

Main Street Matters

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ARTS AND CULTURE MEANS BUSINESS IN GEORGETOWN

By Amanda Still, Georgetown Arts & Culture Coordinator and Eric Lashley, Georgetown Library Director

Editor's Note: The Georgetown Public Library was the recipient of the 2018 Institute of Museum and Library Services National Medal, the highest honor a library and museum can receive in our nation. Library Director Eric Lashley will be a summer workshop speaker in Mount Pleasant, June 11-14.

In 2013, Georgetown's Downtown Overlay District was officially designated as a Cultural District by the Texas Commission on the Arts. Georgetown is one of only 34 cities across the state with the designation, lending a level of distinction and recognition to our arts community that serves to foster pride, and a sense

of place among residents and visitors. Cultural districts are special zones that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community revitalization. These districts can become focal points for generating businesses, attracting tourists, stimulating cultural development, and fostering civic pride. To learn more about the cultural district program go to: <http://www.arts.texas.gov/initiatives/cultural-districts/>.

Georgetown is one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau. As the county seat of Williamson County, Georgetown holds an important position in the region's economic and political landscape. Over the past few decades, Georgetown has also solidified its status as one of the premier locations for arts and culture in Central Texas. Building upon the Most Beautiful Town Square surrounded by historic buildings and the courthouse, downtown Georgetown is the focal point for much of the community's arts and culture activities. Arts and culture organizers in town bring the architecture and history of our area to life, curate thought-provoking

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Amanda Still and Eric Lashley



Red Poppy Festival



Traditions to the Future © Mila Sketch

exhibits and events, create magical theater experiences, and organize concerts that transport the listener.

Georgetown's Cultural District overlaps our historic downtown square and its many wonderful restaurants, wineries, galleries, and much more. It is the focus for dedicated arts and culture organizers: the people who are the roots of our vibrant arts community.

The Cultural District is anchored by: the Georgetown Art Center, the Georgetown Palace Theatre, the Williamson Museum, the Georgetown Public Library, and the Grace Heritage Center. Southwestern University's Sarofim School of Fine Arts, only a few blocks from the district, hosts outstanding theatre productions, concerts, and art exhibits for the general public.

In 2017, the City of Georgetown contracted with TXP, Inc. to conduct an economic impact study of Georgetown's arts and culture sector. Our downtown has approximately 15 arts-inspired businesses as well as many restaurants and wineries that host live music.

The economic impact study found that:

- 30 to 40 percent of all arts and culture activity is attributable to non-Georgetown residents
- Arts and culture festivals and events attracted over 75,000 visitors each year
- \$2.5 million in direct annual economic activity is attributable to non-Georgetown residents
- Approximately \$500,000 in City of Georgetown tax revenue is generated annually by the arts and culture sector

The city's appointed Arts and Culture Board works with nonprofits, artists, business owners, the Main Street program, and the convention and visitors bureau to enhance and promote the arts in Georgetown. Goals of the board include:

- developing a sustainable arts in public places program
- encouraging the development of a thriving arts, cultural, and entertainment district in the downtown
- providing grants to local arts and culture organizations
- improving access to information as well as assisting in the promotion and marketing of local arts and cultural events.

The board is supported by three employees: Eric Lashley, Library Services Director; Amanda Still, Arts and Culture Coordinator; and Lawren Weiss, Administrative Assistant. The Georgetown Public Library was the recipient of the 2018 Institute of Museum and Library Services National Medal, the highest honor a library and museum can receive in our nation. One of the many reasons the library was honored was its role as the center for arts and culture in Georgetown, with offerings in art, music, history, architecture, and more. Arts and culture, after all, embrace multiple modes of human expression and communication, just as the written word does. The Georgetown Library's mission easily extends from making books and information easily available to all citizens to the promotion of art, music, history, theater, and more.

In 2018, the City of Georgetown showed its commitment to arts and culture by investing in an Arts and Culture position. Amanda Still recently joined the team as the Georgetown Arts and Culture Coordinator. Amanda serves as the primary liaison to the city's Arts and Culture Board and coordinates public art projects including the annual Sculpture Tour that places sculpture around the downtown and beyond. To view the new interactive sculpture tour map, <https://arts.georgetown.org/sculpture-tour-map-is-live/>. She also manages the arts and culture marketing efforts, and the arts and culture website at arts.georgetown.org, and the Facebook and Instagram accounts for arts and culture in Georgetown. Amanda holds a bachelor's degree in Interior Design and a master's degree in Arts Development and Program Management. She owned and operated a commercial art gallery in Georgetown for four years and served on the Georgetown Arts and Culture Board for two terms.

To learn more about Georgetown's arts and culture scene, visit the website at <https://arts.georgetown.org/> or follow on Facebook at Arts & Culture in Georgetown and on Instagram at Georgetown TX Arts & Culture.



AN ECONOMIC GAME CHANGER - CITY OF ENNIS' REBRANDING CAMPAIGN



By Becky McCarty, Ennis Main Street Manager

The City of Ennis is on the cusp of growth and prosperity. A mere five years after becoming a Texas Main Street city, Ennis has adopted a Downtown Master Plan and the majority of the Tier 1 projects estimating an investment of more the \$20 million are currently underway. Numerous downtown buildings are taking advantage of historic preservation and façade grants. Downtown Ennis is well on its way to becoming an experiential destination. The plan implementation and all of the new energy downtown have put Ennis on the radar as a potential growth area.

As the city was moving ahead, our brand was stuck in the past. The logo was very outdated and didn't convey growth. The marketing materials were inconsistent, with no brand guidelines to follow. Overall it was very difficult to get current residents and outsiders excited about the upcoming changes. The need to rebrand was obvious. The rebranding project consisted of an extensive 12-month process working closely with Chandler Thinks, a place branding agency based in Franklin, Tennessee. The four phases included significant research, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, surveys, and more. It was extremely important to us to involve the local community. The new brand needed to represent them and create an emotional connection.

The objective was to create an authentic brand that bridges the existing mix of culture, festivals, and businesses as well as the future of Ennis as defined through the approved Downtown Master Plan and Comprehensive Master Plan. The new vision should influence the way citizens, visitors, and investors feel about the city and provide a central mission that the



Bluebonnet spirit means...
COMMUNITY

As the "Official Texas Bluebonnet City" we have a certain spirit that's part of our everyday lives. It's all about friendliness, honesty, caring for those closest to you. This spirit begins in our community. It doesn't matter if you're a native, a new resident or a visitor seeking bluebonnets, we bring the welcoming spirit of community to everyone. We invite you to make yourself at home and enjoy the bluebonnet spirit of Texas.

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citizens can rally behind. The resulting brand should support the city's economic development goals with emphasis on the following areas:

- Enhancing the city's quality of life
- Attracting, retaining, and growing business
- Building a vibrant, experiential downtown
- Encouraging residents of all ethnicities and ages to engage in community activities and support local businesses.

Resulting Brand Strategy

- Claim and preserve your small town Texas heritage and bluebonnet distinction;
- Use your downtown as your core strength for storytelling and celebration;
- Connect to your beautiful countryside.

Core Brand Truth

Downtown is Ennis' primary focal point and now provides a frame for telling your story

Idea

Position Ennis as the one place in Texas where the spirit of bluebonnets pervades everything, all year long.

At the end of the process, we had developed much more than a stunning new logo and tagline. We developed a story for the City of Ennis that everyone can connect to. This allows for the community to help tell our story and promote our city.

The branding project had an immensely successful launch. The city commission, city boards, mayor, and city staff all immediately connected to the new story and design. The significant involvement with the community helped with an easy rollout and adoption. The brand launch video, <http://bit.ly/EnnisBrand>, played a huge role in releasing the brand. It created the emotional connection needed to re-inspire current residents and inspire potential new residents, visitors, and investors. The video captured numerous types of people from all over the city with a heavy focus on downtown. Ranchers, downtown business owners, football team, children playing, factory workers, and families were all represented. The video has been viewed over 80,000 times via the Ennis TX: A Main Street City Facebook page. Our

population is 19,000 so it is definitely fair to say the video went viral. Current residents were sharing it, people who had moved away from Ennis to different states, and even different countries were sharing it. It pulled at heart strings and made people proud of their roots. Many comments were made about moving back to, or moving to Ennis. The branding campaign is generating buzz about Ennis and affecting our economics by increasing residents, visitors, and potential investors.

Immediately after the brand reveal, a new billboard was installed on I-45 (major highway running through Ennis). The design was unique with a bluebonnet extending five feet above the billboard. The purpose was to create positive brand recognition and get people thinking about Ennis. Existing marketing materials were revamped to reflect the new brand and new print ads were designed to help tell the story of the “bluebonnet spirit of Texas.”

Downtown merchants are also beginning to adopt the new brand. The local pub, Finn MacCool’s, serves a Bluebonnet Spirit margarita, and many of the retail shops now carry bluebonnet gifts all year long.



We were thrilled to receive the inaugural Best Economic Game Changer Award at the 2018 Texas Downtown Association Conference. The impact of the new brand has been huge and we are excited to continue rolling it out.

While you can experience the Bluebonnet Spirit in Ennis all year long, you will certainly want to plan a trip in April to take in the beauty of the bluebonnets as they take over our countryside. The 40 miles of mapped Official Texas Bluebonnet Trails are in season from April 1-30, and the Ennis Bluebonnet Trails Festival takes place April 12-14. Experience three full days of live music, including headliner Le Freak, unique shopping, food, Wine Wander, and children's' fun area. Ennis in April is not to be missed.



SUBMIT A NOMINATION FOR PARTNERS IN PRESERVATION: MAIN STREETS

This year, to mark the upcoming 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment in 2020, the campaign will have a special emphasis on historic buildings and sites that celebrate the contributions of women in Main Street communities across America, both historic and modern day. Through this, Partners in Preservation will seek to uncover and raise awareness of women's often unrecognized contributions to American history and society.

We invite you to submit a nomination for participation in this program. We are seeking to identify historic preservation projects with capital needs and public benefit. Grants will be a maximum of \$150,000. Projects should be limited to that budget or, if they exceed that amount, you will be responsible for securing additional funding.

Learn more and apply [here](#).

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

CAZ MUSKE,
BRENHAM MAIN STREET MANAGER



1. What is your hometown?

I was born in Waco and raised in Lorena. (15 minutes South of Waco)

2. What Main Street city do you represent and how long have you been there?

I am the Main Street Manager for the city of Brenham. I am shiny and new, as I hit the ground running in January of 2019.

3. What is your favorite spot in your downtown and why?

Ask me in a year. I am too new to this wonderful city to properly answer this question. Every route I take in downtown Brenham and every new historic fact I hear, I discover a new treasure.

4. What do you enjoy the most about the Main Street program?

My favorite part of the Brenham Main Street program is the citizens involved. This is the third city I have worked for; moreover, I have never experienced so much pride and attentiveness from board and committee members – it is refreshing! Also, one of the OGs of Main Street is my boss! Jennifer Eckermann has been a vital part in the success and revival of Brenham's downtown. I could not think of a better mentor—she is a wealth of knowledge! I truly feel downtowns are the heart and soul of any community old/lucky enough to have one. Main Street is such an ideal program to be a part of to resurrect what the era of cars/big box stores left behind. It is so important for city leaders to preserve

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MARKETING CHAMPAGNE DREAMS ON A MAIN STREET BUDGET



*By Scarlett Rosier, Rhyme & Reason
Design Founder and Director of
Operations*

Wouldn't it be great if instead of Kylie Jenner, your community were the beneficiary of a billion dollars? Imagine the improvements that could be made, the campaigns created and the opportunities for future growth. Alas, we can't all be the Kardashians. But, we can use our network and our communities to increase awareness, without breaking the bank.

By using resources already at your disposal and a few extra tools, you can enhance your marketing efforts so that they look like a million, or dare we say a billion, dollars.

What Have You Been Saying?

For starters, when was the last time you took stock of your communication materials? I'm not talking about the stockpile of swag you keep in the back closet. I mean reviewing your footprint, specifically your digital one. Have you scrolled through your Instagram account lately? What about your blog posts—have you read them? Your eblasts or enews—have you forgotten what they look like? How about your website—have you avoided content updates like the plague? Whether time or money constrains you, it's time to take a look at what you've been saying to the world, or at least your target market. In your review, do you notice inconsistencies? Does your tone of voice change between one platform and another? Have you neglected any channels? If you answer yes to any of these questions, that's totally okay. In fact, with the amount of work on your plate, it would be more shocking if you were able to keep everything perfectly in order. Here's the deal, write down what you find—the good, the bad, and the ugly.

the pulse and beginning of their city. Losing your downtown could be the omen of being ripped from the fabric of history.

5. What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?

My dad has always pushed me beyond what I thought my capabilities were. Anything I ever committed energy to—school, sports, relationships, etc.—he always knew I could do better. As annoyed as my pre-teen/teenage self was, I would not have the drive or ambition I have now, as an adult, without his high expectations. The non-verbal advice I have learned is: if it is important enough to you, you will find a way to succeed but you have to put in the effort. The most amazing things in life are the ones you work the hardest toward.

6. What's your favorite tip for someone in our economic development/downtown revitalization industry?

Five things for those new to local government: find a mentor, don't recreate the wheel, stay positive, never stop learning, and trust the process. Finding someone with experience in the field you are in is vital. You can have all the formal education but you need to learn from someone who has lived the work. Any worthy mentor is looking for a succession plan and wants to pass their hard-earned knowledge on—take advantage of the opportunity. One thing I have learned working in local government is there is a high probability your idea has been done before. Do the research, ask your mentor, and/or reach out to other entities for advice—they are happy to share the highs and lows. It will make your job way easier! No matter the negativity going on in your life, stay optimistic. I think of the song '100 Bad Days' by AJR. The main hook in the lyrics reads: *A hundred bad days made a hundred good stories; A hundred good stories make me interesting at parties.* Embrace the difficulties because in the end, you can't grow as a better person without them. Take any opportunity to learn. Stay humble and seek avenues to be more effective at your craft. Look for podcasts, articles, others in your industry, etc. You are never too old to learn a new trick and the possibilities are endless (and most often free). Lastly, trust your journey. Downtown revitalization in general feels like a 'forever-and-a-day' process. Don't get me wrong – it is. But so worth it! Be patient and always be mindful of your values, mission, and where/why you started.

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Let's Focus on the Things You Can Change

When you complete your review and have a list, go through and determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (aka SWOT). You'll find some highlights and probably some questionable choices. Again, that's the point of this exercise. Once you've separated things out, pick three to five items that you can change. Yes, less than five. There's no reason to try to tackle the whole list—no one, especially you, has time for that.

From experience, the areas most often in need of improvement include photo quality, message consistency and a general lack of attention. All three of which can be solved without too much pain or suffering.

Photo Quality

Have you seen the photos on some of these influencers' social profiles? S-T-U-N-N-I-N-G! Are they masters of Photoshop? Really, really good with filters? Or blessed with natural light at all times of the day? Well one thing's for sure, good light is a rarity so that's definitely a no. However, even without Photoshop chops you can create and take impressive photos with a smartphone and a few apps. Basic filters available via your camera or social platforms can do wonders, but there are a variety of free and low-cost photo/video apps in the world that can take your photos to the next level. The smart people over at Buffer actually wrote an entire article dedicated to the 26 Best Social Media Apps to Help You Create Epic Social Media Content. And if that's too many to choose from, give CANVA a try. It's one of the favorites among the social-savvy set.

Message Consistency

While reviewing your materials, did you notice a theme? Could you always tell that the marketing was for your Main Street? The goal here is to see a theme



7. If you could plan a vacation to anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?

Anywhere! I am open to any and every new experience in the U.S or overseas somewhere. It is fascinating to experience different cultures and norms.

8. Who has been the most influential person in your career?

Chief Devlin—of the Hewitt Police Department—opened the door for my local government career in 2015. I was in the Health and Fitness industry for five years and was frozen in monotony. A former client, Chief Devlin, offered me a civilian position which began my local government journey. Thanks to him, I have discovered a passion. I completed my Masters in Public Administration with a graduate Certificate in Public Budgeting/ Financial Management in May of this year (2019). Also, I now know what I want to be when I grow up—a city manager! Had Chief never given me the opportunity, I would not be where I am today. Thanks Chief, you're the real MVP!

9. Who would you switch places with for a day?

I would love to experience a day in the life of any city manager. I imagine myself being in city management at a small to medium sized agency, but it would be interesting to see what it's like as a city manager in a Dallas or Austin-sized community. I definitely wouldn't want to 'switch places', but I would be a shadow any day!

10. What's your favorite inspirational quote?

My all-time favorite quote is: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit" by Aristotle. If you maintain and practice integrity 24/7, excellence is simply automatic like a heartbeat.

11. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I love hanging out with my small family and handful of friends. I am a new mom and am thoroughly enjoying my riot son, Lincoln James. He will turn 2 in November of this year (2019). Being a mom is the hardest job I ever applied for, but it is the most rewarding hands down. I never thought I could love another human as much as I love him. Lastly, I love experiencing new places, trying different restaurants, binge watching Netflix/Hulu shows, and thinking about future endeavors – all with my husband (a.k.a BFF).

and for every piece of collateral, print or digital, to feel like it came from the same place. The best way to get to a cohesive message is to start with a few main details:

1. Describe your Main Street. Feel free to humanize it—i.e. fun-loving, history buff, anything but square.
2. Who is your target market? Similarly, give he/she/them a story so that you feel like you know them (which you do, obviously).
3. Define the one thing you want your target market to know about your Main Street.
4. Does this one thing correlate with your marketing objectives?

These answers should be used as guidelines for your marketing. You can use them to create a content strategy, ensuring that social posts are conveying the same message as blog posts and that each element of your communication toolkit is working together to achieve the same goal.

Lack of Attention

Want to know a secret? You don't have to do it all. Seriously. If you have less than zero time to get things done, why are you trying to do the most? The most successful organizations, know that less is more. If you aren't super witty and your Main Street doesn't have a constant stream of information, why are you tweeting? If your target market isn't tweens, why are you snapping? Essentially, pare your platforms down to the ones where you can succeed and that connect with your target market the best. Then execute on the content strategy you developed for message consistency. By having a plan and limiting your efforts you'll find that you are more effective and more efficient with your time. #Goals.

Go forth and communicate

Be realistic. Rome wasn't built in a day and neither was your Main Street. Creating measurable change takes time. However, by taking manageable steps you can begin to move the needle.

HURRICANE HARVEY EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT PROGRAM

The National Park Service (NPS) has awarded Texas a \$12,318,047 Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund grant for historic preservation projects. The emergency grant program will address damage inflicted by Hurricane Harvey. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) is managing the grant program for the State of Texas.

The Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund (HIM ESHPF) grant program is competitive. THC will award grants to qualified applicants, and will coordinate with grantees and the NPS.

Visit our website [here](#) for the application.



FROM BLAH TO AHHH!



By Frieda Lasater, Decatur Main Street Manager

Decatur became a Texas Main Street city in January of 1994. Twenty-five years later, the transformation is unbelievable! In 1994, the downtown Decatur square had one restaurant, a few boutiques, gift/antique stores, several attorneys, and service businesses. Our square wasn't dead by any means, but the joke was that the sidewalks rolled up at 5:30, once the courthouse employees went home. It was never a problem to have an event after 6 p.m., until now! These days, the square is busy from early in the morning till almost midnight, every day of the week.



The Decatur Main Street District is now home to Sweetie Pies Ribeyes, Fuzzy's Taco Shop, Brandi's Diner, Rooster's Roadhouse, Cakes by Leisha, Trinity Street Coffee Bar, and Hey Sugar Candy Store! In addition, there are several established boutiques, gift/antique stores, a florist, several attorneys as well as a few service providers, and our fabulous Wise County Courthouse. The food brings the people, and the atmosphere keeps them coming back. Twenty-five years later, downtown Decatur is developing its own culture and becoming a gathering place again.

Current Main Street Manager, Frieda Haley Lasater started in 1998. "One of the first things I did was take pictures of the square, 20 years later, it's amazing to see the difference," Frieda explains. "When I started, there were still a lot of covered transom windows and few slipcovers, and it seemed like everything was painted beige. It's really amazing to see it now, everywhere you look there's something that went from Blah to Ahhh! It didn't happen overnight, or without the effort of countless volunteers, business owners, and building owners with vision and perseverance. We have a wonderful Main Street community, people who love our downtown, and are dedicated to preserving the past while building on the future!" Future goals include expanding the nine square block Main Street Street District to take in the downtown east and west gateways on Main and Walnut Streets.



REVOLVING LOAN FUND FOR TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAMS

As part of a continuing relationship with the National Main Street Center and the 1772 Foundation, \$20,000 will soon be awarded in 0% interest loans for qualified façade improvement projects in one Texas Main Street community. This is the second phase of a national pilot project the Texas Main Street Program has worked with 1772 and the national center on, and will ultimately

fund \$70,000 in loans for projects over the next three years. Main Street managers should review the flyer and information sent to them through the Main Street listserv on April 4.



CONGRATULATIONS LENETTE IN PILOT POINT



Congratulations to Lenette Cox (center), Pilot Point Main Street manager, who has received her Main Street America Revitalization Professional (MSARP) certification at the closing session of the national Main Street Now conference in Seattle March 27. Lenette worked on the certification for two years through online and coursework, and passage of the certification exam.