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FIFTEEN HISTORIC TEXAS COURTHOUSES RECEIVE \$20 MILLION IN PRESERVATION GRANTS

AUSTIN, Texas—The Texas Historical Commission (THC) announced grant recipients for Round X of the nationally recognized Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP) during its April 27 quarterly meeting in San Felipe. The THC awarded matching grants totaling \$19,713,303 to 15 counties to aid in preservation of their historic courthouses, including four grants to undertake full restorations.

Falls, Hunt, Marion, and Menard counties received major construction grant awards, each between \$1.2 and \$5.8 million, for full restoration projects.

Camp, Coleman, Goliad, Kimble, Limestone, Milam, and Orange counties received emergency grants, from \$60,012 to \$313,367 to address critical issues including structural failures of beams and exterior cladding, and water intrusion through windows and basements.

Callahan, Polk, and Van Zandt counties received planning grants to be applied toward the production of construction documents for a future grant application for a full restoration of their building.

Refugio County received a \$450,000 emergency planning grant following major damage from Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

The THCPP Round X grants were made possible through a \$20.2 million appropriation by the 85th Texas Legislature. The THC received applications from 17 counties requesting \$52.6 million for projects totaling \$95.4 million. The agency determined grant awards by assessing 21 criteria including the building's age, endangerment, historical designations, and the applicants' proposals and support for the project. Emergency grants were based primarily upon the score assigned to the endangerment category.

"The goal of the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program is to positively impact as many communities as possible by revitalizing historic downtowns, bolstering pride through the restoration of a treasured landmark, and creating a safer, more functional building to serve its citizens," said THC Architecture Division Director Sharon Fleming, AIA. There are still 35 applicants awaiting full restoration funding after receiving planning and emergency grants and another 39 program participants that have not yet received any funding at all, with a total outstanding need of just over \$400 million.

Approaching its 20-year anniversary, the program has attracted more than 134 participants and awarded more than \$290 million to counties to fund the full restorations of 70 courthouses and provide smaller grants to assist with emergency and planning projects. In addition to providing safe and functional buildings, restoration of historic courthouses benefits the state and local economies. Courthouse preservation projects have created more than 10,650 jobs in Texas and generated more than \$555 million in revenue. Restored courthouses reinvigorate historic downtowns and promote heritage tourism, a \$7.3 billion industry in Texas.

"By revitalizing Texas' historic county courthouses, we help make a significant economic impact on communities," said THC Chairman John Nau, III. "These precious historic resources provide essential state services and operate as centerpieces of county history, culture and tourism."

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Texas has the most historic courthouses (more than 240) in the U.S., which were deemed national treasures by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and collectively included twice on the Trust's Most Endangered Places list. The THCPP has earned national and international attention with the awards from the Association for Preservation Technology International, the Texas Society of Architects, and the Society of Architectural Historians. In 2008, the program was recognized with a Presidential Award from the White House.

"The historic county courthouses of Texas are renowned for good reason," said THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe. "We remain committed to restoring every historic courthouse, maximizing the significant economic and community benefits these iconic buildings provide."

For more information about the THCPP, visit www.thc.texas.gov/thcpp or contact the THC's Architecture Division at 512-463-6094.

www.thc.texas.gov