TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Main Street ! Matters

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SECRETS OF SUCCESS

Advice from Experienced Main Street Managers

The national Main Street revitalization effort for historic downtowns was formed more than 30 years ago. In 1981, following a pilot project of the national center that studied ways to address the decline of America's downtowns, the Texas Main Street Program (TMSP) became one of the first six statewide coordinating programs in the nation. It has since operated as part of the Texas Historical Commission.

The TMSP is one of the oldest and largest in the nation, with 87 fully designated communities. Together these communities have spurred over $2.8 billion in overall downtown reinvestment and created 7,796 new businesses with over 30,000 jobs. What an impact Main Street has made across the state!

In addition to having one of the oldest statewide programs in the country, Texas has a wealth of knowledge about preserving historic downtowns for future generations. As we all know, places do not revitalize themselves; it is people working hard that help downtowns fully maximize their potential and become communities of choice for residents and tourists alike. Main Street cannot exist without strong community support, volunteers, and of course, strong Main Street managers leading the efforts. We asked some of our long term managers around the state about their thoughts regarding their Main Street programs and are honored that they shared some of their words of advice.

Carolyn Howard, Main Street Manager for 29 years

Beaumont

What is your proudest accomplishment as a Main Street manager?

There isn't just one thing – it really is the utter persistence, get-up-and-go, and timing that I feel good about. Persistence – when you just keep going, when you are dead tired, but you believe in the mission and you just get up one more time and go. Timing, knowing when to let go, and let the issue become silent, or when to leave someone alone and when to pick back up with them again. There is no such thing as "no." There may be silence for a while and that's okay.

Carolyn Howard, Main Street Manager, Beaumont

What is the biggest challenge you have overcome in your time as a Main Street manager?

I am still overcoming all the time, but I have had to confront being mentally bankrupt. I have had to embrace taking time to refresh, to look at things outside of our world of Main Street-ing, and find those creative juices – allowing your mind to rest. There is a huge difference in physical tired and mental tired. The latter is tough; again, be silent and let your voice come back.

What do you know now that you wish you knew in your first year as a Main Street manager?

Trust your instincts, and when you feel pressured to do something because somebody said so. Stop, be still and silent, and the right thing can happen. It is okay to not take action on each and every idea. Silence really is power sometimes.

Any advice for new Main Street communities?
Be very patient. This is a process. And when the magic moments come, such as a great event or the restoration of an old property, savor every moment and remind yourself of the process required to get there. Embrace good organization because that is the foundation of everything else.

Beverly Abell, Main Street Manager for 25+ years

Tyler

Beverly has been immersed in the world of Main Street for the past 25 year. She has managed four different programs in three different states, was on staff at the National Main Street Center, and was a Main Street consultant in the United Kingdom.

What is your proudest accomplishment as a Main Street manager?

First, I don't consider any programmatic accomplishments "mine" alone. They belong to the community, the volunteers and the program. But for me personally, I'd say my two proudest accomplishments are: Relationships and Longevity. Relationship - anytime I can impact a life or be an encouragement is a true privilege to me, and I've had that opportunity many times over the past 25 years. Longevity itself -this is a tough line of work many times, and there are a lot of land mines and days you wish you could do something, anything else. It is very rare in our industry to see people who can stick it out more than a few years. I don't know if the x factor in longevity is stubbornness, a touch of craziness, or what, but I am proud that I have lasted this long.

What is the biggest challenge you have overcome in your time as a Main Street manager?

Program-wise, it is balancing personalities and expectations. Also, making the point that Main Street isn't just a special events program – it is true economic development at its finest. Personally, it is work-life balance. This job is a heartfelt mission and can easily become your life if you let it. Developing stress —and fatigue—management skills is a must.

What do you know now that you wish you knew in your first year as a Main Street manager?

That there is no way I will know it all in my first year—or even two or three years. That not everyone will be your fan or your friend, but if you keep steady and do what you know is right, you will be fine. To remember that it will be a month from today very, very soon. One thing I constantly ask myself: Will this matter a year from now?

Any advice for new Main Street communities?
• There is no big investor out there who will save your community for you. Your answers and success come from within.
• The Big Fix does not work.
• Remember to hold events to reach a market point – not just because you want to throw a party.
• Workplans are a must, no matter how much of a pain they can be.
• Do the doable first.
• Share the power and the vision, and then you have consensus.
• Treat all ideas and the people who produce them with dignity.
• Above all, remember that your job is encouragement: encouragement of downtown, encouragement of businesses, encouragement of historic preservation, encouragement of volunteers, encouragement of a community and a movement. Measure everything you do and say against that one word: encouragement.
• And, just for fun: it's promotion – no S! Drives me 'round the bend when people tack on that "s." Lol.

Amy Miller, Main Street Manager for 18 years

Elgin

Amy Miller (right), Main Street manager, Elgin, pictured with her mother.

What is your proudest accomplishment as a Main Street manager?

Main Street in Elgin is an amazing team – being part of growing the Elgin Hogeye Festival.

What is the biggest challenge you have overcome in your time as a Main Street manager?

Keeping a positive feeling around the program and downtown when times are hard.

What do you know now that you wish you knew in your first year as a Main Street manager?

Patience – it all takes time and it's a rollercoaster that what goes up, comes down in some fashion, but goes up again, too.

Any advice for new Main Street communities?
Be patient, persistent, and positive.

Shelly Hargrove, Main Street Manager for 16+ years

Georgetown

Shelly Hargrove, Main Street manager, Professional Community and Economic Developer, Georgetown

What is your proudest accomplishment as a Main Street manager?

Helping to recruit a strong, positive advisory board that accomplishes goals on their annual action plan through active, working committees.

What is the biggest challenge that you have overcome in your time as a Main Street manager?

Personalities. Downtowns tend to attract a lot of "mavericks" with our independent small businesses, but variety is the spice of life, right?

What do you know now that you wish you knew in your first year as a Main Street manager?

Get out and start building relationships with your downtown property and business owners and local leaders the first couple of weeks you are in town. Put names with faces since you will ultimately be the face of Main Street. People need to see you visible to know that the local Main Street program is active.

Any advice for new Main Street communities?

Baby steps, baby steps, baby steps! There can be so much you want to accomplish at first, but you truly have to listen to your downtown stakeholders and prioritize since timing can be everything!

Julie Glover, Certified Main Street Manager for 16 years

Denton

What is your proudest accomplishment as a Main Street manager?

Seeing downtown really become a vital 24/7 area with activities for all ages. I'm especially proud of our residents in downtown and their involvement with the program. They recently wrote and won a local grant to help us install custom bike racks, adding 57 more spaces for bikes.

What is the biggest challenge you have overcome in your time as a Main Street manager?

Dealing with dumpsters and parking. If there was a good solution, we'd already be doing it. And I would be a rich consultant, not a poor Main Street manager.

What do you know now that you wish you knew in your first year as a Main Street manager?

Don't take it personally—some people cannot be happy with anything. Do what you can, keep smiling, and move on.

Any advice for new Main Street communities?

It's a slow process, so don't get discouraged. Know that you're doing something worthwhile that will matter for generations to come

Frieda Haley, Certified Main Street Manager for 16 years

Decatur

What is your proudest accomplishment as a Main Street manager?

Seeing downtown Decatur busy and businesses thriving is a wonderful thing. Every event and project, from the beginning of the program in 1994, from clean-up day to downtown festivals, etc., has a part in the success of the program. Every volunteer hour really does matter and even though

there is still plenty on the "to do" list, it's great to look back and see it all pay off.

What is the biggest challenge you have overcome in your time as a Main Street Manager?

Apathetic and negative attitudes from business owners, building owners, city council members, and citizens is a challenge anywhere. Since people are really what make the Main Street program successful, building and maintaining positive and encouraging relationships, setting realistic programs goals, and learning to be patient are key.

What do you know now that you wish you knew in your first year as a Main Street manager?

You can't please everyone and you can't do it all for them (businesses) —be clear and realistic about what you (personally), your board and committees can offer, then under-promise and over-deliver.

Any advice for new Main Street communities?

It's okay to think big — but set one or two realistic goals that can be accomplished in 12–24 months. Always write personal "thank you" notes to sponsors and volunteers. Take lots and lots of pictures, and keep track of the changes to your downtown (good and bad) so you can remind people how things used to look. You'll be amazed how easily they forget.

Jannis Hayers, Main Street Manager for 16 years

Electra

What is your proudest accomplishment as a Main Street manager?

The Main Street Advisory Board created a small business "Main Street Market" —a collection of vendors in a City-owned downtown building — for the holiday season in 2002, giving home-based businesses a storefront, and residents additional shopping opportunities. It survived as the privately owned Market at 222 W. Cleveland for several years thereafter.

What is the biggest challenge you have overcome in your time as a Main Street manager?

Maintaining a program when public resources were, by necessity, totally directed toward developing an adequate water supply.

What do you know now that you wish you knew in your first year as a Main Street Manager?

That programs go through cycles, and there's a real art to keeping volunteers engaged through all of them.

Any advice for new Main Street communities?

Take full advantage of the Texas Main Street Program staff services!

Doyle Dick, Main Street Manager for 14 years

Greenville

Doyle Dick,
Main Street manager, Greenville

What is your proudest accomplishment as a Main Street manager?

Visual improvements. The City of Greenville received a Transportation Enhancement Program grant for ADA sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, and street furniture. Additionally, we've awarded $100,000 in facade grants over the last four years.

What is the biggest challenge you have overcome in your time as a Main Street manager?

Implementation of work. Volunteers can have wonderful ideas, but many expect you to do it all.

What do you know now that you wish you knew in your first year as a Main Street manager?
Don't take it personally. Some merchants are negative and seek to blame others for their lack of success.

Any advice for new Main Street communities?
Little projects make a difference.

Adah Leah Wolf, Main Street Manager for 11 years

Farmersville

What is your proudest accomplishment as a Main Street manager?

I am proudest of my role in helping to create an environment where building owners feel comfortable investing large sums of money to improve their buildings.

What is the biggest challenge you have overcome in your time as a Main Street manager?

Inertia. Changes never happen as quickly as you would like them to.

What do you know now that you wish you knew in your first year as a Main Street manager?

Sometimes when you hear nothing, that means good news! Really, the new Main Street managers don't need any more information; they are already dealing with information overload.

Any advice for new Main Street communities?

Be supportive of your Main Street Manager—they are your downtown cheerleader.

Barbara Thompson, Lufkin, Main Street manager for 10 years

Lufkin

Barbara Thompson,
Main Street manager, Lufkin

What is your proudest accomplishment as a Main Street manager?

Getting the past owner to sell the Pines Theatre to the City of Lufkin. I knew the theatre was a major link to restoring downtown. If she didn't sell the theatre, the city was going to condemn it, and make a parking lot. The city restored the Pines Theatre and the community loves and supports it. The Pines Theatre is now equipped with a nice stage, lighting and sound equipment, large dressing rooms, and new and comfortable seating. Since the opening of the theatre, Lufkin has seen several world-class artists. Movies at the Pines are enjoyed by families and friends. The theatre rents for concerts, weddings and even a funeral! There's always a booking for the Pines Theatre.

What is the biggest challenge you have overcome in your time as a Main Street manager?

Both overcoming people's negative thoughts of downtown "ever" being able to revitalize and getting the community to invest in downtown. After a couple of people invested in downtown, others are buying in by starting or moving their business to downtown. Downtown Lufkin is steadily becoming a destination!

What do you know now that you wish you knew in your first year as a Main Street manager?

The importance in having the local media be a part of your Main Street. A part of selling downtown is to keep downtown in the forefront. Ask them to serve on your board and if their busy schedule doesn't permit, ask their company to be an ex-officio—forever! Be a cheerleader about everything positive that happens in downtown;

Any advice for new Main Street communities?

To understand the importance of hiring an astute Main Street Director. A shrewd director, will project, listen, and ask the right questions to get people to contribute their time and funds toward downtown. Never underestimate what can be done with great volunteers. Last but not least, understand who you can connect within the community to support in the revitalization of downtown. Don't hesitate to communicate with other Main Street directors. Take time to

utilize the (Texas Main Street) listserv. It will save you valuable time, and most of the time, you will try to reinvent the wheel, when the wheel is already made and rolling!

We do have several other long-time Main Street managers in our network with more than ten years' experience. A big round of applause for those above, as well as Donna Dow in Denison, Barbara Friedrich in Gonzales, David Klempin in Grapevine, Jennifer Eckermann in Brenham, and Evelyn Ecker in Canyon. Without all this amazing talent, Main Street could not have achieved the significant impact in our historic downtowns. Thanks to all of our Main Street managers for their dedication and hard work.

New Main Street Managers

We welcomed 11 new managers into our network this year. In June, they gathered for professional development and networking. We look forward to seeing them interact with their communities and providing a fresh perspective to their Main Street programs.

Mineola, 25 years

Written by Lynda Durham Rauscher, Community Development Director, Main Street manager, and Historic Preservation Officer, City of Mineola, TX

A vibrant downtown doesn't just happen. Twenty-five years ago, Mineola's downtown was dying, and something had to happen to save this small community in the heart of the East Texas timber belt. Sixty five percent of downtown businesses were boarded up, and the future looked bleak. The key to unlocking the potential of downtown was the National Four Point Approach™ of Main Street.

New Manager Training, Lufkin, June 2014

Third times a charm. That's how it was for Mineola in 1989. It took the city three tries before it was designated a Texas Main Street community. The first large project undertaken was the sidewalk project. A nice walkable sidewalk made all the difference. In 1996, Amtrak Texas Eagle declared Mineola as a designated station stop after several years of relentless campaigning.

In 2005, the Main Street program restored back to its original 1906 splendor, which was achieved by countless fundraisers, festivals, grants, sponsorships, and just asking people for money.

This year, Mineola Main Street celebrated the "Heartbeat of Mineola," showcasing 25 years of success with a vibrant downtown supporting a 90 percent occupancy rate. The accumulation of 25 years of stakeholder's vision and hard work has resulted in Mineola's Downtown Historic District's listing in the National Register of Historic Places. When you have volunteers, business owners, city officials, and city staff with the same vision and goals, as well as understanding and using the National Four Point Approach™ for revitalizing the downtown through economic development, you can bring a community back to life! It's been a grand accomplishment for a small East Texas community (pop. 4515), that has proven its people make a difference!

Changing the Language of Preservation

Brian O'Connor, Economic Development Specialist, Courthouse Square Initiative

It has often been said by property owners, developers, and real estate professionals that historic preservation is not a sound investment. After all, isn't it less profitable to preserve a historic building than to construct a new one? Fluted columns and decorative cornices, while pleasing, cannot influence how many hamburgers a downtown merchant sells on Saturday night, right?

However, contrary to popular opinion, historic preservation yields significant financial benefits for the

Downtown Minela, a 25 year Main Street Program

local economy and can serve as a catalyst for future investment. There are countless instances where the rehabilitation of a historic building has stimulated the revitalization of a downtown. In other cases, a series of smaller rehabilitations are necessary to create the critical mass that returns a neighborhood to prosperity. Downtown property values in the City of Lampasas increased nearly 21 percent on average after restoration of its courthouse. Whereas, only after adopting an economic renewal plan for its downtown did the City of San Marcos experience success. Despite the contrast in methods, neighborhoods that were once depressed are now among the most vibrant and desirable.

Cities across Texas possess historic structures that, if fully leveraged, can be converted into competitive assets to attract business and investment. For the past 30 years, it was widely speculated that technology would eliminate the need for people to congregate in urban centers, sounding the death knell for downtowns. After all, workers would telecommute and video conference, leaving vacant miles of asphalt leading to languishing urban centers. To the contrary, today's technological culture reveals how nearsighted we are.

Research has shown that the physical clustering of people is vital for the cultivation of advancing technologies and a must-have for attracting Richard Florida's "Creative Class." The changing demographic landscape suggests that now is the time to invest in preserving historic downtowns. The prototypical family, a married couple with school age children, is less than 25 percent of all households. College graduates are flocking to authentic downtowns that are seen as walkable, and visitor and bicycle friendly. The population of college-educated 25 to 34 year olds in urban centers has increased by 26 percent in the last decade, creating a workforce that adds to the economic vitality of downtowns. From empty-nesters to the elderly, individuals are increasingly seeking downtowns with easy access to hospitals, shopping, public transportation, and cultural amenities.

For too long, historic preservationists have defended their actions solely in aesthetic terms. Stated in non-use values for which traditional economic models were ill-suited to measure, their impact often came into question each budget cycle. The value of preservation need not be expressed only in quantitative terms; however, the context in which preservation is viewed needs to be revisited.

Preservationists should start by not separating the economic benefits from the historical and cultural rewards. Separating the intrinsic value of historic preservation from its financial capabilities is and will always be a losing proposition. Fortunately, these issues are not mutually exclusive. Today, preservation is slowly emerging beyond that of a calling, a movement, or a social cause. What historic preservation can and should be seen as is part of an investment strategy and business model for building vibrant, sustainable communities.

Unfortunately, in the race to attract business, some communities undermine the sustaining value of their historic structures; exchanging short-term returns at the expense of long-term results. As a result, they build fashionable but trendy places that are unsustainable because they have sacrificed that which made them unique. Therefore, let's start the conversation by admitting that the preservation process may be slower. Let's concede that the costs to preserve a historic structure can be higher than that of new construction; and yes, let's openly acknowledge that the work may more difficult. However, anything worth doing, typically is.

Fortunately, empirical evidence is available that historic preservation produces demonstrable public and private benefits. In the last decade, economic impact studies and cost-benefit analyses have demonstrated the economic benefits of historic preservation. Although there is not yet consensus on how benefits should be measured, historic preservation has distinguished itself in the area of jobs, property values, heritage tourism, and downtown revitalization. Studies conducted by Rutgers University (Table A) have shown that in many parts of the country, a $1 million investment in historic rehabilitation yields markedly better results in terms of employment, income, and state and local taxes than an equal investment in new construction or in other industry.

In cities across Texas, historic buildings are quietly contributing to robust local economies and distinctive livable communities including buildings that are of a diverse vintage that provides flexible, affordable space for entrepreneurs, and buildings that are of a scale ideally suited for walking, shopping, and social interaction. Evidence suggests that Americans may be growing tired of its exit-ramp economy with disposable office, commercial, and retail facilities located along suburban freeways in favor of authentic places.

New York City's Independent Budget Office studied the effects of a local historic district designation on real-estate prices and found a 22.6 percent to 71.8 percent price premium associated with inclusion of a property in an historic district. A State of Florida economic impact study found that for every dollar invested in the state's historic preservation efforts, two dollars are returned in direct revenues. Similar results undertaken for the State of New Jersey found that each $1 million spent on non-residential historic rehabilitation creates two more jobs than the same money spent on new construction. In the past year, economic impact studies specifically focused on Main Street have been done in Iowa, Michigan, and New Mexico and show similar results.

Table A	$1 Million in Historic Preservation
5 more jobs than	Manufacturing electronic equipment in California.
12 more jobs than	Manufacturing cars in Michigan.
29 more jobs than	Pumping oil in Oklahoma
22 more jobs than	Cutting timber in Oregon
12 more jobs than	Processing steel in Pennsylvania
8 more jobs than	Manufacturing textiles in South Carolina
17 more jobs than	Agriculture in South Dakota
20 more jobs than	Mining coal in West Virginia

Historic Preservation creates more jobs than more traditional forms of economic devlopment.
Source: Rutger University

In the area of heritage tourism, an important piece for articulating the economic contributions of historic preservation, researchers found that heritage tourists stay 4.7 nights longer than the average tourist, and spend 78 percent more in restaurants than other travelers. In the State of Texas, state and local revenues supported by the travel industry represent about 8 percent of all state and local revenues (not including property taxes).

In 1976, Congress passed the 20 percent federal historic tax credit to promote the rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties. Since that time, it has leveraged over $106 billion in private investment, created 2.35 million jobs, and preserved more than 38,700 buildings for productive uses. However, despite such success, the US Congress is considering the elimination of the federal historic tax credit (HTC) to balance the budget.

The reality is that revitalizing any downtown typically requires some market intervention to disrupt the cycle of disinvestment. Preservation incentives from local, state, and federal governments can and should be used to prime-the-pump for private sector investment. However, the public discourse on the merits of historic preservation need to be radically and inextricably altered. Incentives to preserve historic structures need to be presented not as entitlements but rather as part of a proven investment strategy with indisputable returns for tax payers.

As we move into an economy of knowledge, innovation, and entrepreneurship, many downtowns are better utilizing historic structures through various business approaches. Municipal governments are collaborating with local colleges and universities to create downtown business incubators and satellite campuses that provide technical training to strengthen pathways to employment and enhance the local business mix. Public incentives are vitally important for revitalizing smaller Main Street communities that are often tasked with the unimaginable burden of stimulating the real estate market and restoring business confidence. Historic preservation, if properly articulated, could stand along with traditional economic development incentive programs that target science, technology, engineering and manufacturing clusters whose mission is clearly measured in terms of jobs, taxes, and investment.

A 2010 study of the Delaware Historic Preservation Tax Credit program showed that $1 million of economic output from a local manufacturer generates nearly $344,000 in household income. A $1 million new construction project generates more than $477,000 in household income. But a $1 million invested in the rehabilitation of a historic building generates nearly $540,000 in household income in Delaware (see Table B).

However, the economic benefits of historic preservation can only be fully realized if networked with other elements that address the quality of the business mix, walkability, and aesthetics of public spaces.

Table B. Delaware Historic Tax Credit program.
Source: Passport to Preservation: The Global Economic of Historic Preservation, Donovan Rypkema, November 2, 2011

In Washington, D.C., design improvements along a three-quarter mile corridor in Barracks Row, including patterned sidewalks and traffic signals, attracted 40 new businesses with nearly 200 jobs. Lancaster, California added pedestrian safety features as part of a downtown revitalization effort, including a pedestrian plaza, wider sidewalks, landscaping, and traffic calming. The project spurred $125 million in private investment, a 26 percent increase in sales tax revenue, and 800 new jobs, producing a 10-fold return on investment. In Mountain View, California, the expansion of space for sidewalk cafes and a street redesign for pedestrians were followed by private investment of $150 million, including residential, retail and offices, resulting in a vibrant downtown destination.

If the argument in favor of historic preservation ever hopes to appeal to the other side of the balance sheet, they'll have to place more emphasis on jobs, taxes, and return on investment to garner political support and private sector confidence. Additionally, bankers, developers, investors, underwriters, as well as local government officials will need to be better informed of the enduring economic benefits of historic preservation. Fortunately, changing the tone of the conversation should be as

simple as few economic activities have had a more impressive effect on the local economy than the rehabilitation of historic buildings.

However, let's not forget, that historic preservation, at its very best, is a melding of architecture, history and culture, and entrepreneurship. Therefore, preservationists should readily embrace the real estate aspects of their work. Arguably, even historic buildings need to generate sales to support rents so as to maintain and improve them. The rich culture and diversity of downtowns will be assured if a stronger economic development argument is made to preserve historic places.

So the next time you are downtown enjoying dinner with friends, take a moment to look around. Take notice of the public spaces, the tree-lined streets and the intricate building features that surround you, and think how they just might add to the flavor of your burger.

Sources:
Contribution of Historic Preservation to Quality of Life of Floridians, University of Florida, September 2006

Passport to Preservation: The Global Economics of Historic Preservation Donovan Rypkema, November 2, 2011

Historic Preservation's Impact on Job Creation, Property Values and Environmental Sustainability. School of Urban and Public Affairs. University of Louisville, KY, July 23, 2009

Downtown Revitalization in Texas: The intersection of the Main Street and Historic Courthouse Preservation Programs, Marie Oehlerking, Master's Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Austin

Marketing Your Website

Rebekka Adams, Assistant State Coordinator, Texas Main Street Program

In last month's issue of Main Street Matters, we spoke of the importance of having a website dedicated to your Main Street program. As they say, if you build it, they will come. Is this really true for a website? Just build a website, and customers, volunteers, and investors will come flocking into your downtown, right? The thing about a website is that it is never finished. You will always be making updates. A website is not static; it always needs fresh, new content. Additionally, you need to spend just as much effort marketing the website as you did creating it.

Build SEO

What exactly does that mean? Isn't a website marketing itself? A website is only good if people know how to find it. The first thing to do is to increase your search engine optimization (SEO) ranking. There are many articles out there to help you increase your SEO. Let Google be your guide in improving SEO.

Create Backlinks

One key place to market your website is online. You want your website to be linked to as many credible websites that are relevant in your community as possible. Backlinks help build credibility to your website and increases your standing with search engines. A backlink is an incoming link to your website from another website. Here is a list of suggested local organizations to approach to help you build backlinks to your website. The great thing is that you can approach each of these organizations and start a conversation around your program, why they should link to your website, and ultimately, work on building a stronger partnership for your Main Street program.

- Local newspaper
- Local radio station(s)
- Your area CVB
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Small business development centers
- Volunteer organizations that work in your community
- Your area merchants' websites (and their social media)
- Tourism websites that serve your region
- Other websites that cater to your community
- Local business directories
- Local bloggers

If your Main Street community is a tourist destination, think bigger than your local community for building partnerships and backlinks. Think regionally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. Work with your organization and promotion committees to build a list of potential places to reach out to and partner with. Utilize your board and volunteers to help you approach these organizations to ask for backlinks. Asking for something as simple as a backlink is a great conversation starter.

Also, remember common courtesy,

and link back to websites of organizations with whom you are partnering.

Market Online
In addition to building partnerships and securing backlinks, you should be doing your own online marketing of your website. Here are some suggestions for places to market your website online:

• Your email signature
• All of your social media — all platforms have a place to link back to your website
• Google+ page. This is also the number one way to help increase your website standing in search rankings.
• E-newsletter
• Local business directories
• Guest blogging or writing articles for local publications. Make sure to link back to your website in your byline.

Market in Print
Finally, promote your website in EVERY possible place that you can think of offline. This means writing the URL on every printed piece that your Main Street program creates. Note that current practice in printing your website names no longer means that you have to include the "www." in front of your url. Just make sure that your website can be accesses with and without the www. If you include the .com/.org at the end, it is understood that it is a website. The following list should be used to market your social media sites as well as your website.

• Organization letterhead
• Business cards
• Printed newsletter
• Grant applications
• Printed maps
• Customer receipts (work with your local merchants)
• Outdoor advertising (wayfinding maps/signs)
• Posters/flyers/etc.
• Any promotional items that you may print — t-Shirts, koozies, pens, etc.
• Window clings in merchant windows in your downtown

Update Constantly
Now that you are working hard to promote your website, make sure that you are constantly updating it. Make sure that you remove past events and make the home page current to reflect what is happening right now and the immediate future in your downtown. Events happening in the upcoming month should be prominently featured on your homepage with links to more information.

This all may seem like a ton of work, but it is worth it to help engage your community, promote your downtown, and attract investors to your Main Street. Remember to have fun with all of it and utilize your volunteers to help with the work. Once you get into a routine of updating and promoting, it will become second nature to you.

Main Street in the News

Amarillo
High Noon on the Square
High Noon on the Square returns

Bastrop
Revisiting Bastrop after the fire

Denton
City deserves tag of Texas Treasure
Kim Phillips: Texas Treasures award well-deserved honor for Denton
City receives First Lady's Texas Treasures Award

Grand Saline
A Toast to History

Georgetown
Gateway to Georgetown

Longview
Historic Depot Days teams with AlleyFest
Renovations have historic train depot back on track
City dedicates renovated depot, looks forward
Officials report several thousand attendees at AlleyFest

Mineola
A day for the past, present, and future

San Augustine
San Augustine store shows why Texas is friendly to small businesses

San Marcos
Why San Marcos is the nation's fastest-growing city

Main Street Events

July 4
Cotulla
Fourth of July Celebration
Music, entertainment, food, and games. Fireworks at 9:15 p.m.

July 4
Canton
4th of July Celebration and Friday Night Live
Hot dogs around the square, parade, band, raffles, late night shopping around the square from 5–9 p.m. and fireworks at dusk on west side of First Monday Grounds.

July 4
Canyon
July 4th Parade and Fair on the Square
Restless Heart performing at Kimbourgh Stadium. More information.

July 4
Denison
Fireworks in Forest Park
Gates 6 p.m. Fireworks at dusk. More information.

July 4
Gonzales
Star Spangled Spectacular
BBQ and bean cook-off, children games, decorated bicycle parade, watermelon–eating contest, tug of war, and other games. 1 p.m. Live music from 2–10 p.m. Bill Pekar and the Rainey Brother (2 –6 p.m.) and The Emotions (7–11 p.m.). Fireworks display at 10 p.m.

July 4
Kingsville
Fourth of July Parade
Parade and activities in the park from 9 a.m.–noon, Kingsville Symphony Orchestra: A Patriotic Celebration from 3– 4:30 p.m.

July 4
Livingston
Picnic in the Park
Live music, car and motorcycle show, FAITH Military Support Group, free hot dogs, cokes, face painting. 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

July 4
McKinney
Red White and Boom Hometown Parade
Red, White, and Blue Parade from 10–11 a.m., Car show from 1-5 p.m. More information.

July 4
Seguin
Fourth of July Celebrations
Flag raising ceremony at 9 a.m., Biggest Small–Town 4th of July Parade in Texas at 10 a.m.

July 4
Rio Grande City
Fourth of July Concert
Concert at the Kiosk. Four local bands. 7 p.m.–12 a.m. More information.

July 4
Winnsboro
Fourth of July Parade
Starts at 4:30 p.m. winding through downtown. Fireworks at night.

July 5
Bastrop
Pet & Pal Parade and Patriotic Festival
Small children and their pets, all decked out in red, white and blue, march down Main Street beginning at 10 a.m. and finish at the Opera. At 6 p.m., everyone gathers at Fisherman's Park on the Colorado River and listens to local music groups until the Austin Symphonic Band plays marching music while fireworks illuminate the river at 9 p.m. More information.

July 5, 12, 19, and 26
Brenham
Hot Nights, Cool Tunes
Summer Concert Series each Saturday in July from 7–10:30 p.m. More information.

July 5
Childress
Main Street Party
8 p.m. Main Street and Party at the Palace. Showing of "Top Gun" at the football field parking lot. Main Street fundraiser is the concession stand. More information.

July 5
Plainview
5k Color Fun Freedom Run 8:30 – 1:30 a.m., downtown. More information.

July 5
Rio Grande City
Keepin' It Rio Market Days
Free to the public. 11 a.m.–3 p.m. More infomation.

July 8
Canton
Cruise Night
Great cars, food, music, and family fun! More information.

July 10
Eagle Pass
"El 28 de Junio"
The Great Flood of 1954 Pictorial exhibit at Fort Duncan Museum, 310 Bliss Street. 5:30–7:30 p.m.

July 11 & 25
Canyon
Movie Night on the Square
More information.

July 12
Weatherford
Parker County Peach Festival
Over 200 arts crafts, food and activity booths, live music, children's activities, the Peach Pedal Bike Ride, and a "42" Domino Tourney. 8 a.m.–5 p.m. More information.

July 12 and August 22
Waxahachie
Summer Moonlight Movies
Bring your lawn chairs and blankets and enjoy a free movie downtown under the stars. Concessions on site. July 12 – "Frozen" and August 22 – "Monsters University."All movies start at approximately 9 p.m. and are located on Franklin Street between College and Jackson.

July 17
Taylor
Third Thursday
Downtown merchants open late. Enjoy art exhibits in local galleries.

July 25
Gainesville
Summer Sounds
Hayes Carll performing on the west side of the courthouse square at 6:15 p.m. More information.

July 25
Kilgore
Friday After 5 Concert: The Bluebirds
Location: World's Richest Acre 8 – 10 p.m. More information.

July 25
La Grange
Movie Night on the Square
Marley & Me on the big screen at the Fayette County Courthouse Square at 9 p.m.; bring a chair or blanket. Refreshments available for purchase. More information.

July 26
Pecos
Kids Karnival
Games of Skill for children during Night in Old Pecos, 6 – 10 p.m.

August 9
Childress
Dancing on Main
8:00 p.m. dancing, music videos, ice cream bar and much more hosted by Childress Main Street. More information.

September 12 – 14
Celina
Celina Balloon Festival
Hot air balloons, carnival rides, vendors, hamster balls for humans, zip line, dog adoptions, and more.

September 26 – 27
Hillsboro
Cotton Pickin Fair and BBQ Cook Off
More information.

If you would like one of your Main Street events posted here, email: rebekka.adams@thc.state.tx.us at least one month in advance.

Main Street Professional Development

Texas Capital Fund Application Webinar
August 8
This webinar gives extra points on the Texas Capital Fund (TCF) grant application. The TCF supports rural business development, retention and expansion by providing funds for public infrastructure, real estate development, or the elimination of deteriorated conditions. The TCF application deadline for the Main Street Improvements Grant is Oct. 2, 2014. More information.

November 4 – 7
Granbury
Texas Downtown Development & Revitalization Conference
Co-sponsors: Texas Main Street Program/Texas Downtown Association.
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.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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