

# Main Street Matters

JANUARY 2018 • A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

## YEAR 2017 IN REVIEW

By Debra Drescher, State Coordinator, Texas Main Street Program (TMSP)

As pointed out by our national organization, Main Street America™, Main Street is much more than just a program. It is a movement that “grew out of a recognition that a community is only as strong as its core.” It is a movement in which today thousands of communities nationwide participate. Texas was on the ground floor of the effort when, in 1981, the Texas Historical Commission took a leap of faith by agreeing to implement this innovative yet largely untested statewide initiative. Almost four decades later, that leap has provided substantial economic returns to Texas, in its small businesses, and its communities.

During 2017, more than \$500 million was reinvested into Texas’ Main Street districts, of which about half came from private investment. This shows that tax-supported improvements by the public sector—signifying prioritization of downtown by

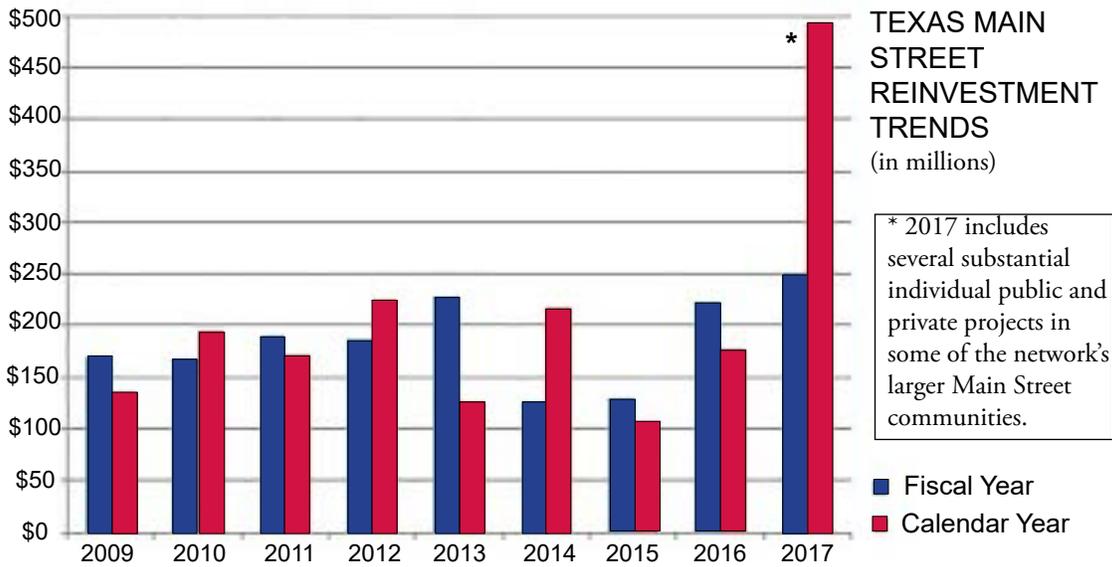
local government—can effectively spur private response. Private investment includes the value of real estate transactions, property rehabilitations, and infill (new) construction. Texas has 89 designated Main Street communities ranging from the very small, with just a few thousand in population, to urban areas across the state. A list and map of Texas’ participating Main Street communities can be found on the [Current Participants](#) page of the Texas Historical Commission website.

At year-end, cumulative economic impact figures for communities that are current participants in the program showed more than \$3.2 billion in combined public and private reinvestment. There are many communities that have maintained their Main Street designations for decades, but there are also new programs designated each year following an application process.

(Cont. on page 2)



Renderings for Buda and Linden, 2017 designated programs, were unveiled during a visit by First Lady Cecilia Abbott in April. The renderings were done by Sarah Blankenship and Marie Oehlerking-Read of the TMSP design staff.



programs. Additionally, 161 site visits were conducted. Consultations done by the TMSP design staff resulted in more than \$10 million in reinvestment. Another service provided to local programs is the TMSP online resource library. The library averages well over 100 visits by managers monthly, and had 6,679 page views during 2017.

The TMSP listserv is also a well-used communications tool for local programs.

During 2017, there were 427 different topics posted on the listserv, each resulting in further e-conversations and sharing of information. Information requests ranged from incentives and grants for downtown development, to ordinance development, to caricature artists, to outdoor movie equipment. The listserv also helped spur voting that resulted in McKinney Main Street receiving \$150,000 through the Partners in Preservation: Main Streets! project of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Main Street America™, American Express, National Geographic, and Delta Airlines. The money will be used for exterior improvements to the McKinney Performing Arts Center, the community's historic downtown centerpiece that was originally the Collin County courthouse.

Just as importantly, almost 116,000 volunteer hours were contributed to Texas' 89 local programs during 2017. The impact of this is \$2,903,394 in financial value, leveraging the impact of staffed time by community members who believe in the value of their local downtowns.

### It's been a busy year...

As part of a tradition of Texas Main Street since 1981, the First Lady of Texas joined officials from the Texas Historical Commission to welcome Buda and Linden as the new 2017 Main Street communities. During her remarks at the April events, the First Lady stated that "Main Street communities represent the best of what the state has to offer." The ceremonies also included unveiling of renderings from the TMSP design staff. Later in the year, the TMSP and affiliated Town Square Initiative team conducted resource teams for both new programs to help them set the foundation for their future Main Street activities. Thanks to Bastrop Main Street Manager, Sarah O'Brien and Palestine Main Street Manager, Greg Laudadio, who also served on the visits to provide their expertise in Buda and Linden, respectively. Already during their first year, these two small communities—with a combined population of just 17,000—have recorded substantial reinvestment into their districts.

During the year, TMSP staff provided at no cost to designated Main Street programs and their downtown property/business owners, almost 4,300 hours of assistance on specific projects requested by the local



In 2017, several local programs reached milestone anniversaries. Pittsburg, one of the earliest programs in Texas' network, became a designated Main Street community in 1987.

A special activity during national Preservation Month in May 2017 was the launch of [www.downtownTX.org](http://www.downtownTX.org) under our Town Square Initiative (TSI). This website, an online building inventory, also showcases the Main Street and Certified Local Government communities that are part of the THC. It is designed to connect interested investors, developers, and entrepreneurs to opportunities in these historic downtowns. The public launch was celebrated in 12 Main Street cities across the state, where local Imagine the Possibilities tours were hosted. (See the related Preservation Month article in this issue.)



May's Celebrate Main Street promotion featured downtown Harlingen, famous for many larger-than-life size murals.

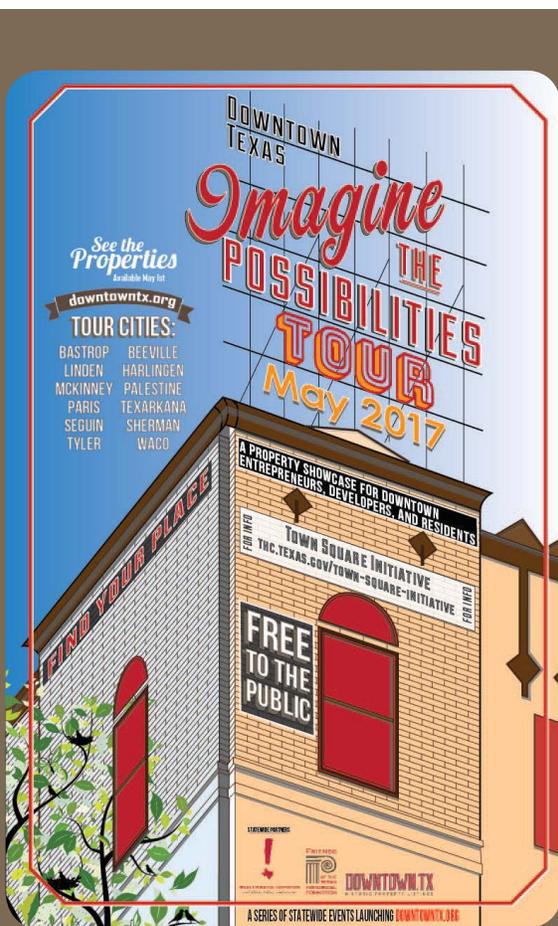
TMSP partnered with the Harlingen Main Street program during Preservation Month on a Celebrate Main Street Sweepstakes contest that awarded destination packages to visit this 20-year-old Main Street city. The May 2017 contest was a follow-up to a

similar sweepstakes that the TMSP held throughout 2016 in celebration of the state program's 35th anniversary. That project won an Innovation on Main Street Award from the National Main Street Center (NMSC) presented at the national conference in Pittsburgh, Pa. in May 2017.

Throughout 2017, the TMSP continued to work with the NMSC and the Texarkana and San Augustine programs on the inaugural national Main Street America™/1772 Foundation Façade Improvement Pilot Program. The TMSP was selected after a nationwide competition for this program, designed to stimulate local economies. Through the program, \$80,000 in loan and grant funding for building improvements is being distributed directly to property owners. By the end of the year, several local projects were completed, with others to be completed throughout 2018.

### Local Program Milestones

The NMSC describes the unique Four Point Approach™ as “a time-tested framework for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization.” The successful Main Street revitalization effort does not happen overnight, it requires continual buy-in, commitment, and dedication of many partners. In 2017, several local programs reached milestone anniversaries.



The Imagine the Possibilities tours showcased available downtown properties by opening them to the public as a way to engage potential investors, entrepreneurs, developers, residents, and anyone else who has imagined themselves running a business, owning a building, or living downtown.



Before



Rendering



After



Before



Before



After



Before



Rendering



After

Texas Main Street, and the Main Street programs in Texarkana and San Augustine, were selected in a nationwide competition to participate in the Facade Improvement Pilot Program of Main Street America™ and the 1772 Foundation. Projects completed so far include Heart of Texas Grill/San Augustine (left column); Pecan Pilot Brewing Company/Texarkana (middle column); and Texas Star Retail/San Augustine (right column).

Pittsburg, one of the earliest programs in Texas' network, became a designated Main Street community in 1987. Congratulations, Pittsburg Main Street on your 30th anniversary!

In Texas' 89-city network—one of the largest in the country—there are only four others with a longer record. (Lufkin and Grapevine/1983; Corsicana/1985; and San Marcos/1986).

In 2017, Celina and Bowie recognized 20 years in Main Street; while Goliad, Harlingen, and Seguin recognized 20 years since being recertified in 1997. Seguin ended its anniversary year being selected by Main Street America™ as one of only two local Main Street programs in the

country to participate in a pilot project on building an entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Bastrop kicked off its 10th anniversary year in January 2017 with a well-attended 'What's the Big Idea' retreat designed to look ahead to the next decade of Main Street. In its 10 years of Main Street, Bastrop—a community of about 8,500—has realized reinvestment of almost \$33 million.

Bridgeport and Cotulla both completed substantial public improvements in the district at their 10-year marks in 2017. Bridgeport's \$1.5 million project, completed with economic development and tax increment funds, purposefully used all local labor and

materials. Cotulla's public improvement project included sidewalk replacement, lighting, landscaping, and a façade improvement to city hall.

## Goodbye, and Hello

Over the year, numerous managers moved on from their local Main Street positions, and we wish them luck in their new endeavors. They included some long-time managers who retired—Shelly Hargrove, Bob Ziegler, and Adah Leah Wolf, and Beverly Abell of Heart of Tyler Main Street, whose Main Street career spanned more than 25 years. Also moving on were Tam Erwin, Bridgette Bise, Sara Beth Wilson Symanck, Diane Peek, Terry Sweeney, Barbie Baker, Morgan Rath, Kathy Cannon, Theresa Carlberg, Sylvia Bruni, Amanda McCellon, Belinda Trevino, Andrea Barefield, and Gus Gustafson.

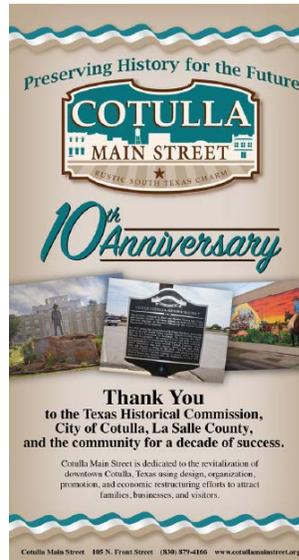
We welcomed as new managers a group of professionals with a strong range of backgrounds and expertise: Pattie Odom/Bay City, Stacy Crossley/Canton, Rebecca Barton/Celina, Mickey Allen/Clarksville, Colette Rye/Corpus Christi, Karie Denny/Corsicana, Sandra Osman/Cuero, Amy Borel/Livingston, Josie Falletta (assistant)/San Marcos, Clint McCormick/Vernon, and Brenda Buck/Winnsboro.

Several new managers came into the fold with existing Main Street background, such as Huntsville's new manager Debbie Charbonneau. The managers for the incoming 2017 cities of Buda and Linden—Maggie Gillespie and Allie Anderson—previously were with the Main Street programs in San Marcos and Uvalde respectively. Similarly, the new manager in Goliad, Keli Miller, previously interned with the Cuero Main Street Program. Upon Shelly Hargrove's retirement from the Georgetown Main Street Program, former Huntsville Main Street Manager, Kim McAuliffe, joined the Georgetown team. And while we lost Andrea Barefield from the Waco Main Street program, she stayed in the THC family by becoming the executive director of the Texas Brazos Trail regional tourism program.

Sadly, we said goodbye to two Main Street friends who passed away during 2017. Kelly Franks, the 25-year Main Street manager in San Marcos, passed away Dec. 21. We profiled her career and accomplishments upon retirement in a special issue of our Main Street Matters newsletter in June 2013, and you can still find that [issue](#)



(Top left) The Halsell Street Improvement Ribbon Cutting Celebration poster in Bridgeport; (Top right) Before image of Halsell Street; (Bottom) After image of Halsell Street.



(Top left) Cotulla's 10th Anniversary event poster; (Top right) Before image of the Gallman Building; (Bottom) After image of the Gallman Building.



## What's the Big Idea?

JOIN THE CITY OF BASTROP MAIN STREET PROGRAM AS WE REFLECT ON THE LAST TEN YEARS AND THINK ABOUT THE ROAD AHEAD  
 MONDAY, JANUARY 30TH 5:30-7:30 P.M.  
 LOST PINES ART CENTER, 1204 CHESTNUT  
 RSVP BY VISITING [WWW.BASTROPDOWNTOWN.COM](http://WWW.BASTROPDOWNTOWN.COM)



Bastrop's 'What's the Big Idea' retreat considered the progress of the last 10 years in the program, while planning for the next 10 years of a successful Main Street program.

archived on THC's website. Elaine Reynolds passed away Nov. 4. Elaine was a long-time rock for the Longview Main Street Program, and organized many of Longview's well-known events such as Alley Fest, Downtown Live, and Christmas at the Courthouse.

The Texas Main Street Program looks forward to another productive year in 2018 providing for Texas' historic downtowns. From all of us, thank you for what you do.

## MAIN STREET MATTERS/RESOURCE LIBRARY MASHUP

During 2018, we will feature a series on topics we find in the reports we receive from programs or see on the TMSP listserv. While we will feature a story in Main Street Matters, managers, board members, and those with access to the online resource library can go there to find out more about the subject and get an in-depth look at the information. This month, we are focusing on Preservation Month activities and youth programs within Main Street. Main Street programs can visit [www.txms-resourcelibrary.org](http://www.txms-resourcelibrary.org) for more materials on both of these topics. If you have a topic you would like covered in these features, please email Sarah Marshall, [sarah.marshall@thc.texas.gov](mailto:sarah.marshall@thc.texas.gov), or Marie Oehlerking-Read, [marie.oehlerking@thc.texas.gov](mailto:marie.oehlerking@thc.texas.gov).

## THANK YOU FOR A GREAT 2017!



TMSP/TSI Staff

(Back Row from left to right) Emily Koller, Riley Triggs, and Alan Cox. (Front Row from left to right) Sarah Marshall, Marie Oehlerking-Read, Sarah Blankenship, Kimberly Klein, and Debra Drescher. Not pictured: Brad Patterson and Virginia Owens.

*Brad Patterson* Debra Drescher  
 Emily Koller Riley Triggs  
 Sarah Marshall Marie Oehlerking Sarah Blankenship  
 Ginny Owens Kimberly Klein

# PRESERVATION MONTH IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Each year in May, we celebrate Preservation Month across the country to spotlight efforts to save history and places that matter. Many Main Street programs hold events that are intended to instill community pride, promote heritage tourism, and show the social and economic benefits of historic preservation. While proclamations by city councils declaring May as Preservation Month are common, many local programs go a step further with special events and activities throughout the month celebrating local heritage and bolster support for their program. Here are some ideas to help Main Street managers plan for celebrating Preservation Month with special activities in May.

The Town Square Initiative (TSI) kicked off its website [DowntownTX.org](http://DowntownTX.org) with 12 Imagine the Possibilities Tours to observe Preservation Month in 2017. The tours showcased available downtown properties as a way to engage potential investors, entrepreneurs, developers, residents, and anyone else who has imagined themselves running a business, owning a building, or living downtown. The tours had a fantastic turnout, and many program managers saw new people visiting their vacant buildings and places.

One of the success stories from the Imagine the Possibilities Tours came from Linden, which was brand new to the Main Street program in 2017. Having committed to the May date early allowed Allie Anderson, Linden Main Street manager, to converse with property owners so they had time to clean up their spaces to attract prospects. Allie also increased the engagement from the public by simply posting giant pieces of paper and letting people write down what they want to see in that particular space. After the tour, Shade Tree Gifts opened in a building that served as the blue jeans department for the big downtown clothing retailer, Allen Brothers Men's and Women's



(Top left) Photo courtesy of Neil Abeles /Texarkana Gazette. Linden had a great turnout for its Imagine the Possibilities Tour. (Top right) Photo courtesy of Neil Abeles /Texarkana Gazette. People on the tour were able to write down what they wanted to see in their downtown. (Bottom left) Photo courtesy of [DowntownTX.org](http://DowntownTX.org). (Bottom right) A building formerly used as the blue jeans department of the big downtown clothing retailer is now a successful gift store thanks to the Imagine the Possibilities Tour.



(Top) Photos and paintings displayed at the Fort Bend County Museum for the Preserving Fort Bend County Through the Arts contest. (Bottom) Reception at Fort Bend County Museum honoring the winners contest.

Department Store. Shade Tree Gifts remains open and prosperous.

TSI is conducting Imagine the Possibilities Tours again this year to celebrate Preservation Month. If your downtown is listed on [DowntownTX.org](http://DowntownTX.org), and you want to participate, contact Emily Koller at [Emily.Koller@thc.texas.gov](mailto:Emily.Koller@thc.texas.gov).

Rosenberg is another city that executed a creative idea to celebrate Preservation Month for the past three years. In 2015 and 2016, they held an Architectural Appreciation Photo Contest, and last year, they built on that idea, by naming the contest Preserving Fort Bend County Through the Arts to include all art mediums. Partnering with the Art League of Fort Bend, the Fort Bend Historical Commission, and the Fort Bend County Museum, the contest was held in May with the winners being announced and awarded trophies and ribbons at a City Council meeting. The winners were recognized at a reception at the Fort Bend County Museum, and the entries were displayed for about two months at the museum with ribbons denoting the winners. The Rosenberg Main Street Manager, Dan Kelleher, said it was a great way to involve other organizations in Rosenberg with the Main Street program, and get the public excited for Preservation Month.

When planning an activity for Preservation Month, make sure it engages everyone in the community and not just the regular stakeholders. This is an opportunity to showcase your historic downtown, and involve people that are usually not involved in preservation. For more ideas and inspiration for Preservation Month activities, Main Street managers can visit the TMSPP online resource library to find out how other Main Streets celebrate Preservation Month, proclamation templates, and “This Place Matters” materials.

## YOUTH IN MAIN STREET

Getting young people involved with their community’s Main Street program benefits not only the program with some of the heavy lifting, but providing an opportunity for community engagement and encouraging youth to enjoy history in their own backyards and beyond. Main Street programs often create partnerships with local schools and offer service learning and community service opportunities to students using heritage resources. These are some of the ways that Main Streets are involving youth in their communities.

### **Harlingen – Downtown Mosaic Planter Art Project** Submitted by Ed Meza, Harlingen Main Street manager

Harlingen artist Roberta Lee will oversee the Mosaic Planter Art Project created by Harlingen junior high and high school students. The 12 concrete cylinder planters will be turned into works of art by the students and will be used to beautify downtown Harlingen. The students will design each planter, learn the process of drawing, and use different materials such as glass and their own mosaic pieces out of glazed ceramic to install the pieces.



(Left) Photo courtesy of Maricela Rodriguez/Valley Morning Star. Roberta Lee is supervising a program for high school students to help beautify downtown Harlingen. (Right) Mosaic art designed by high school students in downtown Harlingen.

Each planter will be designed with a theme that represents Harlingen and its uniqueness. Themes include flora and fauna, the Arroyo Colorado, recycling, the cotton industry, the citrus industry, and more. The planters are sponsored by businesses and residents and will be distributed in the downtown area and serve as visual art pieces.

**MAY IS PRESERVATION MONTH**

*Celebrate with*  
**#ThisPlaceMatters**

[www.thc.texas.gov](http://www.thc.texas.gov)

## Carthage – Youth Advisory Council

Submitted by Cindy Deloney, Carthage Main Street Manager

The Carthage Main Street Youth Advisory Council (YAC) was formed in April 2016 with 12 members, and in 2017 it is already up to the max of 20 members. Each year this council is tasked with planning an event and a project as well as volunteering for both Carthage Main Street and Panola County Chamber of Commerce events, with their officers also being Junior Chamber Ambassadors. Each member also has to volunteer two hours per semester working in the Carthage Main Street office.

This outstanding group of young people start their year with a full day of training on Main Street, team- building exercises, and a planning session for their year. Their first event, The Homecoming Street Dance, was a huge success and they are building on that event for this year. They have also helped with the renovations at the Esquire Theater downtown and volunteering at the concession stand for both the country music shows and movies held in this historic theater. Their first big project is about to become a reality: a life-size chess board will be added to Anderson Park in our downtown square thanks to their hard work.

The first chair of the YAC, Emily Andrus, was the featured volunteer in the May 2017 issue of [Main Street Matters](#).

These programs are only a couple of great examples of getting youth involved with their Main Street programs. Please log into the online resource library for several additional profiles on youth involvement in the San Marcos and Uvalde Main Street programs.



The original Carthage Main Street Youth Advisory council.

## Websites of Interest

- **Advisory Council on Historic Preservation:** [www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov)
- **African American Heritage Preservation Foundation:** [www.aahpfdn.org](http://www.aahpfdn.org)
- **(The) Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation:** [www.ahlp.org](http://www.ahlp.org)
- **(The) American Institute of Architects:** [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org)
- **American Planning Association:** [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)
- **American Society of Landscape Architects:** [www.asla.org](http://www.asla.org)
- **(The) Cultural Landscape Foundation:** [www.tclf.org](http://www.tclf.org)
- **(The) Handbook of Texas Online:** [www.tsha-online.org/handbook/online](http://www.tsha-online.org/handbook/online)
- **Keep Texas Beautiful:** [www.ktb.org](http://www.ktb.org)
- **League of Historic American Theatres:** [www.lhat.org](http://www.lhat.org)
- **National Main Street Center:** [www.preservationnation.org/main-street](http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street)
- **National Park Service:** [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)
- **National Trust for Historic Preservation:** [www.preservationnation.org](http://www.preservationnation.org)
- **Partners for Sacred Places:** [www.sacredplaces.org](http://www.sacredplaces.org)
- **Preservation Easement Trust:** [www.preservationeasement.org](http://www.preservationeasement.org)
- **Preservation Directory.com:** [www.preservationdirectory.com](http://www.preservationdirectory.com)
- **Preservation Texas:** [www.preservationtexas.org](http://www.preservationtexas.org)
- **Project for Public Spaces:** [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)
- **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy:** [www.railstotrails.org](http://www.railstotrails.org)
- **Scenic America:** [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org)
- **Texas Department of Agriculture:** [www.TexasAgriculture.gov](http://www.TexasAgriculture.gov)
- **Texas Commission on the Arts:** [www.arts.texas.gov](http://www.arts.texas.gov)
- **Texas Downtown Association:** [www.texasdowntown.org](http://www.texasdowntown.org)
- **Texas Folklife Resources:** [www.texasfolklife.org](http://www.texasfolklife.org)
- **Texas Historical Commission:** [www.thc.texas.gov](http://www.thc.texas.gov)
- **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department:** [www.tpwd.texas.gov](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov)
- **Texas Rural Leadership Program:** [www.trlp.org](http://www.trlp.org)
- **Texas State Preservation Board:** [www.tspb.state.tx.us](http://www.tspb.state.tx.us)
- **Urban Land Institute:** [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org)