in the November general election, campaigned as a reform candidate who pledged to reduce arrests for low-level drug offenses.

Category	Cost
JAIL	\$13,187,000
DISTRICT ATTORNEY	\$4,780,000
COUNTY	\$2,970,000
INDIGENT DEFENSE	\$2,552,000
CRIMINAL CASES	\$1,790,000
POLICE	\$1,384,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$26,663,800</b>

Reaction to the proposal was swift, coming even before details of the program were officially unveiled. Montgomery County District Attorney Brett Ligon sharply criticized the proposal, saying Ogg was trying to legalize marijuana.

“Unlike Harris County, Montgomery County will not become a sanctuary for dope smokers,” Ligon said in a press release. “I swore an oath to follow the law – all the laws, as written by the Texas Legislature. I don’t get to pick and choose which laws I enforce.”

The Houston chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, praised the program.

“Law enforcement should focus on protecting our communities instead of wasting their resources arresting people and ruining their lives over a misdemeanor amount of cannabis,” the organization said in a press release. “Our DA is taking a brave course of action to minimize the detrimental affect that prohibition has on our communities.”



**Harris County district attorney Kim Ogg, left, shakes hands with Houston police chief Art Acevedo after she announced a new policy to decriminalize low-level possession of marijuana Thursday, Feb. 16, 2017 in Houston. The new policy means that most misdemeanor offenders with less than four ounces of marijuana will not be arrested, ticketed or required to appear in court if they agree to take a four-hour drug education class.**

At the sheriff’s office, the new policy will save up to 12 hours of processing time per month for as many as 1,000 suspects, a move that will ease the workload on administrators and jailers who transfer and process inmates, officials said. “We’re really encouraged by these swift actions by the district attorney,” said sheriff’s spokesman Ryan Sullivan. “And we are looking forward to working with Harris County’s criminal justice leadership identifying common-sense solutions to our broken criminal justice system.”

Sullivan said the move would likely not affect the jail population significantly, since most misdemeanor marijuana offenders move quickly in and out of jail. On Wednesday, just 12 people were jailed on misdemeanor marijuana offenses and unable to make bail, he said.

Elected district attorneys are given wide latitude in their discretion about how to enforce laws in their jurisdictions. Diversion programs,

such as drug courts, have been widely used across Texas, and Austin has launched a “cite and release” program in which low-level drug offenders are given tickets and required to appear in court.



**Harris County district attorney Kim Ogg, left, shakes hands with Houston city council member Michael Kubosh, right, after she announced a new policy to decriminalize low-level possession of marijuana Thursday, Feb. 16, 2017 in Houston. The new policy means that most misdemeanor offenders with less than four ounces of marijuana will not be arrested, ticketed or required to appear in court if they agree to take a four-hour drug education class.**

Under the new local program, police would identify a suspect to make sure they do not have warrants or other legal issues, then would offer them the option of taking the drug education class. If the suspect takes the class, the drugs are destroyed and the agreement is filed away. A suspect would be able to take the class repeatedly again regardless of past criminal history, officials said.

The new program will keep police on the streets longer each day and reduce costs for lab testing of the drugs, Mitcham said.

If the suspect does not take the class, the contraband will be tested, and prosecutors will file charges and issue an arrest warrant. Offenders could then face up to one year in jail if convicted of the Class A misdemeanor.

In the past, police union officials have supported marijuana diversion programs as long as officers are allowed to drop evidence at police stations, instead of having to take it downtown. Shortly after taking HPD’s top post in December, Acevedo — who previously was chief in Austin — voiced similar sentiments about low-level drug cases, saying police should go after drug dealers rather than users. He could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

“For those that are involved in the violence of the drug trade, that’s who I want to focus on,” he said in December. “I want to focus on the people that are the big movers and shakers that are poisoning young people.”

Mitcham, who is one of Ogg’s top lieutenants, agreed.

“We don’t want people to go through an arrest, and all that entails, over simple possession of marijuana,” he said. “We don’t want the cops spending the hours it takes to book somebody into jail while the burglars conduct their business because there’s no cop on the beat.” Ogg, who lost the 2014 election for DA before unseating Anderson last year, has long campaigned on a diversion initiative.

Part of Ogg’s platform was adopted by Anderson, who created a diversion program in 2014. Under Anderson’s plan, only first offenders were eligible to take the diversion program and could take it only once.

Under that plan, they were arrested, jailed, had to arrange bail and come to court to apply for a year-long probation. (Courtesy <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news>)

Three Americans of Korean descent, Kim Dong Chul, Tony Kim and Kim Hak Song are the names of three American citizens whom North Korea has been holding as hostages for years — and who may soon be on their way home.

South Korean media reports say the North Korean government has transferred the Americans from brutal labor camps to a hotel near Pyongyang. If true, it's a strong signal that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un may authorize their release before he meets with President Donald Trump later this month or in early June.

On Wednesday night, Trump hinted the US and North Korea may have reached an agreement to release the detainees.

“As everybody is aware, the past Administration has long been asking for three hostages to be released from a North Korean Labor camp, but to no avail,” Trump tweeted.

An unnamed US official told CNN on Thursday the administration is “confident” North Korea will release the detainees. Rudy Giuliani, one of the newest members of Trump’s legal team, said they could be freed as early as Thursday.



People watch a TV news report on screen, showing portraits of three Americans, Kim Dong Chul, left, Tony Kim and Kim Hak Song, right, detained in the North Korea at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, May 3, 2018. (Photo AP)

The State Department, however, isn't feeling quite as confident.

“We cannot confirm the validity of these reports,” a spokesperson told me. “The three Americans unlawfully held by North Korea remain very much on the mind of the Trump administration ... and their re-

## Could Be A Big Diplomatic Win For President Trump

# North Korea May Release The Three U.S. Hostages Ahead Of Trump-Kim Talks

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un (Korea Summit Press Pool/Getty Images)

lease would be seen as a sign of goodwill.” This moment is at least two months in the making. In March, North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho traveled to Sweden — which acts as an intermediary for Washington and Pyongyang — to discuss releasing the hostages. And over Easter weekend, then-CIA Director Mike Pompeo spoke personally with Kim about the detainees (Pompeo is now the secretary of state). (<https://www.vox.com/2018>)

### Related

#### Trump Hints At Likely Release Of 3 Americans Held In North Korea

The three men — Kim Hak-Song, also known as Jin Xue Song; Tony Kim, also known as Kim Sang-Duk; and Kim Dong-Chul — were arrested on a variety of supposed anti-state crimes, despite the fact that they appear to have journeyed to the diplomatically isolated nation to improve conditions for its 25 million citizens:

They all faced the same fate: years behind bars.

• **Kim Dong-Chul** of Fairfax, Va., was arrested in October 2015 and sentenced to 10 years of hard labor in April 2016 on charges of spying and other offenses. A month before his trial, he supposedly apologized for trying to steal military secrets for South Koreans. He had been living in Rason, North Korea, in a special economic zone where he ran a trading and hotel services company.



Kim Dong Chul (center) a U.S. citi-

zen detained in North Korea, is escorted from a courtroom after his trial in Pyongyang, North Korea in April 2016. He is one of three Americans currently detained by the Pyongyang regime. (Photo AP)

President Trump suggested late Wednesday that three Americans held in North Korea could be freed soon.

### Trump Tweet

Donald J. Trump  
@realDonaldTrump

As everybody is aware, the past Administration has long been asking for three hostages to be released from a North Korean Labor camp, but to no avail. Stay tuned!  
7:53 PM - May 2, 2018

89.8K 35.1K people are talking about this

His remarks come ahead of a possible historic summit between him and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Trump was apparently referring to Tony Kim, also known as Kim Sang-duk, an American teacher detained by North Korea in April 2017; Kim Hak-song, also known as Jin Xue Song, whose detention was announced the following month; and Kim Dong Chul, who was arrested in 2015.

The three are believed to be in a North Korean labor camp.

Tony Kim, a U.S. citizen in his late 50s briefly taught accounting at Pyongyang University of Science and Technology, or PUST, the only privately run university in the country — funded largely by evangelical Christians in the United States and China, USA Today reports. He was accused of unspecified “hostile acts.” Kim Hak-song also worked at PUST and was detained on a similarly vague charge of “hostile acts” against North Korea.



The third detainee, 60-something Kim Dong Chul, of Fairfax, Va., was sentenced to 10 years in prison and hard labor in April 2016.

USA Today writes, “A month before his trial, he supposedly apologized for trying to steal military secrets for South Koreans. He had been living in Rason, North Korea, in a special economic zone where he ran a trading and hotel services company.”

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo — who secretly visited North Korea last month when he was still head of the CIA — is said to have discussed the plight of the three Americans with North Korean leader Kim.

Meanwhile, National Security Adviser John Bolton said release of the Americans would be a “demonstration of their sincerity” in the lead-up to the summit, according to The Associated Press.

Last year, North Korea released American Otto Warmbier, a university student who was detained at the Pyongyang airport in January 2016 while on a five-day tour of North Korea. He was later convicted of stealing a propaganda poster.



U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton

He was subsequently sentenced to 15 years hard labor, but then released 15 months later, in June 2017, gravely ill and in a coma. He died soon after his return to the United States.

North Korea also freed U.S. citizens during visits by former Presidents Bill Clinton, in 2009, and Jimmy Carter, in 2010. (Courtesy <https://www.npr.org/section>)