



# Main Street Matters

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

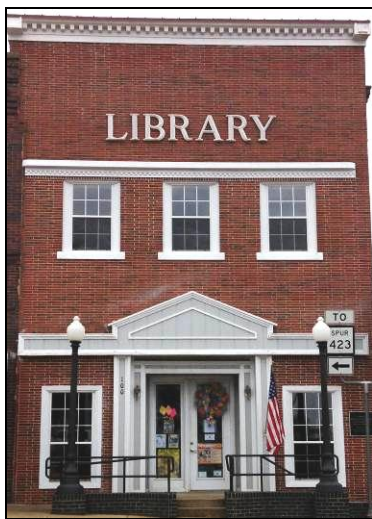
APRIL 2013 • COMMUNITY HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION • P.O. BOX 12276, AUSTIN, TX 78711 • 512.463.6092

## Spotlight on Mount Vernon

(Population approx. 2,700)

### Repurposing buildings brings new life to Main Street Mount Vernon

Repurposing building uses has been the key to preservation in Mount Vernon. Located one mile north of I-30, the city's Main Street Alliance members feel that downtown revitalization is key to maintaining a vibrant economy. After 20 years as a Main Street City, Mount Vernon has been recognized for the 10th time as a state commended and Nationally Accredited program.



The historic First National Bank building was the first repurposed building in downtown Mount Vernon.

“Preservation is not something that happens overnight,” emphasizes Carolyn Teague, Mount Vernon Main Street Executive Director. “It is a long-term commitment to preserving our sense of place.”

Earlier years of neglect and/or demolition of downtown buildings underscored the need to save remaining structures. Together with the support of local banks, the city's Economic Development Corporation, the Franklin County Historical Commission, and building owners, Mount Vernon's Main Street helped to outline a plan of work.

Through use of Community Development Grants and matching county funds, the old First National Bank building became the first repurposed downtown structure. It has since undergone two major renovations to make it both functional as the Franklin County Library and maintain its unique architectural aspects, such as its original marble counter, original lighting fixtures, and ornate ceiling. The vault was repurposed as a children's reading room. An elevator was added, allowing the second story (a former dentist's office) to be



Franklin county courthouse (currently in the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program) during the Piney Woods Wine Trail Festival.

claimed as a meeting room, and more shelving was added for books.

The construction of a new county jail and law enforcement center in 1991 left the historic 1912 jail building vacant. It was quickly repurposed to house offices for the Franklin County Extension Office on the north side of its ground floor, and a museum/art gallery on the south side of the ground floor and the second floor. A section of the original iron-cage cells for prisoners was set up with life-size soft sculptures to replicate jail life in earlier years. The remainder of the upper floor is used to display the varied permanent collection of art owned by the Franklin County Arts Alliance. The wine and cheese receptions, which are held at each



Replication of former jail life in the historic 1912 jail building.

new exhibit opening, are much-anticipated events.

Volunteer labor, a small amount of tax dollars, and funds from the Charles Bruce Estate endowment were leveraged to begin an early renovation of the district courtroom in the Franklin County Courthouse, a cornerstone of the downtown business district. The second floor courtroom of the 1912 three story classical revival style building, designed by architect L.L. Thurmon of Dallas, was returned to some of its original glory. The Main Street program inspired the start of restoration, including the removal of 1960s-era suspend-

spotlight the value of the building, with uses for the public other than county government such as community theater and concert music performances. The county submitted applications to the Texas Historical Commission to participate in the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. In 2006, the building was accepted on the list of National Register Historical Places. Franklin County was the recipient of a \$250,000 planning grant in 1998, a \$2 million exterior grant in 2010, and is currently implementing interior work funded through a \$3 million grant awarded in 2012. Renovations are targeted for completion late in 2013.

ed /dropped ceilings, layers of paint on stained window sashes, and ornamental woodwork and replacement of some of the damaged or missing tin ceiling panels.

The Franklin County Historical Association stepped in to

Similar projects were taken on by downtown building owners over a two-decade period. These projects were first made possible through low-interest façade and building infrastructure loans by local banks (rates were a quarter of the cost of similar loans in other areas of the city). Over the past decade, rental assistance, small façade grants, and matching fund Existing Business Structure Assistance Program (EBSAP) through the city's Main Street and Economic Development Corporation assisted more than 40 businesses with their buildings. In 2012-13, the EBSAP assisted with more than \$350,000 in re-investments to improve existing buildings and the start-up of four new retail business sites.

As American singer, songwriter, guitarist, and poet Ani DiFranco said, "In order to keep anything cultural, logical, or ideological, you have to reinvent the reality of it."

Many other buildings have been repurposed. Museums now operate from the 1940 WPA-financed fire station/city hall, 1894 Cotton Belt Depot, circa 1883 Parchman House Farmstead Living History Center, and the two story home of Henry Clay Thruston (the tallest soldier in



The slipcover (left) was removed on these circa 1904 buildings, and they currently (right) function as an operations center for First National Bank and as M.L. Edwards Hardware and Dry Goods store.

the Civil War at 7' 7 1/2"). The house was built on the Bankhead Highway, the 1919 transcontinental route from Washington, D.C. to San Diego. An auto parts store is now an art and framing gallery, and an auto repair garage now houses the Cultural Arts Center with a beautiful outdoor courtyard. A grocery store is now a gym, boxing, Taekwondo and Yoga center. The mid-century post office currently houses the expanded City Hall. An abandoned 1907 church building now serves as the venue for Mount Vernon Music, a regional and nationally recognized organization that provides and develops high quality performance of live music in northeast Texas.

A current construction project will repurpose the former Chevrolet dealership's art deco style building into a meeting and party venue. Most recently, a wall collapse at a building received emergency response from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, with a grant to fund engineering to develop a plan to stabilize the site and assure adjacent building structures are not endangered.

The Main Street Alliance has not forgotten about existing retail businesses. The economic restructuring and promotions committees have helped to develop or expand events centered in the heart of the city. Among these are the Piney Woods Wine Trail Festival (third Saturday in May), the Wine in the Pines event (fourth Saturday and Friday prior in October), Cypress SpringFest with Tour de Cypress bike ride and run (third Friday and Saturday in April), and our 39-year-old CountryFest (second Saturday in October).

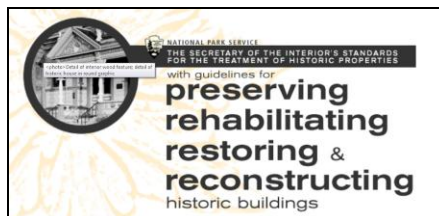
With these events and other retail promotions, such as cash mobs and

Pot O'Gold, the Main Street Alliance has helped to bring more shoppers to local retail businesses. Simple tie-in promotions improved door traffic for merchants. For instance, a coupon for a special wine tote, which was given to those registering to enter the wine tasting areas at the wine events, were redeemable only inside local retail shops in the downtown area.

Situated on the Bankhead Highway, once called "The Broadway of America," Mount Vernon experienced growth with the advent of new transportation changes of the 20th Century. The city is once again poised for continued growth in the 21st Century.

*Thanks to Carolyn Teague, Mount Vernon Main Street Manager, and Lillie Bush-Reves, Mount Vernon Main Street Chair for providing this article.*

## FOCUS ON MAIN STREET DESIGN



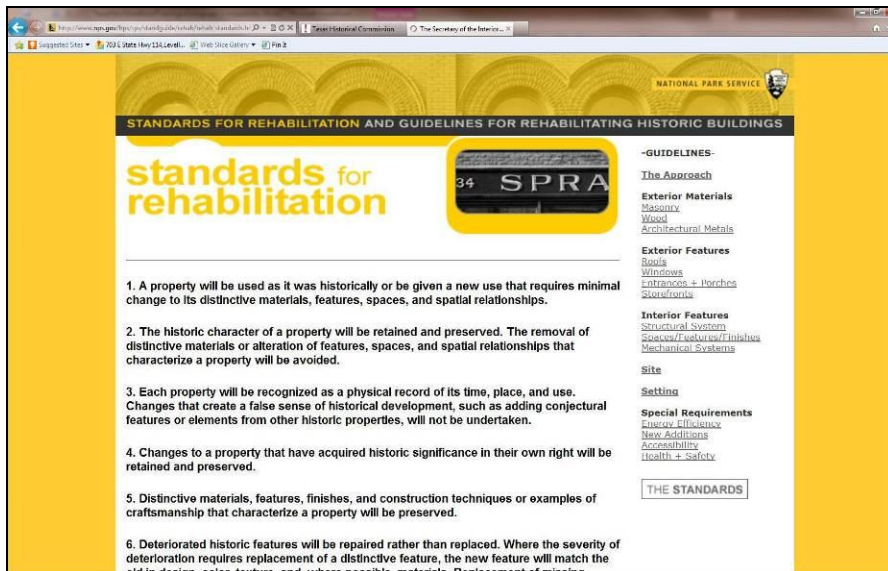
### A Brief Introduction to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Texas Main Street Communities

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards are often mentioned and discussed in Main Street Training and in Texas Main Street Design Reports. This article will outline how the Secretary of the Interior's Standards came about, why they should be used, and how they can be helpful in your preservation and revitalization work.

The Secretary of the Interior of the United States is responsible for establishing professional standards and providing advice on the preservation and protection of cultural resources. The National Park Service, an agency of the Department of the Interior, has developed guidelines and standards that guide decision-making for these resources at the national, state, and local levels to encourage consistent preservation practices across the country. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* are the Secretary's best advice to everyone on how to protect a wide range of historic properties. Known as 'the Standards,' they are neither technical nor prescriptive, but are intended to promote responsible preservation practices that help protect our irreplaceable cultural resources. As noted, while the Standards are designed to be applied to all historic resource types included in the National Register of Historic Places—buildings, sites, structures, districts, and objects—the guidelines apply to specific resource types, in this case, buildings. A full list of the Standards is found at:

[www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide](http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide)

The Standards are not overly specific, and describe general approaches and decision-making rather than providing a checklist of do's and don'ts. The Standards are broad partly because no two resources are exactly alike, and each has its own unique features, problems, and issues. They are not meant to give case-specific advice or address exceptions or rare instances. Therefore, it is recommended that the advice of qualified historic preservation professionals be obtained early in the planning stage of the project.



Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation webpage  
[www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab\\_standards.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab_standards.htm)

The Secretary of the Interior has required the application of the Standards in certain programs that the Secretary administers through the National Park Service. They apply to all proposed development grant-in-aid projects assisted through the national Historic Preservation Fund. They are also tied to attaining the Federal Preservation 20 percent tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings that are listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Further information about preservation tax incentives can be found at:

[www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/preservation-tax-incentives/about-preservation-tax-incentives](http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/preservation-tax-incentives/about-preservation-tax-incentives). Some preservation organizations on the local level also link guidelines and grants to the Standards as a way of regulating best practices.

The Standards break down preservation projects into four approaches, with subsequent standards and guidelines for each.

**Preservation** focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing

historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.

**Rehabilitation** acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.

**Restoration** depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.

**Reconstruction** re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.

When choosing an approach, a variety of factors should be considered, including the property's historical significance, physical condition, proposed use, intended interpretation, and mandated code requirements. The Standards are not intended to be used to make essential decisions about what features of the historic building should be saved and what can be changed. However, once a treatment is selected, the Standards provide a

general philosophy and approach that must be uniquely applied in each situation based on the desired outcomes and existing conditions. Choosing an appropriate treatment for a historic building or landscape is critical.

The Standards for Rehabilitation are used most often when analyzing and making recommendations for buildings in Main Street communities. Rehabilitation is defined as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values." Of the four treatments, only rehabilitation includes an opportunity to make possible an efficient contemporary use through alterations and additions. The Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings are found at:

[www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab\\_index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab_index.htm)

Sources:

This article relies heavily upon the National Park Service's website regarding the Secretary of the Interior's Standards:

[www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide](http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide)

*Thanks to Audrey Holt, Texas Main Street Project Design Assistant, for providing this article.*

## National Volunteer Week, April 21-27

Celebrate the people who are the core of downtown revitalization in your community. There is no better time to sing their praises than during National Volunteer Week—this year's theme is Celebrating People in Action. National Volunteer

Week honors ordinary people doing extraordinary things to improve communities across the nation. This one week highlights the enormous contributions that volunteers make every day.

**More Preservation Month**

**Activities in Texas**

May is National Preservation Month and is a time to celebrate historic places in your city and to educate the local community about the importance of preservation.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has a variety of activities listed on its website

[www.preservationnation.org/take-action/preservation-month](http://www.preservationnation.org/take-action/preservation-month) as well as a sample preservation proclamation at [www.preservationnation.org/take-action/preservation-month/proclamation.html](http://www.preservationnation.org/take-action/preservation-month/proclamation.html).

Last month we featured a few activities in Texas Main Street cities. Following are just a few more of the many Preservation Month or preservation education activities from Texas Main Street cities:

**Canton**

Canton Main Street initiated a state historical marker program in 2012 for subjects important to downtown Canton. One historical marker was dedicated before the end of 2012, and another approved for submission in 2013. Canton Main Street has taken the lead in a cemetery (in the



New 2013 Texas Main Street cities of Childress and San Augustine and re-certified city of Cuero were welcomed into the program with a kick-off event with First Lady Anita Perry on March 28. From top to bottom: Childress, San Augustine and Cuero.

heart of downtown) restoration committee formed to restore not only physical appearance, but to record the history of individuals buried there—many of whom are Canton’s founding families. Plans are being made for a “history walk” in the cemetery for Preservation Month in 2013.

**Waxahachie**

Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) and Main Street distributed historic property coloring books to all 2<sup>nd</sup> graders in the WISD school system in 2012. HPC members delivered books to two of the schools and gave talks on preservation to the children.

**HISTORIC SITES FREE DAY**

In celebration of National Preservation Month and Texas Travel Tourism Week, visitors are invited to historic sites across the state on May 12 for Historic Sites Free Day. See [www.texashistoricsites.com](http://www.texashistoricsites.com)

**MAIN STREET AROUND THE STATE**

**Farmersville**

Farmersville is bringing new tourists to downtown. It is the trail head to the new Chaparral Trail section of the Northeast Texas Trail (rail-trail). The 130-mile trail welcomes cyclists, runners, walkers,

etc., and travels through seven counties and 19 rural towns. See feature in the March issue of *Texas Highways* [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com)

### Uvalde

Uvalde's small-town hospitality and southwestern history are featured in the April issue of *Texas Highways* in an article titled Unexpected Uvalde. The article speaks of Uvalde's progressive, can-do spirit while remaining firmly rooted in its small-town traditions. See [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com)

### Vernon

The Perdue Brandon Fielder Collins & Mott Architectural Appreciation Essay Contest, and the Tyson Foods of Vernon Architectural Appreciation Drawing/Sketching Contest will educate contestants and the community about the importance of preserving the local architectural heritage in downtown Vernon. The rules are to select a building anywhere in Vernon to draw or to write about (500-1,000 words). Completed essays and/or drawings are submitted to the Vernon Main Street office by March 22 and winners will receive ribbons and cash prizes. In addition to the two naming sponsors, these events are also sponsored by the Wilbarger County Historical Com-



mission, The Vintage Vernon Foundation, Vernon College, The Rotary Club of Vernon and the Vernon Main Street Program.

### EVENTS

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

#### April 5–May 10, Huntsville

The Main Street Music Series will feature local bands and musicians every Friday from 6–9 p.m. on the Walker County Courthouse lawn free to the public. Two bands will play nightly with a wide range of musical genres. Downtown stores will be open late and there will be gift certificates raffled to use during the music series. Snacks and drinks will also be sold to benefit the Main Street Program to help keep the concerts free. For more information, call 936.291.5920 or email [kmcauliffe@huntsvilletx.gov](mailto:kmcauliffe@huntsvilletx.gov).

#### April 6, Vernon

Vernon Downtown Community Clean-up Day will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday. Participants will be given free breakfast sandwiches and coffee and then Mayor Jeff Bearden will welcome the volunteers who will be given litter pick-up assignments. This event is sponsored by Progressive Waste Solutions and McDonalds Restaurant of Vernon. Contact Meg Heatly at 940.552.2368.

#### April 12, Paris

April in Paris Wine Fest 2013 will feature nine Texas wineries and samples of delectable local cuisine while strolling in historic downtown. Proceeds will benefit the Paris Main Street Building Improvements Grant. See <http://paristexas.gov/index.aspx?NID=336>

#### April 20, Lufkin

The Hoedown Festival kicks off with a parade through downtown at 10 a.m. Downtown will be full of arts and crafts and entertainment for the entire family. Lufkin Main Street's largest fund raiser raises money for downtown landscaping, façade grants, and efforts to support a vibrant downtown.

#### April 27, Clifton

Boots n Brew will debut as a spin-off of the Clifton Swirl wine event and will feature craft beers from around the state along with local dining and retail. Time 6-9 p.m. See [www.cliftonswirl.com](http://www.cliftonswirl.com)

#### April 27, Ferris

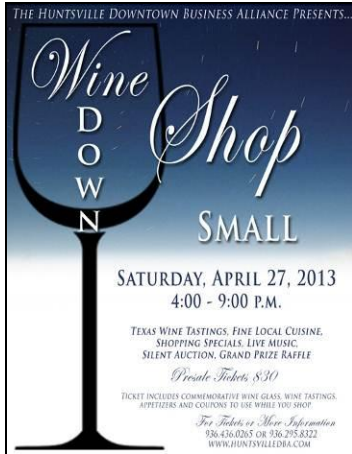
The 17th annual Brick Festival will include brick pull and brick thrown contests, a brick decorating contest, Mr. and Miss Brickfest, and several new events including a celebrity auction, photo contest, and art contest. There will be live music and a late afternoon street dance. See Ferris Downtown Association on Facebook.

#### April 27-28, Georgetown

The 14th annual Red Poppy Festival in downtown Georgetown will feature artisans from across the nation, classic car show, red poppy 5k run, parade, Red Poppy tour, street dance, and great bands including headliner Restless Heart Saturday evening. A Georgetown and Central Texas tradition, the Red Poppy Festival is a time to enjoy family and friends, music, food and fun! See <http://poppy.georgetown.org>



## April 27, Huntsville



The Huntsville Downtown Business Alliance will host Wine Down, Shop Small to sip, snack and shop under the stars for this second annual event from 4–9 p.m. This will be an evening of downtown shopping while sampling regional Texas wines and fine local cuisine. Several stores in the downtown will be participating in late night shopping. Selected stores will host a unique winery and restaurant in their shop. Live music will help set the fun and festive mood. Shoppers will be able to bid on several silent auction items throughout the night. Tickets are on sale for \$30 prior to the event or \$40 on the day of the event. For more information, call 936.291.1201 or [dejavudecor2010@yahoo.com](mailto:dejavudecor2010@yahoo.com).

## April 27, Pittsburg

The inaugural Pittsburg Art and Wine Festival will be held in historic downtown from 1-8 p.m. The festival will showcase wines from the Pine Woods Wine Trail as well as artists and art societies from the east Texas area, music, and local culinary treats. See [www.localwineevents.com](http://www.localwineevents.com)

## May 10-12, Longview

AlleyFest 2013 will include alley art, an alley run, and a three-day music line up. See <http://longviewchamber.com/AlleyFest>

## April 13, Waxahachie

Waxahachie Downtown Merchants Association presents Junk in the Trunk, a community-wide resale event in downtown. See [www.downtownwaxahachie.com](http://www.downtownwaxahachie.com) or call Anita Williamson at 469.309.4111.

## AWARD APPLICATIONS Scenic Texas

The Scenic City Certification Program, a project of Scenic Texas in cooperation with the Texas Historical Commission, Texas Municipal League, and several additional partners, is currently accepting 2013 applications through **April 30**.

The program supplies cities an objective review of existing infrastructure ordinances for public roadways and public spaces, evaluated against the Scenic City model. Assessment is points-based, with every applicant receiving a detailed, scored evaluation. Cities earning the highest points are certified for five years. Their program looks broadly across the community, not just downtown, and some of the criteria they consider may not directly apply to downtown or in historic areas but overall the criteria does a good job of evaluating a community's concern for their visual character which is clearly an important component that contributes to revitalization.

Currently there are 36 Certified Scenic Cities in Texas but only a few—Bastrop, Georgetown, and Grapevine are current Main Street cities. We'd love to see more Main Streets represented and encourage you to consider whether your community might be a good fit and benefit from their program. The THC's role in the certification and with Scenic Texas is advisory only.

Visit [sceniccitycertification.org](http://sceniccitycertification.org) for contact information and to access the application, example ordinance language and current Scenic Certified Cities.

## Calendar of Events

- **Apr. 14–16, 2013, New Orleans** National Main Streets Conference, theme: *Main Street and the Cultural Economy*
- **June 4–5, 2013, LaGrange**  
New manager training prior to the beginning of Summer training for all managers. New manager training will last all day June 4 through noon June 5
- **June 5 (after noon)–June 7, 2013 (noon), LaGrange**  
Summer Main Street training for all Texas Main Street managers

## 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)  
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 Department of Agriculture: [www.TexasAgriculture.gov](http://www.TexasAgriculture.gov)  
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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**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
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