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# NEWSLETTER

## TEXAS MAIN STREET PROJECT

**VOL. 4, NO. 6**

**DECEMBER 1984**

### 1985 Main Street Cities Announced

On November 26 Governor Mark White announced the designation of Corsicana, Cuero, Lampasas, Mineral Wells, and Sweetwater as the 1985 Texas Main Street cities. This is the fifth consecutive year that five cities have been named to participate in the Texas program since its beginning in 1981

Each of these communities has committed funds to hire a full-time Main Street manager for three years and has pledged to provide both private and public sector support for the program.

The new managers will join other downtown managers for training in Austin, January 14-18 and February 4-8. Other cities interested in starting a self-initiated Main Street program can contact the Austin office at 512/475-4407 for more information on the training course, which costs \$250.

### Eight Cities To Participate In Revitalization Project

The National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation has announced it will select eight cities to participate in a model commercial area revitalization program.

The cities chosen must designate target areas that include easily defined portions of their downtowns, commercial strips, or neighborhoods. The target areas must contain historic buildings, and the cities must be willing to fund the project for three years.

Communities interested in applying should contact the National Main Street Center, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036, 202/673-4056.

### Main Street Conference Spurs Statewide Association

A large group of representatives from downtown organizations across the state gathered during the November Main Street Conference in Austin to organize the Texas Downtown Association.

Jim Cloar of the Dallas Central Business District Association, who has been active in assisting other statewide downtown organizations, shared his ideas and experiences at the meeting.

The primary goals of the association include encouraging downtown redevelopment and serving as a statewide network of information on issues relating to downtown. A steering committee is drafting bylaws, purpose statements, and membership/dues criteria.

Assistance will be provided to the new association by the staff of the Texas Main Street Department at the Texas Historical Commission.

'In the 1950s a study was done in Baltimore and it was found no business was planning to expand. It was projected that the city would go broke in a generation. The inner-harbor was filthy and rat-infested. This was a city that never knew what a tourist was unless someone's mother-in-law came to visit. Last year, 22 million visitors came to Inner Harbor more than to Disneyland. To revitalize downtown you must marshal leadership, organization, and vision.

**James Rouse, Oct. 25, 1984  
in address to National Trust Annual  
Conference in Baltimore**

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## Good Merchandising Techniques Pay Off for Historic Buildings

Effective display techniques are not only feasible in historic structures, they can actually work better with the ambiance of an older space than in a new and sterile environment. Historic spaces have a certain character that cannot be duplicated. They can, however, pose unique problems or challenges. Just because a building is historic is no excuse for using dated merchandising methods or having tired, worn-out window displays.

In many historic commercial buildings, the walls are of thick masonry construction—even when they are plastered, they do not offer a good display surface. Contemporary fixtures can make a business look updated and, in many instances, help the merchandise look better. Fixtures that are freestanding and designed for floor displays, such as round racks, T-stands, four-way face-outs, and gondolas, can solve some problems.

The merchant who is fortunate enough to have antique pieces that can be used for displays should use these in conjunction with contemporary fixtures for an interesting, eclectic appeal. Antique armoires are great display pieces when the doors are open and the merchandise is neatly stacked inside. Also, the drawers of armoires and chests can be pulled out to show the items inside. Some of the most beautiful showcases are antiques with glass tops and beautifully grained wood.

Lighting is another important element in displays. It sets the mood of the store and enables the customer to visually distinguish between various displays or areas of the store. While good lighting is important for providing adequate safety, the innovative merchant will use significantly more light to accentuate certain display areas. Many historic commercial buildings still have old fluorescent fixtures with bare bulbs, and this type of lighting does offer several advantages. Primarily, it is often already in place, it is cheap to operate, and the bulbs last a long time. However, they produce a flat light that does not highlight the textural interest of items and can often distort the hue of the merchandise. To offset this drawback, shield fluorescent bulbs with frames or baffles to make them look complete. Baffles come in a variety of patterns and can actually add interest to a ceiling. When used in conjunction with incandescent lighting, the results can be attractively successful. Fluorescents may light an area, but incandescents help sell the merchandise.

Since historic buildings are often long and

narrow, the successful merchant will try to add interest to the back of the store. Generally, displays should be smaller to the front and larger in the back, where they can more readily attract a customer's eye. A color element, in particular, will draw potential buyers to the back of the store. Also, if customers see something interesting in the back, they must first wander through the other displays. As a result, they end up passing a variety of displays twice—going in and coming out.

When a historic building still has its original ceiling, it can be interesting to emphasize the pressed tin or beaded board. This effect can be achieved by painting the ceiling to coordinate with the interior walls and floor. Structural columns can also be beautiful simply by removing any boxing that may have been placed around them and painting them.

These are general ideas for merchandising in a historic structure. It can be a challenge, but the results can be rewarding. For more detailed information or for a consultation from the Main Street interior designer, contact the THC at P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711 or call 512/475-4407.

## Medallion Features Main Street Project

The December issue of *The Medallion*, the Texas Historical Commission's monthly newsletter, will be devoted to the Main Street Project—how it was created, the cities involved, and its future. Articles will highlight the benefits of the program, and 10 profiles of designated and self-initiated cities will illustrate how downtowns have been revitalized and economies boosted with help from the Main Street Project. New subscribers to *The Medallion* can receive a free December issue by returning the form below with a check for \$5.

### Medallion Subscription Form

Please enter my one-year subscription to *The Medallion* and mail me a free copy of the December 1984 issue on the Main Street Project.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Make checks payable to the Texas Historical Commission, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711

## PARIS

*(With this issue of the Main Street Newsletter we conclude our profiles of the 1984 Main Street cities.)*

Selected as a 1984 Main Street city, Paris was founded in 1839 by George W. Wright on land that divides tributaries of the Red and Sulphur rivers. Originally called Pinhook, Paris was chosen as the Lamar County seat in 1844. This community grew in size and importance as it became a railroad center. The Texas and Pacific reached town in 1876 and additional lines followed in 1887, 1893, and 1910.

Historical lore associated with Paris abounds. Jesse James was shot to death here. His brother Frank retired from robbing banks and worked in a Paris' dry-goods store. Belle Starr was jailed here and, in 1835, Davy Crockett is rumored to have slept under an oak in Paris on his way to the Alamo. In 1882, the Women's Christian Temperance Union was established in Paris.

In 1916, a fire destroyed most of downtown Paris, which was rebuilt that year and the next. The replacement buildings, which have survived to the present day, currently have a high occupancy rate. Culberson Fountain, an imported European fountain, accents Downtown Plaza and symbolizes Paris' pride in historic detail.

Paris has many preservationists among its citizens. Both the Lamar County Historical Society and the Lamar County Historical Commission are active organizations. They worked together to restore the historic Samuel Bell Maxey House, now operated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The Texas

Historical Commission has provided matching funds for a survey of the historical buildings in the city, which could lead to the establishment of a designated historic district. In addition, there are 17 historical markers in Paris.

Through its participation in the Main Street Project, Paris is combining the efforts of private and public groups in the promotion and improvement of the central business district. In addition, the city is promoting voluntary improvements and preservation of existing structures and adaptive reuse of vacant buildings.

Supporters of participation in the Main Street Project include the Paris Downtown Development Association, Lamar County Historical Commission, and the Paris Community Theatre. In addition, local financial institutions are now providing low-interest loans for property improvements in the downtown area. Ninety thousand dollars has been set aside for this purpose with an interest rate of seven percent.

The availability of labor—both skilled and unskilled—makes this city attractive for industrial development. In the past several years, two major employers have opened operations in the area. Local industries make canned soup, steam generating equipment, apparel, food products, and farm supplies. With all of its assets, coupled with the determination of local and government groups, Paris is achieving much as a Main Street city.

### Main Street Memos

The landscape and sidewalk renovation in downtown **McKINNEY** will be completed by the holidays and will serve as a model for what smaller cities can accomplish. **TERRELL** has received grants and bond funding for a \$3.5 million downtown improvement program. The 1985 Festival and Events Seminar is scheduled for February 4-6 at Texas A&M University in **COLLEGE STATION**. The Piedras-Alameda area of **EL PASO** is beginning a revitalization project patterned after Main Street Project efforts across the state.

### Texas Main Street Project Newsletter

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The *Texas Main Street Project Newsletter* is a bimonthly publication of the Texas Historical Commission. Address all correspondence to Texas Main Street Project, Texas Historical Commission, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711 (512/475-4407).

## MAIN STREET PROJECT MANAGERS

### 1981 Cities

HILLSBORO	Maaria Olander, City Hall, Hillsboro, TX 76645	817/582-2119, 3271
SEGUIN	Mona Starcke, P.O. Box 710, Seguin, TX 78155	512/379-6382

### 1982 Cities

GAINESVILLE	City Hall, P.O. Drawer J, Gainesville, TX 76240	817/665-4323
GEORGETOWN	Susie Clinard, P.O. Box 409, Georgetown, TX 78626	512/869-1873
KINGSVILLE	Kevin Stowers, P.O. Box 1458, Kingsville, TX 78363	512/592-5235
McKINNEY	Susan Campbell, P.O. Box 517, McKinney, TX 75069	214/542-2675
MARSHALL	Carole Wetsel, P.O. Box 520, Marshall, TX 75670	214/935-7868

### 1983 Cities

BRENHAM	Lennie Brown, P.O. Box 1059, Brenham, TX 77833	409/836-7911
HARLINGEN	Kevin Walker, P.O. Box 2207, Harlingen, TX 78551	512/423-5440
LUFKIN	Carol Moore, P.O. Drawer 190, Lufkin, TX 75901	409/634-8881
STAMFORD	James Butts, P.O. Box 191, Stamford, TX 79553	915/773-2723
WAXAHACHIE	Kate Singleton, P.O. Box 757, Waxahachie, TX 75165	214/937-7330

### 1984 Cities

BELTON	Steve Sorrells, P.O. Box 120, Belton, TX 76513	817/939-5851
BROWNWOOD	Bill Clary, P.O. Box 1389, Brownwood, TX 76804	915/646-6056
ENNIS	Sugar Glaspy, P.O. Box 220, Ennis, TX 75119	214/875-9081
GOLIAD	Becky Borchers, P.O. Box 8, Goliad, TX 77963	512/645-3479
PARIS	Sue Smith, P.O. Box 1037, Paris, TX 75460	214/785-7511

### Independent Main Street Cities

ATHENS	LouAnn Laird, P.O. Box 608, Athens, TX 75751	214/675-5181
CONROE	Ken Rice, P.O. Box 3635, Conroe, TX 77305	409/760-3776
GRAPEVINE	Mary Ellen Tamasy, P.O. Box 729, Grapevine, TX 76051	817/481-2546
LAMPASAS	Danelle Baldwin, P.O. Box 666, Lampasas, TX 76550	512/556-3641
MARBLE FALLS	Faye Dockery, 14 Pecan Drive, Marble Falls, TX 78654	512/693-3611
SAN MARCOS	Terry Colley, 630 East Hopkins, San Marcos, TX 78666	512/353-4444
SHERMAN	Jan Jackson, P.O. Box 2054, Sherman, TX 75090	214/868-0228
SWEETWATER	Greg Wortham, P.O. Box 450, Sweetwater, TX 79556	915/235-2081
TAYLOR	Margaret Massey, P.O. Box 810, Taylor, TX 76574	512/352-8602
TOMBALL	Kathy Morgan, 401 West Market, Tomball, TX 77375	713/351-5484
UVALDE	Greg Davenport, P.O. Box 799, Uvalde, TX 78801	512/278-3315

## Texas Main Street Project Sponsors

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