

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

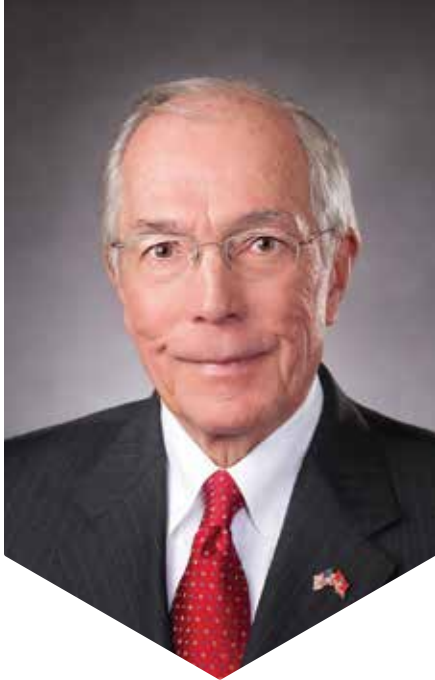
COURTHOUSE CORNERSTONES

2023 TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM UPDATE



FROM COMES
TRAGEDY TRIUMPH

PRESERVING COMMUNITY CENTERPIECES ACROSS THE LONE STAR STATE



THC CHAIRMAN **JOHN L. NAU, III** ON HISTORIC TEXAS COURTHOUSES

Across Texas, historic county courthouses embody the stories and history of communities while preserving their local character and charm.

This year, Mason County provides an especially powerful example, not just of the good that comes from the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP), but of the values and determination that make the Lone Star State unique in American history. The following pages describe the morning in February 2021, when Mason County residents discovered their courthouse was destroyed due to arson. They also quickly discovered the county leadership's commitment to preservation and reconstruction of the iconic building. Soon after, they would learn that the effort had support from across the state in the form of timely aid from the Texas Legislature and the guidance and experience of the Texas Historical Commission.

I am proud our agency is able to assist Mason County, but I am

awed by the resolve of Mason County Judge Jerry Bearden and the leadership he provided to the community during this difficult time.

He knows what many of his fellow judges and elected officials know—the Lone Star State's historic courthouses are of great value to the economic development and quality of life of their counties.

Over the last biennium, Mason County joined more than 100 other recipients of our THCPP grants—all these communities will reap the benefits to their identity and cultural heritage. These advantages include substantial economic impact from the state's \$9.2 billion heritage travel economy, increased property values, and improved utility costs over the new extended lifetime of the building. Courthouse preservation honors the work of previous generations while extending cost efficiencies to future Texans—which includes their awareness and benefit of Texas' history of personal freedom and economic prosperity.

It is critical that Texas preserve historic county courthouses along with other key historical assets in these communities. The courthouse buildings provide numerous benefits and enhancements to state services, while also standing as the most central and important structures in their communities—they are a backdrop for community celebrations, civic events, and festivals. We're ready to work with counties across the state and will provide as many matching preservation grants to qualifying counties as we are funded to provide. We want every community that hosts one of these historic treasures to benefit as Mason County and many others have.

Thank you for everything you do for Texas—let us know what you need from us in the coming biennium.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John L. Nau, III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.



ANDREW MURR TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 53

Our local historic county courthouses are icons of Texas history. Saving and safeguarding these architectural treasures is a duty members of the 88th Legislature share with our predecessors. This duty was reflected in the first historic courthouse protections enacted in 1971 and further shown when biennial funding for courthouse preservation grants was added to the state budget in 1999.

As former county judge, I was proud to steer Kimble County toward the Courthouse Preservation Program and was thrilled that Kimble County finally achieved that elusive full restoration grant in July 2022. While this is certainly an achievement, rural legislators like myself and county judges across Texas know this vital rehabilitation grant has slowed noticeably in 24 years.

Biennial appropriations for grants between 1999 and 2007 averaged \$51.75 million, enabling completion of a remarkable 57 projects. Unfortunately, courthouse preservation grant appropriations

dropped to an average of \$20.36 million beginning in 2009. Only 21 counties have been awarded full restoration grants in the past 14 years. With so few opportunities and escalating costs, disheartened counties have stopped applying for grants despite the investments they made to first join the Courthouse Preservation Program. While grant applications are down, 68 counties remain in the program hoping to restore their magnificent historic courthouses.

The THC this session seeks \$45 million for grants, a minimal amount to get this program back on track. Equally important is a proposal to increase the statutory grant maximum for any county from \$6 million to \$10 million. That cap has been in law since 2007 and steady levels of escalating inflation justify a higher amount. If both funding proposals proceed, we will surely renew interest and enthusiasm for the courthouse program.

While state appropriations for grants total nearly \$350 million, counties have contributed \$300 million in

courthouse restoration spending. That's 85 percent of state spending despite a statutory county match of only 15 percent. These numbers underscore the courthouse program as an economic engine, particularly in rural counties. We should remember that historic preservation is a construction industry, spending money in communities large and small. In many towns, courthouse restoration is the largest project since the courthouse was built.

I hope my colleagues in the Texas Legislature join me in renewing our commitment to this wonderful program this session. Let's keep the promises made by wise legislators who came before us.

Andrew Murr
Texas House of Representatives
District 53

OUT OF THE ASHES

MASON COUNTY COURTHOUSE RECOVERING FROM DEVASTATING FIRE

By Susan Tietz, Program Coordinator, Courthouse Preservation Program, Texas Historical Commission



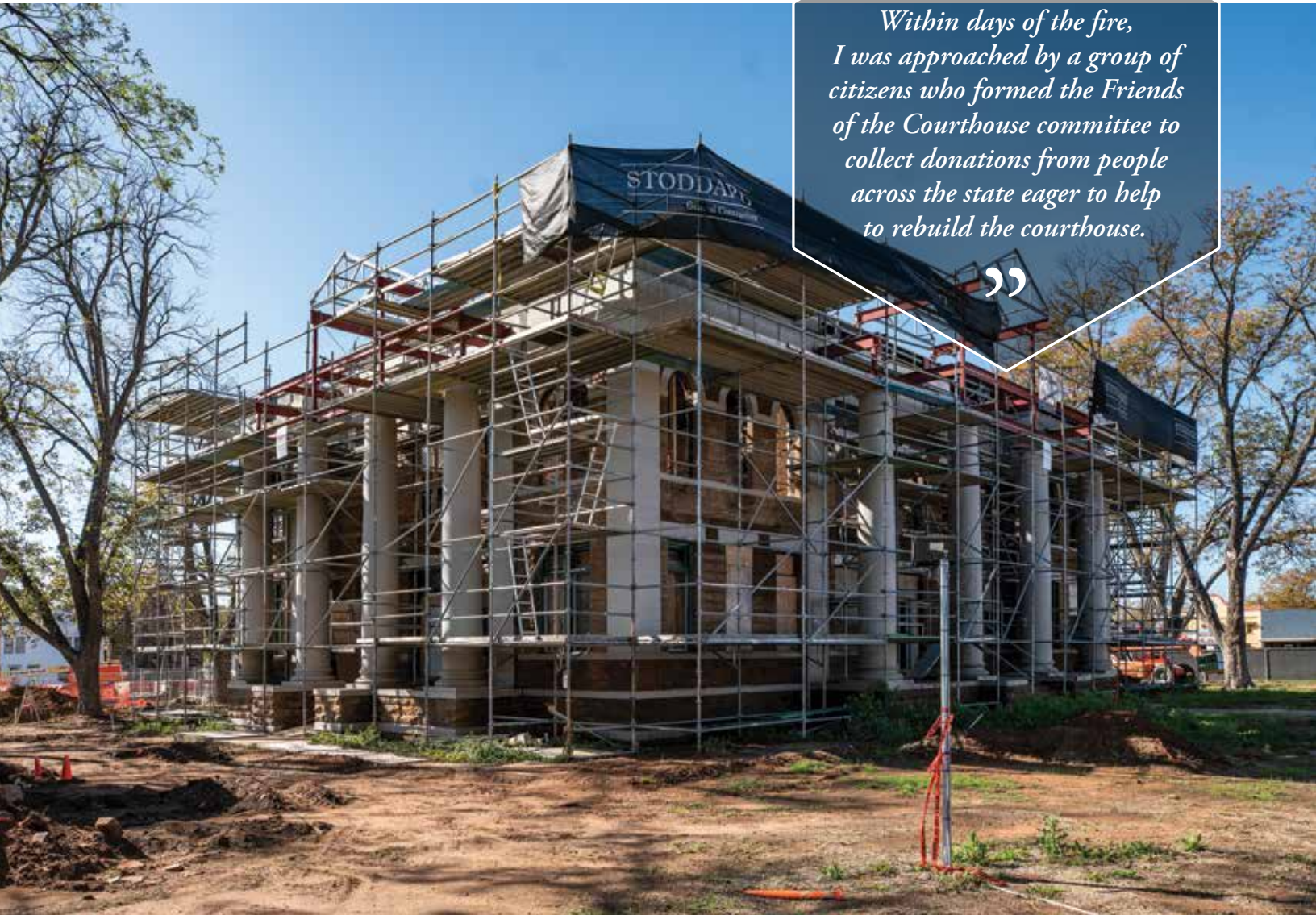
Photo courtesy of Mason County Judge Jerry Bearden

“
*Tears streamed
down my face as he
told me the courthouse
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fire the night before.*
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On the morning of February 5, 2021, I was surprised when my cell phone rang before sunrise. It was Stan Graves, previous director of the Texas Historical Commission’s (THC) Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP) and current architect for the THCPP’s Round XI grant-funded restoration of the Mason County Courthouse.

Tears streamed down my face as he told me the courthouse had been gutted by fire the night before. Local and nearby firefighters had responded quickly, but the blaze (quickly determined to be arson) was too powerful—once the smoke had cleared, not much remained other than the building’s load-bearing sandstone walls and chimneys

and the cast-stone columns. The 10 enduring chimneys were later dismantled following a structural assessment that determined them to be unstable—but thankfully, the rusticated sandstone walls were permitted to stand. Because the full



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Within days of the fire, I was approached by a group of citizens who formed the Friends of the Courthouse committee to collect donations from people across the state eager to help to rebuild the courthouse.

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restoration of the courthouse had been imminent prior to the fire, the building was fully documented and county records and some furnishings had been relocated—a small blessing.

After composing myself, I called Mason County Judge Jerry Bearden to offer the THC’s condolences and support. I could sense his sorrow over the loss of such a treasure, but

I also heard his resolve to rebuild the 1903 crown jewel at the heart of his community. “There is no way to express the pain and anguish felt by the citizens of Mason County as we watched our historic courthouse destroyed by fire. I felt like I had lost a member of my family. I made a promise that night to myself and the people of Mason County that we would overcome this tragedy

and rebuild our courthouse and restore it,” recalls Bearden.

“Within days of the fire, I was approached by a group of citizens who formed the Friends of the Courthouse committee to collect donations from people across the state eager to help to rebuild the courthouse,” shared Bearden. “They were successful beyond our wildest



Photos courtesy of Architexas

expectations and have raised over \$5 million to fund the county’s portion of the restoration efforts.”

Bearden wrote a letter to the assembled Legislature requesting financial support, and with assistance from State Rep. Andrew Murr, a \$6 million special appropriation was allocated toward the reconstruction. When combined with community donations, the THC’s Round XI restoration grant of \$4.1 million, and the Texas Association of Counties’ Risk Pool insurance disbursement of \$12.7 million, the funding was secured. With an architect and contractor already aboard for the planned restoration,

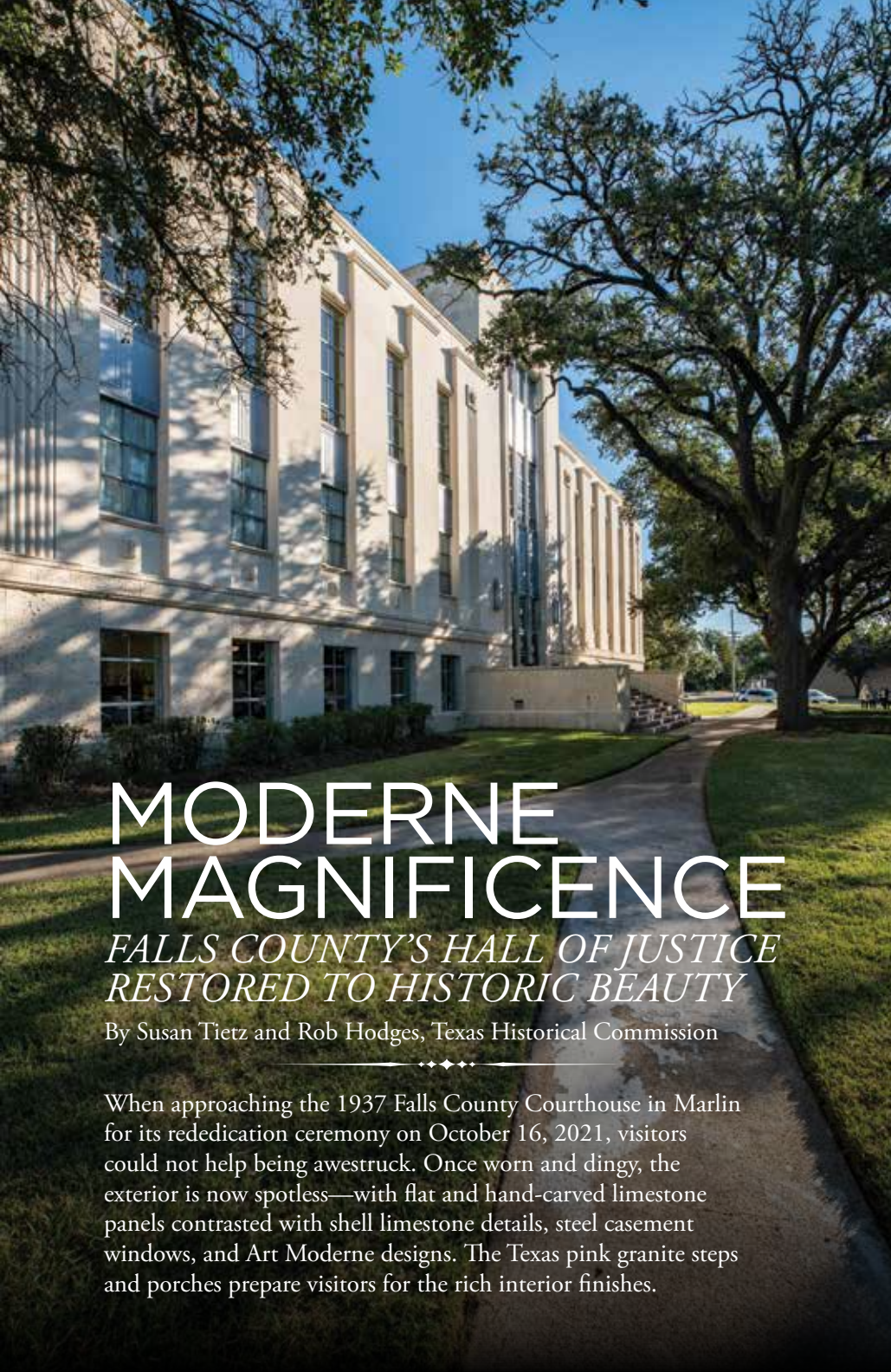
efforts to rebuild the Mason County Courthouse began immediately.

Before the fire, the Classical Revival building was one of the most intact historic courthouses in Texas, with its original windows, exterior and interior doors, hardware, light fixtures, ornamental cast iron fireplace surrounds and covers, clockworks and bell, ornamental pressed metal ceiling tile and cornice, flooring, architectural wood trim, decoratively painted vault doors, staircases, courtroom furnishings, and more. For this reason, the Round XI full restoration of the courthouse—funded in 2020 and about to begin construction when

the fire occurred—was estimated to cost under \$5 million. After the fire, the cost of reconstructing the roof, cupola, other missing historic features, and interior finishes—as well as replacing damaged sandstone with a perfect match from a nearby quarry and installing all new systems into the building—is currently over \$20 million.

Mason County anticipates the courthouse reconstruction will be completed in the latter half of 2023—and the heart of its community will again beat strong and loudly.





MODERNE MAGNIFICENCE

*FALLS COUNTY'S HALL OF JUSTICE
RESTORED TO HISTORIC BEAUTY*

By Susan Tietz and Rob Hodges, Texas Historical Commission

When approaching the 1937 Falls County Courthouse in Marlin for its rededication ceremony on October 16, 2021, visitors could not help being awestruck. Once worn and dingy, the exterior is now spotless—with flat and hand-carved limestone panels contrasted with shell limestone details, steel casement windows, and Art Moderne designs. The Texas pink granite steps and porches prepare visitors for the rich interior finishes.

Inside, visitors find halls with seafoam green walls, rose and gray marble wainscots, and zig-zagged, two-toned terrazzo floors, as well as stunning aluminum and ribbed glass pendant light fixtures. Following the restoration, the courthouse is also more comfortable, functional, and safer. Old electrical systems were replaced, and HVAC was

installed throughout the building in place of window units. The county courtroom and corridors have a unique, green-grained (or cerused) wood for the millwork and courtroom furnishings, while the district courtroom features beautifully carved rosewood and seafoam green walls.

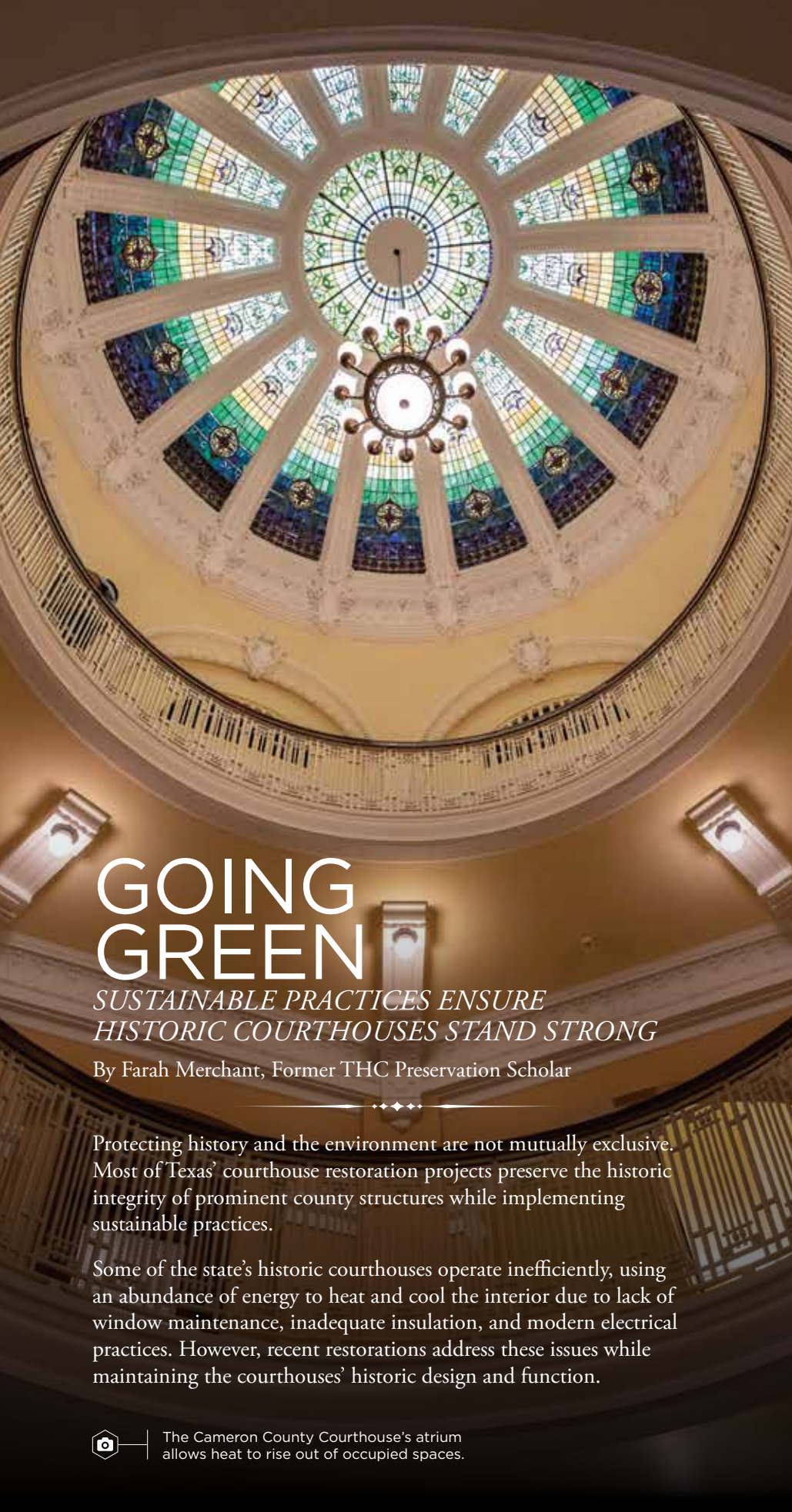
The rededication ceremony featured First Lady of Texas Cecilia Abbott as the keynote speaker. Part of the ceremony included the ringing of a bell that was salvaged from an earlier 1880 courthouse, which is now displayed on the current building's lawn. The bell was proudly rung by Building Superintendent Miguel Lopez, who was commended for his stewardship of the courthouse.

Praising the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP), Abbott stated, "We are not just trying to save an old building, although that is important. Courthouse preservation projects support the economy with more than 600 jobs yearly and more than 12,000 jobs total since this program began."

Falls County received its initial planning grant of \$100,334 during the THCPP's first grant cycle in 2000. After a nearly 20-year hiatus, the county successfully applied under the leadership of County Judge Jay Elliott, receiving a construction grant of \$5,832,430 in 2018 to fully restore the courthouse.

Now restored to its historic beauty and bolstered by more functionality and energy efficiency, the Art Moderne masterpiece stands ready to impress heritage tourists and serve the citizens of Falls County for decades to come.






GOING GREEN

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES ENSURE HISTORIC COURTHOUSES STAND STRONG

By Farah Merchant, Former THC Preservation Scholar

Protecting history and the environment are not mutually exclusive. Most of Texas' courthouse restoration projects preserve the historic integrity of prominent county structures while implementing sustainable practices.

Some of the state's historic courthouses operate inefficiently, using an abundance of energy to heat and cool the interior due to lack of window maintenance, inadequate insulation, and modern electrical practices. However, recent restorations address these issues while maintaining the courthouses' historic design and function.

 The Cameron County Courthouse's atrium allows heat to rise out of occupied spaces.

According to Texas Historical Commission (THC) architects, restoring courthouses and other historic buildings is inherently green due to the use of previous construction (aka embodied energy) and passive climate-responsive designs, such as solar shading from deep entry porches, daylight use, and durable materials. Most restoration projects, however, make buildings even greener through energy-efficient electrical systems, which maximize control over thermal loss and gain.

Bess Althaus Graham, the former director of the THC's Architecture Division, oversaw several courthouse restoration projects that implemented ground-source heat pump systems. The Trinity and Hamilton county courthouses use the earth's constant temperature to preheat or pre-cool water used in the HVAC systems. Buried underground, the system is highly efficient and invisible. The restoration of the La Salle and Hood county courthouses also used similar methods incorporating heat-pump systems to reduce energy use and the buildings' carbon footprints.

Another energy-efficient courthouse feature is a cool roof, which reflects sunlight and absorbs less heat than a standard roof through reflective paint, sheet covering, or reflective tiles or shingles. Also, courthouses updated with modern systems use new technologies that increase energy efficiency and reduce water waste.

To further lessen the amount of energy needed to power courthouses, restoration plans typically focus on insulating attics. This balances temperature and reduces the need to overwork the air conditioner or heater, since the tops and bottoms of buildings are more susceptible to heat or cooling loss. These areas are also easier to insulate than perimeter walls and openings, without sacrificing these key historic features.

REDUCE AND REUSE

Along with shifting to more-renewable sources and reducing energy consumption, reusing materials and taking advantage of existing infrastructure is imperative for sustainability.

For example, original windows are rehabilitated to allow future maintenance by replacing deteriorated window parts over time. Rehabilitating these historic windows is more sustainable than replacing the entire window panel with newer models that have a life expectancy of 20–30 years. The Hood County Courthouse restoration included restored window sashes and frames and a shutter-track system, which allows for natural light while preventing the building from heating.

Like most preservationists, Susan Tietz, coordinator of the THC's Courthouse Preservation Program, is a strong proponent of preservation rather than the replacement of building elements, which reduces waste going to landfills and the need to use new materials.

"It's inherently sustainable," Tietz said. "It would waste so much energy to demolish those buildings. There is already so much embodied energy in the courthouses, and the buildings and materials used in them are durable. They've already lasted a hundred years and, if they're well maintained, they'll last indefinitely."

For her, sustainability is an important aspect of restoration, but so is respecting the historical integrity of the buildings. She believes the energy invested in constructing a landmark such as a courthouse needs to be

preserved to remember the past and honor those who came before us.

"At the time they were built, these counties, in most cases, borrowed substantial amounts of money and often hired famous architects to design their courthouses, even in small rural communities," Tietz said. "Courthouses were considered important buildings, so most counties hired the most



Minimal lighting is needed in the Hood County Courthouse because of the windows' daylighting. Photo courtesy of HDR Architecture, Inc.

prominent architect they could afford to design their courthouse."

COURTHOUSE COEXISTENCE

Graham claims there are new environmental issues on the horizon, such as severe weather events, net-zero construction, and the difficulty of restoring, repairing, and maintaining materials introduced by the Modern style following World War II.

She says adopting the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)

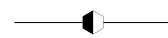
environmental rating system combines preservation and sustainability. Many architects don't use this system due to the misconception that LEED clashes with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, a guide for maintaining the integrity of historic buildings. Graham points out that the latest version of LEED focuses on the source and life cycle of materials, which supports historic buildings' efforts to reuse materials.

"The LEED rating system is effective because each point is associated with a measurable goal and verified by a third party," Graham said. "Preservation and sustainability can coexist very well, as long as both sides understand each other and their assumptions."

Tietz adds that more needs to be incorporated into grant-funded courthouse restoration projects; she hopes to use her position to expand the Courthouse Preservation Program's involvement to ensure the most sustainable outcome.

"The program could do more to encourage project architects to focus on sustainability when choosing materials or methods," said

Tietz. "Most of the architecture firms do tend toward sustainable design anyway, but our program doesn't require it. We can all do our part to help ensure these historically significant buildings are sustainable and preserved for future generations of Texans to use and enjoy."



A version of this article previously appeared in the fall 2020 issue of *The Medallion*.

TOTAL TRANSFORMATION

OLD IS NEW AGAIN AT THE FANNIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE



Photo taken May 2016



Photo taken March 2022

By James Malanaphy and Rob Hodges, Texas Historical Commission

If you only saw the Fannin County Courthouse in Bonham five years ago and then saw it again now, you'd swear it was not the same building. After a four-year restoration that cost \$27.8 million, it is utterly transformed.

The beautiful French Second Empire-style courthouse with elaborate stonework and soaring clock tower is back after participating in the THC's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. Built in 1888, the historic Fannin County Courthouse was partially destroyed by a fire in 1929. Although stabilized and reoccupied, it was substantially altered—exterior walls and window openings were retained, but the clock tower was gone, the gable roof and much ornamental stone decoration were removed, and the interior was completely refinished.

In 1966, the entire exterior was covered in a new flat-panel

facade. Interiors were completely altered—even the two-story district courtroom and balcony disappeared and was divided into two floors.

The recent restoration completely reversed the dramatic changes of 1929 and 1966. Original building materials and finishes were carefully investigated, researched, and restored to allow public spaces to be returned to their original grandeur. The old stone exterior was uncovered and restored—using limestone from a nearby quarry that was generously reopened by the family to support the restoration—and a replica clock tower was raised as crowds of onlookers applauded. The combined efforts of over 35 specialty contractors and contributions from additional local companies were required to complete the full restoration.

On March 10, 2022, hundreds gathered on the courthouse square (while many more watched a livestream) and cheered as the bell tower clock struck 10 a.m. and

Fannin County Judge Randy Moore began the rededication ceremony. Among the attendees was Mary Helen Dodson, great-granddaughter of Wesley Clark Dodson, the courthouse's original architect.

During his remarks, Judge Moore credited the remarkable restoration not only to the tremendous support of the community, whose financial backing was critical, but also to the vision and determination of Barbara McCutcheon, retired town librarian who campaigned tirelessly for the courthouse's restoration. The THC awarded a \$400,000 planning grant in 2008 and a \$5.6 million construction grant in July 2016, while the county contributed \$22.2 million authorized by the Commissioners' Court with resident support.

It takes a village, and everyone came together to see this transformative project through to an end result that aptly represents this proud community.





REMOTE, RUGGED, RESTORED

LIPSCOMB COUNTY COURTHOUSE RECEIVES FULL RESTORATION

By Eva Osborne and Rob Hodges, Texas Historical Commission

Located in the far northeastern corner of the Texas Panhandle, with Oklahoma on its northern and eastern borders, Lipscomb County is known as a remote and rugged place with a sparse and resolute population. The 2020 census recorded 3,059 people, with the village of Lipscomb—the county seat—having just 66 residents.

Modern services can be scarce in Lipscomb—there are no gas stations or grocery stores, and electricity and cell service can be spotty. There are no city officials and none of the usual local ordinances and regulations. The residents are self-reliant, independent, and determined.

Standing in the center of the small town is the impressive Lipscomb County Courthouse, a Classical Revival structure with Prairie Style influences. Built in 1916, it is now fully restored.

A participant in the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program

(THCPP), the community centerpiece was rededicated on September 11, 2021. The ceremony was presided over by County Judge Mickey Simpson and featured former County Judge Willis Smith, who recounted the history of the restoration project.



At a total cost of nearly \$6 million, the project included masonry repairs, roof replacement, removal of suspended ceilings, modern wall finishes and floor coverings, and the restoration of all interior finishes. New mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems were installed, and modern security features were added, including cameras and computer system wiring. The district courtroom was restored based on finish analysis and historic documentation, including the restoration of the balcony. A new elevator was installed inside the building after the removal of an exterior elevator that was added in the 1970s. Windows had previously been restored during a 2014 THCPP emergency grant project, and replica windows were installed during this recent project at the location of a demolished addition.

The Lipscomb County Courthouse stands restored and proud, a testament to its residents' determination.



FULL CIRCLE

MARION COUNTY COURTHOUSE RESTORED TO FORMER GLORY

By James Malanaphy and Rob Hodges, Texas Historical Commission

With the cutting of a ribbon on May 22, 2021, in front of the newly restored Marion County Courthouse in Jefferson, pomp and circumstance—and the optimism that accompanies such occasions—came full circle. The ribbon-cutter was Marcia Thomas, great-granddaughter of a commissioner, George Washington Brown, who had been present at the courthouse's original construction in 1913. Almost 110 years after it was built, dozens of guests and dignitaries looked on to celebrate the full restoration of the stately Greek Revival structure.

The path to restoration was long. The building opened its doors to the public after completion of a three-year construction project. The downtown landmark was restored with assistance of a \$362,816 planning grant in 2010 and a \$4.7 million construction grant in 2018, both awarded by the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation

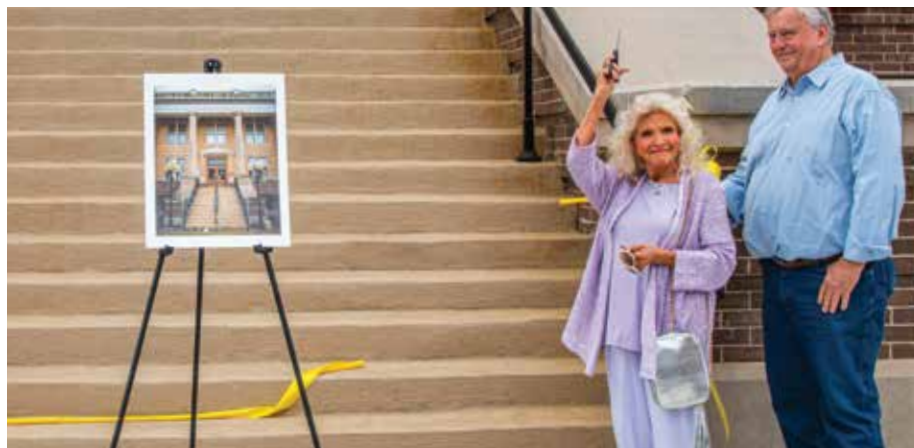


Program. Those were combined with over \$1.2 million of county funding authorized by the Commissioners Court, which began saving money for the project about 20 years ago.

Major champions of the project were former County Judges Phil Parker and Lex Jones, as well as current County Judge Leward LaFleur—they were joined by former County Judge Gene Terry for the rededication. LaFleur conducted the ceremony, with remarks given by THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe and Karl Komatsu of Komatsu Architecture, which provided restoration project design and construction administration

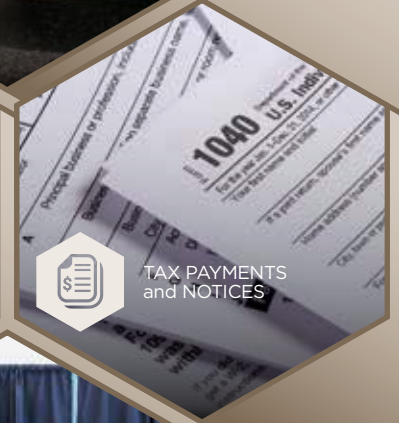
services. Tours of the restored building followed the ceremony, while members of the Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club provided light refreshments in the grand hallway.

To return it to its former glory, anything not original to the 1913 courthouse was removed, and some modern improvements such as LED lighting and air conditioning were installed. Fortunately, most of the original exterior building materials had been retained or previously restored, including the windows that were rehabilitated with a 2012 emergency grant in the amount of \$216,390. Most of the original interior building fabric remained intact under layers of materials installed during a 1973 renovation. The restoration project reversed the 1973 renovation efforts that were in serious disrepair and obscured the view of the original building materials. Changes were also made to upgrade site drainage, building access, fire protection, and plumbing systems, in addition to other improvements necessary to meet current building codes.

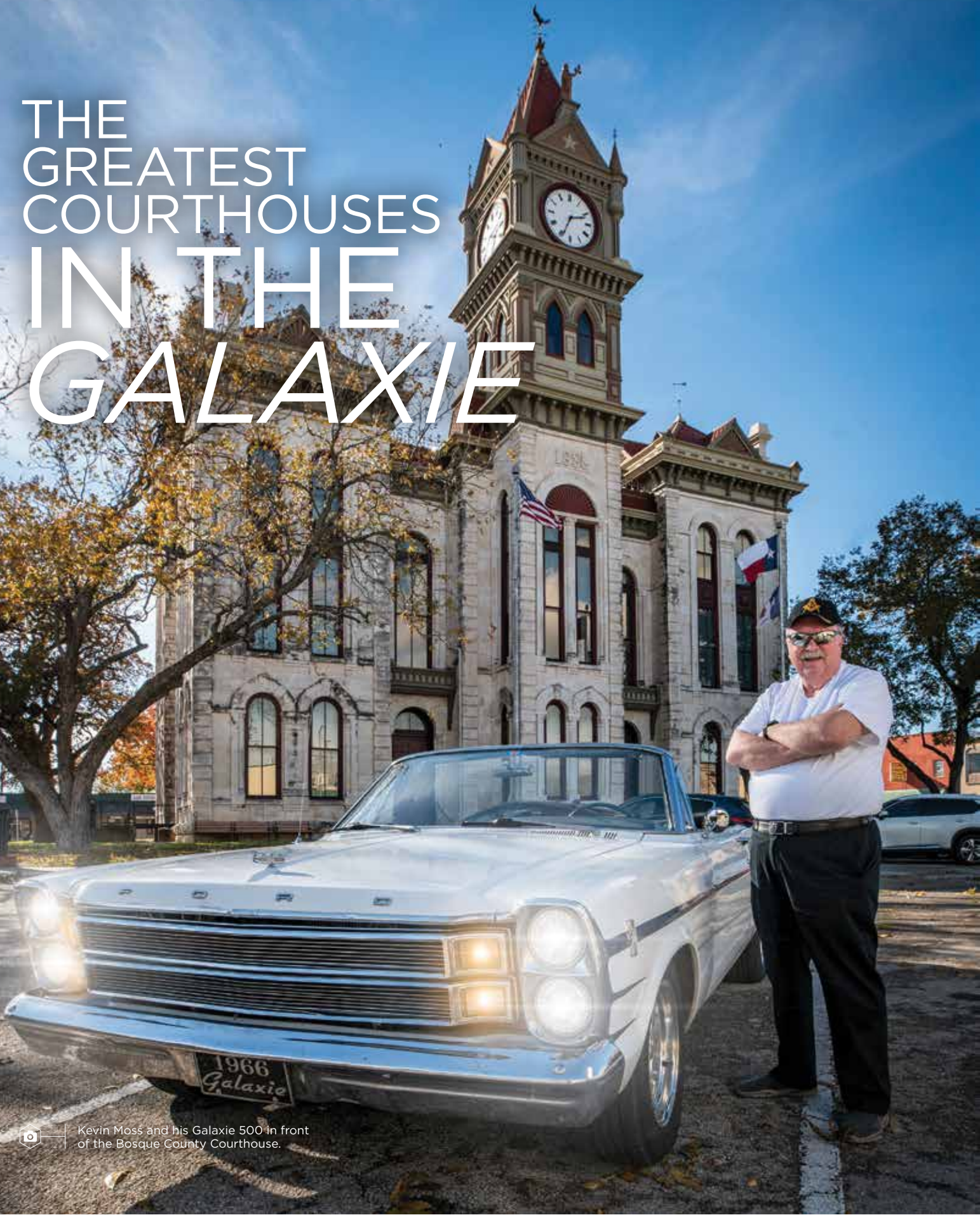


COUNTY COURTHOUSES

A FOUNDATION OF STATE SERVICES



THE GREATEST COURTHOUSES IN THE *GALAXIE*



Kevin Moss and his Galaxie 500 in front of the Bosque County Courthouse.

MEET THE MAN WHO DROVE TO ALL TEXAS COUNTY COURTHOUSES IN A 1966 GALAXIE 500

Kevin Moss is a financial advisor from Arlington who “accidentally” bought a vintage car on Ebay in 2013. He came across a 1966 Ford Galaxie 500 convertible located in Kansas City, placed an opening offer expecting to be outbid, and three days later learned he was the lucky winner! He towed the partially disassembled and dilapidated vehicle back to Texas and got to work.

In September 2020, with the car revamped and roadworthy, he embarked on a quest to drive to courthouses in every Texas county. He tackled it in segments, logging 24 separate trips across 37 days and driving at times solo, with his wife Joyce, or with his son and grandson. Less than a year and about 18,500 miles later, he finished on Labor Day 2021 at the El Paso County Courthouse.

YOU BOUGHT AND RESTORED YOUR 1966 GALAXIE 500... WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO THEN DRIVE IT TO COURTHOUSES IN ALL 254 TEXAS COUNTIES?

Refreshed may be a better term than restored. We did not completely disassemble the car and replace everything with new or rebuilt parts. Most of the original wiring is still in the car and the air conditioner/heater is only semi-functioning. I replaced and upgraded the front brakes to disc brakes, but the rear brakes are still the original drum type. The engine was running when we bought it, but it had some overheating issues that we did our best to resolve. In other words, it was mostly a job to repair or replace what was not working and then wait to see what else needed to be repaired.

Our primary goal then and now is to travel Route 66 from Chicago to L.A. However, because we were still in the trial-and-error stage of how roadworthy the Gal was, I suggested we take some day trips to see how she performed. I have always enjoyed seeing county courthouses because

a lot of them are nostalgic and architecturally interesting. These short trips proved important for finding things with the car that did not hold up or needed replacing. By the time we made it to all the counties in Texas, the car was very reliable.

Once the first day trip was discussed, it morphed into a challenge. I remember thinking, “I bet no one has taken a picture of a ‘66 Galaxie convertible in front of every county courthouse in Texas.” So I started mapping out Texas into different courthouse trips. Then I entered them into the calendar and, with a few exceptions, we were able to stick to that schedule.

YOUR WEBSITE PROVIDES DETAILS ON EACH COUNTY HISTORY AND COURTHOUSE YOU VISITED. TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR INTEREST IN HISTORY AND COURTHOUSES SPECIFICALLY.

One day I was sitting in a client’s lobby waiting for a meeting to start, and they had a coffee-table book about Tarrant County. As I



“
The first time I saw the Hopkins County Courthouse in Sulphur Springs, I was blown away.
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looked at the history of the county's courthouses, I found it interesting that the main reason they started building a lot of courthouses in Texas out of stone instead of the traditional wood structures was because of fire. These fires were either caused by arson for record destruction, or because of oil lamps breaking. I surmised that if electricity had become available 30 years sooner, maybe they never would have started building these magnificent "fire-proof" structures. I guess my mind has always needed to know why something is the way it is. What was the path that led to this outcome? History can provide a lot of information to solve that question.

DID YOU HAVE A FAVORITE COURTHOUSE? WAS THERE ONE THAT SURPRISED YOU?

The first time I saw the Hopkins County Courthouse in Sulphur Springs, I was blown away. Not only is it a beautiful courthouse, but the town square is still active and vibrant unlike so many other town squares that may have a beautiful courthouse, but the surrounding square is very disappointing. Palo Pinto kind of surprised me because the courthouse is so massive and seems out of place for a county that small. Also, I have to mention that Wise County's courthouse is beautiful, but the duct-taped PVC pipe shooting out of the 4th-floor window to a balcony on the 3rd floor just ruined it for me.

[Editor's note: The Wise County Courthouse in Decatur was the recipient of a Texas Historic



Courthouse Preservation Program grant in July 2022. The full restoration of the building will address this and other exterior and interior issues.]

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE COURTHOUSE STORY OR DETAIL YOU LEARNED ALONG THE WAY OR DURING YOUR RESEARCH?

There are so many that I hate to choose one. In Montgomery County, we parked the Gal in the crosswalk by the entrance for the photo. Soon, an attorney walked out of the building, looked at the car, then at us and said, "Your car is parked illegally. I am going to have to confiscate it and take it to my house."

In Tarrant County, I was taking a panoramic shot of the Gal parked illegally in the middle of Main Street. As I panned from left to right, the end of the shot included a policeman looking at the car and

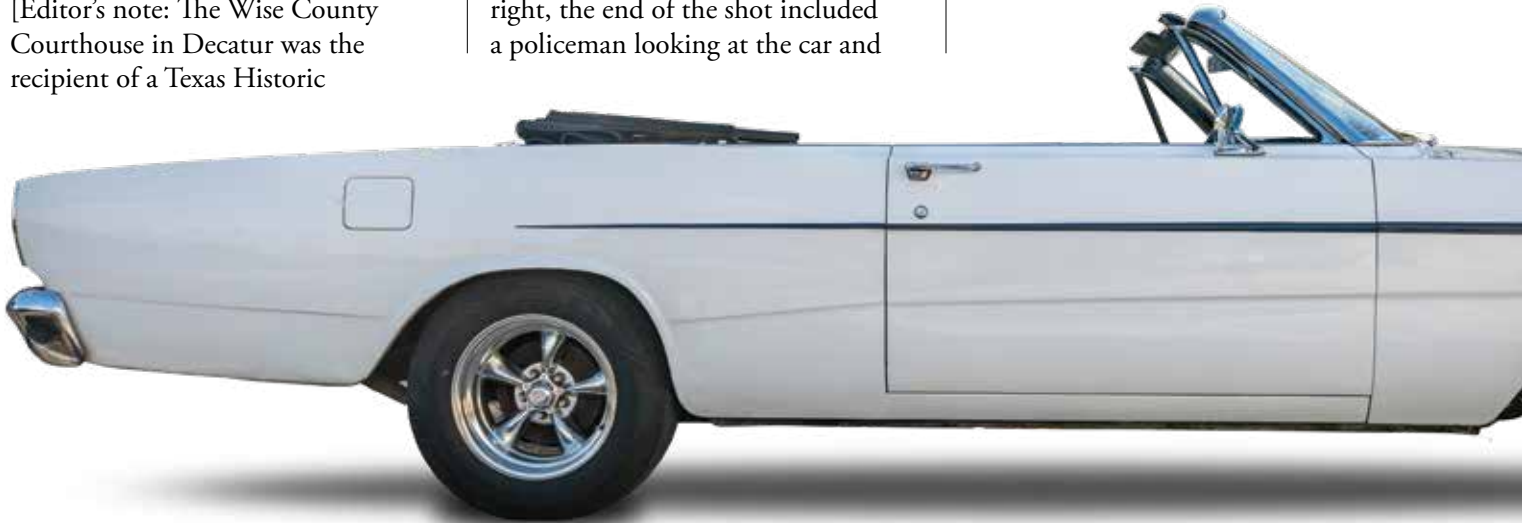
then at me. Fortunately, he was a car guy and began asking lots of questions, and when he heard it run, he seemed exceedingly satisfied and said, "Now, that's the stuff!"

In Presidio County, we arrived on the same day as the Marfa Lights Festival. The entire area around the courthouse was closed. After talking to a local police officer about what we were doing, we were able to convince her of the importance of our quest and she escorted us to a great photo place, moved some barricades behind the courthouse, and let us take some photos.

YOUR WEBSITE SHARES THE "TRIALS AND ADVENTURES OF OUR GALAXIE 500." WHAT WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING TRIAL AND BIGGEST ADVENTURE DURING YOUR TEXAS COURTHOUSE TRAVELS?

On the second courthouse trip, we had some brake issues develop while in East Texas. We found a repair shop not too far from us that was able to get us back on the road. By far, the most challenging part of the quest was July and August trips with no air-conditioning. That much heat and sun is very draining.

On our four-day tour of the Panhandle, we were amazed by the stark contrast of miles and miles of flat land and then suddenly we would be driving into a beautiful canyon. Then just as suddenly, we would rise out of the



canyon to flat lands as far as one can see. We also enjoyed the incredible musical “Texas” performed in Palo Duro Canyon with the canyon walls as the backdrop of the stage. Quite a beautiful treat!

WHAT’S THE IDEAL SOUNDTRACK FOR A ROAD TRIP TO HISTORIC COURTHOUSES IN A CLASSIC CAR?

I suppose it would depend on the car. We think the decade of and decade after the car was built seems appropriate for the right travel music. Since our Gal’s birthday is April 1, 1966, songs of the 1960s and 1970s were played most.

THERE’S SOMETHING ABOUT OLD BUILDINGS AND OLD CARS THAT REALLY STAND THE TEST OF TIME. WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THAT CONNECTION, AND IS THERE SOMETHING YOU LEARNED ABOUT RESTORING AND MAINTAINING AN OLD VEHICLE THAT YOU THINK MIGHT APPLY TO A STRUCTURE?

There is a connection between the two as far as I am concerned. Preserving the beauty of the past is important for the next generation. To properly appreciate the present, it is good to get a feel for

what came before. A lot of our roads and highways today are nothing more than old cattle trails that have been paved over. Often while on a drive, I think about the early settlers that more than likely traveled these same pathways on horseback and how much more trouble it was for them. It makes me appreciate what we can do today even more.

HAVE YOU COME ACROSS OTHER PEOPLE DOING COURTHOUSE ROAD TRIPS OR ANOTHER TYPE OF HERITAGE TOURISM?

I only remember meeting one other person on our many trips who

was touring Texas county courthouses. He said he wanted to get photos of all the county courthouses. He had been at it for

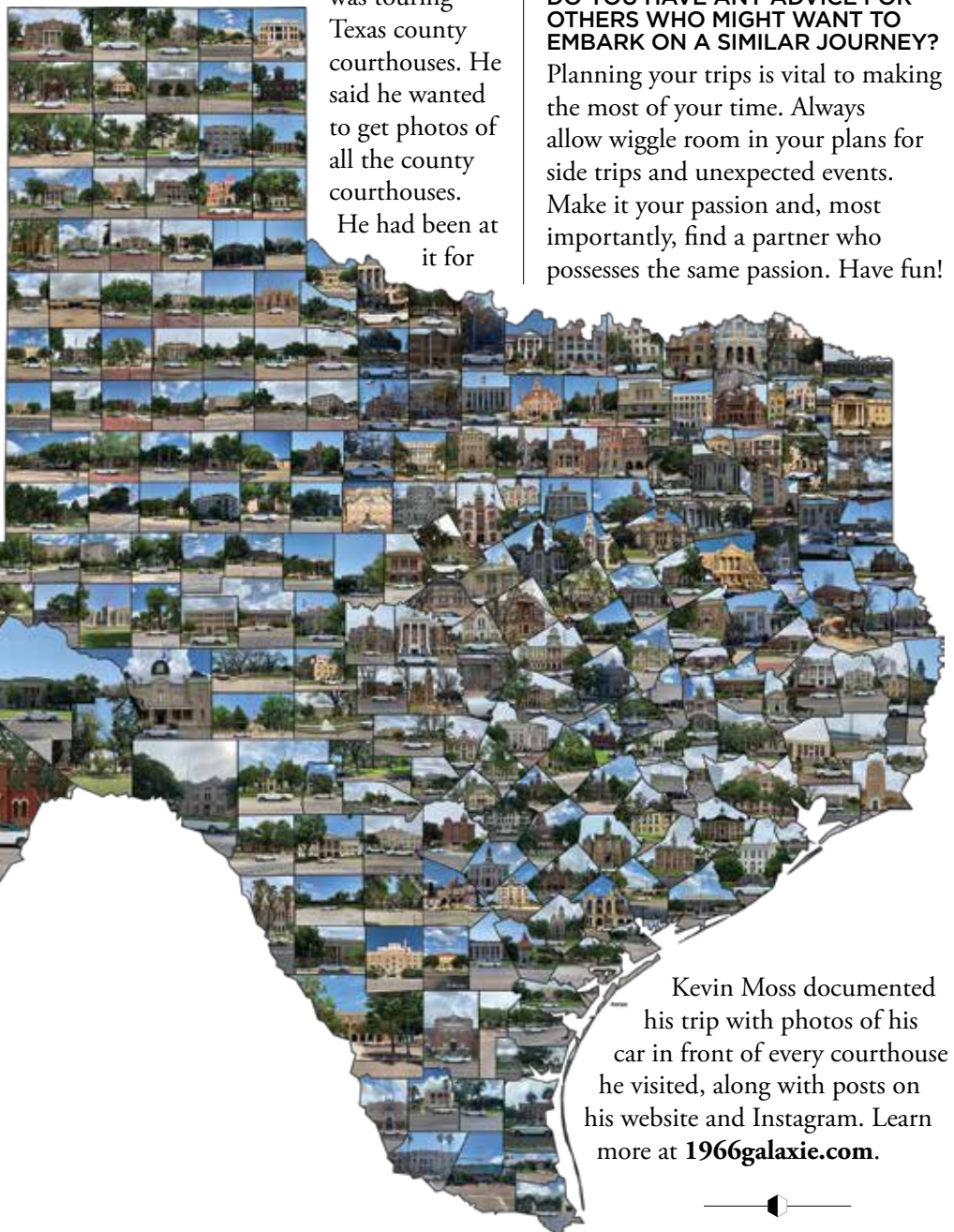
three years and had 50 completed. He had no idea how long it would take him to complete his quest. I am sure it will take him a much longer time because he was busy taking many photos of the outside and inside.

WHAT WILL BE YOUR NEXT ROAD TRIP IN THE GALAXIE 500?

We are planning to complete our Route 66 trip in May. We have completed the portion from Chicago to Oklahoma City, and now we plan to drive from Oklahoma City to L.A. and hang 10 off the Santa Monica pier.

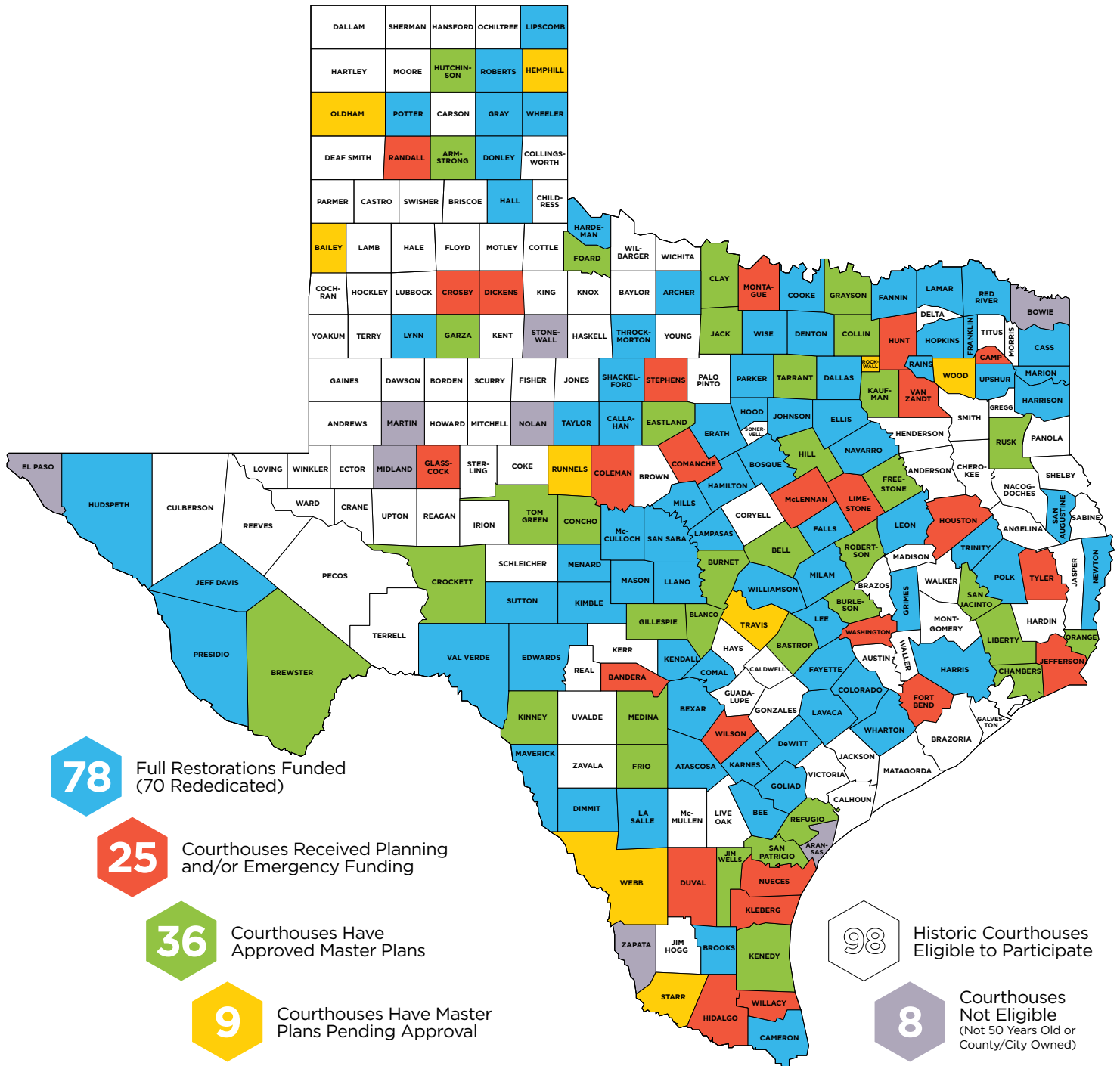
DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR OTHERS WHO MIGHT WANT TO EMBARK ON A SIMILAR JOURNEY?

Planning your trips is vital to making the most of your time. Always allow wiggle room in your plans for side trips and unexpected events. Make it your passion and, most importantly, find a partner who possesses the same passion. Have fun!



Kevin Moss documented his trip with photos of his car in front of every courthouse he visited, along with posts on his website and Instagram. Learn more at 1966galaxie.com.

TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM



MAJOR FUNDING FOR PROJECTS FROM 1999 TO 2022

FULLY RESTORED COURTHOUSES

County	City	Rededicated	Yr Built
Archer	Archer City	5/12/05	1891
Atascosa	Jourdanton	6/14/03	1912
Bee	Beeville	5/20/06	1913
Bexar	San Antonio	7/14/15	1896
Bosque	Meridian	9/22/07	1886
Brooks	Falfurrias	2/26/10	1914
Cameron	Brownsville	10/17/06	1912
Cass	Linden	2/18/12	1861
Colorado	Columbus	5/17/14	1891
Comal	New Braunfels	1/22/13	1898
Cooke	Gainesville	11/12/11	1911
Dallas	Dallas	5/15/07	1892
Denton	Denton	11/6/04	1896
DeWitt	Cuero	10/27/07	1896
Dimmit	Carrizo Springs	11/18/04	1884
Donley	Clarendon	7/4/03	1891
Edwards	Rocksprings	7/5/14	1891
Ellis	Waxahachie	10/4/03	1897
Erath	Stephenville	8/20/02	1892
Falls	Marlin	10/16/21	1940
Fannin	Bonham	3/10/22	1889
Fayette	La Grange	6/25/05	1891
Franklin	Mount Vernon	9/20/14	1912
Goliad	Goliad	12/4/03	1894
Gray	Pampa	4/12/03	1928
Grimes	Anderson	3/2/02	1894
Hamilton	Hamilton	4/28/12	1887
Hardeman	Quanah	5/9/14	1908
Harris	Houston	8/23/11	1910
Harrison	Marshall	6/20/09	1901
Hood	Granbury	10/27/12	1891
Hopkins	Sulphur Springs	12/7/02	1894
Hudspeth	Sierra Blanca	7/3/04	1920
Jeff Davis	Fort Davis	11/8/03	1910
Johnson	Cleburne	12/1/07	1913

County	City	Rededicated	Yr Built
Karnes	Karnes City	4/7/18	1894
Kendall	Boerne	4/10/10	1870
La Salle	Cotulla	1/26/13	1931
Lamar	Paris	9/3/05	1917
Lampasas	Lampasas	3/2/04	1883
Lavaca	Hallettsville	9/11/10	1899
Lee	Giddings	10/8/04	1899
Leon	Centerville	7/1/07	1887
Lipscomb	Lipscomb	9/11/21	1916
Llano	Llano	6/15/02	1892
Lynn	Tahoka	6/20/19	1916
Marion	Jefferson	7/3/21	1912
Maverick	Eagle Pass	10/13/05	1885
McCulloch	Brady	9/5/09	1899
Menard	Menard	11/11/06	1932
Milam	Cameron	7/4/02	1892
Mills	Goldthwaite	8/27/11	1913
Navarro	Corsicana	7/9/16	1905
Newton	Newton	12/8/12	1903
Parker	Weatherford	6/4/05	1886
Potter	Amarillo	8/18/12	1932
Presidio	Marfa	1/5/02	1886
Rains	Emory	10/17/10	1909
Red River	Clarksville	10/26/02	1884
Roberts	Miami	6/2/12	1913
San Augustine	San Augustine	11/20/10	1927
San Saba	San Saba	1/23/20	1911
Shackelford	Albany	6/30/01	1883
Sutton	Sonora	6/11/02	1891
Throckmorton	Throckmorton	3/12/15	1891
Trinity	Groveton	7/22/11	1914
Val Verde	Del Rio	7/23/04	1887
Wharton	Wharton	8/4/07	1889
Wheeler	Wheeler	10/16/04	1925
Williamson	Georgetown	12/8/07	1911

CURRENT FULL RESTORATION GRANTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Callahan	Baird	In Progress	1929
Hall	Memphis	In Progress	1924
Kimble	Junction	In Progress	1930
Mason	Mason	In Progress	1910
Polk	Livingston	In Progress	1923
Taylor	Abilene	In Progress	1915
Upshur	Gilmer	In Progress	1933
Wise	Decatur	In Progress	1896

CURRENT PLANNING PROJECTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Comanche	Comanche	In Progress	1939
Willacy	Raymondville	In Progress	1922

PREVIOUS PLANNING PROJECTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Crosby	Crosbyton	Complete	1914
Fort Bend	Richmond	Complete	1909
Houston	Crockett	Complete	1940
Hunt	Greenville	Complete	1929
Stephens	Breckenridge	Complete	1926
Van Zandt	Canton	Complete	1937
Washington	Brenham	Complete	1939

CURRENT EMERGENCY PROJECTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Duval	San Diego	In Progress	1916
Lee	Giddings	In Progress	1899
Willacy	Raymondville	In Progress	1922

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY PROJECTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Bandera	Bandera	Complete	1891
Callahan	Baird	Complete	1929
Cameron	Brownsville	Complete	1912
Camp	Pittsburg	Complete	1929
Dickens	Dickens	Complete	1893
Glasscock	Garden City	Complete	1894
Goliad	Goliad	Complete	1894
Hidalgo	Hidalgo	Complete	1886
Houston	Crockett	Complete	1940
Hunt	Greenville	Complete	1929
Jefferson	Beaumont	Complete	1932
Kimble	Junction	Complete	1930
Kleberg	Kingsville	Complete	1914
Limestone	Groesbeck	Complete	1924
Lipscomb	Lipscomb	Complete	1916
Mason	Mason	Complete	1910
McLennan	Waco	Complete	1901
Milam	Cameron	Complete	1892
Montague	Montague	Complete	1913
Nueces	Corpus Christi	Complete	1914
Polk	Livingston	Complete	1923
Randall	Canyon	Complete	1908
Tyler	Woodville	Complete	1891
Upshur	Gilmer	Complete	1933
Wilson	Floresville	Complete	1884

THE BENEFITS OF RESTORED HISTORIC COURTHOUSES

ECONOMIC



- Since 1999, 13,300+ jobs created through courthouse preservation projects
- Generated nearly \$791 million in revenue
- Generated almost \$970 million in gross state product
- Restored courthouses reinvigorate historic downtowns and promote heritage tourism, a \$9.2 billion industry in Texas
- Increased downtown property values
- Increased downtown occupancy
- Increased utility savings from new, energy-efficient systems

ACCESSIBILITY



- ADA-accessible parking and building access (sidewalk and ramps)
- Wheelchair accessibility (elevator, ramps, seating, accessible-height counters, and handrails)
- Signage and other accommodations for the visually impaired
- And many more compliance requirements of the Texas Accessibility Standards

SAFETY



- Brought up to code compliance
- Installation of fire detection, notification, and suppression systems
- Replacement of outdated electrical systems (reduces fire risks)
- Installation of lightning protection
- Installation of security systems
- Improved air quality

ENERGY EFFICIENCY/ SUSTAINABILITY



- New, more-efficient mechanical and electrical systems
- Installation of insulation and weatherized windows/doors
- Decrease in water usage with new plumbing systems/fixtures

MAINTENANCE



- More manageable maintenance due to all-new finishes, sealants, and building infrastructure
- Counties receive post-restoration maintenance training

FUNCTIONALITY



- Improved audio visual systems and courtroom functionality
- Improved courtroom acoustics
- Improved technology/network systems
- Improved document and file storage, with better temperature/humidity control

QUALITY OF LIFE



- Restored courthouses instill community pride as centerpieces
- Courthouse lawns and squares serve as event/festival spaces
- Restoration projects increase employment in construction industry and strengthen skills of craftspeople in specialty trades