

# Thoughts on the Texas Inaugural Ball 2015

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The social shift in Austin might be as telling as the political one.

“More Longhorns,” joked University of Texas System Regent **Steve Hicks** about the social changing of the guard in Austin with Gov. **Greg Abbott’s** hours-old administration. “Fewer Aggies!”

Beyond our usual loyalties — which outsiders ignore at their peril — there’s a sense of social renewal after 14 years of Gov. **Rick Perry** in the Governor’s Mansion.

- [Click here to see a photo gallery of the Inaugural Ball](#)

“Abbott’s social style will be more relaxed yet classy,” said **Jennifer Stevens**, President & CEO, JHL Company. “That will apply to the Governor’s Mansion as well as to events such as the ball.”

Some social observers noted that Perry’s social tone could be elitist and, at the same time, oddly uncouth.

Perry detractors single out the choice of unedited gun enthusiast **Ted Nugent** as the 2007 inaugural ball material. **Lady Antebellum** and **Pat Green** were booked for tonight’s party.

Restricted access to the Governor’s Mansion during Perry’s time, even after the renovation, also rubbed some social leaders from both parties the wrong way.

As often is the case with a fresh start, enthusiasm and hope are common currency.

“Knowing our new Governor and Lt. Governor, and their wonderful families, there’s no doubt the inaugural ball will usher in a dazzling new era for our great state,” said lobbyist **Andrea McWilliams** before the ball.

**Ricardo Gaitan**, also a guest at the ball, thinks Abbott’s social circles “will be more open to other voices.”

There was no parade or black-tie ball for Gov. Perry and Lt. Gov. **David Dewhurst** in 2010. A celebration party instead was considered less ostentatious during the Great Recession, also parades are usually reserved for first elections.

For security reasons, organizers had asked media to arrive at 5:45 p.m. for an 8 p.m. ball. That gave us plenty of time to examine the decor. Interesting, blue was the dominant color, often surrounding red completely. The inaugural logo was white on blue.

Organizers expected 10,000 guests. Where would they go? It’s a big room at the Austin Convention Center, but not that big.

Doors finally opened at 7:45 p.m. Guests surged in. “Let’s go for the food!

A man in a modified Confederate uniform and his companion, dressed as a riverboat gambler, mingled at the buffet line.

There might have been almost 10,000 guests there by the time my deadline loomed at 9 p.m., but they were already enjoying the opening act. A few told me more about their private thoughts on the subtle social alterations underway.

Clearly, the eats and drinks, and, especially, the lounge furniture were hits. How better to rest those tuxes and evening gowns?

Even given some of the outsized hair, “relaxed but classy” does seem the right way to describe the Texas Inaugural Ball 2015.