

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

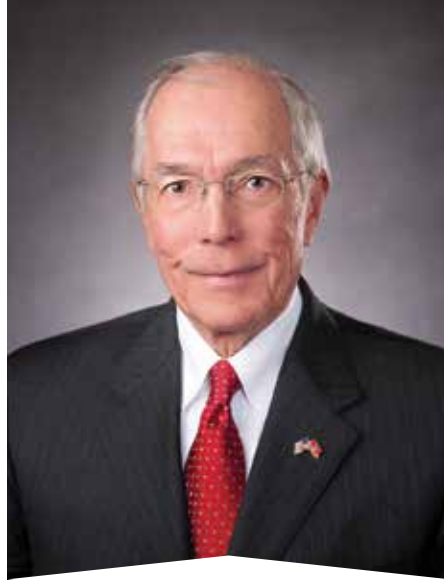
# HISTORIC HEIGHTS

— STATE HISTORIC SITES UPDATE —

2025

*Preserving a  
physical record,*  
**ROOTED  
IN REAL  
PLACES**

TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION   
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES



## THC CHAIRMAN **JOHN L. NAU, III** ON HISTORIC SITES

It's safe to say that the Lone Star State has made an outsized impact on the history of the world.

From our dramatic beginning in revolution to the winding road of the 20th century—when the economy of Texas rose to world prominence—the mission of the Texas Historical Commission (THC) has remained constant. Our mission is to preserve a physical record, rooted in real places, that helps preserve this history for our residents and for visitors from around the world.

One of the most effective and permanent efforts we make is through our network of 40 state historic sites that highlights the stories of the iconic places of battle, worship, politics, and family life where generations of Texans made their mark on our shared history. Each site adds a unique dimension to our mission of preserving Texas history.

This network grew in the past biennium as we added four significant sites to our family—Fort Martin Scott in Fredericksburg, established as the first U.S. Army outpost on the Texas Frontier; the Slaton Harvey House, a beautifully restored Fred Harvey Company “eating house” that served rail travelers for more than 30 years; the Iwo Jima Monument and Museum in Harlingen commemorating that significant World War II battle; and the

Stephen F. Austin Memorial in West Columbia, marking the site where the Father of Texas died on December 27, 1836.

Our sites welcomed nearly 800,000 visitors and reached over 830,000 people through robust outreach. The state historic sites generated more than \$5.6 million in revenue through varied sources, including nearly \$3.3 million in admissions, over \$1.8 million in store revenue, and approximately \$378,000 from seven overnight lodging facilities. Our sites host impactful public programming that inspires visitation and travel in and around our host communities.

In 2024, the Caddo Mounds Visitor Center (Alto) reopened after a devastating 2019 tornado necessitated a \$2.5 million renovation project that begins a new chapter for this important cultural site with exhibits on ancestral Caddo culture and a rebuilt traditional grass house. Completed preservation work at Fanthorp Inn (Anderson) addressed deterioration. At the Port Isabel Lighthouse, visitors celebrated the installation of the first illumination in 117 years—lighting the skies and the history of Texas’ maritime history.

We're actively preparing for both the U.S. 250th anniversary and Texas Bicentennial celebrations, ensuring our sites tell these important stories through enhanced educational

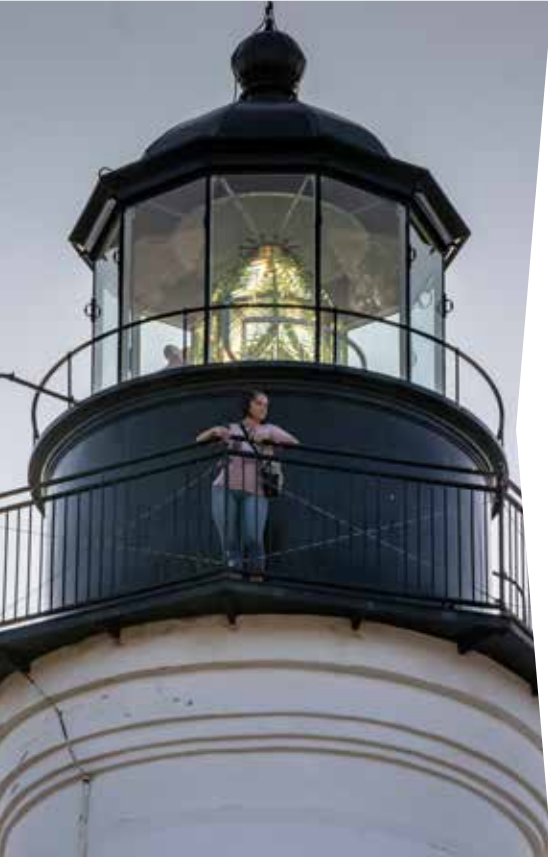
programming and multilingual resources.

Significant transformations are underway across Texas—at Washington-on-the-Brazos, the Star of the Republic Museum, and San Jacinto Battleground, where world class destinations are underway that will parallel visitor experiences at Gettysburg, Saratoga, and Pearl Harbor. A new Iwo Jima Museum in Harlingen promises a new landmark destination in South Texas, while enhanced facilities at Kreische Brewery (La Grange) and Eisenhower Birthplace (Denison) will offer visitors new interactive features and expanded interpretation.

The THC continues addressing preservation needs across our sites, including crucial stabilization work at the Magoffin Home (El Paso) and Varner-Hogg Plantation (West Columbia).

With ongoing support from the Texas Legislature and elected officials, we remain dedicated to preserving these irreplaceable historic places for future generations to learn, experience and enjoy.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John L. Nau III". The signature is stylized and fluid.



*Visit*

# HISTORIC TEXAS

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) manages 40 state historic sites representing Texas' history. Two museums are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. Four new historic sites were added to the network—Fort Martin Scott in Fredericksburg, the Slaton Harvey House in Slaton, the Iwo Jima Museum and Monument in Harlingen, and the Stephen F. Austin Memorial in West Columbia. The THC aims to enhance visitor experiences as Texas approaches its bicentennial.



## FORT MARTIN SCOTT

Located in Fredericksburg, Fort Martin Scott was the first U.S. Army outpost on the Texas frontier (1848–1853). It contains one restored original garrison building and three reproductions. The fort was crucial in protecting settlers and travelers in West Texas and hosted the unratified Fort Martin Scott Treaty of 1850 with various Native American tribes.



Fort Martin Scott is located in the Texas Hill Country Trail Region.  
[visitfortmartinsscott.com](http://visitfortmartinsscott.com)



## SLATON HARVEY HOUSE

Built in 1912, the structure was one of the Fred Harvey Company's "eating houses" along the AT&SF Railway (Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe). It served diners for over 30 years, was saved from demolition, restored, and opened as a museum, events venue, and bed and breakfast in 2006 by the Slaton Railroad Heritage Association. The site tells stories about the impact of railroads, women, and business innovation in the settlement and economic growth of Texas in the early 20th century.



Slaton Harvey House is located in the Texas Plains Trail Region.  
[visitslatonharveyhouse.com](http://visitslatonharveyhouse.com)

## STEPHEN F. AUSTIN MEMORIAL

A great lawn and marker indicate the home of George B. McKinstry, where Stephen F. Austin, the Father of Texas, died on December 27, 1836. The site has no interpretation (other than the marker) and no services for visitors.



Stephen F. Austin Memorial is located in the Texas Independence Trail Region.  
[visitstephenfaustinmemorial.com](http://visitstephenfaustinmemorial.com)



## IWO JIMA MUSEUM AND MONUMENT

The Iwo Jima Monument stands as a powerful tribute to the heroic actions of six Marines on February 23, 1945, who raised an American flag atop Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima. Crafted by sculptor Dr. Felix W. de Weldon, the larger-than-life figures perfectly recreate the iconic flag-raising moment captured by photographer Joe Rosenthal. Plans are underway for a new museum at the Iwo Jima Museum and Monument in Harlingen. The museum aims to attract history enthusiasts, veterans, and tourists, establishing the site as a destination in South Texas. Operation of the museum will be coordinated with the Marine Military Academy.



Iwo Jima Museum and Memorial is located in the Texas Tropical Trail Region.  
[visitiwjomemorial.com](http://visitiwjomemorial.com)



## CADDO MOUNDS VISITOR CENTER

Reopened on May 18, 2024 after tornado damage in 2019, the new \$2.5 million visitor center features new exhibits on ancestral Caddo culture, a rebuilt traditional grass house, and enhanced tornado preparedness measures. The site offers walking trails, educational programs, and is fully accessible.



Caddo Mounds is located in the Texas Forest Trail Region.  
[visitcaddomounds.com](http://visitcaddomounds.com)



## FANTHORP INN PRESERVATION

An exterior preservation project for the inn to address window, roof, and siding deterioration was completed in Summer 2024. The site officially reopened in November 2024.



Fanthorp Inn is located in the Texas Independence Trail Region.  
[visitfanthorpinn.com](http://visitfanthorpinn.com)

## PORT ISABEL LIGHTHOUSE LENS LIGHTING

The THC partnered with the city of Port Isabel to host the first official lighthouse lens lighting in 117 years on December 9, 2022. A reproduced 3rd Order Fresnel Lens now offers visitors insights into the lighthouse's history, maritime safety advancements, and service to the Texas Gulf Coast.



Port Isabel Lighthouse is located in the Texas Tropical Trail Region.  
[visitportisabellighthouse.com](http://visitportisabellighthouse.com)



## BUSH FAMILY HOME WELCOME EVENT

The THC welcomed the Bush Family Home as a Texas state historic site on May 23, 2023. Built in 1940, the Bush Family Home is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the residence of an exceptional political family who shaped state and national politics in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Residents included future President George H.W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush and their sons, Texas governor and U.S President George W. Bush and Jeb Bush, Florida governor.



Bush Family Home is located in the  
Texas Pecos Trail Region.  
[visitbushfamilyhome.com](http://visitbushfamilyhome.com)



## PRESIDIO LA BAHÍA WELCOME EVENT

The THC celebrated the transfer of Presidio La Bahía on September 15, 2023. Established in 1749, this Spanish fort played crucial roles in Texas development, including the Mexican war for independence and the Goliad Massacre during Texas' fight for independence. It prompted the rallying cry "Remember Goliad!" at the Battle of San Jacinto.



Presidio La Bahía Inn is located in the  
Texas Independence Trail Region.  
[visitpresidiolabaha.com](http://visitpresidiolabaha.com)

## UPDATES FROM AROUND THE STATE

### NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

The award-winning National Museum of the Pacific War continues to attract thousands of visitors annually. Having achieved accreditation with the American Alliance of Museums and designation as a Smithsonian Affiliate, the museum is considered one of the top military museums in America. Ongoing renovations and exhibit updates in the Bush Gallery continue to enhance the visitor experience. An interactive theater provides a new visitor experience to bring the war to life. A Main Street entry portal draws visitors into the outer courtyard of the Bush Gallery.



### WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS WORK CONTINUES

Phased construction that began in fall 2023 includes a new vehicle entry, a renovated state-of-the-art visitor center and conference center, historic townsite, and completely new Star of the Republic Museum permanent exhibits. The site honors Texas Declaration of Independence signers and interprets Republic-era life. During construction, Independence Hall tours, Barrington Plantation, trails, and picnic areas remained open.



### LANDMARK INN MEDINA RIVER DAM PRESERVATION AND SHUTTER INSTALLATION

In August, preservation work was completed on the circa 1854 Medina River dam. The scope included masonry cleaning and repointing and internal structural reinforcement. In early 2024, the site completed installation of historically correct shutters at the 1949 Vance Hotel, funded by Friends of Landmark Inn. These improvements enhance the visitor experience and historical authenticity.





## MAGOFFIN HOME STABILIZATION PROJECT

The Magoffin Home will soon enter the construction phase for the adobe and stucco stabilization project to address structural deficiencies. The project preserves an important cultural institution representing a multicultural family on the U.S.–Mexico border near the Rio Grande. Structural repairs are being designed and repair work scheduled on the visitor center.



## VARNER-HOGG STABILIZATION

Varner Hogg Plantation completed its foundation stabilization project focusing on historic brick walls and drainage. Improvements include enhanced visitor accessibility with new sloping sidewalks and a fully accessible entrance on the building's south side.



## CHARLES AND MARY ANN GOODNIGHT RANCH VISITOR CENTER, SITE ENTRY

The Charles and Mary Ann Goodnight Ranch acquired additional properties totaling 31.17 acres to protect the original cultural landscape and critical archeological resources. Acquisitions included an existing store that is now the Visitor Center and expanded Museum Store. The Friends of the THC facilitated transactions, with negotiations ongoing for purchase agreements. The Armstrong County Foundation has transferred three buffalo to the THC to maintain their exhibit at the site.



## FORT LANCASTER EXPANDS HISTORY

Renamed to Fort Lancaster and Battlefield in Summer 2024, this was the site of the only documented attack on a U.S. Army fort in Texas by Native Americans (1867). The battle involved the 9th U.S. Cavalry Regiment and Kickapoo warriors, marking a significant historical event.



## CASA NAVARRO, O. HENRY HOUSE

The University of Texas at San Antonio offered the O. Henry House to Casa Navarro to potentially reuse the building as a classroom to support Casa Navarro's operations, integrating it into the site's educational programs.



## SABINE PASS SEAWALL REPAIRS

Completed in February 2023, repairs included sidewalk reconstruction, tie-back rod repairs, and installation of a new drainage system. These improvements enhance site safety and preservation.



## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

### SAN JACINTO BATTLEGROUND MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECT

At San Jacinto Battleground, a project management firm has been hired to conduct a major capital improvements project. This project encompasses monument and battlefield restoration, a new visitor center, and various infrastructure and interpretive enhancements. The project aims to create a world-class destination highlighting Texas' journey to independence. The design team has been selected to include architects Lake Flato, exhibit designers Gallagher & Associates, and landscape architects TBG.



### LEVI JORDAN PLANTATION

Historic Sites conducted one-on-one interviews with community members regarding future plans for the Levi Jordan Plantation visitor center. Efforts are underway to secure ownership of the slave cemetery and locate the slave quarters.



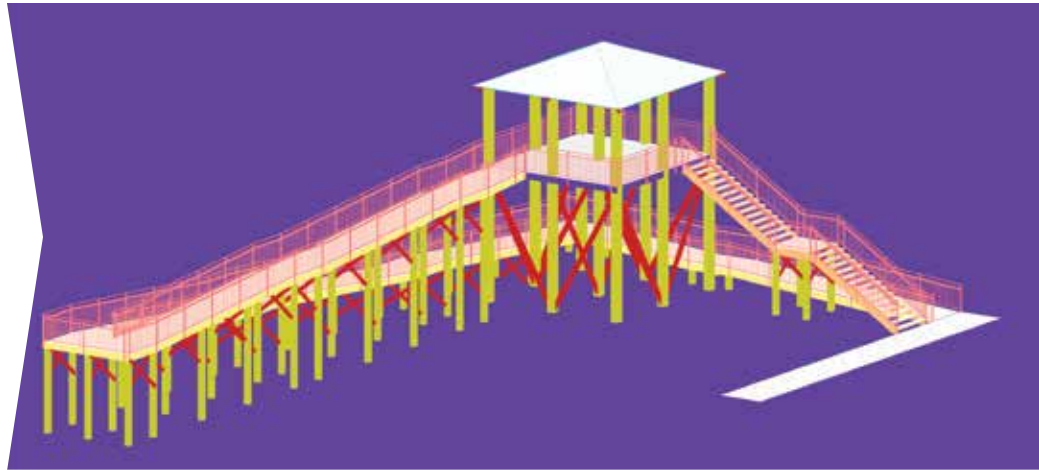
### PORT ISABEL LIGHTHOUSE CLASSROOM AND VISITOR CENTER

Historic Sites is collaborating with the City of Port Isabel to renovate and expand the 1996 Visitor Center. Plans include adding classroom space, improving restrooms, refreshing exhibits, and optimizing office space.



## PALMITO RANCH BATTLEFIELD ELEVATED VIEWING PLATFORM

Engineering design has been completed for an elevated viewing platform that will enhance the visitor experience at the last land battle site of the Civil War. The platform will offer panoramic views of the battlefield, allowing visitors to understand the landscape's importance. Interpretive panels will provide historical context, creating an immersive educational experience.



## KREISCHE BREWERY VISITOR CENTER

Historic Sites is planning a new Visitor Center and events pavilion to replace two outdated existing structures. The project will include updated interpretation, retail space, and address brewery structure stabilization. A new interactive playground has been installed on site to provide a learning environment for children.



## EISENHOWER BIRTHPLACE SITE PRESERVATION, CAMPUS EXPANSION, AND VISITOR CENTER UPGRADES

Historic Sites has completed landscape design for relocating the entrance, depicting "lost neighborhood" building footprints, and adding interpretive panels. Plans include Visitor Center renovation, and addition of gallery space, improved access, and restoration of the historic neighborhood character.



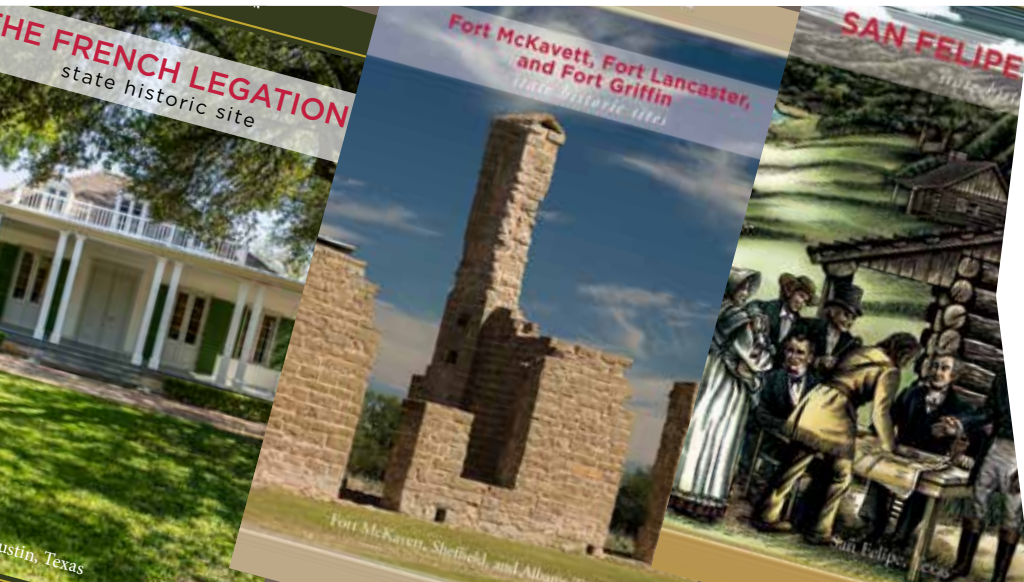
## BUSH FAMILY HOME LEARNING CENTER

Historic Sites acquired two adjacent homes for program space and approved construction of a maintenance building, enabled by a private gift. Work underway is restoring the site residence and visitor center.



## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND INTERPRETATION

State historic sites offer programs for visitors of all ages, including families, adults, students, and educators. School programs and educational resources are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Site programs are directly tied to their interpretive master plans, which guide interpretation of history at each site. Additionally, many sites feature living-history programs and work with historians to produce guidebooks in multiple languages.



## GUIDEBOOK DEVELOPMENT AND MULTILINGUAL RESOURCES

New guidebooks have been published for various sites, including Eisenhower Birthplace, Fulton Mansion, San Felipe de Austin, San Jacinto Battleground, and Caddo Mounds. These publications provide visitors with detailed information and support retail operations at the sites. Some guidebooks, such as those for French Legation, San Felipe de Austin, and Casa Navarro, are being translated into Spanish and French to cater to international visitors and expand awareness of Texas history.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND COLLABORATION

The division is focused on supporting site educator/interpreters by offering professional certification through the National Association for Interpretation, monthly discussion groups, the regular sharing of resources, and an annual in-person educator/interpreter symposium. The goal is to create a network of colleagues who can support one another, especially important given the geographic dispersion of staff and the influx of new team members.

## FUTURE INITIATIVES

Upcoming projects include continued updates to the educational resources available on our website, facilitating greater connections with teachers statewide, and programmatic planning for the U.S. 250th and Texas Bicentennial celebrations. The division is also working on tribal collaboration efforts, aiming to include tribal voices in planning processes. Additionally, state historic sites offer summer camps as part of a coordinated statewide initiative.



## COLLECTION STEWARDSHIP

The Historic Sites' curatorial staff members work to support collections needs and outreach at historic sites.

### CADMUS CUP PLATE,



### WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS

Made by the Boston and Sandwich Glass Company in 1824, this plate commemorates Lafayette's second visit to America. It's believed to be the first piece of commemorative pressed glass. Excavated in 1969, it was identified through a recent artifact reprocessing project in collaboration with The University of Texas at Austin.



### GUERRERO BATTALION CROSS BELT PLATE, SAN JACINTO BATTLEGROUND

This artifact belonged to the Mexican Army reinforcements at San Jacinto in 1836. It was conserved at Texas A&M University's Conservation Research Lab as part of the Summerlee grant project, which conducted a condition assessment of San Jacinto Archeological Collections.



### INDIGENOUS CERAMICS, MISSION DOLORES

These ceramics were part of the Mission Dolores State Historic Site Archeological Collections Rehabilitation Project. Funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the project involved multiple partners including the THC, Rice University, and the University of Missouri. It significantly improved collections care and control of archeological material from the site.



### ENSAYO HISTÓRICO DE LAS REVOLUCIONES DE MEGICO DESDE, STAR OF THE REPUBLIC MUSEUM

This rare book from the Republic of Texas period was acquired in May 2024. Titled *Ensayo Historico de las Revoluciones de Megico Desde 1808 Hasta 1830*, it was owned by both Stephen F. Austin and his nephew, Moses Austin Bryan, a resident of San Felipe de Austin.



### PINE BURR QUILT, 1894, SAM RAYBURN HOUSE

This quilt was made by Lela Grant Ballew (1876-1967) as a young woman for her marriage to Samuel Ballew. From the Star of the Republic Museum collection, it was featured at the Sam Rayburn House Museum Quilt Hop in June 2024, showcasing early Texan craftsmanship.



### NEW COMPACT SHELVING, CURATORIAL FACILITY FOR ARTIFACT RESEARCH

Recently installed compact shelving has increased storage space by 40% throughout the facility. This improvement has expanded capacity in the archeology vault, textile vault, and receiving areas, allowing for better preservation and organization of the growing collection.

# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Twenty historic sites currently have partnership agreements with nonprofit groups, with the majority serving as friends groups that provide support through fundraising, volunteerism, and local community promotion. The Nimitz Foundation and San Jacinto Museum Association have operating agreements with their respective sites and the THC. Of these supporting nonprofits, 17 are private 501c3s, and three are fiscally sponsored by the Friends of the THC. Additionally, staff collaborates with co-chairs, consultants, and other THC personnel to coordinate the Levi Jordan Advisory Committee in planning a new visitor center and updating site interpretation. The Community Engagement Program assists the THC's Interpretation team and sites in revising Interpretive Master Plans, which includes a community stakeholder process.

## CURRENT ACTIVE HISTORIC SITES FRIENDS GROUPS

- Bush Family Home Foundation
- Casa Magoffin Compañeros
- Fort Lancaster Company
- Friends of Caddo Mounds
- Friends of Casa Navarro
- Friends of Fort Griffin
- Friends of Fort McKavett
- Friends of French Legation
- Friends of Fulton Mansion
- Friends of the Charles & Mary Ann Goodnight Ranch
- Friends of Kreische Brewery and Monument Hill
- Friends of Landmark Inn
- Friends of Mission Dolores
- Friends of Sam Bell Maxey House
- Friends of San Felipe de Austin
- Friends of Starr Family Home
- Varner-Hogg Volunteers
- Washington on the Brazos Historical Foundation



## VISITATION AND REVENUE AT OUR SITES



**800,000**  
TOTAL VISITORS

**830,000**

PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS

**22,696**

PEAK MONTHLY VISITORS  
(MARCH 2024)



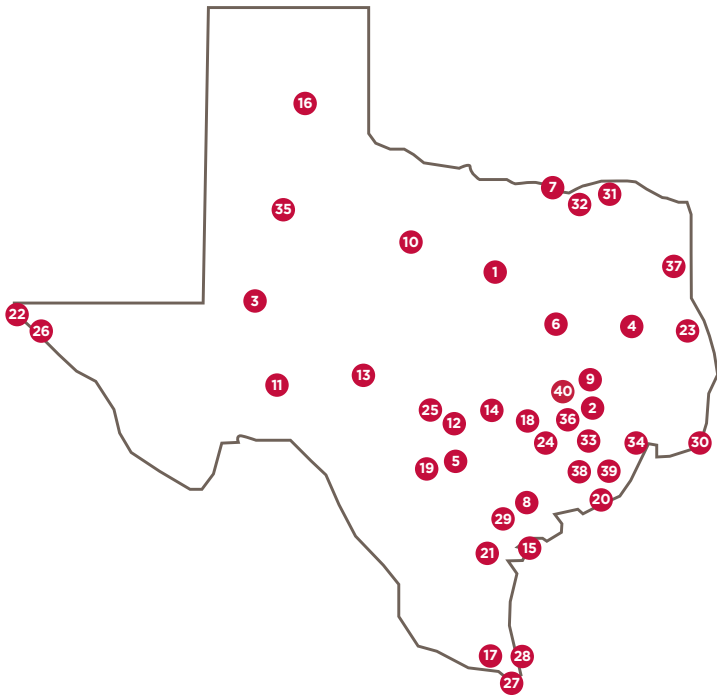
**\$5.6 million**  
TOTAL BIENNIUM REVENUE

**\$3.3 million**  
ADMISSIONS

**\$1.8 million**  
GIFT SHOPS

**\$378,000**  
OVERNIGHT REVENUE (7 FACILITIES)

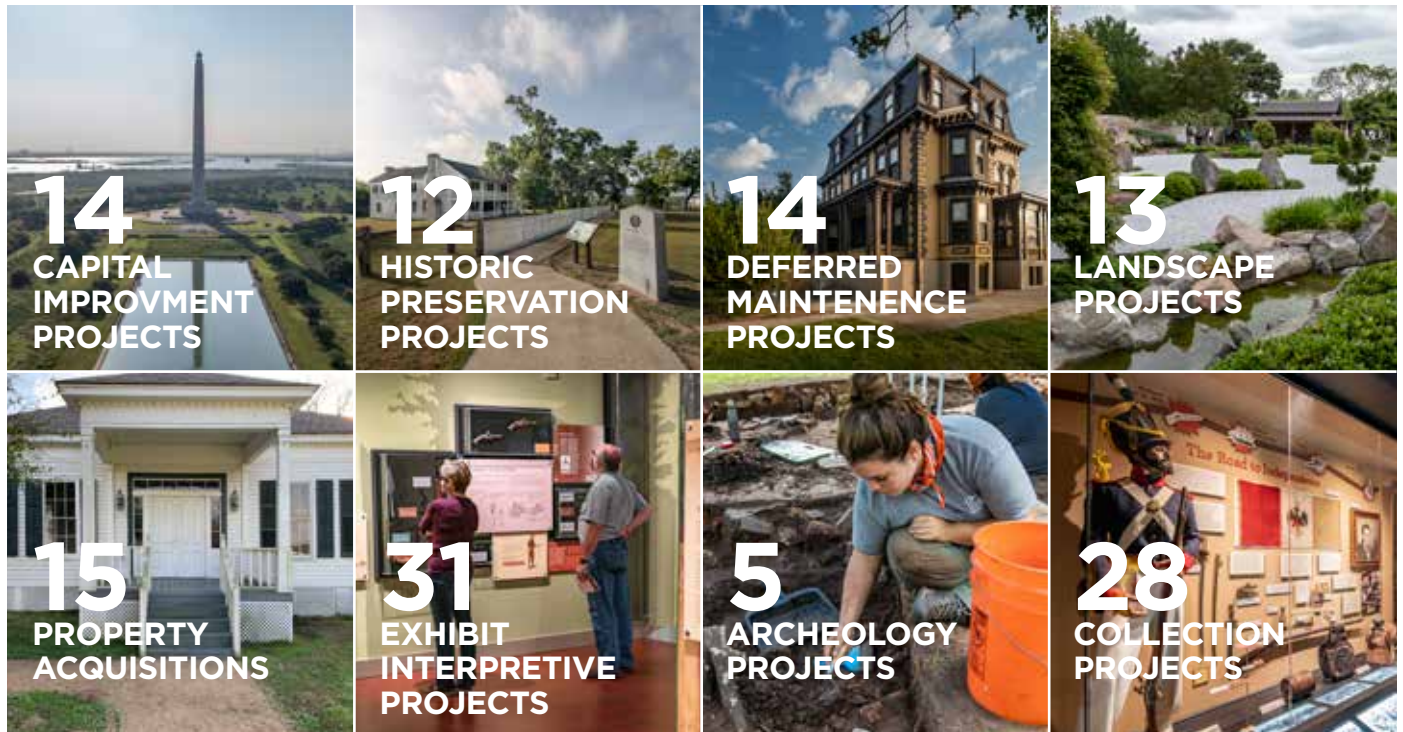
# OUR 40 STATE HISTORIC SITES



- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Acton                           | 21 Lipantitlan                        |
| 2 Barrington Plantation           | 22 Magoffin Home                      |
| 3 Bush Family Home                | 23 Mission Dolores                    |
| 4 Caddo Mounds                    | 24 Monument Hill                      |
| 5 Casa Navarro                    | 25 National Museum of the Pacific War |
| 6 Confederate Reunion Grounds     | 26 Old Socorro Mission                |
| 7 Eisenhower Birthplace           | 27 Palmito Ranch Battlefield          |
| 8 Fannin Battleground             | 28 Port Isabel Lighthouse             |
| 9 Fanthorp Inn                    | 29 Presidio la Bahía                  |
| 10 Fort Griffin                   | 30 Sabine Pass Battleground           |
| 11 Fort Lancaster and Battlefield | 31 Sam Bell Maxey House               |
| 12 Fort Martin Scott              | 32 Sam Rayburn House                  |
| 13 Fort McKavett                  | 33 San Felipe de Austin               |
| 14 French Legation                | 34 San Jacinto Battleground           |
| 15 Fulton Mansion                 | 35 Slaton Harvey House                |
| 16 Goodnight Ranch                | 36 Star of the Republic Museum        |
| 17 Iwo Jima Museum and Monument   | 37 Starr Family Home                  |
| 18 Kreische Brewery               | 38 Stephen F. Austin Memorial         |
| 19 Landmark Inn                   | 39 Varner-Hogg Plantation             |
| 20 Levi Jordan Plantation         | 40 Washington-on-the-Brazos           |

## MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS COMPLETED OR UNDER DEVELOPMENT

The following is an overview of projects completed or under development to date to enhance the visitor experience. There is over \$260 million invested and budgeted for the network of state historic sites. The total amount includes privately raised funds, federal funds, and state appropriations. Funding is included for capital improvement, historic preservation, major deferred maintenance, landscape upgrades, property acquisitions, exhibit interpretation, archeology, and major grant projects.



Visit us at [texashistoricsites.com](http://texashistoricsites.com) and on social media.



## TAKE TEXAS HOME WITH HISTORIC SITES GIFTS!

The collection of gifts sold at state historic sites features the homes, people, and animals that are iconic of Texas' storied history. Revenue from the sale of these items directly supports the mission of the Texas Historic Sites system. For the first time, customers can enter order requests on the web at [TexasHistoryGifts.com](http://TexasHistoryGifts.com) or they can shop for these featured items at select Texas Historic Sites, as noted on each items' web listing. If visiting a site to purchase, call before you visit to confirm availability.

