



Main Street! Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

APRIL 2012 • COMMUNITY HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION • P.O. BOX 12276, AUSTIN, TX 78711 • 512.463.6092

Spotlight on Canyon

(Population approx. 13,300)



Canyon is located in the upper portion of the Texas panhandle. It is often confused with Canyon Lake, located in the hill country. We do not have a lake, but we do have the second largest canyon in the United

States, Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Canyon was founded on Christmas Day 1887, and in 1889 Randall County was formed as the county seat.

This year Canyon is celebrating its 10th anniversary as an official Texas Main Street City and much has been accomplished during the decade. The attitude around the square is totally different since the exterior restoration of the Randall County Courthouse and the surrounding public space improvements took place. The restoration was a partnership between the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program and Randall County. The Canyon Economic Development Corporation, Canyon Main Street program, and the Canyon Community Fund supported the public space improvements. The restoration of the courthouse was the catalyst needed to create private investment in the commercial property on the square.

Since the dedication of the courthouse in October 2010,



July 4th celebration around the recently restored Randall County Courthouse square.

the downtown area has experienced remarkable growth in new retail businesses, building renovations and commerce. Several properties were rented to service businesses. Those properties sold, buildings were renovated, and new retail businesses were brought to Canyon. The Palace Hotel built in 1906 had been vacant for seven years and was recently renovated for a mixed-use development and now is home to a coffee shop, home décor and gift shop, pottery store, and art gallery. The Palace was a finalist in the Texas Downtown Association President's Awards program for Best Renovation/Rehabilitation in 2011.

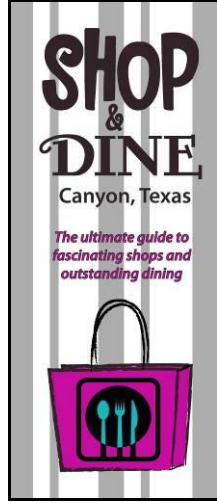
Canyon is experiencing a new level of visitor to the city, primarily for shopping. The Main Street program saw the need to create Canyon's



The Palace Hotel mixed-use development was a finalist in the Texas Downtown Association President's Awards program for Best Renovation/Rehabilitation in 2011.



Palo Duro Canyon is a unique geological attraction bringing tourists to the area and ultimately to shop and dine downtown.



attracts more than 20,000 attendees. Both of these events are more than 20 years old. They are hosted by the city of Canyon and the Chamber of Commerce.

A new project for the Canyon Main Street program is the restoration of Tex Randall, the 47 foot-tall, seven-ton cowboy built in 1959. Currently a capital campaign is in progress to raise funds for the restoration of the statue and site redevelopment.

FOCUS ON MAIN STREET DESIGN

Design Beyond the Front Façade: Back Façade, Side Façade and Alley

In Main Street, we often put a great deal of emphasis and attention on the front façade. This works well when people only see the fronts of the buildings, but in reality a town is experienced through many vantage points; whether it is a vehicular route, pedestrian shortcut/connection, or dining area created away from the noise of the street. Improving aesthetics and transforming underutilized areas are two major categories for making changes.

Improving aesthetics is the most basic reason to address the rear façade/alley. This could be as simple as cleaning up the trash and essential maintenance on the rear façade (such as fixing broken downspouts). The back of the building's purpose was originally utilitarian, so it is not necessary to doll it up too much. In fact, keeping the original textures and materials visible will make a more interesting backdrop. Keeping historic doors and windows is always a must!

Graffiti is a problem with which some cities struggle. One city found it was spending so much money to continuously remove graffiti from utility boxes that they took a chance on a creative solution. They invested in artists to paint utility boxes into pieces of art. Seven years later, they report this has been a successful deterrent and the city has saved money in the long run. For more details, visit the Ft. Collins, Colorado website.

first ever Shop & Dine brochure. It boasts a map showing restaurants and more than 30 shops. The nine-block area encompassing the square is 95 percent occupied.

The two largest events in Canyon take place on the downtown Square. The 4th of July celebration has 30,000 plus people attend from all over the panhandle. The Fair on the Square in October is held in conjunction with the West Texas A&M University homecoming and

The property where he is located was purchased by Main Street Canyon's non-profit organization and will be a venue for murals depicting the history of Canyon as well as a kiosk for information about Canyon and attractions such as the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, "TEXAS" musical drama, and the historic downtown square. The Texas Country Reporter aired a segment on this unique project in 2010.

Since becoming a Texas Main Street city, Canyon has used the tools of Main Street successfully, accessed the services provided by the Austin staff, and has created an organization with more than 30 volunteers. It has been said by many local folks, "the Canyon Main Street program is the vehicle that was needed to revitalize the downtown square." We look forward to the next decade with excitement.

If you are planning a summer vacation, consider Canyon, the crown jewel of the Texas panhandle.

Thanks to Evelyn Ecker, Canyon Main Street Director and Economic Development Corporation Executive Director for providing this article.



Historic 47 ft. tall Tex Randall statue is being restored to welcome tourists to Canyon.



In Fort Collins, Colorado, graffiti is deterred by creatively painting utility boxes.

Art can go a long way to improve aesthetics and transform an underutilized area. Simply mounting artwork on the backdrop of historic masonry walls creates a combination of rich textures and visual appeal for everyday use or major events. San Angelo's Art Opens Doors alleyscape beautification project is one such example of this successful combination. Affixing any artwork to the mortar rather than the masonry is essential to avoid damage to the masonry.

Efforts have been made in many places to re-purpose alleys into activity areas or "new living rooms." These tend to work better in larger cities, walkable communities, university cities, or cities with lots of downtown living. In Seattle's Alley Project, a goal was to make vibrant public spaces in the alley with such elements as local art installations, movie screenings, and food vendors. The picture of Nord Alley in

Seattle shows a movie event in the alley. In utilizing this space, only maintenance, clean-up, and art (note the artistic light fixture in the night photo) are needed to be addressed.



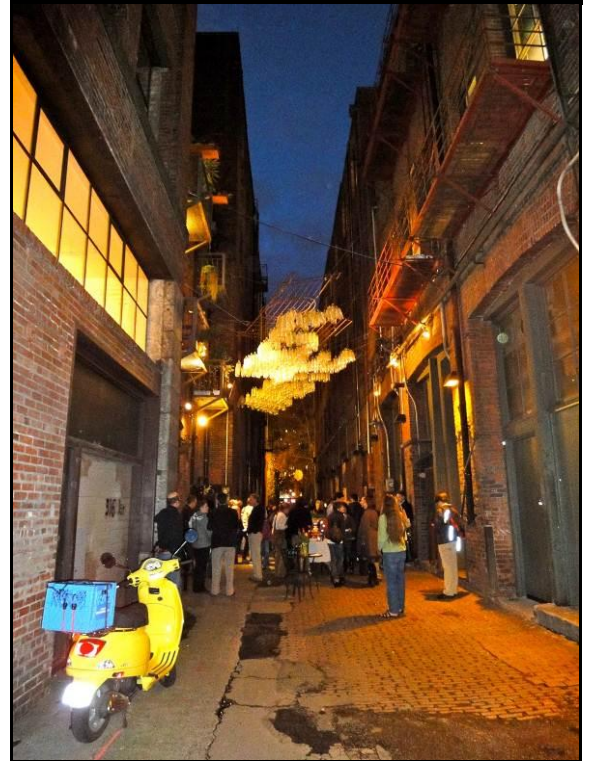
The Art Opens Doors alley project in downtown San Angelo affixes artwork to the mortar rather than the masonry.

Other alley transformations into "new living rooms" can involve tremendous changes such as new paving textures, raised pedestrian walkways, bollards, landscaping, benches, etc., that require extensive master plans and community input meetings. The South-of-Market Alley Project in San Francisco is an interesting and well documented project of this magnitude.

These same considerations can be scaled down for smaller alley projects and appear similar to many pocket park projects that are a frequent topic in our downtowns. The pocket park can work, but all too often they become vacant spaces with a few plants and benches. For an alley or pocket park project to be successful, there really needs to be either a constant use for the space or enough population in the area to make it a utilized corridor.

Winnsboro has leased an alley next to a restaurant for outdoor dining which fulfills the need for continual use to make this project successful. The alley

was no longer being used by vehicles so it was made into a pedestrian walkway. It is very shaded, and



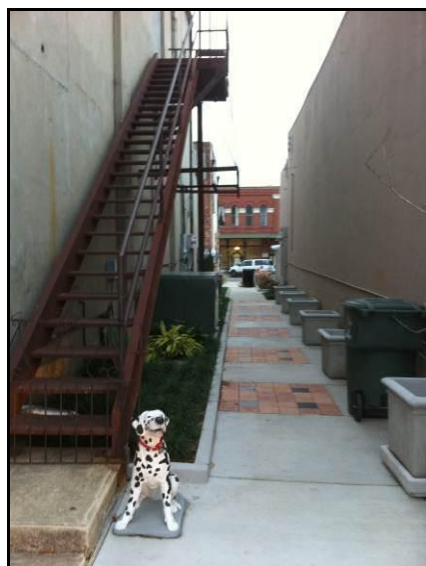
Nord Alley in Seattle serves as a great venue for movies and displays creative artistic lighting in the evening.



Effective landscaping and restaurant seating transform this alley in downtown Winnsboro.

pedestrian traffic can still use the alley as a gateway between their two main streets.

In Brenham, a little-used alley has been cleaned up to create a pedestrian path to Toubin Park near downtown. “Belle’s Alley” was



Belle’s Alley in downtown Brenham was cleaned up to create a pedestrian path to nearby Toubin Park. (photo credit: Jennifer Eckermann, Brenham)

named after the Brenham fire station Dalmatian and includes brick pavers sold in honor of people’s pets. Landscaping and lighting are still in the works. Special attention also needs to be paid to drainage in these types of improvements so that the adjacent historic buildings are not damaged. Note in the Georgia example how a space is left so the landscaping does not touch the brick wall and to allow proper drainage from the gutters.



This alley in Valdosta, GA pays special attention to drainage issues while protecting the historic building and hiding the downspouts with plantings placed away from the building. (photo credit: C. Fischetti, Valdosta)

Secondary entrances are another way to utilize the back facade. Be careful not to take too much foot traffic away from the main street. You want your downtown to look busy, and making secondary entrances could potentially work against this goal by driving foot traffic away from the front street.

Funding these projects can come from the city, donors, or individual



Businesses in this cleaned-up alley in New Braunfels utilize their back doors as secondary entrances.

building/business owners. Many times, it is of the business/building owners’ own initiative, but other times they are forced to make improvements. Some municipal codes force building owners to keep their alley tidy in order to: create cleaner business districts, reduce the incidence of uncivil behaviors and illegal activities, increase pedestrian use, allow better access for business services (deliveries), and expand commercial activity. These efforts can include removing junk, graffiti, overgrown landscaping, or dumpsters. There are even ordinances preventing dumpsters in certain alleys and accommodate for this by providing garbage pick-up multiple times per day for businesses.

Volunteer efforts can make a big difference—organize an ongoing clean-up program or annual event. The Adopt-an-Alley Youth Empowerment project in Chinatown (San Francisco) is an inspiring story of high school students that work to improve the quality of life by monitoring and organizing clean-ups. The volunteers with this program developed a connection to the culture and history of the area. Former members lead year-round Chinatown Alley Tours teaching about the history of the buildings, culture, and people.

There are many fun and creative examples of what people have done

to underutilized spaces. I look forward to hearing more stories of what your cities do 'beyond the front façade.'

Thanks to Sarah J. Blankenship, Project Design Assistant with the TMSP, for providing this article.

First Lady of Texas Celebrates in San Angelo and Victoria

April 10 will be a day of celebration in both San Angelo and Victoria. San Angelo will be recognized with a special award presented by First Lady of Texas, Anita Perry, at 10:30 a.m. at the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts with a reception following. Later, at 2 p.m., Mrs. Perry will welcome the new 2012 Main Street city of Victoria to the Texas Main Street Program with a grand kick-off ceremony and reception on the courthouse steps in downtown. If you are near either of these, please plan to come to these celebrations and support your fellow Texas Main Street cities.

AROUND THE STATE

Corsicana

Corsicana Main Street's Design Committee has launched a new program aimed at improving the appearance of downtown vacancies. The first project, at the former Dyer's Department store, was kicked off with a great showing of more than a dozen volunteers that included Main Street Advisory Board members, representatives from the Corsicana Art League, the Cumbie Aviation Museum, a city councilman, and individual citizens. After new paint, clean up, and glass repair, the building will be used as a downtown kiosk, promoting community organizations and events. Once this project is complete, the focus will shift to vacant properties along Beaton.

Corsicana Main Street's Economic Restructuring Committee continues to partner with the Small Business Development Center at Navarro College. On April 17 a website design and social media consultant, Eric Spellmann, will present a free seminar on how to increase traffic and create qualified leads through a website and social media. In June, Marc Willson, professional retail consultant, will talk about the best ways to leverage the increased traffic during events and how to benefit from the extra exposure to new customers.

Mount Vernon

The businesses in the Mount Vernon Main Street district have all agreed to have the same business hours—congratulations! As of April 1, the new hours will be Monday-Friday 11 a.m.–6 p.m. and Saturdays until 3 p.m.

Vernon

Nine local celebrities waited tables and entertained diners at a fund-raising dinner held on February 21 in the interest of downtown. The waiters sold tickets to the event and then competed with each other in a contest to raise the most in tips during the evening. Bragging rights went to waiter Bobby Crews, who raised more than \$2,000 to support downtown beautifications and enhancements. In total, the celebrity waiters raised more than \$10,000 for downtown enhancement and beautification projects.

Winnsboro

The April issue of Southern Living features downtown Winnsboro and places to shop, eat and stay as well as entertainment venues.

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.

April 14, Ferris

Kiss My Earth is the theme of the first annual Earth Day in Ferris on April 14. Strong participation by local teachers and principals, school children, business people, and citizens should make this a popular event. See

http://cityofferris.org/index/index.php?option=com_jcalpro&Itemid=38&extmode=view&extid=422

April 13–14, Paris

Wine tastings in local downtown businesses and an artists reception will launch the Paris Wine and Art Fest from 6 p.m.–9 p.m. Friday evening. The event will feature nine Texas wineries and heavy hors d'oeuvres from local restaurants. Tickets for the wine tasting event are \$25, and proceeds benefit the Paris Main Street Program. Fine art in the downtown plaza will be enjoyed all day Saturday from 10 a.m.–5 p.m. See

<http://pariswineandartfest.com>

April 14, McKinney



Local and regional artists invite you to experience art in all forms as creative forte's blossom throughout the Historic District from 10 a.m.–6 p.m. This all-day event is a perfect opportunity to experience the magic of McKinney historic shopping district during the spring season with art, music, food, and much more. See

www.mckinneytexas.org/mainstreet.aspx?id=4540

April 19, Huntsville

Wine Down, Shop Small is Huntsville's newest event on April 19 from 6–9 p.m. Downtown retail stores will be open for late-night shopping and selected stores will host a unique regional winery and local restaurant fare. There will be live music by the Sam Houston String Ensemble as well as a silent auction. All proceeds go to downtown revitalization efforts in Huntsville. For more information, contact

kmcauliffe@huntsvilletx.gov

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>

April 28, Ferris

The 16th annual Brick Festival will be celebrated in downtown. The all-day event will include a brick sled pull, a brick throwing contest, and the day will conclude with a street dance by the Ellis County band Smoke & Mirrors. See http://cityofferris.org/index/index.php?option=com_jcalpro&Itemid=1&extmode=view&xtid=423

April 28–29, Georgetown

The 13th annual Red Poppy Festival in downtown Georgetown features numerous venues and activities and has become a Georgetown and



central Texas tradition. Events include the Red Poppy Market Place which features artisans from across the nation, the Open Car Show, the Safe Place Kids Village, and the Saturday Night Concert and Street Dance. See

<http://poppy.georgetown.org>

SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS/ WEBINARS

Free Historic Wood Window Repair Educational Workshop

Date and Time: April 21, 9 a.m. – Noon

Location: The Chapel @ Chestnut Square Historic Village, 315 S. Chestnut Street; McKinney, Texas

This free half-day workshop hosted by the City of McKinney Office of Historic Preservation and the McKinney Historic Preservation Advisory Board is designed to provide historic building owners and construction professionals with a working knowledge on how to evaluate the condition of historic wood windows and how to best go about repairing or replacing them. Model sash and frame parts showing a variety of appropriate treatments for historic windows will be available for hands-on interaction and inspection. Demonstrations and discussion will include:

- identification of window components,
- evaluation of existing condition of window components, and
- techniques for wood preparation, putty removal, re-glazing, re-painting, sash cord replacement, weather stripping maintenance, and hardware alignment.

Save Money...

Historic wood windows can

usually be repaired for a lower cost than replacing them.

Save History...

Windows are character defining features of a building, and retaining historic wood windows helps to preserve the historic integrity of a building.

Save Energy...

Historic wood windows can be weatherized to be as energy efficient as replacement windows.

Please RSVP to Terri Ramey tramey@mckinneytexas.org or call 972.547.7417

by Monday, April 16. Please include name, mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address of all attendees.

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 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 also will 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

Telling a Better Story through Interpretive Panels Webinar

The American Trails Webinar Series will include the upcoming webinar “Telling a Better Story—Best Practices for Developing Interpretive Panels for Trails” on Thursday, April 26 at from noon–1 p.m.

Visitors encounter a range of sign media when they arrive at a

trailside. Entry signs welcome them; maps orient them; regulatory signs guide them. But it is the experiences on the trail that inspire them, and often, those experiences are made more powerful with wayside exhibits. Wayside exhibits are low-profile interpretive panels positioned along the trail. Done poorly, these panels only dispense facts, and too many of them at that. Done well, they convey powerful messages that visitors understand. While they increase awareness and build knowledge, they also serve to inspire people, even turning them into trail stewards and advocates.

A part of the American Trails Webinar Series, “Telling a Better Story” focuses on strategies for captivating your trail audience with provocative, well-designed interpre-

tive panels. The webinar will provide advice for developing theme-based messages, establishing budgets, selecting images and design elements, understanding how visitors learn, writing interpretive text, and preparing files for production. There will be discussions, case studies, and valuable tips and techniques to turn ordinary panels into extraordinary experiences. Cost for the webinar is \$25 for American Trails members and \$45 for non-members.

For more information, see <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs044/1105067396951/archive/1109519651415.html>

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

Texas Main Street Program
Texas Historical Commission
P. O. Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276
512.463.6092, Fax 512.463.5862



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories