



Main Street! Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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Spotlight on Corsicana

(Population approx. 23,926)

Early last year, a reorganized Main Street Advisory Board in Corsicana set visibility in the community as a priority. At that time, new Main Street manager, Steve Dieterichs, approached the new board with the idea of taking on a signature project to create visibility for the program in the downtown district.

The board turned its sights toward the downtown streetscape and settled on a bench replacement program as its first project. In 2007, a now bygone downtown association had sought donations for and installed a number of residential-grade benches that are reaching their life expectancy five years later. Previous generations of similarly donated benches, along with several privately owned benches, had led to close to 100 benches in several

different unmatched styles downtown. With its new program, the board would replace these with dozens of durable, industrial quality benches of a uniform design.

Staff set about identifying appropriate design examples and, in doing so, discovered that a bench style had already been specified in the city's 2007 master plan. An affordable quality version of the designated bench was found and the style and finish were approved by both the design committee and the Landmark Commission. The selected bench was then presented to city council as an amendment to the master plan. The resolution that passed also included a more historically accurate pedestrian street lamp design than the one the consultant chose in the original master plan.

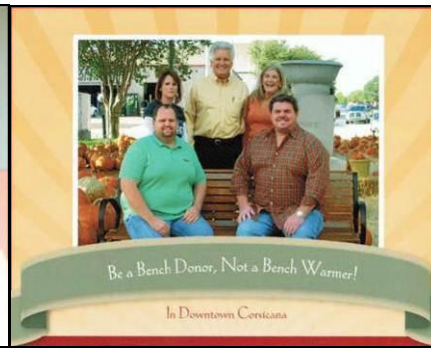
Parallel to these design considerations, the board began considering fundraising opportunities and enthusiastically endorsed the idea of a Pumpkin Patch, an idea Dieterichs had been carrying around for years. Corsicana's Main Street office is housed inside the Visitor



Beaton Street in downtown Corsicana



(top) Corsicana Main Street office and Visitor's Center; (middle) Boy Scout Troop #253 and Grace Community Church volunteers helping unload the pumpkins; (bottom) the Pumpkin Patch on the lawn of the Main Street office and Visitor's Center.



(left) Main Street board members celebrate bench fundraiser on new bench; (middle) Bench donor solicitation postcard with local preservationists and original bench donors Lowell Dunn and Derek Miner; (right) Locals already enjoying the new installation downtown.

Center, a rehabbed 1895 rail freight warehouse, on busy SH 31, and sees more than 35,000 cars a day pass by it. What better place to display thousands of pumpkins?

The group teamed up with Pumpkin Patch Fundraisers (www.pumpkinsusa.com) a farming operation that has been offering consignment pumpkin sales to non-profit organizations for more than 35 years. Pumpkin Patch Fundraisers (PPF) provided a manual and videos that spelled out everything needed for a successful patch, from staffing to sales reporting to spoilage control.

The sheer volume of pumpkins, gourds, and spookies that arrived via semi tractor-trailer was something for which a first-time patch could never truly prepare. Literally thousands of all shapes, sizes, and weights had to be carefully unloaded one-by-one. The daunting task was accomplished with the help of Boy Scout Troop #253 and parishioners from downtown's Grace Community Church.

The start of something special happened that day and continued for another 16 days. Realtor offices, civic groups, and families volunteered to staff the patch and visitors from all over the city came. Some spent hundreds of dollars, others nothing. Many photos were taken. And, in the end, more than \$10,000 worth of pumpkins had

been sold, with Main Street keeping one-third of the sales.

Pumpkin Palooza was held the second Saturday of the patch and included a pumpkin pancake breakfast, decorating demonstrations, a bounce house, fire truck, and more. This year, more and bigger activities are planned, including outdoor movie nights, a car show, craft fair, and downtown pumpkin walk, with a goal of doubling last year's sales.

That first year, Main Street Program Assistant Lisa Miller was the glue that kept it all together, devoting countless hours to the patch (both on and off the clock). Thanks to her efforts, more than 400 day-care, pre-K, and kindergarten children came to the patch for weekday story times, with each receiving a spookie and hand-made decorating kit. To see those tiny faces light up at the sight of all the pumpkins was a blessing to everyone involved in the project.

Lisa also provided daily sales reports to PPF, collected the cash box each night, kept the volunteers on schedule, rotated stock, and generally had a hand in every piece of the operation. On November 10, the board presented her a plaque recognizing her tireless efforts that made the event a success. Sadly, less than two weeks later, Lisa passed away unexpectedly, just hours after working another downtown event.



After the Pumpkin Patch, the first bench was installed near the new Quittin' Time bronze commemorating Corsicana's oil field workers.

Other fundraising activities took place in tandem with the event.

Half of the program cost (\$14,500) was generously granted by the Navarro Community Foundation, in part because of Main Street's other ambitious fundraising plans. Local

preservationists Lowell Dunn and Derek Miner donated funds to purchase a sample bench prior to the patch which was used to leverage donations onsite and through a postcard mailing.

That bench was installed near a new bronze sculpture on the south end of downtown in November. A bench donated by the Main Street Advisory Board and honoring Lisa Miller was dedicated February 9 and anchors the other end of downtown. This fall, the rest of the 45 benches envisioned for the district will be installed, and the fundraising focus will turn to pedestrian street lamps.



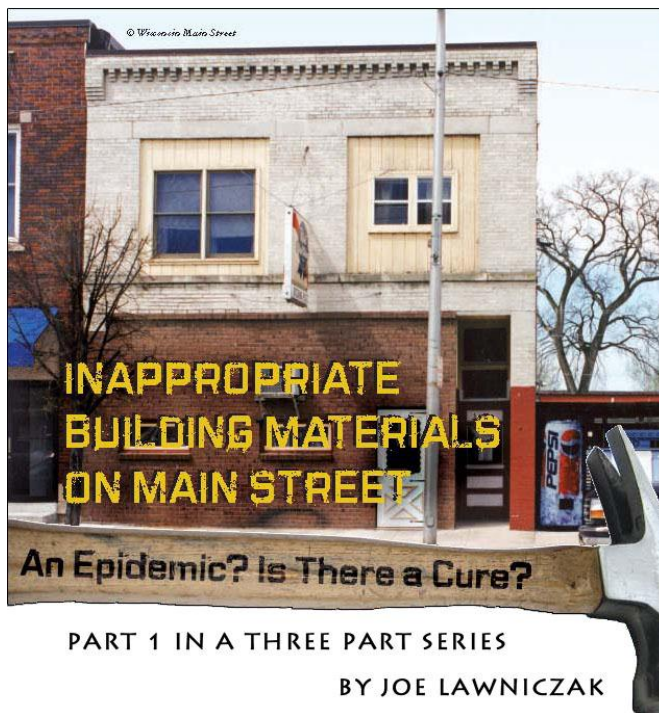
In just one year, this highly visible event led to the realization of the bench

program and allowed Corsicana Main Street to form numerous community partnerships that have paid big dividends in other program areas.

Corsicana Main Street's 2nd Annual Pumpkin Harvest Festival, featuring the Great Pumpkin Patch, takes place Oct. 13 through Nov. 3. See Facebook and www.corsicanamainstreet.org/pumpkin-patch.

Thanks to Steve Dieterichs, Corsicana Main Street Manager, for this article.

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PART 1 IN A THREE PART SERIES

BY JOE LAWNICZAK

FOCUS ON MAIN STREET DESIGN

Georgia Institute of Technology once wrote that “the appearance of a historic building is a product of the cultural heritage of its region, the technology of its period, the skill and training of its builders, and the materials used for its construction. The exterior character of a building is largely established by its ‘style’ and by the degree of decorative detailing. When these character-defining elements are destroyed, removed, or concealed, the true historic integrity of the structure is lost.”

But why does any of this matter to a building owner? Who cares what materials are used or if the style is altered? It's still an improvement, isn't it? These are questions that Main Street professionals are asked time and again. If you can answer these questions, you can often change the owner's perception about restoring historic buildings. The first thing building owners want to know is what's in it for them. Well, first of all, proper res-

toration is a far better way to protect an investment than a quick-fix approach. In the end, it will at least maintain and, more often, increase the property's value, and thus the resale value. In 2003, a study on preservation was conducted in 18 historic districts in Florida. In none of the districts studied did the historic designation depress property values. In fact, in 15 of the 18 cases, the

value of property in the historic districts appreciated greater than in comparable non-historic districts.

It should be noted too, that if the building is within a certified historic district, or individually certified, the owner may qualify for state and/or federal historic rehabilitation tax credits. To qualify, the rehabilitation must follow a set of guidelines called the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Not only will inappropriate alterations jeopardize tax credit approval, but they could jeopardize the building's historic status as well.

Many Main Street communities also establish local financial incentives, which are tied into design guidelines and design review. Building owners can benefit from these incentives as long as they follow the established design criteria. In other words, they simply avoid making inappropriate alterations.

More than anything, however, owners of buildings on Main Street need to start thinking district-wide. They need to realize that what is good for the district is good for

them, even if they don't see a direct financial benefit. For example, building facades convey an image, either good or bad, of the district. A district that undergoes a series of quality restorations can project a unified image that attracts more customers, thereby helping existing businesses do better and perhaps attracting new ones. As the vacancy rate declines, the owners' chances of leasing their buildings improve. As more customers visit the district, businesses can afford to pay higher rents, which increase the building owners' income. And with the increased activity, more people may desire to live in the district, thus creating opportunities for upper-level residential development. As you can see, it is a "domino effect."



"When these character defining elements are destroyed, removed, or concealed, the true historic integrity of the structure is lost."



EXCUSES, EXCUSES...

Even though it may seem obvious that a proper restoration will benefit a building owner more than a quick fix, there are still some who take the "low road," so to speak. Why do building owners apply inappropriate materials to their buildings? There are a number of reasons, the most common of which are:

Cost

This is undoubtedly the primary reason, and to a certain degree, it is understandable. Many owners of

Main Street buildings do not have the personal financial resources to invest a lot of money in their properties. Furthermore, when they do make improvements, they want them to be "maintenance free," so they don't ever have to think about them again. Any construction work based solely on cost, however, is a dangerous thing. The old adage "you get what you pay for" is true. Property owners need to understand that maintaining and repairing a building's historic materials will usually result in a more stable structure and, sometimes, less frequent maintenance than any "quick fix."

Ease of Construction

This reason is frequently cited in conjunction with cost. Again, on the surface, the argument has a great deal of truth to it. Of course it is easier to conceal a deteriorating masonry wall or rotting wood siding than to repair it. The problem is that the owner is simply covering up the problem. Underneath the clean new surface remain the problems that existed prior to its installation.

Because it is Trendy

The best way to counter this argument is to point out that nearly every inappropriate alteration over the past century was done because it was "the thing to do" at the time. And when another new trend came along, the preceding alterations went out of style. By contrast, historic preservation doesn't go in and out of style because it restores a building's original design as closely as

possible. If the original design is preserved, there won't be a need to change its appearance as design trends change. The building will always appear as it was originally designed, nothing more, nothing less.

Because I want it to be "Maintenance-Free"

If I could teach building owners one thing, it would be that there is no such thing as a maintenance-free building or a maintenance-free building material. It's no surprise that many people believe that such materials exist. After all, most salespeople have been promoting their products as such for decades. Admittedly, there are low-maintenance materials, but most building owners are surprised to learn that some of the materials they are planning to conceal or replace require very little maintenance. For example, one of the lowest-maintenance building materials ever made is masonry. Very few materials have proven to last as long as masonry if it is properly maintained.



A typical wild-west themed building

Because I don't like the look or style of the building

One of the basic tenets of Main Street is to build upon what already exists; it discourages creation of a false image, theme, or style. If a building is a two-story, masonry commercial building, it should remain as such. It has long baffled Main Street professionals why building owners would purchase a historic building if that's not what



A typical shingled mansard.

they want. Changing the appearance or style of a building is like buying a Volkswagen Beetle when you need a pick-up truck, then adding a flatbed and tailgate to it. Why buy the Volkswagen? Why not buy a pickup truck instead and leave the Volkswagen for someone who needs and would appreciate it?

To Paul Stridick, AIA, director of the New Jersey Division of Community Resources, the most objectionable thing he comes across is inappropriate time periods. "It's bigger than just single elements of a building," says Stridick. "When a downtown that was primarily built in the mid to late 19th century cloaks itself in colonial brick and six-over-six windows, it appears that it's dressing itself in someone else's clothes...it dilutes the authentic qualities, and it compromises the

'truth' of what a structure needs to say about itself."

Coming in the November issue, Part 2: We will review the most common inappropriate materials. Next, the December issue will contain Part 3: 'Are All Substitute Materials Inappropriate?' and 'The Tools' which will address how a community can ensure restorations are done properly.

Thanks to Joe Lawmiczak, the Design Specialist for Wisconsin Main Street for providing this article. In his more than 10 years with the program, he has worked with countless building owners throughout Wisconsin in planning for the restoration of their historic buildings. Prior to this he was an active volunteer for On-Broadway, Inc., a Main Street district in Green Bay, from 1995 to 2001. Also, thanks to Audrey Holt, Texas Main Street project design assistant for obtaining the correct permissions and reformatting the article for this newsletter.

Article reprinted with permission. Originally printed in the November 2006 issue of Main Street News, (currently known as Main Street Now) the monthly journal of the National Trust Main Street Center.

NEWS

Are You the Coolest Small Town in America?

Budget Travel Magazine has an annual contest for the coolest small towns in America. You must nominate your town by October 15. See www.budgettravel.com/contest/coolest-small-towns-2012-nominations.13/

Texas Historical Marker Applications Available

Texas historical marker applications will be taken through **November 15**. Applications are only being accepted from county historical commission chairs and marker chairs. For details, see the THC website:

www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madapply.shtm

MAIN STREET AROUND THE STATE

Amarillo

Center City's (Amarillo's Main Street Program) Block Party drew 6,500 people downtown for their annual festival. There was wide media coverage including the newspaper, four television stations and numerous radio stations. This festival is a major fundraiser for the Center City program. That same weekend in Amarillo, the 1932 Potter County Courthouse, a project in the Texas Historical Commission's courthouse preservation program, was rededicated.

Gainesville

The August issue of *Main Street Matters* congratulated Gainesville for winning Most Patriotic Small Town in America in the Rand McNally and *USA TODAY* travel channel Best of the Road contest. Shortly after that, the National Trust Main Street Center posted a Story of the Week and videos on the three Main Street cities across the United States that were Best of the Road winners.

See more at:

www.preservationnation.org/main-street/main-street-news/story-of-the-week/2012/120801bestofroad/main-streets-rule-the-road.html

Vernon

By developing the city's GIS mapping system and upgrading some fire equipment, Vernon's fire chief and his team were able to secure a reclassification of the insurance rating for the entire community. As a result, downtown merchants and property owners will see their insurance premiums drop (along with other businesses and homeowners.)

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.

Oct. 6, Rockwall

Each fall, downtown Rockwall is host to the Rockwall Rib Rub and Run. Visitors flock to the historic town square for a fun-filled day featuring a great barbecue competition, good music, and food. Rockwall Running Center will host the 5k Fun Run, and afterwards, visitors can take it easy and stroll through the Old Town Shoppes collecting the winning hand in the "Poker Stroll." See <http://mainstreet.rockwall.com/events.asp>

Oct. 6, Vernon

The Farmers Fall Festival will take place on Saturday at the Wilbarger County Courthouse Square. Activities will range from pumpkin sales, pumpkin decorating contest, apple bobbing, fun photo booth, Zombie Walk, and much more. For more information, call 940.552.2368.

Oct. 13, Canton

Canton will hold its 12th Annual Autumn Stroll Festival on October 13 with music, food, entertainment, arts and crafts, children's area, health fair and blood drive, and a state championship barbecue cook

off. For more information call 903.567.1849 or see www.cantontxedc.com/node/93

Oct. 13, Tyler

Celebrate the 25th annual Festival on the Square with a Texas-sized music concert on the brick streets in downtown. All proceeds go to the Tyler Main Street Program for downtown revitalization efforts. See www.festivalonthesquare.com

Oct. 19–21, Llano

Llano's Heritage Day Festival will include stage coach rides, western style show, authentic chuck wagons, living history, entertainment and cowboy poetry. See www.llanomainstreet.com

Oct. 24–27, Tyler

The 2012 Downtown Film Festival will showcase short films each night that are competing for \$3,000 in prizes. Films will be shown at two downtown venues: the newly-renovated Liberty Hall and at Gallery Main Street. In addition to the films being shown each night, the festival will feature educational workshops for those interested in learning more about filmmaking. The Downtown Tyler Film Festival is a project of the Downtown Tyler Arts Coalition (DTAC) film/ theater working group. DTAC is an all-volunteer group that works to promote the arts in downtown Tyler under the auspices of the City of Tyler Main Street Department and its nonprofit partner, Heart of Tyler, Inc. See www.tylerfilmfest.com

Oct. 26, Laredo

The Streets of Laredo Masquerade Ball and silent auction will be held at the historic La Posada hotel from 7-9 p.m. All proceeds benefit

Laredo Main Street Association's mission to promote and preserve downtown Laredo. For more information, call 956.523.8817.

Oct. 26–27, Mount Vernon

Mount Vernon's third annual Wine in the Pines will take place on the plaza in downtown Oct. 26–27. Times will be from Friday, Oct. 26 from 5–9 p.m. and on Saturday, Oct. 27 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wineries from all over the state will be represented. There is no admission charge, tastings are \$1. For more information, call Main Street Alliance, 903.537.4070 or see www.txwines.org/calendar/october.asp

Oct. 26–28, Seguin

Pecan Fest Heritage Days is a three-day event including the Hats Off to Juan Seguin street dance and hat parade, entertainment, world's largest nutcracker collection, lots of pecan delicacies, film festival, reenactors and Booffest. There will also be "There's a Ghost Story Here" ghost tours where everyone will learn about the stories which still haunt some of the buildings and visit some of the sites. See www.SeguGoNuts.com



Oct. 27, Kerrville

The Main Street Moonlight Drive is a fundraising event produced by the Kerrville Main Street program, featuring a unique night-time golf tournament, costume and cart decorating contest, longest drive contest, and putting contest. There will also be games, photo ops, dinner and an awards ceremony. Proceeds

from the 2012 event will benefit downtown public art projects. Location for the tournament is the Scott Schreiner Municipal Golf Course. See

www.mainstreetmoonlightdrive.com/

Oct. 27, Paris

The 12th annual Festival of Pumpkins in historic downtown will include contests for best decorated pumpkin and best costume. Pumpkins will be for sale and many other events included for a great time. Time will be from 9 a.m. –6 p.m. For more information, call 903.784.9293.

Oct. 27, Waxahachie

Downtown will host Bob Phillips on the courthouse square for the 17th annual Texas Country Reporter Festival. This is a one-day event features artists, craftsmen, music, and food from all over the state—much of it featured on the Texas Country Reporter television show over the years. See

www.texascountryreporter.com/Festival2012/2012festival.htm.



Nov. 10, Grand Saline

Grand Saline Main Street Program will present the third annual Great American Peanut Butter (PB) Festival in historic downtown. Events will include pictures taken with Buddy McNutty, Peanuttiest pet contest, PB recipe contest, a PB

pancake breakfast, PB parade, PB&J sandwich eating contest, crowning of the festival PB queen, and this year the festival will attempt to break the world record for the largest PB cookie. See

www.greatamericanpeanutbutterfestival.com/#!

TRAINING

Texas Friendly

Train the Trainer Hospitality Workshops

Become a certified Texas Friendly instructor through this hospitality workshop comprised of two half-day sessions that provide the best tools to take back to one's community regarding customer service. The workshops will be:

Athens, Oct. 16-17

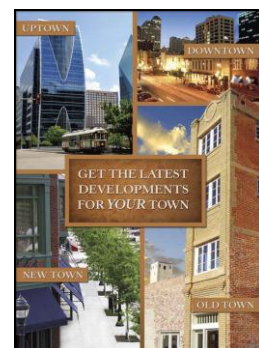
Rockwall, Oct. 18-19

Cost is \$200 for new instructors (both days); \$100 for current instructor "refreshe" (1st day only). Free registration to AgriLife Extension staff. To find out more about the program and to register, visit the Texas Friendly Hospitality website at:

<http://agrilife.org/texasfriendly/>

Texas Downtown Association / Texas Main Street Annual Conference

Texas Downtown Association (TDA)/Texas Main Street Annual Conference Registration is open for annual conference in Wichita Falls **Nov. 6–9**. Keynote speaker for the conference will be internationally-recognized speaker, Jon Schallert, business expert specializing in teaching businesses and communities how to turn themselves into consumer destinations. Conference session topics will include Invent-ing and Investing in New Business, Cash Mobs, Pop-up Stores in Downtown, Historic Preservation in Downtown, Funding/ Fundraising for Downtown Projects, Culinary and Agritourism, and more. TMSP coordinator Debra Farst will lead a session Wednesday on his-toric preservation as economic development and Leslie Wolfenden, TMSP design staff, will lead a ses-sion Thursday on understanding the value of mid-century architec-ture. See www.texasdowntown.org



Calendar of Events

- **Oct. 31–Nov. 3, 2012, Spokane, WA**
National Preservation Conference, theme: *Beyond Boundaries*
- **Nov. 6–9, 2012, Wichita Falls**
Texas Main Street/Texas Downtown Association Annual Conference
- **Jan. 28–Feb. 1, 2013 OR Feb. 4–8, 2013** (Final dates to be decided. Bids to host due by Oct. 12, 2012)
Winter Main Street training
- **Apr. 14–16, 2013, New Orleans** National Main Streets Conference, theme: *Main Street and the Cultural Economy*
- **June 3–7, 2013 OR June 10–14, 2013** (Final dates to be decided. Bids to host due by Oct. 12, 2012)

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 Agriculture: www.TexasAgriculture.gov
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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