

Main Street Matters

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AMARILLO

By Beth Duke, Amarillo Main Street Manager

Editor's Note: New Manager Orientation and All-Manager Professional Development will be held next month in Amarillo and Canyon. For this month's Main Street Matters edition, we asked both Beth Duke, the Amarillo Program Manager, and Kirstie Patterson, the Canyon Program Manager, to write a spotlight on their communities.

Welcome to Center City of Amarillo. We have come a long way since a group of citizens decided downtown was worth saving. Although Center City did not become a Texas Main Street City until 2002, the seeds of our downtown revitalization were planted decades before.

By the 1970s, Amarillo's downtown was a place to work. Everyone went home at 5 p.m. The streets and buildings were empty. The beautiful Pueblo Deco

architectural treasures were in danger of becoming parking lots. Today, downtown streets are thriving once again. Thanks to the successful implementation of a Strategic Downtown Action Plan, downtown is now a place to live, work, play, learn, and worship.

- Live – Center City is adding new residences each year. The Vineyard Manor apartments, the Parkview Apartments, the Lofts on 10th, and The Firestone lofts are examples of historic tax credit projects giving historic buildings a new life. The projects also received Façade Grants of up to \$20,000 each through a partnership with the City of Amarillo and Center City. In 2017, Center City's Façade Grant program topped the \$1 million mark with cumulative grants reinvested in downtown since the program began in 1996. The Lofts on 10th won a Texas Downtown Association Design Award in

(Cont. on page 2)



Located at the corner of 10th and Tyler is the recently restored Firestone Lofts. It was designed and inspired by architect, Gregg Bliss and landscape architect Cleve Turner. It originally opened in the 1930s as the Louis H. Smith Inc. Firestone Store, and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015.

2016. In addition, the Park Central retirement community in downtown offers a continuum of care from independent living to memory care. The Park Central campus spans multiple blocks and houses 800 residents and employs three shifts of caregivers.

- Work – Center City has 20,000 people who work in downtown or within a five-minute drive of downtown. Federal, state, and municipal courts are centrally located, along with all the major law firms. Major employers include banks, accounting firms, the City of Amarillo, and Potter County. Office occupancy hovers around 75 percent with more tenants leasing each week. Xcel Energy chose to build its new campus on prime real estate overlooking the new AA major league baseball field in our new outdoor event venue. The state-of-the-art headquarters was designed for today’s workforce with an open floor plan, a company gym, and smart rooms. The campus will house 500 employees at full staff.
- Play – Center City has the largest downtown dining district in the state of Texas with almost 40 restaurants offering everything from steaks to sushi. For after-dinner drinks, the district has a martini bar, a jazz club, a brew pub, and a wine bar all within walking distance. The trendy brew pub and new wine bar on Polk Street represent the first new construction on Amarillo’s “Main Street” in more than 40 years. The modern building will house both the pub and wine bar. The restaurants will have sidewalk dining, interior dining, and even a rooftop bar. An outdoor stage is “plug and play” for musical acts. The architect incorporated motifs from one of Amarillo’s most historic buildings for the exterior trim on the new building.

Center City is also the heart of the Amarillo Cultural District. The downtown Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts houses the Amarillo Symphony, the Amarillo Opera, and the Lone Star Ballet performing companies. Downtown is home to the Cerulean Gallery and several live/work art spaces. Center City celebrated the 15th year of its Hoof Prints program to encourage art in public places. More than 100 full-size fiberglass replicas of American Quarter Horses dot the city and raise funds for Center City.



At the heart of downtown Amarillo is its cultural district. Visitors can find more than 100 full-size fiberglass replicas of American Quarter Horses (top image), watch more than 75 longhorns parade down Polk Street for the Annual Cattle Drive Parade (middle image), and watch a special performance at the High Noon on the Square summer concerts (bottom image).

Center City sponsors downtown events including High Noon on the Square summer concerts, Amarillo Community Market every Saturday in the summer, the Electric Light Parade at Christmas, and Jazztober in the fall. Center City partners a variety of events—Ama-Con comic book convention, a longhorn cattle drive, and the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. Center City co-sponsors the Amarillo Tower Race—a vertical race to the 31st floor of the Amarillo Tower, the tallest building in Amarillo.



Completed in 1927, the First Presbyterian Church in downtown Amarillo was constructed in a 15th century gothic revival architectural style. It is fully adorned with flying buttresses and antique glass sanctuary windows.

- **Learn** – West Texas A&M University is transforming a mid-century department store into a new Amarillo Center for classes, clinics, and student services. The Amarillo Center was formerly housed on three floors of the Chase Tower. In the spring of 2018, the center will have its own storefront. The center anticipates more than 300 students and faculty to use the center daily. The Amarillo Center will also have a clinic for children with learning disabilities and the WTAMU / Small Business Administration Small Business Development Center. The WTAMU / SBA Center is a key resource for entrepreneurs, especially for people who want to open a business downtown. Center City is also home to the Downtown Campus of Amarillo College, the city's growing community college.
- **Worship** – Amarillo's downtown churches anchor Center City with their stained-glass windows, historic architecture, and growing congregations. More than 4,000 people worship downtown each Sunday. The downtown churches work together with outreach projects for the downtown neighborhood and open their doors to community events. First Presbyterian, First Baptist, Central Church of Christ, Polk Street United Methodist, Messiah House, Mount Olive Baptist Church, City Church, and St. Mary's

Cathedral are an active part of the downtown Amarillo community. Most of the congregations are more than 100 years old, and several of the buildings date back to the 1920s. Center City has sponsored historic church tours and a brochure detailing these architectural treasures.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

TEXAS MAIN STREET SUMMER
2018 NEW MANAGER
ORIENTATION AND ALL-MANAGER
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

JULY 10-13, 2018
AMARILLO AND CANYON

Open to staff and volunteer leaders of all Main Street communities. Managers, please refer to the registration links noted in emails on the Texas Main Street listserv, or contact our office.

Center City welcomes Main Street Summer Training to Amarillo with lodging in our two very different downtown hotels. The Courtyard by Marriott in the Historic Fisk building is on the National Register of Historic Places. The hotel is on historic Polk Street in a 1928 skyscraper originally built to house medical offices. The Embassy Suites on Buchanan Street is our new convention center hotel, built as part of the Downtown Strategic Action Plan. This modern hotel will be a short walk from the baseball field when the team plays ball in 2019.

We can't wait to see you in July, and show you Center City of Amarillo.

CANYON

By Kirstie Patterson, Canyon Main Street Manager

From revitalizing Canyon's downtown square, to creating fun and free/affordable events for citizens and visitors, to restoring the Historic Randall

County Courthouse and Tex Randall, a lot has been accomplished since Canyon Main Street's formation in 2002! With the help of our dedicated volunteers and generous sponsors, we feel we have lived up to our mission: To improve quality of life for the citizens of Canyon and the benefit of the overall community, through the enhancement and promotion of historic preservation, restoration, business vitality, tourism, cultural, and arts awareness.

The Canyon Main Street Program is in its 16th year of planning and community service to Canyon. It is said by many that "the Main Street program is the vehicle that brought the downtown square back to life!" The CMS program is part of the Business and Development Department of the City of Canyon. This department is a partnership with the Canyon Economic Development Corporation. The CEDC has invested thousands of dollars into our community, especially the downtown area. The goal of both CMS and the CEDC is to make Canyon a destination. Canyon Main Street hosts a number of events, including the Giddy Up for Tex 5K Run/Walk, June



The original Tex Randall statue was constructed in 1959 out of concrete, steel, and wire mesh, and created to advertise Wheeler's Western Store on US 60. After a semi crashed into his left boot in the 1980s, it wasn't until 2016 that Tex was restored to his full glory. (Right image [source](#) and more about this story.)

Jams, Movie Nights on the Square, Autumn Street Fest, and Visits with Santa (as part of Christmas in Canyon).

In Canyon, we've found a way to harness our heritage and send it hurtling into a bright future. Dish Network recently named Canyon—and neighboring Palo Duro Canyon State Park—number one on its nationwide list of the “Best Small-Town Gems to Visit in 2018.”

So, drop by and see what we've been cooking up. Go hike America's second – largest canyon, then come to Canyon's historic square for a refreshing smoothie at Squeezy Street, or have a latte at the original location of Palace Coffee—the 2014 winner of Da Vinci Gourmet's prestigious “America's Best Coffeehouse” title. Afterward, take your latte across the square to Burrowing Owl Books, the Texas Panhandle's most charming and successful independent bookstore.

What about dinner? If you're hankering for a taste of Asia, Sayakomarn's—or “soccer mom's,” as it's affectionately known to locals—serves up the most appetizing pad thai and sesame pork in the Panhandle. If it's fun you're after, try the Rockin' Zebra Soda Shop—a 1950-style diner, complete with chrome barstools and a jukebox—or Recreation, a hip “barcade,” where you can challenge a friend to a game of Street Fighter while scarfing down street tacos. And speaking of tacos, since its opening in January, Joe Taco has become the most popular eatery on the square, with its heaping helpings of nachos and enchiladas.

Or perhaps you're in the mood for a night of fine dining? Why not sample the wares over at the Imperial Taproom, home to hand-crafted brews and mouthwatering farm-to-table dishes. Or there's Barrel & Pie, a new whiskey-and-craft-pizza eatery that's already creating a buzz across West Texas, with its Brooklynesque subway-tile interiors, lavish pizzas, and brilliantly concocted cocktail recipes, all served in the shadow of Canyon's magnificently restored courthouse.

Whether you're looking to step into the past and experience the pleasures of small-town America, or you want to travel into the future and experience the most adventurous cuisine, beer, and cocktails now being crafted on the High Plains, there's truly something for everyone in Canyon, and Canyon Main Street has played a huge role in all the excitement.



(Top image) Sayakomarn's was built in 2015 as the first new building on the Canyon square since 1947. (Middle image) Palace Coffee was built in 1906 as a hardware store, and operated as a hotel from 1912-1960. (Bottom image) Joe Taco, a part of the Canyon Downtown Dining District, is a great example of an adaptive reuse building, circa 1927.

PRESERVATION MONTH



May is Preservation Month, and is celebrated across the country under a theme of This Place Matters (#ThisPlaceMatters). In Texas, local Main Street communities celebrated with special activities throughout the month. Program managers can visit the Main Street Online Resource Library at txms-resourcelibrary.org to see many more examples of activities and projects that celebrated Preservation Month in Texas.



PALESTINE - Our goal was to showcase as many Main Street organizations as possible, and bring awareness to the buildings, businesses, and people that make up the fabric of our historic downtown. While we didn't get them all, we thoroughly enjoyed getting to spend time with the ones we did.



WAXAHACHIE - Over 600 preservation coloring books were distributed to second graders at Schackelford Elementary and other elementary schools in the Waxahachie Independent School District.



GEORGETOWN - On May 1, we held our Preservation Month Kick-off and re-dedication of the Emzy Taylor historic marker at the corner of 7th Street & Austin Avenue. Emzy Taylor was the first fire chief in Georgetown and a local business owner.



LAREDO - At Laredo's monthly El Centro de Laredo Farmers Market, we celebrated both National Preservation Month and National Bike Month with a Historic Bike Tour of our Historic St. Peter's Neighborhood in Downtown Laredo.



MCKINNEY - Downtown Walking Tours with Guy Giersch were held, along with a special presentation by Debra Kilgore called "Follow McKinney's Movie Trail: Brown Bag Lunch Talk."



The Texas Main Street’s affiliated program, the Town Square Initiative, has coordinated a series of *Imagine the Possibilities Tours* throughout May and into July, featuring property showcases and investment opportunities in 20 Texas Main Street communities, hosting 22 tours total.

As of newsletter printing date:

- 19 tours
- 775 attendees
- 143 downtown properties showcased
- 6 buildings with accepted offers



AMARILLO - Beth Duke, Director of Center City Amarillo, speaks at a press conference held several days before their tour to announce DowntownTX.org and promote the tour. Photo by Ralph Duke.



TEXARKANA - Texarkana received great media coverage in advance of the tour including this television clip which captured some of the Main Street design renderings that were displayed to help attendees Imagine the Possibilities.



LA GRANGE - Attendees looking for a potential restaurant space wander through a vacant former restaurant on the square in La Grange.



LA GRANGE - Anyone a Dale Watson fan? One of his popular Texas honky tonk songs is Truck Stop in La Grange.



TAYLOR - Owner and project architect Doug Moss displays his model showcasing the live/work style floor plan for the redevelopment of the long vacant building at 100 E. 2nd Street in Taylor.



SAN MARCOS - San Marcos created a self-guided walking tour with maps and large posters featuring the building history at each of the stops.



PALESTINE - Imagine the Possibilities tour attendees in Palestine know why their downtown matters.



BEAUMONT - Tour attendees enjoyed learning about the building history of the featured properties during Beaumont's tour.



ELGIN - Attendees tour the construction of rear residential units in Elgin that have made the redevelopment of many of Elgin's single story commercial buildings possible in recent years.

MAIN STREET IN ACTION



(Top) The Laredo Main Street board held a goal setting meeting during May. (Bottom) Dozens of people turned out to help the newly established Pearsall Main Street Program in their Downtown Clean-Up Day that was held in advance of the annual First Lady's visit May 1.

CONGRATULATIONS
TO
HILLSBORO
AND TEXARKANA!



Congratulations to both Hillsboro and Texarkana. Both Main Street communities were in the running for the STIHL/ Independent We Stand "America's Main Streets" \$25,000 contest. Hillsboro made it to the Top 10 nationwide. Congratulations, Hillsboro Main Street, for that great achievement! The selection of Ashtabula, OH was announced June 4.

Websites of Interest

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