Every year Texas Wine Month officially begins in October, one of our favorite months to celebrate the bountiful harvest and the wines produced. In our main spotlight this month, we asked five Texas Main Street managers with downtown wineries, “How has the Texas Wine Industry contributed to your Main Street district?”
HOW HAS THE TEXAS WINE INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR MAIN STREET DISTRICT?

Susan Leary, Main Street Manager, Childress Main Street Program

The 501 Winery opened in November 2015, one block off U.S. Highway 287 in the Childress Main Street district. In the short period of three years, they have seen visitors from every state and many foreign visitors from over 20 countries. The winery sits at the entrance to our Main Street district and is named after our Fort Worth & Denver Steam Locomotive No. 501 that sits at the end of our district. The wonderful employees of the winery encourage visitors to explore our downtown and visit the locomotive. It is the most photographed landmark in Childress. They include in all their advertising that they are located in the Childress Main Street district. The 501 Winery is Childress’ second main tourism attraction, just behind the Stoney Ridge Golf Course. To have a staple like the winery in our downtown has been a huge draw for visitors, and our downtown merchants have seen an increase in their sales since its opening. We feel they were the perfect fit for Main Street and are one of our best partners for Main Street activities. The owner also serves on the Childress Advisory Board. Our blessing, the 501 Winery, and Childress Main Street Program, a win-win!

Anita Brown, Main Street Manager, Waxahachie Main Street Program

Our first winery sprang from a completely unexpected source. Karla Gibson and her husband made wine as a hobby and mostly shared it with friends and associates. After receiving rave reviews from those who were priviledged to get to sample their products, Karla decided it might be a new career path. After turning a dream into a reality in 2015, and after securing a space in February of 2016, she opened for business on December 30, 2016. During the time of getting licensed and preparing the interior of her store, Karla and her husband were making and bottling what they thought was enough wine to sustain them for a while. Within the first three months of being open, they had to stop selling bottles and cases of wine to go because their supply was quickly being depleted. Karla’s winery and her wine proved so popular that she eventually had to find a larger winery who would follow her recipes to help with production in order to meet demand! Now open for almost two years, Cork House Winery is a favorite spot in downtown Waxahachie that hosts live music, and contributes to the ambiance and offerings for nightlife here. Since the winery opened, downtown Waxahachie has gained a wine bar/restaurant and our first local brewery.

Aaron Werner, Main Street Coordinator, McKinney Main Street Program

Historic Downtown McKinney has two hometown wineries on opposite sides of the square. It is easy to contribute some of downtown McKinney’s progression to both Lone Star Wine Cellars and Landon Winery. Each one has brought something totally unique to our downtown. They are featured at local events such as McKinney Oktoberfest and have played a critical role in the development of our arts festival, Arts in Bloom, a celebration of art and wine. In addition, these wineries are ambassadors for McKinney when they travel to other wine tasting events across the state. Our goal is for historic downtown McKinney to become known as an entertainment destination—a place that offers a full experience, beyond shopping and dining. Our wineries play a huge part in this because they prolong people’s stay when visiting the square. Guests can sit on an open-air patio, share a bottle of wine with friends, and listen to a local act. The live music alone changes the atmosphere of the entire square. When visitors walk past one of the wineries on a Saturday night, they can tell that this place is alive, people are enjoying themselves, and those feelings are contagious.

Sarah O’Brien, Main Street Manager, Bastrop Main Street Program

Thankfully Bastrop’s Colorado River Winery has been a staple of our eclectic Main Street scene for years. Owners Brad and Sylvia Cook have been involved with special events including Lost Pines Christmas, Wine Swirl, and our new Table on Main event. I’d be remiss if I didn’t mention our fantastic wine shop, Cripple Creek Wine & Gifts, whose friendly service, vast array of Texas wines, and regular wine tastings is a First Friday must do. Owners Sean and Abbie Neighbours are the inspiring young merchants you want in your downtown. A second winery, Blessed Bee Winery, opened inside the TDA Award Winning Lost Pines Art Center. They serve a variety of locally produced mead wines, as well as the finest champagnes and wines from Texas to California. Kathleen O’Steen and her team host the annual Texas Mead Festival. Last year was their first entry into our downtown event scene concocting a delicious wassail for our annual #smallbusinesssaturday celebration. Instead of longing for a downtown winery as I did for so many years, now I struggle trying to decide where to enjoy Mimosa Mornings because yes, we have more than one of those events every Saturday. Raise a glass and help me cheer the amazing folks behind downtown Bastrop’s wine scene.

Deby Lannen, Main Street Manager, Taylor Main Street Program

Since Pilot Knob Vineyard and Winery joined the downtown Main Street family in the city of Taylor, they have rounded out our entertainment options and provided a wonderful place where people can enjoy themselves in our beautiful downtown. For several years as I traveled around visiting other Main Street cities, I found myself experiencing a little bit of “Main Street Envy” when I would see Main Streets with fun gathering spots where friends and families could meet after shopping, or just sit down and visit. I wished we had more of those types of places in Taylor’s Main Street district. As our downtown has grown, we have attracted more variety in businesses, which now includes a fantastic brewery that really lends a sense of character. So when Pilot Knob established their presence in downtown Taylor, they gave us a new gathering spot. In addition to serving fantastic wine, they also host events like painting / wood sign making classes, and live music events. They also provide rental space for events like bridal showers and birthday parties. Pilot Knob has taken the fun, independent spirit of downtown Taylor to heart, and they have become an integral part of our Main Street family.
MANAGING YOUR MAIN STREET PROGRAM’S OR SMALL BUSINESS’ SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE A SCARY AND OVERWHELMING TASK, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE A ONE-PERSON SHOW. WITH CONSTANT UPDATES TO ALGORITHMS AND PLATFORMS, IT CAN OFTEN SEEM LIKE ONCE YOU GET A HANG OF THINGS, YOU ARE PUSHED BACK TO SQUARE ONE. EVERYONE THAT DWELLS WITHIN THE SOCIAL MEDIA WORLD IS RIGHT THERE WITH YOU WHEN IT COMES TO THE FRustrATIONS OF STAYING UP-TO-DATE AND MANAGING MULTIPLE PLATFORMS.

MANAGING YOUR MAIN STREET PROGRAM’S OR SMALL BUSINESS’ SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE A SCARY AND OVERWHELMING TASK, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE A ONE-PERSON SHOW. WITH CONSTANT UPDATES TO ALGORITHMS AND PLATFORMS, IT CAN OFTEN SEEM LIKE ONCE YOU GET A HANG OF THINGS, YOU ARE PUSHED BACK TO SQUARE ONE. EVERYONE THAT DWELLS WITHIN THE SOCIAL MEDIA WORLD IS RIGHT THERE WITH YOU WHEN IT COMES TO THE FRustrATIONS OF STAYING UP-TO-DATE AND MANAGING MULTIPLE PLATFORMS.

WHAT SOCIAL PLATFORMS SHOULD I BE USING?
*Crowd chants in unison* “ALL OF THEM!”
Wrong. For a business with limited resources, it can be incredibly overwhelming and next to impossible to manage six-plus social media profiles. Best practice is to go with Facebook first and build from there. Facebook performs well for all demographics and is the king of the social media world. Yes, there are more “older” people on Facebook, but the younger audience is still alive and well on the platform. Once you have your Facebook squared away and building followers, move on to the next platform that best fits your target audience’s demographics. Here are a few stats on what people you can find on each platform:

Facebook

Instagram

Twitter
When should I be posting?

It’s always important to understand that your audience isn’t the same as everyone else’s and should be treated as such. If you have some history built up on your platform, you should look at the free analytics that every platform provides on your audience’s activity. From there all you need to do is post when your audience is most active! Remember that as your following grows, so will your analytics. Be sure you are constantly monitoring your page/profile’s analytics, so you are catering to your current audience at all times. If you have just started or don’t have enough data on your followers yet, start posting at the average optimal post times as shown below, and adjust your post times as you grow your audience.

How do I create “good” content?

Great question! Content is king when it comes to social media, plain and simple. If you don’t have good relevant content, then no one has any reason to follow you. The first step to having good content is understanding that there are different standards for good content on each platform. One rule that exists across all platforms is that text-only posts are a bad idea. There’s simply too much content with beautiful graphics and images for someone to care about your post with nothing but text. You need to have eye-catching images and graphics with your posts for people to pay attention. It’s perfectly acceptable to paste a link that pulls in metadata (images and text from the website you’re linking to) to check off the image criteria on your Facebook posts.

With Instagram, you’ll need to be a little more creative. Instagram is all about pretty pictures, so you’ll need to make sure your images are cropped and edited appropriately so they look nice. Use the editor that Instagram has gifted you with. It will help to make your images pop, but don’t go too crazy—people don’t like something that is obviously fake. As far as Twitter goes, infographics, and images work great. People go to Twitter for information, so they are less concerned with a beautiful photo, and more interested in an image or infographic that supports the information you are feeding them.

If you aren’t a photographer or Photoshop expert, here are a few tools that can help you build great content at little to no cost:

- Canva (my favorite!)
- Pagemodo (helpful for building header images and infographics)
- Adobe Spark (Photoshop for dummies)

How do I successfully manage a contest through social media to help build my following?

I’m so glad you asked! Promoting contests through your social media is an excellent way to shine some light on your profile and gain some followers. “Promoting” is the keyword in that last sentence. On Facebook, you should never be running a contest solely from your social channel, because there’s way too much red tape and room for error. Facebook has very strict rules about contests and they are not messing around when it comes to the consequences for not following these rules. They will permanently delete...
your page for not abiding by their rules. Asking people to like, share, or follow you to enter a contest is strictly forbidden. You see it all the time, but those people are subject to deletion at any time. SCARY! The best practice when it comes to Facebook contests is to run the contest from your website, and promote the contest by encouraging people to enter it by linking to your website from your post. Don’t forget to place a disclaimer in all your posts promoting the contest stating that your promotion is in no way sponsored, endorsed, administered by, or associated with Facebook. Here is a full, comprehensive breakdown on how to promote your contest through Facebook.

Instagram, which is owned by Facebook, is a little more relaxed. You can find their guidelines here. They still require a disclaimer, but do not have specific bans on asking people to follow you or tag friends. Since they are owned by Facebook, I would not say it’s farfetched to assume that they will start being stricter on contests in the near future, so keep an eye out for updates to their promotion guidelines.

Twitter is like the cool uncle when it comes to contests. They do not require any lengthy disclaimer, though you must inform people that you are running a contest across all platforms. Their main beef with contests is that they don't want you spamming people, and they don't want people creating multiple accounts to enter your contest multiple times. You can see their full list of contest rules here.

I’ve covered a few of the most frequently asked questions I receive regarding social media, but I’m sure you have many more questions! Since managing social media is a challenge for everyone, even the experts, you can find excellent articles and blogs about social media across the internet. All it requires is a simple Google search. Some of my favorite sources for social media help are Sprout Social (Meltwater), Hubspot, Social Report, and Hootsuite.

Remember, even though the social media world is a scary place, it is doable! There is an entire community of people working together across the globe to conquer the social media realm, and we are all relying on one another to make it happen. Happy socializing!

---

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

RACHEL SKOWRONEK, MARSHALL MAIN STREET MANAGER

1. What is your hometown?
   Chicago, Illinois, although I’ve been a Texas transplant long enough that I guess I should start claiming it!

2. What Main Street city do you represent and how long have you been there?
   I am going on three years in Marshall this November! I started off in Tourism & Promotions with our Convention & Visitors Bureau, occasionally lending some assistance to our Main Street program, and transitioned fully to Main Street Manager over the summer.

3. What is your favorite spot in your downtown and why?
   I think my favorite spot downtown is my own front porch! Ha! Living downtown was non-negotiable for me when I moved to Marshall. I'm just steps away from my favorite places, our best local attractions, and of course live music as the Birthplace of Boogie Woogie. It's especially beautiful during the Holidays—people drive from all over to see our courthouse all lit up in white lights, but I can just walk out my front door!

4. What do you enjoy the most about the Main Street program?
   I love that I get to be a part of enhancing our quality of life! I’m used to crafting experiences for visitors, and I love that I get to do that for our locals now too. Downtown Marshall is under a major resurgence right now, and I am grateful to be so involved in that.

(cont. on next page)
FIVE SIMPLE STEPS TO ATTRACT MORE ATTENTION AND CUSTOMERS RIGHT NOW


Editor’s note: This month’s spotlight on attracting attention and customers is provided by Jon Schallert, who works with communities and businesses on becoming consumer destinations. Jon, who speaks to thousands annually on his 14-step “Destination Business” process, is the opening keynote speaker at the 2018 Texas Downtown Conference co-sponsored by the Texas Downtown Association and the Texas Main Street Program. The annual conference is November 6-9 in Corpus Christi. In the spotlight that follows, Jon shares some “Silver Bullet Marketing” tools—easy-to-implement marketing tactics that can yield big results for very little dollars and can be used by businesses or downtown organizations. The Schallert Group, Inc. is located in Longmont, Co.

This fall is going to get busy quickly, but many downtown organizations and independent businesses are not taking advantage of some very simple tools that will drive more locals and visitors into your area for no cost or a low cost.

Here are five steps that every marketing team should be doing right now:

1. Blog once a week and keep it short

Blogging often causes business owners and downtown directors to roll their eyes and walk away, but blogging today helps with search engine optimization (SEO), and it attracts free media attention. I’m sure all of you know that the media can give your community or small business lots of free publicity when they write about you, feature you on television, or talk about you on the radio.

www.thc.texas.gov

5. What is the best piece of advice you’ve ever received? “Make good use of today.”

6. What’s your favorite tip for someone in our economic development/downtown revitalization industry? Continually drive positive awareness of your city’s downtown. I’m always amazed when locals say, “I never realized that was there!” When we educate about our events, businesses, and attractions, we expose a wider portion of the community to the unique assets located in our urban core.

7. If you could plan a vacation to anywhere in the world, where would it be and why? Growing up in a “road trip family” I’m blessed to have been to all 50 states, so next up—everywhere else! Currently, I’m planning a trip to Reykjavik, Iceland with some friends in the spring.

8. Who has been the most influential person in your career? Honestly, a grumpy merchant when I was doing my internship. He never saw the value in all the work we did to make downtown wonderful, didn’t like when we closed the street, etc. Instead of letting it go I made it a point to pop in often, to smile and wave more, and to keep him in the loop. Finally, I got him to participate in an event and even show up to a few merchant meetings! I believe that everyone should be a diehard advocate for their downtown, and I think he really spurred that in me.

9. Who would you switch places with for a day? I’d like to swap places with someone through hiking the Appalachian Trail! It’s always been a dream of mine. One day I’ll find the 5 to 7 months to do it!

10. What’s your favorite inspirational quote? “Work hard and be nice to people.”

11. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? If I’m not at the dog park with my pup or on a weekend getaway, I’m probably planning something! I love to entertain—whether it’s a Pinterest-perfect themed party, simple game night, or a weekend out in the woods camping—you can find me organizing some kind of get-together with friends.

All blog posts should have a photo, with 100 to a maximum of 400 words. That’s it. The ideal blog post should not be about selling people; it should be about helpful information that everyone in your area can use. Your blog should be an information resource. Think of it like a written tour guide, not an advertisement.
2. Use Facebook Live, 1-3 times a week

A Facebook Live video, 60 seconds to two minutes long, is easy to create, but powerful enough that every downtown and downtown business should do them, one to three times a week. Remember that a Facebook Live video gets priority over other Facebook posts, so this should be at the top of your social media to-do list.

3. Schedule multiple events and post on Facebook

On your small business or downtown Facebook page, there’s a place to create and schedule Events. Most people think this means that they have to have a band or some type of big promotion going on to use this feature on Facebook. Not true! You can create multiple events in the same week, from featuring an expert lecture, a one-time tour, or even something so simple as a two-for-one ice cream cone discount. The reason you want a large number of Events listed on your Facebook page is that anyone who clicks on “Interested” or “Going” to any Event can be tracked and marketed to in the future for up to 180 days. This is often an untapped customer attraction tool. Your social media person should know how to do this, and if they don’t, well, you now know they should.

4. Get this book: Chase’s Calendar of Events

There’s a book called Chase’s Calendar of Events that every small business owner and downtown marketing person should own. It lists day by day, every famous person’s birthday and every event worth celebrating, no matter how obscure. Once you have the book, go through it and pick out celebrations that can add some fun to your downtown guests’ visits and these events will also bring you a wave of free publicity.

For example, did you know that this summer, in the month of July alone, I had businesses celebrating these obscure events:

- On Wednesday, July 11 it was Make Your Own Sundae Day
- On Sunday, July 15 it was National Ice Cream Day! Great fun for restaurants.
- Thursday, July 26 was Mick Jagger’s 75th Birthday: We had a business playing Rolling Stones music all day and anyone wearing Rolling Stones apparel got a discount on clothing.
- Friday, July 27, was Walk on Stilts Day

Buy the book and you’ll find over 4,600 birthdays and 2,250 celebrations and anniversaries listed.

5. Use Twitter to share your message with the media

I hope your small business and your downtown marketing people use Twitter. Remember that Twitter today is where breaking news happens. Reporters and journalists use Twitter to find ideas to put in their newspapers and magazines, on their television newscasts and in their radio shows. Make sure you follow those media people who write about businesses and active downtowns and when you post on Twitter, include their Twitter handle (their address), in your posts. Start feeding it to the media through Twitter.
The Uvalde Grand Opera House was built in 1891 and is the second-oldest opera house in Texas. Rich with history and legend, the building has seen a vice president, state governor, two dragons, and even a few ghosts.

Originally built by the Uvalde Real Estate and Building Company, the Opera House hosted balls and graduation ceremonies until the late 1800s, when they began to stage theatre and Vaudeville. The building passed through several hands until 1917 when F.A. Piper sold the building to John Nance Garner. Garner had his office in the cupola room of the building, where he could see the layout of the town and all its activities. Even when he served as the vice president of the United States, Garner maintained his office at the Uvalde Opera House. In 1979, the Garner estate sold the opera house to the City of Uvalde for $10. It still belongs to and is maintained by the city.

One of the most interesting features of the Uvalde Opera House is the dragon gargoyle that sits atop the cupola window. Although there now stands a bronze replica, the original can be found in the lobby of the building. Named the 'Drunken Dragon', this character has an intriguing backstory. Legend has it that in 1891, when the architect B.F. Trister finished designing the opera house, he went out to celebrate and after a few drinks, he began to scribble on his plans. The scribbles were interpreted as a dragon, and so he was created! After several decades of dedicated guardianship, he was brought down due to weather and bullet damage.

The Grand Opera House is a cornerstone of downtown and is Uvalde's second oldest building still standing. It

www.thc.texas.gov
turned 127 years old in August and sits at the corner of Uvalde’s main plaza area of four plazas, at the crossroads of the United States. The two longest highways in the United States, highways 90 and 83, intersect just a few yards away from its front doors. The opera house has been featured the last few months on several “ghost hunters” television shows. “I haven’t seen any ghosts myself,” said Uvalde Main Street Manager Susan Rios, “but to hear the locals talk, it isn’t uncommon to see or hear them. All reports state they are friendly watchful ghosts.”

Over the last two years, we have been working hard to revitalize the theater and bring it back to life both structurally and with our activities. Most recently, we presented Oscar Wilde’s classic “The Importance of Being Earnest.” This marks the third community production in two years and featured local talent. This Christmas, we are presenting Joe Landry’s “It’s a Wonderful Life: A live radio play.” We will be casting the play in early October and perform December 6-8. It is incredibly exciting to present the best of our talent to our region and to provide quality entertainment for our audiences. We are so blessed to have such an incredible building and to participate in part of Uvalde’s most treasured history.

Nurturing local art and performance is vital for downtown survival. Not only does it bring in audiences from afar, but it provides an opportunity for locals to invest in their own hometown. In order to grow, there must first be an interest from the people who will essentially be the builders. As the Uvalde Opera House, it is our mission to provide such an opportunity and to encourage a growth of culture and vibrancy in our downtown district.

ROAD TRIP! JOIN THE TEXAS FORTS TRAIL 50TH ANNIVERSARY CARAVAN OCTOBER 4-6, 2018

By Margaret Hoogstra, Executive Director, Texas Forts Trail Region

Remember those road trips where your friends got together, gassed up the car, and then hit the road? It wasn’t so much about the destination as it was the journey—right? The Texas Forts Trail is offering a three-day adventure combining a historic driving route with folklore, history, local cuisine, and trivia contests. Participants can join for a 20-mile leg of the trip, a half day, full day, or the entire journey. The caravan begins and ends in Abilene, Texas, and will be held Thursday, October 4 through the afternoon of Saturday, October 6.

Both the Texas Forts Trail and the caravan are based on an idea that’s now 50 years old. In 1968, San Antonio was hosting HemisFair, and Governor John Connally was at the forefront of establishing Texas as a travel destination. Under his direction, 10 “travel trails” were established throughout the state. These driving routes gave visitors the opportunity to explore the state and highlighted the unique aspects of Texas. A “caravan” concept was then used to promote these trails. Indeed, Governor and Mrs. Connally led an entourage of state and regional officials and drove the entire 650-plus mile Texas Forts Trail in two days’ time!

In 1998, under the leadership of Governor George W. Bush, the trails were the basis for a statewide heritage tourism program. The Texas Heritage Trails Program was developed by the Texas Historical Commission and began with the establishment of the Texas Forts Trail Region.

In honor of the trail’s 50th anniversary (and the Forts Trail Region’s 20th anniversary), a replication of that original 1968 “caravan” is in order!

MAIN STREET MARVELS

The Van Zandt County Abstract & Title Company in Canton has been undergoing renovations, and just recently the original painted sign from 1914 was discovered.

Texas Main Street Program TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
The caravan features stops at the eight historic forts and ruins of the largest Spanish fort built in Texas, the sites that anchor the region's recommended driving trail, and other points of interest along the trail. Travelers will enjoy local cuisine and there will be plenty of rest stops. Drive time will be occupied with trivia games and “I spy” activities designed to highlight the history of the area as well as sites of interest and local museums and attractions.

There is no charge for participating in the Texas Forts Trail Anniversary Caravan and registration is not required, although for planning purposes registration is certainly appreciated. Although everyone is responsible for their own lodging arrangements, special rates and room blocks have been secured.

Reservations are required to partake in the pre-planned lunches and dinners. Many of the places we will be traveling through and/or stopping are small, rural communities or sites with very limited dining options. We strongly suggest making plans to be part of the group meals in order to share the experience with your fellow travelers and to guarantee eating an authentic local meal.

There’s always that person who is either on a road trip, planning a road trip, talking to people who are on a road trip, or posting quotes about a road trip. Come on and be a part of this road trip—the Texas Forts Trail 50th Anniversary Caravan!

For additional information, contact the Texas Forts Trail at (325) 660-6774 or info@texasfortstrail.com. For additional caravan details or to register, go to texasfortstrailregion.com/50caravan.

(Top) Save the Dates Facebook Promotional Poster. (Middle) Originally known as the “Post on the Clear Fork of the Brazos,” Fort Phantom Hill was occupied by the U.S. Army from 1851 until 1854. After its abandonment, the post served as a station on the Butterfield Stage Line and as the first county seat for Jones County. This rustic site is now privately owned but open to the general public and is located just north of Abilene. (Bottom) Joe Gonzalez of San Antonio helps provide interpretation of the Presidio San Saba, located near present-day Menard. The Presidio was founded in 1757 by the Colonial Spanish Army and active until 1772.

(Cover) There's always that person who is either on a road trip, planning a road trip, talking to people who are on a road trip, or posting quotes about a road trip. Come on and be a part of this road trip—the Texas Forts Trail 50th Anniversary Caravan!
This will be the Texas Historical Commission's biggest and best conference yet with Main Street programming, workshops and tours, and 20+ sessions with 60+ speakers including:

- **GENE KRANZ**, legendary leader of the flight team that brought Apollo 13 safely home
- Noted museum expert **COLLEEN DILENSCHNEIDER**
- Bestselling author and speaker **NINA SIMON**
- Architect and urban planner **CURTIS DAVIS**
- Author and TV personality **BRENT HULL**

GET REGISTERED TODAY!

realplaces.us