



# Main Street Matters

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## SHOWSTOPPERS: HISTORIC THEATER RESTORATIONS ON TEXAS MAIN STREETS

*Article written by Rebekka Adams,  
Assistant State Coordinator, Texas Main  
Street Program*

Visiting Main Streets throughout Texas, one icon is prevalent in most downtowns—a historic theater. Some of these theaters are architectural masterpieces, while others fit into the streetscape as a modest storefront with a marquee. These theaters are important to our communities as they are places that spark our creativity, sanctuaries for art and cinema, and places for us to be collectively entertained and escape reality, even if only for but an hour. Unfortunately, many of these treasures have long since shuttered their doors due to economic hardships and changing technologies, leaving a hole in the hearts of our downtowns. Luckily, the value of historic theaters is now realized and many communities are fighting hard to save and restore these treasured buildings.

The economic benefits of restoring historic theaters to operating venues has been proven in case studies throughout the United States. Studies in other



The Palace Theater in Georgetown is an excellent example of a restored theater in the heart of Main Street. Restored in 2000, the project took 3.5 years and a million dollar budget.

states show the positive local economic impact of audience spending in arts related events. A 2005 study by the Seattle Arts and Cultural Affairs Office estimates that resident attendees spend on average \$21.27 per day in event-related purchases, while non-resident attendees spend an average of \$31.92 per day. Based on data from the Texas Office of the Governor, Economic Development and Tourism and studies commissioned by cities, nonprofit arts and culture industries generate \$2.46 billion in tourism spending. This

translates into 21,000 jobs with earnings in excess of \$700 million. In addition, the state and local governments received \$158.5 million in tax revenue from these visitors.

Though nostalgia runs deep in these places, it takes modern technology to make theaters economically feasible once again. This article explores a handful of theaters in Texas Main Street cities that are working hard to revitalize their downtowns by restoring their theaters. We then give you some resources to get started on working

with your community to help restore your historic theaters.

## Texas Theater, Kingsville

*Written by Cynthia Martin, Downtown Manager, Dept. of Tourism & Heritage, City of Kingsville*

A new page in the history of Kingsville's Texas Theater started in May of 2013, when a San Antonio businessman, Cal Collins, purchased the deteriorating downtown theater. Built in 1950 according to a design by prolific Dallas theater architect, Jack Corgan, the theater was, according to long-time resident Ben Figueroa, "the place to be in Kingsville in the 1950's and 1960's" on date night. Mr. Collins has been producing and directing musicals for 20 years and had always wanted a theater of his own. However, he had a larger vision—to provide the community with a new downtown attraction that could be used by the community for a variety of events—a vision shared by Kingsville Main Street.

Mr. Collins applied for and received a façade improvement grant for \$45,000 from the City of Kingsville in recognition of the importance of this project as a catalyst for further development in a downtown block that included



Texas Theater's interior and 1950 façade. Image courtesy Kingsville Main Street

a number of vacant buildings. Kingsville Main Street Manager, Cynthia Martin, provided technical assistance on design and material issues that came up during work in progress on the theater. She worked with the owner to facilitate the logistics of the project such as coordinating removal of demolition and construction debris; arranging with the City to have the street tree in front of the theater trimmed to make way for the restoration of the vertical "Texas" sign and the marquee; assisting with the choice and procurement of exterior paint for the façade; and documenting the project and keeping it in the public eye to stimulate interest in hope for development of nearby properties.

Owner Cal Collins, says the restoration will likely take two years as the theater hasn't been

properly used for about 30 years. But once done, he says "it will be a centerpiece for downtown."

## Fair Theatre, Plainview

*Written by Andrew Freeman, Assistant City Manager, City of Plainview*

Since being purchased in 1994 by the City of Plainview, and reopened in October 1999, the Fair Theatre has re-established itself in the cultural fabric of Plainview.

The Fair Theatre originally opened as a silent movie house in 1925. It has undergone many a transformation, from a popular movie house, to a vaudeville showcase, to an empty shuttered building, to the jewel in the crown of downtown Plainview.

In an effort to promote tourism and recapture a bit of



Kingsville's Texas Theater is currently under renovation. Before (left), During (center), and near completion (right), Image Courtesy Kingsville Main Street

historic grandeur reminiscent of downtown's glory days, the City of Plainview purchased the building in 1994 with hotel/motel taxes. Those tax funds, which are based on room receipts and taxable revenues of local lodging establishments, are restricted and can only be used to promote tourism and conventions.



Granada Theater before (left) and after (right), Image Courtesy Plainview Main Street

A \$250,000 restoration followed the purchase. Grants, fund-raisers, and donations helped to pay for stage curtains, lighting and sound systems, central heat and air, and other necessities. The restoration was made possible in large part thanks to free craftsman labor provided by prisoners from the local Wheeler Formby Unit.

Though the restoration took about 18 months, the glitter and glow of the theatre's present persona seems as if it has always been there. The theatre stands three stories tall and sports a split balcony. It seats 421 on the main floor and another 110 upstairs.

Plainview is fortunate to have another historic theater, The

Granada, which was [purchased in 2012](#), and restoration work has begun. It opened in 1929 and closed in 1997. The owner is continuing to work on it and has recently installed a [restored marquee](#) on the outside. They also removed the dividing wall, drop ceiling and framework inside that was installed in 1977, concealing the original stage. To date, a cost of \$66,000 has been spent on the restoration. The owner [held a concert](#) to help raise funds for the restoration. Original seating capacity for the theater was 1,400 before the chairs were removed in 1997. His goal is to return the theater to 1929 specifications.

### Lynn Theatre, Gonzales

*Written by Barbara Friedrich, Main Street Administrator, City of Gonzales*

The Lynn Theatre was originally built by Lynn Smith Sr. in 1947 and was in operation until the 1970's when it was sold to Commonwealth Theaters, who ultimately closed the theater in the 1980's due to an unfortunate crime which prevented parents from allowing their children to attend. The building was purchased in 1988, but remained closed until 2005.

In 2004, the building once again switched hands. The new owner purchased the dilapidated theater and worked hard to completely renovate the building, including installation of a new roof, plumbing, and electrical system. The balcony was closed off from the main space and a second screen was installed, so that two movies could be shown at the same time. The total investment was \$400,000, which was financed through a combination of private funds and loans from the Gonzales Economic Development Corporation, the Gonzales County Revolving Loan, the Gonzales Area Development Corporation, and Prosperity Bank. At the time, the most costly expense was asbestos abatement, which ran \$120,000



Fair Theater, 2011, Image Courtesy Plainview Main Street

and took the project over budget. Without this intervention and investment, the Lynn Theater probably would not be standing today.

The greatest challenge of this project was the cost to renovate the theater and get it operational again. The building sat vacant for about 30 years, during which time there was a lot of expressed interest in the building but the current property owner was unwilling to sell it.

In 2009, the Gonzales Economic Development Corporation took possession of the Lynn Theater and sold it. The new owner put about \$150,000 into the building turning it into a live theater venue and producing several live shows which brought some interesting traveling shows to Gonzales.

In 2012, the Gonzales Economic Board took control of the building back and leased it out with an option to buy to a family operated business that upgraded and digitized the theater. Although there was a lot of turnover in recent years, the theater is now a viable business and a valuable community asset. This process shows that it took the dedication of numerous people and investors, and public-private partnerships to bring life back to the Lynn Theater. Currently, the theater seats 400 people and first-run movies are shown Wednesday through Monday. The operator hosts a free movie on Confederate Square twice a year and runs \$1 movies on Friday nights during football season. After all this time without a theater, it took the citizens of

Gonzales to realize they did not have to go out of town for a dinner and a movie. With new restaurants in downtown, Gonzales now has a destination for locals' right in the heart of Main Street.

Find out about events and happenings on the [Lynn Theater Facebook page](#).

### **Barnhill Center at the Historic Simon Theater, Brenham, Texas**

*Written by Jennifer Eckermann, Main Street Manager, Brenham*

It has been more than a decade since Brenham Main Street Historical Preservation, Inc. (BMSHP)—a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity—was organized to preserve the architectural heritage of Downtown Brenham.

Soon after purchasing the Simon Theatre in 2003, a theatre consultant, whose company managed and operated renovated theatres across the country, was hired to help determine the best use for this historic property. Following Town Hall public meetings, with representatives from throughout the community, the board felt confident that a downtown conference center would contribute to the economic and cultural vitality of our community, and a Business Plan was developed.

Little did the board know at the time, that it would lose its leader,



Lynn Theater, 2011, Image Courtesy Gonzales Main Street program

Tom Bullock, Sr., much too soon, and that it would take as long as it has to complete the renovation of this historic property.

Initial fundraising led to work on the building's exterior, including repointing of the brick, and replication of the marquee and neon sign.

Next, a new roof was installed, and in 2010, the board made the decision to move forward with Phase I, which included the lobby and what were shown on the original plans as Retail 1 and 2. This phase was completed at the end of 2010, and the Convention and Visitors Bureau moved in, as was suggested in the Business Plan.

The original Master Plan Scope, designed by preservation architecture firm, ARCHITEXAS, included required ADA restrooms



Simon Theater, Brenham. Image Courtesy of [The Brenham House Blog](#).

in the back of the theatre, totally changing the look of the theatre.

Not satisfied with that solution, the board voted in 2012 to purchase the property next door to the Simon on Douglas Street for construction of restrooms and additional meeting space for the conference center.

Phase II of the project began earlier this year when work on the 2nd floor ballroom began. This phase includes adding the elevators needed, renovation of the original ballroom space, and adding second and third floor spaces to the three-story fly space above the theatre stage, and a catering kitchen and storage area.

For the past two years, the board has been working with a consultant on tax credits, as a way to help raise the majority of the funding still needed. Although there was a major setback last year when it was learned that the New

Market Tax Credit investor had backed out of this and similar projects across the country, the board now has investors for the Federal Historic Tax Credit, and the new State Historic Tax Credit.

It was the ability to take advantage of these tax credits, along with the more than \$5M that had been raised, that led the board, in March, to make the decision to move forward with Phase III—completing the renovation of the theatre, and the restrooms needed to complete the building's renovation. This allows BMSHP to receive a needed Certificate of Occupancy by the end of the year, as required by our federal tax credit investor.

Since the beginning, BMSHP has worked under the premise that this downtown landmark should be renovated to become a downtown conference center, drawing meetings and workshops to town on weekdays, and using the facility

on weekends for a variety of receptions and events, including film festivals and showings of classical, independent, and foreign films, concerts, and educational opportunities and programs. Even 10 years later, the Business Plan, written by the theatre consultant, is timely and relevant, with strategies, policies, and management tools that ensure both community service and financial sustainability.

The whole fund-raising process was long, and honestly, often torturous. There have been great highs, and there have been long periods of little progress, but the board was happy to recently announce that the renovation of the Simon Theatre will be complete in the spring of 2015.

[Click here](#) to read more about the history of the theater and the Save The Simon project.

Now that you have some inspiration as to what a theater restoration looks like, both physically and how it impacts the community, it is time to examine the use of historic theaters in your Main Street.

Note that although many people want to restore historic theaters because of their beauty and history, it is important to have a convincing plan of action as to how the restoration will benefit the community and be an economic engine. Research is your friend. Doing a full background investigation on the property and its previous uses will help you plan for its future. Developing a clear vision of your project goals and a plan of action for restoring

a theater will help you save time, money, and morale. In restoring a theater, one should visualize the final project, what it means for the community, how it will be programmed and managed, and then work backwards to achieve that result. The League of Historic American Theaters has a wealth of information on everything from the restoration process to programming insights. It's *Historic Theater Rescue, Restoration, Rehabilitation and Adaptive Reuse Manual* can be [found here](#). This manual has the most in-depth information about everything related to restoring a historic theater, including how the city fits into the picture, business structure, and financing options. Here are some additional resources for saving historic theaters:

### **Educational Resources**

#### **American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS)**

Organized in 1955, ATOS is an international society of over 5,000 members dedicated to the preservation the theatre pipe organ and its music. Its mission is to preserve, restore, maintain, and promote the theatre pipe organ. A few ATOS chapters own and operate historic theatres. [www.atos.org](http://www.atos.org)

#### **Cinema Treasures**

This ground-breaking website is devoted to movie theater preservation and awareness using the community-building capabilities of the Internet, Cinema Treasures unites movie theater owners and enthusiasts in a common cause—to save the last remaining movie palaces across

the country. <http://cinematreasures.org/>

#### **The League of Historic American Theaters (LHAT)**

The League of Historic American Theatres, a nonprofit membership association, is a professional network dedicated to sustaining America's historic theatres for the benefit of their communities and future generations. [www.lhat.org](http://www.lhat.org)

#### **Theatre Historical Society (THS)**

Founded in 1969, THS is the only organization in the nation which documents and preserves the architectural, cultural, and social history of American theatres. Its archives contain information on more than 14,000 theatres nationwide. [www.historictheatres.org](http://www.historictheatres.org)

### **Financial Resource**

#### **Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation**

The Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation makes grants available to historic theaters hoping to maintain their structures and make improvements. The program was started in honor of Johanna Favrot's 80th birthday and seeks to encourage the appreciation of historical sites throughout the country. Available to both public and nonprofit organizations, the fund offers grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000, though the amount awarded must be matched by the particular theater or location. [Click here for more information.](#)

## **NOW SHOWING: RESTORATION OF HISTORIC THEATER MARQUEES**

*Article written by Marie Oehlerking,  
Project Design Assistant, Texas Main Street  
Program*

Live theaters, opera houses, and movie palaces are the entertainment centers of many historic downtowns. Like the shows that played on the stage or screen, these buildings were constructed to put on a performance of their own through their luxurious interiors and ornate facades. Many theaters were designed to make people forget about their daily lives and envelope them in fantasy worlds. No element was spared from this song and dance including the building's signage and exterior advertisements.

The marquee was often the most important and distinctive feature of a theater. Its main function was to advertise upcoming shows and events. However, the marquee also created a visual landmark, extending from the façade, so that the building stood out physically and aesthetically from all others on the street and drew patrons inside.

Before the turn of the 20th century, live theaters and early movie theaters called nickelodeons advertised their shows with hand-painted signs or printed, paper posters pasted on the exterior of the building. Between 1910 and the late 1920s, marquees were dark, flat, delicately decorated sources of detailed



Components of a Theater Marquee – State Theater, Austin, Texas  
Source: [Flickr, Jims\\_Photos](#).

information. Only large theaters in big cities could afford to custom order electrical signs made out of channeled bulb letters. Changeable letter boards were introduced in 1916. This signage method was so practical that it survived changing times and is still used by many theaters today.

By the 1930s, marquees were transformed into what some have called “electric tiaras.” Many theaters introduced a vertical blade sign that announced the theater beneath. During the day, its height drew attention; at night the structure was enhanced with neon stripes and glowing balls of moving lights known as “flashers,” and “chasers.” The automobile gave rise to changes in the shape and size of the marquee as well to make the sign more readable from the street. What started as a small rectangle letter board transformed into a large

trapezoid that projected from the façade.

Electric and neon signs were used continuously through the 1940s and 50s only growing in size. In many theaters, the marquee became the façade, extending the full width and height of the structure.

### Marquees Today

Most theater marquees that still exist today in Texas Main Street cities are

the “electric tiaras” of the mid-20th century. These marquees are important landmarks and should be restored and maintained just like the buildings they are attached to. However, the restoration process can be daunting due to the size and unusual materials used to construct the signs. The diagram above explains the major components of a typical theater marquee and the materials used to make them.

**Blade**—projecting vertical sign typically made of metal shell coated in colored porcelain enamel or other durable coating.

**Chaser or Flasher Lights**—lighting along the profile of the blade typically made of neon tubes or colorful light bulbs

**Lettering**—neon tubes or colorful

light bulbs were often used to form the blade’s letters. Channel letters could also be used. The base of the letter’s shape is made of sheet metal that is covered with plastic on one side. Lights could be on the interior or exterior of the plastic.

**Marquee**—backlit plastic sheets with metal grid to hold letters. Lettering was also made of plastic and could be flat or three dimensional

### Restoration

Reviving a historic theater marquee requires a specialized craftsman, time, and money. *The National Park Service Preservation Brief Number 25* provides general guidance on the restoration process. The League of Historic American Theatres’ Rescue and Rehab Manual also gives advice on how to carry out and fund this type of project. See *The Preservation of Historic Signs*.

Several sign companies throughout the state specialize in historic theater marquees and/or neon signs. Before hiring a sign professional, several steps should be taken:

1. Do your research. Review the sources above, find examples of other good projects, and talk to the Main Street design staff first to fully prepare yourself.



Example Channel Letter Sign – The Kessler Theater, Dallas, Texas  
Source: [Flickr](#).

2. Review potential companies' project portfolios to determine what kind of work they have done in the past

3. Talk with the company's past clients and get their opinion on the company's capabilities

4. Discuss the process with the sign company and obtain a full understanding of how they will go about restoring the sign.

Several Texas Main Streets have undertaken a marquee restoration with brilliant results. The following case study from Amarillo highlights their process and funding campaign.

## CASE STUDY: RESTORATION PARAMOUNT THEATER, AMARILLO

*Article written by Beth Duke, Executive Director, Center City of Amarillo, a Texas Main Street Program*

**Question:** How do you resurrect a 33-and-a-half-foot historic neon sign?

**Answer:** One bulb at a time—even if the sign contains 847 light bulbs.

Throughout the history of downtown Amarillo, the Paramount Theater located at Ninth Avenue and Polk Street was a gateway to a thriving downtown entertainment and retail area. The Paramount Theater was just one of the pre-World War II theaters that drew crowds to downtown with sometimes lavish movie premieres and always-cool



Restored Paramount sign (left), painting the sign (top right), and moving the sign (bottom right). Source: Ralph Duke, photographer.

air conditioning. Noted theater architect W. Scott Dunne of Dallas designed the Paramount Theater, which was built by Charles S. Lambie in 1932.

The building's terra cotta-clad exterior remains one of the shining examples of what has been called "Pueblo Deco" architecture. This unique architectural style combines striking silhouettes of the Art Deco movement with a Southwestern flair.

The Paramount building has survived, but the Paramount Theater did not. In the 1970s, the theater closed. During the renovation to transform the space into modern offices, crews uncovered a backstage area complete with small dressing rooms and curtain riggings that dated back to the theater's vaudeville days. Evidence of the theater was

scattered and sold as downtown made way for the 1970s' version of progress.

The Paramount Theater sign found life in yet another trend—disco. Club owner Lowell Stapf installed the sign at his Paramount Club at Third Avenue and Osage Street. The Paramount Club, with its trademark two-story jukebox, was just another chapter in the saga of the sign.

Fast forward to 2006. Wes Reeves, president of the Amarillo Historical Preservation Foundation had a dream to bring the Paramount sign back to Polk Street. Reeves was also a corporate spokesman for Xcel Energy Co. and a board member for Center City of Amarillo, our Main Street organization. He recalled an old annual report from Xcel's predecessor company, Southwestern Public Service Company. The report

showcased nighttime photos of Polk Street, calling it one of the best lit downtowns in the country with enough neon to rival the Nevada cities of Reno or Las Vegas. Through a series of negotiations, Reeves and his historical foundation team persuaded Stapf to sell the sign to the foundation.

Then came the hard part: restoring the sign to its past glory. Reeves was no novice when it comes to saving history. He earned his experience through saving other significant structures including the downtown “Ritz” theater in his hometown of Wellington. In that project, Reeves worked with Wellborn Sign Co. of Amarillo. Wellborn’s work gained national recognition for the Wellington restoration. Now it was time to tackle the Paramount sign. Amazingly, the Paramount sign still worked when technicians electrified it on a test run in the Wellborn Sign Co. shop. But years of exposure to the Panhandle climate meant that every electrical connection needed to be rebuilt.

To pay for the almost \$80,000 project, the board of Center City of Amarillo gave the Amarillo Historical Preservation Foundation a lead gift of \$40,000. To raise the other half of the money, Center City and the foundation embarked on the “Buy A Bulb” campaign. The campaign encouraged people to buy a bulb for \$50. For the next few months, donations large and small came in as people voted with their money to save the

Paramount sign. The campaign worked for several reasons:

- Most people could afford to give \$50 to save a piece of history
- The sign represented a piece of historical architecture that almost everyone could enjoy
- The Paramount sign was an icon and a landmark
- The sign became a tangible example of Center City’s dedication to downtown revitalization and historic preservation

In all, the campaign raised about \$25,000 in four months. Center City wanted to light the sign in ceremonies at the annual Polk Street Block Party on Aug. 19, 2006. To meet that deadline, the foundation needed more money quickly. At the end of the campaign the Amarillo National Bank and the Sybil Harrington Trust each donated \$10,000 to make the Paramount sign dream come true. At 10 p.m. on Aug. 19, 2006, Amarillo Mayor Debra McCartt led a countdown for the 20,000 people at the Polk Street Block Party. The sign once again illuminated historic Polk Street—one bulb at a time.

When we restored the Paramount sign, we told our community that this might not be our biggest project, but it would be a catalyst. Looking back across eight years, the Paramount sign has become a symbol for downtown revitalization. Several businesses have added their own neon and lights, bringing new life to downtown.

## WHY DO A RETAIL GAP ANALYSIS

*Article written by Brian O’Connor, Community & Economic Development Specialist, Texas Main Street Program*

Every person is a consumer of retail products since we all buy food, clothing, and other everyday necessities. Sometimes our dollars stay within the local economy or they leave as we travel outside our borders in search of the best value, product, or service. If our purchases stay locally, the benefits associated with them stay locally. And as we are all aware, as those dollars re-circulate within the local economy they facilitate economic growth.

For years, Main Street managers have played an important role in educating local citizens specifically on issues of retail competitiveness. As a result, Main Street cities have often outperformed other cities through the retention of local retail dollars. Simply stated, a community’s economic health is a measure of its ability to capture local as well as area consumer dollars.

However, in order for a community to measure its economic health it must first understand how the local market captures the spending patterns of local and regional consumers. One such technique for identifying such retail surpluses or leakages is called a Retail Gap Analysis. The technique sometimes called “a gap analysis” or “a supply and demand analysis” is relatively linear and Main Street Economic Restructuring committees are

Table 1.0 Sample City Expenditures by Merchandise Category		
Standard Classification (SIC)	Industrial Category	Percentage of Income
52-59	Total Retail Expenditures	29.34%
52	Lumber, Bldg. Materials, Hardware	2.55%
53	General Merchandise	7.33%
54	Food Stores	6.41%
55	Auto, Accessories, Gasoline	1.41%
56	Apparel and Accessories	1.22%
57	Furniture, Home Furnishings & Equipment	2.38%
58	Eating and Drinking Places	4.37%
59	Miscellaneous Retail Stores	3.67%

Table 1: An example of sales by merchandise category.

capable of performing the analysis.

Essentially, the analysis estimates the number of shoppers coming to a community to purchase retail items. For example, if a city with a population of 1,000 is attracting 2,000 shoppers annually, the interpretation is that this community is not only attracting its own residents, but is also drawing in non-local customers. If that same city of 1,000 people was only attracting 500 shoppers, the implication would be that the city is not capturing the retail dollars of residents and that a significant amount of shopping outside the city is probably taking place.

Naturally, changing demographics, consumer trends, as well as other factors influence local consumption patterns and must be taken into consideration. For instance, older shoppers tend to have already acquired all the necessities in life and are in search of experiences rather than accumulating more goods. Therefore, their

spending patterns favor those of full service restaurants, travel, and personal indulgences over household appliances, furniture, and equipment.

A common misconception to avoid is that if a retail gap exists, then it must be directly filled. For example, residents in a west Texas community wanted a coffeehouse, and a retail analysis confirmed a significant gap in the market. Unfortunately, a feasibility study showed that the city's median household income was insufficient to support this type of business. Ultimately, the retail gap analysis proved meaningful because it encouraged a local bookstore to

remodel to provide fresh-brewed coffee and pastries.

In its most basic terms, a retail gap analysis measures the differences between actual and potential sales. It does not indicate why such gaps are occurring, whether the gaps are desirable or not, or even how to stop them. It is up to the community to decide whether the gaps are acceptable or not and how best to address its needs.

Determining the sales gap coefficient is the critical part of the analysis as it indicates (1.0) whether a city is capturing the expenditures of its residents. A number less than

Table 2. Gap Analysis Worksheet for Sample City		
	Description	Total
1	City population	1,000
2	County per capita income 2010	\$10,000
3	County per capita income current year 2014	\$14,000
4	Percentage change from line 2 to 3, add 1.0	1.40
5	City per capita income 2010	\$12,000
6	Line 4 x Line 5 (per capita income adjusted for time)	\$16,800
7	Line 6 x .2934 (Table 1.0) Total Retail Expenditures	\$4,929
8	Total expenditures by city residents (Line 7 x Line 1)	\$4,929,000
9	City sales tax collected	\$110,500
10	City Tax Rate	.03
11	Line 9 ÷ Line 10 (estimated taxable sales)	\$3,683,333
12	Line 11 ÷ Line 8 (retail sales gap coefficient)	.7473
13	Line 1 x Line 6 (disposal income by city residents)	\$16,800,000
14	Percentage for "eating and drinking places" (Table 1.0)	.0437
15	Line 13 x Line 14 (demand for service by city residents)	\$734,160
16	Sales tax collected by business in category	\$22,025
17	Line 16 ÷ Line 10 (amt. consumed by city residents)	\$734,166
18	Line 17 ÷ Line 15 (ratio of consumption to demand)	1.000

An example of a gap analysis worksheet showing where residents spend their money.

1.0 implies “leakage” and that resident are traveling outside the city for services. Whereas, a number greater than 1.0 implies “surplus” and that not only is the retail segment capturing resident expenditures but is also drawing consumers from outside the city.

In order to determine the sales gap coefficient for specific categories of expenditures, a city must have access to sales tax collections by merchandise category typically in the form of Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code (Table 1). Unfortunately, this type of data is not generally published and may have to be purchased through private vendors. However, check to see if your city may already compiled this information.

The following ‘Sample City’ scenario is taken from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census data sources and published case studies. Sample City is for instructional purposes only.

Notice that Sample City (Table 2) registers a sales gap coefficient Line 12 of (.7473) which suggests that residents are leaving the city to shop for “eating and drinking places.” Consumers typically will not drive as far for full service restaurants, as other merchandise, and the capture rate for “eating and drinking places” in Sample City could be much higher if local offerings

were improved. Let’s assume that Sample City registered a sales gap coefficient of .0437. Literally interpreted, Sample City is capturing only 57 cents of every \$1.00 in potential retail sales and facing a substantial leakage of retail dollars in this category. These numbers are important as the retail sector accounts for a significant portion of local jobs and personal income and are an important source of tax revenues that fund health, education, and public safety.

Follow the Gap Analysis Worksheet (Table 2), which outlines the process for calculating the retail gap coefficient. The coefficient indicates the degree to which a retail sector captures all local potential sales or loses some potential sales to out-of-county businesses.

Keep in mind that a retail gap analysis is only a starting point to stimulate further conversation. The analysis is only a means to facilitate plans and evaluate the progress of retail strategies over time. Do not be discouraged if the results of your analysis raise even more questions. The questioning and deliberation are all part of the journey and are a

worthy guidepost.

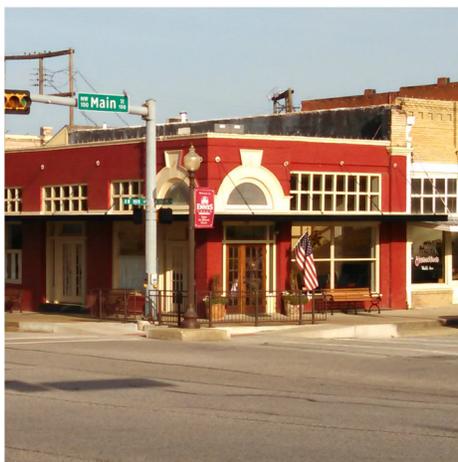
#### Public Information Sources:

1. Bureau of the Census.
2. [Texas Association of Counties](#)
3. [Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts](#)
4. United State Department of Labor

## ENNIS AND ROSENBERG NAMED 2015 TEXAS MAIN STREET CITIES

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) has designated Ennis and Rosenberg as 2015 official Texas Main Street cities. The announcement was made Wednesday, October 22 during the THC’s quarterly commission meeting in Austin.

“For more than 30 years, the Texas Main Street Program has successfully worked with communities on the revitalization of their historic downtowns and the economic impact local Main Street programs have had is remarkable. The Main Street process works in communities of all sizes throughout the



Downtown Ennis (left) and Rosenberg (right) have officially been named as 2015 Texas Main Street Cities.

nation and we are excited today to be adding Rosenberg and Ennis into our network,” said THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe.

Ennis, founded in 1872, was previously a designated Main Street community from 1984-1988, shortly after the state program was started in Texas. Ennis, population of 18,500, is about 30 miles southeast of Dallas. Historic downtown Ennis is a National Register Commercial Historic District and also has numerous individually listed properties and Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks. In 2013, a tornado ripped through the community damaging numerous buildings, including some in downtown.

Over the past five years, Rosenberg has made great strides in its revitalization process, including its 2013 designation as a Cultural Arts District by the Texas Commission on the Arts. The Main Street application is an extension of this desire to focus resources and attention on its historic downtown. Rosenberg is approximately 35 miles southwest of Houston and just about 25 miles from Sealy, a 2014 designated Main Street community.

The THC’s Texas Main Street Program is a revitalization program for historic downtown and neighborhood commercial districts and has been assisting communities for more than 30 years. Ennis and Rosenberg become the 88th and 89th currently designated participant

communities. In 1981, the THC’s Texas Main Street Program was started as one of the first state coordinating programs. Since that time, more than 170 Texas communities have been involved. Local Main Street programs receive a wide range of services and technical expertise from the state office in design and historic preservation, planning, economic development, organizational management, and training. The Texas program is affiliated with the National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Main Street model is based on a Four-Point® approach of organization, design, promotion, and economic restructuring, all within the context of historic preservation. The program stimulates private sector downtown reinvestment; and helps retain, expand, and recruit businesses, creating new jobs in Texas.

## MAIN STREET EVENTS

**November 1**

**Decatur**

**Decatur Swirl**

A fun evening of shopping by “swirling” round the square enjoying savory delights from local eateries paired with Texas wines. All proceeds benefit the Decatur Main Street Incentive Fund. 6–9 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

**November 8**

**Caldwell**

**Hunter’s Wife Weekend**

Dizzy Does will purchase event tickets that include an official Hunter’s Wife Dizzy Doe WineFest wine glass, wine charms, and a Hunter’s Wife recyclable shopping

bag filled with special discounts and goodies. By collecting all the wine charms, Dizzy Does will be eligible for a Mini Doe Makeover drawing that will be announced after the event on Saturday evening. 3–7 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

**November 8**

**Clifton**

**Clifton Swirl**

Featuring Texas wine, food, and shopping in historic downtown Clifton. [Click here for more information.](#)

**November 8**

**Gladewater**

**Holiday Open House**

Downtown merchants invite shoppers to browse the stores & enjoy delicious refreshments & hospitality that is found only in the heart of Gladewater. 5–9 p.m.

**November 8**

**Texarkana**

**A Night at the Museum**

Gala event featuring a silent auction, live music, great food and fun. [Click here for more information.](#)

**November 13**

**Elgin**

**Sip, Shop & Stroll**

In-store specials and live music. Downtown Elgin, 5–8 p.m.

**November 13**

**Levelland**

**Ladies Night Out**

Ladies are invited for a special night of shopping in downtown Levelland. Horse-drawn carriages, doormen at every store, drinks and h’orderves, Christmas lights and decorations, and Christmas

carolers to kick off the holiday shopping season.

### **November 13**

#### **Sealy**

#### **Rock'in the Rail on Main Street**

Networking, conversation, and live music. 113 Main Street, 5–7p.m.

[Click here for more information.](#)

### **November 14**

#### **San Marcos**

#### **Wine & Wassail Walk**

A progressive tour of retail businesses serving a variety of wines, homemade wassail, and paired hors d'oeuvres. Participants will receive a commemorative wine glass and enjoy live entertainment while strolling the downtown streets. [Click here for more information.](#)

### **November 14–15**

#### **Mt Vernon**

#### **Boots, Brew and Barbeque**

Street Dance, Barbeque competition, craft beer tasting, 5K run, 42 Tournament. [Click here for more information.](#)

### **November 15**

#### **Mt Vernon**

#### **Main Street Open House**

Open house showcasing new rehabilitated historic buildings in downtown Mt. Vernon. 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

### **November 22–23**

#### **Kingsville**

#### **3rd Annual Ranch Hand Festival**

The festival honors the city's rich cultural heritage as one of the mainstays of the Texas ranching industry and will feature food, wine, and tequila tasting, a beer garden, live music, cooking demonstrations, art, storytelling,

book signings by local authors, and more. [Click here for more information.](#)

### **November 29**

#### **Electra**

#### **Holiday of Lights Parade**

Annual downtown parade followed by photos with Santa. 6 p.m.

### **December 1**

#### **Lufkin**

#### **Main Street Lighted Christmas Parade**

Candy Land theme parade with over 100 entries. 6 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

### **December 1**

#### **Texarkana**

#### **Main Street Christmas Parade**

Theme is “Mad, Mad Victorian Christmas!” using all recycled items for floats. Live camels lead the parade, with over 100 lighted entries. And, of course, Santa makes his grand appearance at the end of the parade. Parade runs in downtown Texarkana on State Line Avenue and Broad Street. 7 p.m.

### **December 4**

#### **Bridgeport**

#### **Lights on Halsell, Christmas Parade**

Come and enjoy the Lights on Halsell, Christmas Parade. We will also have Main Street Merchants Window Decorating Contest, Wassail On Halsell, and the Snowflake Coupon Release. 6 p.m. [Click here for more information](#) or follow Main Street [on Facebook](#).

### **December 4**

#### **Graham**

#### **Christmas Stroll and Lighted Parade**

Gather around the square to

celebrate in the spirit of Christmas. This year's theme “T'was the Lights Before Christmas.” Stroll begins at 5 p.m.; parade 7 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

### **December 4**

#### **La Grange**

#### **Schmeckenfest**

La Grange's wassail tasting and Christmas extravaganza on the Fayette County Courthouse Square. There will be homemade treats, plenty of wassail and a special visit from Santa. 5–8 p.m.

### **December 4–6**

#### **Caldwell**

#### **Christmas on the Square**

Lots of activities including: outdoor ice skating, real snow, chili cook-off, gingerbread house contest, Christmas wreath contest, lighted Rudy 5K run, Christmas parade, storefront holiday decorating contest, arts and crafts and food concessions, Christmas pet fashion show, elf workshop and bike give-away, City of Caldwell holiday light contest, and food and toy drive. [Click here for more information.](#)

### **December 4–6**

#### **Cuero**

#### **Downtown Christmas Treasure Hunt**

Pick up a map at any participating store to begin your quest. If you find all the hidden treasures, you will be entered to win a fantastic basket full of gift certificates and presents! [Click here for more information.](#)

### **December 4–7**

#### **Gonzales**

#### **Winterfest 2014**

Lots of events and activities

including: parade, arts and crafts market, carolers, food vendors, ice skating, chili cook-off, fun run, children's activities, Santa, historic home tour, and more. [Click here for more information.](#)

## **December 5**

### **Amarillo**

#### **Electric Light Parade**

More than 65 lighted floats will travel a 10-block route on historic Polk Street before arriving at the Amarillo Civic Center where the Parks and Recreation Department will light the city's Christmas tree. 6 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

## **December 6**

### **Elgin**

#### **Holiday by the Tracks**

Photos with Santa, live entertainment, holiday specials, cookie contest, followed by a lighted Christmas parade at dusk and a live nativity.

## **December 6**

### **Ferris**

#### **Nineteenth Annual Christmas on the Square**

An exciting event filled with a parade, food, contests, entertainment, silent and live auctions, holiday craft vendors, hayride, Santa, live nativity, and evening showing of Polar Express! Noon–9 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

## **December 6**

### **Pilot Point**

#### **Christmas on the Square**

The oldest town in Denton County, Pilot Point Original Town was platted on Christmas Day, 1853. Join us for Christmas on the Square events including

Christmas music, pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus, carriage rides, petting zoo, and face painting. 6–8:30 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

## **December 6**

### **Rockwall**

#### **Hometown Christmas Celebration**

Celebrate the holiday season in Historic Downtown Rockwall! Annual Christmas parade, photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, arts and crafts, games train rides and more. Wrap up the day with the annual City of Rockwall tree lighting ceremony and nostalgic horse drawn carriage rides. 9 a.m.–10 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

## **December 6–13**

### **Waco**

#### **Waco Wonderland**

Eight days of food, fun, & cheer complete with skating rink, Ferris wheel, food trucks, and live entertainment. Monday–Friday 4–9 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m.–9 p.m., and Sunday noon–9 p.m. [Click here for more information](#) or [follow on Facebook.](#)

## **December 8**

### **Clarksville**

#### **Lighting of the Square, Christmas Parade and Chili & Stew Supper**

Lighting of the Square as Santa arrives on the fire truck in the parade. Annual Chili & Stew supper to follow at the Historical Presbyterian Church directly after the parade. Starts at 5 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

## **December 11–13**

### **Cuero**

#### **Christmas in Downtown**

Join historic downtown Cuero

as it gets transformed into a winter wonderland. Lots of activities including an ice skating rink, life-sized snow globe, Santa's Workshoppe, horse drawn carriage rides, an antique carousel, and special performances, but we're not 'letting go' of any secrets! Thursday 6–9 p.m., Friday 6–10 p.m., and Saturday noon–10 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

## **December 11**

### **Elgin**

#### **Sip, Shop & Stroll**

In-store specials and live music. Downtown Elgin from 5–8 p.m.

## **December 13**

### **Clifton**

#### **Second Saturday's Ugly Christmas Sweater Run Down Main**

Inaugural Ugly Sweater Run down Main! Sure to be an ugly good time. Merchants open late with specials and special activities. Come run then wrap up your Christmas Shopping. Run begins at 4 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

## **December 13**

### **Vernon**

#### **Christmas on the Western Trail Festival**

This festival features food and gift vendors, breakfast with Santa, chili supper, and lighted holiday parade at 6 p.m. Activities from 9 a.m.–9 p.m.

If you would like one of your Main Street downtown events posted here, email: [rebekka.adams@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:rebekka.adams@thc.state.tx.us) at least one month in advance.

# MAIN STREET GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

**The Levitt AMP Grant Awards** is an exciting new matching grant program made possible by Levitt Pavilions, a national nonprofit dedicated to strengthening the social fabric of America through the power of free, live music. Each grantee will receive up to \$25,000 in matching funds to present a minimum of 10 free outdoor concerts presented over 10 consecutive weeks during 2015-16. [Click here for more information.](#)

# MAIN STREET PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**November 4–7**

## **Granbury**

Texas Downtown Development & Revitalization Conference  
Co-sponsors: Texas Main Street Program/Texas Downtown Association. [Click here for more information.](#)

**March 30–April 2, 2015**

**Atlanta, GA**

## **National Main Streets Annual Conference**

[Click here for more information.](#)

**February 10–15, 2015**

## **Texas Main Street Professional Development**

Nacogdoches. More information coming soon.

## 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.tshaonline.org/handbook/online](http://www.tshaonline.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)

PreservationDirectory.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.state.tx.us](http://www.arts.state.tx.us)

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.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us)

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)

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)

Texas Historical Commission  
P.O. Box 12276  
Austin, TX 78711-2276  
512.463.6100  
fax 512.475.4872  
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