



Main Street! Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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Spotlight on Brenham

(Population approx. 16,427)

Slow but steady growth from Houston has been heading this way – marching westward down State Highway 290. It is the understanding of what that growth might mean, good and bad, that has refocused the attention of the community on the importance of our historic core.

With the economy of recent years in the doldrums, the city has had limited funding available for specific Main Street projects so it has been community support for the downtown revitalization process



Historic cistern in Toubin Park dedicated in downtown Brenham.



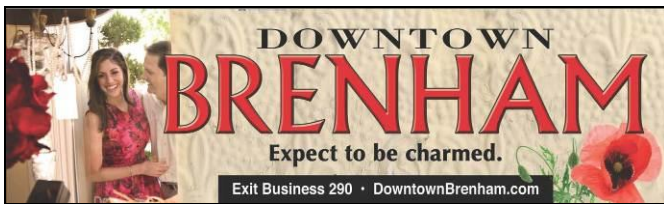
The historic Simon Theater (left) houses a coffee shop and the Washington County Visitor Center (right). Notice the map on the floor of the Visitor Center.

that has enabled us to accomplish several things that otherwise would have had to wait for better economic times.

Funding to complete a downtown pocket park (Toubin Park) was generated, along with excitement for the project, when history previously unknown to the community (historic underground cistern system) was uncovered and the interesting story was shared at meetings of numerous community organizations. When citizens found out that sponsors were needed for display boards in the park where the story would be told, there were actually people fighting for the chance to sponsor. Later, there was one gentleman who attended the ground-

breaking who offered to help promote the park, and ended up funding the first of four printings of the book The Burning of Brenham that was written to share every detail that was uncovered. This was a man none of us had met before but he was so taken with the project that he got involved in a big way.

Some members of our Economic Restructuring Committee decided to push for funding of a Downtown Master Plan after attending part of the Texas Downtown Association Annual Conference in Temple and a road trip to Georgetown. Again, funding a master plan in this economy was not high on Council's priority list, but at the urging of our Mayor, the



As Brenham’s new billboard boasts, “Expect to be charmed” in downtown Brenham...at the historic Ant Street Inn (above) hosting the Main Street Summer Workshop and in all of downtown.

group met with community leaders to gather support to fund the plan. It was because of the determination of Main Street supporters that funding was made available, the planning process took place, and adoption of the plan is expected in June.

A \$1M contribution to a major renovation project by a local preservation and community-minded family has been a catalyst to complete what will become the Jane and John Barnhill Conference Center at the Historic Simon Theater. The non-profit that owns the theater and is committed to completing the project, is currently working with Texas Historical Commission Project Reviewer on eligibility for historic tax credits, and with an Austin group on New Market Tax Credits. Although somewhat challenging to understand, the opportunity of the non-

profit to take advantage of programs like ones we had heard about, but that had not seen accomplished, has made the group more aware of what is available to help complete great downtown projects.

Main Street Summer Training which will be held at the historic Ant Street Inn is just around the corner. We are looking forward to sharing more about the exciting things going

on in Downtown Brenham and, as our new billboard says: “Expect to be charmed.”

Thanks to Jennifer Eckermann, Brenham Main Street Manager for providing this article.

FOCUS ON MAIN STREET DESIGN
Cast Iron Preservation

When you think of Galveston, what is the first thing that comes to mind? The beach? A bustling port? Beautiful historic houses? Hurricanes? While it is true that each and every one of those things is a very important component responsible for making Galveston what it is today, there is an equally important component that often gets overlooked—cast iron. Galveston’s Strand/Mechanic National Historic

Landmark District boasts one of the largest collections of cast iron historic commercial buildings in the country (Fig 1).

Did you know that cast iron, while it can be highly decorative, is often the structural framework of these historic commercial buildings (Fig 2)? Did you know that on September 13, 2008, Hurricane Ike flooded the Strand/Mechanic National Historic Landmark District with 6-12 feet of salty ocean water? (Fig 2) When you combine these factors, you get a situation that has the potential to be catastrophic. When cast iron is exposed to moisture, it rusts and expands, with the potential of causing severe damage to this very important structural system.



Fig 1 A row of cast iron buildings in the Strand/Mechanic National Historic District

To bring awareness to this issue, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the Cast Iron

Architecture of Galveston to their 11 Most Endangered List in 2009. As a direct result of this listing, the Galveston Historical Foundation received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to host a symposium on the manufacture and maintenance of cast iron. When the designers here at the Texas Main Street Center (TMSC) heard about this symposium we were very excited to go and learn more.



Fig 4 Rust has split the surface of this cast iron column

You may be thinking, what does this mean for you? Many of our Texas cities are not on the coast and have no danger of seawater flooding, so what is it that we at the TMSC hoped to gain by attending the symposium? You may have noticed that you have structural cast iron building components in your own town, virtually all Main Street Cities do. Have you also ever noticed it to be humid, or that puddles of water accumulate after a good rain? While not as catastrophic as 6-12 feet of saltwater, our humid Texas air and rain storms can deteriorate and rust cast iron. More often than not, you can

remove the rust and repair the cast iron. Rust has 7-10 times the volume of the undamaged metal, therefore it can be said that rust 'blooms,' expanding the cast iron (Fig 4 & 5). Though you may think that you are looking at a significant amount of rusted metal, in reality, rust in normal conditions rarely exceeds 5-25 percent of the total cast iron material. When the face or exterior surface of a material, usually plaster or stucco, begins to crack due to a rusting cast iron element enclosed inside, this is known as 'rust jacking.' Keeping a careful eye out for this issue can help identify potential issues with cast iron that may not be readily visible.



Fig 5 Rust has 'bloomed' in this structural cast iron element (jill, trim as needed to fit)

Once a rust issue is identified, your object becomes finding a qualified



Fig 6 The cast iron threshold is being bowed upward, likely by rust caused by contact with the brick sidewalk

contractor who can remove the rust. Once rust gets started, it becomes more and more difficult to contain. It is imperative that the area be examined and the cause of the issue be found. As we discussed, water is cast iron's number one enemy, therefore constant contact with moisture is the root of significant deterioration. Usual culprits are wood or masonry that hold water near to the metal (Fig 6). Once the source of moisture is eliminated and the rust is removed down to bare metal, a rust inhibitor and a fresh coat of paint can do wonders for slowing the deterioration of your cast iron. Again, rust on structural cast iron is rarely thick enough to necessitate replacement, although in extreme cases it can happen. In the event this does occur, there are foundries that specialize in replicating historic cast iron components. If the rust on structural cast iron is severe enough to perhaps warrant replacement, a qualified structural engineer should be consulted to do a thorough assessment.

Galveston is on its way to bringing back many of their damaged buildings, but they have a long road ahead of them. If you notice issues with cast iron in your own town, never hesitate to call or to snap a few photos and email them to us. Of course, if the issue seems to be an imminent danger to life safety, a structural engineer should be contacted right away.

For more information about cast iron, also see the National Park Service's Preservation Brief #27 *The Maintenance and Repair of Structural Cast Iron*.
www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief27.htm

Thanks to Audrey Holt, Texas Main Street project design assistant, for providing this article.

The Spring issue of The Medallion, the Texas Historical Commission's official magazine, is now available in electronic format on the agency's web site. Regular subscribers will receive the issue via mail soon; however, the online version offers Texas preservationists a conveniently accessible and paperless option.

<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/medallionmag/mdarchive.shtml>

<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/medallionmag/medalliontravel.mdtravel.shtml>

AROUND THE STATE

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.

June 7, 14, 21, 28, Level-land
Sounds of Texas 2012
7:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Courthouse Lawn

June 1–2, Denton

This year, dogs and their best friends can start their weekend fun in the evening shade at the Dog Days of Denton Celebration “yappy” hour on Friday, June 1 and

again on Saturday morning and afternoon June 2. Festival hours will be Friday, June 1, from 5 p.m.–8:30 p.m. and Saturday, June 2, from 8:30 a.m.–2 p.m. Festivities take place in the north end of Quakertown Park at 321 E. McKinney, just a few blocks northeast of the Denton County historic courthouse square. Attendees can enjoy a canine couture fashion show, live entertainment, demos and performances by canines and their trainers, glamfur photos, canine contests, arts and craft vendors, pet care information, pet rescue groups, and festival foods. There will be a cool zone by Invisible Fence of Greater Dallas—expanded for more comfort this year. See <http://dentondogdays.com/main>

June 14, Lufkin

Main Street Lufkin will celebrate its 32 annual Flag Day Program. Patriotic music is played and speeches are given. The Mayor acknowledges all soldiers with a City lapel pin and small flags are given to all in attendance. The ceremony will be held in the Atrium of Lufkin City Hall at 5:30 p.m. At 6 p.m. those in attendance will join other Flag Day Celebrations around the country in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to our nation's flag. The program will be a live televised event. Refreshments will be served. For more information, please contact the Lufkin Main Street office at 936/633-0205.

SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS/ WEBINARS

Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference

Problem or asset? Blight or benefit? Explore the strategies and tools that neighborhoods, cities, and states are using to turn the challenge of vacant land and buildings

into a foundation on which to build the future at Remaking America for the 21st Century—Reclaiming Vacant Properties, June 20–22 in New Orleans.

From “rethinking” the competitive 21st century city to hands-on techniques for everything from code enforcement to acquisition of property, the Center for Community Progress' June conference will reflect the broadest thinking and experience of those engaged in repairing and rebuilding their communities. More than 100 speakers and presenters will be offering their insights, including two of the nation's leading social commentators, Clarence Page and Bob Edwards.

Who will be there? Everyone from government and community leaders to funders, lenders, and engaged residents; from those building their way out of crime to those building or rebuilding the next American city. See

www.communityprogress.net/2012-reclaiming-vacant-properties-conference-pages-167.php

Texas Main Street Summer Workshop

New manager training will be held June 12–13 and the official summer workshop for all managers will be from June 13–15 in Brenham. On Thursday, June 14 we will have a special day-long presentation on downtown loft living entitled “Upstairs Downtown” sponsored by Preserve America—this Thursday seminar will be open and free to the public. Details and registration forms for all of these have been sent out on the Main Street managers list serv, so please mark your calendars, make your reservations and forward the information to anyone who might be interested.

GRANTS

Lowe's Community Improvement Grants

The Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation offers Community Grants ranging from \$5,000–\$25,000 for community improvement initiatives and K-12 public education projects. Funding priorities for community improvement

initiatives include park, neighborhood, and community facility enhancements; outdoor learning programs; and community clean-ups. Apply online at www.lowes.com.

Meadows Foundation

Arts and Culture Grants and Civic and Public Affairs Grants are available with the Meadows Foundation. Applications are accepted at any time, see www.mfi.org/display.asp?link=QW61QZ

2012 Calendar of Events

- **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
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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
PreservationTexas: 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