TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Main Street Matters!

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES THROUGH MAIN STREET

Texas Celebrates 35 Years of Main Street Progress in 2016

Annual Letter to Main Street Stakeholders

In 2015, an economic impact study commissioned by the Texas Historical Commission noted that the "revitalization of Texas Main Streets makes good business sense," because of the positive impact to the state's economy. Additionally, the study remarks, "The Texas Main Street Program is more than an economic development program; it is a community philosophy that uses historic preservation as one of its primary tools." In the study, that can be found on the THC's website (http://www.thc.state.tx.us/public/upload/publications/economic-impact-historic-preservation.pdf), the authors found that historical Main Street reinvestment statistics (adjusted for inflation) show that "Texas Main Street Program activities have yielded an annual average of $310 million in state GDP. This investment has translated into 5,385 average annual jobs created, which produced $240 million in labor income and over $23 million in state and local taxes. Since its inception in 1981, investment in Texas Main Streets has totaled over $5.2 billion." (The most recent non-inflation adjusted statistics are shared later in this edition.) Two very different programs—Bastrop and Mineola—were also profiled as case studies in this report to exemplify how the Main Street operational model has broad, positive impact.

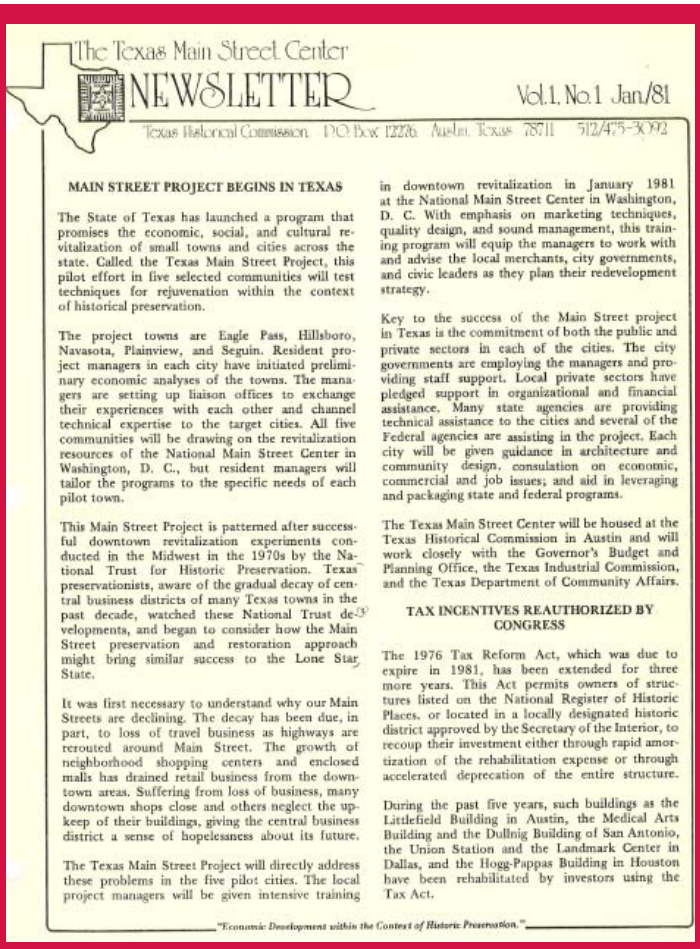
As the Texas Main Street Program begins its 35th year, this first edition of *Main Street Matters* for 2016 seemed like a good time to take a look back at our growth and progress while also introducing some exciting developments in the way Main Streets are evolving today and into the future. We feel that sharing these stories in the format of an open letter to our local Main Street programs is a good way to grow pride, celebrate success and share the news pertaining to some important developments in our

(Left) "Within four years of the first project, almost every building in the Bastrop Main Street Program area had been rehabilitated in some way...the interest was already there, but Main Street was able to put a framework around it and make it possible and organized." – quote from the case study on Bastrop Main Street in the THC's 2015 economic impact study. (Right) "Over the last 25 years, $27 million has been put into projects in Mineola's Main Street. For a town of just over 4,000 people, that shows the pride Mineola's citizens have in their town, and their understanding that historic preservation adds to that pride". – quote from the case study on Mineola Main Street in the THC's 2015 economic impact study.

field. Regardless of whether yours is a newer local program or a longtime one which, there are many reasons to continue moving forward with the work of Main Street. Hopefully, this information will be helpful to anyone who may be seeking to learn more about how and why Main Street works.

Exactly 35 years ago, in January 1981, the launch of the Texas Main Street Project was introduced in the first edition of the inaugural newsletter as a "pilot effort in five selected communities that will test techniques for rejuvenation within the context of historical preservation." Focusing on the historic commercial district, the effort was to be multi-faceted by addressing "economic, social and cultural revitalization" that will positively impact the whole community. Today, we continue to take that holistic approach to our work. We can look back upon that introductory issue to show us how much we've changed; how far we've come; and how much those early ideals are still sound today.

At first, only "small towns and cities" could be accepted into the Main Street program. Larger communities in Texas did not participate until Longview entered the program in 1988. In 1990 Denton and Tyler became Texas' next two urban Main Street programs. They have both continuously participated since that time, and between them have had economic impact through the private reinvestment of more than $210 million in their historic downtowns; and the creation of 3,100 jobs and 530 small businesses. In 1999, Denton was named a Great American Main Street Award® winner by the National Main Street Center. This highly competitive award is presented to communities that exemplify the use of the Main Street Four Point Approach™ in revitalizing their historic downtowns.



The Texas Main Street Center

NEWSLETTER

Vol.1, No.1 Jan/81

Texas Historical Commission P.O. Box 12276 Austin, Texas 78711 512/475-3092

MAIN STREET PROJECT BEGINS IN TEXAS

The State of Texas has launched a program that promises the economic, social, and cultural revitalization of small towns and cities across the state. Called the Texas Main Street Project, this pilot effort in five selected communities will test techniques for rejuvenation within the context of historical preservation.

The project towns are Eagle Pass, Hillsboro, Navasota, Plainview, and Seguin. Resident project managers in each city have initiated preliminary economic analyses of the towns. The managers are setting up liaison offices to exchange their experiences with each other and channel technical expertise to the target cities. All five communities will be drawing on the revitalization resources of the National Main Street Center in Washington, D. C., but resident managers will tailor the programs to the specific needs of each pilot town.

This Main Street Project is patterned after successful downtown revitalization experiments conducted in the Midwest in the 1970s by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Texas preservationists, aware of the gradual decay of central business districts of many Texas towns in the past decade, watched these National Trust developments, and began to consider how the Main Street preservation and restoration approach might bring similar success to the Lone Star State.

It was first necessary to understand why our Main Streets are declining. The decay has been due, in part, to loss of travel business as highways are rerouted around Main Street. The growth of neighborhood shopping centers and enclosed malls has drained retail business from the downtown areas. Suffering from loss of business, many downtown shops close and others neglect the upkeep of their buildings, giving the central business district a sense of hopelessness about its future.

The Texas Main Street Project will directly address these problems in the five pilot cities. The local project managers will be given intensive training in downtown revitalization in January 1981 at the National Main Street Center in Washington, D. C. With emphasis on marketing techniques, quality design, and sound management, this training program will equip the managers to work with and advise the local merchants, city governments, and civic leaders as they plan their redevelopment strategy.

Key to the success of the Main Street project in Texas is the commitment of both the public and private sectors in each of the cities. The city governments are employing the managers and providing staff support. Local private sectors have pledged support in organizational and financial assistance. Many state agencies are providing technical assistance to the cities and several of the Federal agencies are assisting in the project. Each city will be given guidance in architecture and community design, consulation on economic, commercial and job issues; and aid in leveraging and packaging state and federal programs.

The Texas Main Street Center will be housed at the Texas Historical Commission in Austin and will work closely with the Governor's Budget and Planning Office, the Texas Industrial Commission, and the Texas Department of Community Affairs.

TAX INCENTIVES REAUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS

The 1976 Tax Reform Act, which was due to expire in 1981, has been extended for three more years. This Act permits owners of structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or located in a locally designated historic district approved by the Secretary of the Interior, to recoup their investment either through rapid amortization of the rehabilitation expense or through accelerated deprecation of the entire structure.

During the past five years, such buildings as the Littlefield Building in Austin, the Medical Arts Building and the Dullnig Building of San Antonio, the Union Station and the Landmark Center in Dallas, and the Hogg-Pappas Building in Houston have been rehabilitated by investors using the Tax Act.

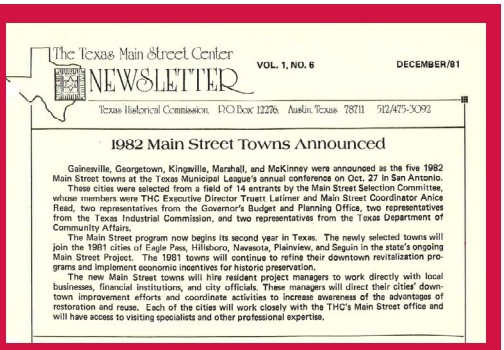
"Economic Development within the Context of Historic Preservation."

The inauguration of the Texas Main Street Project was announced in this newsletter in January 1981.

Today, Texas has 15 urban (over 50,000 in population) programs in all areas of the state, which includes Corpus Christi that officially entered the program this month. Over those first years of the state program, the philosophy was that programs would have a very strong connection to the state office and its services for at least the first three years. They would then transition to a more independent status after the initial period so the statewide network could grow by bringing in more local communities, that required intense services from at that time a very small state staff. Technical assistance by the state office ended after the initial three-year period. Growing the Texas program was especially important since the national Main Street Project that had been developed in 1977 under the National Trust for Historic Preservation was also being comprehensively rolled out across the country at the same time. The national Main Street Four Point Approach™ grew out of that 1977 study project by the Trust. The Texas project was one of the first six states to become affiliated with this national effort, and we continue our partnership today under that nationwide brand.

Texas became one of the first six coordinating programs in the country by taking in its first five communities in 1981. Although no communities have remained continuously designated since that first year, four of the first five that were initially accepted remain in the network today: Hillsboro, Eagle Pass, Seguin, and Plainview. Today, almost 60 percent of the Texas network has been continuously involved for 10 years or more. Eleven of those have been Main Street designated continuously for 25 years or more. This includes places such as Lufkin (1983), Corsicana (1985, profiled in the May 2015 issue of *Main Street Matters*), and New Braunfels (1991, celebrating 25 years in 2016). In 2015, Tyler, Denton, and Elgin recognized their 25th anniversaries, while Clifton and Kerrville celebrated their 20th designated years. Congratulations to all for those important milestones!

The way we described what we were doing in those early years is meaningful too. We started by calling it a "project." Then, as we grew, we were a "program."



The Texas Main Street Center NEWSLETTER VOL. 1, NO. 6 DECEMBER/81

Texas Historical Commission P.O.Box 12276 Austin, Texas 78711 512/475-3092

1982 Main Street Towns Announced

Gainesville, Georgetown, Kingsville, Marshall, and McKinney were announced as the five 1982 Main Street towns at the Texas Municipal League's annual conference on Oct. 27 in San Antonio.

These cities were selected from a field of 14 entrants by the Main Street Selection Committee, whose members were THC Executive Director Truett Latimer and Main Street Coordinator Anice Read, two representatives from the Governor's Budget and Planning Office, two representatives from the Texas Industrial Commission, and two representatives from the Texas Department of Community Affairs.

The Main Street program now begins its second year in Texas. The newly selected towns will join the 1981 cities of Eagle Pass, Hillsboro, Navasota, Plainview, and Seguin in the state's ongoing Main Street Project. The 1981 towns will continue to refine their downtown revitalization programs and implement economic incentives for historic preservation.

The new Main Street towns will hire resident project managers to work directly with local businesses, financial institutions, and city officials. These managers will direct their cities' downtown improvement efforts and coordinate activities to increase awareness of the advantages of restoration and reuse. Each of the cities will work closely with the THC's Main Street office and will have access to visiting specialists and other professional expertise.

At the end of the state project's first year, the second set of cities to be inducted were announced. All of them continue to participate today (all recertified): Gainesville, Georgetown, Kingsville, Marshall, McKinney.

Today, Main Street is considered a national "movement." Collectively, the movement is the leading voice for preservation-based economic development and community revitalization across the country. Made up of small towns, mid-sized communities, and urban commercial districts, Main Street America™ represents the broad diversity that makes this country so unique," notes the National Main Street Center on its website.

Main Street works because of what it tries to do—and what it doesn't try to do. There is uniformity provided through the framework —the Main Street Four Point Approach™ of Organization, Design, Economic Vitality, and Promotion. It is individualistic—no two communities are exactly alike, so no two will carry out the framework in exactly the same way; nor will two cities define success in exactly the same way–the variances between communities are too great. Some places have more limited resources and finances than others. There are differences in leadership, community vision and priorities. However, everyone works toward goals achieved through a foundation of preservation-based economic development. The key is that each community needs to continuously have focused strategies and activities in each of the four strategy areas. There must be broad-based commitment—many partners need to be involved and supportive. Local government will set the tone and show vision and leadership with their continual support as a key partner, but many volunteers will participate so that Main Street is truly a grassroots, community-led program.

While Main Street is a movement grounded in the past—the legacy of our historic downtowns—it must always be looking toward the future and adapting to trends and needs of current consumers and communities. In the May 2014 edition of *Main Street Now*, the national center's digital magazine, Kennedy Smith, a well-known national Main Street consultant, wrote about the Main Street of the future and what is vital to success. This includes the importance of a "broad mix of uses—and a broad range of capital sources and incentives to make this happen;" organizational flexibility- being nimble; embracing technology; and differentiating your community from another (what makes yours stand out?). In that same issue, Mary Means writes: "As the Main Street program nears its fourth decade, the enduring relevance of its comprehensive and integrated approach has been amply confirmed. The notion that thriving downtowns require deliberate management of many moving parts is now widely understood...." Means was a major part of the creation of the original national effort and was involved in many ways in Texas' earliest years of Main Street.

As the national movement enters a new era, some changes are being unveiled that will impact the way the work of the Main Street movement across the country will be carried out. This includes a re-branding, and an updated and 'refreshed' Four Point Approach™, in which there is "a solid understanding of the

market realities of the district, and is informed by broad community engagement;" and creation of Community Transformation Strategies that "provide a clear sense of priorities and direction for the revitalization efforts." Implementation all comes together with "an equally important focus on measuring progress and results." (http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street). Matt Wagner, Ph.D, Vice President of Revitalization Programs for the National Main Street Center, will be the featured speaker at Texas Main Street Manager Professional Development in February in New Braunfels. Dr. Wagner is leading the launch of the renewed and re-imagined Four Point Approach™. Main Street managers and volunteer leadership should all try to attend this important meeting.

FROM THE TEXAS MAIN STREET OFFICE

Return on Reinvestment

Reinvestment figures documenting economic activity in Main Street districts has been collected by the state office continually over the past 35 years. When Main Street was begun, there was little understanding that preservation-based activity had the ability to have significant economic impact. It was important to show that it could. Otherwise, the sustainability of the effort would be in jeopardy. The Trust's pilot study showed that there was great potential, but there was not widespread evidence because this kind of focused work had not previously been done.

It started to become clear pretty early on—as the Texas program finished its first three years—that the potential for economic impact was significant. The February 1984 issue of the state newsletter announced that during those first three years there had been reinvestment of more than $43 million in the 14 participating communities.

The Mineola profile in the THC's economic impact study showed that even a small, rural town can use preservation-based Main Street activities to create significant economic benefit. At that time the study was written, Mineola Main Street reported $27 million of reinvestment over their 25 years. Since then, that number is more than $31 million. Mineola is a town with a population of about 4,500.

As of the third quarter 2015, Texas' historical reinvestments for all cities that have ever been designated (but may no longer be involved) show almost $3.2 billion in combined public and private investment during their Main Street participation time. More than 34,000 new jobs have been reported in support of the creation of 8,627 small businesses in the Main Street districts.

For currently participating programs, the reinvestment numbers show $2.46 billion in overall reinvestment; the creation of more than 24,000 jobs and 6,300 businesses. Since local governments financially support their local Main Street programs, it is important for the reinvestments to show evidence that when the public sector invests in downtown through activities like infrastructure improvements, aesthetic enhancements, and incentives, the private sector will respond. The cumulative figure shows that with public investment of about $854 million, more than $1.6 billion has

Historical Perspective

Private-sector reinvestment in the Texas Main Street Project's first three years, 1981-1984

Buildings rehabilitated	408	Businesses added	357
Buildings constructed	25	Jobs created	553
Buildings purchased	152		
Total buildings	**585**		
Buildings rehabilitated	$17,600,577		
Buildings constructed	$14,814,650		
Buildings purchased	$11,000,000		
Total buildings	**$43,415,227**		

Snapshot of Texas Main Street average statistics by population (current programs)

Population	Years of Main Street designation (group avg., as of 12/31/15)	Overall reinvestment (cumulative, as of Q3 2015)	Average annual reinvestment	Job Creation (cumulative)	# Businesses created (cumulative)	Total Volunteer hours	$ value of vol hours
< **4,999** (19 programs)	16	$181,971,050	$598,589	2,295	1,042	389,401	$9,602,628
5,000 - 7,999 (13 programs)	13.5	$124,753,944	$710,849	1,441	542	111,307	$2,744,830
8,000 - 14,999 (12 programs)	16.5	$155,337,430	$784,532	2,325	826	74,617	$1,840,055
15,000 - 24,999 (13 programs)	19	$314,925,312	$1,275,001	3,313	1,047	124,947	$3,081,193
25,000 - 49,999 (17 programs)	18	$636,756,824	$2,080,904	5,110	1,197	226,592	$5,587,759
50,000 - 100,000 (7 programs)	16	$450,321,372	$4,020,726	3,359	748	131,632	$3,246,045
> **100,000** (6 programs)	16	$602,090,669	$6,271,777	6,355	926	112,114	$2,764,731

(Top) After the Texas Main Street Program completed its first 3 years, figures showed that significant economic impact was being made in Texas communities. (Bottom) The economic benefit of Main Street.

been invested by the private sector. This is a return to the public sector of almost 2 to 1: for every dollar they've spent, almost $2 has been returned in private investment.

The highly successful Waxahachie Main Street Program recently looked back over its first 10 years in the program (2002, upon recertification to 2012) to study the private return on investment that had come in response to local government's prioritization of downtown. In those first 10 years, more than $100 million had been reinvested downtown. Almost 79 percent of that was public investment, largely due to infrastructure upgrades, construction of county buildings, a public parking garage, and restoration of the publicly owned depot. By 2013, when those publicly funded projects were completed, the private sector was responding. In that year, public spending was minimal; private investment was more than $1.6 million. "In 2014, public sector reinvestment is dwarfed by the private sector," says Anita Brown, Waxahachie Main Street director. In that year, there was $3.3 million invested by the private sector in comparison to approximately $100,000 of publicly funded projects. The scenario is similar for 2015. With its leadership and by demonstrating belief in downtown by making its revitalization a policy priority in those early years, local government improved market capacity and spurred private interest and investment.

Public dollars spent to operate local Main Street programs also show the capacity for a relevant return on investment. According to the 2015 Texas Main Street funding survey (67 programs reporting), about $10 million was spent to administratively support local programs. This figure takes into account programs in the smallest communities that are housed in city government to urban programs, some of which are non-profits receiving only partial funding from public sources. During that same reporting period, private reinvestment was more than $102 million. In this scenario, the public contribution in supporting the Main Street programs can be looked upon as helping to encourage a tenfold return.

SERVICES, ACTIVITIES AND MAIN STREET VOLUNTEERISM

Services and Activities

The eight-member Texas Main Street Program staff provides continual services to designated Main Street programs in the areas of design/preservation, planning, economic and small business development and organizational management.

During fiscal year 2015 (ended August 31, 2015), the Texas Main Street Program staff conducted 161 site visits and spent almost 6,000 hours on specific projects requested by local Main Street programs. These projects range from design renderings and reports to planning documents for both city planning and organizational management / program development purposes, plus analytical/financing reports. Design staff was directly involved

A 35th anniversary issue of Main Street Matters would not be complete without honoring our founder the late Anice Read, a visionary who laid a strong foundation for the Texas Main Street Program.

with projects valued at $7,391,187 that were completed during the time period. Over the past five years, design staff has been involved in assisting on property improvements valued at more than $31 million. These projects in local Main Street communities vary widely. They include assistance to property owners on the rehabilitation of historic buildings in the Main Street district; providing technical advice on public projects such as improvements or development of gateways and public spaces; and to businesses in the form of helping to develop better signage or visual appearances (i.e. new canopies or awnings). Design staff worked on 232 requested projects during the year. (A property owner may request a project, but might not actually complete the project in the same year so this number does not necessarily directly correlate to the dollar amount of projects completed by the design staff.)

In May, as part of our recognition of National Preservation Month,

we unveiled the TMSP online resource library. This library currently has approximately 150 documents of specific interest to Main Street and has been utilized hundreds of times already. We will continue to build this resource over time with articles, technical resources, blogs, and videos/webinars. Another project we're continuing is the Main Street mentoring program, begun in 2014. The project puts together seasoned Main Street managers with those new to the field. Mentors agree to call and/or have in-person meetings with their mentee on a regular basis for the new manager's first year.

We also welcomed a new staff member in 2015. Sarah Marshall joined as the TMSP Assistant State Coordinator and Small Business Development Consultant in July. She did a self-introduction in the August issue of *Main Street Matters*. All issues of the monthly newsletter are archived on the THC website.

The Main Street listserv continues to be an important facet of our program by allowing local program managers and TMSP staff to regularly converse and share important news, find ideas, and get answers to questions. During 2015, the listserv was utilized 1,056 times.

A very exciting part of 2015 was the continuation of a longstanding tradition: the First Lady's tour of new Main Street cities. Every First Lady since 1981 has participated, and new First Lady Cecilia Abbott graciously honored us by continuing the tradition. Together with THC Commissioners and staff, Mrs. Abbott visited Ennis and Rosenberg on Oct. 20. Images from that visit were posted broadly on social and traditional media and we recapped the visits in the last issue of *Main Street Matters*. The event also provides the TMSP design staff an opportunity to showcase design possibilities for a particular area of the downtown. Renderings of these selected areas are created and produced by the design staff, and then presented to the community by the First Lady during the visit. In Ennis, the rendering spotlighted several properties and a small park, while in Rosenberg, a historic theater and several adjacent historic properties were showcased.

Main Street Volunteerism

In Fiscal Year 2015, volunteers contributed 149,579 hours, which has a value of $3,688,618, to their local Main Street programs. This is a 23 percent increase over 2014. Over the past 16 years since we've been collecting volunteer data, more than 1.7 million hours have been contributed. Using volunteer value calculations through the Independent Sector (https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time), Main Street cities have received almost $29 million in financial value from volunteers contributing their time to local programs and supporting the work of staff.

Main Street volunteers are spotlighted in each monthly issue of *Main Street Matters*. The engagement and leadership of volunteers in Main Street programs are incredibly important to the success of local programs and the spotlights are one small way of saying 'thank you!' During 2015, the following volunteers were spotlighted:

- Sharon Brass, Brenham Main Street Program
- Gary Niesner, La Grange Main Street Program
- Karen Cason, Winnsboro Main Street Program
- Sylvia Smith, Waxahachie Main Street Program
- Joanna Runkles, Levelland Main Street Program
- Dr. Curtis Ratliff, Grapevine Main Street Program
- Mary Valva, San Angelo Main Street Program
- Shelly Preston, Childress Main Street Program
- Renee Butler, Rosenberg Main Street Program
- Kyle Tate, Bowie Main Street Program
- Gerry Larabee, Nacogdoches Main Street Program

Design renderings created for the 2015 First Lady's tours to the new Main Street cities of Ennis and Rosenberg.

MAIN STREET RESTORATION UNCOVERS OLDEST BUILDING

Hillsboro property owner C. H. Stubblefield had scheduled workmen to begin removing plaster from his building on Courthouse Square March 16. But being anxious to discover what was underneath, Stubblefield began chipping away the plaster four days before the crew was to arrive.

By coincidence he started at the location of the building's original cornerstone, placed at eye-level. The date "1876" is legible.

The building first housed the Old Rock Saloon, and is today located next to Bond's Alley on the south side of the Square. Main Street Project Director Paula Peters checked with the county tax office and learned that this building is the city's oldest existing structure.

You never know what you'll learn when you start digging through old records! This information about the oldest existing structure in Hillsboro, was in one of the earliest issues of the Texas Main Street newsletter. Hillsboro was one of the state's first communities accepted into the Texas Main Street project.

- Jill Drake, Paris Main Street Program
- Scott Sustek, San Angelo Main Street Program
- Bill DeBrooke, Harlingen Main Street Program

In the February issue, when the Bastrop Main Street Program was spotlighted, Program Director Nancy Wood acknowledged this about volunteers and their connection to a program's success: "What I've learned over the years is to never underestimate the power of volunteers in any endeavor; that eventually the right things get done for the right reasons; and that it's never your idea in the first place when it comes to things that impact the place where people live… it's their ideas that make it all happen!"

Any managers who would like to recognize one of their Main Street volunteers in a 2016 issue of *Main Street Matters* should contact Sarah Marshall at sarah.marshall@thc.state.tx.us.

Leadership is also very important to the success of local programs, both at the staff and volunteer levels. Leadership development is always either directly or indirectly a big part of content at all of our Main Street manager trainings each year. In 2016, we will be creating a Leadership Development Academy for Main Street board chairs. This academy will include a series of webinars and/or conference calls with the chairs and TMSP staff, designed primarily to connect the volunteer leaders with each other to share common ideas, best practices and such. Along with this, we'll be refining the logistics of Main Street 101 trainings. While we'll still provide training at the local level upon request, we'll also be setting up a series of regional trainings on specific dates that will hopefully bring together volunteers from multiple Main Street communities. We are continuing to work out the details of both of these new initiatives and more details will be forthcoming.

THE TOWN SQUARE INITIATIVE

Originally introduced in 2014 as the Courthouse Square Initiative, the Town Square Initiative (TSI) is an extension of services provided by the Texas Main Street Program and offers specialized assistance through the work of an architect, economic developer, and a planner. The initiative utilizes the market-based approach of the Main Street model to work closely, long-term, and at a high level of expertise with a small subset of communities within the THC network who have already demonstrated a substantial commitment to preservation. The objective of TSI is to address the wide-spread challenge of vacant and underutilized historic downtown property by developing market-sensitive building rehabilitation strategies through a sequenced set of services that includes planning, economic, and architectural analyses.

The TSI team, which includes professionals with expertise in architecture, economic development, and city planning, spent the last year working intensively with several Main Street cities and researching issues related to vacant and under-utilized properties. The end result is a new set of services designed for communities where a combination of policy and preservation tools can be leveraged to accomplish local, small-scale, and high quality redevelopment projects. TSI will formally introduce its menu of services through a website launch and presentations at the Main Street trainings in early 2016.

TSI will also be responsible for creating new tools and resources to assist communities in inventorying historic commercial property and increasing the market visibility of these assets. TSI generously received grant funds from a private foundation in the fall of 2015 and redirected Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) monies returned from a CLG grantee to funding the first phase of what has been named the Downtown Online Inventory. The Downtown Online Inventory (DOI) will be a comprehensive, web-based mapping tool that promotes historic real estate and business investment opportunities in participating Main Street, Certified Local Government, and other partner communities by centralizing current, detailed property data along with historic resource survey information and displaying it in an easy-to-use and broadly accessible online platform.

Staff will work with several pilot communities in 2016 to develop Phase I of the software, which will eventually be made available to all Main Street and CLG communities.

Town Square Initiative Vision

The TSI helps communities re-imagine the possibilities for their key historic buildings. The TSI team provides services to spur preservation-based projects so that local, small-scale and high-quality real estate development becomes more achievable in historic Texas downtowns. Through this approach, development barriers are addressed, a market-driven perspective is prioritized, and vacant and underutilized properties become desirable investment opportunities.

Town Square Initiative Mission

The Initiative addresses barriers to development in historic downtowns that have already demonstrated a substantial commitment to historic preservation-based revitalization. These objectives are accomplished by providing specialized project assistance for vacant and underutilized properties with a focus on:

- Feasibility studies analyzing redevelopment potential;
- Downtown planning strategies;
- Increasing and influencing the market exposure of available properties
- Providing information, education, and resources on best practices that have a positive impact on local policy and decision-making.

THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM CELEBRATES 35 YEARS IN 2016

From five to 90 cities, the Texas Main Street Program has come a long way since 1981. To commemorate this important anniversary, we have some fun items in store for 2016.

- We are also hosting a sweepstakes for a weekend getaway to one of our Main Street communities. Participants must "like" or follow the THC on a social media network (Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram) or subscribe to the THC e-newsletter or blog, and enter their email address. This contest will increase awareness of Texas Main Streets to the public and celebrate this milestone of the TMSP.
- For February training in New Braunfels, we have scheduled Dr. Matt Wagner, the Vice President of Revitalization Programs at the National Main Street Center, to be our keynote speaker. Matt is in charge of leading the launch of the renewed and re-imagined Four Point Approach. Returning to the Center after having previously worked there in the 1990s, Matt has also been a local downtown director (Racine, Wisconsin) and the Main Street director in Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin during which time it became the inaugural Great American Main Street Award winner. He is also a former Small Business Development Center director.
- Finally, we also have an article

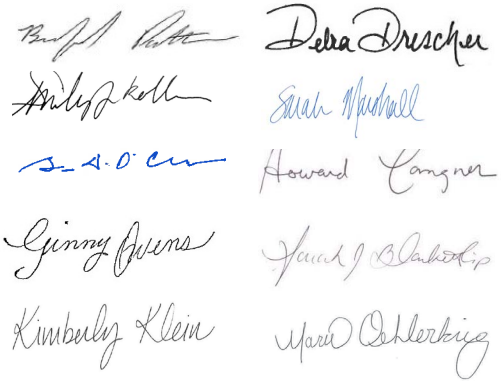
Welcome 2016 Main Street communities! As of January 1, 2016, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, and Sherman entered the Texas Main Street network, bringing the total number of communities served to 90. They were introduced by THC Vice Chairman John Crain during the annual downtown revitalization conference in Waxahachie in November.

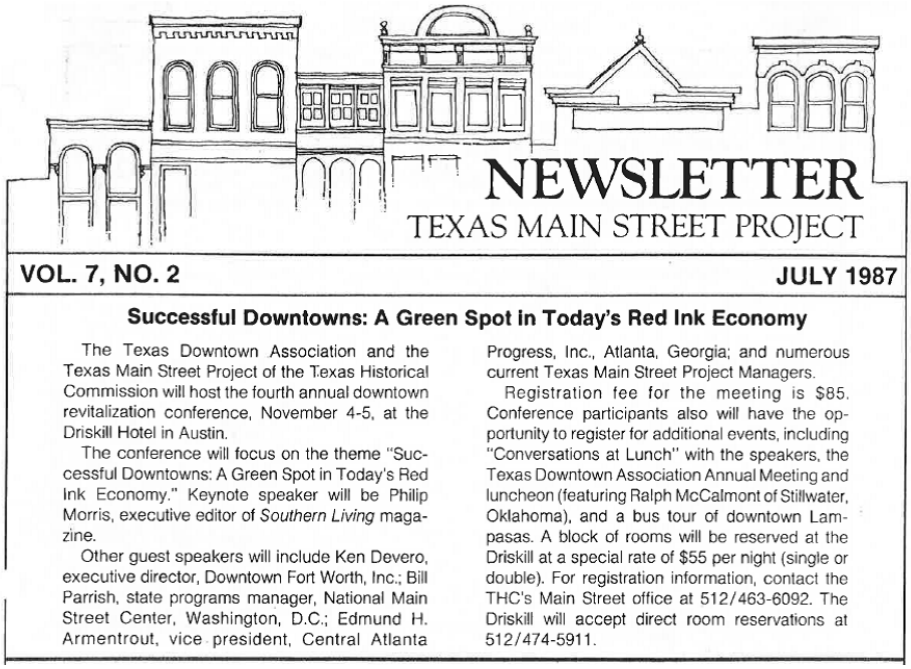
honoring our anniversary in the *Medallion*, the THC's quarterly publication with a circulation of 15,000.

Get ready to help celebrate 35 years of downtown revitalization throughout the state!

The Texas Main Street Program looks forward to another productive year in 2016 providing services to Texas' historic downtowns.

This edition of Main Street Matters was written by Debra Drescher, State Coordinator, Texas Main Street Program





NEWSLETTER
TEXAS MAIN STREET PROJECT

VOL. 7, NO. 2 JULY 1987

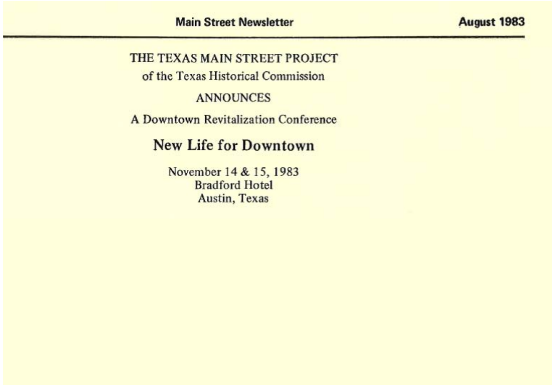
Successful Downtowns: A Green Spot in Today's Red Ink Economy

The Texas Downtown Association and the Texas Main Street Project of the Texas Historical Commission will host the fourth annual downtown revitalization conference, November 4-5, at the Driskill Hotel in Austin.

The conference will focus on the theme "Successful Downtowns: A Green Spot in Today's Red Ink Economy." Keynote speaker will be Philip Morris, executive editor of *Southern Living* magazine.

Other guest speakers will include Ken Devero, executive director, Downtown Fort Worth, Inc.; Bill Parrish, state programs manager, National Main Street Center, Washington, D.C.; Edmund H. Armentrout, vice president, Central Atlanta Progress, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia; and numerous current Texas Main Street Project Managers.

Registration fee for the meeting is $85. Conference participants also will have the opportunity to register for additional events, including "Conversations at Lunch" with the speakers, the Texas Downtown Association Annual Meeting and luncheon (featuring Ralph McCalmont of Stillwater, Oklahoma), and a bus tour of downtown Lampasas. A block of rooms will be reserved at the Driskill at a special rate of $55 per night (single or double). For registration information, contact the THC's Main Street office at 512/463-6092. The Driskill will accept direct room reservations at 512/474-5911.

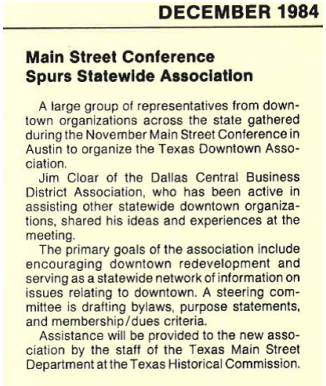


Main Street Newsletter August 1983

THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROJECT
of the Texas Historical Commission
ANNOUNCES
A Downtown Revitalization Conference

New Life for Downtown

November 14 & 15, 1983
Bradford Hotel
Austin, Texas



DECEMBER 1984

Main Street Conference Spurs Statewide Association

A large group of representatives from downtown organizations across the state gathered during the November Main Street Conference in Austin to organize the Texas Downtown Association.

Jim Cloar of the Dallas Central Business District Association, who has been active in assisting other statewide downtown organizations, shared his ideas and experiences at the meeting.

The primary goals of the association include encouraging downtown redevelopment and serving as a statewide network of information on issues relating to downtown. A steering committee is drafting bylaws, purpose statements, and membership/dues criteria.

Assistance will be provided to the new association by the staff of the Texas Main Street Department at the Texas Historical Commission.

More from the archives: Other early issues of the Texas Main Street newsletter inform stakeholders of the first Main Street conference in 1983; the creation of the Texas Downtown Association during the conference in 1984 and the beginnings of a joint statewide revitalization conference being hosted by the two organizations together. This relationship continues still continues today.

MAIN STREET PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2015, managers gathered in Nacogdoches (left) and San Marcos (middle), for Main Street Professional Development. We also gathered for the annual statewide downtown revitalization conference with the Texas Downtown Association in Waxahachie (right), also a Main Street community. Before the start of this conference, TMSP staff had the chance to visit with our newest local program managers.

SPECIAL FEATURE: 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT FIRE OF PARIS

The Fire of 1916 was the greatest calamity that has ever befallen Paris Texas. Flames destroyed the town twice—first in 1877; however, the fire of 1916 is generally referred to as the "Big Fire."

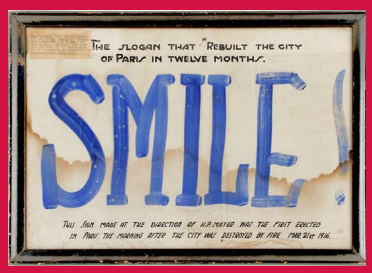
Before and after shot of the "Big Fire"

The "Big Fire" was first seen in single story frame storage warehouse approximately a three fourths of a mile south from the principle mercantile district. Beginning at 5:30 p.m. on March 21, 1916, the fire was ignited and flamed by high winds destroying 1440 buildings and homes over a 264 acre area. Among the public buildings destroyed were County Courthouse and jail, City Hall and Central Fire Station, Congregational, Episcopal, Baptist, Christian, Centenary Presbyterian, Church of Christ churches, the post office, Federal Courthouse, the high school, one grammar school, all picture shows, all telegraph offices and the telephone exchange. The fire raged until 3:30 a.m. when it was finally brought under control with the aid of volunteer firemen in wagons from Dallas, Honey Grove, Bonham, Cooper, and Hugo, Oklahoma. The cause of the fire was never determined, four people died, and the estimated loss was over $11 million.

The city of Paris was almost swept completely swept away by the fire. Few who had gone to bed in the early morning hours with doubt in their minds as to what the future would bring were soon to be informed. At dawn, before the ashes had cooled, there were men busy shoveling debris from the streets, others setting up tents in which to sell emergency supplies, others were conferring with architects and builders. An article in the Paris News dated March 23, 1916 stated, "Most of the merchants have already secured locations to go back to business temporarily until they can rebuild." A large card with the five letters SMILE, made at the direction of H.P. Mayer, was the first sign erected in Paris the morning after the city was destroyed. This simple word SMILE became the slogan that rebuilt the city of Paris in two years, exemplifying the spirit of the people to overcome the effects of this terrible disaster and build a more beautiful city than before. Today, Paris' Commercial Historic District is in the National Register of Historic Places as the largest collection of 1916-1918 buildings in the nation.

Special Events for the Commemoration

- A special brochure was created to be a Self-guided driving or bicycling tour of the path of the fire. It was created as an educational piece, and it made a debut a few weeks ago in November when the Lamar County Historic Commission nominated "History Maker of the year". We plan on using it for hosting Historic Trolley Tours (our chamber owns a trolley) in 2016. The brochure is called " The Day Paris Texas Burned." and gives an hour by hour account of what happened in certain areas of the fire. Copy of brochure to follow.
- A centennial planning group has been selling calendars, history books, and commemorative brass ornaments to fundraise. The ornaments replicate the "Smile sign". The history book is a thesis from 1936 where a school administrator in town had actually interviewed the survivors. It is said to be the most comprehensive booklet to date of the history of the fire.
- Downtown street lamp banners were created highlighting the architecture of the buildings rebuilt after the fire of 1916. The banners also have the word "Smile" These banners were created by Sarah Blankenship.
- A large billboard is going to go up over downtown that is a replica of the "Smile" Sign
- 100 Trees are going to be planted in honor of the 100 anniversary, this is a partnership with Atmos Energy. Beginning in the spring.
- ON the actual 100 anniversary, a solemn ceremony is being planned with to include bagpipes, history reading, fire truck parades- Neighboring towns who aided Paris during the fire have been invited.



The Chamber President at the time created this sign right after the fire. It became the slogan for rebuilding. (Editor's note: This spring Paris, Texas, a 23-year Main Street community, will recognize the 100th anniversary of the 1916 fire that destroyed downtown. According to a brochure on the fire, "The downtown brick buildings were no match for the intense heat of the fire. One after another they burst into flames and were rapidly consumed." The clock in the courthouse tower stopped a little before 11 p.m. on the day of the fire. The courthouse would be rebuilt on the foundation of the one destroyed by the fire. Consequently, it now has two cornerstones, one for each courthouse. Four of the five banks in downtown were also completely destroyed by the fire. A focal point at the center of downtown Paris today is Culbertson Fountain, which was dedicated in 1927 to commemorate the victory spirit of Paris and its recovery from the Fire of 1916. This article and images were submitted by Cheri Bedford, Paris Main Street manager, and Marvin Gorley, a graphic designer with Harrison, Walker and Harper.)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

TEXAS MAIN STREET PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Jan. 26-27, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Georgetown

New Manager Training

Required for any new manager that has not already completed the comprehensive Main Street 101, held last in San Marcos in August.

Feb. 10, begin 1:30 p.m. to noon on Fri. Feb. 12.

All-manager Professional Development

Keynote speaker is Matt Wagner, the Vice President of Revitalization Programs at the National Main Street Center.

Tue. July 12, begin 8 a.m. to Fri., July 15, noon
New manager training (Tues-Wed)
All-Manager Wed, 1:30 p.m. to noon Friday.

Professional development is critical for a strong network and a strong local program. As a reminder, each Main Street manager is required by their contract to attend at least two professional development opportunities during each calendar year. (New managers also attend a new-manager segment). This should include at least one of those above, in addition to other options such as and the Texas Downtown Association/Texas Main Street Program annual conference and/or the National Main Street Conference.

Websites of Interest

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: www.achp.gov

African American Heritage Preservation Foundation: www.aahpfdn.org

(The) Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation: www.ahlp.org

(The) American Institute of Architects: www.aia.org

American Planning Association: www.planning.org

American Society of Landscape Architects: www.asla.org

(The) Cultural Landscape Foundation: www.tclf.org

(The) Handbook of Texas Online: www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online

Keep Texas Beautiful: www.ktb.org

League of Historic American Theatres: www.lhat.org

National Main Street Center: www.preservationnation.org/main-street

National Park Service: www.nps.gov

National Trust for Historic Preservation: www.preservationnation.org

Partners for Sacred Places: www.sacredplaces.org

Preservation Easement Trust: www.preservationeasement.org

PreservationDirectory.com: www.preservationdirectory.com

Preservation Texas: www.preservationtexas.org

Project for Public Spaces: www.pps.org

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy: www.railstotrails.org

Scenic America: www.scenic.org

Texas Department of Agriculture: www.TexasAgriculture.gov

Texas Commission on the Arts: www.arts.state.tx.us

Texas Downtown Association: www.texasdowntown.org

Texas Folklife Resources: www.texasfolklife.org

Texas Historical Commission: www.thc.state.tx.us

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department: www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Texas Rural Leadership Program: www.trlp.org

Texas State Preservation Board: www.tspb.state.tx.us

Urban Land Institute: www.uli.org

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