

COURTHOUSE CORNERSTONES

An Update of the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program



COURTHOUSE PROGRAM EARNS NATIONAL AWARD

Once endangered, the Atascosa County Courthouse has reclaimed much of its original 1913 grandeur with a grant from the Texas Historical Commission.

Not just the eyes of Texas, but also the eyes of the nation are focused on the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program after receiving a prestigious National Preservation Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The award, presented in late September in Louisville, Kentucky, honors agencies, organizations, businesses or individuals whose efforts are exemplary in the preservation of cultural heritage.

"With this award, the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program has come full circle," said THC Chairman John L. Nau, III. "The National Trust named Texas courthouses to its list of America's Most Endangered Historic Places in 1998. Just six years later, the Trust recognizes the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program as a model of how to turn a matter of concern into a matter of great pride."

— *Continues on page 2*

Just five years old, the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program has come a long way since the Texas Legislature appropriated an initial \$50 million for the matching grant program to restore some of Texas' most treasured landmarks.

In 2001, lawmakers approved an additional \$50 million to restore Texas' courthouses. Because of the success and popularity of the first three rounds, lawmakers approved \$45 million in bond sales in 2003 to fund Round IV. With the awarding of the Round IV grants in May 2004, the program today has generated more than 5,000 jobs, more than \$140 million in income, \$11,500 in state taxes and close to \$192 million in gross state product for a total impact of \$355,162 million on the Texas economy. Other states are taking note.

"The Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program is an exemplary national model of how state, local and private partnerships can successfully work together to preserve their courthouses — places that are often important community centers and historical markers," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "This program has not only significantly contributed to preserving the splendor of historic courthouses throughout the great state of Texas, but equally important, it has laid the groundwork for other states to initiate similar programs."

Calling Texas' collection of historic courthouses "unmatched," the National Trust praised the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program for not only restoring the original character of community centers across the state, but for generating a resurgence in economic development and jobs.

"This is one of the most far-reaching historic preservation projects ever conceived by state government," said Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program Director

Stan Graves. "This is a government program with tangible, visual results. People can see how state dollars are being spent. And those dollars are coming back to the local communities in ways some folks never would have imagined."

Community leaders found the program produces rewards almost immediately in the form of economic development, heritage tourism and other, less tangible, results.

"The biggest thing is community pride and spirit. People in Llano and surrounding communities are going the extra mile to make things work for the present, and for the future of our community," said Carl Shannon, city councilman and member of the Llano County Historical Commission and Llano County Historical Society. "People are coming up with old photographs and other valuable memorabilia. Due to this project, people are becoming proud of their past and are willing to bring forward items that otherwise may have stayed hidden."

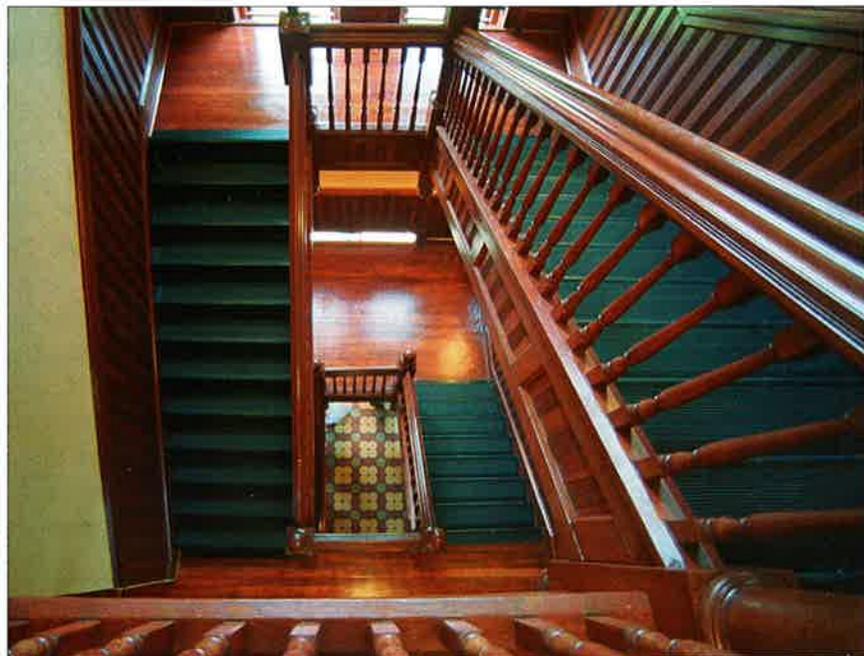
The Llano County Courthouse was restored and rededicated in June 2002 with a \$2.8 million grant in May 2000 from THC.

The courthouse program was recently recognized with two other prestigious awards. The Association for Preservation Technology International, a worldwide, professional organization of preservationists, selected the program for a Presidential Citation. Also, the Texas Society of Architects, the state component of the American Institute of Architects, awarded a Citation of Honor to the program for its contributions to the built environment of Texas. The nomination letter from Jane Stansfeld, FAIA, President of AIA Austin, stated, "The preservation of these resources is more than an issue of architectural history. These structures are the embodiment of the indomitable spirit of the Texans who settled this wild frontier, an inspiration to their communities and a focus of community pride and spirit." ★

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— Richard Moe, president
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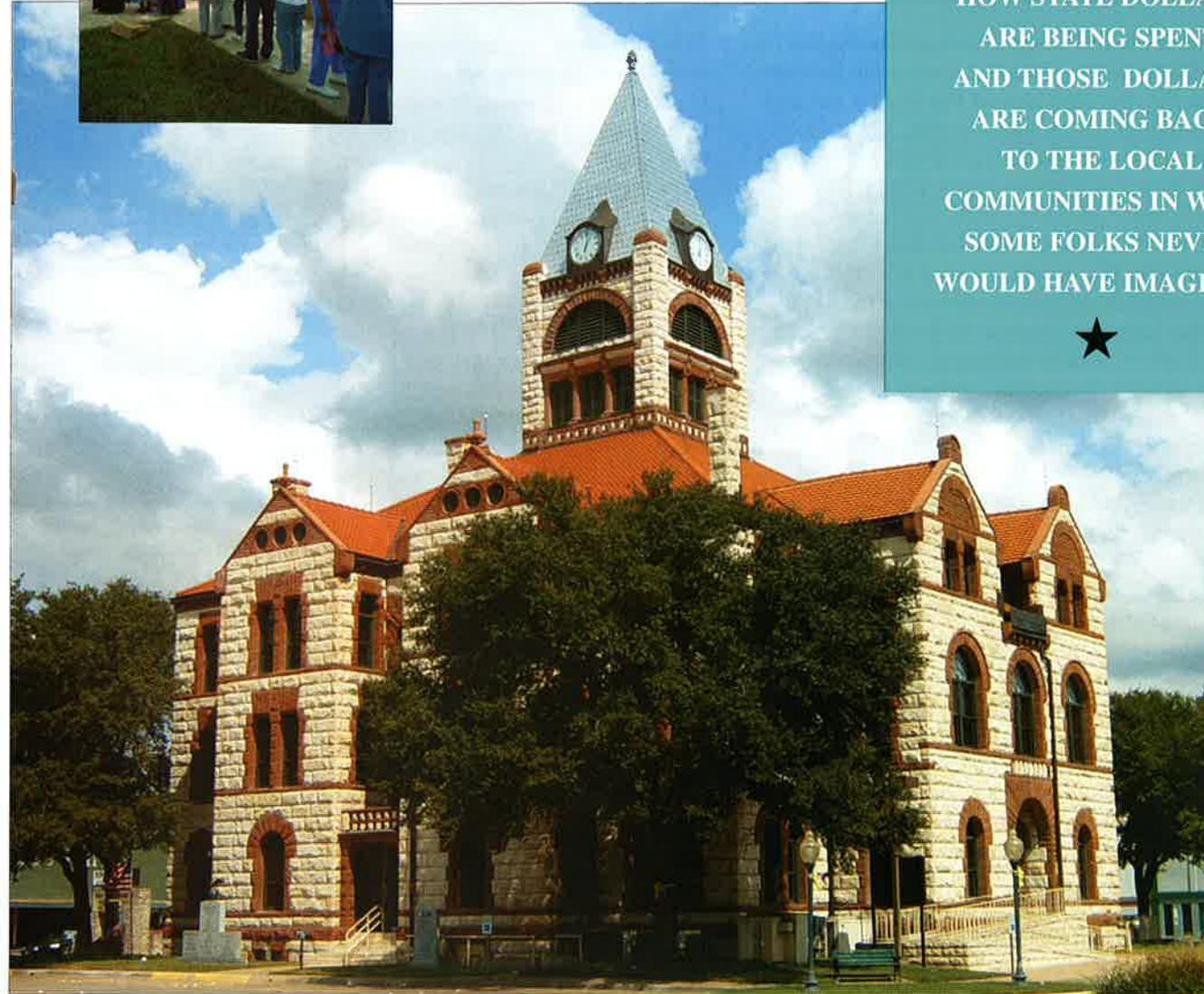


Milam County Courthouse



The rededication ceremony of the Milam County Courthouse brings the community together.

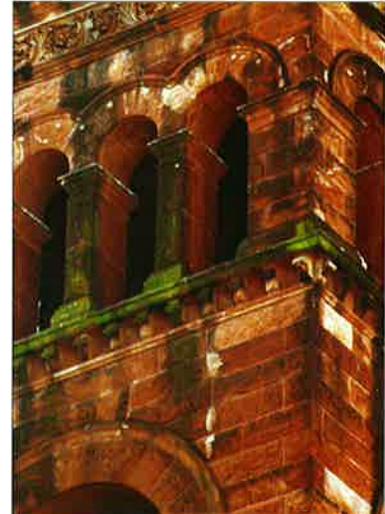
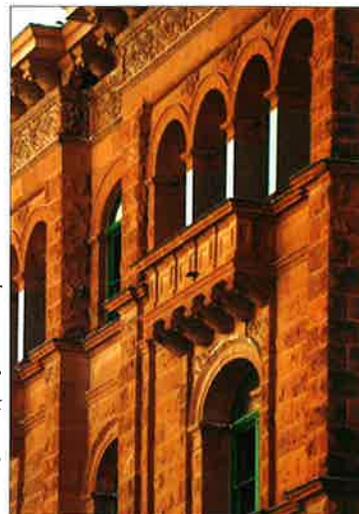
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Above: The Erath County Courthouse in Stephenville was rededicated on Aug. 20, 2002.

Left: The tower of the Red River County Courthouse, rededicated on Oct. 26, 2002, beckons Clarksville residents and visitors.

Right: The 1892 Bexar County Courthouse, rededicated on April 4, 2003, in San Antonio reveals details of the fine stonework cleaned during restoration, compared to the facade prior to 2003.



INVESTING IN TEXAS' FUTURE

Nearly half of the 234 counties potentially eligible for the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program have taken the first step toward funding by completing their required master plan. To date, 123 counties have submitted master plans, 112 of which have been approved.

Since Round I matching grants were awarded in May 2000, 64 Texas counties have received funding through the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) courthouse program. All but one percent of the \$145 million Texas lawmakers earmarked for the program was distributed to counties engaged in courthouse restoration and emergency repair projects.

There remain, however, more than 195 nationally recognized historic courthouses throughout Texas that have not yet completed their full scope of work that can be assisted by the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. Approximately \$250 million in state funds is needed to finance 73 counties already in the program with approved master plans and ready to start or continue the bricks and mortar mode of their restoration work.

"These are counties that have approved master plans, the first step in the process," said THC Executive Director Larry Oaks. "The counties have already put up earnest money to develop their master plans. They are ready to move on to the next step to develop blueprints for the actual construction."

The state of Texas has invested \$145 million in historic county courthouse projects through the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, which has generated more than \$75 million in local, direct and indirect expenditures from participating counties. Bond authority in the amount of \$250 million could extend the program for several more years.

"We have been blessed by the courthouse restoration," said Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce President Debra Wakeland, noting that the Ellis County Courthouse was restored and rededicated in October 2002 with a \$3.6 million program grant awarded in May 2000.

TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM STAFF

Stan Graves, Director
Sharon Fleming, Assistant Director

Lyman Labry, Architect
Mark Cowan, Reviewer
Brad Peterson, Reviewer
Susan Tietz, Reviewer
Amy Lambert, Reviewer
Lisa Harvell, Historic Interiors Specialist
Debbi Head, Public Relations



"The increase in tourism began when the scaffolding went into place on the courthouse. The procedure used to install the scaffolding brought architecture students from schools across the state to see and learn from the process."

Nearly 200 historic Texas courthouses still need restoration. County courthouse projects serve as catalysts for economic revitalization in business districts surrounding courthouse squares across the state. More than just bricks and mortar, Texas' county courthouses are the very soul of a community. Not just records, but memories, are housed in these structures. They are an investment in Texas' future. ★



The ribbon is cut at the Val Verde County Courthouse rededication in Del Rio on July 23, 2004.



The Oct. 8, 2004 rededication of the 1899 Lee County Courthouse in Giddings, designed by J. Riely Gordon, completes the Round I restorations.

Left: Guest speakers at the Lee County Courthouse ceremony.

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MORE THAN JUST BRICKS AND MORTAR, TEXAS' COUNTY COURTHOUSES ARE THE VERY SOUL OF A COMMUNITY.

DEVELOPING A BLUEPRINT FOR COURTHOUSE MAINTENANCE

So, you've completed your restoration projects as part of the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. Now what?

This summer, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) organized a 13-member Maintenance Advisory Panel of design and preservation experts to help these architectural treasures remain jewels for future generations to cherish. Panel members proposed several action items — including creating a financial incentive program, conducting annual monitoring and developing an online maintenance guide — to ensure Texas counties uphold the economic and emotional investment associated with their courthouses.

"We need to make sure the \$150 million the state has invested in this program is well preserved so these courthouses can continue to be viable gathering points for the community," said Stan Graves, director of the THC's Architecture Division and Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. "When all the contractors leave town, we want to know these counties will be able to maintain the standards good preservation practice requires."

Graves and other THC officials expect to soon have resources available to help counties maintain their historic facilities after they've completed work through the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program.

At their July meeting in Austin, panel members expressed concerns about poor maintenance practices for many of Texas' historic structures and discussed how the courthouses can avoid a similar fate. Michael Van Enter, a Dallas conservator, stressed the importance of addressing the source of maintenance problems.

"Ninety percent of what we do is un-doing people's good intentions," he said. "I think it's important for us to remind them that if they don't know what to do, they shouldn't do anything."

Paula Piper of the San Antonio Conservation Society said counties should take an active role by appointing a representative to serve as a maintenance expert to discourage harmful practices such as excessive pressure washing and misapplied caulking.

"You have to have someone responsible for checking the property on a strict schedule," Piper said. "It's a constant battle, especially in Texas where the elements are so severe. We have sun, water, humidity and ocean-related corrosion to deal with. It's a daunting task."

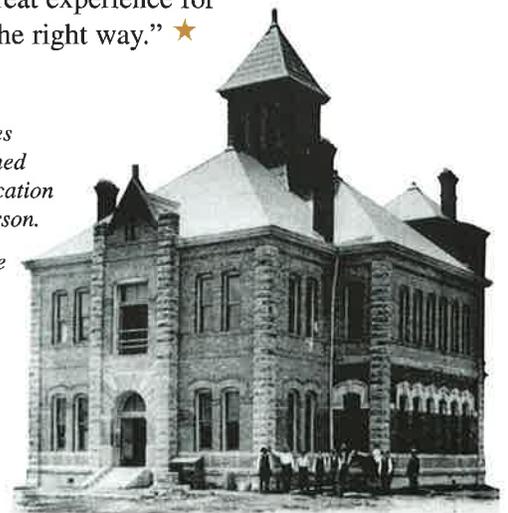
In the coming months, the THC hopes to implement the action plans discussed at the panel meeting. Matching grants, training opportunities and regular inspections may become a reality as the program's blueprints move from the drawing board to implementation.

"Ongoing maintenance is a crucial part of what's keeping these structures viable," said Lee Baker, director of facilities for Texas' State Preservation Board. "In the long run it's essential for the building. And besides, it's a great experience for people to do things the right way." ★



Left: Guests at the Grimes County Courthouse listened to the band at the rededication on Mar. 2, 2002 in Anderson.

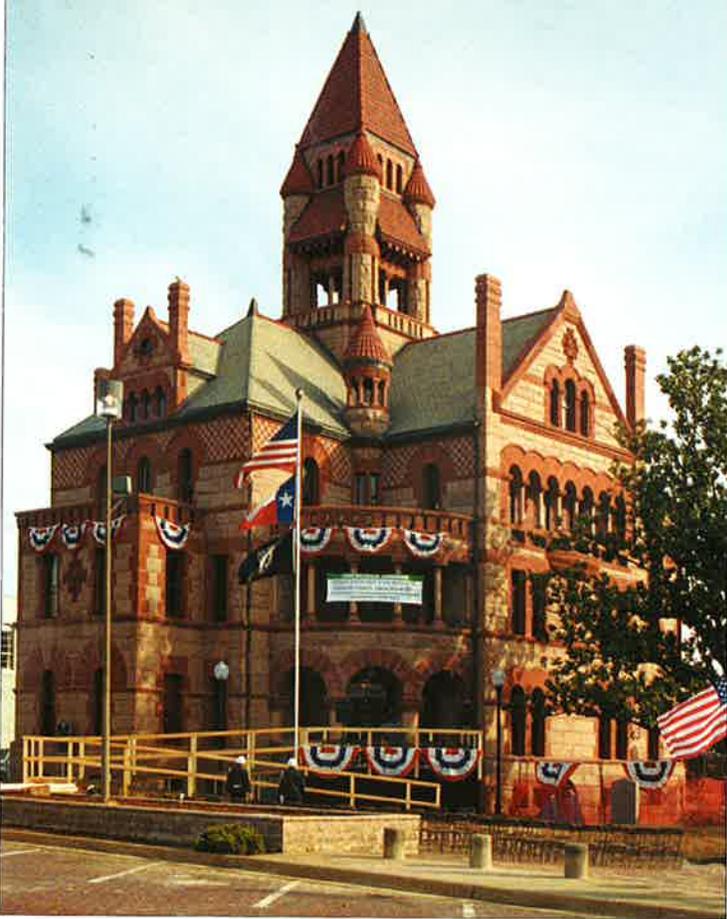
Right: Workmen complete the finishing touches to the Grimes County Courthouse in this early 1908 photo.





October 2004 marks the completion of Round I grant award restorations. The following historic county courthouses have been restored and rededicated.

County	City	Completed	Total Award
Atascosa	Jourdanton	1913	\$2,686,138
Bexar	San Antonio	1897	\$2,829,816
Donley	Clarendon	1891	\$3,125,408
Ellis	Waxahachie	1897	\$3,604,787
Erath	Stephenville	1892	\$1,835,619
Gray	Pampa	1930	\$3,825,733
Grimes	Anderson	1894	\$1,567,748
Hopkins	Sulphur Springs	1895	\$3,719,661
Lampasas	Lampasas	1884	\$2,383,752
Lee	Giddings	1899	\$2,459,835
Llano	Llano	1892	\$2,910,835
Milam	Cameron	1892	\$2,921,492
Presidio	Marfa	1887	\$2,191,230
Red River	Clarksville	1885	\$3,847,057
Shackelford	Albany	1884	\$1,765,440
Sutton	Sonora	1891	\$1,008,348



A banner day in Sulpher Springs at the Hopkins County Courthouse rededication on Dec. 7, 2002.



Above: The Presidio County Courthouse rises from the high plains desert in Marfa, 1887.

Left: Jan. 5, 2002, West Texas counties commemorate the rededication of the Presidio County Courthouse in Marfa.

Below: Scaffolding wraps the courthouse during the reconstruction process.





ONE OF THE GOALS OF THE
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
IS TO HELP THESE
ARCHITECTURAL TREASURES
REMAIN JEWELS
FOR FUTURE
GENERATIONS TO CHERISH.



Rededication ceremony at the Sutton County Courthouse in Sonora on June 11, 2002.



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HELP SAVE OUR
HISTORIC
COURTHOUSES!

Above: Lockhart County Courthouse