



Main Street! Matters

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WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS

What to do after a Main Street fire

Article written by Rebekka Adams, Assistant State Coordinator, Texas Main Street Program

Disasters strike around the world every day. Tornados, earthquakes, hurricanes, strong winds, gas explosions, the list goes on. The most common disaster that happens in our Texas Main Street communities is, unfortunately, fire. While you cannot avoid a fire, you can plan to minimize risk and how you will react to the situation.

Since disasters rarely herald their arrival, the time to prepare for one is NOW. The first step is to form partnerships in your local community with the key players—local government, first responders, and business and property owners. Take the time to show people why preservation is important, and what that means in the event of a disaster.

This article explores stories from Main Street Managers of how and they responded to recent fires in their downtowns. It also includes guidelines on how to prepare your Main Street for disaster, and where



Fire devastates downtown Main Street Pittsburg, February, 2014. Images courtesy Pittsburg Main Street.

to seek help if it happens to your downtown.

Pittsburg, Fire February 2014

The story of the fire from Jenny Rowan, Main Street Manager

Pittsburg experienced a fire in its Main Street district on February 16 this year. There were two buildings completely gutted. The fire started in a computer store and spread to a beauty salon. The buildings were originally built together in 1901 and separated in 1903. Three surrounding buildings had roof damage from the fire/water.

The fire occurred on a Sunday night, with a holiday falling the next day. I live in a loft about four buildings down, so I was woken up at 4 a.m. when the incident occurred and was able to be there at the entire time. I immediately contacted business owners whose buildings were neighboring the fire (if they were not already downtown).

Once the fire was put out, we realized that it had consumed the interiors of both buildings, but fortunately, the front façade was still intact. Working with the city, I knew they'd have to get a

permit to demolish beforehand, so I knew that was something we wouldn't have to discuss at work. I called staff from the Texas Main Street program on Sunday morning, who got me in touch with the National Trust's grant for emergency funding. We applied for the grant, hired a historic preservation engineer, got the grant, and consulted the building owners. Additionally, the property owner is applying for the Main Street matching grant incentive, which is funded through the EDC and funneled by Main Street.

As of August, we are still in the process of rebuilding. The interiors of the two properties were devastated, the front façade was restored, and it just needed some repointing, cleaning, and a bit of structural support. All repointing is completed, as is plumbing and flooring. The roof will be going on next!

When asked, "what do you know now that you wish you would have known before the fire?" I wished I would have known it was going to happen. But in reality, I would have handled everything the same.

Eagle Pass, Fire June 2014

The story of the fire from Joe Cruz, Main Street Manager

On Wednesday, June 26 at approximately 9 a.m., the Eagle Pass fire Department responded to a structural fire at 204 Commercial (downtown). A total of four buildings were affected. The building where the fire initiated was completely demolished. Two of



Fire damages four historic buildings in downtown Eagle Pass, June 2014.
Images courtesy Eagle Pass Main Street.

the attached buildings were also highly damaged and seem to be uninhabitable. The fourth building received smoke and water damage. I made contact with the owner of the store just to make sure they were safe. I drove to the site but the whole area was blocked. I immediately contacted the owner of the store (renter) and the owner of the building. I sent an email to the Texas Main Street staff the following morning.

The owner of the building(s) did not have insurance on the property. At the moment the owner is in the process of clearing out the debris and possibly demolishing the attached buildings. The owner of the fourth building, the one that received water and smoke damage, did have insurance. He is in process of receiving some money from his insurance company. The owner of

the destroyed building has not yet decided if he is going to rebuild or sell the land once it is cleared out of the debris.

Two days before the fire, I had met with our Small Business Development Center representatives. We discussed an emergency preparedness seminar for small business owners. I wish we would have had this seminar last year. We are in the process of having this seminar next month.

Prepare Before a Fire

In the aftermath of a fire or any other disaster, there are many issues that a Main Street manager needs to be prepared for. They include working with the first responders and the property owner, to stabilizing the structure (if possible), to dealing with temporary business relocation, public perception, historic

preservation issues, and street interruption during demolition/rebuilding.

Now is the time for planning and organizing yourself, your business, and your Main Street property owners. Before a disaster strikes, you should:

- Inventory all businesses in your Main Street district; make sure to keep contact information updated.
- Inventory all buildings in your Main Street district. Make sure to include: property owner, contact information and emergency contact information, location of electrical, water, and gas shut offs, and building materials utilized in construction.
- Keep a pictorial inventory (both historic and current) of all buildings so reconstruction will be in appropriate context.
- Identify and get to know your local, county, and state emergency response personnel. Work with them to identify best cases for preserving historic properties.
- Document the existing condition of your historic property with photographs or drawings.
- Work with your local government to develop a disaster plan and include provisions for historic buildings.
- Partner with local insurance agents to provide educational training to both business and property owners on risks and insurance policies.

- Have a list available with contact information for local utilities, insurance brokers, and any other assistance resources available to distribute to affected business and property owners. Have a list of contractors available to help with rebuilding or demolition.

- Make sure you review all of the relevant health, safety, and building codes for regulations and procedures that might hasten demolition of damaged buildings. Be educated on your community's process of dealing with emergencies and disasters.

During a Fire

During a disaster, the primary concern is for personal and public safety. Until the disaster threat has passed, this must be the primary concern. Remember:

- Follow all directions from first responders. Their primary goal is to ensure safety for everyone involved. Do not get in their way.
- Turn off utilities and vacate any neighboring properties that are in danger.
- Work with emergency management personnel to organize efforts to reduce damage during the disaster response period and plan for the recovery.

After a Fire

After a disaster is the time to work collaboratively with property owners to develop appropriate plans to rebuild or repurpose the space. Some tips for this process are:

- Take it slow. Allow time to properly evaluate the damage before making decisions that are irreversible (e.g. demolition). Properly secure the structure so further damage cannot be done while decisions are being made. Tarp exposed roofs, board up entrances to keep people out, and clean and salvage any debris that may have fallen from the structure.

- Make sure materials are not removed from the site until they have been evaluated and determined that they cannot be salvaged for reuse, patterns, or reconstruction.

- Strongly encourage the property owner to work with licensed architects and engineers who are familiar with historic buildings (distribute list of contractors that you hopefully generated before the emergency).

- Make sure to take photographs of the damage prior to any activity. It is good practice to keep photographs of work while it is being done as well.

- Use the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as your guide in rehabilitating historic properties damaged in a disaster.

Advice from around the National Main Street Network:

One of the advantages of being a Main Street program is the wealth of knowledge that can be learned from other Main Street communities. Here are some words of advice from other Main Street managers who have dealt

with fires in their downtowns: Advice from Granby, Colorado, is to pre-plan for anything, and then ensure copies of those plans and other essential information are kept in multiple locations. These places can be known to many, but with the information still kept confidential.

In Brattleboro, Vermont, the local Main Street program partnered with a downtown retailer and their local United Way to hold a fundraiser to assist in rebuilding a historic building that was damaged by fire.

Mount Airy, Maryland worked with the city and county to assist rebuilding downtown after a horrible fire. There were three main components that the Main Street program was able to assist with: temporary relocations of affected businesses, working with the planning department, and marketing. The Main Street program helped to provide temporary pods or construction trailers for affected businesses until their buildings were rebuilt. They also worked with their planning commission to fast track site plan reviews for rebuilding efforts. Also, all the development fees were waived for the affected property owners. Finally, the Main Street program launched a marketing campaign to encourage business in downtown immediately after the fire.

Educate Businesses on Disaster Planning

In addition to what you can do as a Main Street program, it is equally important to educate and work with the businesses that were

housed in the affected buildings. After two major fires in the downtown area in Davis, California, Laura Cowe, Main Street consultant and former Main Street manager, drafted “*Managing Your Business To Minimize Disruption: A guide for small businesses in Downtown Davis*” to distribute to all of her downtown businesses. She kindly shared her advice from her experience with the Texas Main Street network. This is an excellent resource to duplicate and share with your downtown businesses. Make sure to add important contact information to key players in your community. Here are her suggestions:

Business Help After a Disaster

Disaster or major emergencies can occur with little or no warning. For these reasons, it is important to have a plan of action in place for the post-disaster phase, after your building has been stabilized and the damage assessed. At the very least, the action plan should include the names and phone numbers of key individuals and organizations you need to contact immediately following a disaster, including your:

- Insurance carrier
- Suppliers
- Creditors
- Employees and customers
- Media contacts
- Utility companies
- Local emergency management agency

Safety First

The safety of people and property are key considerations following a disaster. Buildings must be safe for occupancy before employees and customers re-enter.



- If you own the building your business occupies, have it inspected by structural engineers and contractors to determine its safety and the extent of the damage.
- If you do not own the building, work with the owner to have the building inspected. Whether you own the property or not, you are responsible for the safety of your employees, customers, and anyone else who may be on the premises.
- Restoring your utilities, phone service, gas lines, and other important links should be done as soon as possible. If you discover gas leaks or live wires, be sure to immediately contact your utility provider.
- Get your sprinkler system back into service as quickly as possible.

Assessing Damages

Make note of the damages to the structure by the disaster, such as roofing, siding, and windows. Photos and videotapes are helpful to supplement your documentation. Also note damage to business equipment

and property, including product inventory and raw materials.

By making temporary repairs to the building, boarding up windows, or covering holes in the roof to make it weather-tight, you can avoid additional property damage. Consider securing the building from casual entry by using temporary signs to redirect parking or traffic access. You may want to notify your customers and suppliers about temporary changes being made to continue operations, including a change of address if necessary.

Cleaning Up

Your insurance company may instruct you to hire a professional cleaning service for your place of business. Any clean-up effort should be done in a safe and healthful manner. If you or your employees are involved in this effort, use safety items such as proper eyewear, gloves, hardhats, and dust masks. Also, separate the damaged stock from the undamaged and remove all debris after you receive authorization from authorities and your adjuster.

Funding to Assist After a Main Street Fire

As always, Texas Main Street staff is available to assist you with picking up the pieces after any disaster in your downtown. Here are a few funding opportunities that you may be eligible for in the case of a fire:

Emergency/Intervention Funding from the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP)

Intervention funding from the National Trust is awarded in emergency situations when immediate and unanticipated work is needed to save a historic structure, such as when a fire or other natural disaster strikes. Funding is restricted to nonprofit organizations and public agencies. Emergency grants typically range from \$1,000 to \$5,000, but unlike the majority of grant funding, a cash match is not required for intervention projects. Contact the NTHP if you believe your project qualifies for this type of funding. Please note: the emergency funding is very limited. [More information.](#)

The Southwest Intervention Fund

Grants from the National Trust's Southwest Intervention Fund are intended to further preservation efforts of the traditional cultures of the Southwest region, exclusively in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, West Texas, and Utah. The fund provides support for preservation planning efforts and enables prompt responses to emergency threats or opportunities in the eligible states. Local partners, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies that have strategic opportunities to save sites or help jumpstart preservation projects are eligible for the fund's small, catalytic grants. Grants generally range from \$2,500 to \$10,000. [More information.](#)

Hart Family Fund for Small Towns

Grants from the Hart Family Fund for Small Towns are intended to encourage preservation at the local level by providing seed money for preservation projects in small towns. These grants help stimulate public discussion, enable local groups to gain the technical expertise needed for particular projects, introduce the public to preservation concepts and techniques, and encourage financial participation by the private sector.

Grants from the Hart Family Fund for Small Towns generally range from \$2,500 to \$10,000. The selection process is very competitive. The review process is generally completed within three months of the application deadline, and applicants are notified via email once the review process is complete. [More information.](#)

Additional Resources:

- [Preventing & Responding to Fire](#)
- [Fire Departments, Life Safety & Emergency Responders: Engaging Preservation](#)

ENCOURAGING RETAIL WITH ZONING REQUIREMENTS

*Article written by Emily Koller, Planner,
Courthouse Square Initiative, Texas
Historical Commission*

Main Streets spend a lot of time combatting the challenge of vacancies, but sometimes the problem is not a vacant prime retail space – the problem is that it is occupied! The buildings may be full, but not with “activity-generating” uses.*

As a downtown transitions from basic stabilization and occupation of historic buildings to the desire for a more sophisticated retail and dining experience, municipalities may turn to land-use controls. Mandating retail space is utilized not only to create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown experience, but also to protect downtown sales tax revenue. Striking the right balance of uses is not easy—often those occupying the most attractive retail spaces are long-time professionals in law, accounting, and insurance. The tenants are likely the owners and may have been the only ones willing to rehabilitate and occupy the buildings decades prior. Explaining to a lawyer that you now want an artisan grilled

* This article uses retail and activity-generating interchangeably. Activity-generating is a planning term that describe uses which generate high levels of pedestrian movement including businesses engaged in the sale of goods, services like salons, some entertainment uses and eating and drinking establishments. Specialty retail is used when describing retail sales only.



Achieving active retail uses depends on the ability to create an experience that is believable to visitors and inclusive of local residents. Pictured on this page, scenes from a Wyoming Main Street struggling to define its retail experience to attract tourists headed to Yellowstone National Park.

cheese sandwich shop in his space might not go over so well.

Know Your Downtown Experience First

Achieving active retail uses directly speaks to a downtown’s ability to create an experience that is believable to visitors while at the same time is inclusive of the local residents. Local retail may mean convenience stores with iced 40-ounce cans of beer and cigarettes, while the long-term community vision fancies a wine bar and humidor to attract overnight wedding parties. Is this retail dream realistic for your existing demographic, and is it a believable experience for visitors to your downtown?

I recently returned from a quick vacation to my small hometown in Wyoming, population 1,853. Their Main Street is a state highway and also happens to be “on the road” to Yellowstone. The town serves its local population with professional services fairly well, but retail is dire. They are considering an application to the



Another scene from a Wyoming Main Street struggling to define its retail experience to attract tourists headed to Yellowstone National Park.

state Main Street program, and I spent time working with several committee members. One of the retailers complained about how quiet the evenings are and that we needed to work to increase activity and energy at night. But the local banker disagreed and presented a different perspective.

Daily he observes the opportunity of an incredible amount of tourist traffic coming and going from Yellowstone National Park (just shy of two hours away). Peak traffic hours are between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., and he believed retail efforts should focus on capturing that traffic. He is right. The believable identity for this town is a pleasant and leisurely mid-day stop on the way to Yellowstone—a few quaint choices for lunch, a quick self-guided museum tour (take your pick between dinosaur history or aerial firefighting), and some time to browse interesting shops with local goods. This would create daytime energy and sales tax revenue while supplementing the existing local professional services still occupying Main Street.

Attempting to attract overnight guests to drink at a wine bar and spend money on other nightlife activities is less realistic. Travelers' sights are set on the major destination a few hours away while locals likely would not support any place where a glass of wine costs more than a bottle at the grocery store.

In this instance new regulations to encourage retail development could be approached in several



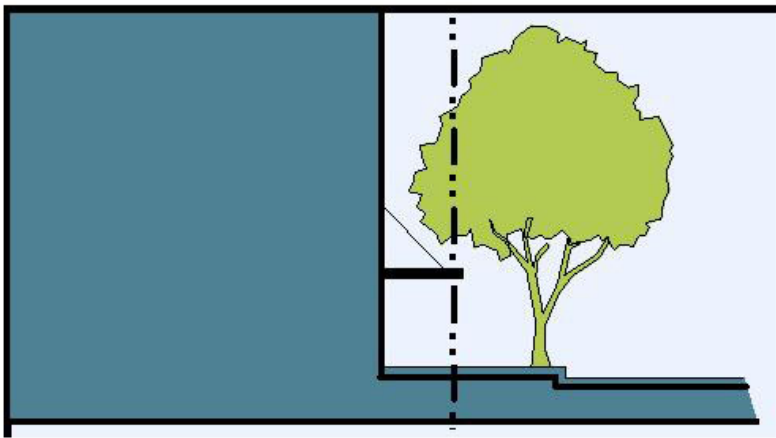
In form-based codes, shopfront requirements include a minimum percentage of transparent glass, primary entrances that open directly to the sidewalk, and specific standards for signs and awnings. These features are illustrated in this photo of Primp in McKinney's Main Street district.

ways. The issues are primarily that the retail spaces are too large and the downtown identity is not clear. What is clear is that the office and professional uses are the only reason Main Street is not deserted, so it would be wise to not offend those business and property owners. Any new requirements should focus on either:

1) A design approach to create a shopfront aesthetic. The town might consider mandatory frontage types so that any renovations or exterior alterations require restoration or installation of awnings, transparent glass and transom windows. Sidewalk

furniture could be allowed through a business-friendly permitting process and a future grant program could assist with rehabilitation costs.

2) A more traditional retail district zoning classification to create smaller, more suitable spaces and concentrate them in key blocks. For example, a percentage of the building frontage along the street would be required for retail use, and office space would need to be located in the rear of buildings. Recruitment programs like a tourist season pop-up contest could help attract tenants.



f. Shopfront: a Frontage wherein the Façade is aligned close to the Frontage Line with the building entrance at Sidewalk grade. This type is conventional for Retail use. It has a substantial glazing on the Sidewalk level and may have an awning that may overlap the Sidewalk to within 2 feet of the Curb. Syn: **Retail Frontage**.

Anyone brave enough to browse through a form-based code would find this type of illustration showing the shopfront frontage type, which creates a façade that interacts with the street (like Primp on page 7)..

How to Zone for Retail

Like the example above, there are two overarching principles used when considering zoning to achieve activity-generating uses. One approach relies on regulating design, while the other regulates permitted uses.

Design: Form-Based Codes (FBC)

Form-based codes heavily regulate the form and exterior design of a building rather than the use. They are especially concerned with how buildings relate to one another and how facades, or frontages, interface with the streetscape. FBCs encourage denser, mixed use development and emphasize a pedestrian-friendly high-quality public realm. The flexibility in use and predictability in design offered by a form-based code is particularly appealing to developers.*

*For more information about form-based codes, the [Form-Based Code Institute](#) and [Center for Applied Transect Studies](#) provide the most comprehensive and accurate information.

The movement was initiated as a response to conventional zoning practice, which is seen as a major contributor towards the creation of sprawling, automobile oriented development patterns. A form-based code can be adopted as either the base zoning or as an overlay district and is used in cities across the country to guide downtown redevelopment plans. Many cities in Texas utilize form-based codes including Duncanville, El Paso, Hutto, Rowlett, Roanoke, San Antonio, and San Marcos.

To encourage active uses in downtown, form-based codes typically require a shopfront frontage type, which is mandated on certain streets where retail is highly desirable. It does not prohibit an office use from being located there as long as their building frontage appears like a store front—built to the property line with proper signage, an awning or canopy, clear glazing, primary ground-floor entrances oriented to the public right-of-way, and parking in the rear. Sometimes these design features are referred to as an active edge. Form-based codes often

require the same design features as a historic preservation ordinance; however, FBCs make no distinction between new or historic materials. The two can work well together.

Use: Traditional Districts

With a more traditional district approach, municipalities can define whichever uses they prefer in their downtown. Retail, commercial, and office uses are typically required on the ground-floor of central business district zoning codes, while office and residential are permitted on upper levels.

When a mix of uses is permitted in the district, different strategies can be utilized to specifically control the amount of retail. An overlay can be used to “incubate” businesses by concentrating them in one area. In larger downtowns, there can be a limited market for specialty retail, so it is common to concentrate retail wherever the most pedestrian activity is desired—along the Main Street, around a plaza or another landmark structure. For redeveloping downtowns, this tactic can also prove useful. Restricting the most desirable retail to a small area can help ensure



Know your property owners well before beginning any ordinance changes to mandate retail frontage. Explaining to a lawyer who has occupied a prime retail space for 20 years that you now want to create small storefronts along the frontage to provide a permanent space for the artisan grilled cheese food truck may not go over so well. Pictured, Burro Cheese Kitchen on South Congress, Austin, TX.

success until a self-sustaining critical mass is established. Development standards are also used to direct retail to defined parts of buildings. More common ones include a frontage width and depth requirement. For example, an ordinance might require non-corner properties dedicate 60 percent of the street frontage to a depth of 60 feet to specialty retail and restaurant uses only.

Finally, any land use policy that is working to incubate retail will also include language that permits urban style residential. Increasing the number of households living in and near downtown is the surest way to support downtown businesses and activate the street.

Questions to Ask

To move forward with a retail zoning requirement, start with asking your Main Street stakeholders the following questions:

1.) Is the problem the use of the building or how the building and the activity it generates interfaces with the street? Traditional zoning creates districts to regulate use, while form-based codes focus on the building design and its relationship to the sidewalk and street. Is the design of building contributing to the lack of vibrancy or it is truly the use? Knowing the answer to this question will help you know how to address the challenge.

2) How well do you understand the property owners in your desired prime retail area? Who do you perceive to be in the way of freeing up prime retail space? Are these in fact the owners and best stewards of your historic buildings? Starting with vacant spaces formerly used as retail is a much different challenge than working with existing occupied spaces filled with professional services and office uses. Changing or implementing new land use controls is a political process and will be a bumpy ride if you do not engage your property owners early and often.

3) Is your desired retail experience believable for visitors and inclusive of your local population? Zoning can control

the size of the space, the type of use, the design of the building façade, etc. An insurance office may be happy to lease their first 40 feet of building depth, creating the perfect space for a candy store; whereas, mandating 100 percent ground floor retail may be too large of a space to attract the wine bar that is unlikely to locate there anyway.

If you have questions about using downtown zoning to achieve the right mix of uses, please contact emily.koller@thc.state.tx.us.

RETAIL CORNER

CUSTOMER SERVICE: THE POWER OF WELCOME

*Article written by Rebekka Adams,
Assistant State Coordinator, Texas Main
Street Program*

Welcome. This simple word has a lot of power.

I have worked for various large retail corporations and sat through their selling-system seminars of tried and true practices in increasing sales. Most of the time, I thought that I sounded insincere using their techniques in real life. However, after leaving the corporate world and working in several mom-and-pop shops throughout Austin, I found myself reverting back to those corporate sales techniques. The one technique that stuck with me and has proven the most effective is welcoming a customer into your store and giving a store tour. This should be done within the first 30 seconds of a customer entering for the maximum benefit.

Whenever you have a new customer enter your business, using the word “Welcome” is a great start. It is more powerful than hello. It lets the customer know that they are wanted there. An even better approach is to say “Welcome to (insert store name here).” Using your store name reinforces your branding. It also lets customers know where they entered, which is especially useful

after a long day of shopping.

After you welcome a customer, there is a great formula that has been proven by larger corporations to increase sales. It is called a store tour. This takes some practice to feel natural; however, once you start using this technique, you will notice a difference in your customer’s behavior.

There are five elements to work into your store tour: a greeting/welcome, asking your customer if they have previously visited your business, sharing with the customer what makes your store unique in two sentences or less, where they can find items in the store, and your name.

Here are two examples for a retail boutique on how to utilize a store tour:

A customer walks into the store.

Employee: Welcome to Amelia’s Boutique.

Customer: Thank you.

Employee: Have you been in before?

Customer: No, it’s my first time.

Employee: Thank you for coming in. Amelia’s Boutique is known for high quality women’s clothing that can fit into your

existing wardrobe and accessories that fit current trends. Up front we have all of our current accessories that are perfect for transitioning to fall; in the back are staple wardrobe items; and to your right is all of our clothing for back to school. I will let you browse around. My name is Rachel, please let me know if I can help you with anything.

Customer: Wow, thank you (and she starts shopping).

A customer walks into the store.

Employee: Welcome to Amelia’s Boutique.

Customer: Thank you.

Employee: Have you been in before?

Customer: Yes, I come in all the time.

Employee: Awesome, what’s your name?

Customer: Julie

Employee: Thank you for coming back Julie. Just to let you know, we have three new product lines in right now, the silver jewelry collection from XYZ right here, a new line of hats over to the right, and some great new printed dresses in the back of the store. I will let you browse around. My name is Rachel, please let me know if I can help you with anything.

Customer: Wow, thank you (and she starts shopping).



The great thing about this technique is that it can be modified to use in almost every type of business. Restaurants have hostesses to greet customers when they walk in the door. Typically, a hostess will take your name and seat you when there is an available table. If you are hungry and there is a wait, you are left standing or sitting in a small entryway. Now imagine getting greeted with the following:

“Welcome to Tito’s Italian Restaurant. We are known for our pasta, which is handmade in-house and the owner’s grandmother’s meatballs. There is currently a short wait. My name is Rachel; may I have your name for the list?”

Doesn’t this make you feel better with a short wait, knowing that soon you can taste homemade Italian food? Not only did the hostess greet you pleasantly, they also suggested a special food, which can also help maximize your sales.

How about a dentist office? This is one place that no one really wants to go. Imagine the receptionist welcoming you into the office. This person can help you relax and make this unpleasant experience a little more relaxed.

“Welcome to Dr. Williams office. He has been practicing for 20 years. I am Rachel, what is your name so I can let him know you are here? Thank you. We have some bottled water in the fridge, please make yourself comfortable.”

Try it for your business:
Welcome to (Name of store). Have you been in before?
If no: (Name of store) is known for (insert item one), (item two), and (item three). My name is (your name). Please let me know if I can help you with anything.
If yes: Thank you for coming back. Let me quickly tell you about our new products ...

Once you feel like you have adapted the greeting and tour, make sure to train your employees why and how to also do it. Inspire them to make every customer’s visit to your business a pleasurable and memorable one, and you will be building repeat business and word of mouth referrals.

MEET MARIE: NEW PROJECT DESIGN ASSISTANT

Marie Oehlerking, Project Design Assistant, Texas Main Street Program

Hello managers! I’m a new Project Design Assistant, working on the design team with Howard and Sarah. I am extremely excited to start working with you all.

I am a recent graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, where I received a Master’s of Science in Historic Preservation. In 2012, I received a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the University of Texas at Arlington, while interning for a local interior design firm. Needless to say, old buildings are my passion. Last summer, I had the opportunity to travel to southeastern Kentucky to work with Discover Downtown Middlesboro, a non-profit organization that carries out the

local Main Street program. During my time there, I drafted the local preservation plan, initiated the city’s first digital historic resource survey, and worked with several property owners on completing façade updates.

At UT Austin, I conducted a year-long thesis project where I investigated the intersection of the Main Street and Historic Courthouse Preservation programs. I researched the programs’ structure, explored 12 communities, and discovered numerous impacts that both programs have on Texas communities. The most significant conclusion that I drew from my research is that when communities come together under a common goal, they can achieve anything, no matter how large the obstacles might be.

I am constantly inspired by you and your cities. My goal is to assist you in any way I can. Please do not hesitate to [drop a line](#) anytime. I look forward to meeting you soon!

-Marie Oehlerking



Marie Oehlerking, Texas Main Street program new project design assistant

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Innovative
Entrepreneur



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PITTSBURG MAIN STREET FOCUSES ON ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

Jenny Rowan, Main Street Manager, shares about Pittsburg Innovative Entrepreneur (PIE) program

Pittsburg Texas' Economic Development Board (EDC) has been working on an original recruitment program that is intended to attract new businesses to Pittsburg. Called the Pittsburg Innovative Entrepreneur (PIE), it is a business startup competition that will take place over a period

of eight months and will generate viable business concepts to open up in Pittsburg.

Starting in September, the City of Pittsburg will be accepting business plans and awarding an entrepreneur \$20,000 to open shop here in Pittsburg!

"Sounds Scrumptious, what all does this entail?!"

Business plans must be received by the City of Pittsburg by February 25, 2015. It is advised that applicants take the Small Business Development Corporation course that will coincide with the contest to help pull together an outstanding business plan.

The EDC board will choose five innovative entrepreneurs on March 16, interview the contestants on their plans, and decide on a winner by April 6, 2015. Winners must open up shop by July 2015.

PIE will help support entrepreneurial growth in our community; the contest will be an annual event to help downtown grow into a sustainable network. The contest is not reserved for only downtown properties, but is focused on Main Street, with providing information on our grant incentives as a "bigger slice of the PIE." Through PIE, the EDC will create a database of

potential business owners that have looked into Pittsburg as home. The database will show entrepreneurs that the EDC needs to support with business development plans and possibly future financial help. The next question is...what type of PIE are you? [Click here for more information.](#)

Pittsburg, Texas is giving you the opportunity to open your own unique business without the scare of funding.

Incentives: \$20,000 for business expenses*, free advertising with the City of Pittsburg, free membership with the Chamber of Commerce, and if opening downtown you will be eligible for grants up to \$10,000.

Fntrepreneurs: we want you in our city. Simply write a business plan/financial plan, give it to the City of Pittsburg, and be ready to open your business if you win!

Get a Slice



* reimbursed after the first year of business

MAIN STREET EVENTS

September 6

Tyler

ArtWalk

[Click here for more information.](#)

September 13

Caldwell

30th Annual Kolache Festival

Celebration of Czech heritage including polka dance, food, crafts, and more. [Click here for more information.](#)

September 13

Denton

15th Annual Arts, Antiques, & Auto Extravaganza

More than 200 cars, chalk art festival, arts and crafts vendors, antique appraisals, silent auction, kids activities, local band, and tasty eats. 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Denton County Courthouse-on-the-Square. [Click here for more information.](#)

September 13

LaGrange

Patriot Day Ceremony

Ceremony honoring emergency service volunteers and staff with 21-gun salute, bagpiper, and 9/11 commemorative flag presentation. Emergency vehicle services will be available for children. Fayette County Courthouse lawn, 9 a.m.

September 13

Greenville

Craft Beer Festival

Food, live bands, and bike contest. Location: Corner Street Pub, Downtown Greenville

September 19–21

Greenville

Rally 'Round Greenville Festival

[Click here for more information.](#)

September 19–20

Pittsburg

Pioneer Days

Pioneer Days is a fun and festive event honoring the Pittsburg's rich history and pioneering spirit. Local vendors, craftsmen, musicians, and food stands populate the streets of Pittsburg and provide a festive atmosphere for all visitors. Various contests, shows, carnival rides, and a street parade help make Pioneer Days a family event. [Click here for more information.](#)

September 20

Electra

Texas Treasure Business Awards

Texas Treasure Business Awards will be presented to a dozen Electra businesses during a 1:30 p.m. reception at the historic Grand Theatre in Electra. A program of the Texas Historical Commission, the awards recognize businesses that have contributed to the Texas and local economy for over 50 years. This Saturday afternoon reception during Homecoming weekend is hosted by Main Street Electra.

September 20

Greenville

Cotton Patch Challenge Bicycle Tour

[Click here for more information.](#)

September 20

Waxahachie

Sip 'n Stroll

Taste 12 different wines as you stroll through merchants' stores in downtown Waxahachie. [Click here for more information.](#)

September 24–27

Tyler

International Film Festival

Downtown Tyler Film Festival is a celebration of storytelling through film in East Texas. Four evenings of films, filmmaker Q&As, receptions, and fun. Location: Liberty Theater. [Click here for more information.](#)

September 26–27

Hillsboro

Cotton Pickin Fair and BBQ Cook Off

[Click here for more information.](#)



September 27

Nacogdoches

Boots & Brew

Boots & Brew is downtown Nacogdoches' newest event featuring live entertainment from the Dirty River Boys, 7 beer tastings, 5 wine tastings, and 10 food samplings. Tasting glasses are included in your \$35 ticket. Attendees will also be able to peruse a wide variety of vendors all on the historic red brick square. 6–10 p.m.

September 27

Seguin

**15th Annual Pontiac Club
Classic Car Show**

The car show, hosted by the Alamo Area Chapter Pontiac-Oakland Club International, will showcase dozens of classic cars around Central Park in downtown Seguin. 9 a.m.–4 p.m., registration is at 9 a.m., judging at 11 a.m., and awards at 4 p.m.

Fridays in October

Longview

Downtown Live

Located at Heritage Plaza in Downtown Longview. Free live music the first four Fridays in October!

October 3–Thieves of SunRise

October 10–Little Man Zac

October 17–The Kid Icarus

Project

October 24–Bobby O and the

Mojos

[Click here for more information.](#)

October 4

Beaumont

DOG-tober Fest

A day of PAW-licious fun with families and their favorite pooches. The day begins with Puppies and Pancakes followed by your favorite furr-licious contests, PAW Readings, BarkArt, WOOF-stock, and Jane FIDO Exercise! Admission is free. A Beaumont Main Street Production. 8 a.m.–1 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

October 4

Bridgeport

Coal Miners' Heritage Festival

Come and enjoy a day of fun fall activities on Halsell Street in Historic Downtown Bridgeport. Event includes: chili cook-off, vendors, pumpkin patch pageant, live performances, Main Street merchant sales, and much more! 9 a.m.–3 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

October 4

Clarksville

Fall Bazaar and Red River County

Duck Race

Held around the Courthouse grounds, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Craft and food booths, children's corner, live music all day. Duck Race 2 p.m. down the Delaware Creek.

October 4

Ferris

Pioneer Days Festival

Sponsored by the Lions Club of Ferris, the "Pioneer Days" festival began in 1974 to celebrate the 100th birthday of the City of Ferris. Parade at 9 a.m.; events from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. with live music, street vendors, and arts and crafts, face painting, and various items for sale. Ferris High School drama students will present "The History of Ferris" in the old Queen Theatre. [Click here for more information.](#)

October 4

Longview

Movies on the Plaza

Longview Main Street will be showing Disney's FROZEN! This is a free event with free popcorn and drinks (while supplies last). Activities start at 6:30 p.m. and the movie starts at dark. [Click here for more information.](#)

October 9

Greenville

Bras for the Cause

6th annual event raising funds for Hunt Regional Healthcare Foundation. Location: Downtown Greenville between the Texan Theater and Landon Winery.

October 11

Electra

Western Heritage Day

The day will feature a working blacksmith, Buffalo Soldiers, a variety of vendors, and special awards to rodeo greats from Electra. Downtown Electra. For vendor information for this new event, call 940.733.360.

October 11

Mount Vernon

40th Annual CountryFest

Arts and Crafts vendors, wiener dog races, car show, 42 tournament, stew cook-off, children rides, and festival food. Location: downtown square, Mount Vernon. [Click here for more information.](#)



October 11

Pilot Point

4th Annual Bonnie & Clyde Days

Lots of events including the Cabinet Makers Soap Box Derby, a 5K "get fit" run at 9:30 a.m.,

a market full of vendors, free kids zone with a bounce house, zip line, rock wall, and petting zoo, reenactments, a chain gang march, Model A car show, classic car show, antique tractor show, peanut thrashers, and live bands throughout the day. The Speakeasy Beer Garden opens at noon. Other activities include pumpkin decorating, a pie eating contest, the PPYSA Cheerleaders and Apex Show Teams will be performing. [Click here for more information.](#)

October 11

Winnsboro

Classic Car Cruise

Car rally/poker run, farmers market, car show, door prizes, and music from the 1950s and '60s. This year the Cruise In is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Mustang, and the judges will be from the Carroll Shelby Automotive School at North East Texas Community College. Main Street and The Hawks of East Texas host this event each year with proceeds going to the HAWKS Scholarship Program and the Main Street Façade Grant Program. Location: Historic Depot in downtown Winnsboro. [Click here for more information.](#)

October 24–25

Mount Vernon

5th Annual Wine in the Pines

We will have a culinary corner with cooking demos, artisanal foods, high-end vendors, and of course wine tastings to celebrate Texas Wine Month and Texas Wineries. [Click here for more information.](#)

October 24–26

Seguin

Pecan Fest Heritage Days

Once a year, Seguin locals break out of their shells and throw one great party. Come pay homage to Seguin's famous crop, pecans, and the area's history. [Click here for more information](#) and [follow on Facebook.](#)

October 25

Ferris

Great Pumpkin 5K Run/Walk

The fourth annual event, sponsored by the Ferris Area Business Association, benefits the Ferris Lions Club. 9 a.m. start in historic downtown Ferris. [Click here for registration information.](#)

October 31

Greenville

Halloween on the Square

Live music featuring The Blandelles, games, inflatables, trick-or-treating, and fun. Location: ourthouse Square, Downtown Greenville.

October 31–November 2

Greenville

Bob Wills Fiddle Festival

Three-day festival and contest named for the King of Western Swing. Location: Texan Theater, Landon Winery, Corner Street Pub, Greenville Municipal Auditorium.

If you would like one of your Main Street downtown events posted here, email: rebekka.adams@thc.state.tx.us at least one month in advance.

MAIN STREET GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The Great American Main Street Award application is now available. Please remember you must be an Accredited Main Street to apply and past winners are currently ineligible to apply. Applications, along with the \$150 application fee, will be due by midnight Wednesday, September 17. For more information on this year's application process, please [visit the GAMSAs web page.](#)

The Levitt AMP Grant Awards is an exciting new matching grant program made possible by Levitt Pavilions, a national nonprofit dedicated to strengthening the social fabric of America through the power of free, live music. Each grantee will receive up to \$25,000 each in matching funds to present a minimum of 10 free outdoor concerts presented over 10 consecutive weeks during 2015-16. [Click here for more information.](#)

Technical Assistance Grant Program

The National Main Street Center (NMSC) is pleased to announce a new technical assistance grant program for Main Street communities, which offers an opportunity to receive hands-on technical assistance or training directly from experts from the NMSC on one of the following four areas: strategic organizational planning, fundraising, leadership/board development, or diversity. It is available to members of the National Main Street Center, with preference given to Designated

Members. This grant is valued at approximately \$2,500. Email completed applications to [Hannah White](#) by Thursday, October 2 at 5p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

MAIN STREET PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**November 4–7
Granbury**

Texas Downtown Development & Revitalization Conference
Co-sponsors: Texas Main Street Program/
Texas Downtown Association. [Click here for more information.](#)

**March 30–April 2, 2015
Atlanta, GA**

**National Main Streets Annual
Conference**
[Click here for more information.](#)

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
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 Department of Agriculture: www.TexasAgriculture.gov
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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