



Main Street! Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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SPOTLIGHT ON BASTROP

Population: 7,554. Designated Main Street community since 2007.

Bastrop Main Street Program The First Eight Years...

Nancy Wood, Bastrop Main Street Manager

The Texas Main Street office asked me to recap the first eight years of the Bastrop Main Street Program (I'll be retiring soon) and share any insights from this very successful effort. Let me start at the beginning;

In 2006, the Bastrop Downtown Business Alliance (BDA) and the President of the Bastrop Economic Development Corporation explored the possibility of Bastrop applying to be a Texas Main Street City. The DBA was hosting events downtown, trying to generate some interest in the historic neighborhood; the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa had just opened in the city's ETJ; and downtown buildings were rundown, with an occupancy rate of about 60 percent and businesses moving regularly. The group



Downtown Bastrop, a Main Street City since 2007 celebrating their First Lady Tour with Former First Lady, Anita Perry

presented to City Council and the application was put together; Bastrop was accepted into the statewide program beginning in 2007.

Next step...hire a program manager. I had a small shop downtown and was ready to close it (yes, I am one of those statistics—open three years and then closing), so I applied to the city to take the job. The city hired me and on February 5, 2007, I started. The next day I went to Winter Training in Austin and

was totally bewildered. What I didn't know at the training was that everything I learned would be valuable information and that the support network I had just entered would be the best I'd ever experienced!

So it was back home after training and "off to the races" with just enough information to be dangerous and tons of wonderful ideas; an Advisory Board that agreed to all the work it would take to get "stuff" off the ground; and a community that loved to



2014 winner check presentations at City Council (left to right) are: Angela Ryan, executive assistant at BEDC; Cindy Cordova (winning business plan with expansion of her business, Cherry Blossom Spa); City Manager Mike Talbot; and Curtis Ervin, director of Bastrop Power and Light.

volunteer. The Board called on everyone they knew to build the Four Points committees: DBA became the core group for the Promotions Committee, the Historic Landmark Commission became the core for the Design Committee, several bankers and the BEDC President put together the Economic Restructuring Committee, and a few of my analytical friends recruited people to write by-laws which formed the core for the Organization Committee.

The Bastrop Main Street Program (BMSP) continues to run with direction from a 15-member Advisory Board: nine voting members appointed by the mayor and confirmed by City Council, and six ex officio which are drawn from partners like the City Council, Bastrop Chamber, BEDC, City Manager, HLC, and Planning Commission. The general manager of the Hyatt, in 2007, agreed to host the first BMSP Annual Strategic Planning Workshop dedicated to developing the committee work plans for the coming year, three years out and five years out. Because of that generosity, every year over 50 volunteers come together to plan BM-

SP's work, and we will be hosting the ninth annual workshop at the Hyatt on February 7, 2015. That same general manager actively worked on the BMSP board almost eight years (until September 2014 when he was transferred to Hyatt Regency Tokyo), and was BMSP board chair for four years. Since 2007, downtown property owners have invested \$13.3 million, the city and its partners have invested \$10.6 million, and BEDC has reimbursed \$460,000

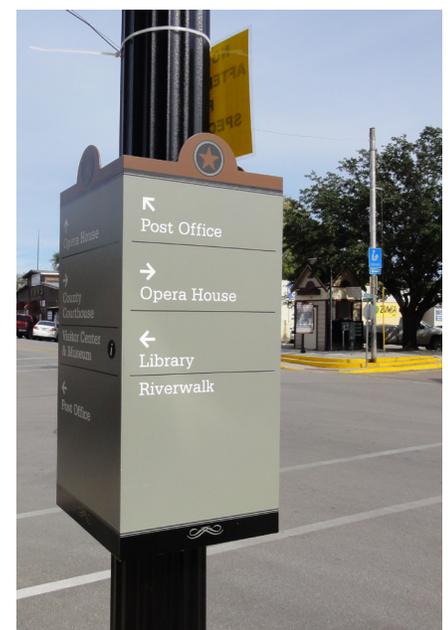
(to property owners who've taken part in the BEDC grant program) in making Bastrop's downtown a viable, exciting place to live, work, and visit!

I cannot express enough the joy, appreciation, and awe this group of working volunteers has generated for me and for this community. What I can do is share the successes that a volunteer core of over 50 people have pulled off in the last eight years for the wonderful city that is Bastrop. **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!**

Here are a few of the successes achieved by each committee (and



The wayfinding project was a partnership of the Bastrop Main Street Design Committee, the city of Bastrop, and the BEDC.





Museum and Visitor Center in Bastrop—the top image shows a before shot; the middle image shows a rendering the design staff of the Texas Main Street Program completed; and the bottom image shows the after shot.

there's much, much more...so explore our BMSP website at www.bastroptxmainstreet.com:

The Design Committee's mission is to guide and foster the historic preservation of sites which make

Bastrop a unique community; successful projects include:

- Led the wayfinding project (completed Phase 1 October 2012; \$155,000 project). This project necessitated numerous

after-hours public meetings to gather public input; funding facilitated by a partnership between BEDC (\$40,000) and the city (\$115,000)

- Ensured BMSP input on the design of the City Hall and the Bastrop Convention and Exhibit Center (City Hall completed and open in November 2010, and Bastrop Convention and Exhibit Center completed and open in March 2011)
- With BEDC, revised and strengthened the Façade Grant Program and added the Mega Grant; continued to refine the process each year (begun in 2007 and is ongoing; to date: 19 Mega; 20 Façade; \$463,000 BEDC invested; \$2.9 million total invested by property owners)

The Economic Restructuring Committee's mission is to provide guidance for viable economic incentives for business and property owners, and encourage business growth in the historic district; successful projects include:

- Successfully lobbied the City Council to designate the downtown core a Culinary District (map includes "spokes" to capture similar outlying businesses) in order to market downtown as a food destination with 18 locally owned restaurants and 11 food related businesses in the district.
- In November 2013, conducted the first Adult Entrepreneur Business Plan Competition with three entrants; raised a

“winner take all” prize package including \$1,000 from BEDC, \$1000 from BP&L, \$800 combined from three local banks, a \$5,000 guaranteed loan from BIG Austin (with training by them for the owner in addition to the loan), and consulting services from a local CPA firm valued at \$1,500. The winner was Johnson Bakery, LLC, and this new business opened in Bastrop in 2014; winner of the second annual competition is currently working on the expansion of her downtown business, Cherry Blossoms Spa.

- Organized the community-wide Entrepreneur Ready certification from Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship for City of Bastrop (received in June, 2012).

The Promotions Committee’s mission is to promote historic downtown as a “destination” through events, marketing, and branding. Successful projects include:

- Produces the annual Lost Pines Christmas Swirl – A Wine Tasting Event on the first evening of Lost Pines Christmas weekend; this is a BMSP fundraiser to support efforts for beautification of downtown. The current project is a partnership with DBA to make the vacant lot at 921 Main St. a rest spot for visitors and shoppers.
- Developed—in collaboration with the Economic Restructuring Committee—the smart phone app (implemented in August 2012).
- With Organization Committee

built and developed the “Meet Me on Main Street” advertising campaign artwork and placements (used 2009-2011) which resulted in Texas Downtown Association’s President’s Award for Best Marketing Program in 2010.

The Organization Committee’s mission is to guide volunteerism, funding, and public relations for the Bastrop Main Street Program goals and objectives; successful projects include:

- Successfully opened the Community Volunteer Center in June 2013 in the historic Laake Farmhouse at 1408 B Chestnut St. (small building on the Bastrop Convention and Exhibit Center property which also houses the BMSP office). The center provides meeting space for non-profit organizations in the community, provides a “one stop shop” to gather written information on local volunteer-driven organizations, and maintains a website www.bastropvolunteercenter.org for those wishing to research volunteer opportunities.
- Led the effort to build, brand, and market Lost Pines Christmas Weekend in December (completed and produced annually beginning 2010).
- During the 2010 National Preservation Conference in Austin, produced by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Bastrop was one of several Field Sessions offered to conference attendees

to gain a first-hand view of preservation and revitalization working hand in hand; more than 20 volunteers greeted conference goers and hosted tours of downtown preservation efforts.



(Editor’s note: Although she will be the first to tell you that she couldn’t do it without her hard-working volunteers, we chose to spotlight Bastrop this month as one small way to recognize the tremendous job that Main Street Director Nancy Wood has done. Nancy is retiring in April, and we wanted to use this space to wish her well!)

VISUAL MERCHANDISING FOR MAIN STREET MERCHANTS

Kimberly Klein, Administrative Technician and Sarah Blankenship, Project Design Assistant, Texas Main Street Program, Texas Historical Commission

Here’s the scenario: you and your best friend have decided to take the

plunge; you are about to open up your own retail shop. Let's pretend that neither of you are especially creative and don't know where to begin. You start pondering how you are going to make your retail space look good, lure in potential customers, and persuade people to hand over their hard-earned money for your products. In this article we will explore some of the bare-bone basics you need to know for effective visual merchandising.

Target customer - The first thing you want to do is begin with your target customer in mind. Knowing your target customer and incorporating their lifestyle interests is going to help you tremendously in creating effective merchandising displays. A good example of a major chain is Banana Republic. They have done an effective job laying out their stores and displays to address the



Store Interior Examples from <http://www.theglobalphotographer.com/the-global-photographer/2008/5/29/banana-republic-store-interior.html>

18-24 year old young adults starting out their careers. Various types of displays and mannequins depict the young adults in sleek office-friendly

clothing. The merchandise is highlighted by track lighting or spotlighting, while the furniture, display holders, wall color and wall art are in used in soft, natural tones.

A good example of a local shop, The Escape, located in Georgetown does a fabulous job of laying out their stores and displays. Their target audience isn't a specific age range, but showcases types of products homeowners would want to display in their home. Just like Banana Republic, the furniture, display holders, and wall color are in soft, natural tones. Accent colors, perhaps used in vases, wall art, and scarfs are brighter and grab the customer's attention.



Store interior Examples from <http://gtownview.com/2014/12/the-escape/>

Visual Clues - There are so many visual cues you can utilize to communicate your message—from using colors, lighting, balance, and focus to direct where your customer looks and for how long. See this [handout](#) for a more detailed description on different visual cues you can use. The

handout covers all the many ways you can visually create that first impression, top-quality signage, and displays for your business.

Creating an experience - Visual cues are essential, but don't forget about sound, touch, smell, and taste to create a full experience for your store. Stores like to [manipulate](#) all of your senses so you'll spend more money. In the industry this is commonly known as [Sensory Branding](#). With sound, depending on what type of crowd you want to draw, play the music they would enjoy. With touch, allow your customers to touch, feel, and try out the items before a purchase is made. Smell is considered to be one of the most important senses, due to playing such an important role in memory, mood, and emotion. There is a whole concept referred to as "Scent Marketing." Resources like <http://www.air-aroma.com/scent-marketing> and Scentmarketing.org are great tools that show how various industries play with this concept. For example, if feminine scents like vanilla or lavender are used in a clothing store, people are more inclined to buy women's clothes. If a more manly scent is used, something woody or earthy, people are more inclined to purchase men's clothes. With consumables, a little taste test can help with a larger sale.

Finding Sources of Inspiration - Major national chain stores pay big bucks for window display and interior layout designers and most have strict rules about contracting out or sharing their trends. However, the new retailer on Main Street can still learn a lot and get inspiration from visiting

these stores and studying their techniques, in addition to visiting successful independent retailers.

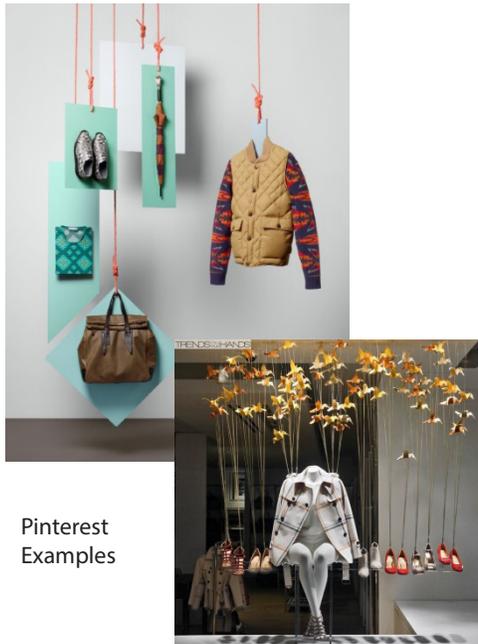


Example window display from retaildesignblog.com. Note the color and use of cut paper/foam for the backdrop.

There are also many forums and blogs that share current trends, such as these: <http://thewindowdisplayblog.com/>, <http://retaildesignblog.net/>, <http://www.shopify.com/blog/12706185-a-fool-proof-guide-to-creating-window-displays-that-turn-heads-and-drive-foot-traffic>, and http://www.boutiquewindow.com/blog/articles/why-window-displays-matter/#.VL_9ekfF98E.

Pinterest is another great resource for images and projects you can do yourself. Start by searching “inexpensive window displays” and you’ll be amazed with what can be done with paper, string, paint, and found objects: <http://www.pinterest.com/search/?q=inexpensive%20window%20displays>

Take a site visit to your own downtown stores or neighboring Main Street cities. Lufkin partnered with their newspaper for an inexpensive material for window displays; an opportunity



Pinterest Examples

for a creative window display contest that required a significant part of the design (at least 75 percent) to be made of newspaper and the *Lufkin Daily News* header had to be easily seen at least once. Here is one of the examples of the window displays featuring the *Lufkin Daily News* as a table runner. (See example to the right.)

With these tips, hopefully you and your best friend will have lots of fun creating a destination store that is visually interesting and an engaging experience for customers.

CELEBRATING MAIN STREET VOLUNTEERS

In the January issue of *Main Street Matters*, we began a new feature that celebrates those all-important volunteers who contribute so much to local Main Street programs. This month, we continue that theme. If you would like to submit a volunteer profile



Window Display in Lufkin, Texas

for a future issue, please email the information to Debra.Drescher@thc.state.tx.us.

Joanna Runkles, Levelland Main Street Program

Information provided by Levelland Main Street Manager, Missy Passmore

For the past three years, Joanna has been a working and contributing member of the Promotions committee. For the Trunk or Treat, she has lined up the parade and occupies a spot around the courthouse square to supervise and assist as needed. In addition, she has assisted in the planning of Little Miss Merry Christmas and Ladies Night Out on the square. And when it is time for the lighted Christmas Parade, she provides leadership to ensure participation,

especially within the Levelland schools.

When the beginning of the school year approaches, Joanna coordinates the agenda and guest appearances for the Movie on the Square. She is committed to being her best in fulfilling anything to which she commits. It is obvious that she wants Levelland and Main Street to be a better place for all people! Joanna obviously is one of our SUPERB Main Street volunteers, and in appreciation for her efforts, we presented her with the Main Street Hero Award 2014.

She also gives unselfishly of her time to many other organizations as well, and through that she has had very positive impact on our whole community. She is actively involved not only in her church's activities, but also in numerous educational projects of the Thi

Theta Epsilon chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma-an educator's service organization.

Additionally, she has been instrumental in instructional improvements in Levelland ISD schools where she champions teacher academies designed to promote retention of the new educators. She has also been an integral part of the Levelland ISD Foundation for Excellence, which raises funds for dual credit courses, teacher innovative grants, and special projects or needs.

Dr. Curtis Ratliff, Grapevine Main Street Program

Information provided by Grapevine Main Street Manager David Klempin and Sallie Andrews

Dr. Curtis Ratliff and his wife, Linda, have been major supporters of the Grapevine Heritage Foundation, the Grapevine Main

Street Program, and Nash Farm with tremendous donations of time and financial resources for 15 years. Since 2010, Dr. Ratliff has served as the chairman of the Grapevine Heritage Foundation Board of Directors, which is also Grapevine's Main Street Board. In addition to his leadership and administrative duties, Dr. Ratliff is a living history re-enactor and participant at Nash Farm, which is located one-half mile west of Main Street. Nash Farm is always marketed with Grapevine's attractions and is considered a part of the Grapevine Historic Township, which Main Street bisects.

For his efforts, in November 2013, Dr. Ratliff was the recipient of the "Beyond the Call of Duty Award" presented to him by the Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau.



Levelland volunteer Joanna Runkles, seen on far left in red sweater



Supporters of the Heritage Foundation Board in Grapevine, Dr. Curtis Ratliff and his wife Linda

More Main Street Volunteerism



Victoria Main Street board members and staff following their board retreat and planning session held in January.



The Main Street Manager in Texarkana, Ina McDowell, took this picture of her daughter, Scout, who is learning early to volunteer and help make downtown Texarkana terrific by window painting for the Christmas holidays.



Denise Miranda (bottom right), Main Street Manager in Winnsboro, and Carolyn Teague (bottom left), Main Street Manager in Mount Vernon, discuss their projects in a regional board training in Mount Vernon. Canton, Royse City, and Pittsburg were also in attendance.

MAIN STREET PROMOTIONS AND EVENTS

CARTHAGE

February 28, 2015
Grand Opening of the Texas Country Music Hall of Fame expansion and the new “Ray Price Exhibit”

Museum open 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

CELINA

March 21, 2015
C.A.R.E. Auction

March 23, 2015
The Circus is Coming to Town

March 28, 2015
Cajun Festival
11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

ELGIN

2nd Thursdays January - June
Sip Shop & Stroll events

March 7, 2015
Super Hero JDRF Fun Run

FARMERSVILLE

February 7, 2015
Farmers & Fleas Market
This is a combination farmers market and flea market, held downtown in our restored historic Onion Shed, on the first Saturday of the month. Sales hours are 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. [More information.](#)

GEORGETOWN

March 7, 2015
6th Annual Georgetown Swirl
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

GLADEWATER

February 12, 2015
2nd Annual Valentine’s Dinner & Dance
6 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Make an impact on your Valentine by starting the holiday sooner and attend the Chamber of Commerce sponsored Valentine’s Dinner & Dance. The evening promises to be fun filled with great food, music, and company.

LA GRANGE

March 21, 2015
La Grange Uncorked
4 p.m. - 8 p.m. Join us for wine tastings, culinary delights, and some savy shopping. [More information.](#)

MCKINNEY

February 15, 2015
Krewe of Barkus Dog Parade & Festival
[More information.](#)

RIO GRANDE CITY

February 13, 2015
Keeping it Rio’s Art Walk
A walking tour supporting local talent. [More information.](#)

ROCKWALL

February 12, 2015
2nd Thursdays
Downtown shops extend their hours until 8 p.m. the 2nd

Thursday monthly, offering promotions and discounts. Follow Downtown Rockwall, Texas on Facebook to acquire monthly event details.

SAN MARCOS

March 21, 2015

National Corn Dog Celebration

Noon to 4 p.m.; Free corn dogs and games on the Square, and March Madness specials at downtown restaurants. [More information.](#)

SEGUIN

March 21, 2015

Art Fest

Hosted by Seguin Main Street, Seguin Commission on the Arts, and Seguin Art League. [More information.](#)

UVALDE

2nd Friday of the Month

Four Square Friday

6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

WINNSBORO

Every Saturday

Winnsboro Farmer's Market

8 a.m. - noon downtown on the patio of Art and Espresso on Broadway. Pastured beef, organic pork, organic chicken, eggs, yogurt, breads, honey, and more! [More information.](#)

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.lhatf.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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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

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