TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Main Street Matters

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ROYSE CITY

Written by Kelly Rogers, Royse City Main Street Board Member

FROM COTTON BALLS TO BASEBALL: ROYSE CITY

In the 1880s, Garrett Burgess Griffin "Byrd" Royse envisioned a small city east of Rockwall that would tap into a vital section of a projected railroad route. People slowly began settling in the area in 1885 when it became known that the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad would be constructed through this part of the county. Then in 1886, Royse platted the townsite and sold the first lots of what would become Royse City, a special place with "a friendly touch of Texas."

Many of the settlement's earliest residents and businesses were attracted from the community of Fate, after the railroad bypassed the nearby city. The first business, a general merchandise store, opened in December 1885 and soon followed soon after by a variety of businesses, some of which were pulled on rollers by ox teams from Fate. An early agricultural community started a lifeblood that became Royse City.

(Cont. on page 2)

Much of the historical architecture in Royse City still exists of the old downtown by the railroad, and now, Main Street boasts a vibrant and vintage vibe. Many businesses include retail boutiques, salons, a coffee lounge with live music, restaurants, and even a microbrewery!

Located in the heart of the Blackland Cotton Belt, Royse City thrived with considerable business in marketing, cotton trading, cottonseed oil manufacturing, and cotton ginning until the early 20th century. Unfortunately, the Great Depression was hard on Royse City's economy, and synthetic fiber technology began replacing cotton products, which threw the local industry into a spin. While 54 businesses still operated in the town in 1936, the aftermath of World War II caused many families to move to Dallas for work, and Royse City businesses declined.

Entering into the new century, in 2000, Royse City's population hovered around 3,000. In the 17 years since, the town experienced tremendous growth while retaining its hometown feel. Development along the Interstate 30 corridor exploded as this little 'sleeper' community remains a favorite hometown destination in the area. In recent years, the population expanded to approximately 12,000 residents, and the school district grew to a 4-A status. With a bright and industrious vision, the Royse City Community Development Corporation ushered in several major chain stores, restaurants, and retailers. Low unemployment rates hold firm with manufacturing, construction, and retail remaining top industries for employment in Royse City, and now a fast-growing medical community is starting to take root. The economic future has never looked brighter!

Recently, the Royse City Independent School District, the city, and Ventura Sports Group agreed to partner on a new $12 million baseball/multi-purpose stadium that will have the capacity for 4,000 people. It will be completed in the spring of 2019 with the debut of the Royse City Griffins, a professional independent baseball team of the Southwest League of Professional Baseball.

Much of the historical architecture still exists of the old downtown by the railroad, and now, Main Street boasts a vibrant and vintage vibe. The many businesses include retail boutiques, salons, a coffee lounge with live music, restaurants, and even a microbrewery!

With the rapid growth in the Royse City area, plans are now in the works to build a courtyard area near the center of old downtown to host live entertainment and a farmers' market, but also to serve as the activity hub for all things downtown going forward. The

A full schedule of events year after year keeps downtown Royse City bustling. Just a few of the events include the Main Street Car Show (top), Trick-or-Treat (middle), and the annual Old Town Block Party (bottom).

Royse City, the small little town that was envisioned back in the 1880's (top) has come a long way over the years. Since 2000, the town has experienced tremendous growth while retaining its hometown feel (bottom image source). The economic future of Royse City has never looked brighter.

Royse City Main Street program keeps a full schedule of events year after year to keep the downtown Main Street bustling. The annual Old Town Block Party features live entertainment on Main Street in the spring, while the Main Street Car Show highlights vintage cars in the summer. Thousands turn out every year for the annual downtown FunFest, Trick-or-Treat on Main Street, and the Main Street Pumpkin Patch in October. Of course, the holiday season is not complete until the Holiday Tree Lighting—with Santa—and Christmas parade take place in December.

Still a small town, Royse City is riding the impact of the rapid growth of DFW and Rockwall County because of the city's central location along Interstate 30 between Rockwall and Greenville. The environment offers everything you need to call it your hometown. It is the type of place to start a young family or launch a small business. The type of place where one can escape the big city life yet stay plugged in. The place where a person can retire amongst good, down-to-earth people and simply relax and enjoy life. Through the years, Royse City continues to be a cozy, small town with friendly folks. It is totally wholesome, but modernly vintage—Americana at its best.

IMPROVING TXDOT STREETS IN DOWNTOWN,TX

Article written by Riley Triggs, Architect, Texas Main Street Program

Usually the design processes the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) uses for its roadways through downtowns does not allow for considerations beyond the curb line of the roadway. The process traditionally only took into account automobile needs—especially those having to do with *mobility*, which is engineering terminology for *speed*. The normal procedure is a "design and defend" process where TxDOT designs a roadway, and then it defends the finished concept to the community affected. The method does not allow for community input until it is too late to incorporate substantial input in a meaningful way. This leads to contentious meetings and ultimately roadway projects imposed on an often-unreceptive community. To remedy this, TxDOT is the first state transportation agency to adopt a new process called Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) that thoughtfully and deliberately identifies stakeholders, encourages early and continuous community involvement, and incorporates stakeholder input into the design at the beginning of a project.

Developed by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) in partnership with the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) and in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) approach is an interdisciplinary collaborative effort to involve all stakeholders in a project. The goal is to produce a roadway that "fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility." (FHWA) In other words, it takes into account all of the stuff beyond the curb line that it didn't before. CSS was adopted by TxDOT in 2009, but many people might not know it exists or what it entails.

Achieving a Context Sensitive Solution according to ITE involves a set of common tenets:

- Balance safety, mobility, community, and environmental goals
- Involve the public and stakeholders early and continuously
- Use an interdisciplinary design team tailored to project needs
- Address needs of all users
- Apply flexibility inherent in design standards and guidelines
- Incorporate aesthetics as an integral part of good design

CSS differs from the conventional TxDOT design process. Conventional street design is dominated by traffic demand and level-of-service objectives, while the CSS process is intended to identify critical factors and issues and use this information to establish the project's objectives and design criteria. The process considers all community objectives so the resulting solution is based on a well thought-out and rationalized assessment of tradeoffs. Essentially it is trying to return streets to the way they were before automobilization. A significant part of this calls for thinking about people again and not just cars. The hallmark quality of CSS is that walkability is the main goal of street design rather than the fast throughput of cars. By prioritizing the safety and comfort of people on foot with lower speed limits, shorter crosswalks, parallel parking, reduced lane widths, and two-way streets, there is an increase in neighborhood desirability and value through attracting better development with more housing and shopping and higher real estate values. The TxDOT *Project Development Process Manual* states that, "CSS principles exercise flexibility and creativity, preserve resources, and enhance the community," which leads to a more holistic and sensible approach to streetscape improvements.

Included in CSS are standards for different urban conditions. The most applicable for Main Street communities is their Urban Center Context for creating good quality commercial streets. According to a report prepared for the New Jersey Department of Transportation (*Scoring Formula for New Jersey's Main Streets, Rutgers University*, March 2003) and based on a visual preference survey, the attributes of a main street that positively affect how people view the street include:

- The proportion of street frontage with active commercial uses
- A low proportion of street frontage with dead space such as vacant lots, parking lots, and blank walls
- The proportion of the street frontage with parked cars generating activity, providing a buffer between traffic and the streetside and slowing traffic
- The proportion of the street with a tree canopy
- Width of sidewalk, with wider facilities providing more public space and greater levels of activity
- Visible curb extensions that provide for shorter crossing distances and space for plantings, street furniture, and traffic calming

Attributes of a main street that negatively affect how people view the street include:

- A high proportion of street frontage with dead space such as vacant lots, parking lots, and blank walls (a negative response is associated with more blank walls)

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the McKinney Main Street Program and its staff, Amy Rosenthal and Aaron Werner, for winning a preservation grant from Partners in Preservation. The grant was for $150,000 to support work for the McKinney Performing Arts Center and exterior work for the downtown courthouse. Partners in Preservation is a community-based partnership established in 2006 to raise awareness of the importance of preserving historic places and their role in sustaining local communities. Read the full article and see image source here.

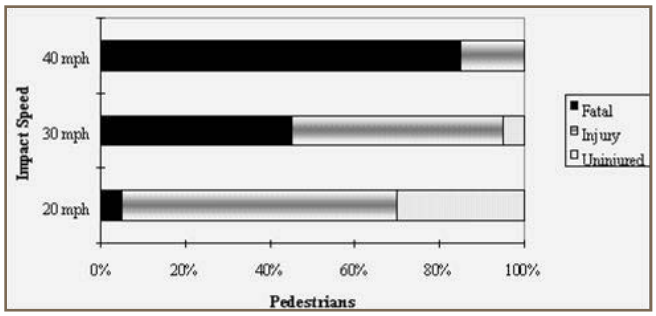
- The number of travel lanes, where streets with more than two lanes are perceived as having higher speeds, more traffic, longer crossing distances, and a less attractive appearance

Guidelines applicable to typical Texas downtown situations are found in the CSS manual under Avenue and Streets in Urban Cores (Figure 1). They are very similar to each other, with the main difference being the width of right of way and volume of traffic being handled in each situation. Of note is that smaller lane widths and speed limits are appropriate for high volume situations up to 30,000 average daily trips per day. Above this volume, cities might consider petitioning TxDOT to relocate the route out of downtown depending on the particular situation. Desirable design factors then are determined by this volume to create an appropriate environment for people.

Traveled Way	Avenue	Street
Typical Traffic Count (Average Daily Trips)	1,500 - 30,000	1,000 - 15,000
Target Speed	25-30 mph	25 mph
Recommended Sidewalk / Streetside Width	19.5 ft	15 ft
Minimum Sidewalk Clear Travel Width	9 ft	6 ft
Number of Lanes	2-4	2-4
Lane Width	10-11 ft	10-11 ft
Parallel Parking Width	8 ft	7-8 ft
Bike Lane Width	5-6 ft	5-6 ft
Curb Radius	5-15 ft	5-15 ft

(Figure 1) Street Design Guidelines for Urban Cores. Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers http://library.ite.org/pub/e1cff43c-2354-d714-51d9-d82b39d4dbad

Vehicle speed is of great concern in downtown streets. It is a major factor in determining the survivability rate



(Figure 2) Pedestrian survival rate by vehicle impact speed Source: FHWA http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/pssp/background/psafety.cfm

of a vulnerable user such as a pedestrian or bicyclist. The character of the urban environment with its many visual distractions makes lower target speeds more appropriate. Especially for pedestrians and bicyclists, minor increases in speed can profoundly affect crash survival rates (Figure 2). The difficulty in remedying this is that the usual street standards encourage speed.

For example, Paris, Texas has one-way couplets on US Business 82 and US 79/271 that meet at their town square with 3 one way lanes at 15 feet wide circling the plaza, which cuts off their major downtown feature, the Culbertson Fountain, from being accessible by people. It also creates the illusion of a higher speed thoroughfare, which leads to higher traffic speeds.

The Plaza in Paris, Texas isolated by one-way multi-lane streets. Source: Google Earth

Car-centric wide one-way lanes, lengthy pedestrian crossings, and large curb radii create an inhospitable environment for people around the Plaza in Paris, TX. Source. Google Maps

For comparison, the Interstate Highway System standard for lane widths is 12 feet. The wide lanes in Paris are probably meant to accommodate large turning trucks at the intersections, but this creates a huge barrier of dangerous pavement for people to traverse, which limits pedestrian accessibility and directly hurts the economy of downtown. This suggests that the trucks should be routed to the existing highway bypass to allow for more urban-appropriate street configuration. In addition, how curbs are configured is also an important component of reducing speed and creating the CSS walkable environment.

Curb radii affect the crossing width of streets, and the comfort and safety of pedestrians, so it should be as small as possible. Flexibility in the design of curb return radii revolves around the need to minimize pedestrian crossing distance, the type of vehicle designed for, and the combination of dimensions that make up the effective width of the approach and receiving lanes and the curb return radius itself.

Recommended practices from ITE include the following:

- A curb return radius of 5 to 15 feet should be used where:
  1. High pedestrian volumes are present
  2. Volumes of turning vehicles are low
  3. The width of the receiving intersection approach can accommodate a turning passenger vehicle without encroachment into the opposing lane
  4. Large vehicles constitute a very low proportion of the turning vehicles
  5. Bicycle and parking lanes create additional space to accommodate the effective turning radius of vehicles
  6. Low turning speeds are required or desired
  7. Occasional encroachment of turning school bus, moving van, fire truck, or oversized delivery truck into an opposing lane is acceptable

- Curb radii may need to be larger where:
  1. Occasional encroachment of a turning bus, school bus, moving van, fire truck, or oversized delivery truck into the opposing lane is not acceptable
  2. Curb extensions are proposed or might be added in the future
  3. Receiving thoroughfare does not have parking or bicycle lanes and the receiving lane is less than 12 feet in width

To accomplish these better standards, TxDOT's *Project Development Process Manual* suggests CSS as an alternative process for realizing projects. All TxDOT projects are eligible to employ this alternative except for maintenance and restoration projects. Each District Director of Transportation Planning and Development is responsible for which projects implement the CSS process in their district. To find your District Director visit https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/district.html.

If employed, the CSS process first directs the district to identify stakeholders in the project area, and then to coordinate CSS workshops for partners and stakeholders to present the CSS method and to establish project visions, goals, objectives, issues, and opportunities. After establishing contacts and possibly creating teams, ongoing feedback is conducted to ensure that the project vision is maintained and that individual goals are being properly considered and met during the design development. Project stakeholders are encouraged to sponsor workshops and meetings throughout the project to maintain good communication with TxDOT.

Advantages to employing the good street making guidelines of CSS include reducing congestion by making walking a viable alternative to driving, enhancing citizen safety through reduced accident death rates, expansion of economic opportunity through better connectivity and environment, and better air quality through reduced auto emissions. But these enhancements to the quality of Texas downtowns cannot occur if CSS is not used.

Other states have also employed CSS or similar standards in revitalizing their main street economies. Oregon created a set of guidelines specifically to address the importance of good street design in their historic districts with the *Oregon Main Street Transportation Manual* http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM/docs/mainstreet.pdf. In 2002, Kentucky created the *Kentucky Streetscape Design Guidelines for Historic Commercial Districts* https://transportation.ky.gov/Local-Programs/Documents/Kentucky%20Streetscape%20Design%20Guidelines.pdf, which is geared toward sometimes – difficult situations of working with historic conditions to solve current problems like traffic volume and parking.

The Town Square Initiative (TSI) is exploring how to more fully take advantage of the CSS process for Texas downtowns. One possibility is encouraging TxDOT to adopt the CSS walkability standards as a downtown standard or a more targeted set of guidelines for historic communities as have Oregon and Kentucky. This would help Texas Main Street communities tremendously by removing the onus of having to fight for good placemaking practices, which can be impossible because of limited staff, expertise, and political clout required to realize a non-standard solution. The result would be a much more people-friendly streetscape, a more economically viable city core, and ultimately lead to a preservation of the valuable historic fabric that we work to protect every day.

References

Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach manual: http://ecommerce.ite.org/IMIS/ItemDetail?iProductCode=RP-036A

Institute of Transportation Engineers Context Sensitive Solutions page: https://www.ite.org/css/

Federal Highway Administrations CSS page with case studies: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/css/
Examples of Context Sensitive Solutions across the country: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/circulars/ec067.pdf

Oregon Main Street Transportation Manual
http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM/docs/mainstreet.pdf

AFTERMATH OF HARVEY

As with any major storm, when Hurricane Harvey came ashore in Texas on August 25, 2017, no one knew for certain how widespread its terror would be. It left all of us in awe, causing close to $200 billion in damage and making landfall three separate times in six days, according to news sources. Although the communities in our Main Street network largely escaped full devastation, some were impacted by wind and water.

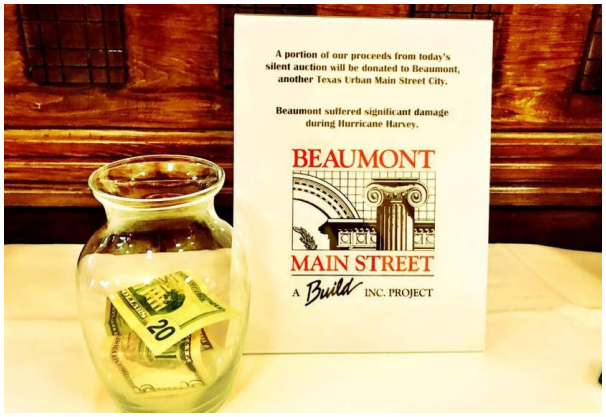
The power of the Main Street network—communities helping communities—came into play pretty quickly, not just from neighboring Main Street programs in Texas, but from all over the country. Main Street America™, our national partner, has already shared much of this with you in a November blog, but we also wanted to use a portion of *Main Street Matters* to say 'thanks' again.

In La Grange (top), their Courthouse Square Historic District is situated just blocks from the Colorado River, which crested at the third highest level the river ever reached in recorded history. Miraculously, the river stopped short of flooding the square, but numerous businesses in the blocks between the river and the square were submerged. In Cuero (bottom), there was both water and wind damage.

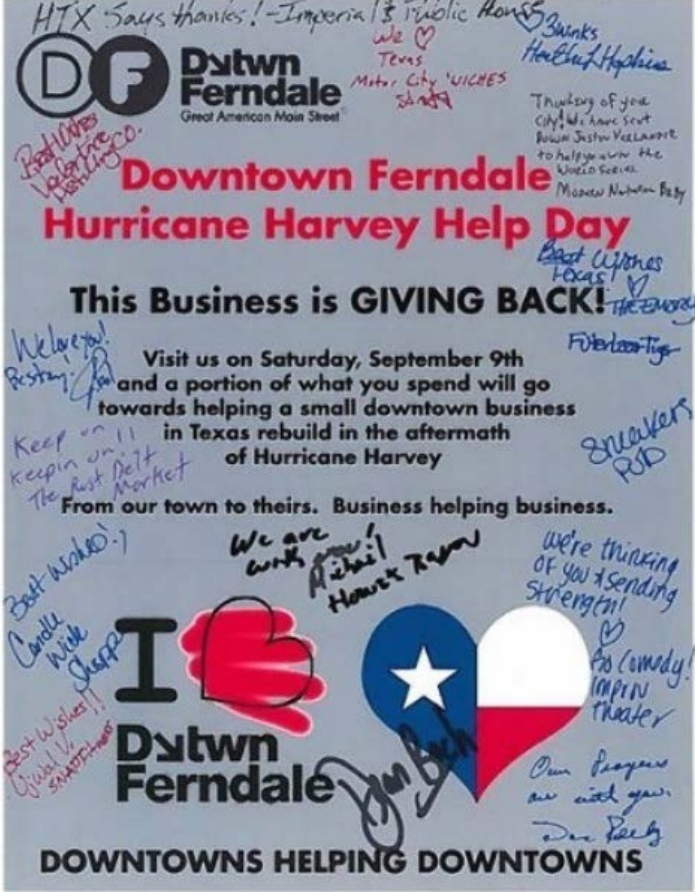
Enter Ferndale, Michigan—1,100 miles away from Texas. On September 9, two weeks after the storm, the Ferndale Main Street program held a Hurricane Harvey Help Day. Downtown merchants contributed portions of their sales to help those impacted in Cuero and La Grange, and ultimately donated $7,000. La Grange is using the money to assist flooded businesses meet needs not covered by insurance. Cuero is applying Ferndale's donation to their annual Christmas in Downtown event, where they'll debut a new lighted attraction recognizing the generosity of Ferndale. "In the coming years, the attraction will serve as a reminder of how the community came together after Harvey," stated Sandra Osman, Cuero Main Street manager. "So nice to see Main Streets helping Main Streets," said Stacey Norris, Main Street and Tourism manager in La Grange.

In Danville, Kentucky, the merchants affiliated with the Heart of Danville Main Street program held a similar fundraiser in October and raised $1,500 for the affected businesses in La Grange.

After the hurricane hit Beaumont, they were "adopted" by their fellow urban Texas Main Street program in Denton. Both are over 25-year Main Street programs. When the Denton Main Street Association held its annual Arts & Auto Extravaganza event a few weeks after the hurricane, they decided to donate funds from their silent auction to Beaumont Main Street. The generous sum of $1,175 donated from Denton's event was placed in Beaumont Main Street's revolving loan fund. On another note, Denton merchants also donated 20-100 percent of their sales Aug. 31 to the SPCA of Texas, Red Cross and Global Giving, and Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund.



Funds were collected by the Denton Main Street Program in a silent auction, and proceeds went toward Harvey recovery efforts for the Beaumont Main Street Program.



Promotional poster for the September fundraising event in Ferndale, MI.

SPECIAL VOLUNTEERS

In each edition of *Main Street Matters,* we continue to spotlight those volunteers whose contributions and dedication are important to the success of local programs. If you would like to honor a special volunteer with a spotlight, please send a short narrative and image to sarah.marshall@thc.texas.gov.

Claudia Rogers, Grand Saline Main Street Program
Written by Lisa Morrison, Main Street Manager, Grand Saline Main Street Program

Claudia Rogers is a lifelong resident of Grand Saline and a graduate of Grand Saline High School. She is married to Randy Rogers, and together they have two daughters Ashley Baker and Whitney Rogers. Claudia is the president of our local Austin Bank Branch.

Claudia's roots run deep in Grand Saline, and it shows by the love she has for her community. She volunteers many hours by serving on the Economic Development Corporation Board, Grand Saline Salt Museum Board, Treasurer for The Salvation Army, and a member of the Athena Club.

Claudia Rogers

For the past 12 years, Claudia has served the Main Street Program in various capacities. Currently she is on the Main Street Advisory Board and Chairman of the Main Street Economic Vitality Committee.

Claudia has spearheaded different projects by gathering information for our building inventory and "Doing Business in Downtown Grand Saline" brochures. She also volunteers at all the Main Street events and fund raisers. Claudia has done anything and everything she can physically, financially, or emotionally for the program. She believes like everyone else on the board that Grand Saline is on the edge of something GRAND. I know that this program and community are successful because of volunteers like Claudia Rogers.

Lynn Kitchens, Grand Saline Main Street Program
Written by Lisa Morrison, Main Street Manager, Grand Saline Main Street Program

Lynn Kitchens has had a career in tourism and marketing beginning as a docent at the Salt Palace Visitors Center in Grand Saline in 1995. Lynn used her passion for history to help develop the Salt Palace Museum and worked with other Van Zandt County entities to develop a county-wide networking organization for tourism and the sharing of local information.

The Grand Saline Economic Development Corporation hired Lynn in in 1997, and after seeing the successes of several area cities with the Texas Main Street Program, Lynn spearheaded a campaign to apply for the program. After gaining support from the community and city leaders, Lynn led a group to submit the application. This resulted in the selection of Grand Saline to the Main Street Program in 2004, where Lynn was the program manager from 2004 through 2007. Lynn returned to the Main Street Program in 2009 as a Main Street Manager, but this time for Canton, Texas, where she was the program's manager and assistant economic development and marketing director until 2014. She still lived in Grand Saline during this time as well. Grand Saline was gifted once again with Lynn coming

REAL PLACES CONFERENCE 2018

Mark your calendars! The Real Places 2018 Conference is coming to Austin January 10-12, 2018. Join us to preserve the legacy of the Lone Star State.

Featured speakers include noted Texas writer Joe Nick Patoski, preservation economist Donovan Rypkema, social preservationist Dr. Andrea Roberts, and preservation anarchist Franklin Vagnone. Entertainment will be provided by the legendary Ray Benson (of Asleep at the Wheel) and the Peterson Brothers.

Agenda available at www.thcfriends.org/real-places-2018. Last day to register is January 3, 2018. Register online here.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the Bastrop Main Street Program and its director, Sarah O'Brien, for becoming a top 10 finalist for the highly acclaimed Small Business Revolution—Main Street Series. The winner will win a $500,000 makeover from Deluxe and be featured in an eight-part series on smallbusinessrevolution.org. The winner will be announced in late February. See announcement and image source here.

back to our community. Lynn's career is now in banking, but her love of Grand Saline's rich history and the community itself brought her into the Main Street Program once again; this time serving as chairman of the Main Street Advisory Board. Lynn's knowledge of the program and history of our community continues to be a gift to the program. In addition to serving Main Street, she continues to serve on several county boards including the Van Zandt County Historical Commission.

Lynn Kitchens

The Grand Saline Main Street Program has been richly gifted by Lynn Kitchens. Lynn laid the foundation for the program and has continues to build and reinforce our walls.

CONGRATULATIONS

At the annual Texas Downtown conference last month, Goliad Main Street Manager Keli Miller, Chair Pat Morales, and board member Ida Hernandez won the cash prize in the downtown scavenger hunt. They used their winnings to create Goliad Main Street's 1st Annual Christmas Tree Project. See a short video about this impressive event on their Facebook page. Winnings were used to purchase a large tent on the Courthouse Square. Local businesses in the Main Street district sponsored trees, and each tree was decorated by students and representatives of the local school district and related organizations. The decorated trees were on display the first two weeks in December, alongside the County Historical Commission's Christmas in Goliad event and the chamber's Market Days. The trees are being donated to 15 families in the community selected in a partnership with the local Sheriff Station and their Silver Santa program.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(Top) In November, just prior to the start of the Texas Downtown Association/Texas Main Street Program annual conference in McKinney, new program managers came together for a Main Street orientation. Texas Main Street staff welcomed and trained managers and assistants from Canton, Corpus Christi, Goliad, Livingston, Sherman, Vernon, and Winnsboro. We were also joined by board members from Corpus Christi, Farmersville, Goliad, McKinney, and Paris. (Bottom) In late November, Matt Wagner, Ph.D, —Vice President of Revitalization Programs for the National Main Street Center —visited Seguin for a day-long workshop on Building Your District's Entrepreneurship Ecosystem. The Seguin, Texas and Oregon City, Oregon Main Street programs were the only two selected in the country to participate in this pilot project of the national center. They are also receiving a grant to implement an entrepreneurial project through the Main Street program. Throughout the day, a variety of stakeholder groups brainstormed and mapped ideas for strengthening downtown Seguin's entrepreneurial environment. These included downtown business and property owners; service providers; and Main Street board and Economic Vitality committee members.