



COMMUNITY HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) Community Heritage Development Division works in partnership with communities and regions to revitalize historic areas, stimulate tourism, and encourage economic development through the use of preservation strategies.

What We Do

Texas Main Street Program

Since 1981, The Texas Main Street Program has worked closely with more than 170 communities across the state to revive and strengthen their historic downtowns or neighborhood commercial districts. Affiliated with the National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Texas program is among the most successful downtown revitalization programs in the nation. Each year, up to five Texas cities or urban areas commit local support and are selected as official Texas Main Street cities. Once selected these communities are provided training utilizing the national model's four-point approach of Organization, Promotion, Design and Economic Restructuring. As participants in the statewide network, civic leaders, small businesses and organizations receive individualized assistance in planning, development, architectural preservation and other disciplines from the division staff. The THC typically does not provide funding or grants specifically to local Main Streets however since its inception, the Texas Main Street Program has generated over \$5.2 billion of investment in the participating commercial districts.

Heritage Tourism and the Texas Heritage Trails Program

Travel and tourism is a critical industry for the state of Texas with recent state travel spending exceeding \$70 billion annually. Heritage tourists, those who visit historic sites and engage in heritage activities as significant part of their travel, comprise more than 10 percent of travelers and conservatively account for more than \$7 billion of annual spending. Tourism to heritage sites



Heritage tourism sign outside of Turkey.

and communities provides local economic development opportunities and the means to preserve and appreciate the state's historic places telling real stories.

The division promotes heritage tourism by assisting local governments, organizations, and individuals in the preservation, enhancement, and promotion of heritage and cultural attractions in the state. Program goals include raising the standards of heritage and cultural attractions around the state; fostering heritage preservation and education; encouraging regional cooperation and promotion of heritage and cultural attractions; and fostering effective local tourism leadership and organizational skills.

The THC plans and implements heritage tourism activities across the state primarily through the Texas Heritage Trails Program (THTP), a regional initiative designed to promote tourism visitation to cultural and heritage sites and events. The Texas Heritage Trails Program has leveraged the state's 10 scenic driving trails created in 1968, to support regional non-profit trail organizations that create collaborative efforts among communities, heritage regions, and the state to partner and promote Texas' historic and cultural resources.



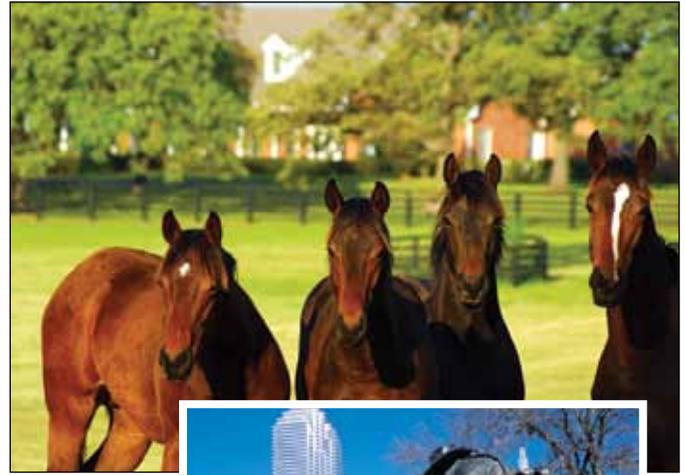
The agency's Texas Heritage Trails Program is the premier source for heritage travel information with print, web, and mobile portals for promoting curated and high quality heritage destinations to Texans and non-Texans.

The programs printed travel guides, www.TexasTimeTravel.com, heritage trail region websites, and mobile tour platform markets heritage regions as tourism destinations, increases visitation to cultural and historic sites and brings more dollars to Texas.

In addition to the THTP, the THC's overall heritage tourism program works to develop and promote the state as a tourist destination in conjunction with the agency's historic sites, the Office of the Governor–Economic Development & Tourism, Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Commission on the Arts, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Certified Local Government

The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program is a local, state, and federal government partnership for historic preservation. The THC administers the program at the state level and the National Park Service is the responsible federal agency. The program is designed to help cities and counties develop high standards of preservation to protect a wide range of important historic properties—from ornate courthouses to working-class neighborhoods. CLG communities are recognized as having special expertise in historic preservation and become part of a national network that provides valuable local perspectives on statewide preservation activities. The THC utilizes a portion of its federal funding to support local heritage conservation projects in CLG communities. Applications for CLG matching grants are usually available in late summer.



From the Texas Lake Trails region: The successful North Country Horse Tour, Denton (above top). Pioneer Park, Dallas (above).

How to Reach Us

Staff members are available to answer questions and provide preservation assistance. Please contact us at:
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real places telling real stories

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