

Main Street Matters

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LINDEN

By Allie Anderson, Linden Main Street Manager

The end of our first year in the Texas Main Street Program has everyone at Linden Main Street feeling upbeat about moving into year two. We built substantial momentum through 2017, got the word out about what Main Street is, and garnered great community involvement and feedback throughout the year.

Our greatest asset this year has been the people of Linden. We have all driven through downtowns that have stunning architecture or have completed a big, expensive infrastructure improvement, but have absolutely nothing going on downtown. For a Main

Street program to really take hold and see meaningful success, the community must get behind it. In my relatively few years in the Main Street world, I have not seen a town more ready for growth than Linden. Standing in line at the post office or in the foyer after a church service, you often hear remarks about how exciting it is to see things happening downtown, and what a long time coming it has been. Our downtown has been poised for revitalization for years, but more importantly, it sits in a community that has been ready and waiting to support its growth.

However, we also have some major obstacles to overcome. Like many other towns across the state, Linden has seen the loss of several of our biggest

(Cont. on page 2)



employers over the last decade and felt the economic domino effect that accompanies such losses: population decline, abandoned houses, drop in sales and property tax revenues, businesses closing, lower school attendance, and on and on. We are a small town with very limited resources, and as such, we must focus on slow, incremental redevelopment of the downtown rather than being able to invest in major projects right away. As they say, it is like trying to make a U-turn in an ocean liner, but, luckily, our community leaders are thinking long-term and have made the decision to invest in the downtown knowing that the effects will ripple out into the community at large.

Over the course of our first year we certainly celebrated quite a few accomplishments—creating a new logo and branding our organization, establishing effective communications and marketing practices, partnering with other organizations to bring their events downtown, and more. The year was bookended by a couple of events in particular that had the biggest impact on our program and on our downtown itself. When the Governor's wife, Cecilia Abbott, visited Linden for the First Lady's Tour three months into the program, we had a team that rose to the challenge immediately and with gusto. The event, which is hosted annually to officially welcome the newest Main Street towns into the program, requires very detailed and regimented planning. Ten people stepped up and asked to be a part of the team that met every week for eight weeks straight to get the job done. They handled everything, from the minute-by-minute scheduling to the design of the custom cookies for the reception. The event went over beautifully and without major catastrophe (although someone should have reminded the Main Street manager to turn the mic on before launching into a speech in front of a large crowd). The whole event set the town abuzz and did wonders for building our credibility as an organization, but above all else, it was an incredible team building exercise. We still occasionally reminisce about it at board meetings and give ourselves a pat on the back for how well everyone worked together and pulled it off.

We closed out 2017 with another event that had an even more tangible effect on the downtown, Pop-Up Week. While the idea for the event came about in a perhaps embarrassingly simple way—we had vacant buildings, we needed businesses in them, and we had no money—the execution took quite a bit of volunteer time and energy that resulted in a big payoff for our downtown. Our pop-up event consisted of seven vendors, or pop-up shops, that were temporarily housed in four vacant buildings on the square. The event began on Small Business Saturday and ran every evening through the following Saturday when the Chamber of Commerce held its annual Christmas on the Square Festival. To incentivize participation by serious entrepreneurs, we put together a big, juicy prize package for the first business to sign a permanent lease after the week was over. It included six months of free city utilities, fiber optic internet service, and a few business improvement tools courtesy of our Chamber of Commerce and the local Small Business Development Center. The winning business was Faith Works Studio, a “painting with a twist” style art studio that also houses a retail shop. They now are open four days a week on average and bring large parties of people downtown. Four of the other six vendors are currently working on finding permanent locations in



The First Lady of Texas, Cecilia Abbott, welcomed Linden into the Texas Main Street Program April 18, 2017. A great team of volunteers was key to the success of the event.



(Top) Pop-Up Week was a highly successful event with vendors temporarily housed in vacant buildings on the square. (Middle) Caddo Music Cafe was one of the seven pop-up shops. (Bottom) Linden Main Street board and volunteers ensured the success of the Imagine the Possibilities Tour.

the downtown as well. Not only did this event meet the usual goals of bringing people downtown and boosting sales for our existing businesses, but it also showed budding entrepreneurs and outside business owners that Linden is serious about economic development. The highlight of the week was hearing a Lindenite remark, “I feel like I’m living in the Linden of the future!”

If there has been any overarching lesson learned from our first year as a Main Street town, it is the real value of community involvement to downtown revitalization. I know many of us live in towns where, say it with me, “the same small group of people volunteer for everything,” and the same has been said about Linden. However, throughout the last year, we have made a concerted effort to reach out to all corners of the community, get feedback, and encourage involvement—not just in our program but in any civic pursuit. The result has been a stronger organization with widespread support from all sectors of the community and a greater impact from our efforts.

As we enter year two as a Main Street town, we are all feeling much excitement and anticipation about what we can accomplish next. So keep an eye on Linden, because you can bet on seeing some big things come out of this small town.

SAVE MONEY, PROMOTE MAINTENANCE

By Marie Oehlerking-Read, Project Design Assistant, Texas Main Street Program (TMSp)

The most cost-effective method of preservation or prolonging the life of a building is regular maintenance and repair.

Preservation projects do not have to be expensive, but they are often perceived that way and can be costly when attempting to restore or rehabilitate an entire building all at once. However, small repairs done on a regular basis can save downtown property owners a lot of money. Just like you brush your teeth to prevent

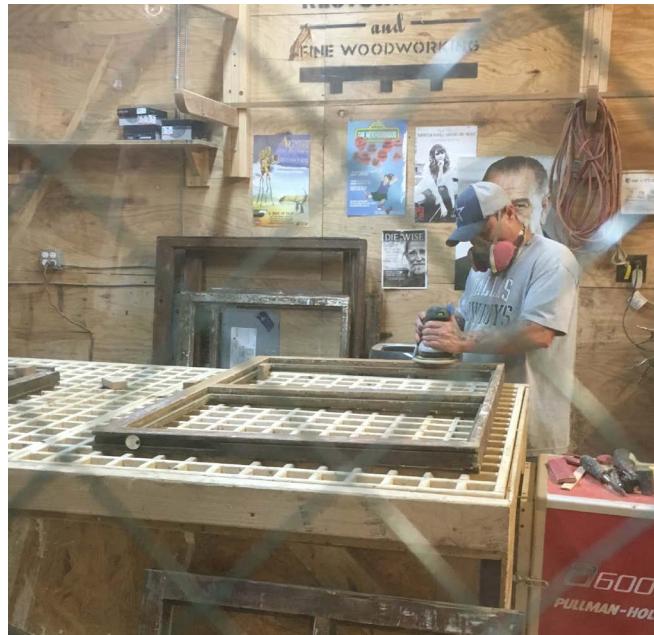
cavities, gum disease, and a hefty bill from your dentist, historic buildings need this kind of attention as well. Roof leaks, drafty windows, and deteriorated mortar joints appear small and insignificant at first, but if left untreated, over time these issues can threaten the health of any building.

Repair Before Replace

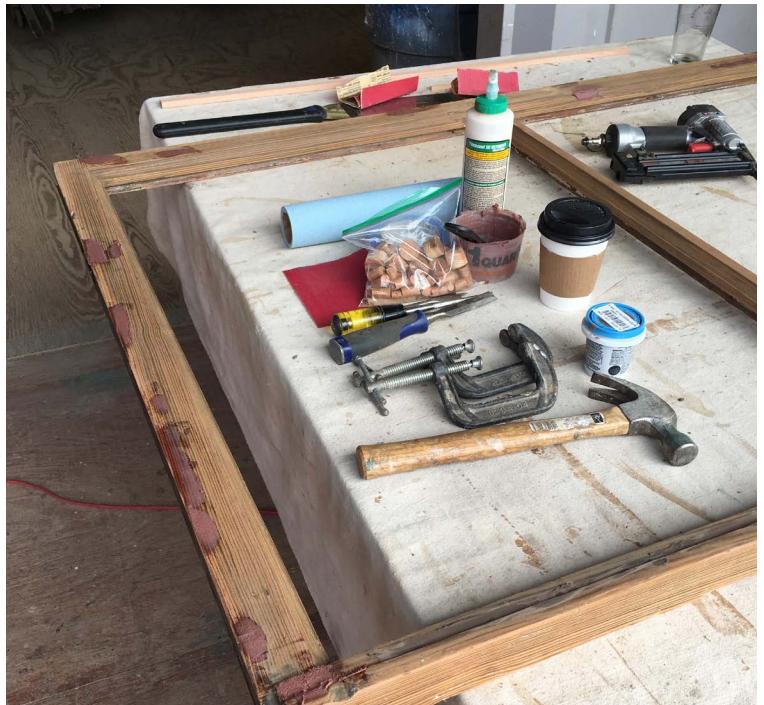
New or old, no building is maintenance free. Exposure to wind, rain, pollution, and other elements cause all building materials to deteriorate and wear down eventually. However, most elements found on a historic building can be repaired. That is how they were designed. Too often the untrained eye looks at a deteriorated window or wall and says, "No, we can't use that. Tear it down." But that does not have to be the case.

Over the last month, I had the opportunity to attend workshops on repair methods for wood windows and brick/stone masonry. The craftspeople that taught these classes are nothing short of artists. The work they do takes true talent and time. The services they provide not only improve the appearance of a historic building, but they improve how it functions and prolongs its life.

During the Real Places conference, John Hindman, owner of Red River Restorations in Austin, provided an in-depth presentation over the wood window restoration



The first step in window repair is removing existing paint from window sashes by manual scraping and sanding.



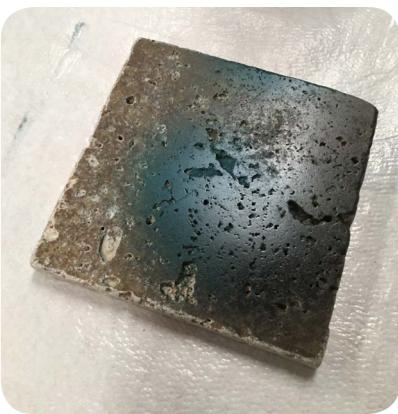
(Top) Bare wood is inspected and weak spots are repaired using consolidants, epoxies, and woodplugs. (Bottom) Finally, new glazing points and putty are installed to hold the glass pane in the wood frame, and the windows are repainted.

process and gave a tour of his workshop, where we got to see the craftspeople in action. The images on this page highlight the major steps involved in window repair.

The second workshop was hosted by the recently founded Restoration Training Collaborative, which is a program created by Conproco and Prosoco with the goal of providing extensive training and support to restoration professionals. The trainers explained in detail the numerous ways to clean and remove staining from brick and stone masonry. On the next page are a few examples.



(Left) The buff brick mockup represents mud on the left and soot stains on the right. Prosoco 2010 All Surface Cleaner diluted in water was used to remove the stains. The solution was applied using a soft bristle brush and was then scrubbed by hand. (Right) This illustrates how clean this method made the stone in just a few minutes. Removing these types of buildup prevent the decay of the masonry.



Various types of paint and graffiti can also be removed from brick and stone without damaging the substrate. (Left) The image shows how this travertine was covered in bright blue paint. Prosoco Safstrip 8, which comes in a gel format, was applied with a brush and then scraped by hand using a soft rubber scraper. (Right) The surface was then washed with plain water, and the results are evident. Notice that this method did not damage the surface of the stone. To remove the paint from the indents, pressure washing can be used, but the pressure should not exceed 1,000 psi for stone. A lower pressure should be used for soft, historic brick. Intentional painting and unintentional graffiti is present in every downtown. While graffiti can visually impact the appearance of the masonry, too much paint covering a building can result in trapped water and physical deterioration. Removing paint can save the stone or brick.



Masonry is also vulnerable to erosion that can lead to cracks, holes, and voids in the unit. Instead of removing the entire piece of material, the hole can be patched with masonry repair mortar. (Left) Before the repair takes place, the contractor creates a custom color that matches the existing stone. (Middle) The hole is cleaned and squared off so that the mortar mixture will properly adhere to the masonry. (Right) Finally, the mortar mixture is troweled by hand into the space. Once the repair material sets, it is scraped or carved to match the surface finish of the masonry.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Professional Development

Our annual Summer Main Street Professional Development and New Manager Orientation will be held in Amarillo July 10-13, 2018. Center City of Amarillo is partnering with Canyon Main Street to bring you a terrific program! Amarillo has been a designated urban Main Street program since 2002, and Canyon, a small-city program, also came into the program in 2002. More details and a schedule will follow later.

Since we had a great set of bids, we've opted to go ahead and announce that in 2019 the annual meeting in Mount Pleasant! Details on dates for 2019 will come later in the year.

Main Street Now Conference

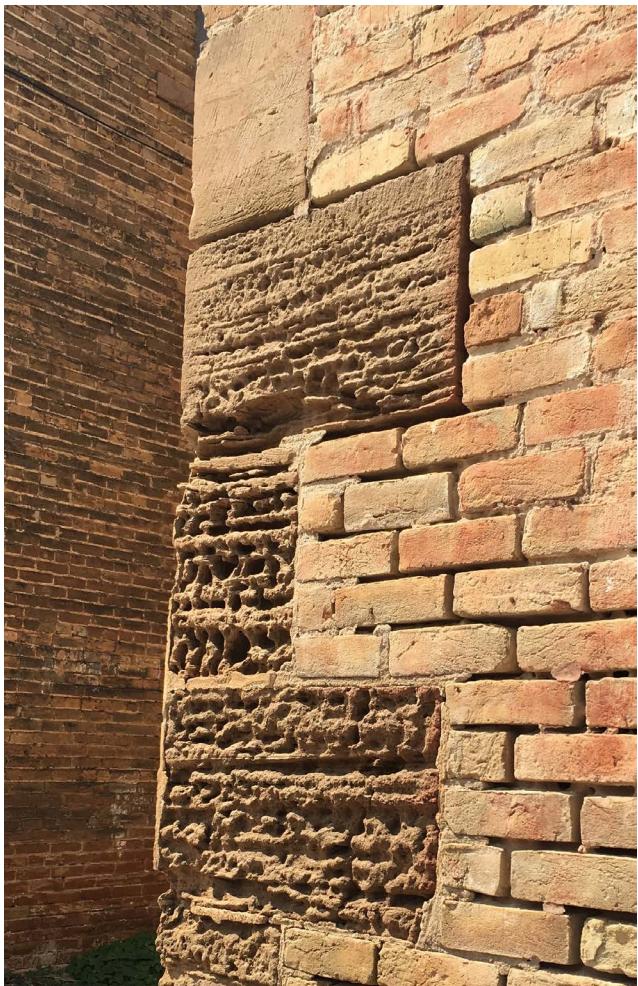
There is still time to register for the 2018 Main Street Now Conference, being held this year in Kansas City, Missouri. Join some of your colleagues March 26-29, 2018 for three days of sessions, workshops, events, and opportunities to explore Kansas City.



Source - https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NMSC/390e0055-2395-4d3b-af60-81b53974430d/UploadedImages/Education__Training/Interior-Header-Template_NOW18.png

Visit the www.mainstreet.org website to get more details, including a full schedule, registration link, and hotel information.

When stone or brick is deteriorated like the building in the image below, inappropriate repairs are often used that can damage the building further. Some people will even argue for demolition. Know that repair is possible. All of the repairs described above must be undertaken by a trained professional. It is important that Main Street organizations and property owners alike know that these repairs are possible. Historic buildings must be inspected regularly for signs of deterioration and decay, and repair work should be undertaken immediately to prevent extensive damage.



Deteriorated stone and brick need to be repaired carefully and correctly, so no further damage can occur.

What can Main Street do?

Beyond protecting the building, upkeep is critical for business success. An attractive, well-maintained building draws in visitors and potential customers. By creating an inviting and appealing storefront, you signal that you take pride in your businesses and your community.

As a Main Street Manager, board member, or volunteer, you can encourage downtown property owners to undertake regular maintenance through educational workshops and resources. Here are a few ideas:

- Create a **maintenance calendar**. It is a good idea to set up a building maintenance schedule as a reminder of any inspections or work that needs to be done. It will also help prioritize maintenance, preventing avoidable, costly future repairs.

Preservation Brief #47: Maintaining the Exterior of Small and Medium Size Historic Buildings provides checklists and instructions on how to inspect a building - <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/47-maintaining-exteriors.htm>



Example of a maintenance calendar. Source: Illinois State Historic Preservation Office - <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnrhistoric/Preserve/Documents/Maintenance%20Schedule%202018.pdf>

- Host a downtown **clean-up day**. Offer to walk around individual buildings to look for signs of deterioration and problem areas.
- Promote **workshops, webinars, and lectures** that discuss how to repair historic buildings materials.
- Pass out **Preservation Briefs** (<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>) and other instruction documents. The Briefs were created by the National Park Service for all types of historic building materials. These comprehensive guides outline repair techniques and specify when these techniques are appropriate to use. Several Main Streets, including Waxahachie (<http://www.waxahachie.com/Departments/HeritagePreservation>) and Palestine (<http://www.cityofpalestinetx.com/users/OldFiles/upload/>

Historic%20Property%20Handbookpdf.pdf) provide links to these resources on their website and in their design guidelines.

- Create your own **Property Maintenance Guide** like Denison (<http://downtowndevelopment.com/pdf/ratonIncreaseOccupancyMaintenanceGuideDraft.pdf>)
- Include maintenance projects as eligible activities in **local incentive programs** such as roof and foundation repairs, brick repointing, window repair, etc.
- Keep track of **craftspeople and contractors** that are sensitive to historic buildings and their needs. Maintain a list for future projects.

Remember, most issues can be prevented with maintenance! Every building is going to deteriorate, but stopping decay before it is widespread helps keep the scale and complexity of work manageable for a downtown property owner. Over time, the cost of maintenance is substantially less than the replacement of historic features, and also it involves considerably less disruption for downtown businesses and visitors.



Wood Window Workshop by Red River Restorations at the 2018 Real Places Conference.

CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS

By Kyle Kramm, Seguin Main Street Program Director

In Seguin, hundreds of volunteer hours are logged for the Main Street Program annually. This includes the nine-member advisory board and committee members who serve on the design review committee and plan the multiple community events that attract thousands of visitors to downtown. In 2015, the Seguin Main Street Program awarded the Volunteer of the Year award to one volunteer who went above and beyond. Lisa Burns and her husband own Alligator Dental; after opening in 2009, they started a relationship with the Seguin Main Street Program by sponsoring several downtown events.

“We were so happy to be a part of a great community that supported us from the beginning and wanted to give back,” said Burns.

In 2012, Burns had her first venture with volunteering with the Main Street Program serving on the planning committee for ArtsFest.

“I had mentioned to Marty Keil in a casual conversation that I felt like there needed to be more opportunities for exposure to the arts and culture for kids in Seguin. She told me she knew just the thing and pushed me toward the ArtsFest planning committee and the rest is history,” said Burns, “After the first ArtsFest event, I realized that events need both sponsors and volunteers. So, I began attending event planning meetings and volunteering for assignments.”

Burns makes volunteering a family affair by getting her kids involved.

Burns said, “One of the best parts of volunteering is being able to volunteer with my family. Being a small business owner and a mother of 7, my free time is limited, but having my kids involved with me gives us a chance to spend some great quality time together while providing service to the community that we live in. I also have a great husband that is very supportive and jumps right in with whatever I have volunteered our family for.”



Seguin Mayor Don Keil presents the 2015 Main Street Volunteer of the Year Award to Lisa Burns.

"Seguin is really a great place to raise a family," said Burns. It is the support of Lisa and volunteers like her that ensure that the revitalization of downtown will continue and make Seguin such a great place.

MAIN STREET MATTERS / RESOURCE LIBRARY MASHUP

We continue this month with our series on relevant topics we find in the reports we receive from programs or see on the TMSP listserv. We will feature a story in Main Street Matters, and Texas Main Street programs can access the online resource library to find out more about the subject and get an in-depth look at the information.

If you have a topic you would like covered in these features, please email Sarah Marshall, sarah_marshall@thc.texas.gov, or Marie Oehlerking- Read, marie_ohlerking@thc.texas.gov.

Volunteer Recruitment

From the beginning of the National Main Street Program, volunteer efforts were recognized as the foundation for the success for local programs.

Although program managers may appear as if they can do everything successfully on their own, behind every thriving Main Street is a group of volunteers aiding in different capacities. Main Street boards and committees are obviously made up of volunteers, but these days, managers are recognizing that many volunteers do not want that large of a commitment and are getting creative with ways to recruit new volunteers.

Center City of Amarillo

By Beth Duke, Center City of Amarillo Executive Director

Center City has a staff of only two with an additional summer intern, so volunteers are how we make things happen downtown. Volunteers staff events such as Create!, High Noon on the Square, and Jazztober. Then, they work up to being a committee member, and finally to a board position.

Corporate volunteer programs allow companies in the area to supply volunteers for events and allow new volunteers to be part of making Center City thrive. Current programs are with Xcel Energy, Golden Spread Electric Cooperative, and Happy State Bank.

Bastrop Main Street

By Sarah O'Brien, Bastrop Main Street Manager

Given that community action programs like the Bastrop Main Street Program (BMSP) are "staffed" by a passing parade of volunteer talent, the BMSP is blessed to retain a cadre of volunteers whose engagement spans the 10-year-history of the program and who provide institutional memory and effectively mentor "newbies." The 2008 Recession and the influx of younger families on the community has transformed the potential volunteer workforce, just as many of our long-term volunteers are scaling back their volunteer activities. While we have seen diminishing interest in becoming a member of a year-round program of work, the number of volunteers forming standing committee membership rosters has thinned. We have had much success with recruiting volunteers for a single event or series of events, seen by many as a better use of volunteer time and talent. Concurrently, two of our standing committees (Promotions and EV) have divided themselves into various project teams whose focus is a single initiative, event, program, etc. These teams work independently;

their progress is coordinated/monitored by the co-chairs within the frameworks of a committee work plan; teams augment their resources through recruiting as needed; co-chairs report progress regularly to the advisory board. Our premier Table on Main was an example of such expanded project specific teaming. A small army was mobilized specifically for this event and included Downtown Business Association members and individual merchants and artists, restaurateurs, and local growers/producers, Chamber office en masse, BEDC staff members, BISD student volunteers, “regular” BMSP volunteers from across the committee structure as well as volunteers recruited specifically for this event. In response to the trends described above, the advisory board formed an ad hoc committee to look at BMSP’s volunteer needs and how those needs might best be met. The committee formulated a series of steps to amp up our recruiting initiatives. Following acceptance by the advisory board, the Organization Committee has amended its work plan to accomplish the committee’s recommendations and will spend much time developing tools (elevator speech, updated recruiting brochure, a speakers’ bureau, an enhanced volunteer/volunteer recruitment database, etc.).

La Grange Main Street

By Stacey Norris, La Grange Main Street and Tourism Manager

In 2017, the recruitment and engagement process for volunteers was centered on personal contact with community members, articles in local news media, and posts on Facebook. We also reached out to some of our event sponsors to encourage their employees to volunteer and have a presence at our events. We have several new energetic volunteers who have helped with several events and are serving on some of our committees. We have continued to see an increase in local sponsors supporting staff volunteerism at our events. Most of these sponsors are “off of the Square” businesses that have allowed their employees to represent their companies at various events including Trick or Treat on the Square, Schmeckenfest, and Movie Nights on the Square. In addition, La Grange Main Street has seen an increase in active volunteers this year.

Volunteers are the backbone of an effective Main Street program, and program managers across the state are coming up with unique ways to utilize engaged

members of the community to assist in all aspects of their program. For more ideas, examples, and inspiration on volunteer recruitment, Main Street managers can visit the TMSP online resource library at www.txms-resourcelibrary.org.



(Top) Volunteers helped make Bastrop Main Street’s Table on Main a signature event. (Bottom) Volunteers in La Grange help decorate the gazebo for the holidays.