



Main Street Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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Spotlight on Sonora

“Formerly a gunslingers’ haven, Sonora now draws tamer travelers in search of starry nights, cool caves and a rocking chair with a view,” stated Sheryl Smith-Rodgers in



Sutton County Courthouse (top) and historic downtown Sonora (bottom).

Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine. The Friends of Historic Sonora Main Street are proud to welcome the annual Summer Workshop for the Texas Main Street Managers and their families July 28–31.

Historic Sonora, the county seat of Sutton County, is located 90 miles from the Mexico border at Del Rio, and 65 miles south of San Angelo. It was founded by rancher Charles G. Adams, who settled on four sections of grassy but dry land in 1885 and named the site after a family servant from Sonora, Mexico. Two years later, he drilled a water well and offered free lots. His abundantly flowing well, located on a proposed courthouse square, attracted a large enough population for Sonora to become the county seat of Sutton County in 1890. A historical marker marks the original well’s site. The Sutton County Courthouse, designed by architect Oscar Ruffini and built in 1891, was recently renovated as part of the Texas Historical Commission’s Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program.

Main Street managers attending the Texas Main Street Summer Workshop will be treated to sessions in the restored upstairs courtroom as well as a courthouse tour, which will feature the gold-stenciled border (uncovered during restoration) lining the rooms and halls, the beautiful wooden benches and railings, the decorative iron work adorning the



Welcome to Sonora!

roof and the local stories that make them all come live.

Managers will learn how heritage tourism and nature tourism go hand in hand. They will experience the Eaton Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, historic downtown, the beautiful Caverns of Sonora, Fort McKavett State Historic Site, and a luxurious ranch tour with African animals.

Managers and their families will taste the local cuisine and experience the down home feel of small town entertainment. Sonora, population 3,000,



Entrance to Eaton Hill Wildlife Sanctuary just off of the downtown historic square.

has had only one empty building in the historic downtown in the last two years and is proud to have had more than \$6 million in public and private funds invested in the economic development of downtown.

Main Street managers will be treated to a wonderful, small, historic West Texas town, true West Texas hospitality and that bigger than life nighttime sky filled with millions of twinkling bright stars.

P.S. Sonora invites Main Street managers to come back the following week to attend the Sutton County Days and Pro Rodeo August 8–9 sponsored by the Rodeo Association, Friends of Historic Sonora Main Street and the Chamber of Commerce.

Thanks to Mary Ann Kay, manager of the Sonora Main Street Program, for providing this article.

NEWS

Green Buildings or Sustainable Development?

With an increasing public awareness and concern for such environmental issues as global warming and fossil

fuel depletion, there is a worldwide push for sustainable development. Downtown managers, building owners and advocates are struggling to learn what green buildings are, how to get LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified, and the role of downtown in an effective overall strategy.

One way of describing the job of a downtown organization is to make the center of the city the place that allows the community to be viable, livable and equitable. Downtown is already the primary contributor to sustainable development in nearly every community. To read more of this article about how downtowns contribute to sustainable development, see “Green Buildings or Sustainable Development” by Donovan Rypkema in the *Downtown Idea Exchange* newsletter at www.downtowndevelopment.com/perspectives.php (click on Green Buildings or Sustainable Development)

GO TEXAN Rural Community Program

The GO TEXAN Rural Community Program began in a slightly different form in October 2003 under the name Texas Yes!, an initiative launched by the Texas Department of Agriculture designed to promote the growth and prosperity of every rural Texas town, city and county. Membership is free and open to rural communities, rural businesses and other organizations devoted to the success of rural Texas.

Certified members can apply for the Hometown STARS (Supporting Tourism and Rural Success) or Bootstrap Bucks grant funding programs designed to help promote tourism events or festivals throughout the state of Texas (see the Grants section of this newsletter for these opportunities). Learn the secrets of

success for growing tourism in your rural community through workshops.

Visit the GO TEXAN Web site www.gotexan.org and play in Texas' backyard and learn more about the distinctive flavor of rural Texas. 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.

AROUND THE STATE

U.S. Representative Ralph Hall attended five downtown **Greenville** ribbon cuttings on May 31 to kick off the My Downtown's Back festival. Rep. Hall presented the five new businesses with a flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol.

AlleyFest celebrated its 30th year June 6–8 in downtown **Longview** complete with alley art and an alley run with more than 300 runners. There was great music and a fun Kids Fest and delicious chili cook-off.

EVENTS

Many Main Street cities have some great 4th of July events planned. Included here is a sampling of some of these festivities:

July 3, Elgin

Chalk It Up: Children's Sidewalk Art Contest will take place at Veterans' Memorial Park. The Elgin Parks and Recreation Department sponsors this free children's sidewalk art contest each July. The program is co-sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association. The theme is “Celebrating Freedom in the USA.” Prizes will be awarded to winners in

the following age groups: (6–8 yr. olds) and (9–12 yr. olds). For more information, see the Parks and Recreation web site at www.elginpard.com.

July 3–4, Waxahachie

Designated as the Crape Myrtle Capital of Texas, Waxahachie offers some of the best crape myrtles in the state. Citizens celebrate freedom each year with the spectacular fireworks display and tailgate party on the night of July 3 followed by a hometown crape myrtle parade and festival on July 4 on Main Street. For more information, see www.waxahachiechamber.com.

July 4, Cotulla

Main Street Cotulla's July Jamboree will include an ice cream freeze-off, a watermelon-eating contest, a seed-spitting contest, a washer pitching tournament and more all concluding with a grand fireworks display at 9:30 p.m. Email cotullamainstreet@yahoo.com or call 830/879-4166 for more details.

July 4, Elgin

Push, Pedal, Pull and Pets is the theme of the annual patriotic fourth of this July parade and celebration. Everyone is invited to walk down historic Main Street from city hall to the Veterans' Memorial Park for a celebration of our nations' freedom. All non-motorized entries are accepted. Food and fun follow the parade with a short program and a Soap Box Derby exhibition by the local cub scouts. Call 512/281-2477 or see www.elginpard.com.

July 4–5, McKinney

This two-day festival will feature non-stop activities for the entire family. This hometown event will kick off Friday morning with a hometown parade, Veterans Salute, antique car show and sidewalk sale for patrons to enjoy while experiencing the unique



atmosphere the town square has to offer. At 4:30 p.m., residents and visitors from around the metroplex and beyond will join us at the soccer complex at Craig Ranch for an evening of chart-topping music, food, fun and activities. The evening will start out with a bang with country musician Josh Gracin. *Gracin's debut album has produced three consecutive Top 5 country radio singles.* There will be a few surprises along the way, followed by an unforgettable fireworks celebration, lighting the night at dusk.

On Saturday, July 5, the fun returns to historic downtown for an afternoon of ice cream sampling during the 13th Annual Killis Melton Ice Cream Crank Off. Get out your ice cream bucket and sign up to compete. The flavors and competition have gotten fierce and exotic — even jalapeno flavored. People come from all over to enjoy sampling homemade ice cream in the widest variety of flavors you will ever find!

More than 107 shops in historic downtown will showcase their treasures during the second day of our annual sidewalk sale. For more information on all of these events, see www.downtownmckinney.com.

July 26, Pecos

Night in Old Pecos and Cantaloupe Festival will be held from 6 p.m. until midnight. Streets are blocked off in downtown with a variety of vendors and live music. Call 432/445-2406 for more information.

Texas Main Street Summer Workshop in Sonora! July 29–31

For new managers who have not yet attended any training, **Interim Training** will be held on **July 28** in Sonora beginning at 1:30 p.m.

A **Texas Capital Fund application workshop** will be held from 8:30 a.m.-noon on **July 29** in Sonora.

The **Summer Workshop** will begin on **July 29** at 1:30 p.m.

Hotel reservations can be made at either hotel:

Comfort Inn of Sonora

311 Hwy 277 North
Phone 325/387-5800 or 800/424-6423

Rate: \$74

Refer to: Texas Main Street

Deadline: July 25

Best Western of Sonora

270 Hwy 277
Phone 325/387- 9111 or 877/937-9111

Rate: \$85.49

Refer to: Texas Main Street

Deadline: July 25

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 Festivals and Events Association (TFEA) Annual Conference

TFEA is a non-profit trade association for festival and event professionals and the companies that provide goods and services to festivals and events. This year's annual conference will be held **July 18–20** at the Renaissance Greenway Plaza Hotel in Houston. For more information, call TFEA Executive Director Penny Reeh at 830/997-0741 or email pennyreeh@kfc.com.

Texas Economic Development Council (TEDC) Events

TEDC will hold the following upcoming events:

- **July 23-25**, Summer Meeting, Galveston
- **July 23**, Economic Development Sales Tax Workshop, Galveston
- **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.

Texas Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (TACVB) Annual Convention

Texas convention and visitor bureaus identify and promote cultural diversity, rich history, hidden treasures, and off-the-beaten-path places of interest across the state along with all

the well-known icons that say "Texas" to anyone anywhere. The TACVB 2008 annual conference will be held **Aug. 5–8** in Beaumont at the MCM Elegante Hotel and Conference Center. For more information, see www.tacvb.org.

Hospitality Accommodations of Texas (HAT) Annual Convention

HAT will hold their 25th annual convention **Aug. 24–26** in Round Rock. Workshops will include strategies to recruit various meeting or luncheon business, how fill your midweek 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 non-profit 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. The web page for the scholarship information is:

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 will be: 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

Texas Main Street Program
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**TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

www.thc.state.tx.us