



Main Street Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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Spotlight on... Decatur

The city of Decatur is located at the intersection of Highways 380 and 287, just 40 miles northwest of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex providing a mix of the best qualities of small life with easy access to metropolitan amenities.

Decatur is the county seat of Wise County, which celebrated its sesquicentennial birthday (150 years) in 2006. Festivities included a week-long celebration highlighting every town in the county including the neighboring Main Street community of Bridgeport. The county-wide festivities included a pioneer festival in



Antique car show around the courthouse square.

Paradise, a sesquicentennial queens contest at the Bridgeport stage, a chili cook-off in Alvord, fireworks in Runaway Bay, a fish fry and festival in Greenwood and an old fashioned gospel singing in Slidell. The week culminated in a sesquicentennial parade and festival around the base of the Wise County Courthouse in historic downtown Decatur at the end of the week.

Designated an official Texas Main Street city in 1994, Decatur has seen more than 40 rehabilitation projects ranging from simple slipcover removal to complete restoration in its nine square block district. New programs and events have brought old and new friends downtown again. Cruise Nights on the Courthouse Square is held each month, May through October, on the first Saturday and brings classic, antique and custom cars to the square for a one of a kind car show. Thursday Night Flicks is a summertime phenomenon that brings people to the square to watch movies. It is held every other Thursday night beginning in June and ending the second week of August. The last movie night brings the Decatur High School football team to the square for a mini-pep rally to kick off the football season by watching last year's highlights video and an inspiring football movie. (I know I don't have to explain to any of my fellow Texans how important football season is...) The Chisholm Trail Days, Western



Wise County Courthouse, Decatur style.

Heritage Festival, held in June has been revived and brought back to the square in recent years and this year featured a kid's stick-horse rodeo and chuck wagon competition as additions to the annual home-made ice cream contest, fiddle contest, gun fight performance and live music. The Holiday season begins with Moonlight Madness, an annual chamber of commerce promotion, held on the first Saturday of December, featuring a lighted Christmas parade, horse drawn carriage rides, kids activities and pictures with Santa. Stores city wide stay open late for the celebration. In 2006, merchants agreed to continue the celebration with Christmas on the

Square, staying open every Saturday evening in December, featuring carriage rides, carolers and last-minute shopping bargains. The most recent project of the Decatur Main Street program is the renovation of the historic Post Office Building. An anonymous donation of \$50,000 was the catalyst to get the project started with an additional \$100,000 pledged by city council. The building will become a visitors center and is scheduled to begin renovations soon.

Thanks to Frieda Davis, manager of the Decatur Main Street Program, for providing the preceding article.

NEWS

Texas Downtown Association/Texas Main Street 2007 Annual Conference



Learn how to envision, plan and implement ideas that will turn your Downtown into Wowtown! Where and when? The annual Texas Downtown Revitalization Conference in Fort Worth is the place, and October 16-18 are the dates.

The Texas Downtown Association and Texas Main Street Center annually partner to produce this educational and networking opportunity. This year, Downtown Fort Worth, Inc. joins the group as the local host organization.

An exciting schedule of educational sessions, tours and exhibits have been planned. Topping the list of outstanding speakers is Kennedy Lawson Smith, the former director of the National Main Street Center and one of the nation's foremost experts on commercial district revitalization and development. Today Kennedy is with the Community Land Use and Economics (CLUE) Group.

Kennedy will be delivering the conference keynote address, titled "The Road Ahead." As Kennedy states, "From gas prices to green architecture, the trends that shape America's decisions about where to live, work and shop are changing — quickly. My keynote session will discuss some of these changes and how they're likely to affect downtowns in the years ahead." Kennedy will also provide a second conference session on "Creating a Dynamic Business Mix."

Other conference sessions include: Downtown 101, Sustainable Communities, Ordinances Every Downtown Should Have, Wowtown Festivals, and Playing Well With Others—Better Boards. There will also be walking tours of Sundance Square, downtown Fort Worth's popular mixed-use district, and South Downtown, where new construction, parks and historic buildings are revitalizing this end of downtown Fort Worth. A special treat will be the Downtown Urban Living Tour, where attendees will see downtown Fort Worth's most sought after residential properties.

Another special function is the Texas Main Street Luncheon on October 17th. At this luncheon, representatives from several local Main Street programs will share some local successes of which they are most proud. National Rec-

ognition Cities will also be announced at this event.



Historic Sundance Square in downtown Fort Worth.

The Texas Downtown Association award finalists will be featured at the Eggs and Excellence breakfast on October 18th. The 2007 winners will be announced that evening at the Awards Gala.

Conference registration brochures will be arriving in your mailbox any day now. You may also visit www.texasdowntown.org for registration information. Early bird registration ends October 1st.

The Hilton Fort Worth (downtown at the corner of 8th and Main) is the conference hotel. Make your reservations by calling 817-870-2100 and requesting the rate for the Texas Downtown Association. The room rate is \$134 for single/double/triple. You must reserve your room by SEPTEMBER 16, 2007 to receive the special rate.

Call the Texas Downtown Association at 512-472-7832 or go to www.texasdowntown.org for more details. See you in downtown Fort Worth!

New Economic Research Tool

Texas Comptroller Susan Combs proudly introduces Texas EDGE, an online research service designed to help local governments and economic development organizations analyze facts and figures. This expanded research service will provide governments, developers and

businesses across the state with data and analysis useful in revenue planning, financial analysis, economic forecasting, site location decisions and other issues affecting trade and industry growth. "We are putting vital information to use while enabling local governments and businesses to make important decisions regarding economic development," Combs said. "With Texas EDGE, you're not required to know a complicated system, and you do not have to master special analysis tools. Our staff can show community leaders how to find the information they need quickly, or we can offer a customized report and do the research for you." See www.window.state.tx.us/texasedge.

Main Street National Certification

Establish yourself as an expert in the revitalization field and build your professional skills to manage a commercial district revitalization program and resolve complex problems. The Main Street National Certification Institute will be held January 21– 25, 2008. It is not a course for beginners; it is designed to give seasoned professionals advanced tools and problem-solving skills. The methodology taught is grounded in the Main Street Four-Point Approach, and those attending should be well-versed in its principles. Applicants must demonstrate they have had training in the basics of the Main Street Approach. 2008 admissions applications must be received on or before **October 29, 2007**. See www.mainstreet.org/content.aspx?page=273§ion=5. Texas has three current Main Street managers who have this distinguished certification: Julie Glover in Denton, Fabio Angell in Pharr and Frieda Davis in Decatur.

AROUND THE STATE IN MAIN STREET

Brenham's Hot Nights, Cool Tunes concert series was a great hit all summer long. They made more than \$7,000 (net) for their Toubin Park project from food, beer and T-shirt sales.

Cotulla (2007 Main Street city) held a Main Street Jamboree in July and has already raised \$800 toward their façade improvement program.

Eagle Scouts in **New Braunfels** are taking on a leadership service project in downtown to help save the trees by removing the old tree grates that have been there almost 20 years. The trees have grown and the grates need to be removed before harming the trees. This involves the city, the New Braunfels Utility Dept. and the Eagle Scouts.

The Texas Theatre restoration project in **Seguin** has received a \$150,000 grant from the Meadows Foundation.

EVENTS

August 31–Sept. 2, Freeport
Cool blues will 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 www.freeportmainstreet.com.

Sept. 8, Electra
Downtown Electra will be the site of the annual TACC Car Show. Call 940/495-3166.

Sept. 8, Hillsboro

The old fashioned Cotton Pick'n Fair features live music, entertainment, street dance, Go Texas BBQ cook-off and craft vendors. Visit www.hillsborotx.org or call 1-800-Hillsboro.

Sept. 8, Hillsboro

The City of Hillsboro will host the grand opening for its newly renovated historic City Hall. Visit www.hillsboro.org for details.

Sept. 15, Bridgeport

The Coal Miner's Heritage Festival includes living history demonstrations, vendors and activities for the whole family.

Sept. 15, Tyler

East Texans will be dancing the night away to the sounds of country artists Charlie Robison and Stoney Larue, who will be headlining the entertainment for the 2007 Festival on The Square in Tyler. Supporting Robison will be Larue, who had a recent No. 1 hit, "Oklahoma Breakdown." Other acts include University of Texas at Tyler graduate Brandon Rhyder with his current hit, "Between Here and the Front Door," and Doug Moreland and recent "Nashville Star" finalist Kacey Musgraves. The festival will also include children's activities, arts and crafts, a beach volleyball competition and new activities taking on an international perspective. See www.festivalonthesquare.com/ and myspace page at www.myspace.com/festivalonthesquare.

Sept. 15, Waxahachie

Come celebrate the impact the cotton industry had on the development of Waxahachie and Ellis County at the Cotton Fest at the Farmer's Market. Demonstrations of ginning, spinning and weaving will be held. Lone Star

Glory Band will provide music and vendors will have lots of plants, produce and more. Call 972/ 937-7330 ext. 198.

Oct. 27, Marlin

Texas State Technical College Waco and the Heart of Texas Workforce present Freedom Fest Knowledge is Power: Impacting Lives to Create Leaders! Freedom Fest provides local and area citizens an opportunity to participate in Heart of Texas Workforce JOB-A-THON and preview area establishments that can aid in health and wellness, importance of credit, higher education, social services, financial stability, job opportunities, arts and cultural events, performances and motivational speaking, and more. The event is taking place from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Marlin Football Stadium.

GRANTS

My Hometown Helper Grant Program

Hamburger Helper, a General Mills food brand, is looking to lend a helping hand to neighborhoods throughout the United States with its My Hometown Helper grant program.

Submit a written essay describing how the "My Hometown Helper" grant would improve a community project. Awards will be based on the merit of the project, including its impact and support within your community. Examples of possible projects include: lights or bleachers for athletic fields; repairs to a band shell; computers for the local school or library; playground equipment for a park; money for choir, band or science trips; new uniforms for Little League teams; clean-up projects; and training for volunteer firefighters.

Applicants can request a one-time award ranging from \$5,000–\$15,000.

All requests for funding must be sponsored by a 501c3 non profit organization, municipal or civic organization or public school. Applications will be accepted **August 1 – September 30, 2007**. Funds will be awarded based on the merit of the project, including its impact on and support within the community. For details, see www.myhometownhelper.com/. Applications will be collected only via online submission. Winners will be selected on or before November 15, 2007. See a list of projects that have already been funded: www.myhometownhelper.com/TownSHelped.aspx.

Communities Foundation Grant

Dallas-based Communities Foundation of Texas will begin reviewing grant applications this fall. The major areas of distribution include education, religion, culture and history, social services, youth and inner city/community. The deadline for consideration at the fall meeting is **September 14**. Visit www.cftexas.org/default.htm to learn more about grants in Texas and across the United States.

NOMINATIONS

Become a Distinctive Destination

Each year, the National Trust for Historic Preservation chooses 12 outstanding communities from across the country that demonstrate a commitment to historic preservation and community revitalization and are great places to visit. Distinctive Destinations are marketed to our membership and the media, featured in *Preservation* magazine, on our website, and included in our annual travel guide.

Nomination forms for the 2008 list of America's Dozen Distinctive Destinations are now available online at www.nationaltrust.org/dozen_distinctive_destinations/2008_form.html. Nominations from individuals will not be accepted. Convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce and preservation organizations are invited to apply.

To be considered as one of a Dozen Distinctive Destinations, a place must provide an authentic and dynamic visitor experience; have a heritage tourism infrastructure, such as unique shopping, dining or lodging (e.g., historic hotels); have interesting and attractive historic architecture and/or cultural landscapes; and organizations actively working to promote and protect the community's historic assets. This is a great opportunity for Main Street cities to get attention and a great opportunity for rural and urban communities.

All nominations must be received by Friday, **September 28, 2007**. The 2008 list will be announced in February 2008. Please contact Denise Alexander, program officer at the Southwest Office of the National Trust if you have any questions: denise_alexander@nthp.org or call 817/332-4398.

CONFERENCES/ WORKSHOPS

Texas Travel Summit
The Texas Travel Industry Association (TTIA) unites businesses, organizations, associations and individuals throughout Texas who are dedicated to developing Texas tourism to its fullest potential. The TTIA annual Travel Summit will be held **September 23–26** in Houston at

the Westin Galleria. See www.ttia.org/summit/.

National Preservation Conference

The annual conference for the National Trust for Historic Preservation will be in the twin cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, **October 2-6, 2007**. This conference provides all-important know-how, innovative ideas and inspiration for people saving America's historic places and revitalizing communities. This is the premier educational and networking event for community leaders, volunteers and staff of the historic preservation movement. Register now at www.nthpconference.org/

2007 Calendar of Events

■ **October 16–18, Fort Worth**

Texas Downtown Association/Texas Main Street Annual Conference

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 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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The State Agency for Historic Preservation

www.the.state.tx.us