



Main Street! Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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Editor's note: Getting a new Main Street program off the ground is hard work (in the same manner that maintaining and growing a program over the years is hard work! For new programs, there's considerable organizational work to be done to lay a strong foundation for future success. There's also the need to undertake during the year relevant, visible, and achievable projects to create that Main Street "vibe." For this issue's Spotlight, we asked managers of our three 2013 cities—Childress, Cuero and San Augustine—to reflect on their first year as designated Main Street programs.

Spotlight On CHILDRESS

[Population approx. 6,083]

The first year of the Childress Main Street Program is complete. It was, to say the least, a learning experience. I don't know if there is anything as overwhelming as starting a new program. Bylaws, committees, boards, meetings, training, reports, and just wrapping your head around it all, well, that is enough for the first year!

The First Lady Tour was a great success with about 200 in attendance on an early March morning. (See the April 2013 and January 2014 issues of Main Street Matters for images of the 2013 First Lady's Tour here: www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-main-street/resources/main-street-matters.) Childress Elementary, Boy Scouts, and the First United Methodist Choir were just some of the highlights. Mrs. Perry's graciousness flowed throughout

the event and when it was over everyone was smiling. We were on our way as a Main Street City! The Advisory Board was formed and Adam Bishop, LeeAnn Dean, Russell Graves, Dave Griminger, Sharon Johnson, Brian Pierce and Shelly Preston have led us well this first year. New banners in our Main Street District highlighted our railroad heritage with our iconic 501 Engine as the inspiration (bottom right). Those were hung in May and work began on the Armstrong (501) Park to bring it to life. Shauna Garrison and Keep Childress Beautiful have created a very nice landscape and new benches will be added this Spring. The Park will be dedicated to Dalton Reese, an avid gardener and friend that we lost way too early.

Once the bylaws were written we began to look for ways to bring folks to downtown. We worked on an inventory list of what exactly was in downtown Childress. We have retail, hair salons, barbershops, plumbers,

electricians, auto supply stores, a library, insurance agencies, an abstract office, storage facilities, churches, government entities, restaurants, eye doctors, an orthodontist, engineering firms, a home health agency, financial entities, and housing! We have a theatre under restoration, a new Health and Human Services building, vacant buildings, and several buildings in need of TLC. We worked with the Texas Historical Commission (THC)



on a survey to help us qualify for our downtown to be eventually recognized as a National Register Historic District. As well, THC Main Street officials brought a resource team to our community during the summer, completed an analysis of our downtown and returned a report that has given us many ideas for the future.

As a result of new businesses, building projects and general upkeep, plus the Armstrong Park renovation and the new banners, over \$600,000 was reinvested in downtown Childress in 2013!

Childress Main Street hosted Dancing on Main with great results in August. More than 200 adults and kids danced, ate ice cream and just plain had fun—it looks like an annual event was born. In October Main

Street hosted Downtown Trick or Treating along with the First United Methodist Church, First Baptist Church, and the Childress Women’s Council Chili Supper. The night ended with our very first (but not last) ZOMBIE CRAWL! (below) The whole event was a great time and we look forward to next year’s fun. We finished the year with a booth and a movie at the Childress Christmas Festival. Whew!

We have prided ourselves in working with as many established events as possible. We help promote the event and participate if possible. One of the best lessons learned this year would be that you don’t have to do it all. Everything that happens in your downtown is part of your Main Street Program. It enhances your efforts and keeps people interested in what you are

doing. Form alliances that benefit you, whether in your community or through the

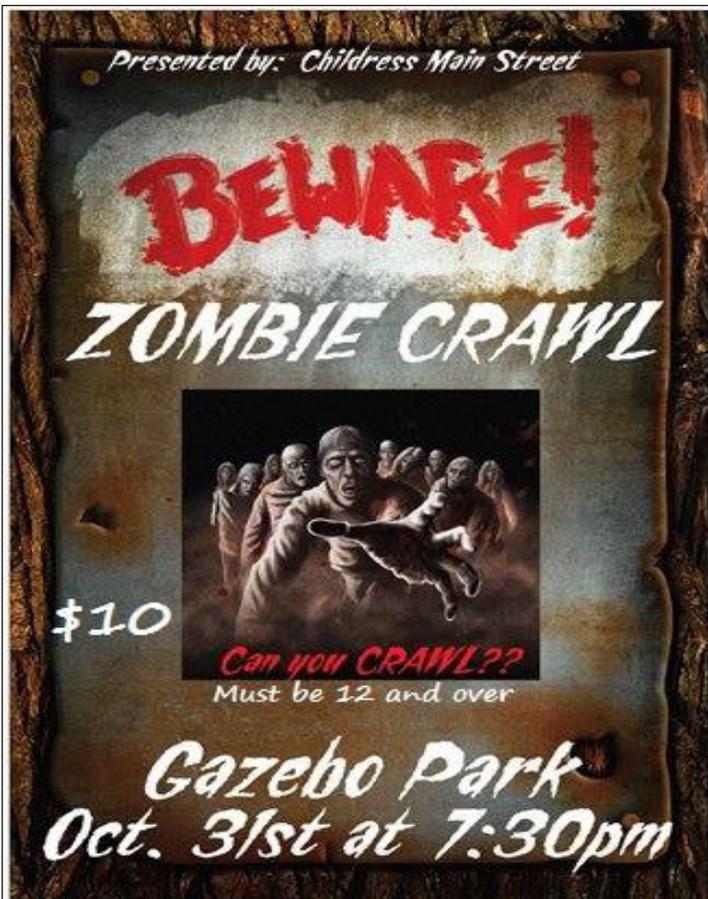
fabulous Main Street program and its people! Thanks for all of your help this year!

Thanks to Susan Leary, Childress Main Street Manager, for providing this article. (see: www.facebook.com/pages/Childress-Main-Street/139151039593660)

Spotlight On CUERO

[Population approx. 6,964]

Cuero hit the ground running in our first year of being rededicated into the Texas Main Street Program with new marketing and events to help bring people back downtown. The program launched www.cueromainstreet.com that features an informative overview of the program, while highlighting events and businesses located in the historic Main Street district. Since the site was unveiled, almost 2000 people have visited. Cuero Main Street Program (CMSP) staff also



Presented by: Childress Main Street

BEWARE!

ZOMBIE CRAWL



\$10

Can you CRAWL??

Must be 12 and over

Gazebo Park

Oct. 31st at 7:30pm



AMAZING \$1 SCOOP + STOPPING ICE CREAM BAR

AUGUST 10TH

Videos on display

DANCING IN THE STREETS

BY GAZEBO PARK

Starts at 8:00 till 11:00

Wii DANCE

HUSTLE

LINE DANCE

BOP

SLIDE

MUSIC ON MAIN

PRESENTED BY CHILDRESS MAIN STREET

FREE DANCE

created social media fan pages in both Facebook and Twitter and held sweepstakes contests along with events to drive more activity to the pages and increase followers.

As part of the program's mission to bring families back to downtown, we created two new events in our first year. KidFest, held in June, was a free event that drew over 400 people to an afternoon and evening of fun, games, magic show, 5k fun run, and several contests including Pickles for Nickels, Heels For Wheels, Super Mom, and a historic scavenger hunt. The second event was all about bringing back a Norman Rockwell Old Fashioned Christmas experience into downtown Cuero. Christmas In Downtown was held December 12-14 (top right) and included Ice Skating, Carriage Rides, a Life Size Giant Snow Globe, and a Carousel that kids of all ages enjoyed. Santa, Mrs. Claus, and the elves were in Santa's Workshop and their North Pole Dinner, where an event venue was turned into a makeshift restaurant for three nights serving up delicious homemade dinners from local nonprofits as a fundraiser. Some of the other events included a Treasure Hunt where over 300 shoppers participated in a three day shopping scavenger hunt going to 15 participating businesses to compete for grand prize basket filled with gifts and goodies valued at over \$400. And finally, to set the beautiful backdrop for all the festivities, the CMSP held a Deck The Downtown window decorating contest where businesses throughout the Main Street District decorated their



window fronts and sidewalks in an effort to win the \$500 façade grant. Christmas In Downtown was a huge success and drew both residents and visitors from an hour away to the three-day event.

Also during the year, we took on a project to make downtown Cuero a whole lot prettier. The CMSP teamed up with Full O Pep Ranch and Garden Center and the Cuero High School FFA Floral Design Students to help beautify the Cuero Main Street District. Cuero Main Street purchased 45 hanging baskets. Each is a 22-inch hanging iron basket with liners that the Cuero High School FFA Students planted with flowers donated by Full O Pep. A variety of flowers were planted that will tolerate the South Texas heat including varieties of sweet potato vine, Vinca (Periwinkle) and Gazania. "Being involved in a project like this is what Ful-O-Pep has done since the business began," said Kay Vigus, representative from Full-O-Pep Garden Center. "It's important to do our part for the community."

The project was created by Cuero Main Street Director Bridgette Bise, as a way to spruce up the downtown area while getting area youth involved to take pride in their community, specifically their historic downtown. "This project is a great partnership and represents how everyone in our community all work together so well," said Bise. These beautiful baskets (below) have added an instant 'wow' factor to our downtown."



The maintenance of all 45 baskets will be done by the City's Parks and Recreation Department that built a water truck to be able to access and water the baskets daily.

As the second year kicks off, the Cuero MSP will be tackling its 10 year-long bat infestation problem in the 100 Block of E. Main. We will be working with building owners and businesses on sealing up any openings and have contracted with a professional to build Bat Houses and plan to move the houses a few hundred feet each year until the bats have been relocated out of the downtown area out to the city's 185 acre park. (There is a related bat remediation article in this issue of Main Street Matters from the Texas Main Street design staff.)

Thanks to Bridgette Bise, Cuero Main Street Manager, for providing this article. (see: www.facebook.com/CueroMainStreet)

Spotlight On SAN AUGUSTINE

[Population approx. 2,108]

Downtown San Augustine—Main Street of the Texas Republic. Located on the National Historic Trail, El Camino Real de los Tejas, San Augustine celebrates its first year as a designated Texas Main Street city. The city is located about twenty three miles from the Texas/ Louisiana border in deep east Texas. San Augustine was founded in 1833, when settlers organized the earliest and oldest

American town in Texas. With that heritage comes the proud ownership of many "Texas firsts" like the establishment of the first university, home of the first governor, first churches, and the list goes on. Now it is our pleasure to reflect on the first year as a Main Street city.

Many of the activities and projects over the past several months have already had a positive impact on San Augustine. Our goal is to become a destination city while focusing on revitalization and preservation of the historic downtown district. Our stakeholders are anticipating a sustainable program with a bright future.

The organization and foundation for the program was the major focus over the past twelve months. Becoming a Texas Main Street city has presented us with the challenge to work with the community in all areas of the National Main Street Model Four Point Approach™. In one year we have been able to see how the method works. It has proven itself to be successful.

Here are some of our happenings over the past year:

- Main Street manager was hired and the Advisory Board of 11 volunteer members established (image next page).
- By-laws were established.
- Monthly Advisory board meetings and committee meetings (organization, promotion, design, economic restructuring) began.
- First Lady's visit event
- Texas Main Street Resource Team visit occurred (right).
- National preservation month

photo contest was held (below).



- Main Street Manager became a certified instructor— Texas Friendly Customer Service.
- Work plans were established for all four committees.
- Main Street sponsored the Texas Forest Trail Region Series—20 Ingredients of An Outstanding Downtown— to the stakeholders.
- Filed for 501(c)3 status for tax purposes—San Augustine Main Street Patrons and Loyal Supporters.
- Facebook was started for Main Street.
- Created brochure: "What is Main Street?"
- Adopted a membership form and protocol—San Augustine Main Street Patrons and Loyal Supporters.
- Main Street Back-to-School Downtown Cleanup Event.
- Main Street Halloween Spooktacular Movie Under the Stars Event (purchased screen



and movie) was held.

- First Fundraiser Event—Happy Birthday San Augustine—Celebrating 180 years and made approx. \$9,000.
- Awarded a Texas Downtown Association/Anice Read Fund grant for \$800
- Eight trash receptacles were purchased and placed on the downtown sidewalks(below).



- Main Street Business/Building owners luncheon meeting.
- Submitted 11 design requests with recommendations back and businesses contacted.

Several businesses have already begun to use suggestions from the state office. The Body Shop Fitness Center at 124 E. Columbia Street used some state architect recommendations to improve the building by revealing transom windows that had been covered, made repairs, and painted according to color specifications. (top left).

Art Flower and Gifts and The San Augustine General Store 109 S. Harrison Street-used some state architect recommendations to preserve the inside and outside of the building (top right).

Thanks to Tracy Cox, San Augustine Main Street Manager, for providing this article.



Bats on Main Street

It would be accurate to state that every Texas Main Street City has at least one building where bats are roosting. The simple fact is that old buildings offer a wonderful roosting opportunity for bats with their open windows, loose eave/soffit boards, and other areas of disrepair.

First of all, what should we in the Main Street community know about bats? Well, unfortunately, bats have been given a bum rap over the years—think vampires and Count Dracula. The truth is that bats are vital to controlling insect pests, pollinating plants, and dispersing seeds. Have a look at these Bat Facts from Bat Conservation International (www.batcon.org):

[batcon.org](http://www.batcon.org)):

- In Texas and around the world, bats are natural enemies of night-flying insects.
- The millions of Mexican free-tailed bats at Bracken Bat Cave (west of New Braunfels) alone eat up to 200 tons of insects nightly.
- If we lose our bat species we increase the demand for chemical pesticides, jeopardizing whole ecosystems of other animal and plant species and harming human economies.

The other thing we tend to associate bats with is rabies. Here are some more facts from Bat Conservation International:

- Like most mammals, bats can contract rabies. However, the vast majority of bats are not infected, and even those that are, normally bite only in self defense and pose little threat to people who do not handle them.
- The fear of rabies is far disproportionate to the actual risk. To put the risk into perspective: about 386,000 Americans are treated for dog bites each year and about 16 people die from the attacks. Bat bites, on the other hand, have led to an average of two human deaths per year from rabies.

You now recognize the value of bats. You may even love the little critters, but you also realize that they don't belong in your Main Street buildings. Now its time to know something about excluding bats from entering buildings in the first place and if they are already roosting, how to permanently and humanely evict them.

How do I know if bats are in my Main Street buildings?

The existence of bats in buildings is sometimes indicated by the presence of black or brown stains from body oils or droppings (guano) around cracks or crevices. Bat droppings may also appear on walls or beneath dilapidated ceilings. Bat guano may resemble small, hard rodent pellets, but it is actually soft and easily crushed revealing shiny insect parts (their diet) in the process.

How do I evict bats from my Main Street buildings?

All potential entry points must be sealed. This is the only effective and permanent solution. Trapping and relocating have proven to be ineffective methods because bats have powerful homing instincts and will simply return even when released at great distances. Pesticide use against bats is illegal.

How do I prevent bats from entering my Main Street buildings in the first place?

The first step involves inspecting the interior of the building. While the bats are likely roosting in the attic or roof cavities, start with the other interior spaces to be sure the roosting doesn't extend further. All openings connecting the attic space to their potential roosting areas should be sealed while

entry points on the outside of the building are left open. Caulking, flashing, screening, or insulation can be used to seal most openings on the inside.

The next step requires setting up a method whereby bats can leave but are unable to reenter. It is not proper procedure to wait for bats to fly out at night and then seal openings. This is because not all of the bats leave at the same time and some may remain in the building throughout the night especially during inclement weather.

When should bat exclusion occur?

Don't embark upon the bat exclusion process until young bats are able to fly otherwise they will be trapped inside the building away from their mothers (who do go out nightly to feed) and die of starvation. In Texas the maternity season for bats begins as early as mid April and the young won't learn to fly until late August. This means that bat exclusions should not occur between April and late August.

How are bats excluded?

Chances are whoever is reading this article will not be performing the actual physical work involved in excluding bats, but like so many aspects of the Main Street Program, it's nice to have a working knowledge.

The two primary methods of excluding bats are: tubes and netting. The idea behind both is very simple yet very clever. Both methods create a safe and humane means of egress but prohibit re-entry.

The Tube Method

The tube method involves placing small plastic tubes in strategic locations in a downward orientation from roof overhangs. The bats recognize the opening as an exit and they pretty much "slide" out of the tube. When they want to get back in, the tube, because of its vertical orientation and smooth inner surface, prevents them from "climbing" back up.

The Netting Method

The netting method works on a vertical surface or when placing a tube is impractical. The netting acts as a flap over an existing hole or louver in the surface of the building. The trick is to attach the netting on the top and sides over the entire hole or louver but leave it unattached at the bottom. What happens in this setup is the bats will crawl down from the hole and exit under the bottom edge of the netting. When they return, the netting is laying flat against the vertical building surface and they can not "lift" it and climb back up to the exit hole.

Each of these methods should be left in place a minimum of 5 to 7 days to ensure all bats have left. The openings are then permanently sealed. The method of sealing depends upon the location and material composition around the opening.

Permanent roosts versus perching

Bats will take breaks from their "feeding frenzies" during the night while they are out and about. They will find a porch, canopy, or roof overhang and use their break time to digest the insects they have eaten. They usually perch for a

short while although they might return to the same perching spot night after night (this was the case at my residence when I was living in the Big Bend of Texas many years ago). The experts at Bat Conservation International suggest that you just leave the perching bats alone; they don't stay in those spots for long periods, don't tend to make noticeable waste, and tend to remain solitary while perching. If the perching activity proves to be a nuisance there are simple, humane methods that can be used to discourage the bats from perching. See www.batcon.org for more information.

How does a Main Street program start the bat conversation about bat conservation?

A Texas building owner in Mineral Wells received some nation-wide attention through the National Trust for Historic Preservation for her bat infested building. Her story is fascinating because she took the unlikely approach of leaving the bats in place and allowing them to continue their habitation. You can read about her situation here: www.preservationnation.org/magazine/story-of-the-week/2009/bat-woman-mineral-wells.html.

Her story was written back in 2009 so it is likely that things are different now, but the point of the article is twofold: the fate of a bat colony that occupies an old commercial building should be carefully considered and plans for the future use of the historic building itself should also be carefully considered. In the case of the Mineral Wells building, the bats were the impetus for actually saving the building.

Cuero, which happens to be one of our south Texas Main Street communities, has had bats on its radar screen since 2006 when there were a series of public meetings and presentations from bat specialists with the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife: <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=861&dat=20061013&id=7UJTAAAAIBAJ&sjid=i4UDAAAAIBAJ&pg=5161,2827756>

Since then, there has been renewed interest with a new round of presentations organized by Bridgette Bise, Cuero Main Street Manager, and site visits from bat experts. You can read about her situation here: www.victoriaadvocate.com/news/2013/oct/22/cuero_bats_sl_102313_222641/?print

One thing to come out of the discussions and educational presentations was the potential benefit of constructing bat houses near the downtown.

What is a bat house?

The majority of the discussion thus far has been about removing bats safely and humanely from our Main Street buildings. The point that is missing here is where do the bats go once they are excluded? Remember, they are enormously beneficial to our ecosystem and they eat tons of moths and mosquitoes! One way to have bats stay in your community without having them seek lodging in your Main Street buildings is to build bat houses.

A well designed, well built bat house stands a good chance of attracting bats. Bat Conservation International research has shown that bats will inhabit an average

of 61 percent of all reported bat houses in rural areas and 50 percent in urban and suburban areas. Furthermore, 90 percent of all occupied bat houses were used within two years with 50 percent occupancy in the first year. The remaining bat houses needed three to five years for bat occupancy.

The only catch, if it can be called such, is that bats have to find these new roosts on their own. You cannot simply place one in a bat house and expect it and the colony to relocate. First of all it is illegal to handle the bat and second, it has to choose the location on its own. Successful placement of bat houses has been influenced by such factors as temperature, compass orientation, construction materials, mounting location, mounting height, and over time, how well you maintain their house. That's right, bats require a clean and safe house if you want them to stay. That means wasp and mud dauber nests need to be cleaned out each winter after bats and wasps have departed. Bat houses also need to be monitored at least monthly to detect problems with predators, temperature, deterioration of the bat house components, and so on.

Summary

Now you know why bats are important creatures. They help control pests and are vital pollinators and seed dispersers for countless plants. Years of misinformation and myths have given bats a bad name and it is good for us to learn everything we can about bats, educate others, and support ongoing research. Granted, bats don't belong in our historic buildings but now we have shared something about how to

deal with the situation in a safe and humane manner. Hopefully you will be inspired to organize bat house projects in your Main Street communities.

Thanks to Howard Langner, architect with Texas Main Street Program for providing this article.

Upcoming Events

If you would like one of your Main Street events posted here, email virginia.owens@thc.state.tx.us at least three weeks ahead of the month in which you want the posting.

February 15, 2014

ROYSE CITY

Join Royse City Main Street and Historic Old Town Merchants Association and be a part of our Winter Wonderland Event from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Activities include snow tubing and ice skating. For more information contact Paula Morris at paula.morris@roysecity.com.

March 1, 2014

GEORGETOWN

5th Annual Georgetown Swirl from 6–9 p.m. on Saturday, March 1. More information can be found at <https://swirl.georgetown.org/>.

March 4, 2014

VERNON

Vernon Annual Celebrity Waiter Dinner to raise money for downtown beautifications, (Mardi Gras) at 6 p.m. at the Bryant Banquet Hall at 1423 Main Street. For more information contact Dan Kelleher at dkelleher@vernontx.gov.

March 6, 2014

Denison

Its Girls Night Out! Look for the businesses with balloons from 5 p.m.– 8 p.m. in downtown for some evening shopping and refreshment.

March 7, 2014

BASTROP

Enjoy First Friday Art Walk from 6 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. by taking a stroll downtown looking at the works of local artists, meet featured artists, listen to live music, shop in the many specialty stores and dine in one of our unique restaurants.

March 29, 2014

CELINA

Join us for the first annual Celina Cajun and Crawfish Festival on the Square from 11 a.m.–7 p.m. Activities include a car show, wall climbing, music and shopping.

April 12, 2014

PARIS

The 3rd annual April in Paris Wine Fest will feature samples of Texas' top wines and delectable local cuisine while strolling in historic downtown. Proceeds will benefit the Paris Main Street Building Improvements Grant. For more information contact Cheri Bedford at cbedford@paristexas.gov

April 12, 2014

LUFKIN

The 22nd Hoedown Festival kicks off at 10 a.m. with a parade followed by arts and crafts and entertainment for the entire family. For more information call 936-633-0205.

April 23, 2014

VERNON

The Annual Roy Orbison Birthday Party, Weenie Roast & Community Picnic, will be held at the site of Orbison's birth at the corner of Deaf Smith & Pease Streets in downtown Vernon. For more information contact Dan Kelleher at dkelleher@vernontx.gov.

April 26–27, 2014

GEORGETOWN

The 15th annual Red Poppy Festival in downtown Georgetown will feature artisans from across the nation, classic car show, red poppy 5k run, parade, Red Poppy tour, street dance, and great bands See <http://poppy.georgetown.org> for more information.

June 9–10, 2014

LUFKIN

New Main Street manager training all day June 9 through noon June 10. (New board members also welcome to attend.)

June 10 (after noon)– June 13, 2014

LUFKIN

Summer Main Street professional development for all Texas Main Street managers.

Award Applications

Scenic Texas

The Scenic City Certification Program, a project of Scenic Texas in cooperation with the Texas Historical Commission, Texas Municipal League, and several additional partners, is currently accepting 2014 applications through March 31.

In upcoming issues of **Main Street Matters**, we'll be spotlighting some specific topics and we are looking for the following:

March: Best Practices/Main Street Volunteer Programs.

Interestingly, this also came up in the evaluations from Seguin Professional Development at the roundtable discussions, so we know it is on your mind. Can you provide a profile of either an overall volunteer recruitment, management, and recognition program or a specific volunteer activity or project?

May: Best Practices/Unique and Measurable Main Street Promotions

for retail development, heritage/preservation celebration, education and awareness, and fundraising.

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: www.achp.gov

African American Heritage Preservation Foundation: www.aahpfdn.org

(The) Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation: www.ahlp.org

(The) American Institute of Architects: www.aia.org

American Planning Association: www.planning.org

American Society of Landscape Architects: www.asla.org

(The) Cultural Landscape Foundation: www.tclf.org

(The) Handbook of Texas Online: www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online

Keep Texas Beautiful: www.ktb.org

League of Historic American Theatres: www.lhat.org

National Main Street Center: www.preservationnation.org/main-street

National Park Service: www.nps.gov

National Trust for Historic Preservation: www.preservationnation.org

Partners for Sacred Places: www.sacredplaces.org

Preservation Easement Trust: www.preservationeasement.org

PreservationDirectory.com: www.preservationdirectory.com

Preservation Texas: www.preservationtexas.org

Project for Public Spaces: www.pps.org

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy: www.railstotrails.org

Scenic America: www.scenic.org

Texas Department of Agriculture: www.TexasAgriculture.gov

Texas Commission on the Arts: www.arts.state.tx.us

Texas Downtown Association: www.texasdowntown.org

Texas Folklife Resources: www.texasfolklife.org

Texas Historical Commission: www.thc.state.tx.us

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department: www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Texas Rural Leadership Program: www.trlp.org

Texas State Preservation Board: www.tspb.state.tx.us

Urban Land Institute: www.uli.org

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

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