

PRESS ! RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: October 24, 2018

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TEXAS COMMUNITIES JOIN PRESTIGIOUS REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

AUSTIN, Texas—The Texas Historical Commission (THC) has designated Granger, Mesquite, and the Emancipation Avenue/Historic Third Ward district of Houston as incoming 2019 official Texas Main Street cities. The announcement was made October 24 at the THC's quarterly commission meeting in Laredo, Texas.

The THC's Texas Main Street Program is a revitalization program for historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts. Granger, Mesquite, and Houston's Emancipation Avenue will officially enter the program on January 1, bringing the number of fully designated Main Street communities in Texas to 89.

With a current estimated population of 1,650, Granger joins as one of the state's smallest Main Street communities. Houston's Emancipation Avenue, which will be known as the Emancipation Avenue Main Street (EAMS) program, and the City of Mesquite, will both participate in the urban Main Street category. Communities in any population category are eligible to apply for Main Street designation.

"Main Street cities are the heartbeat of heritage tourism for Texas downtowns," said THC Chairman John L. Nau, III. "They attract new businesses and bring in tourist dollars in a way that preserves the historic character of each unique community."

The Main Street Program stimulates private sector downtown reinvestment in historic downtowns, and helps retain, expand, and recruit small businesses, while also creating new jobs in Texas. The THC's Texas Main Street Program began in 1981 as one of the first state coordinating programs in the U.S. Since then, 177 Texas communities have participated in the program. Participating communities have generated more than \$4.1 billion in overall reinvestment into their historic downtowns and created more than 40,000 jobs and 9,800 small businesses.

Every year, the THC may select up to five Texas cities for official Main Street designation. Local Main Street programs receive a wide range of services and technical expertise from the THC including design and historic preservation, planning, economic development, organizational management, and training. The Texas program is affiliated with the National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Main Street model is based on a Four-Point Approach of preservation-based revitalization for historic downtowns.

For more information on the Texas Main Street Program, contact State Coordinator Debra Drescher at 512-463-5758 or visit thc.texas.gov/mainstreet.

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