



# Main Street Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

Celebrating 30 Years of Progress

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## Texas Main Street 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Report Preservation Matters

As Texas Main Street finishes up a year-long celebration of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it seems an appropriate time to put a spotlight on preservation basics and how historic preservation, when it is the bedrock of local economic effort, can make such a difference in a community's quality of life. While the act of preserving historic resources is the outwardly visual component, understanding and awareness is critically important as well, and this is why the state program places such a high value on training.

Let's start back at the beginning of the Texas Main Street Program, which in 1981 was one of the first state programs in the country. The first issue of the Texas Main Street Center Newsletter, in January 1981, announces that: "The State of Texas has launched a program that promises the economic, social and cultural revitalization of small towns and cities across the state. Called the Texas Main Street Project, this pilot effort in five selected communities will test techniques for rejuvenation within the context of historical preservation."

Four of those original five programs are officially designated to-

day, although none has remained in the program continually. The charter cities still in the program are Eagle Pass, Hillsboro, Plainview, and Seguin. Seguin Mayor Betty Ann Matthies says, "The City of Seguin recognizes the important role the Texas Main Street Program has played in the wonderful revitalization of our historic downtown. Sharing the expertise of the staff and the resources of other Main Street managers across the state is hard to put a price on. Let's just say for those of us who treasure the heart of our community, it's invaluable."

Thirty years after its start, the original premise of the first newsletter has become reality. Currently there are 85 officially designated Texas Main Street communities ranging in size from just 2,000 to more than 200,000 in population. Together with formerly participating programs over the years, more than \$2.4 billion in reinvestment has been realized, along with the creation of more than 27,000 jobs and 7,100 small businesses. Given the nature of downtown revitalization, most of those businesses provide local economic impact through their entrepreneurial nature.



Sometimes, a picture says it all. We DARE you to NOT buy a confection at Confections, in Lufkin's Main Street district, that creatively and compactly utilizes an otherwise non-descript space.

“Entrepreneurs are vital to economic growth and, consequently, to higher living standards” notes the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas (<http://dallasfed.org/educate/everday/ev3.html>). There are also numerous studies and articles that encourage public investment and public policy that supports entrepreneurship. This is happening in many Texas Main Street communities through incentives and training programs that support the kinds of creative small business ventures that are most appropriate for the unique historic buildings on Main Street.

That first issue of the Main Street Newsletter discusses 10 “preliminary observations” for Main Street revitalization—reprinted from an original article by Mary Means, who was in on the ground floor of the national Main Street rollout:

1. Careful economic analysis in advance of program development is crucial to develop a suitable revitalization strategy.
2. Design quality and economic development are undeniably linked.
3. Incremental rather than cataclysmic change is the objective.
4. There nevertheless must be some physical signs of progress soon to build and sustain momentum.
5. The entire community must be made aware of the assets of downtown and of the program underway to enhance them.
6. Municipal, county, and state government officials must understand the program and support its short- and long-range goals in their decision making.
7. It is not going to happen overnight. “The Main Street revitalization process actually involves a *revolution*.”

## History Beckons



The H.M. King High School in Kingsville

The ongoing adaptive reuse of the H.M. King High School epitomizes the spirit of historic preservation at a community-wide scale. This grand edifice, located just beyond the far western edge of the Kingsville Main Street Commercial district, held a wealth of memories for the citizens of Kingsville. When the school ceased operations years ago, many felt that something needed to be done to keep the H.M. King High School campus intact as a vital, physical part of historic Kingsville. This account from Kathryn Evans for the *Kingsville Record and Bishop News* (June 6, 2010 front page) sums up the situation beautifully:

“At the west end of Kleberg Avenue dust and debris are floating out of old King High. Trucks are backed up to the front entrances and men in hard hats are loading rubble to be hauled away. After the last graduating class left the school in 1964, it was used spasmodically for various educational endeavors until 1978. Then it settled down to watch the world go by. As the years slipped away, this dear old landmark showed signs of aging. She shed her beautiful red roof tiles. Windows stared down at the vacant yard where children once gathered. Bricks dropped from loosened mortar.

After many years of citizens trying to decide what could be done about the empty, decaying building that holds so many memories of the town’s population, finally a revival of the structure is beginning. A foundation spearheaded by Mrs. Helen Kleberg Groves, great granddaughter of Henrietta M. King, the original donor of the edifice, is working to restore it to its former glory for the city Mrs. King planned so carefully. Mrs. Groves contributed one million dollars to start the project. Other community leaders—Joe Henkel, Kleberg Bank president and chief executive officer, Mayor Sam Fugate, and Jane Haun Macon, member of the 1964 graduating class—are undertaking the preparations for its future use. An architect, David Brown of Corpus Christi, has been secured. The building has been determined structurally sound. At this time, clean up of the interior is in progress. The end result after all the refurbishing will be a proud building that harbors so many stories of past students who walked those halls.”

8. Not every building owner or business person will cooperate. *"The key is identifying leaders..."*
9. One individual must have as a full-time and single responsibility the management of the revitalization program. This is not to say that it is just the Main Street manager's job to single-handedly revitalize downtown. Main Street then and now relies on a combination of staff and volunteers, with the manager responsible for administrative aspects of the program and volunteers to drive progress and awareness.
10. Historic preservation makes better sense than virtually any other approach to Main Street revitalization.

Interestingly, those same concepts are as true today as when they were written 30 years ago.

### History Beckons

Main Street is all about revitalized communities and old buildings that look their best. It doesn't take an architectural historian to appreciate the colors, textures, shapes, details, and craftsmanship that so many of our old buildings possess. These "gifts to the street" transcend mere shelter and rise to the level of public art. Furthermore, many of our old buildings actually work quite well, often for uses that were never even imagined by their original owners. Just think about how many art galleries, museums, condominiums, or loft apartments you've seen or visited that started off their lives as 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup>-century factories or warehouses. The world-renowned King Ranch is immortalized in a former ice plant at the northern edge of the Kingsville Main Street Commercial District. This is a magnificent example of creative adaptive reuse of an historic property.

Old buildings and towns attract people. While some folks enjoy visiting new resorts and theme parks, many others flock to historic sites that have buildings, streets, parks, and vistas that evoke a deeper reaction, a bond to the past.



The King Ranch Museum in Kingsville, a 2011 Texas Main Street City

### Main Street Towns

The post office, the city hall, the bank, the church, and the county courthouse were often the first permanent structures to go up in Texas towns. If a town prospered, it grew up around these buildings in the form of a town square, an intersection of roads, or along a railroad line. In a county seat, the courthouse became the visual center of the town as well as the symbolic center or soul of the community. People came to regard the courthouse as the place where history was created and maintained: trials, elections, market days, and political rallies were *held* here while birth, marriage, and death records were *kept* here.

When these prominent building types were built in the formative stages of a town's growth, people who had very limited opportunity for travel or advanced education



The Ellis County Courthouse in Waxahatchie, architect J. Riely Gordon, 1897

were suddenly exposed to state-of-the-art construction methods and the talents of state, regional, or nationally prominent architects and designers. As a result, a remote town could receive its first taste of Gothic Revival, Neoclassical, Renaissance Revival, Richardsonian Romanesque, French Second Empire, or, later on, Art Deco and Streamline Moderne. It is difficult for a modern-day person to imagine what a tremendous impact these buildings made when they were first constructed.



The Plaza Theater in Paris

### Preservation and the Economics of Old Buildings

Our public and private Main Street buildings did not come to be without considerable financial commitment on the part of the community. Bonds were issued and taxes were levied to pay for the design

and construction of these important buildings. Many of these buildings were designed to be beautiful and imposing, while many others were constructed for everyday commercial use as the general store, the boarding house, or pharmacy. Those buildings that were built of thick masonry have been shown to effectively conserve heat; their large open spaces have allowed for good air circulation; and their tall windows and skylights have let in natural light—all basic principles of “green building” before the notion of sustainable construction was even conceived.

The current beauty of the downtown commercial district model allows the public’s business to be transacted in one location (court, post office, banks, etc.), while commerce has a steady supply of customers in that location as well; judges, lawyers, postmasters, bankers, jurors, and the general public becomes customers for downtown merchants. This model has been reinterpreted today in the guise of the “supercenter” where merchandise, groceries, banking, haircuts, nails, eyeglasses, jewelry, restaurants, and more can all be obtained under one roof. But it is only a substitute for the ‘real thing’ – the historic downtown. The biggest dif-

ference between now and then, of course, is the *history and the process of construction*.

Historic buildings are so vital to the life of Texas communities that billions of dollars have been reinvested in their restoration through public and private sources. This includes reinvestment through the Main Street effort, the Texas Courthouse Preservation Program, THC Preservation Trust Fund, TEA21 and ISTEAs grants, investment tax credits, hotel occupancy taxes, local financial incentives, and a host of other sources. While some of these state and national programs no longer exist, it should be noted that they were originally created because they were sound investments. Why? Because preservation pays.

Yet another factor to consider with old buildings is that they *simply exist*. They already represent an investment in time and materials and they usually require nothing more than regular maintenance to continue to serve a role in the community. Their design and construction required skills and talents that are difficult or impossible to replicate. Preservation eliminates waste of construction materials and other resources. Rehabilitation means reduced demolition and lessened impact upon landfill space. Should a town start to lose its old buildings to demolition, not only would the value of the materials, energy resources, and labor used to design, build, and maintain the structure be lost, but a piece of the town’s soul would be lost as well. When an old building is demolished it is gone forever. Photographs, drawings, and written accounts



A recent demolition of an historic apartment building in Austin

are poor substitutes for the real thing. These old buildings are a gift from our ancestors to us and to those who follow us. Remember, preservation is all about protecting legacies.

In addition to the preliminary observations reviewed earlier, the national demonstration program of 30-plus years ago that resulted in the creation of the formal Main Street Four Point Approach™ also included guiding principles that are still followed today. These range from Main Street’s comprehensive, yet incremental, nature to capitalizing on existing assets and leading the charge for change. It is a proven model— *Main Street works*.

<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/eight-principles.html>

Feature article by Debra Farst, state coordinator, Texas Main Street Program and Howard Langner, architect, Texas Main Street Program.

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

### Welcome New Programs!

In 2011, Uvalde, Vernon and Kingsville were all accepted as officially designated programs. Each community spent the year building



A cotton-sorting room on the upper floor of a late 19<sup>th</sup> Century building in Quanah; notice the thick walls, large open space, tall windows, and skylights.

## Welcome 2011 Texas Main Street Cities



Setting the stage for future success: Uvalde board members on a parade float touting Main Street efforts (left), the Kingsville First Lady's Tour (center), and the Vernon resource team (right).

up their Main Street foundation to set the stages for future progress.

During its first year, Uvalde secured \$25,000 for façade grants and helped facilitate the opening of 10 businesses in the district. Through the program, a successful monthly Four-Square Friday merchant event was begun as well as weekly radio announcements about downtown. The city and Uvalde Main Street were highlighted in the fall issue of *Texas Hill Country Magazine* featuring several downtown merchants.

During Vernon's first year, a \$20,000 façade grant program and tax abatement policy for improvements to downtown buildings were both created and several new businesses opened in the district. Eight businesses have already worked with the TMSP design staff on improvements. Additionally, work continues on achieving other first-year priorities: making wi-fi available throughout downtown, a farmer's market, Shop Local campaign, and creating specific programs and products to increase local preservation awareness, including an Architectural Appreciation Essay Contest and an Architectural Appreciation Drawing Contest. Thirty-second promotional television spots about downtown have been created to air in local hotel rooms. See link at:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBxIZEVmR-WU&list=HL1324591696&feature=mh\\_1olz](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBxIZEVmR-WU&list=HL1324591696&feature=mh_1olz)

Kingsville Main Street partnered on the first ever Calle Siete sub-district Cinco de Mayo family event, and is working with Texas A&M University Kingsville to develop a bike/pedestrian connection to downtown. Program staff and volunteers have also been working on plantings to enhance the district and fundraising efforts for the preservation of the H. M. King High School (see related sidebar).

### Education & Assistance

Texas Main Street started the year off with a training for new managers and board members in Georgetown, a 1997 Great American Main Street winner (national award) and inaugural 2009 First Lady Texas Treasures recipient (a Texas Historical Commission award). There were more than 50 participants, making it one of the largest January trainings ever! This training is our most comprehensive board training oppor-

tunity of the year, which includes intense Main Street Four Point and preservation training with a tour of the courthouse square to learn about historic architecture and Georgetown's 26-year revitalization efforts. As part of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, we also snapped the first This Place Matters (TPM) photo on the Williamson County courthouse lawn. The TPM image made its way around the state another 35-plus more times after that for Main Street. (See the slide show at

<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/mainstreet/msabout.shtml>)

Other very successful trainings during the year were held in Paris, Denton and in Nacogdoches for the Texas Downtown Association/Texas Main Street Annual Conference. There were close to 300 participants in these various events, greatly helping to further preservation awareness and education. The Denton training also in-



New staff and board members, Georgetown training, January 2011

cluded the last of the Preserve America preservation seminars, which were made possible through a grant to TMSP from Preserve America and the National Park Service. The Denton seminar was on Comprehensive Business Recruitment for Historic Downtowns by Rick Ferrell of Retail Market Answers. An overview of content and handouts from this seminar can be found on the THC website: [www.thc.state.tx.us/mainstreet/mswork.shtml](http://www.thc.state.tx.us/mainstreet/mswork.shtml) and in the Fall 2011 edition of The Medallion, the agency's preservation magazine, which can be accessed on the THC's website as well.

During the year, TMSP staff also continued work on a series of multi-day site visits to communities with Main Street/Preserve America designations, utilizing nationally recognized consultants made possible through the grant and THC staff to expand and enhance technical preservation assistance for the benefit of the local communities. During 2011, nine of these visits have occurred. Following the site visits, each program receives an individualized, comprehensive report providing recommendations in all areas of Main Street. Since the grant-funded program began in August 2009, 24 of these site visits

have been completed. Additionally in 2011, TMSP, assisted by other THC staff and several local Main Street managers, completed comprehensive resource teams for Vernon, Kingsville, and Uvalde. Thanks to the following local managers who participated: D.C. Dunham, Bay City (Kingsville resource team) and Mindy Wendele, Kerrville, and Frieda Hanley, Decatur (Uvalde resource team). In all, TMSP staff made site visits 118 times between January and December to provide technical assistance and resources to designated Main Street communities.

**Reinvestment**

In the most recent fiscal year, Texas Main Street communities reported more than \$171 million in overall reinvestment. Of that, almost



Stakeholder participation in the TMSP site visits done under the Preserve America/National Park Service grant was strong, as shown in the image from Bastrop (top). On the Denton assessment, Mayor Mark Burroughs and Councilman Jim Engelbrecht met with the team (bottom).

\$77 million comes from private reinvestment, signaling the confidence local entrepreneurs and property owners have in their Main Street communities. Private reinvestment includes the value of rehabilitation and restoration projects on privately owned buildings, new construction, and the value of properties bought and sold in Main Street districts.

In this same period, close to 1,400 jobs were created and 359 businesses were created, expanded, or relocated in the Main Street district.

The successful Main Street effort relies on volunteers. During this period, 90,468 hours have been contributed to the program by Main Street volunteers. The Independent Sector calculates the annual value of a volunteer hour. It varies year to year and state to state but has ranged from an overall val-

***The Comprehensive Business Recruitment for Historic Downtowns seminar evoked enthusiastic responses:***

*"This was by far the best in-depth training I have participated in!"*

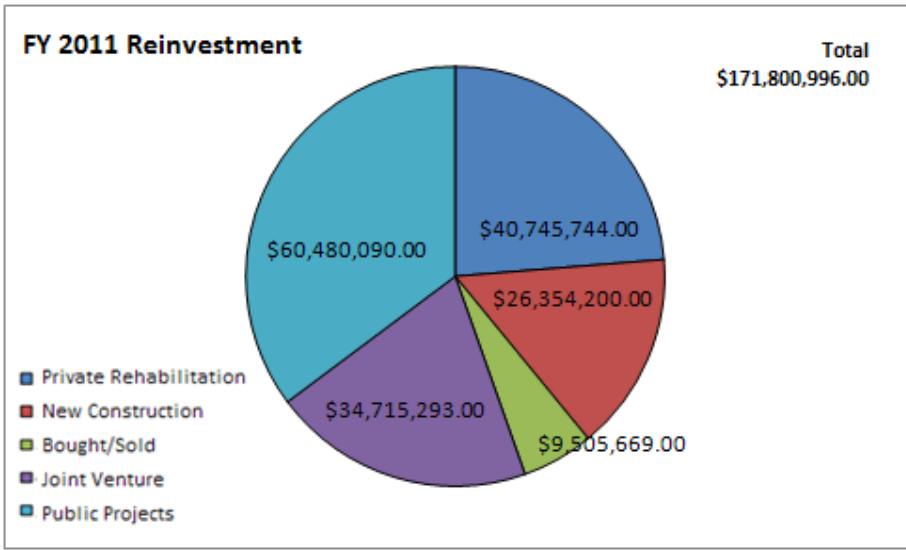
*"Great, practical information for the ER committee..."*

*"Best training in years!"*

*"One of the best presentations I have ever seen on Main Street businesses and retention."*

*"Just what we needed to hear."*

*"Can't say enough about how beneficial this presentation was!"*



**Accolades**

This year marked significant anniversaries for several local Main Street programs: Pittsburg and San Marcos, with 25 continuous years as designated programs, and New Braunfels and Odessa, each with 20 years. Huntsville, Canton, and Carthage each recognized 10 continuous years while Gainesville and Hillsboro recognized 10 years as recertified programs.

Additionally, four Texas programs hold the distinction of having earned National Recognition status every year since the national accreditation program was first implemented in 1999. Those four cities are Beaumont, Elgin, San Marcos, and Seguin. There are 29 cities that have received this nod at least 10 times over the past 12 years.

On the national level, San Angelo, an urban designated program since 2005, was named a “Distinctive Destination” in 2011 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This very important honor recognizes “cities and towns that offer an authentic visitor experience by combining dynamic downtowns, cultural diversity, attractive

ue of \$19.51 to \$21.36 most recently. Using the raw formulas, value of volunteer time given to Texas Main Street programs over the current period is \$1,932,396.

The ever-changing nature of local and national economies impact Main Street activity, so being able to record this kind of progress in a weak economic climate is a testament to the power and wisdom of Main Street and preservation-based economic development. The Texas Main Street office collects this information from local programs and

helps facilitate growth the data shows through individualized services offered by the state office. The data is also used by the National Trust Main Street Center to create a national picture of the effectiveness of the Main Street movement.

Main Street is based upon an incremental approach. So it is important to look at Main Street economic progress over time through reinvestment to show that having a strategic and preservation-based local revitalization effort pays off.



San Marcos Main Street board members and staff celebrate their most recent National Recognition award with THC staff. The San Marcos program is one of four in Texas to have received it each year since 1999.



Just one more...the last This Place Matters anniversary picture for 2011, taken in Lufkin just after the annual conference in nearby Nacogdoches.

architecture, cultural landscapes and a strong commitment to historic preservation, sustainability and revitalization.” San Angelo is one of only seven Distinctive Destinations in Texas and one of 131 in the country. In Texas, two other Main Street cities share the honor: Bastrop, named in 2010, and New Braunfels, named in 2005.

Texas Main Street was proud to have numerous Main Street cities win Texas Downtown Association 2011 President’s awards. Congratulations to:

- Best Renovation/Rehabilitation  
San Angelo—Stephens Central Library
- Best Restoration  
Palestine—Duncan Depot Antiques/Lucas Hardware Building
- Best Adaptive Reuse  
Amarillo—Courtyard by Marriott

- at the Historic Fisk Building
- San Marcos—Texas Music Theater
- Best Promotional Event  
Denton—35 Denton
- Best Downtown Business  
Waxahachie—College Street Restaurant & Pub
- Best Downtown Partner  
Waxahachie—Citizens National Bank of Texas
- Downtowner of the Year  
Mineola—Mrs. Lou Malory
- Susan H. Campbell Award for Professional Excellence  
Tyler—Beverly Abell

We are looking forward to working with each of you throughout 2011!



The Texas Main Street network also said goodbye to Main Street architect Wayne Bell this year. Wayne retired after a long and incredibly noteworthy career in preservation. Brad Patterson, division director for the THC’s Community Heritage Development Division of which Main Street is a part, presented him with a medallion recently to commemorate his years of service. In November, Wayne was one of only three recipients ever to be presented the lifetime achievement award from the Heritage Society of Austin.

Sincerely,

The staff of the Texas Main Street Program

*Debra Faust*

*Spellic Wolfenden*

*Jill Robinson*

*Kimberly A. Klein*

*Howard Conger*

*Ginny Owens*

*Janet J. Blahodis*

*Audrey Helt*



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## 2012 Calendar of Events

- **Feb. 7–8, Harlingen:** Main Street training for new managers (afternoon of Feb. 7 and morning of Feb. 8)
- **Feb. 8–10, Harlingen**  
Main Street Winter Workshop for all managers (begins afternoon of Feb. 8 through noon on Feb. 10)
- **Apr. 1–4, Baltimore, Maryland**  
National Main Streets Annual Conference  
([www.preservationnation.org/mainstreet/training/conference/2012baltimore](http://www.preservationnation.org/mainstreet/training/conference/2012baltimore))
- **June 12-15, Site to be determined:** Main Street summer training (new managers June 12; all managers June 13-15)
- **Oct. 31–Nov. 3, Spokane, Washington**  
National Trust Preservation Conference ([www.preservationnation.org](http://www.preservationnation.org)).
- **Nov. 6–9, Wichita Falls**  
Texas Downtown Association/Texas Main Street Annual Downtown Revitalization Conference

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## Websites of Interest

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: [www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov)  
African American Heritage Preservation Foundation: [www.aahpfdn.org](http://www.aahpfdn.org)  
(The) Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation: [www.ahlp.org](http://www.ahlp.org)  
(The) American Institute of Architects: [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org)  
American Planning Association: [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)  
American Society of Landscape Architects: [www.asla.org](http://www.asla.org)  
(The) Cultural Landscape Foundation: [www.tclf.org](http://www.tclf.org)  
(The) Handbook of Texas Online: [www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online)  
Keep Texas Beautiful: [www.ktb.org](http://www.ktb.org)  
League of Historic American Theatres: [www.lhat.org](http://www.lhat.org)  
National Main Street Center: [www.preservationnation.org/main-street](http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street)  
National Park Service: [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)  
National Trust for Historic Preservation: [www.preservationnation.org](http://www.preservationnation.org)  
Texas Department of Rural Affairs: [www.tda.state.tx.us](http://www.tda.state.tx.us) (TDRA has now become the Office of Rural Affairs within the Texas Department of Agriculture)  
Partners for Sacred Places: [www.sacredplaces.org](http://www.sacredplaces.org)  
Preservation Easement Trust: [www.preservationeasement.org](http://www.preservationeasement.org)  
PreservationDirectory.com: [www.preservationdirectory.com](http://www.preservationdirectory.com)  
Preservation Texas: [www.preservationtexas.org](http://www.preservationtexas.org)  
Project for Public Spaces: [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)  
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy: [www.railstotrails.org](http://www.railstotrails.org)  
Scenic America: [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org)  
Texas Commission on the Arts: [www.arts.state.tx.us](http://www.arts.state.tx.us)  
Texas Downtown Association: [www.texasdowntown.org](http://www.texasdowntown.org)  
Texas Folklife Resources: [www.texasfolklife.org](http://www.texasfolklife.org)  
Texas Historical Commission: [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us)  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)  
Texas Rural Leadership Program: [www.trlp.org](http://www.trlp.org)  
Texas State Preservation Board: [www.tspb.state.tx.us](http://www.tspb.state.tx.us)  
Urban Land Institute: [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org)

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