



Main Street Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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Spotlight on Seguin

(Population approx. 26,842)

Tenacity and Vision Driving New Arts Venues in Seguin

Never, never, never give up. That's a quote from Winston Churchill, and as veteran Main Street Manager Mary Jo Filip will tell you these are words to live by. She is in her 16th year working as the director of the Seguin Main Street Program and bears witness to the importance of this quote. The past few years have been particularly fruitful, and are the result of many tenacious people and organizations that never lost sight of their vision for the organization and the creation of a dynamic downtown.

Some of these projects have been in the works for more than a decade. Some happened because of good planning. Some happened out of pure luck. And, some can be attributed to good timing and synchronicity.

Downtown Seguin and the Arts?

During the process of an annual Main Street Advisory Planning session about six years ago, someone piped up with the idea of downtown Seguin being known for the arts. With some hesitation, the idea made its way onto the list of goals.

The concept percolated, and two years ago, the Seguin Arts Commission bylaws and first committee appointments were made by City Council. In March 2011, with about six weeks of planning, Seguin Main Street and the Arts Commission held ArtsFest. Piggy-backing on the March downtown Trade Days, ArtsFest provided free space for artists in Central Park, art activities for kids, a poetry reading in a downtown café, live entertainment by local musicians in the bandstand all day, and creation of Seguin's first public art project, a collaboration of 30 children and 13 local professional artists.

The installation was unveiled in City Hall in May. The title of the artwork is: "Art in Seguin...Deep in the Heart of Texans." This year, ArtsFest 2012 has grown to include 40 different arts venues happening primarily in downtown Seguin, with an art auction fundraiser to support a new



"Art in Seguin, Deep in the Heart of Texans" was Seguin's first work of public art and was directed by local sculptor Marika Bordes. This 30" x 40" mixed media work which hangs in City Hall in downtown, was created by different artists working in different mediums. Each art piece is of a different place in downtown. The border was created during ArtsFest and features the handprints and handiwork of 30 children from Seguin.

outdoor public art installation in nearby Walnut Springs Park.

A Local Art Organization Finds a Home

For years, the Seguin Oakwood Art League wanted its own gallery to

offer classes, have a gift shop, and showcase member artwork. Various options were explored over the course of more than five years, but the organization, flush on desire and short on cash, couldn't come up with a location they could afford. It was universally agreed that downtown was the best place for the gallery. About six months ago, a downtown property owner called the Main Street office and reported that they really needed a tenant. Their property had been vacant for more than a year, and this was going to cause a significant increase in insurance costs. She asked if Mary Jo had any ideas for who could occupy the space? And voila, a perfect match was made. The property owner made the space available at a significantly reduced rental rate, and Seguin Oakwood Art League had a home.

A Magnificent Theatre Gets Restored

The Seguin Conservation Society bought the historic Texas Theatre in 1996. The theatre had a gaping hole in the roof, water damage, and was in poor condition. Working for 15 years, the Texas Theatre Task Force of the Seguin Conservation Society raised funds for the restoration of the theatre, which included purchase of the building housing

the Chamber of Commerce and new construction infill between it and the theatre. Pledges, grants, donations, fund-raising events, and memorials helped raise the funds needed for the project, which was beefed up with a \$1 million donation from a local source which was given naming rights for the theatre. In March 2011 the Stephen and Mary Birch Texas Theatre opened, providing a venue for live entertainment and special events. Funds were completely expended and the important feature of the marquee remained un-restored.

One of the task force members mentioned they were having a difficult time finding a contractor who knew how to tackle its renovation, and, on top of that, they barely had any money to do the work. Mary Jo was able to locate a retired multi-talented genius who took on the project for the cost of materials only and an occasional tank of gas.

Some of you know him, Harry Grove, former Main Street Manager in Floresville. In the fall of 2011, a Marquee Partee was held to celebrate the return of this glorious entry into our historic downtown.

Mary Jo said that in her early years in this position, she would joke with other Main Street managers at training when they asked what



The renovated historic Texas Theatre opened in March 2011.

she was doing in Seguin. “I do cute,” she would say. She did low budget events and activities that engaged the public and encouraged them to reconnect to their downtown. After Seguin received its first Texas Capital Fund Main Street grant, the people of Seguin were able to see the potential and approved two bond elections for capital project improvements, burying utility lines, installing period street light fixtures, and improving sidewalks. Working without the benefit of a master plan for downtown, but with the help and guidance of Texas Main Street in program planning and design, they created a vision and “never, never, never” gave up. The new arts activities are just one example of the importance of utilizing annual planning and goal setting to move downtown along the path to being a dynamic destination and heart of your community. Mary Jo advises to take advantage of the expertise of the Main Street staff in helping with this very, very important task—and, she stresses... Never, never, never give up.

Thanks to Mary Jo Filip, Seguin Main Street Director for providing information for this article.



Art on display in the new Seguin Oakwood Art League gallery in downtown Seguin.

NEWS

Historic Resources Survey: Pilot Project in Pittsburg

The Texas Main Street Program (TMSP) continually looks for ways to help our Main Street cities strengthen the historic preservation umbrella that encompasses the Four Points of Main Street: Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring. We encourage Main Street towns to conduct building inventories of their districts and to get buildings and districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The TMSP Design staff also offers time and expertise for a historic resources survey to benefit our Main Street towns on several levels. Many towns don't tackle this type of project because it seems daunting; also they may not be sure how to do a survey, and/or don't necessarily have the funds to hire a professional consultant to do the work.

What does a historic resource survey do for a community? As part of a broader preservation planning effort, a survey:

- stimulates public awareness of a community's historic resources;
- produces information useful to



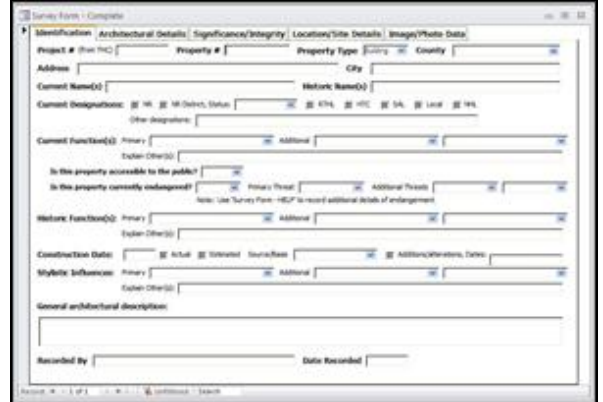
Historic resources survey area

local government or planning agencies;

- is essential if a community plans to pursue historical designations or historic districts under local ordinances;
- helps identify historic resources in anticipation of projects that may involve building demolition and land disturbance;
- documents properties representing a style, period, construction type, or historic theme; and
- allows participation by community members.

So as a pilot project, we looked at all of our Main Street cities to see which ones needed the most assistance—the ones with no building inventory and no National Register buildings or districts in town (or even in the entire county). These cities also needed to have a downtown district that wasn't overly large but with lots of good building stock, an effective Main Street

board and committees, and an active historical society. With input from Greg Smith, National Register coordinator at the Texas Historical Commission, we narrowed the options to four and selected Pittsburg in



Top: Historic building in Pittsburg
Bottom: THC survey form

Camp County as the initial city for a historic resources survey.

TMSP will hold the first meeting this spring for Pittsburg's citizens to let them know what a historic resources survey is and how they can participate in the survey. Nearby Main Street cities and Certified Local Government (CLG) communities will be invited to the meeting as well, in the hopes of inspiring those towns to initiate their own surveys. Historic resources surveys are one of the many projects for which CLG grants may be used. If you are a CLG city or located within a CLG county, please contact CLG State Coordinator Matt Synatschk at matt.synatschk@thc.state.tx.us or 512.463.7812 for more information.

The survey team will be comprised of an architectural historian, several

historian or researcher volunteers, and feet-on-the-ground volunteers to take photos and fill in survey forms. The architectural historian (one of the TMSP design staff in this case) will oversee the entire project, review all survey forms, and make determinations of eligibility, significance, and integrity. The historians or researchers will write the town's historic context so the survey participants are familiar with the broader historical patterns that have influenced the development and character of the survey area, which includes geography, settlement, transportation, industry and commerce, social history and culture, physical development, and building patterns.

The historians will also do research to uncover building information (legal descriptions, photographs, owner histories, etc.) from local records and archives. The feet-on-the-ground volunteers will supply the actual survey work of photo-documenting the buildings, recording building information, noting architectural descriptions and additional information, and creating the inventory database. The architectural historian will take all the information gathered and compile it into a historic resources survey report and inventory.

The newly created inventory should be in a database format that can be easily updated. New photographs should be taken every time a major façade renovation occurs and a complete photographic survey can be done every five years. The completed inventory can also be coupled with the efforts of the economic restructuring committee for a complete database of downtown buildings including historic and current information.

The historic resources survey and inventory set up the next step of

doing a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination, which is another project in itself. A National Register listing is a honorific designation and an excellent heritage tourism tool. The NRHP provides national recognition of a property's historical or architectural significance and provides special consideration to the properties during federal projects. It also makes available a federal rehabilitation tax credit to qualifying building projects.

Thanks to Leslie Wolfenden, Project Design Assistant with the TMSP, for providing this article.

AROUND THE STATE

Kilgore

Kilgore hosted a very successful regional board training in February with the nearby cities of Gladewater, Carthage and Henderson. There was a great exchange of Main Street information and experiences among the cities in attendance.

Mineola

Mineola Main Street presented its first Golden Broom award to Lee's Old Country Store. Owner Lee James clean numerous sidewalks as well as the Gazebo. The Mineola Main Street Program hopes to create more awareness and inspire more merchants to keep their storefronts clean with this new award.

Palestine

Palestine Main Street recently partnered with the Small Business Development Center and the Palestine Economic Development Corporation to present a workshop on Successfully Marketing to a Changed Customer.



Regional board training in Kilgore including the cities of Gladewater, Carthage, and Henderson.

EVENTS

If you would like one of your Main Street events posted here, email jill.robinson@thc.state.tx.us at least three weeks ahead of the month in which you want the posting.

March 10, Luling

Calling all cooks to show off your Cajun cooking abilities, with an all-original Ragun' Cajun Throwdown Gumbo Cook-off in Luling. There will be 13 awards given and one People's Choice Award. Entertainment provided by the Dr. Zog Zydeco Band and Chris Rybak, accordion player. Amusements will include a mechanical bull and a Eurobungie. The event is sponsored by Luling Main Street. Entry forms and additional information are available at www.lulingmainstreet.com.

Mar. 23–Apr. 8, Tyler

The 53rd Annual Tyler Azalea and Spring Flower Trail travels through eight miles of residential gardens, including national historic register districts and historic homes sites. See www.tylerazaleatrail.com/index.htm

March 24–25, Mineola

Celebrate the 9th Annual Mineola Main Street/Amtrak Reels on the Rails Wine Festival traveling in

Texas Eagle coach cars from Mineola to Fort Worth for a great get-away weekend. For more information, see

www.mineola.com/home/41/98-9th-annual-mineola-main-streetamtrak-wine-fest.html

March 31, Gladewater

Come support historic downtown at the first annual Bricks in Bloom event. Garden and landscaping advice will be available from the master gardeners, garden club, and the county extension office. Garden art, gardening supplies, and loads of spring flowers will be filling the brick streets. Adam Brown and the Triple Crown Band will provide live entertainment for the day and are sponsored by The Bumpus House. The event will be 9 a.m.–3 p.m. in historic downtown Gladewater on the brick streets. For more information, call 903.845.5501.

April 21, Lufkin

The Downtown Hoe Down in its 16th year is an annual street festival held each spring in historic downtown Lufkin beginning at 10 a.m. Events include a parade, petting zoo, classic car show, tricycle obstacle course, live entertainment on two stages, arts and crafts, children's games, and more. See <http://cityoflufkin.com/ms/hoedown.htm>

SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS/ WEBINARS

Free Webinar: Many kids want to be their own boss someday...which ones can?

There will be a free webinar on Many kids want to be their own boss someday...which ones can? Attend this free webinar on Tuesday, March 6 at 1:30 p.m. central standard time discussing this topic.

Identifying children who have the qualities to be a successful entrepreneur and nourishing that growth is an important yet often misunderstood endeavor. Formal educational systems often forget that entrepreneurship is a career opportunity and should be taught as such. Learn ways of utilizing your community's organization as a catalyst for expanding the young entrepreneurial curiosity. Presented by Todd Tracy of in(alliance). To register, see <https://www4.gotomeeting.com/register/651806239>

Free Downtown Market Analysis Webinar

There will be a free webinar on *Downtown Market Analysis Tools to Study the Retail Sector* on Wednesday, March 7 at noon central standard time.

To guide economic development efforts in small city downtowns, business and community leaders require more than a basic understanding of the health of the local economy. Retail development in particular requires relevant and sector-specific market information to guide business development efforts. This webinar will describe a variety of retail market analysis tools to help you understand market conditions, conduct business-specific analyses, and apply the findings to business retention, expansion and recruitment efforts. Presenters: Jill Clark of the Ohio State University, Ryan Pesch and Bruce Schwartau of the University of Minnesota-Extension, and Bill Ryan of the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Free National Register Webinar

A free webinar will be offered on the basics of the National Register of Historic Places, March 20 from 1:30–2:15 p.m. central standard time (30 minute presentation/15

minute Q&A). The official list of the nation's historic places is frequently afforded mythical powers in preventing owners from altering their historic properties. This webinar will be presented by Darius Bryjka of in(alliance) and will break through the myths surrounding the program and present facts, advantages, and disadvantages (if any) of pursuing a listing in the National Register. If you can't make the live session, you can still register and you will get the OnDemand session within 48 hours of the live session. No prior registration required—just go to <http://connect.msu.edu/ncrcrd/> at noon on March 7.

2012 Preservation Summit

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) is proud to partner with Preservation Texas (PT) and offer a special funding workshop, open house, and reception to the public as part of the 2012 Preservation Summit on March 22–23 in Austin. The Preservation Summit is an opportunity to identify issues related to the preservation of the historic built environment, develop strategic approaches and solutions to the issues, and to cultivate partnerships across the state. The Summit is open to anyone who is interested in the preservation of historic and cultural places in Texas.

To learn more about the PT Summit and schedule, as well as to register, please visit: www.preservationtexas.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50%3A2012-preservation-summit&catid=1&Itemid=25. Attendees can purchase registration for one or both days of the Summit, or register a la carte for THC events.

Texas Pathways Symposium

El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association and the Oregon-California Trail Association are hosting a symposium in Austin April 26–28 at the Hilton Garden Inn. The symposium will seek to explore the histories of both trails and discuss developments taking place with each. The period of historic significance for the Camino is 1680-1845, while the Southern Route to California is focused primarily on the period

from around 1849 through the Civil War. Lecturers will make connections, not only through time, but also geographically, where the trails intersect and have resources in common with one another. Native American history associated with the trails will also be highlighted.

The symposium will better familiarize people with these two trail systems, inspire partnerships where historic resources are in common, and cross-pollinate interest between those primarily interested in the

Camino and those interested in the Southern Routes.

For more information, see www.votemailer1.com/display.php?M=9511017&C=3f44e9bb20a5b28385f509c2d037ecf7&S=2523&L=254&N=828

2012 Calendar of Events

- **Apr. 1–4, Baltimore, Maryland**
National Main Streets Annual Conference (www.preservationnation.org/main-street/training/conference/2012baltimore)
- **June 12–13, Brenham**
Main Street Summer Training for new managers (afternoon of June 12 and morning of June 13)
- **June 13–15, Brenham**
Main Street Summer Workshop and Preserve America Seminar (Thursday) for all managers (begins afternoon of June 13 through noon on June 15)
- **Nov. 6–9, Wichita Falls**
Texas Main Street/Texas Downtown Association annual conference

Websites of Interest

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: www.achp.gov
African American Heritage Preservation Foundation: www.aahpfdn.org
(The) Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation: www.ahlp.org
(The) American Institute of Architects: www.aia.org
American Planning Association: www.planning.org
American Society of Landscape Architects: www.asla.org
(The) Cultural Landscape Foundation: www.tclf.org
(The) Handbook of Texas Online: www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online
Keep Texas Beautiful: www.ktb.org
League of Historic American Theatres: www.lhat.org
National Main Street Center: www.preservationnation.org/main-street
National Park Service: www.nps.gov
National Trust for Historic Preservation: www.preservationnation.org
Texas Department of Rural Affairs: 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
Preservation Easement Trust: www.preservationeasement.org
PreservationDirectory.com: www.preservationdirectory.com

Preservation Texas: www.preservationtexas.org
Project for Public Spaces: www.pps.org
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy: www.railstotrails.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 Department: 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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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories