



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

AGENDA  
COMMUNICATIONS /  
FINANCE & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Renaissance Austin Hotel  
Bluebonnet Room  
9721 Arboretum Boulevard  
Austin, TX 78759  
April , 2024  
10:00 A.M.

(or upon the adjournment of the 9:30a.m. Architecture committee meeting, whichever occurs later)

This meeting of the Communications L Q D Q F H \* R Y H U Q P H Q W 5 H O D W L R Q V F R P P L W W H H K D V E according to the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, shall be open to the members of the items listed in the agenda.

1. Call to Order <sup>2</sup>Chair Donnelly
  - A. Committee member introductions
  - B. Establish quorum
  - C. Recognize and/or excuse absences
2. Consider approval of the January 30, 2024, meeting minutes for Communications & Finance and Government Relations Committee
3. Consider acceptance of donations / gifts-in-kind <sup>2</sup>(None) <sup>2</sup>Dr. Egele
4. Financial review <sup>2</sup>Estrada
5. Legislative Report <sup>2</sup>Aldredge
6. Communications Division update and committee discussion <sup>3</sup> Florance
  - A. Updates
  - B. Major Projects Status
  - C. Future Planning
7. Adjournment

NOTICE OF ASSISTANCE AT PUBLIC MEETINGS: Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may or services such as interpreters for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired, readers, large print materials, are required to contact the Texas Historical Commission at least four (4) business days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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## MINUTES COMMUNICATIONS / FINANCE & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Holiday Inn Austin Town Lake  
Sunflower/Marigold Room  
20 N IH 35  
Austin, TX 78701  
January 30, 2024  
10:15 a.m.

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*Note: For the full text of action items, please contact the Texas Historical Commission at P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711 or call 512-463-6100*

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### 1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Texas Historical Commission (THC) Communications / Finance and Government Relations Committee was called to order by committee Chair Garrett Donnelly at 10:19 a.m. on January 30, 2024. He announced the meeting had been posted with the Secretary of State's Office according to the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code.

### A. Committee member introductions

Committee members present included:  
Committee Chair Garrett Donnelly  
Chairman John Nau  
Vice-Chair Catherine McKnight  
Commissioner John Crain  
Commissioner Ted Houghton

### B. Establish quorum

Chair Donnelly reported a quorum was present and declared the meeting open.

### C. Recognize and/or excuse absences

Chair Donnelly stated if there were no objections, they would excuse the absence of Commissioner Renee Dutia. Hearing none, the absence was excused.

### 2. Consider approval of the October 26, 2023, Communications / Finance and Government Relations Committee meeting minutes

Chair Donnelly said that with no objections the committee would approve the October 26, 2023, committee meeting minutes for both the Communications Committee and the Finance and Government Relations Committee. Hearing none, he declared the minutes approved.

### 3. Consider acceptance of donations to the THC (Item 6.4)

Dr. Carol Egele, Deputy Executive Director of Administration, said that the donations noted were from September through December 2023 and that donations were a standing consent agenda item. She explained the two donations coming before the committee:

- A donation received from Rudy Rodriguez, EPI Electrical Enclosures, in the amount of \$5000 to be dedicated to the History Programs Division for the Undertold Marker Program.
- A reimbursement from the Friends of THC for the Almonte Land Purchase at San Jacinto Battleground SHS for \$500,000.

Commissioner Catherine McKnight moved, and Commissioner Ted Houghton seconded, and the committee voted unanimously to send forward to the commission and recommend approval to accept donations and reimbursements to the THC in the amount of \$505,000 as noted.

#### **4. Consider approval of contract amendments and agreements - (Item 6.7A and 6.7B)**

##### **A. Contract Agreement with McConnell & Jones, LLP (Item 6.7A)**

Dr. Egele noted that McConnell & Jones were the THC Auditors tasked with organizing, managing, and implementing our yearly internal audit, including risk assessments, producing all required reports, and presenting their findings to the audit committee. She stated that in October 2023 they presented their findings to the Commission, which voted to approve the plan and subsequent contract for \$36,000. She further noted that McConnell would be advising staff on Auxiliary Enterprise Operations which they determined to be too large to incorporate into their current scope. They proposed to split their scope of work. Dr. Egele said that the staff was requesting approval to increase the contract amount by \$39,545. Commissioner McKnight moved, and Commissioner John Crain seconded, and the committee voted unanimously to send forward to the Commission and recommend approval of the contract agreement which adds \$39,545 for the Auxiliary Enterprise Fund review for retail.

##### **B. Contract Amendment with Design & Production Incorporated for Star of the Republic Museum at Washington-on-the-Brazos SHS – (item 6.7B)**

Dr. Egele noted that this amendment would increase the end date of the current contract by one year to October 2, 2025, and increase the total cost not to exceed \$51,587,500. Joseph Bell, Deputy Executive Director of Historic Sites, noted that the above stated amount consists of both state and privately raised funds to accomplish the original scope of work. Commissioner McKnight moved, and Commissioner Houghton seconded, and the committee voted unanimously to send forward to the Commission and recommend approval the contract amendment with Design & Production Incorporated for Star of the Republic Museum at Washington-on-the-Brazos SHS.

#### **5. Financial review**

Chief Financial Officer Daniel Estrada reported on the dashboard for the first quarter of FY2024. He noted that any additional Supplemental funds had been rolled into the budget. He also mentioned that the UB funds for San Felipe and all Article IX funding had been received and was reflected in the budget. Strategic planning will begin in the coming months. He stated that there were no issues to report.

#### **6. Legislative Report**

Vaughn Aldredge spoke about several items including but not limited to:

- Interim studies through the Texas House of Representatives Cultural, Recreation & Tourism Committee. He noted that Representative Trent Ashby from Lufkin is the chair of that committee.
- Possible expansion of Heritage Tourism Program
- Finding a permanent home for the Longhorn Herd
- Centennial markers – moving the stewardship from the Texas Facilities Commission to THC. Chairman John Nau noted that staff will seek legislative approval for the transfer of the stewardship of those markers.
- Exploring the possibility of a joint curatorial and storage facility for collections and artifacts with other agencies.
- Undertold Marker Project – continue as is or increase funding to maintain original availability or expand.
- Preservation Advocacy Week in Washington, DC. He has agreed to be the state coordinator. He noted that Ed Lengel and Brad Patterson will also be attending.

## **7. Communications Division update and committee discussion**

Communications Director Chris Florance spoke about the launch of the newly redesigned website on January 8. He noted that software used to maintain the site was reaching its end-of-life, necessitating a new website. He reported that the launch went well, with few glitches, and that feedback has been positive. Problems that were reported were quickly fixed, with the rate of discovered problems being very manageable.

He noted that the first year of managing Texas Archeology Month communications between the Archeology, Historic Sites, and Communications Divisions resulted in the execution of a comprehensive marketing plan for the events, and that the French Legation State Historic Site TAM event drew more than 350 attendees, a 400 percent increase over the same event held in 2023.

He stated that staff was working on segmented email lists for certain demographics that will be launched in February.

Florance stated that his division was almost fully staffed. He introduced new hires, Lance Catchings and Ana Gutierrez who were in attendance. He stated that the Texas History Navigator Mobile App is up and running but has not yet been publicly released. Staff were waiting until the badging feature was added.

There was a question about badging. Dr. Egele noted that in February staff will begin working on Phase 2 for the Mobile App which will include the badging feature and is looking at an August/September launch. Florance explained that the badging feature is like a passport book but is digital using geo-location features.

## **8. Adjournment**

The committee meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

## FY 2024 Quarterly Report

Finance and Accounting Division  
January–March 2024

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Due to the change in the quarterly meeting date, financial and procurement-related information is current through February 29.

### **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND PAYROLL**

Accounts payable have processed 4,796 travel and payment transaction vouchers totaling \$25,680,547.39 through the period ending February 29.

During this same period, \$275,739.21 of procurement card expenditures have been processed.

For FY 2024, 15 payrolls (regular and supplemental) were processed totaling \$13,523,732.56.

### **BUDGET**

THC budget staff have reviewed budgets for 1,895 requisitions for Fiscal Year 2024, through the period ending February 29.

### **FINANCIAL REPORTING**

These financial reports have been prepared and submitted since September 1, 2023:

- 941 Quarterly Tax Returns
- Monthly Bond Fund Reports
- Monthly Sales Tax Returns
- Quarterly Operating Budgets
- Quarterly Performance Measures
- Quarterly Binding Encumbrance Report
- Quarterly ABEST/USAS Reconciliation
- Disaster Federal Funds Report to the LBB for SB 8 funding received for Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site (\$20 million) for the Fiscal Year ended August 31, 2023
- Federal End-of-Year Report for Federal Year ended September 30, 2023

# FY 2024 Quarterly Report

Procurement and Contracting Services Division  
September 1, 2023–February 29, 2024

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## PURCHASING

Purchasing has processed 1,811 purchase orders for the period ending February 29.

## HUB

The THC percentages for the period ending February 29:

Category	THC Actual	THC Goal
Heavy Construction	0.00%	11.2%
Building Construction	0.71%	21.1%
Special Trade	9.38%	32.9%
Professional Service	32.08%	23.7%
Other Service	18.90%	26.0%
Commodity Purchasing	7.53%	21.1%

The HUB coordinator and staff have updated policies and procedures to streamline and find new ways to enhance our good-faith effort in meeting and exceeding our goals.

Staff continue to reach out to HUB vendors for projects through agency-sponsored forums and other agency forums, as well as soliciting on the Electronic State Business Daily and utilizing the Centralized Master Bidders List for all formal bids and proposals. We are also contacting non-HUB vendors that could be eligible to be a HUB by assisting in the certification process or identifying those expenditures for supplemental reporting consideration.

## Quarterly Report

Communications Division  
January–March 2023

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Due to the change in the quarterly meeting date, most of the following data is from January and February.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Ana Gutierrez started on January 2 as the digital engagement coordinator, a position that had been vacant since mid-August. She has been helping ramp up our social media and email marketing efforts.

This quarter, social media topics included the hiring of Ed Lengel as executive director, the new THC website, Holocaust Remembrance Week, the FY 2025 TPTF and Preservation Scholars application periods, the deadline before the final rate increase for Real Places 2024, Texas Independence Day, and the Texas Revolution. There were also spotlights on state historic sites, Main Street cities, courthouses, Texas Treasure Business Award recipients and National Register of Historic Places listings.

African American History Month topics included features on Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Bessie Coleman, Prairie View A&M University, the Victory Grill in Austin, the Buffalo Soldier National Museum in Houston, Architect William Sydney Pittman and the Knights of Pythias Temple in Dallas, and Peoples Funeral Home in Marshall,

### WEBSITES

The new agency website, still [thc.texas.gov](http://thc.texas.gov), launched on January 9, with no disruptions to essential agency services. Training for using the new agency site has already been completed for Historic Sites Division staff and will be held for other agency users in the coming weeks. The upcoming months will also include auditing the content of PDFs on the agency website for accuracy, accessibility, and branding.

The THC website saw 251,076 unique visitors from January 1 through February 29, compared to 346,460 during the same period the previous year. The relative

decline reflects the ongoing process of content migration and URL redirect fulfillment from the old website to the new one, which is expected to be completed during the upcoming quarter. The site launched with redirects in place for top-visited pages such as the state historic sites landing page, the job opportunities page, and Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site pages.

### VIDEO/WEBINARS

Communications staff created a short orientation video for new employees featuring new THC Executive Director Ed Lengel. Staff also created numerous short videos to be played in April during the Real Places 2024 conference, both online and in person, including sponsor and keynote loops and 12 award videos.

### HISTORIC SITES

The Communications Division continues to prioritize the promotion of visitation, site amenities, and upcoming living history, historic foodways, and seasonal events at the THC's state historic sites. General promotion of the sites as well as upcoming in-person and digital events continue to be highlighted on the agency website, social media, email marketing, public relations, and paid advertising efforts.

Print advertising continues to promote visitation to historic sites with ads placed in *Texas Highways*, *AAA Texas Explorer*, *Texas Highways Events Calendar*, *Texas State Travel Guide*, *Authentic Texas*, and *USA Today*. Digital ads are running through search, native, YouTube, and social media to promote historic sites and convert clicks to our state historic sites webpages.

Through lead generation campaigns with Travel Texas, TxDOT, and TourTexas.com—as well as new subscribers on the agency's GovDelivery email network and collection of emails at the historic sites point of sale system—there are now over 320,000



email addresses to promote initiatives and events at our state historic sites each month.

Communications developed a marketing kit for promotion of registration for upcoming summer camps being hosted at state historic sites. Promotions continue for living history events, Texas Revolution-themed events, spring break, and other upcoming events at state historic sites.

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

We are in the process of interviewing candidates for the media relations coordinator position and look forward to filling it soon.

Significant media coverage in January and February included the listings of Dallas' Longhorn Ballroom and Congregation Beth Jacob of Galveston in the National Register, San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site, a World War I-era shipwreck found in the Neches River, and the restoration of the Upshur County Courthouse.

Press releases were distributed for the hiring of Ed Lengel as the THC executive director and the THC Preservation Award recipients (one statewide release about all 10 award winners and 10 individual releases about each recipient sent to their local media markets).

## **EMAIL OUTREACH**

The February edition of the monthly agency e-newsletter went to 137,928 subscribers and had an open rate of 24 percent. Some of the most-clicked links were the press release about Ed Lengel being hired as THC executive director, the THC Calendar of Events, the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum webpage on TexasTimeTravel.com, and the Texas Historic Sites Atlas.

We also distributed the Marking Time in Texas newsletter about the Historical Markers Program in February to 20,183 subscribers. We continued to distribute the monthly Employment Opportunities newsletter with job postings, and additional quarterly email newsletters are being planned for release in the coming months on the topics of archeology, commercial services, Texas history educational resources, and cemetery preservation.

Real Places 2024 email outreach this quarter included emails sent to most lists and listservs about the conference rate room block selling out and about the final registration rate increase deadline. Targeted emails were also sent to specific lists promoting certain workshops and tours.

Other key email outreach efforts focused on numerous webinar and event promotions offered by the THC and our historic sites, as well as the TPTF grant application period, THC press releases, the Friends of the THC, and Texas Holocaust, Genocide, and Antisemitism Advisory Commission emails.

## **PRINT/EDITING PROJECTS**

Print projects have included the winter 2024 edition of *The Medallion*, with a cover story on heritage tourism destinations in El Paso. The spring edition is in the works. We have continued to distribute the monthly employee newsletter.

We have designed and are in the process of editing the Real Places 2024 program and signage, and there will be several smaller conference pieces designed in the coming weeks, including handouts, inserts, and table tents. We are also working with the courthouse program on a new display that they hope to exhibit for the first time at the conference.

We also began the editing process of the FY 2025–29 THC Strategic Plan, a legislative publication that is required to be updated every two years. It is due June 1 and will incorporate considerable feedback from leadership, including division directors, Administration, and Commissioners. We are continuing to work with County Historical Commission Outreach Program staff to update an old brochure about their program.

## Digital Engagement Quarterly Report—Q1 2024 (January and February)

As of March 2024, THC email newsletters have over 361,000 subscribers, while more than 403,000 people follow the THC’s social networks.

### Executive Summary

- **Total Social Media Followers:** 402,790 (.54% increase)
- **Total e-Newsletter Subscribers:** 361,028 (-.6% decrease)
- **Total Impressions on Social Media:** 8,477,424 (17.6% increase)
- **Total Engagements (likes, comments, shares, etc):** 232,099 (9.9% increase)

### Total Impressions, Including State Historic Sites

- **Facebook:** 7.9m
- **Instagram:** 497k
- **LinkedIn:** 59k

### Engagement Rate by Platform, Agency Accounts

- **Facebook:** 1.4%
- **Instagram:** 6.3%
- **LinkedIn:** 8.7%

### Top Content

- **Facebook: Spindletop**
  - Reach: 1.4m
  - Engagement rate per reach: 2.6%
- **Instagram: James Avery (TTBA)**
  - Reach: 20k
  - Engagement rate per reach: 13%
- **LinkedIn: James Avery (TTBA)**
  - Impressions: 3.4k
  - Engagement rate per impression: 8.3%

### e-Newsletters

- **Total Subscribers:** 361,028
- **Total Subscriptions:** 738,795
- **Top Email Topic Subscriptions**
  - THC State Historic Sites Updates and Promotions: 319,215
  - THC e-Newsletter: 135,963
  - Heritage Traveler e-Newsletter: 40,715
- **Total Unique Email Opens:** 666,321
- **Overall Engagement Rate:** 39.5%
- **Unique Link Clicks:** 29,577
  - Last chance to save on Real Places 2024!: 740 clicks

- Real Places 2024 conference room rate almost sold out!: 710 clicks
- Past Matters: Friends of the THC News and Updates: 632 clicks

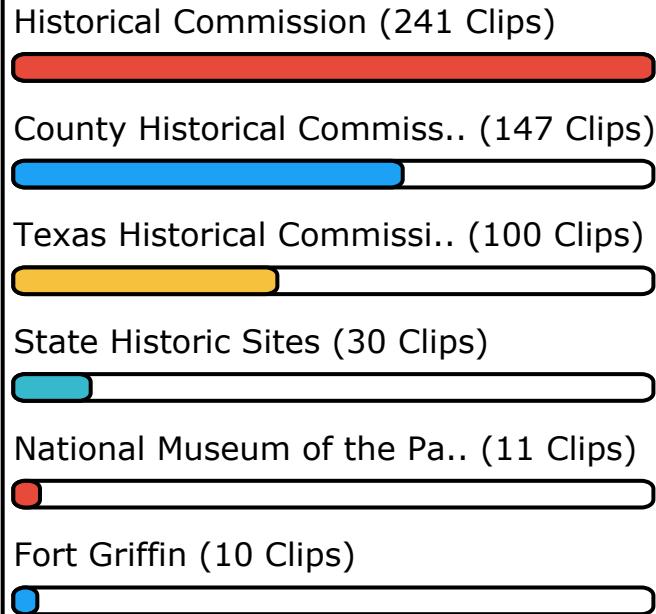
# TX0111 Texas Historical Commission

## February 2024 News Overview

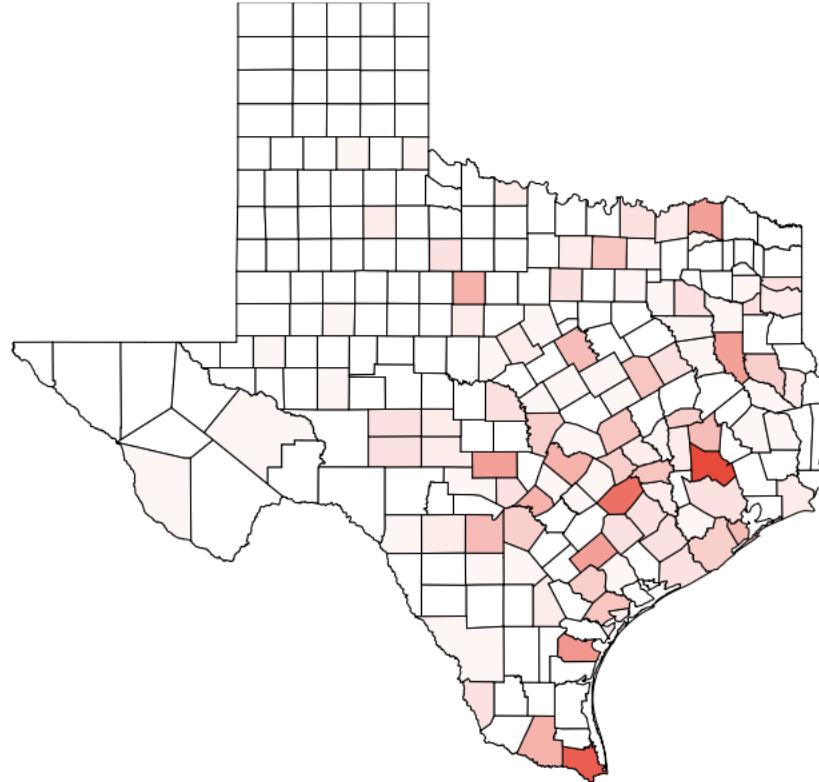
### Grand Totals:

Publications = 127  
 Clips = 312  
 Col Inches = 20,914  
 Ad Equiv = \$735,153.16  
 Readership = 3,987,419

### Top Keywords:



### County Heat Map



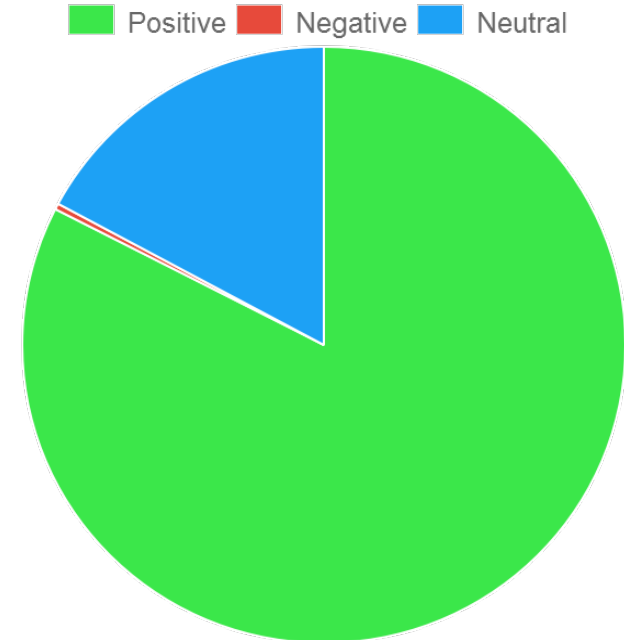
82% Positive Sentiment

Top Keyword: (241 clips)  
 Historical Commission

Top County: (16 clips)  
 Montgomery County

Top Publication: (16 clips)  
 Conroe Courier

### Sentiment Graph



Texas Historical Commission

### Key Metrics

Summary of key metrics indicating account performance, growth, and engagement.

**57.6K Change in Subscribers** [more details](#)  
Net change in subscribers to your account

**106K Change in Subscriptions** [more details](#)  
Net change in subscriptions to your topics

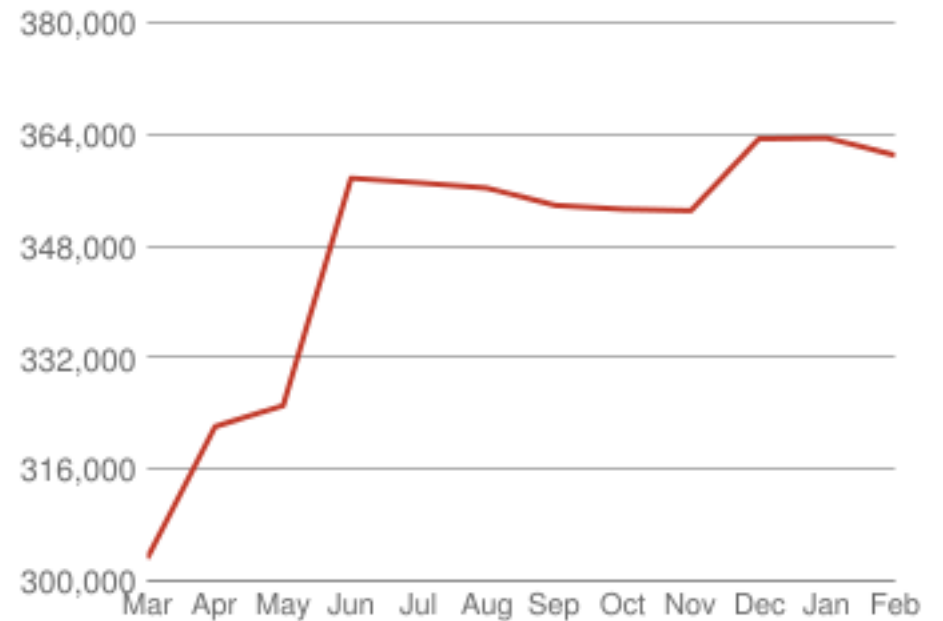
**2.0 Subscriptions Per Subscriber** [more details](#)  
Average number of topic subscriptions that each subscriber has as of 02/2024

**39.5% Engagement Rate** [more details](#)  
Percentage of recipients who opened or clicked on a link in a bulletin in 90 days prior to 02/2024

**5.66M Impressions**  
Total number of bulletin opens and link clicks

**120.0% Network Impact** [more details](#)  
Percentage growth in subscribers as a result of using the GovDelivery Network

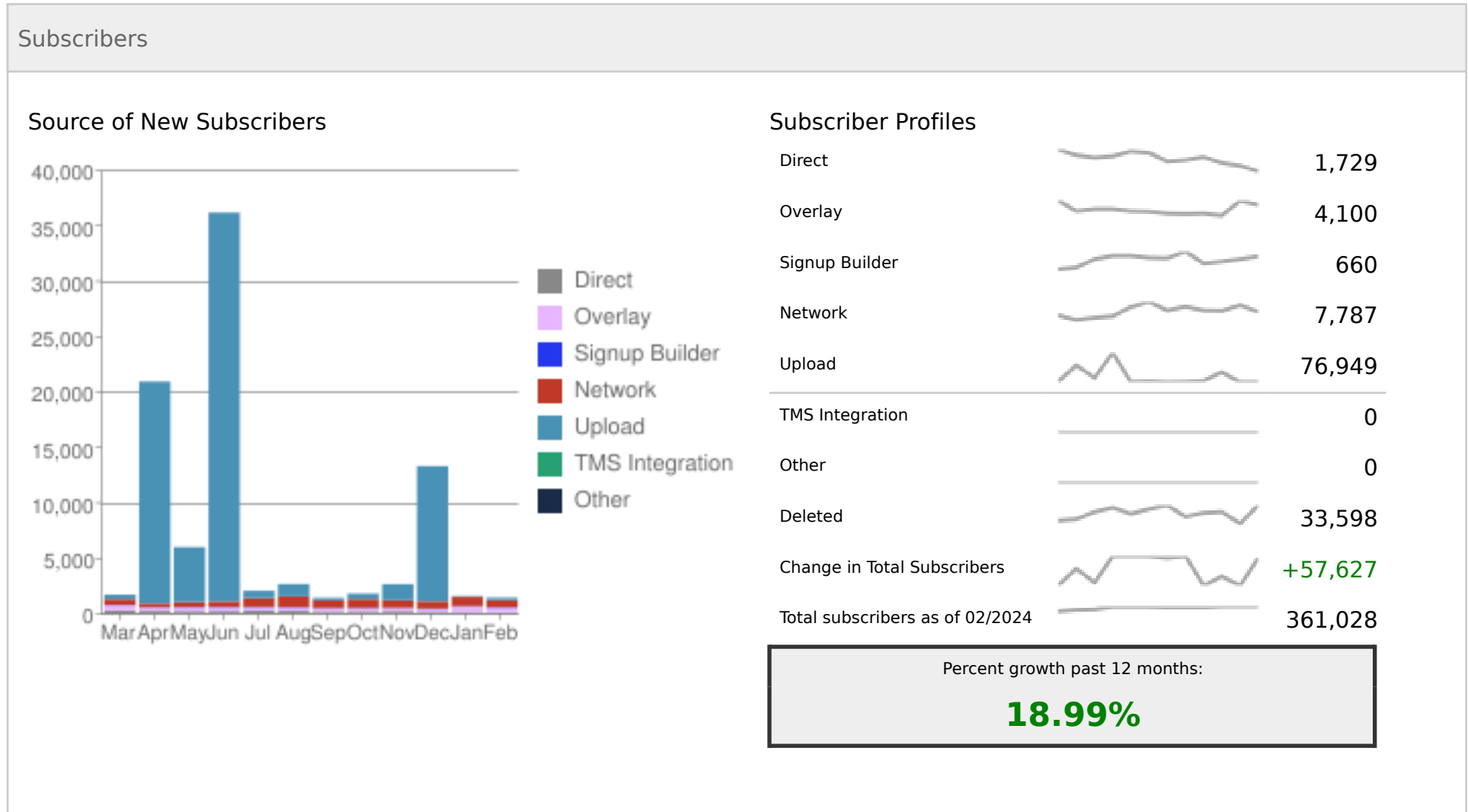
Total Subscribers



Texas Historical Commission

## Effectiveness

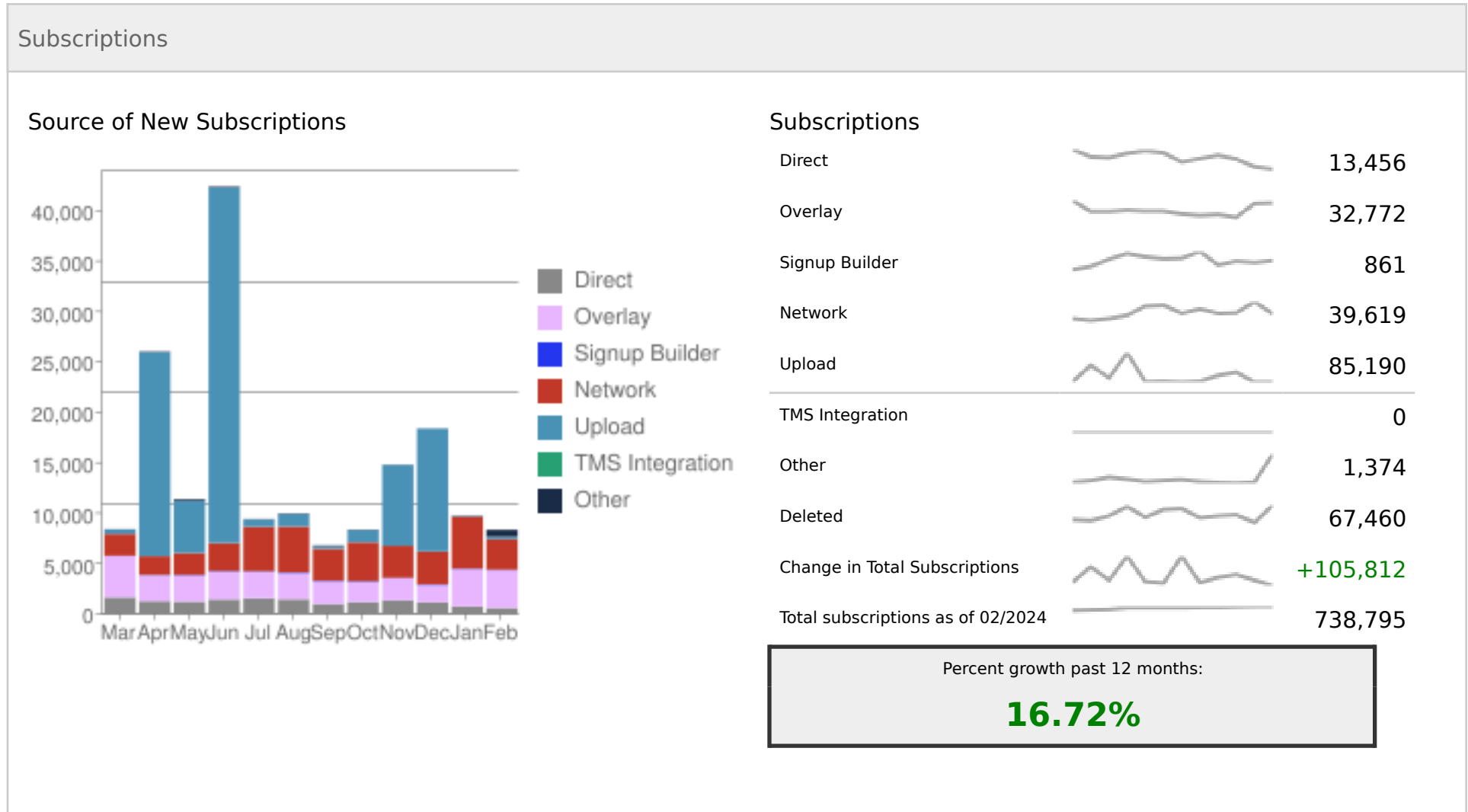
See how your organization is increasing reach and which sources are bringing in the most subscribers.



Texas Historical Commission

## Effectiveness

See how your organization is increasing reach and which sources are bringing in the most subscribers.



Texas Historical Commission

## Effectiveness

See how your organization is increasing reach and which sources are bringing in the most subscribers.

Network impact

### New Network Subscribers as Percentage of Direct

Month	Percentage
Mar	75
Apr	75
May	85
Jun	90
Jul	135
Aug	175
Sep	150
Oct	170
Nov	145
Dec	165
Jan	135
Feb	115

### Top Contributors to Your Account

Agency	Subscribers to Your Account	Current
Office of the Governor Texas	2,193	✔
Teacher Retirement System of Texas	1,041	✔
Texas Department of Motor Vehicles	372	✔
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services	326	✔
Texas Health and Human Services Commission	297	✔
Texas Real Estate Commission	262	✔
Nueces County, Texas	258	✔
Texas Education Agency	240	✔
City of Fort Worth, Texas	206	✔
Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts	199	✔

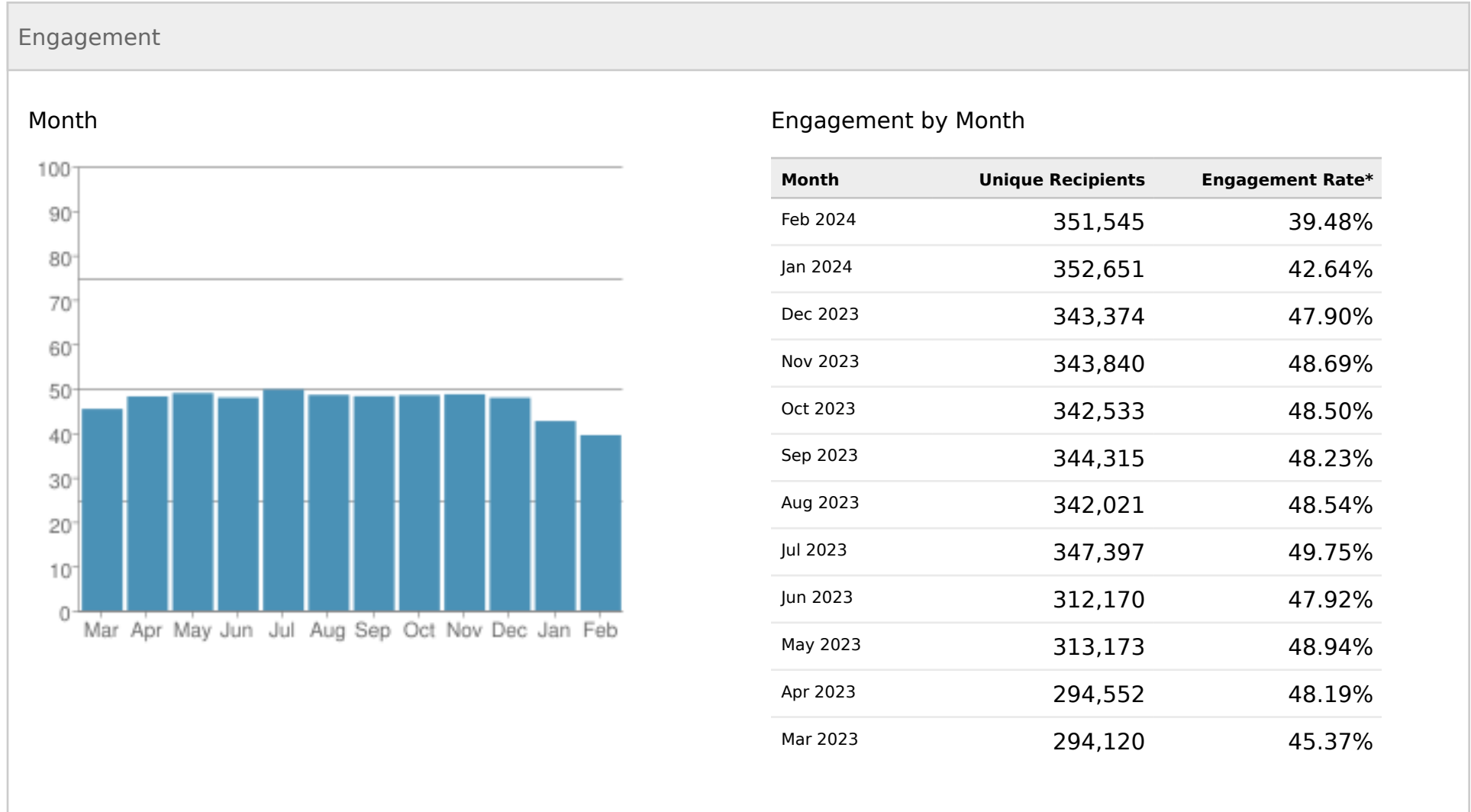
Increase in New Subscribers using GovDelivery Network past 12 months:  
**120.00%**



Texas Historical Commission

## Engagement

View your most popular topics and how many subscribers are engaging with your communications.



## Texas Historical Commission

## Engagement

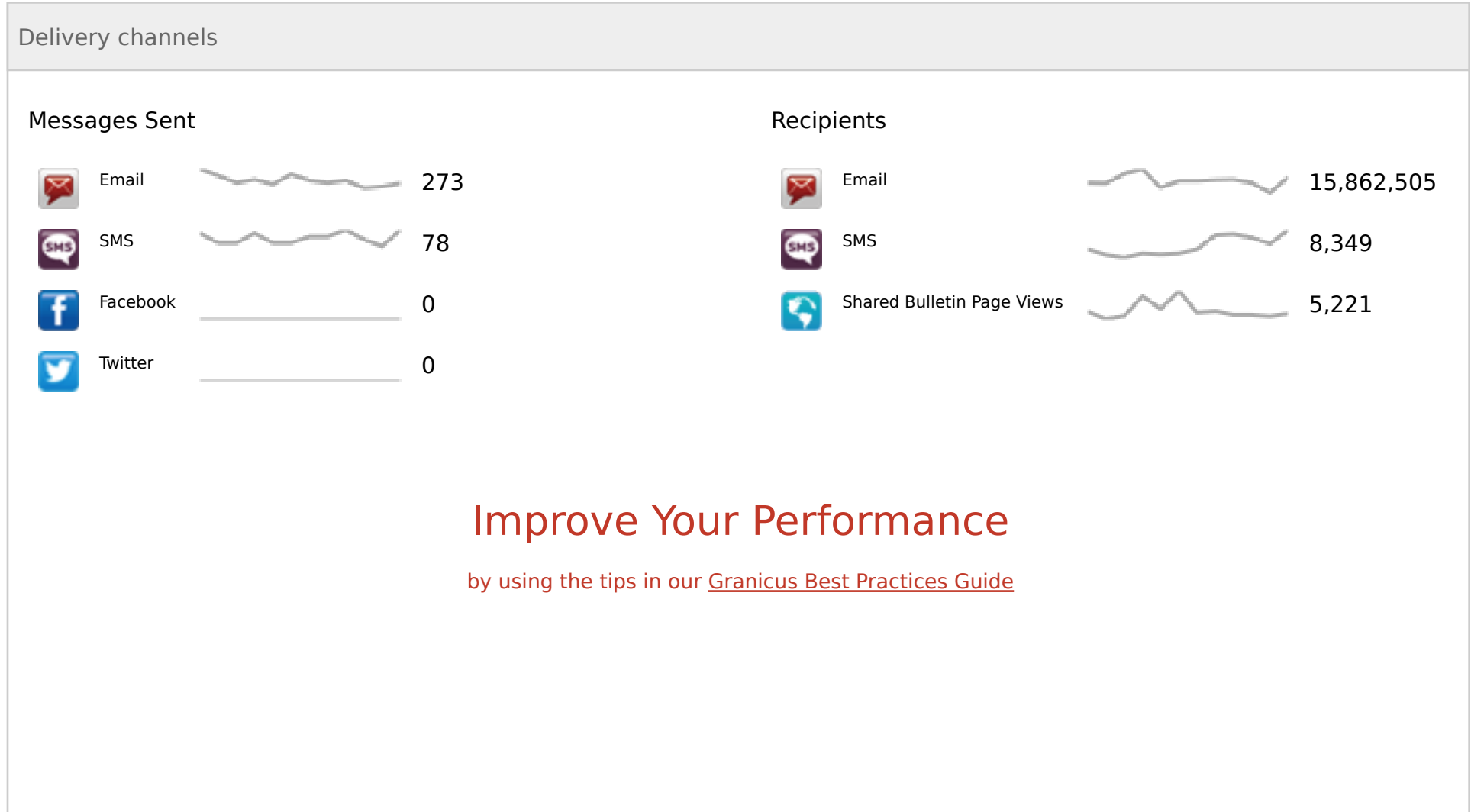
View your most popular topics and how many subscribers are engaging with your communications.

Topic activity	
<b>Popular Topics among Subscribers</b>	
Topic Name	Net Change in Subscriptions
THC State Historic Sites Updates and Promotions	46,200
History Museum Outreach and Education	8,371
2023 Friends Annual Giving Campaign	6,977
Historic Cemetery Preservation Announcements	6,292
Texas Holocaust, Genocide, and Antisemitism Advisory Commission	5,944
Upcoming Events	3,117
Texas History Education Resources	2,706
Archeology Division Updates and Events	2,703
Texas Heritage Trails Program Updates	2,680
Federal and State Tax Credits for Historic Preservation	2,353
<b>Topics with the Most Bulletins Sent</b>	
Topic Name	Bulletins Sent
History Museum Outreach and Education	75
Magoffin Home	59
French Legation	59
Upcoming Events	58
Casa Navarro	52
Sam Rayburn House	51
Sabine Pass Battleground	51
Washington-on-the-Brazos	51
Varner-Hogg Plantation	51
Starr Family Home	51

Texas Historical Commission

## Efficiency

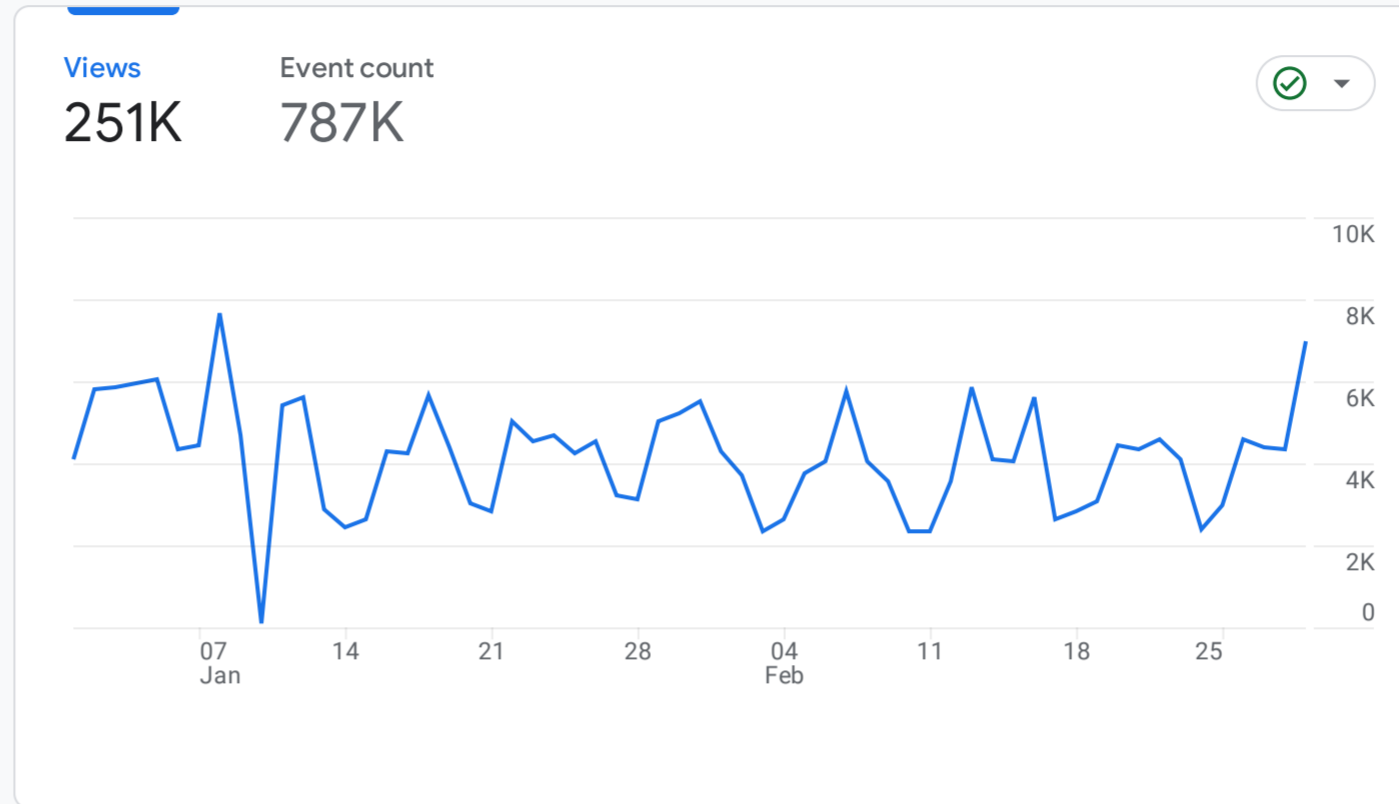
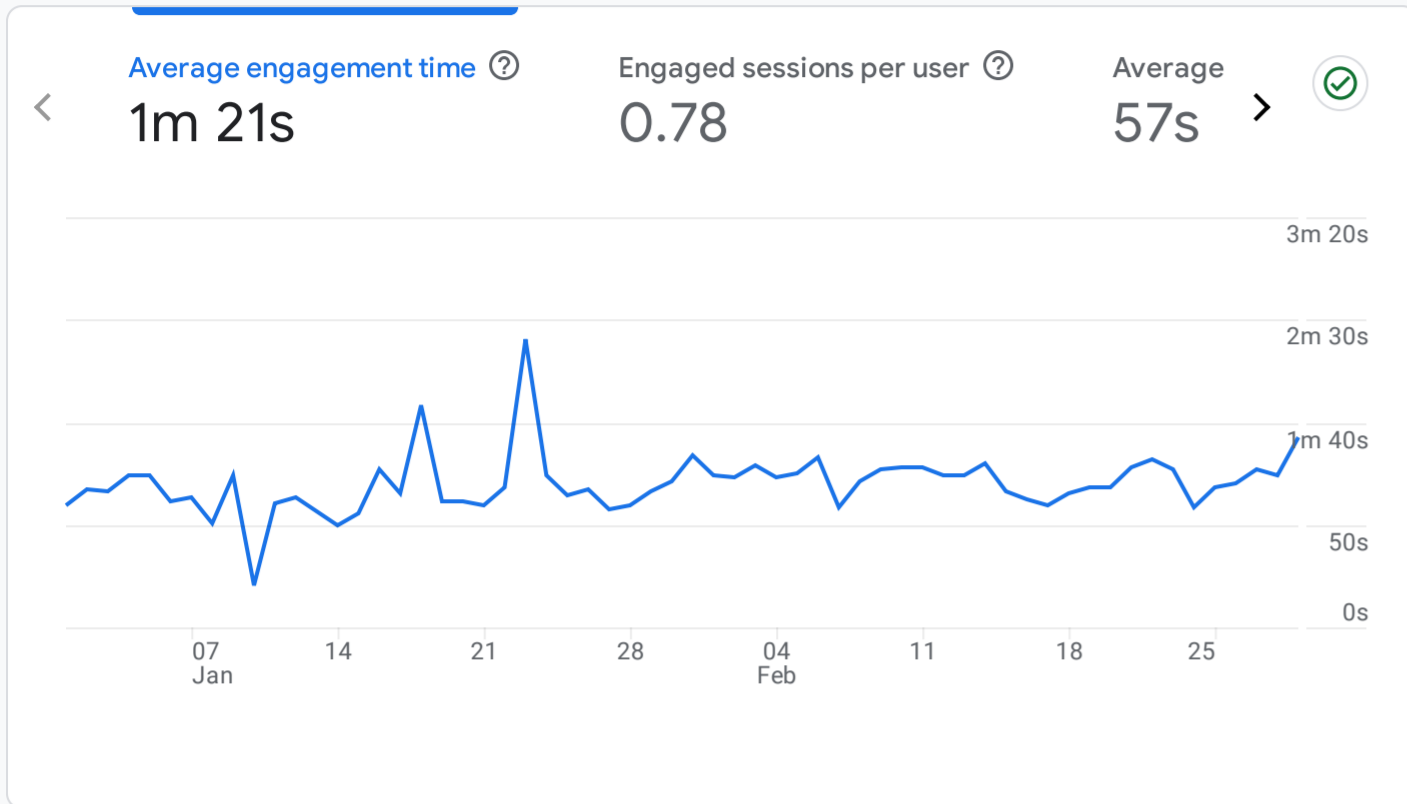
Explore which online channels you are leveraging to maximize the impact of your communication efforts.



All Users [Add comparison](#)

Custom Jan 1 - Feb 29, 2024

## Engagement overview



**Event count by Event name**

EVENT NAME	EVENT COUNT
page_view	251K
user_engagement	176K
session_start	132K
scroll	89K
first_visit	89K
click	29K
file_download	12K

[View events](#)

**Views by Page title and screen**

PAGE TITLE AND SCREEN	VIEWS
Page Not Found   Tex...	25K
Home   Texas Histori...	19K
Texas State Historic ...	8.9K
7 Best Historic Winte...	7.3K
Historical Markers   T...	6.7K
Search   Texas Histor...	6.7K
Upcoming Events   Te...	6.6K

[View pages and screens](#)

