



Main Street Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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Spotlight... The Holiday Season on Main Street

All of our Texas Main Street cities have wonderful downtown events during the holidays—unfortunately, far too numerous to mention each one. Included here is a glimpse at the variety of creativity in our Texas cities during the holidays.

New Braunfels

Wassailfest is held in charming historic downtown New Braunfels on the first Thursday in December each year, (Dec. 6, 2007). Downtown businesses and boutiques open their doors to the community offering a unique blend of Wassail. Wassail is a special blend of apple cider and spices. (The origin of Wassail dates back to England and means “to your Health.”)



New Braunfels Wassailfest

Wassailfest attendees vote for their favorite Wassail and enter to win prizes from downtown businesses. A variety of Christmas music is performed throughout the historic district by church and school choirs.

Community groups offer a selection of ethnic foods around Main Plaza located in the center of downtown. Thousands of Christmas lights illuminate the district, adding to the charm of this special hometown experience.

Marshall

The Wonderland of Lights in Marshall began in 1987 and is known as the Granddaddy of Texas Lighting Festivals, with more than 10 million lights in the community. The festival begins the Wednesday night before Thanksgiving and runs through December 31. The festival rivals any

Christmas lighting scene in the country. The Historic Harrison County Courthouse is the festival’s crown jewel decorated with more than 125,000 lights. Festivities include historic home tours, live entertainment, Church of the Bells, carriage rides, bus tours of the trail of lights, parade, ice skating, real snow and more.



Marshall’s Harrison County Courthouse aglow during the holidays (above); and, ice skating (below) during the Wonderland of Lights festivities.



Nacogdoches

For more than a decade, the Nine Flags Festival has paid homage to the rich and spirited history of the oldest town in Texas. That history includes three attempts to establish a Republic of Texas. Thus, nine flags have flown over Nacogdoches as opposed to the six that have represented Texas. They are French, Spanish,



Nacogdoches Nine Flags Festival logo (above) and the celebration in historic downtown (below).



Magee-Gutierrez, Dr. James Long, Mexican, Fredonia Rebellion, Lone Star, Confederate Stars and Bars and United States of America.

Since its conception in 1997, the Nine Flags Festival has become one of the premier holiday celebrations in the state and has been recognized by the Texas Legislature for its community education and historic restoration efforts. The 11th annual Nine Flags Festival will pay special tribute to the French flag with special events planned to recognize the town's French influence. Some of the activities include a lighted Christmas parade, two fireworks displays, a holiday tour of homes, breakfast with Santa Claus and a 5K run. This year the festival will be held Nov. 16 – Dec. 8.

Kilgore

The Mount Kilgore Snow Hill, featuring 40,000 pounds of ice made into a snowhill for sledding, is the premier holiday event in Kilgore. Each year the Kilgore Chamber of Commerce brings snow to downtown for the 20-foot tall Mt. Kilgore snow hill. Towering over the buildings of downtown celebrating Kilgore's history are 60 towering oil derricks representing the more than 1,100 producing wells in Kilgore at the height of the oil boom. This was once known as the world's richest acre. These derricks are topped with shining stars during the holidays helping the city maintain its title as the state's official "City of Stars." The event is filled with children's activities, horse and buggy tours and shopping.



Kilgore illuminated oil derricks in downtown (above), and the Mt. Kilgore Snowhill (below)



Levelland

Ladies Night Out includes horse drawn carriages downtown transporting shoppers from one locale to the next. Local escorts dressed in Char-



Escorts for Levelland's Ladies Night Out.

les Dickens costumes will be the doormen for the evening. Christmas music will play over the downtown sound system to compliment the evening event. Local business customer lists help form the invitation lists. The focus is for customers to come and make their Christmas wish lists and to do a little shopping as well.

Corsicana

The second annual World Christmas Market will take place in downtown Corsicana this December. Different areas of downtown will represent four countries and will highlight Christmas traditions, foods and decorations of those countries. Trees will be decorated for each country. Area schools will be invited to participate in the research and decoration for each country. Celebrated countries change yearly. There is also an international pavilion where more countries are recognized and celebrated.

Grapevine

Grapevine is fast becoming the Christmas Capital of Texas and as such, historic downtown Grapevine and surrounding areas in the city will be converted to a winter wonderland this holiday season. Their Lone Star Christmas event, taking place November 15 thru January 5, features 1.2 million twinkling holiday lights, magical train sets, a 40-foot tall Christmas tree, a life-size gingerbread house and more. And don't be



Grapevine Christmas logo (above) and Grapevine Carol of Lights celebration (below).



surprised if you run into Santa, Mrs. Claus, live reindeer, or a variety of strolling holiday entertainers!

Grapevine’s Carol of Lights includes local choirs and sing-alongs as the switch is thrown in historic downtown illuminating thousands of lights. Also enjoy classic holiday movies during the season on the big screen at the historic Palace Theatre.

Rolling to the tune of numerous festive marching bands, the Parade of Lights illuminates historic downtown with 100 colorfully lighted floats. This is North Texas’ largest lighted Christmas parade.

If you are ready to get out of the house after Christmas, the Grapevine vintage railroad will be waiting for you!

NEWS

ShopMainStreet.org

ShopMainStreet.org is a national e-Commerce portal that connects savvy shoppers with unique “mom and pop” businesses in historic “Main Street” settings. Launched for the 2006 holiday season, it is an initiative of the National Trust

Main Street Center. It allows you to not only find one-of-a-kind gifts, but also help independent businesses and the historic or traditional shopping districts in which they are located to compete with large national retailers. This site is not just about shopping, it’s also about supporting a part of our heritage that is important to all of us. To shop or to sign up some of your local businesses, see

www.shopmainstreet.org.

Value of Volunteer Time

Completing the holidays involves some very energetic and sometimes very tired volunteers. These volunteers dedicate their time, talents and energy to the revitalization of Texas downtowns. Of course, you are already showing your appreciation for these individuals—be sure also to communicate the dollar value of these volunteers to your community and city officials. Currently the dollar value of a volunteer is \$18.77 per hour.

Welcome and Farewell...

We bid a fond farewell to Sarah Hueber in Nacogdoches, Melanie Thomas in Sinton, Tom Rivera in Pecos and Rebecca Hale in Clarksville — we wish everyone the best in their new endeavors and/or retirements! We also welcome Gus Gustafson in Pittsburg and Martin Arreguy in Pecos (starting 1/1/08).

AROUND THE STATE IN MAIN STREET

Main Street **Del Rio** sponsored their first Monster Mash on Main in October that filled two blocks of Main Street. Activities included a costume contest, trackless train ride, games, food, entertainment, etc. The board sold 300 tickets and

an additional 200 persons paid at the gate. And they did this all without having a manager — kudos to the advisory board!

Entertainment in Cotton Square Park was held each Friday in October in downtown **Lufkin**. In conjunction with breast cancer awareness month, they had huge pink bows adorning the trees and awards prize tickets to the hospital’s Power of Pink luncheon. On the third Friday the Lufkin police department Crime Stoppers band played with lunch sold by the department’s Relay for Life Team. Two baskets were also given away each Friday with items donated by downtown merchants.

Mt. Vernon had its biggest ever Countryfest in October with over 5000 in attendance. A great addition to the festivities was the Preservation Texas traveling courthouse exhibit.

In September, **Pharr** unveiled its 11th historical marker. The “Pharr Volunteer Fire Dept.” is also the only one in the lower Rio Grande Valley to honor volunteers in its title. Pharr now has the most historical markers in the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Metroplex.

Spur’s Showcase Your Talent fundraiser netted \$1,648 for restoration projects.

EVENTS

Nov. 23–25, Dec. 1–2, 8–9, Waxahachie

The downtown Victorian Christmas celebration includes artisans dressed in Victorian-era costumes selling gifts, ice-skating, photos with Santa and performances by “Cast in Bronze.” There will also be a Candlelight Christmas Homes Tour fea-

turing 12 homes in all (four each weekend). Call 972/937-2390.

Nov. 23–Dec. 31, Bastrop

Enjoy the River of Lights celebration on the Colorado River riverwalk from Fisherman’s Park to Ferry Park. Festivities will include holiday lights, music and refreshments. Email info@bastropchamber.us

Nov. 29–Dec. 1, Beaumont

The Very Merry Main Street Market includes Thursday holiday happy hours with early bird shopping, cocktails, raffles, holiday luncheon and Gingerbread House Workshop for children. Call 409/832-0873.

Nov. 30–Dec. 1, Brenham

Holiday Homecoming festivities in downtown will include the Kristkindl Market, Santa’s Stroll, Christmas Through the Years Parade of Lights, Jingle Bell Fun Run and the Gingerbread Auction. See www.downtownbrenham.com/holiday.html

Nov. 30–Dec. 1, Gonzales

The Winterfest Lighted Christmas Parade on the evening of Nov. 30 will include lighted floats, cars, bicycles, horses and Santa. After the parade, everyone will gather around the downtown Christmas tree and the Christmas lights on the square will be officially turned on. Businesses will be open late for shoppers. On Dec. 1, there will be an arts and crafts show, breakfast with Santa, historic homes tour and a history show “Gonzales: the Beginning.”

Nov. 30, Dec. 1–2, 7–9, Paris

Holiday in Paris “Tis the Season” will include music, vintage scenes, carriage rides, miniature horse cart rides for the children, art walk, Garden Club tour of homes, carolers and hand bell choirs, Christmas village, tastes and smells of Christmas and

more. Cas Haley, runner up in America’s Got Talent, will perform a free concert during the event (he is from Paris!) The Winder Wonderettes will also be at the Paris Community Theatre. Contact Bethany Golden at bethgolden@paristexas.gov or call 903/784-9293.

Nov. 30–Dec. 29, San Angelo

The doors open to a Winter Wonderland of holiday decorations inside and out of the Historic Depot for Santa’s Santa Fe Christmas. Enjoy beautifully decorated trees with model trains of every size running on different layouts. Includes a Christmas story for children on Friday and Saturday and Santa every night. Call 325/944-9146.

Dec. 1, Georgetown

Enjoy the 27th annual Christmas Stroll and parade in historic downtown. Call 512/868-8675 or see www.downtowngeorgetownassociation.org

Dec. 1, Bowie

Enjoy the Fantasy of Lights Christmas festival and parade in downtown. See www.downtowngeorgetownassociation.org

Dec. 1, Elgin

Catch the holiday spirit in historic downtown Elgin at Holiday by the Tracks. Before or after cutting your Christmas tree from one of two local tree farms, enjoy live music, caroling, shopping and kid’s activities. There will also be pictures with Santa and a lighted holiday parade at dusk. Noon–7pm. Only 19 miles east of Austin on Hwy 290. www.elgintx.com. 512/285-4515.

Dec. 1, Fairfield

Miracle on Main Street will include a lighted parade bringing Santa in on the new fire truck. There will be pho-

tos with Santa and a live Nativity scene.

Dec. 1, 8 and 15, Longview

Downtown Longview and the courthouse are transformed by hundreds of lights. Visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus, enjoy musical entertainment and children’s arts and crafts. Hours are 6–9 p.m. Gregg County Courthouse, downtown Longview. Email: elaine@longviewpartnership.org

Dec. 3, Texarkana

The Twice as Bright Festival of Lights includes the annual Christmas parade followed by a community tree lighting ceremony at the post office. Festivities include carriage rides and Santa Claus. View the Ace of Clubs historic home and the downtown Christmas light display. The lighting display continues through Jan. 2. downtown.

Dec. 6–8, San Marcos

There will be lights, lights and more lights at the 21st annual Sights and Sounds of Christmas. Start your Christmas shopping early at the Texas marketplace. Visit Santa’s village, ride the carousel, view a live nativity scene and enjoy delicious holiday favorites. The entire family can get into the holiday spirit by joining in on all the fun-filled activities. See www.toursanmarcos.com or 888/200-5620.

Dec. 8, Bridgeport

Slow down and enjoy the season with Santa, Christmas carolers, unique gift items and hometown customer service! There will be merchant Open Houses and Santa will arrive at 2 p.m. with free pictures from 2–5 p.m. at the Bridgeport Stage. The lighted Christmas parade will begin at 6 p.m.

Dec. 8–12, Beeville

Enjoy the annual Christmas in Beeville celebration parade. This year's event will kick off the Bee County Sesquicentennial Celebration.

Dec. 8, Livingston

Hometown Christmas features arts and crafts vendors, petting zoo, pony carousel, train village, wagon and carriage rides, lighted parade and pictures with Santa. Historic downtown Livingston. Call 936/327-1050.

Dec. 15–17, Seguin

Tour a 19th century farm and experience what Christmas was like for German settlers at the Rural Christmas tour at the Texas Agricultural and Heritage Center in Seguin. There will be entertainment, dancing, chuck-wagon dinner, storytelling and educational tours for the whole family. Sponsored by Texas Yes!

CONFERENCES/ WORKSHOPS

Texas Tourism Industry Dinner

Join over a thousand of your colleagues, along with state legislators, mayors, city council members and other elected officials, as we come together to celebrate travel and tourism in Texas at the Faces and Places of Texas 2008 Unity Dinner. The dinner will be at the Hilton in Austin on February 13. See www.ttia.org/unity/

Free Monthly Trainings from The Alliance for Community Trees

The Alliance for Community Trees offers a free monthly training (webcast) for anyone interested in issues pertaining to preserving and planting their urban canopy. The series is geared for volunteer organizers, community groups, and others

who work with the public. Registration is required. More information, including the list of topics that will be covered through March 2008, can be found at

http://actrees.org/site/stories/act_launches_monthly_webcast_series.php#subscribe.

Section 106 Training

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) is presenting a two-day course on the Section 106 Essentials **Jan. 16–17** in Houston. It is designed for those who are new to Section 106 review or those who want a refresher on its basic operation. Taught by the ACHP, this course explains the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which applies any time a federal, federally assisted, or federally approved activity might affect a property listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. See www.achp.gov/106essentials.html.

2008 National Main Streets Conference

Who attends this conference? Everyone interested in community revitalization. Beginner or expert, small town or urban business district, people who work, volunteer, or are interested in community revitalization will value this educational and networking experience.

The 2008 National Main Streets Conference **March 30–Apr. 2** in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania will explore the ways entrepreneurship and diversity enrich commercial districts. These qualities add to the local flavor, create a true reflection of a community, contribute to an authentic identity and exciting business mix — all essential motivations that bring customers, tourists, new residents and cool businesses to your district. See

<http://conference.mainstreet.org/content.aspx?page=11247&site=13>

GRANTS

Preserve America Grants
Preserve America (PA) grants are available to PA communities that have demonstrated a commitment to preserving local cultural resources. Eligible activities include planning, development, implementation or enhancement of innovative activities and programs in heritage tourism, including interpretation/education, planning, marketing, training and research and documentation of cultural resources. Successful projects will involve public-private partnerships and serve as models to communities nationwide for heritage tourism, historic preservation, education and economic development. Application **deadline is Dec. 12**. Call 202/354-2020, ext. 2, or see www.cr.nps.gov/hps/hpg/preserveamerica.

Interpreting America's Historic Places Grants
Interpreting America's Historic Places implementation and planning grant applications due **Jan. 23, 2008**.

Implementation Grants:
www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/IAHP_Implementation.html

Planning Grants:
www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/IAHP_Planning.html

NOMINATIONS

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is accepting nominations for its 2008 America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list. The 2008 list will be announced in May. Since its founding, the endangered list has been one of the nation's most successful tools in the fight to save

America's irreplaceable architectural, cultural and natural heritage. Download the nomination guidelines and nomination form at www.nationaltrust.org/11most/nominate.html. Complete nominations, letters of support and high-resolution photographs must be received by **Friday, January 4, 2008**. If you have questions or would like to discuss a potential nomination, please send an email to swro@nthp.org or call 817-332-4398

JOBS

The Texas Independence Trail Regional Coordinator's role is critical to building a successful regional heritage tourism program. The regional coordinator is the facilitator for the development, execution and documentation of the heritage trail regional program. The regional coordinator is an advocate, motivator, guide and resource for the communities of the region. In working with local organizations and partner agencies, the regional coordinator strives to enable and empower people, groups and organizations to gain knowledge and skills, assume responsibility and develop and implement ideas for building better heritage tourism destinations and attractions throughout the heritage region. Office will be located in Rosenberg. For full job description, see www.thc.state.tx.us/jobs/jbdefault.html.

2008 Calendar of Events

- **January 7–9, Austin**
Basic Training for new managers, Austin
 - **February 5–8, Austin**
Basic Training for new managers is on Feb. 5 and the morning of Feb. 6. Main Street Annual Meeting is Feb. 6–8 (beginning after noon and ending at noon on the 8th)
 - **February 6–8, Austin**
Main Street Annual Meeting (begins the afternoon of Feb. 6 and ends by noon on Feb. 8)
 - **March 30–April 2, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**
National Main Streets Annual Conference, 2008 theme: Enriching Main Street Through Entrepreneurship and Diversity (This conference is always excellent — consult with your city manager or your boards now to see if you can fit it into your budgets.)
 - **May 1–3, Corpus Christi**
Texas Historical Commission Annual Conference, 2008 theme: Explore the Sights and Stories of Texas.
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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

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