



# Main Street! Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

MARCH 2014 • COMMUNITY HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION • P. O. BOX 12276, AUSTIN, TX 78711 • 512.463.6092

One of the first things both the national and statewide coordinating programs recommend to communities applying for Main Street designation is that they generate broad-based local interest and support for the Main Street effort. To be successful, a balance of public and private participants is needed right from the start, including business/property owners, local government, residents, civic associations, schools and other institutions, banks, utilities, media, and other groups, and individuals representing a broad and varied cross-section of the community. Over time, maintaining and growing a local program depends on the continuation of that support. It is one of the most basic—yet no doubt one of the hardest—things that staff and other stakeholders have to do (which you already know!).

This month's Spotlight article showcases several interesting and noteworthy examples of effective volunteer-based activities instead of focusing on a single specific Main Street community. Occasionally spotlighting multiple examples of success on certain topics like volunteer management

in a single issue of Main Street Matters will allow multiple Main Street programs to be part of the Spotlight. If you have ideas for topics you'd like to see covered, let us know. Next month, the traditional Spotlight will be on Amarillo, a successful urban Main Street program since 2002.

## Productive Volunteerism in Main Street

### BEAUMONT

*Information contributed by Carolyn Howard, Beaumont Main Street director, (Urban Main Street program since 1992, nonprofit structure)*

One component of the Beaumont Main Street Program (BMSP) is a group of young professionals called Young Creatives for Downtown Revitalization (YCFDR). This volunteer group believes that successful growth of the downtown area is connected to developing downtown residential space. As of January 2014, approximately 150 people lived in downtown Beaumont, but the group and the BMSP feel that we need more downtown residents, especially in market-rate rentable loft space.

Several buildings in downtown Beaumont are perfectly suited for loft living. Plus, the Main Street district is a National Register Commercial Historic District.

During 2013, YCFDR organized and hosted a survey focusing on the need for residential development. The group organized a survey with distribution through Survey Monkey, social media, and email marketing. As a follow-up to the initial survey, to encourage additional survey responses, and to keep awareness high, YCFDR hosted loft tours, themed "Livin' It Up Downtown." As of late fall 2013, more than 400 people had indicated their perceptions and desires pertaining to downtown living in Beaumont.

More than 91 percent of the respondents answered positively to the statement "I am interested in living in a historic building." When asked about tall ceilings, wood floors, light, or architectural features, more than 80 percent in each category stated that these attracted them to historic buildings as residential space (Chart A). Almost 70 percent loved the idea of urban living, while 63 percent were attracted to being near the culture and

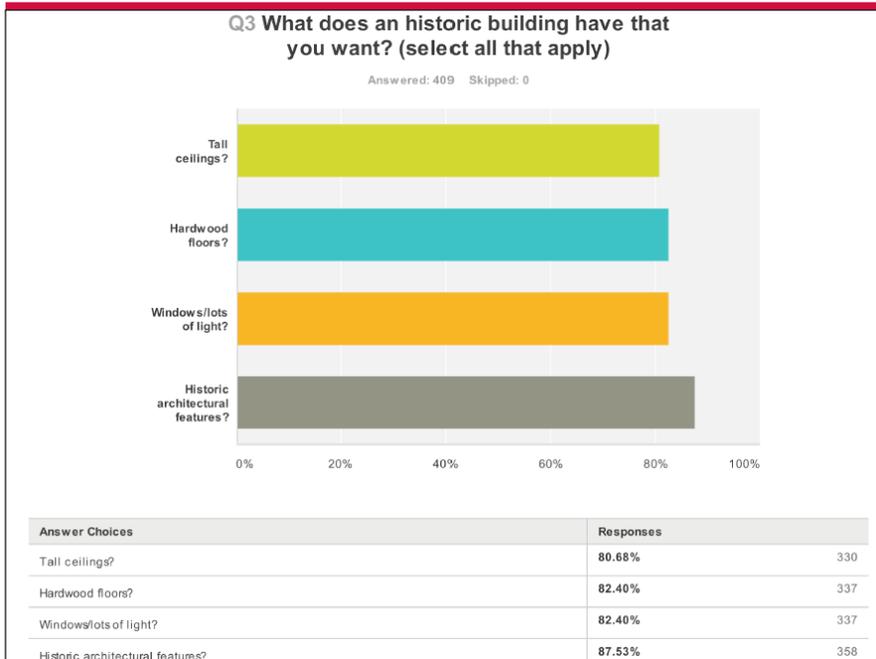


Chart A: What respondents like about living in historic buildings.

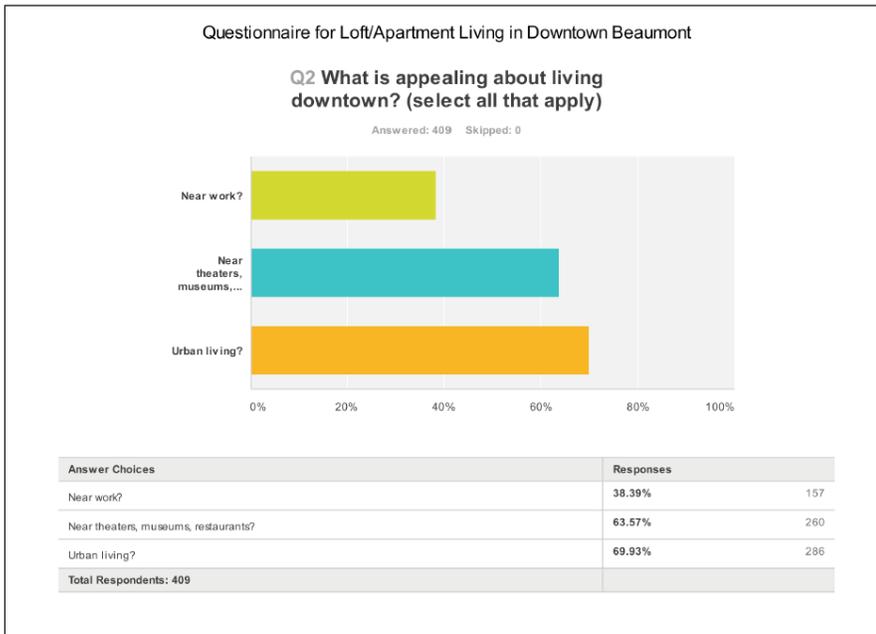


Chart B: Why respondents liked the idea of living downtown.

life of the city (Chart B). Other questions asked in the survey were whether true loft space (few walls) was desirable; what rents would be acceptable to the market; desired number of bedrooms and unit sizes; and amenities needed. Demographic questions, to determine how marketing might proceed, included questions of gender (56 percent female), and marital status (67 percent single), age (62 percent under age 34), income, and occupation.

The survey and activity generated by YCFDR helped the BMSP compile a list of 160 people who have specifically expressed interest in living in downtown Beaumont and will help direct future program activities during 2014 and beyond.

## EAGLE PASS

*Written by Joe Cruz, Eagle Pass Main Street manager (Population 27,283, recertified Main Street community since 2010)*

Eagle Pass “Back in the Day” started out as a Facebook page in 2010 by a local history buff, Jeff Taylor Sr., who wanted to create awareness of our town’s history by using one of today’s best networking tools—Facebook. I enjoyed watching all the vintage pictures that Jeff was posting of Eagle Pass. ([www.facebook.com/pages/Eagle-Pass-Texas-Back-in-the-Day/122008607891278](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Eagle-Pass-Texas-Back-in-the-Day/122008607891278)). In 2012, I contacted him to talk about an idea I had to bring his Facebook page to life by creating an event to promote our town’s history and heritage. In May 2013, we had our first “Eagle Pass, Texas—Back in the Day” event. Angelica Hesles and her family helped us by hosting the event at her well-known downtown store Hesles Sporting Goods (Figure 1). Mrs. Hesles’ son Richard and his wife Vanessa provided refreshments from their downtown restaurant Mia’s. For the event we had a variety of vintage pictures of our downtown that we picked from the “Back in the Day” Facebook page. The event was scheduled to run from May 13–18, but it became so popular that we left the pictures up for an extra week.

After this event, Jeff and his wife Joyce became volunteers for the Eagle Pass Main Street Program (EPMS) and have since participated in many ventures downtown. Last fall, Jeff and I wanted to have a “Back in the Day” event to highlight our local war veterans. Joaquin Davila, the owner of the Old Downtown Drug Store, offered his building to us. Jeff, Doris Miller, our board chairperson, and a few local veterans helped with the cleanup and set up of the building. On

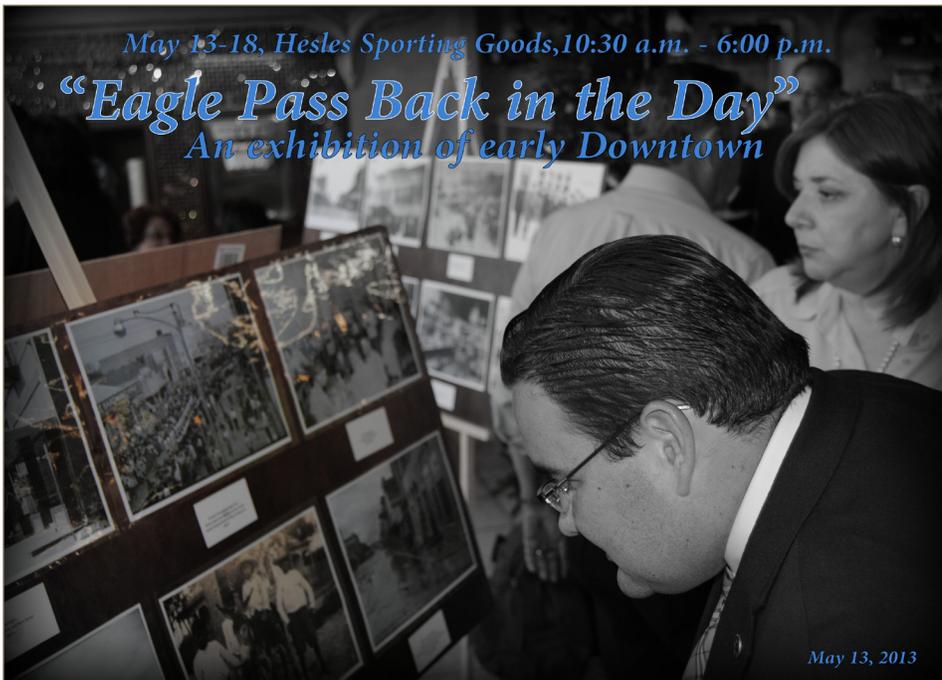


Figure 1: Many visitors attended the special Eagle Pass ‘Back in the Day’ event, including Mayor Ramsey English Cantu.

November 20, 2013, we had our second “Eagle Pass, Texas—Back in the Day” titled “Veterans of Maverick County”. We had many pictures of our local WWI, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam veterans. We borrowed many items from our veterans and their families. Hesles Sporting Goods and Maverick Sporting Goods helped us with some items since they sell army and military gear.

In January 2014, Jeff Taylor Sr. was nominated for the Citizen of the Year Award for his dedication to EPMS and for his historic preservation efforts. Although he did not win the award, it is still an honor to be named for such an award.

We’ve had much success with this event thanks to all the individuals who volunteered their time to put such an event together. We are currently planning a third “Eagle Pass, Texas—Back in the Day” event. This time we will be having it at the Fort Duncan Museum.

(Fort Duncan was established in 1849: [www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbf17](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbf17)).

## Elgin

*Contributed by Amy Miller, Elgin Main Street manager (Population 8,232, Main Street community since 1990)*

Elgin works with Elgin High School to secure young volunteers for the Elgin Main Street Program (EMSP). A marketing class at Elgin High School and a group called the REAL club both seek hands-on, relevant projects that can transfer to work experience. In 2013 the REAL club coordinated the Road Hog Car Show that is part of the annual Hogeeye Festival. Proceeds from the show were shared between the club and EMSP. The students and their advisor, high school teacher Bob Haisler, handled all of the logistic,

marketing, planning, and day-of efforts related to the show. It was a great success and had almost 100 cars! The marketing classes can work on specific projects like budgeting printing for a project, or designing flyers. A new project in fall of 2013 was to have groups of students create a short graphic-based story of the history of buildings downtown that could be viewed online via a QR Code. Bob brought the students downtown for a field trip, and I provided an overview of the EMSP, and the heritage walking tour. Thanks to a generous downtown property owner, Ed Rivers, the students also toured two buildings under renovation. Seeing the restoration in action really kept their attention. Two students from the REAL club attended the EMSP retreat in February (Figure 2). Students attend city council meetings, and in March will be part of the planning process for our Union Pacific property, which is slated to become a plaza community destination for downtown Elgin. In addition, Elgin has a new campus for Austin Community College, and one ACC student volunteers in our office around her class schedule.



Figure 2: Two Elgin High School students (right foreground) participated in Elgin Main Street’s annual retreat last month.

She started with the program in high school. The department worked with Bob to match a part-time intern for spring break and hopes to have a summer intern to help with Main Street and park programs.

## Denison

*Contributed by Donna Dow, Denison Main Street manager (Population 22,665, Main Street community since 1989)*

The Crew began with a conversation with a volunteer interested in seeing downtown Denison thrive. (He has since passed away, but the Crew lives on). It began as a think tank for two with a third party (the future Crew Chief) joining in. The founder wouldn't take no for an answer and wanted to put everything on the fast track. So to address our needs, we formed—the Crew. The timing was perfect as we were seeing an influx of new businesses.

The Crew was created as a volunteer organization based in Denison designed to help out our local businesses. Wearing bright matching shirts, the Crew (nearly 20 strong) walks the streets and alleys of downtown daily to pick up trash and look for items that need to be addressed or repaired (Figure 3). They are an ambassadors group that has been well received. The group members don't want credit; they just want to see a good business climate in downtown Denison. They were a large part of the reason we won the Texas Downtown Association Marketing

award for the Operation Increase Occupancy program. The Crew was also the winner of the 2013 Volunteer of the Year award in Denison. Note: Donna will be presenting a session on the Operation Increase Occupancy program at the National Main Street Conference in Detroit, MI in May.

For some time, I had been looking for a way to nurture new businesses. Nothing seemed to fit. We tried hosting a Chat Over Coffee, monthly socials, inviting them to our committee meetings, and other things. It

wasn't the original mission of the Crew, but it turned out to be an awesome side benefit. As the Crew members performed their daily walks, they came in contact with new business owners. Normally, they would meet the new business owners as they were moving in. Conversation, encouragement, and a helping hand were offered. This turned out to be the nurturing boost for new businesses that had been hoped for through other means.



Figure 3: The Crew, keeps an eye on downtown Denison, walking the streets, picking up trash and helping out wherever needed.

## Vernon

*Contributed by Dan Kelleher,  
Vernon Main Street director  
(Population 10,769, Main Street  
community since 2011)*

The Vernon Main Street Program (VMSP) strives to partner with our local Wilbarger County Historical Commission (WCHC) on any project that involves historic preservation. For instance, VMSP requested and received \$1,000 in funding from WCHC to help fund our Downtown Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program. Also, VMSP and WCHC are co-sponsors of our annual architectural appreciation essay and drawing contests. These contests educate both the contestants and the general public about the importance of preserving our local architectural heritage. The contests offer cash prizes and ribbons to winners and they are timed so winners are selected in April and honored in May, (Preservation Month). The chairman of the WCHC is an alternate member of our board; as such, he attends our meetings regarding façade improvement grant proposals and advocates for such projects when they involve historic restoration of downtown buildings.

## Storefront-ectomy: A Trend to Avoid

Over the last few years, the THC's Main Street design staff has experienced an increase in the number of design requests that seek to create covered seating/dining areas by removing historic storefronts on the ground floor level. This approach seldom

works to the benefit of the historic building or historic downtown. It creates an unfortunate gap similar to a vacant lot or new infill building being set back too far from the sidewalk edge (Figures 4-6).

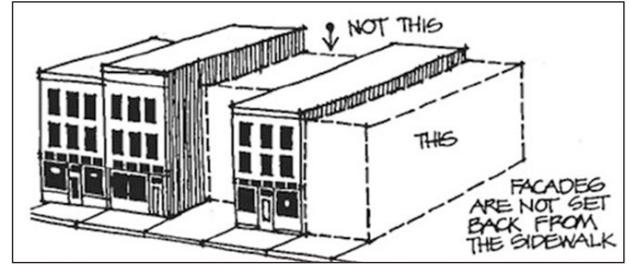


Figure 5: Center storefront removed.

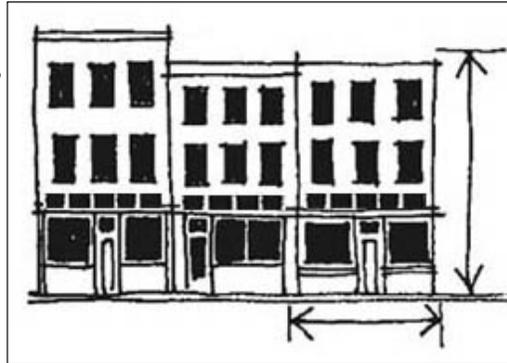


Figure 4: Traditional Streetscape proportions and rhythm.

The newly hollowed-out space can be gussied up with lighting, banners, business ads, pictures and color so it doesn't appear to be a big black hole, but there is no denying the fact that something important is missing (Figure 7).

It is astonishing to hear people wanting to remove historic elements simply to provide open air lunch or dinner areas. It's much more prudent to concentrate seating areas to the sidewalk and use traditional means—awning and canopies—to provide shade rather than remove historic materials.

Look at creative alternatives to expand areas for outdoor seating. Could the sidewalk be expanded? Could portions of the parking lane be used for outdoor seating? "Parklets" are becoming more popular in many cities as pedestrian-friendliness is valued over an auto-dominance. In the example from Milwaukee (Figure

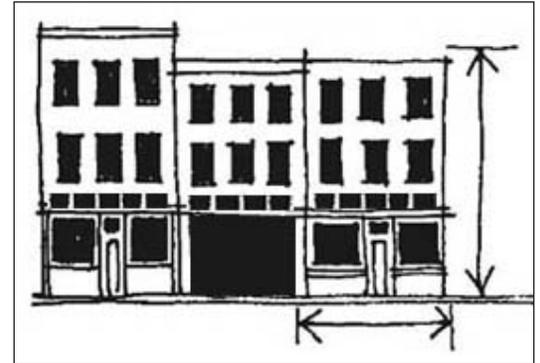


Figure 6: Center storefront removed.

8), three car spaces were removed and a decking system was installed that added 14 outdoor tables. These efforts have resulted in a wonderful downtown ambience.



Figure 7: Examples of hollowed-out spaces.



Figure 8: Milwaukee parklet. (Source: [www.jsonline.com/business/two-east-side-parking-spaces-replaced-by-14-outdoor-dining-tables-b9982256z1-220860751.html](http://www.jsonline.com/business/two-east-side-parking-spaces-replaced-by-14-outdoor-dining-tables-b9982256z1-220860751.html))

Likewise in Austin, (Figure 9), two parking spaces have been removed for a parklet. Changes like these can be temporary or permanent.



Figure 9: Austin parklet.

Many “better street” resources are out there, some of which have already been discussed on the Main Street listserv that can save our historic storefronts. Here are just a few:

- <http://betterblock.org/>
- [www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets)
- [www.sf-planning.org/ftp/BetterStreets/index.htm](http://www.sf-planning.org/ftp/BetterStreets/index.htm)
- [www.pps.org/](http://www.pps.org/)
- [www.communitymatters.org/](http://www.communitymatters.org/)

Remember, respecting the traditional building design is important—the raised bulkhead, entry doors, transom windows, and columns (Figure 10).

You might ask, “What can be done if the historic storefront is

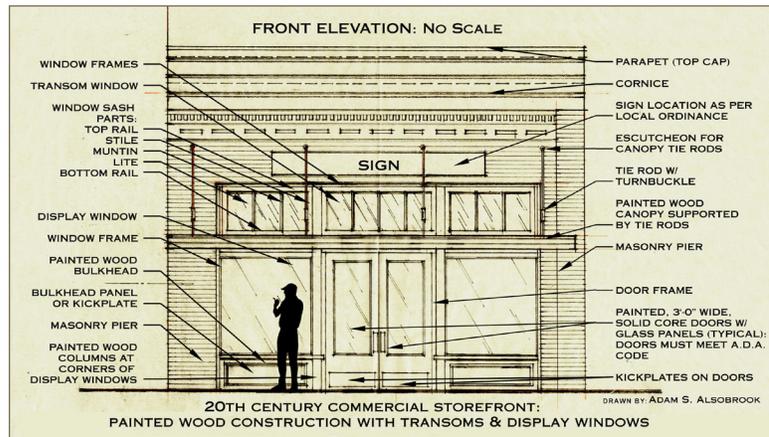


Figure 10: 20th Century storefront (staff drawing).

gone?” First of all, assess the current storefront appearance and determine if it still maintains its historic integrity. For example, pigmented structural glass is a “new” material that was used to modernize storefronts. Today, a storefront with pigmented structural glass (Figure 11) might meet the general historic rule of 50 years or older, and therefore should be retained in accordance with the Secretary of the Interiors Standards #4: “Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.” This will be easier to accomplish for cities with good design guidelines and ordinances.



Figure 11: Decorative Pigmented structural glass., Durango, CO (photo: Darius Bryjka)

Figure 12 shows an example of a building that was modified. The existing building, (top) had pigmented structural glass with a window display layout common

in the early to mid-20th century. Though the building is rather plain in its current appearance, rather than discarding the storefront completely, much can be done with signage and window displays to accent the space. Instead, the storefront was removed, (bottom) leaving a hollowed out dark space.



Figure 12: Modified storefronts.

When dealing with a storefront that has less merit, more freedom can come into play. This is when it becomes important to recall the simple principles of a traditional storefront in your proposed design and avoid creating a large, dark void. For example, more modern windows such as folding windows (Figure 13) can be used and completely opened, but the

bulkhead, transom windows, and awning are still incorporated.



Figure 13: Example of folding windows in Austin, TX.

It is always best to save what is historic and, when necessary, develop creative ways to incorporate new uses into existing situations. Figure 14 is a great example where traditional-looking doors and columns have been incorporated. They are left open to allow the outside in. A simple railing is added on the interior to provide an amount of enclosure and security.



Figure 14: Keep the historic features when developing new uses (Austin, TX).

## NEWS from the Texas Main Street office

We are very excited to announce the addition of a new staff member! Rebekka Adams will come on board March 17 as the new Texas Main Street Assistant State Coordinator. Rebekka has an undergraduate degree in city and regional planning, a master's in public administration and urban planning, and a graduate certificate in tourism. She has held a number of interesting jobs, including owning her own business. She previously worked for the Austin Independent Business Alliance, and was the Economic Development Program Manager for Neighborhood Ventures in Grand Rapid, Michigan where she was involved in a variety of important activities ranging from business recruitment to façade grant programs to establishment of Tax Increment Finance Districts—all based around the Main Street Four Point Approach™.

### Upcoming Events

If you would like one of your Main Street events posted here, email [rebekka.adams@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:rebekka.adams@thc.state.tx.us) (after March 11) at least three weeks ahead of the month in which you want the posting.

#### 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 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 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](mailto:cbedford@paristexas.gov)

#### 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 and Pease Streets in downtown Vernon. For more information contact Dan Kelleher at [dkelleher@vernontx.gov](mailto: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.

#### May 18–20, 2014 DETROIT, MICHIGAN

National Main Streets Annual Conference  
“Works in Progress: Making Places, Moving Forward”  
[www.preservationnation.org/main-street/](http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/)

#### June 10–11, 2014 LUFKIN

New Main Street manager training all day June 10 through noon June 11. (New board members also welcome to attend.) corrected from Feb. MSM

#### June 11 – June 13, 2014 (noon) LUFKIN

Summer Main Street professional development for all Texas Main Street managers. corrected from Feb. MSM

#### November 4–7, 2014 GRANBURY

Texas Downtown Development & Revitalization Conference

Co-sponsors: Texas Main Street Program/  
Texas Downtown Association  
<http://texasdowntown.org/revitalization-conference-2013.html>

## 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:

**Best Practices/Unique and Measurable Main Street Promotions** for retail development, heritage/preservation celebration, education and awareness, and fundraising.

**DON'T FORGET:** National Volunteer Week—which is about inspiring, recognizing, and encouraging people to seek out imaginative ways to engage in their communities is April 6–12, 2014. National Preservation Month—another good time to recognize your volunteers—is in May.

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: [www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov)  
African American Heritage Preservation Foundation: [www.aahpfdn.org](http://www.aahpfdn.org)  
(The) Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation: [www.ahlp.org](http://www.ahlp.org)  
(The ) American Institute of Architects: [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org)  
American Planning Association: [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)  
American Society of Landscape Architects: [www.asla.org](http://www.asla.org)  
(The) Cultural Landscape Foundation: [www.tclf.org](http://www.tclf.org)  
(The) Handbook of Texas Online: [www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online)  
Keep Texas Beautiful: [www.ktb.org](http://www.ktb.org)  
League of Historic American Theatres: [www.lhat.org](http://www.lhat.org)  
National Main Street Center: [www.preservationnation.org/main-street](http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street)  
National Park Service: [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)  
National Trust for Historic Preservation: [www.preservationnation.org](http://www.preservationnation.org)  
Partners for Sacred Places: [www.sacredplaces.org](http://www.sacredplaces.org)  
Preservation Easement Trust: [www.preservationeasement.org](http://www.preservationeasement.org)  
PreservationDirectory.com: [www.preservationdirectory.com](http://www.preservationdirectory.com)  
Preservation Texas: [www.preservationtexas.org](http://www.preservationtexas.org)  
Project for Public Spaces: [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)  
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy: [www.railstotrails.org](http://www.railstotrails.org)  
Scenic America: [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org)  
Texas Department of Agriculture: [www.TexasAgriculture.gov](http://www.TexasAgriculture.gov)  
Texas Commission on the Arts: [www.arts.state.tx.us](http://www.arts.state.tx.us)  
Texas Downtown Association: [www.texasdowntown.org](http://www.texasdowntown.org)  
Texas Folklife Resources: [www.texasfolklife.org](http://www.texasfolklife.org)  
Texas Historical Commission: [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us)  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)  
Texas Rural Leadership Program: [www.trlp.org](http://www.trlp.org)  
Texas State Preservation Board: [www.tspb.state.tx.us](http://www.tspb.state.tx.us)  
Urban Land Institute: [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org)

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