



# Main Street! Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

MARCH 2015 • COMMUNITY HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION • P. O. BOX 12276, AUSTIN, TX 78711 • 512.463.6092

## SPOTLIGHT ON DECATUR

Article written by *By Frieda Haley*  
Decatur Main Street and Visitors Center  
Manager

<http://www.decaturmainstreet.com/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Decatur-Main-Street/239627404676>

Editor's note: We are very fortunate in Texas that of our 89 currently designated programs, 28 of them have participated for 20 years or more! This is a true testament to the value of the Main Street model and how powerful it can be as a preservation and economic development tool for local communities. In 2014, the Decatur Main Street program celebrated 20 years of active Main Street participation, so we chose to spotlight them this month. At the center of Decatur's Main Street district is Wise County's J. Riely Gordon-designed Romanesque Revival courthouse. Main Street manager Frieda Haley has directed the program since 1998 and is one of only two currently active nationally Certified Main Street Managers in Texas (The other is Julie Glover in Denton). The population of Decatur is 6,042. Frieda was one of the first in Texas to develop a now-renowned overlay image of the Walmart parking lot compared against downtown to



At the heart of Decatur's Main Street district is the stunning Wise County courthouse.

visually show that the distance pedestrians walk is similar in both places. (Frieda got this idea from Julie Glover who had done the same thing with an overlay of a Denton mall.) Many other programs have since adapted a similar image of their own downtowns against that of local big-box development to send the same message – that downtown is pedestrian-friendly and navigable.



Decatur Main Street's existing logo was adapted during the program's 20th anniversary year in 2014. Commemorative t-shirts were also sold.

Designated an official Texas Main Street City in 1994, Decatur, with the help and expertise of the Texas Historical Commission's Main Street Center, has seen the benefits of downtown revitalization first hand.

Since January of 1994 almost \$7.8 million has been reinvested in the name of historic preservation in Decatur. More than 80 rehabilitation projects have been completed, ranging from simple slipcover removal to complete interior and exterior restoration. New businesses have opened, others have relocated to downtown, and some have expanded, all creating new jobs as

a benefit. New programs and events have brought old and new friends downtown again. Now beginning its 21st year, the program is a work in progress with many stories to tell and many yet to come.

We've used a lot of techniques to address some of our parking issues in downtown. Some of the issues are perceived; some are real due in part to the fact that the city does not own the most appropriate land suitable for parking surrounding downtown. As I mentioned in my annual 10 Criteria report this year: "The downtown area is FULL of cars day and night! What a great problem to have-but it is a problem. Efforts are moving forward with a parking survey to determine how many people park downtown on a regular basis and where and how many spaces are actually available to visitors. Once the data is compiled, it will be presented to city council along with ideas to help provide

additional off-square parking and signage." A new map that includes parking information was developed last fall with the help of the city planning department and placed into shops in the Main Street district. Many of these ideas have been discussed for quite a long time and they became priority projects during our Main Street retreat in 2013.

We are also proud of the many events that we host downtown, including our annual Wine Swirl and the Lucky to be Local campaign. The Decatur Swirl was created after the model, of two other Main Street cities wine events, The Georgetown Swirl and Clifton Swirl, and are designed to be a fundraiser for the program after budget cuts in 2008 slashed the marketing and promotion budget in half. Now headed into its fifth year the event raises over \$5,000.

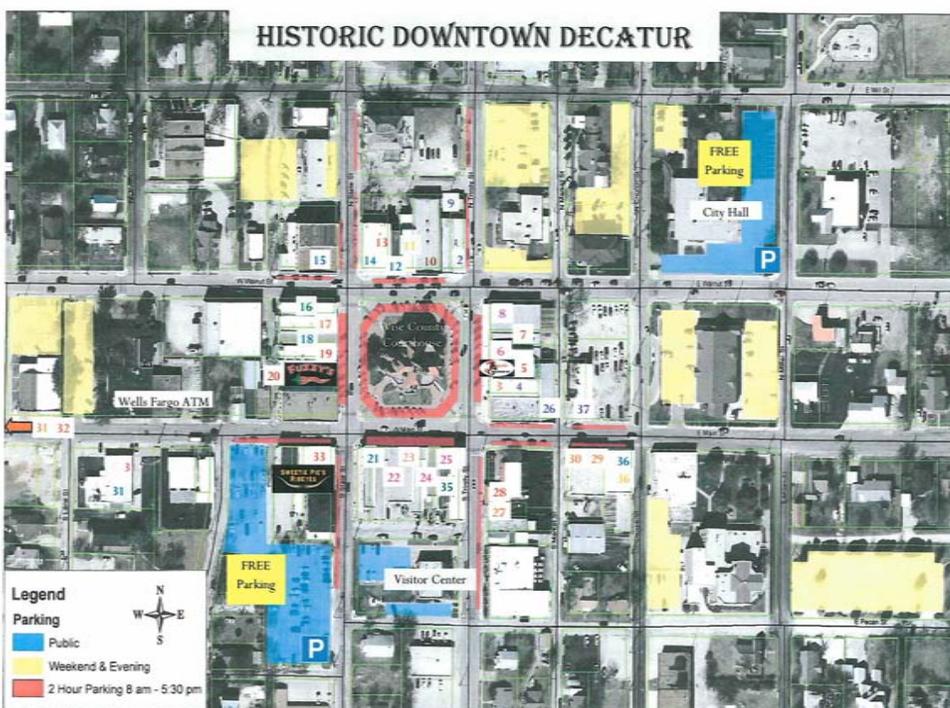


Promotional poster for the Decatur Lucky to be Local event.

Primarily a retail shopping promotion, stores host local and regional wineries paired with downtown and local food establishments for tastes. The event has sold out the last 2 years, bringing new people to downtown for a fun event and a great cause.

Lucky to be Local is a new way to look at an established event called Lucky 7, which was designed more than 25 years ago to keep locals in town instead of heading to the Metroplex the day after Thanksgiving. Lucky 7 focuses on all-day sales, starting with the best discounts on a percentage of 7 like 57% off from 7 a.m. until 8 a.m. Most participating stores are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Lucky to be Local was primarily a co-operative advertising opportunity for downtown merchants to let locals know what they would be offering and remind folks how Lucky they are to have so many great things right here in downtown!

The Main Street program has proven to be a vital component in Decatur's efforts to revitalize our historic downtown, finding ways to welcome growth while



This map is one of the techniques being used to better manage downtown parking in Decatur.

protecting the heart of our community, utilizing the four point approach of Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring in the context of historic preservation.

Decatur's Main Street Program is housed in the historic 1939 WPA Post Office building and Decatur Visitor Center. The Decatur Visitor Center project was the vision of the Decatur Main Street Advisory Board, and it officially opened in June 2007.

The Decatur Visitor Center project started with a \$50,000 private donation that was then matched by the city with total funds allocated of \$125,000. The Main Street Board's goal for the center is to highlight all that Decatur, Wise County, and Texas have to offer for visitors. In addition to the lobby space, which features the original WPA Post Office Mural, visitors can get information 24 hours a day on the old post office loading dock in the rear of the building. The building is also

available to the public for rentals and is used for meetings and small family gatherings in addition to community events.

*(Additional information provided by the THC Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program)* Wise County has a program-approved Master Plan for their historic courthouse and is eligible to apply for grant funding through our Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. The Wise County Courthouse is one of J. Riely Gordon's characteristic Romanesque Revival courthouses.

## CONDUCTING MAIN STREET BUILDING AND BUSINESS INVENTORIES

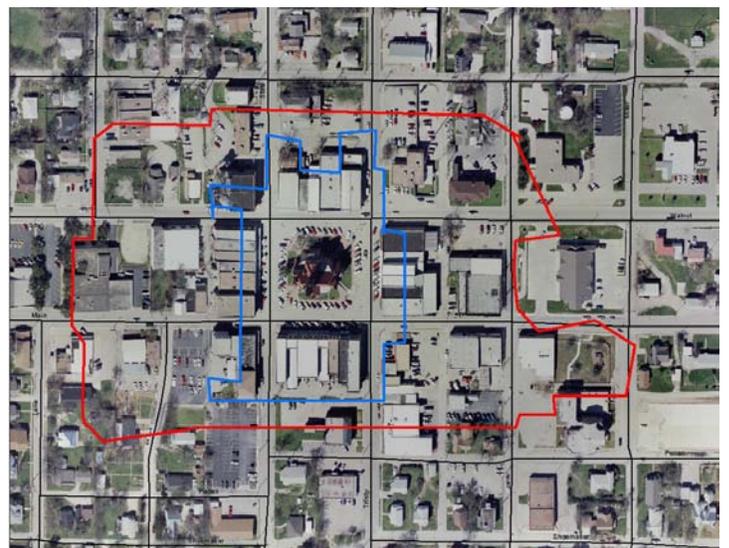
*Article written by Emily Koller, Texas Main Street Planner*

I asked a colleague about the value of having a good inventory of your downtown buildings and

businesses. Can you tell me in a couple of sentences why it is so important? The answer: "It's so basic. A building inventory is the most basic thing about Main Street work. It is like going grocery shopping without a list and no idea what you have at home." In other words, you need to know what you have in order to get the things that you need!

It is a point worth reiterating. An inventory of your downtown properties and businesses is essential to a thorough understanding of the physical and economic makeup of your commercial district. When combined with demographic data, a good inventory becomes a tool that can help you identify economic opportunities for your Main Street, respond to all real estate and development-related inquiries and projects with accurate and historically appropriate information, and track trends and progress over time.

Unfortunately there are not many tools available that make



The overlay of Wal-Mart on top of Decatur's downtown shows that the distance pedestrians walk is similar in both places.

the process of creating an inventory and, more importantly, maintaining it, easy and efficient. The type of data that is recommended to be collected is extensive and is generated from a variety of sources. In order for it to be useful, it also has to be in a format that can be easily searched and queried. And to complicate matters even more, there really are two different inventories that are needed—building and business.

So what are the important differences? And why aren't they one and the same?

First, a business inventory tracks the businesses! These are the most important building blocks for a downtown revitalization program. Unfortunately businesses come and go, so the data tracked through a business survey is different from that collected for a building inventory. The business inventory is critical, though, because it is the first step in analyzing your commercial area's market, a process that will help guide business assistance and recruitment programs, marketing efforts, and identification of new economic opportunities. Once you have completed a comprehensive survey, future outreach to businesses can be a more-concise needs assessment.

The building inventory, on the other hand, is used to create a complete understanding of the district's physical fabric. It includes the architectural styles, the state of repair, special incentive programs available for each property, and any historic designations. It can also serve as a repository for



A building and business inventory is an essential tool for any Main Street program. The property information collected provides a data-driven analysis of what is going on with the downtown economy.

historical information, including photographs and building improvements so one can track the changes over time. A building inventory should, when completed correctly, only need minor updates over time such as when a change of ownership or major rehabilitation project occurs.

While this sounds like a lot of work, inventories are great projects for the Design and Economic Restructuring committees. It is essential for the Design committee to have a complete understanding of the district's physical fabric. Because of the historic research necessary, it is a way to involve historians and volunteers in the program who are most interested in the history of downtown. The Economic Restructuring committee can be a difficult committee to engage with volunteer activities, but asking members to visit a few businesses and conduct the survey is easy and very useful. It also helps to raise the profile of the program, especially new Main Streets, when

board and committee members are out visiting property owners and businesses and asking them about their specific needs.

### Getting Started

The simplest way to get started with both inventories is to capture the basic data from the County Appraisal District. The CAD data is the most accurate parcel information available—it provides the site address, ownership information, building square footage, property values, and the last few deed transactions. Every appraisal district employs a mapping specialist who maintains the property data in both a database format and usually a mapping format. Depending on the way the individual county stores this, it is usually possible to request the parcel information for a specific geographic area as a map and a spreadsheet. The most valuable aspect of this is the alignment of the property owner and building improvements with the correct site address. This in

turn serves as the foundation for your inventories. If your city has a planning department they will also utilize mapping software—typically GIS or Geographic Information System—so they can be helpful in producing a map and spreadsheet with all the downtown parcels identified. However, they also rely on the county tax roll data for ownership information so you will get the same information from either source.

Some counties may only provide the data in GIS format. The file size will be very large and will require GIS software to manipulate. In this case, staff with the Texas Main Street Program can create the spreadsheet and map for you, or you may be able to work with your local planning department to do the same.

At this point, you will have to decide which organizational system you want to use for the data. At the very minimum, maintain the building information in a spreadsheet format where you can add additional columns to include important information like zoning, historic district, available incentives, etc. If you use a spreadsheet, you'll need to create a separate one to serve as the foundation for your business inventory.

Any off-the-shelf database like Microsoft Access will work to combine the information for both inventories. This can be time consuming to create, but is an ideal project for an intern.

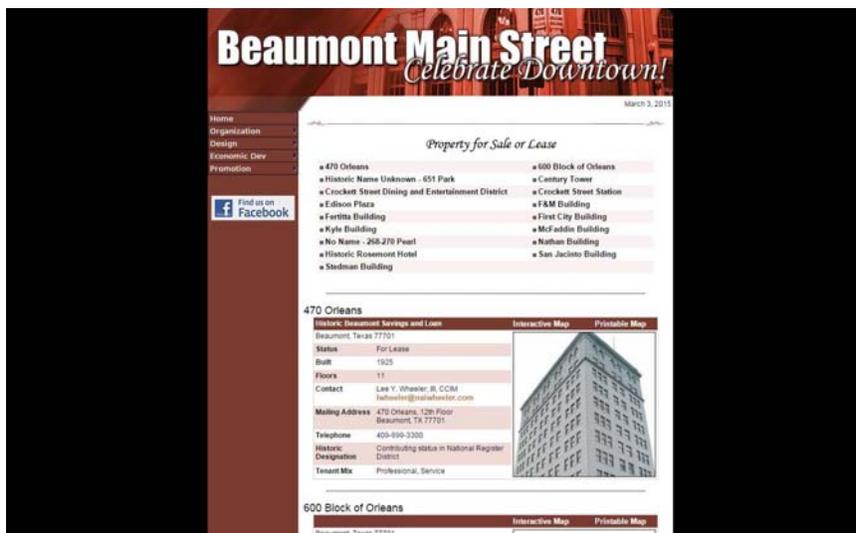
There are also several different types of professional tools marketed to downtown professionals to assist with organizing and storing data—they use either a database framework or a mapping framework to display information. Other tools feature mapping capabilities and are designed to make the historic resource survey process efficient. Some of the most recently developed tools use web-based interfaces featuring Google mapping technology to record and display properties.

### Tracking Down the Details

Once you are confident that you have an accurate list of properties, you can start collecting the details. Some programs conduct a mailing to business and property owners, but a complete inventory will likely require some combination of a mailing and personal contact. This is where your volunteers will be useful and, they in turn, should find the work rewarding and interesting. Most downtown programs utilize a form for each inventory, and the Texas Main

Street Program has recently created sample forms for your use. The most efficient way to execute the survey is to assign volunteers by address—Economic Restructuring committee members can reach out to businesses using the business survey form and Design committee members can reach out to property owners with the building survey form. Complete any information in advance that is repetitious in the forms (like address, ownership, current tenant, etc.). If you receive complete information from a mailing, it may make sense to only assign a section to your volunteers, like building history and photographs.

Speaking of photographs, these are essential to your inventory work. Photographing every building in your commercial district when compiling the inventory will provide a snapshot of the district at that point in time. If you conduct a building inventory when you start your revitalization program, you'll have some great before images to contrast with later achievements. Historic photographs are also very



In order to sell downtown to potential investors, it is critical that you know what you have and what you need. A good inventory captures this information and then communicates it to the market.

important. These provide the basis for any rehabilitation work and should be easily accessible to any group making design decisions about downtown including your design committee, historic preservation commission, and city planning department. Generally a building inventory should include:

- Property Owner
- Current Tenant
- Physical Condition
- Building Amenities
- Building Restrictions
- History
- Photographs

A business inventory should include:

- Business Owner
- Business Name/Concept
- Employee Information
- Lease Rate
- Physical Characteristics of Lease Space (Size and Condition)
- Parking Availability
- Target Market
- Hours
- Advertising Efforts
- Sales Revenue

### Putting it all Together

Once you've done the hard work and gathered all of this information, you can start to use it strategically. You'll be able to provide big-picture information for planning purposes like building stock quality, business mix, and the target market. You'll also be able to mine the details like sales per square foot, lease rates, and number of employees by profession in downtown.

Missoula Downtown, in Missoula, Montana, has created an excellent summary of the findings of their business and building inventory that serves as great example: <http://www.missouladowntown.com/>. The inventories will also provide accurate information to help you market downtown properties in a variety of outlets. Tracking vacancies in a database format allows for a quick report that can be used to update the website, feature in marketing materials, or provide quickly in an email to an interested investor. See Beaumont Main Street's Property listing for a good example of how to feature the information collected in a building inventory: [http://www.beaumontmainstreet.com/econdev\\_property.php](http://www.beaumontmainstreet.com/econdev_property.php).

For questions and to receive the survey forms, Main Street managers should contact Emily Koller [emily.koller@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:emily.koller@thc.state.tx.us) or Brian O'Connor [brian.oconnor@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:brian.oconnor@thc.state.tx.us).

## CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

*We continue to spotlight in each edition of Main Street Matters those volunteers whose contributions and dedication are so important to the success of local programs. If you would like to honor a special volunteer with a spotlight, please send a short narrative and images to [debra.drescher@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:debra.drescher@thc.state.tx.us).*

### Mary Valva, San Angelo Main Street Program

*Information provided by San Angelo Main Street Manager Del Velasquez*  
Mary Valva has served as a volunteer for Downtown San

Angelo (DSA) for eight-plus years. Mary has gone above and beyond in helping to promote our Main Street program. Her eagerness to lend a hand whenever and wherever needed has been exemplary. Mrs. Valva is owner of The Glass Prism, art glass studio and gallery, located at 225 S. Chadbourne. Her business specializes in stained and fused glass creations, and she offers classes throughout the year.



Mary Valva mans the DSA booth at the Art-Ober-Fest ASU Homecoming Parade and festivities.

Mary took the lead in coordination of the monthly Art Walk for the last six years. Whether it involves coordinating trolley stop sign set-up, art walk map design and distribution, collaboration with art walk participants, and promotions and marketing, Mary approaches every task in a positive enthusiastic manner. She has also volunteered to serve as block captain. Whenever we need to get the word out on promotions, she is ready to walk the street to hand-deliver fliers and she is always ready to welcome new businesses to the downtown area. Angelo State University selected Mary to serve as a liaison with DSA when obtaining student volunteers. Additionally, she has volunteered to appear on our local news show to provide information on Downtown San Angelo activities.

When it comes to designing and creating unique stained glass awards for outgoing board members and officers, she has stepped up to the plate.

### **Shelly Preston, Childress Main Street Program**

*Information provided by Childress Main Street Manager Susan Leary*

Shelly serves on our Advisory Board and is a co-chair on the Promotion Committee and Organization Committee. She has rarely missed any meetings and is the member that calls or comes by when she does miss to see what she needs to be doing or how she can help. She is a wife, mother of two children under 10 years of age, a major component in her family-owned insurance business, and heavily involved in the restoration of the Palace Theatre in Childress. As well, she serves as vice president of the Childress Theatre Company, president of Childress Women's Council, vice president of Childress Teacher/Parent Organization, and deacon in her church.

Shelly is our creative design person with fliers and art work. She creates all of the Main Street activity fliers and does so without being asked. Very often they are in my email the morning after a meeting, and she then makes sure they are what we want and if not, makes changes quickly. As we all know, publicity is our mainstay. Shelly is also a guru with Facebook and is an administrator on our page. She posts routinely on our page and makes sure everything stays updated.



The Advisory Boards of both the Plainview (right) and Colorado City Main Street Programs (left) held their respective planning retreats and training for new board members at the first of March. There were good turnouts for both meetings, with elected officials and city management also in attendance.



In 2013 Shelly was named Woman of the Year for Childress. Although



Shelly Preston (left), Childress volunteer and Susan Leary, Childress Main Street manager, as they decorated for the banquet where she received the Woman of the Year award.

this award is normally given to a person who is older, the committee making the selection thought Shelly was the perfect recipient. Her work in the first year of Childress' involvement with Texas Main Street was considered when making their decision. Shelly is a giving and compassionate person who cares deeply about Childress and its further growth and development. She is an asset not just to the Main Street Program, but to the City of Childress and its residents.

While looking for a picture of Shelly, I realized, she is the one taking most of our pictures too! She rocks as the mainstay for our program!

## **MAIN STREET PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**March 30–April 2, 2015**  
**National Main Streets Conference**  
**Atlanta, GA**

<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/training/conference/>



**August 4–7, 2015**  
**San Marcos, TX**

Texas Main Street New Manager Training  
Start at 8 a.m. on August 4th and end at noon on August 5th.

All Manager Professional Development  
Start at 1 p.m. on August 5th and end at noon on August 7th.

## MAIN STREET EVENTS

### BEAUMONT

**Young Audiences National Art  
in Education Week  
Week of March 16–20, 2015**

We are partnering with Young Audiences of Southeast Texas and the Art Museum of Southeast Texas to offer an after school event in conjunction with this week and the Art Museum's After School program.

### BEEVILLE

**Market and Main  
March 28, 2015**

Beeville Main Street is hosting Market & Main on March 28, 2015 from 9 a.m.–2 p.m. in downtown Beeville.

### Cajun Festival

**Saturday, March 28, 2015**

**11 a.m.–7 pm**

<http://www.celina-tx.gov/index.aspx?nid=987>

### CORSICANA

**Second Saturday Event  
March 14, 2015**

Second Saturday Event with car show, band, vendor trade show, food trucks, and bike race.

### EAGLE PASS

**Fiesta de Amistad Celebration  
March 20 – 28, 2015**

Located in downtown Eagle Pass/Shelby Park. Various locations for events, visit

<http://www.eaglepasstexas.com/> for schedule. The International Friendship Festival is an event of the Eagle Pass Chamber of Commerce with collaboration from the City of Eagle Pass, the Eagle Pass Lions Club, and EP/PN Good Neighbor Council.

### FARMERSVILLE

**Farmers & Fleas Market  
Every first Saturday**

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. [http://www.farmersvilletx.com/main\\_street\\_2/farmers\\_and\\_fleas\\_market/index.php](http://www.farmersvilletx.com/main_street_2/farmers_and_fleas_market/index.php)

### Jazz on Main

**March 21, 2015**

Inaugural event, live music featuring four bands, and paying homage to jazz guitarist (and Farmersville native) Herb Ellis [http://farmersvilletx.com/main\\_street\\_2/jazz\\_on\\_main\\_concert.php](http://farmersvilletx.com/main_street_2/jazz_on_main_concert.php)

### GLADEWATER

**Bricks & Bloom  
March 28, 2015**

Opens at 9 a.m. Come purchase your supplies for spring; flowers, gardening items, spring décor, and expert advice will be available to all who attend. <https://www.facebook.com/events/334417626604432/>

### GONZALES

**Lunch and Learn Meeting  
March 11, 2015**

Main Street Advisory Board and Gonzales Economic Development

Corporation have invited Valerie Magolan of the Texas Historical Commission's Tax Credit Program to present her program. <http://www.gonzalestexas.com/event/1279/>

### GRAPEVINE

**Jazz Wine Trains**

**March 20 & 21, 2015**

Raise a glass and ride the rails on the Grapevine Vintage Railroad. This train experience is fun for guests ages 21 and up. One of the most popular annual springtime events in Grapevine, this one-of-a-kind wine tasting experience features live jazz entertainment, a delicious boxed dinner, a souvenir wine glass, and samplings of Grapevine wines. [www.GrapevineTexasUSA.com/JazzWineTrains](http://www.GrapevineTexasUSA.com/JazzWineTrains)

### GREENVILLE

**March 11, 2015**

**March Concert at Greenville  
Municipal Auditorium, Don  
Williams**

<http://www.showtimeatthegma.com/>

**March Concerts at the**

**Texan Theater** <http://www.texantheatergreenville.com/>

March 20, 2015, Jef Plankenhorn  
March 22, 2015, Mark Willis  
March 29, 2015, Michael Peterson

### KILGORE

**Spring Shop Hop  
March 21, 2015**

<https://www.facebook.com/events/816659475062776>

Hop from shop to shop, enjoying new spring merchandise, refreshments, and a good time

with friends.

### **Kilgogh Arts Festival March 27 & 28, 2015**

Following two years of East Texas arts activities, the KilGogh Arts Festival returns for its third annual series of events in late March of 2015. We hope you'll join us on Friday, March 27, as the Wine POP Gallery Gala begins at 7 p.m. in the Texan Theater. Leading up the 162nd anniversary of Vincent van Gogh's birth March 30, the celebration continues Saturday, March 28, with the free festival and KIDSGOGH activities from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Kilgore's Downtown Entertainment District.

### **LA GRANGE**

#### **La Grange Uncorked Saturday, March 21, 2015**

From 4 p.m.–8pm. Join us for wine tastings, culinary delights, and some savvy shopping. Tickets can be purchased at [www.lguncorked.com](http://www.lguncorked.com).

### **LULING**

#### **March 14, 2015 Rajun' Cajun Throwdown & Gumbo Cook-Off**

From 10 a.m.–10 p.m, a Cajun themed downtown street festival with a vendor fair, crawfish sold by the pound, and fun and games for kids and adults alike. Mud Bug 500 wiggle races for all who dare. Live Cajun music all day on the main sound stage with live auction and

awards for all cooking category winners at the end of the day. Go to [www.lulingmainstreet.com](http://www.lulingmainstreet.com) for entry forms and visit our Rajun Cajun Throwdown Facebook page for updates and info.

### **PECOS**

#### **March 14, 2015 Texas Proud in Pecos**

Featuring John Erickson of Hank the Cowdog fame, a NO MOTORS Parade, Dutch Oven Dessert Off, music, trivia, chili and cornbread.

### **ROCKWALL**

#### **March 12, 2015 2nd Thursdays Monthly**

Downtown shops extend their hours until 8 p.m. the second Thursday monthly, offering promotions and discounts. Follow Downtown Rockwall, Texas on Facebook for monthly event details.

### **SEGUIN**

#### **March 21, 2015 ArtsFest**

Hosted by Seguin Main Street, Seguin Commission on the Arts, and Seguin Art League. A ticketed event celebrating Seguin's art community with live entertainment, appetizers, wine and beer tastings, keepsake wine glass, and silent auction. Tickets can be purchased at the Chamber, Court St. Coffee Shop, and Gift

& Gourmet. Facebook Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/717032875070346/?source=1>

### **UVALDE**

#### **March 13, 2015 Four Square Friday**

Held every second Friday of the month from 6 p.m.–9 p.m.

### **WINNSBORO**

#### **March 13, 2015 Joe Crookston Concert**

Located at the Winnsboro Center for the Arts downtown.

#### **Every Saturday The Winnsboro Farmers' Market**

From 10.am.–1 p.m. downtown on the patio of Art and Espresso on Broadway. Pastured beef, organic pork, organic chicken, eggs, yogurt, breads, honey, and more! [www.winnsborofarmersmarket.com](http://www.winnsborofarmersmarket.com)

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