



Main Street Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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Spotlight on Palestine

Population 17,598

Palestine is a beautiful, historic town located almost midway between Dallas and Houston. It has a unique history in that it was formed in 1846, the year after Texas statehood. It was a sleepy little antebellum town until 1872 when the International & Great Northern Railroad arrived. Many of the residents of the town did not want



Spring Street circa 1874

the noisy, dirty, smoking industry in their quiet agrarian community, but the inevitable happened. In order to keep the noise of the railroad away from the town square and the surrounding neighborhoods, the railroad located about a mile southeast of the

square. The railroad laid out commercial, residential and the industrial sections where the shops and depot were built, resulting in the locals calling the original part of town “Old Town.”

The area around the railroad became known as “New Town” and that is still how locals refer to it to this day.

Palestine’s downtown, like most small Main Street cities, was the center of the city’s commercial and retail activity. In the 1950s through the 1980s, many buildings were “slip covered”, then moved out to the loop (once it was built) leaving many of the once grand historic buildings vacant, deteriorating and eventually some were torn down.

Palestine was a Texas Main street City from 1986–91 and reapplied in 2006, and was designated a Provisional Main Street City in 2007 and recertified as a 2008 Official Texas Main Street City. Since January



International and Great Northern Railroad Construction, circa 1872

2007, the city has become aware of the amazing quantity and quality of its historic resources. The City Council and Palestine Economic Development Corporation is a 4B sales tax city and established a Façade Improvement Program Grant about the time the city was designated as a Provisional Main Street City. The grant was a matching grant that could be used for exterior improvements only including roof repair or replacement. The program was slow to start, but eventually there were two grants awarded in December 2007, one to the flagship of New Town, The Gregg-Link Building, a three-story Romanesque Revival Building built circa 1900.

In January 2008, there was a lot of



Downtown Palestine, c1878



100 Block of Spring Street c1970

interest in Main Street and about 10 or 12 buildings were planning rehabs with or without an incentive program, but many were late in getting their applications in before the deadline. This started a flurry of interest of building owners in both Old Town and New Town in rehabilitating their buildings. The Palestine City Manager and PEDC announced another grant round for May 2008. In June, grants were awarded for six more projects in both New Town and Old Town, making a total of 27 building rehabs underway in Main Street Palestine. Many of the buildings have existing businesses and several will house new businesses or commercial interests that are coming back to downtown. We look forward to these and more rehabs completed in the coming months. Palestine will once again have a thriving historic business center thanks to the Texas Main Street Program.

Thanks to Neely Plumb, manager of the Palestine Main Street Program, for providing this article.

NEWS

Texas Rising Focuses on the Economics of Tourism
As your strategic partner for local government management, the Texas Comptroller's office is focusing on the economics of tourism with steps for becoming a must-see

destination in its recent edition of *Texas Rising*. Included are tips on how to promote your town's varied attractions and partner with state agencies and

other organizations to maximize the return on your marketing dollars, and celebrate your community's unique tourism offerings. See www.texasahead.org/texasrising/tr0806/

Texas Ahead Web Portal for Economic Resources
The Texas Comptroller's Office offers *Texas Ahead*, a one-stop web portal to economic resources for growing and governing Texas.

The web site www.TexasAhead.org provides targeted resources for businesses, local governments and economic development professionals, giving vital information needed when making decisions about doing business in Texas or planning for economic growth.

Texas Ahead offers a wide array of economic data and analysis including:

- Detailed explanations of tools available to assist local governments in their economic development and governing efforts; and,
- Pverviews of the local economies in Texas' various regions and the challenges and opportunities they face.

Texas Ahead also features a link to Texas EDGE, the Comptroller's popular online tool for creating or requesting customized, tightly focused reports to guide economic development decisions. Texas EDGE users can get up-to-date information on the population, demographics, education, taxes and other economic factors in various geographic areas of Texas.

Cell Phone Mural Tour in Downtown San Angelo
Did you know that one of the first San Angelo stagecoach drivers was a woman (and no one knew it until she passed away)? And, were you aware that a street car and a Model T collided on the 200 block of South Chadbourne? At the touch of the keypad on your cell phone, you will hear all about these accounts and much more. By calling 325/201-9037 provided at each of the mural sites or on the audio

tour guide card (pictured), you will gain access to a description of the rich and colorful history behind each of the historic murals located in downtown San Angelo.



San Angelo free cell phone audio tour guide of downtown murals.

AROUND THE STATE
Brenham's first Hot Nights, Cool Tunes concert of the summer on

June 28 had record crowds of 4,000–4,500 (previous years crowds were between 1,500–2,000). A classic car group brought around 60 classic cars to the event, the T-shirt booth sold \$1,000 in merchandise and the food booth sold out of food by the end of the night.

Farmersville celebrated its 9th annual Audie Murphy Day with more than 130 local veterans. Sponsorships more than covered the costs of the event and approximately 422 volunteer hours were logged for the event.

On July 4, the city of **Grapevine** dedicated the Nation's first monument (and plaza) to the flight crews of the planes involved in the 9/11 tragedy:
www.grapevintexasusa.com/FestivalsAndEvents/4thofJulyEvents/tabid/227/Default.aspx

Kilgore had its first farmers market downtown in over 20 years this summer and are now attracting between 200-500 people every weekend.

EVENTS

Please remember if you want one of your Main Street events posted here to send an email to jill.robinson@thc.state.tx.us at least a few weeks ahead of the issue in which you want the posting.

Aug. 6 and Sept. 3, McKinney
McKinney's Art History Brown Bag Series heightens appreciation of art and provides insight into the mind of the artist. Begins at 12:30 p.m. Heard-Craig House, 205 W. Hunt, downtown. See www.heardcraig.org.

Aug. 14–Sept. 7, Kerrville
Downtown Retrospective is a collection of photographs depicting the historical downtown area of Kerrville

at the Kerr Arts and Cultural Center, 228 Earl Garrett. For more information, email siderby@kackerrville.com

August 16, Amarillo

Come to the Polk Street Block Party — the city's biggest block party offers four stages with 25 live bands. More than 15,000 people are expected to enjoy the celebration. Call 806/372-6744 or see www.centercity.org

August 29–31, Freeport

Cool blues to end a hot summer at the Summertime Blues Festival! This family-oriented event features live music, biker games, biker run, triathlon, kids area, stunt shows, great food, vendors, artwork, fireworks and more. Come enjoy Freeport's small-town hospitality. Call 979/233-3526 or visit <http://freeportmainstreet.com/summertimeblues.aspx>.

GRANTS

Keep Texas Beautiful/ HEB Recycling Grants

HEB grocery store and Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB) are proud to introduce the 2008 HEB / Keep Texas Beautiful Recycling Grants, which will provide a minimum of \$20,000 semi-annually in grant funding for recycling programs. Grants will support KTB affiliates' efforts to implement new or enhance existing local,



voluntary recycling activities in HEB service areas, with funding ranging from \$150 to \$3,000.

The Green Bag Grants are being established through funds raised from the sale of reusable green bags at any H-E-B (available for \$0.99 each plus tax), with \$0.05 from each bag sale being contributed to the grant program. The grant recipients will be announced on Texas Recycles Day Nov. 15. For more information, see www.ktb.org/hebreyclinggrant.htm

GO TEXAN Grants

Note: for both of the following grants, you must be a GO TEXAN member to apply. Certified membership is open to non-metropolitan counties or cities located in rural Texas. Counties and cities eligible to apply for the GO TEXAN Rural Community Program must be located in a non-metropolitan area or a city with a population under 20,000.

Hometown STARS Grant Program

The Hometown STARS (Supporting Tourism and Rural Success) matching fund reimbursement program through the Texas Department of Agriculture is designed to help rural communities leverage the dollars they have available to promote tourism events, in turn boosting local economies and attracting new jobs and dollars. The program will reimburse GO TEXAN Rural Community Program certified members for half of approved promotional costs up to \$10,000. Hometown STARS is a matching fund program for communities with experience managing their tourism programs and a budget that will accommodate the matching dollars required. See

www.texasyes.org/ty/channel/render/items/0.1186.827_846_0_833.00.html.

Bootstrap Bucks Grant Program

The Bootstrap Bucks reimbursable funding program through the Texas Department of Agriculture is designed to help rural communities promote tourism events. Approved GO TEXAN Rural Community Program certified members can use up to \$2,500 in reimbursable funds for one of four eligible promotional items: banners, posters, newspaper advertisements and radio/television spots. Bootstrap Bucks is a reimbursable funding program for communities just beginning their tourism programs or communities adding new elements to their programs, and it has no matching fund requirement. See www.texasyes.org/ty/channel/render/items/0,1186,827_2608_0_833,00.html

CONFERENCES/ WORKSHOPS

Texas Economic Development Council (TEDC)
Events

TEDC will hold the following upcoming events:

- **Sept. 29–Oct. 1**, Annual Conference, Austin
- **Sept. 29–Oct. 2**, Basic Economic Development Course, Austin
- **Oct. 24**, Economic Development Sales Tax Workshop, Fort Worth
- **Dec. 12**, Economic Development Sales Tax Workshop, Fort Worth

For more information on these workshops, see www.texasedc.org.

Hospitality Accommodations of Texas (HAT) Annual Convention

HAT will hold their 25th annual convention **Aug. 24–26** in Round Rock. Workshops will include strate-

gies to recruit various meeting or luncheon business, how fill your mid-week vacancies, hotel occupancy tax, getting started in the B&B business, and more. See www.hat.org for more information.

Texas Leadership Institute Workshops

The Texas Leadership Institute (TLI), a nonprofit educational consortium, was formed to enhance the ability of the small to medium size communities in Texas to plan for sustainable economic activity by building a team of trained leaders. TLI will be offering the following workshops through September:

- **Aug. 14**, Strategic Planning for Cities, Counties and Organizations. Bastrop
- **Aug. 27**, Business Recruitment, Retention and Expansion. Bastrop
- **Sept. 11**, GIS, What Is It and How Can It Benefit Your Community? Bastrop
- **Sept. 17–18**, Basic Grant Writing. Bastrop
- **Sept. 25**, Public Finance for Cities, Counties and Special Districts. Bastrop
- **Oct. 15**, The Role of city and County Officials in Community and Economic Development. Buchanan Dam.
- **Oct. 23**, Retail Strategies for a Balanced Approach. Bastrop
- **Oct. 30**, Tourism Public Relations and Communications. Bastrop
- **Nov. 19**, Developing a Historic Preservation Program. Bastrop

For more information on TLI or to view agendas for these workshops, see www.texasleadership.org.

Texas Travel Industry Association (TTIA) Annual Travel Summit

TTIA, the statewide umbrella organization for the Texas travel and tourism industry and the leading advocate for Texas tourism will hold their annual travel summit **Sept. 21–24** in Galveston at the Galveston Island Convention Center. For more information, see www.ttia.org.

TTIA Tourism Workshops

TTIA will be conducting a great series of workshops designed to help Texas communities foster the development and growth of tourism.

The Saddle Up! Rein in the Power of Tourism for Your Community workshops will be conducted in select cities throughout the state between August and November. The presenting sponsor for the workshop series will be the Texas Department of Agriculture's GO TEXAN program, which promotes the products, culture and communities of Texas.

Currently confirmed workshop locations and dates are as follows:

- **August 14**, Kingsville
- **September 4**, Odessa
- **October 8**, Tyler
- **October 15**, Plainview
- **October 22**, Marble Falls

For more information regarding the workshops, contact David Teel with the Texas Travel Industry Association at 512/476-4472 or see www.ttia.org/regional/index.html.

National Preservation Conference

The 2008 National Preservation Conference will be in downtown Tulsa, Oklahoma. This conference provides innovative ideas, education and inspiration to preserve and revitalize America's historic treasures. Conference dates are **Oct. 21–25**. See www.nthpconference.org.

In order to increase the diversity of participants at the National Preservation Conference, there is a **Diversity Scholarship Program** available. For scholarship information, see:

[www.preservationnation.org/resources/training/npc/information/npc-](http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/training/npc/information/npc-scholarships.html)

[scholarships.html](http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/training/npc/information/npc-scholarships.html). The deadline for applications is May 31, 2008. If you have any questions, please contact Diversity Director Free Harris at 202/588-6027 or

free_harris@nthp.org

2008 Calendar of Events

- **July 29–31, Sonora**

The Texas Main Street Summer Workshop will be held in Sonora.

- **November 11–14, Temple/Belton/Salado**

Texas Downtown Association/Texas Main Street annual conference. The 2008 theme is: Howdy, Partner! Creating Partnerships for Downtown.

Web Sites of Interest

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: www.achp.gov
African American Heritage Preservation Foundation: www.aahpf.org
(The) Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation: www.ahlp.org
(The) Alliance for National Heritage Areas: www.cofc.edu/~heritage
American Institute of Architects: www.aiaonline.com
American Planning Association: www.planning.org
American Society of Landscape Architects: www.asla.org
(The) Cultural Landscape Foundation: www.tclf.org
Handbook of Texas Online: www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online
Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies: www.icls.harvard.edu
Keep Texas Beautiful: www.ktb.org
League of Historic American Theaters: www.lhat.org
Livable Communities Task Force:
www.blumenauer.house.gov/issues/CaucusSummary.aspx?NewsID=1077&IssueID=11
National Main Street Center: www.mainstreet.org
National Park Service: www.nps.gov
National Trust for Historic Preservation: www.nthp.org
Office of Rural Community Affairs: www.orca.state.tx.us
Preservation Easement Trust: www.preservationeasement.org/home
Preservation Directory: www.preservationdirectory.com
Preservation Texas: www.preservationtexas.org
Project for Public Spaces: www.pps.org
Rails to Trails: www.railstotrails.org
Sacred Places: www.sacredplaces.org
Scenic America: www.scenic.org
Texas Commission on the Arts: www.arts.state.tx.us
Texas Downtown Association: www.texasdowntown.org
Texas Folklife Resources: www.texasfolklife.org
Texas Historical Commission: www.thc.state.tx.us
Texas Parks and Wildlife: www.tpwd.state.tx.us
Texas Rural Leadership Program: www.trlp.org
Texas State Preservation Board: www.tspb.state.tx.us
Urban Land Institute: www.uli.org

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**TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

www.thc.state.tx.us