

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

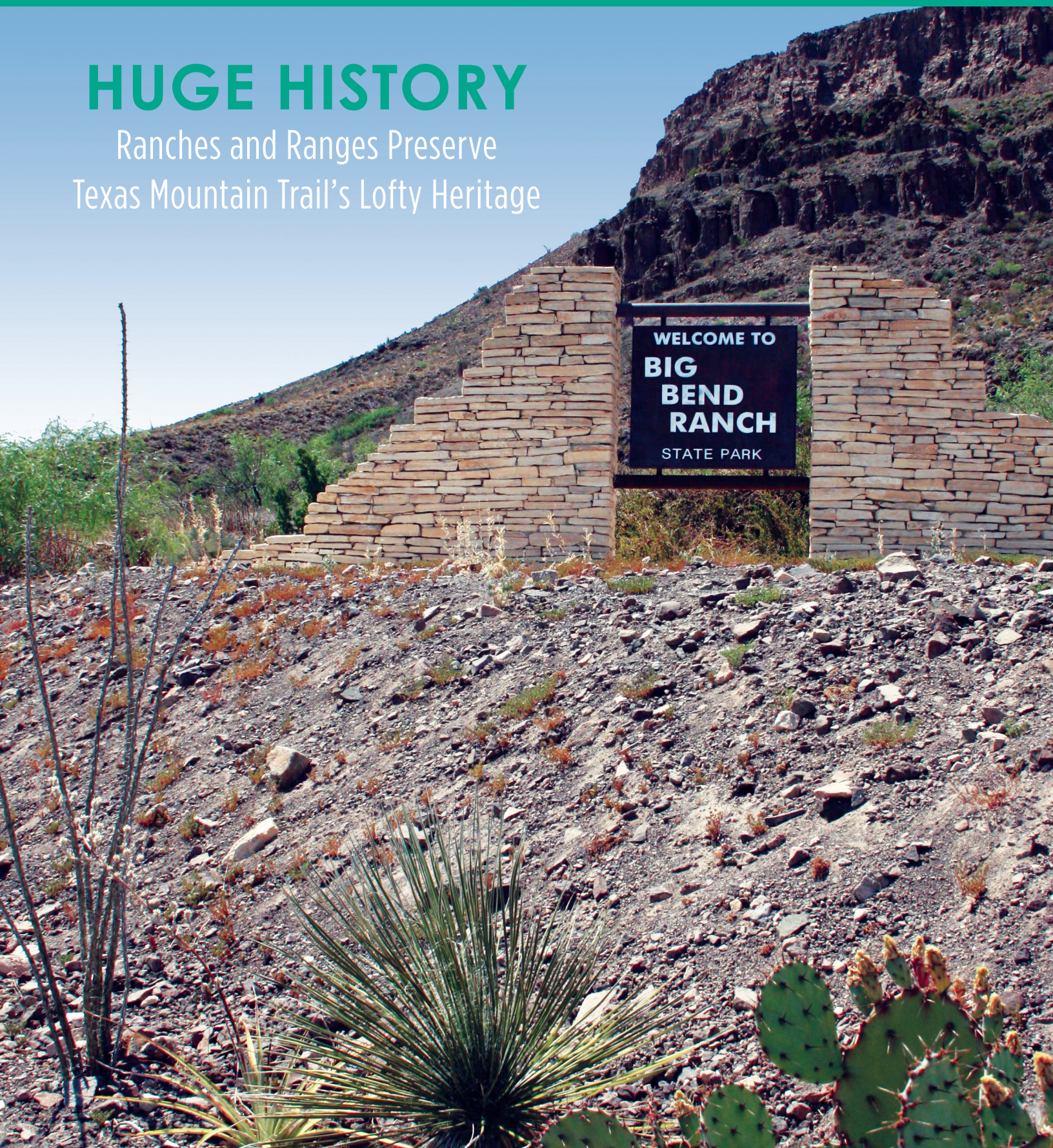
THE MEDALLION



SUMMER 2013

HUGE HISTORY

Ranches and Ranges Preserve
Texas Mountain Trail's Lofty Heritage





TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Matthew F. Kreisle, III, Chairman
 Thomas E. Alexander, Vice Chair
 Robert K. Shepard, Secretary

Earl Broussard Jr.
 A. Mario Castillo
 John W. Crain
 Michael D. Donegan
 David A. Gravelle
 Jon T. Hansen
 August W. Harris, III
 Lisa A. Hembry
 Steven L. Highlander
 Tom Perini
 Gilbert E. Peterson
 Judy C. Richardson
 Nancy M. Steves
 Daisy Sloan White

Commissioner Emeritus: T. R. Fehrenbach
Executive Director: Mark Wolfe

Medallion Staff:

Heather McBride
 Department Head
 Andy Rhodes
 Managing Editor
 Barbara Putrino
 Senior Projects Coordinator
 Judy Jensen
 Senior Graphic Design Coordinator

ISSN 0890-7595

Vol. 51, No. III

www.thc.state.tx.us thc@thc.state.tx.us

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

THE **MEDALLION**

SUMMER 2013

FEATURES

4 Royal Road
 Group Preserves El
 Camino Real de los Tejas.



THC OUTREACH

6 Way Out West
 Explore Ranches,
 Ranges in the Mountain
 Trail Region.



10 Historic Partnership
 Preservation Groups
 Collaborate on Pittsburg
 Survey Project.

ON THE COVER:

Entrance to Big Bend Ranch State Park near Lajitas. Photo by Andy Rhodes.

VISIT US ON THE WEB

www.thc.state.tx.us

Learn more about the real places
 telling the real stories of Texas.

www.texasimetravel.com

The Texas Heritage Trails Program's
 travel resource

www.texashistoricsites.com

The THC's 20 historic properties

www.thcfriends.org

Friends of the Texas
 Historical Commission

FAST FACTS

The THC-administered Federal Investment Tax Credit
 Program is an economic catalyst in Texas.



MILLION
 ANNUAL
 INCOME
 GENERATED



MILLION
 STATE TAXES
 GENERATED



MILLION
 LOCAL TAXES
 GENERATED



JOBS
 SUPPORTED

*Figures from 2011 report "Economic Impact of Agency Programs"

City of Delights

First Lady Anita Perry Honors Paris with Texas Treasures Award

By *Debbi Head*
 THC Senior Communications Specialist

Paris, Texas, may never match the cosmopolitan elegance of its namesake French metropolis, but it boasts several cultural treasures unmatched across the Lone Star State.

These gems include the distinguished and elegant 1868 Sam Bell Maxey House, the distinctive collection of carved headstones at Evergreen Cemetery, the beautifully restored Lamar County Courthouse, and the charmingly bustling Main Street district. Each contributed to Paris' recent reception of the 2013 First Lady's Texas Treasures Award. The prestigious award was announced in March by First Lady Anita Perry at the State Capitol in Austin, along with Texas Historical Commission (THC) leadership and staff. Afterward, THC Commissioner John Crain and Executive Director Mark Wolfe presented the award to local representatives at a special event in Paris.

The award, initiated in 2009, recognizes communities that showcase their dedication to community preservation efforts through participation in THC initiatives and other state and local programs. The award is sponsored by the Office of the First Lady and the THC.

"Texas Treasures are communities that go the extra mile to discover their roots, teach living history lessons, and create a lasting legacy for future generations," said Texas First Lady Anita Perry. "This award recognizes

Right: Attending the award ceremony, from left, are: Paris Mayor A.J. Hashmi, Texas First Lady Anita Perry, and Lamar CHC Chair Suzy Harper.



Paris' distinguished preservation attractions include the Culberson Fountain (above) and the Main Street district (right).



visionary communities that put in the hard work required to ensure that their hometown is different from the next. It spotlights communities that lovingly maintain their monuments from the past in order to create a stronger future."

Paris received the award for its multi-faceted preservation commitment, exhibited by organizations such as the Lamar County Historical Commission, Paris Historic Preservation Commission, Paris Main Street, Paris Visitors and Convention Council, Lamar County Historical Society, and the Valley of the Caddo Archeological Society. Together with the City of Paris, they actively participated in projects like the Trail de Paris, part of a 130-mile hike and bike



trail that connects several historic towns to Paris' vibrant Plaza Square, where

Culberson Fountain serves as the centerpiece of downtown.

"I want to thank the First Lady for sponsoring this truly deserved award," said THC Chairman Matt Kreisle. "Texas Treasures communities represent a strong commitment to enriching the lives of visitors through the preservation of their real places telling the real stories of Texas. The efforts of the citizens of Paris should encourage other communities to follow on their own preservation journey."

Applications for the 2014 award will be accepted until 5 p.m. on August 30. For more information, visit www.thc.state.tx.us or call 512.463.6092.

The First Lady's Texas Treasures Award promotes and recognizes the unique heritage of Paris through special signage and a DVD promoting the community's cultural resources. To see video clips of the award-winning communities since 2009, visit the THC's website. ★

Applications for the 2014 award will be accepted until 5 p.m. on August 30. For more information, visit www.thc.state.tx.us or call 512.463.6092. ★

The Royal Road's Real Stories

Group Strives to Protect Threatened
El Camino Real de los Tejas

By *Andy Rhodes*
Managing Editor, The Medallion

Nestled among Texas' rolling hills and meandering creekbeds are slight depressions in the earth known as swales. Barely visible to the untrained eye, swales descend into the surrounding landscape, forming elongated u-shaped indentations resulting from centuries of foot, horse, and wagon traffic. In eastern Texas, many swales are remnants of the Camino Real de los Tejas, the legendary Royal Road that transported Native Americans, Spanish colonists, and westward settlers between the Sabine River and the Rio Grande from the late 1600s to the mid 1800s.

Steven Gonzales, executive director of El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association, pointed out examples of swale features at Apache Pass in Milam County on a recent sunny spring afternoon. He noted that travelers would descend toward the San Gabriel River and cross a natural ford at the site as they traversed the Camino Real.

"You can see where they probably walked along this path and down toward the river crossing," Gonzales explains. "These depressions are very similar to others we've seen in the area—once you know what to look for, it's easier to identify. In fact, there are people so fascinated with these swales that they've started calling themselves 'rut nuts.'"

Gonzales hopes this type of intrigue will raise the profile of the trail association, officially designated in 2004 by the U.S. Congress. It is tasked with promoting and protecting the Camino Real's historic integrity and its



Steven Gonzales, executive director of El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association, points out swale features along the legendary Royal Road at Apache Pass in Milam County.

modern contributions to tourism and economic development. He notes that the trail is one of the oldest in the nation, and, unlike others, represents several different eras of historical significance.

"This trail is an invaluable national resource—it led to the founding of Texas, and we wouldn't be calling our state Texas without it," Gonzales says. "We're working hard to expand our support base and educate folks about this trail, because it can be a bit overwhelming and sometimes confusing at first."

For example, Gonzales notes there are challenges distinguishing the trail's path with portions of the Old San Antonio Road, which the Daughters of the American Revolution designated with markers from 1918–2004. Also,

confusion occasionally arises with El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (another nationally recognized Spanish colonial route near El Paso), as well as inconsistent routes marked by historians over two centuries along with differing designated trail regions.

Rockdale resident Dr. Lucile Estell, a founder and current board member of the trail association, says the organization has worked closely with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to properly research, designate, and preserve El Camino Real de los Tejas' historic resources.

"The list of historically significant people who've walked on El Camino Real de los Tejas is quite impressive, from Alonso de León to Moses Austin to Davy Crockett," Estell says. "We're hoping to educate Texans about these



El Camino Real's dedicated supporters (from left) Dr. Lucile Estell, Johnnielyn Brown, Joy Graham, and Steven Gonzales. Below: The road traverses the former site of Mission San Ildefonso.

important historical connections. In the process, we're hoping some of the property owners along the trail will sign a certification grant or conservation easement to help protect this important part of our history."

Fellow board member and Rockdale resident Joy Graham adds that signage is crucial for raising awareness and fostering local pride. She suggests communities along El Camino Real de los Tejas follow Milam County's example by working with the THC to become a Certified Local Government. This entitles designated communities to compete for grants, which can finance a historical resources survey to identify significant sites and provide framework for implementing a sign program.

"It's very beneficial to develop partnerships with other organizations and communities in your area—this is a nationally significant resource, and it draws people from across the country to explore our shared heritage," Graham says.

Gonzales notes that El Camino Real de los Tejas is one of Texas' most threatened cultural

resources, with its "tremendous spatial extent" being susceptible to environmental issues. Of primary concern to Gonzales is hydraulic fracturing in the Eagle Ford Shale, which lies below most of the trail's South Texas territory. He says the fracturing operations typically

involve bulldozing large swaths of land for equipment, well pads, temporary housing, and pipelines; as a result, swales and other trail features may be irreparably damaged.

"We don't want to infringe on the rights of individual property owners or discourage development—we're just trying to raise awareness so people know this is a threatened resource," Gonzales says.

In addition, Gonzales cites environmental threats from construction on Interstate 35 near San Antonio, the XL Pipeline in East Texas, and aquifer drilling. As executive director of

the trail association, he raises these concerns annually with legislators in Washington, D.C.

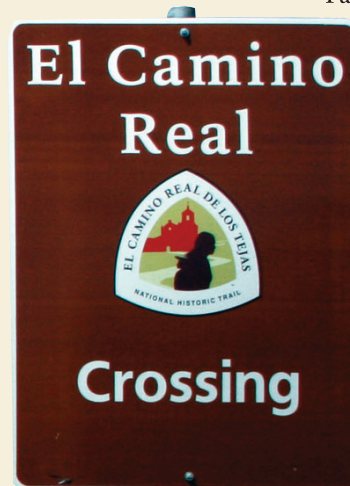
"We're aware that all of these activities are very important to modern development of Texas, but we also need to ensure people are aware of the significance of the trail in making Texas what it is today," Gonzales says. "It's a connected foundation representing so many things that made this state so great. We just hope, in turn, that people will respect that history by making an effort to protect the trail."

He adds that the best way for people to learn about El Camino Real de los Tejas' extensive history, and the trail association's resources, is via its website (www.elcaminotrail.org), and regular updates through its

Facebook page. These

platforms provide updates about the organization's efforts to engage the community in service projects, add related historical content to Texas' public school curriculum, raise needed funds, and allow property owners to participate in land certification, conservation, and easement programs along the length of El Camino Real.

"The more people learn about the trail, the more they want to get involved with protecting and preserving this wonderful national resource," Estell says. "Just recently, I was helping a young Boy Scout with a merit badge project, and I could see the excitement in his eyes as he learned about each new layer of El Camino Real's rich history. We're hoping that enthusiasm will catch on with folks all across Texas." ★



HUGE HISTORY

Ranches and Ranges Preserve Texas Mountain Trail's Lofty Heritage

*Text and Photos by Andy Rhodes
Managing Editor, The Medallion*

Upon approach, the rock shelter in Big Bend Ranch State Park appears to be a simple outcropping of limestone. Even its shadowy nook is modest and unassuming, belying the historical treasure within.

Once inside, it takes nearly a minute for your eyes to fully adjust and absorb the magnitude of the ancient artwork on the ceiling's rock canvas. One by one, they appear—first the black fingers, then white, and finally red outlines of the most recognizable and primal forms of human connection: hands.

These mesmerizing pictographs, painted by Native Americans up to 2,000 years ago, represent some of the finest accessible rock art in the Trans-Pecos region of

Texas. The site, named Manos Arriba (Spanish for “hands above”), is especially distinctive because it is one of the region's only known archeological sites to feature handprints exclusively.

“I think it's wonderful that visitors can take their time experiencing this amazing rock art and make their own decisions about the meaning behind the handprints,” says Blaine Hall, interpretive ranger at the park.

He adds that park archeologists have determined Native Americans created the pictographs' pigments by mixing water and powdered natural materials like manganese oxide and hematite. Perhaps the most important element was the binder—usually a portion of animal fat.



Pictographs of human handprints decorate the ceiling of a rock shelter in Big Bend Ranch State Park.

“It was pretty rare for people at the time to have animal products available, and whatever they had was usually dedicated to sustaining their basic survival,” Hall says. “Isn’t it amazing to think they were willing to expend some of this precious resource for their art?”

Similarly compelling is Big Bend Ranch State Park’s colossal size and remarkable historic resources. Hall puts the immensity into context: all of Texas Parks and Wildlife’s (TPWD) other parks combined could fit inside Big Bend Ranch’s 311,000 acres.

“It’s truly enormous, and the possibilities for exploring history, archeology, and cultural heritage out here are just as big,” he says.

Park Archeologist Tim Gibbs adds that the property contains nearly 600 known prehistoric and historic sites, 40 rock art locations, and 20 Cielo complex sites (late prehistoric occupational patterns first recognized by former THC State Archeologist Robert Mallof). Many pictographs were painted during the Late Archaic and Late Prehistoric periods (spanning circa 500 B.C.–A.D. 1000), while others depict horses, longhorn cattle, and Spanish crosses.

“It’s pretty much wide open out here, and it’s been wonderful to have the opportunity to conduct research in such a vast area that hasn’t been extensively studied,” Gibbs says. “One of the challenges is discerning among the various occupation periods at the same site—you don’t want to damage one element while attempting to preserve another.”

To ensure preservation while optimizing educational opportunities for visitors, the park offers affordable day-long tours customized for individual interests. The tour—conducted by knowledgeable guides in 4x4 air-conditioned vehicles equipped with emergency resources—begins at the park’s visitors center in the Sauceda historic district. Here, ranchers made the first of several attempts to tame the area’s rugged landscape more than a century ago.

Sauceda (Spanish for “willow grove”) initially took shape in 1905, when George A. Howard developed the core of the historic district’s main residential building as



A historical trail in Big Bend Ranch State Park.

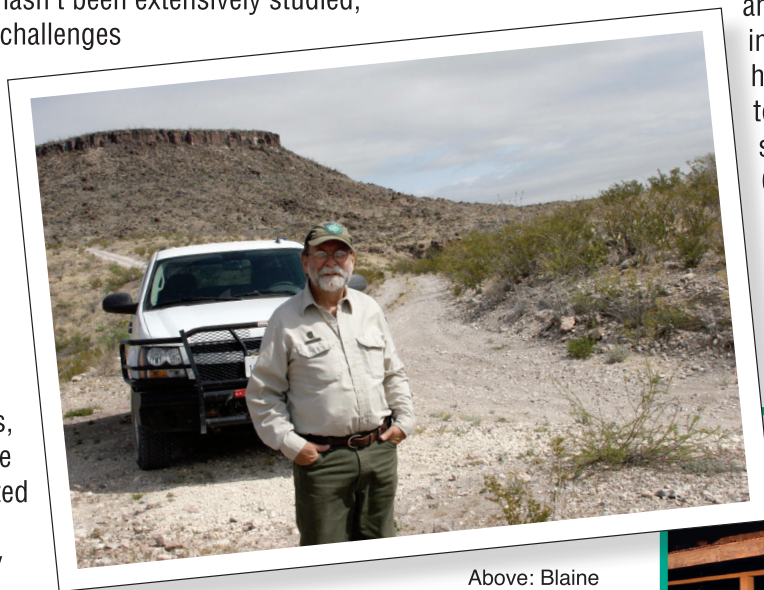
a headquarters for his Chillicothe-Saucita Ranch. Now known as the Big House, it serves as the park’s primary lodging facility, with additional rooms available in a nearby bunkhouse.

In 1915, the property shifted ownership to the Bogels. The family raised sheep and goats, and many of their impressive stone fences remain throughout the park. By 1934, the effects of drought and the Great Depression forced the Bogels to sell their ranch. The property was eventually purchased and expanded to nearly 300,000 acres by Edwin and Manny Fowlkes.

“The Fowlkes brothers contributed the biggest investment trying to make this a successful ranching operation,” Hall explains.

“They had a large crew of cowboys out here and put in a lot of fencing, water lines, and other infrastructure to really make a go at it.”

By 1958, however, the Fowlkes were forced to sell the ranch due to prolonged drought, a global wool-market crash, and the family’s over-ambitious expansion efforts. The new owner, Midland oilman and lawyer Len G. “Tuffy” McCormick, christened the property Big Bend Ranch and made several significant improvements. Most notably, he helped implement major upgrades to the road on the property’s southern border along the Rio Grande, now known as FM 170—one of the most scenic drives in Texas. By 1988, TPWD purchased the property, and opened it to the public as Big Bend Ranch State Park in 1995.



Above: Blaine Hall, TPWD interpretive ranger, leads customized tours. Right: the park’s bunk house at sunset in the Sauceda historic district.





“It’s our job to help protect and research the property and share our resources with the public,” Hall says. “Sometimes people are a bit intimidated by the remote and rugged nature of this park, but once you put in a little effort to get here, you’ll be rewarded with experiences that are unavailable anywhere else.”

For example, the historic Crawford-Smith Ranch in the eastern portion of the park offers a step back in time to the region’s early ranching years. In the early 1900s, the Crawford and Smith families occupied the once-thriving Fresno Canyon, where fresh water from a natural spring had drawn animals and Native Americans for thousands of years. This water was piped to a reservoir that doubled as a swimming hole, and was also used to irrigate diverse agricultural plots, including fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, and vineyards.

Both families raised sheep and Angora goats, and embarked on several entrepreneurial endeavors to supply military demands during World War I, such as mohair production. The Crawford family also constructed a wax-processing facility, which used the desert’s abundant candelilla plant to create wax for waterproofing military supplies.

“In addition to the freight hauled past here on the Marfa to Terlingua Road, a passenger stage line also ran by, so people would stop off a few times each week,” Hall explains. “This wasn’t an official stage stop, but people often dropped in for some shade, maybe buy some vegetables and fruit, or even just to chat while having a water break.”

These days, the site’s only activity comes from heritage tourists, who marvel at the ruins of the ranch buildings and speculate on the once-bustling surroundings. Sun-baked adobe walls that comprised the main ranch house are now crumbling to the desert floor; personal items, including a shriveled cowboy boot,

are scattered among the outbuildings; and barbed wire is still entwined in hand-hewn fence posts that once encircled livestock pens.

Hall uses the Crawford-Smith settlement to help define the park’s large-scale historical context. He emphasizes the significant role geology has played in the park’s heritage; in this case, the surrounding Fresno Canyon attracted humans with its natural passageway and access to the springs, ultimately dictating travel and settlement patterns. Reaching further back, he points to the park’s nearby signature geological feature—El Solitario, a 35 million-year-old uplifted, eroded dome.

“This area is a paradise for geology, which has impacted everything in the park’s history that we study today,” he says. “It’s pretty amazing to stand here and take in the different elements, from geology to archeology to botany to history. I try to emphasize to our visitors that there’s a balance to everything out here, and that they ultimately can control the preservation and future of this incredible landscape.”

MARATHON’S MILEAGE

The THC’s Texas Mountain Trail Region offers a respite from summer heat and city life, beckoning with low humidity and open roads. The rugged isolation of Big Bend Ranch State Park lures adventure-minded visitors, but others seek historical attractions and outdoor recreation involving less...adventure. These travelers may opt to make a run for Marathon and its welcoming heritage activities.



Top: the adobe ruins at Crawford-Smith Ranch. Above, from left: Chihuahuan Desert flora and landscape; the historic Marathon Cemetery; cycling on Marathon’s heritage bike route.

An ideal home base is the remarkable Gage Hotel, built in 1927 for rancher, banker, and businessman Alfred Gage, who commissioned noted El Paso architects Trost and Trost to design the property as a headquarters for his 500,000-acre ranch. In 1978, former THC Commissioner J.P. Bryan bought the property, and has carefully renovated the hotel with authentic West Texas and Mexican-inspired décor, such as hand-crafted rustic doors, wrought-iron candelabra fixtures, and appealing adobe details. The hotel is now managed by Carol Peterson, wife of current THC Commissioner Gilbert “Pete” Peterson.

“The Gage is a true historic treasure for all travelers who come this way,” Carol Peterson says, encouraging visitors to experience the lush Gage Gardens, Desert Moon spa, and regional-themed restaurant. “It provides a glimpse to the past, and allows guests to enjoy our unique West Texas history.”

The hotel also serves as a hub for the highly recommended heritage bike route, a five-mile ride to historic Post Park just south of Marathon (helpful details about the course and its historical attractions are available at www.texasmountaintrail.com/bike). Developed by Texas Mountain Trail Region Executive Director Beth Nobles, the scenic route offers an ideal escape for visitors in search



Marathon's Gage Hotel, a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, was constructed in 1927.

of a pleasant cycling experience accompanied by fascinating history, unencumbered vistas, and a moderate workout.

“This is a wonderful way to fully engage your senses in the Texas Mountain Trail. From a bike, you can see historic ranches, hear regional bird calls, and feel the fresh mountain breeze,” Nobles says. “The bike ride transports visitors to centuries past, when people traveling on this road had a very similar perspective from their horses and wagons.”

Cyclists can spend an entire morning or afternoon exploring the route's many historical treasures, including an initial stop at the Marathon Cemetery. Gravesites include victims of the 1918 flu epidemic as well as Viola Pettus, a local African American nurse, who

cared for flu and measles patients (she reportedly made castor oil “really taste good”) and attended to children's medical needs.

The route's destination, Post Park, is also brimming with significant history. According to Brewster County historian J. Travis Roberts, Native Americans frequented the natural springs from at least 7,000 years ago, and Comanche Indians were involved in a skirmish here with Buffalo Soldiers and Texas Rangers in 1855. In the early 1930s, Civilian Conservation Corps members constructed a dam, which forms the park's placid lake, surrounded by uncommonly lush vegetation and accompanying songbirds.

Cycling and equipment rental can be arranged by Gage staff, who take pride in the hotel's growing reputation as a bike-friendly destination.

“We're seeing more and more cyclists come through here to experience this beautiful region by bike,” Peterson says. “After they've traveled across the desert and through the mountains, we're happy to provide them with a comfortable place to relax and unwind while being surrounded by West Texas history.” ★

IF YOU GO

Big Bend Ranch State Park (www.tpwd.state.tx.us) offers heritage-based activities for travelers of all ages and interests, including hiking, birding, mountain biking, horseback riding, backpacking, and paddling; however, the park's remote and rugged nature should be taken into consideration. Lodging at the Saucedo historic district is only accessible via an unpaved road, and a high-clearance vehicle is recommended for the nearly two-hour drive.

Information and exhibits dedicated to local history are available at Fort Leaton State Historic Site at the western edge of the park's boundary, and Barton Warnock Visitor Center on the eastern edge. For information about additional heritage tourism destinations in the area, order a free copy of the THC's *Texas Mountain Trail Region* travel guide at 866.276.6219 or www.texasmetravel.com, or visit www.texasmountaintrail.com.



A Historic Partnership

Preservation Organizations Collaborate on Pittsburg Commercial Historic District

By *Andy Rhodes*
Managing Editor, The Medallion

Several historical entities recently made Texas history by collaborating on the first-ever partnership resulting in a National Register designation. The Pittsburg Commercial Historic District is the culmination of a yearlong project among the Texas Historical Commission (THC), the Pittsburg Main Street Program, and the Camp County Historical Commission (CHC) to inventory and evaluate many of the East Texas community's significant historic resources.

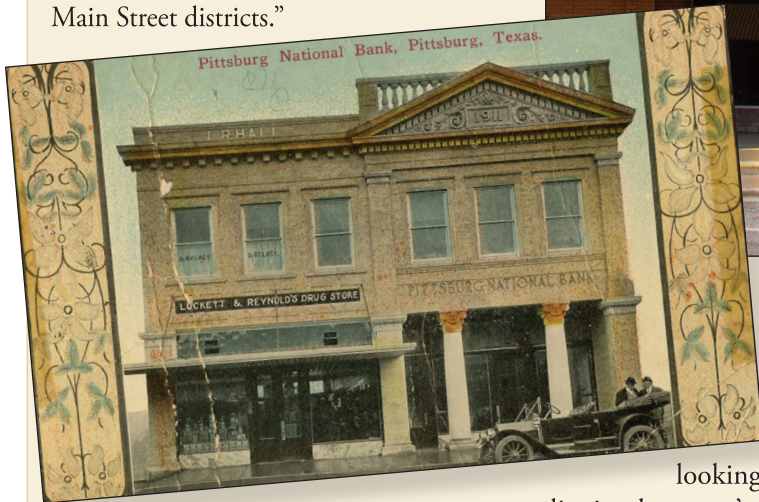
"This was a truly collaborative effort, and we're proud that it's the first of its kind to be completed in the state," says Terry Colley, the THC's deputy executive director. "We hope it can serve as a model for other Texas communities looking to document and preserve historic Main Street districts."

According to Leslie Wolfenden, the THC's historic resources survey coordinator, the survey and documentation process began in early 2012, when THC staff reviewed Main Street cities to determine which needed the most assistance.

THC staff hosted an initial site visit in February, and an inaugural public meeting was held in May to inform Pittsburg residents about the project, including the need for volunteers to assist with the physical survey and gathering of information and images.



Pittsburg's Commercial Historic District was recently listed in the National Register of Historic Places after an unprecedented collaborative community effort, which included gathering historic photos and surveying downtown buildings.



The Pittsburg Commercial Historic District anchors the city's (population 4,500) central business area. It retains a high concentration of properties representing the commercial, cultural, and architectural development of Pittsburg from the late 19th century to the present. The 32-acre district is composed of 88 buildings and sites.

"We were looking for a downtown district that wasn't overly large, but with plenty of good building stock, an effective Main Street program, and an active historical organization," Wolfenden explains.

After consulting with Texas Main Street Program staff and Greg Smith, the THC's National Register coordinator, Pittsburg was selected as the pilot project for the historic resources survey.

During the visit, community members submitted photographs and provided historical details about the buildings and the town. The following morning, THC staff and Pittsburg volunteers conducted survey work. This consisted of taking photographs of every building in the district and filling out an inventory form for each one.

Afterward, THC staff entered survey information into a database, along with historical and photographic

materials. Camp CHC members Vernon Holcomb and Stan Wiley wrote a historic context, including a narrative of the broader historical features—highlighting geography, settlement, transportation, industry, culture, and building patterns—that influenced the development and character of the survey area. Over the following months, THC staff transformed the information into a National Register Historic District nomination. The National Park Service awarded the designation in April 2013.

“A National Register listing is an excellent heritage tourism and preservation tool,” Wolfenden explains. “It provides national recognition of a property’s historical or architectural significance, and a federal rehabilitation tax credit is available to qualifying building projects.”



With the National Register designation in place, Pittsburg’s survey database and images are accessible, allowing city staff to update the information as needed. According to Wolfenden, the completed inventory can also be coupled with Pittsburg’s economic restructuring efforts to provide a complete database of downtown buildings, including historic and current information.

Pittsburg’s Commercial Historic District contains modest 19th- and 20th-century brick commercial

buildings with storefronts composed of cast iron, brick, wood, and glass, as well as superior examples of civic and religious architecture.

Founded in the 1850s, Pittsburg steadily grew into a thriving agricultural service hub, boasting many businesses related to transporting, processing, or manufacturing of agricultural products and goods.

According to the Handbook of Texas, Pittsburg’s early manufacturing endeavors included sawmills, wagon makers, and builders. By 1896, the town also had a foundry, tannery, ice factory, and bottling works. The most active growth took place from the 1880s through the 1930s, and the bulk of the Pittsburg Commercial Historic District properties were built during this time period.

Debra Farst, coordinator of the Texas Main Street Program, says 53 cities in the current Main Street network do not have National Register commercial districts, and 75 cities do not have local commercial downtown districts.

“There are tremendous opportunities to expand this program,” she adds. “We’re always looking for ways to help our cities strengthen the historic preservation umbrella that encompasses our Four Point approach: Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring. The THC doesn’t have the ability to complete this for all Main Streets, but even this limited fashion has helped cities realize the importance of documenting their historic resources and has spurred surveys by the private sector.”



Leslie Wolfenden, at right, speaks with community members in Llano during Main Street training related to the Pittsburg survey project.

Wolfenden adds that a historic resources survey is a critical starting point for future preservation projects since “it’s difficult to preserve what you have if you don’t know what you have.” As part of a broader preservation planning effort, she says a historical survey will accomplish the following:

- Stimulate public awareness of a community’s historic resources
- Produce information useful to local government or planning agencies
- Provide essential documentation if a community plans to pursue historical designations or historic districts
- Help identify historic resources in anticipation of projects that may involve building demolition and land disturbance
- Document properties representing a style, period, construction type, or historic theme
- Allow participation by community members

To learn more about initiating a historic resources survey in your community, contact Wolfenden at 512.463.3386 or leslie.wolfenden@thc.state.tx.us. ★

Give. Restore. Explore.

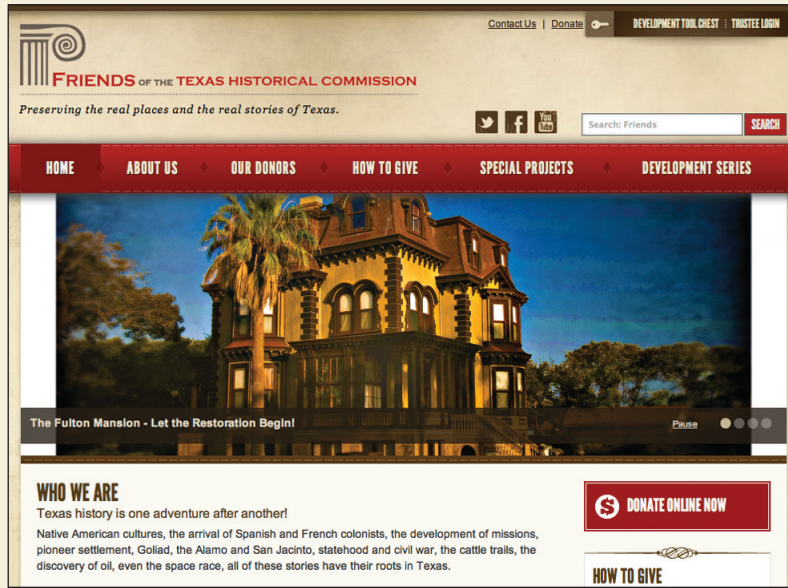
Friends of the THC Prepares for Exciting Year Ahead

By *Andy Rhodes*
Managing Editor, The Medallion

This has been a pivotal year for the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission. The organization has welcomed a new executive director, Rebecca Borchers, and celebrated the launch of its new website, www.thcfriends.org.

The Friends, which provides financial support for the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) strategic initiatives, has played a vital role in preserving our state's heritage since 1996, and it continues to have a significant impact on funding preservation projects. However, the need for financial support of Texas preservation projects is at an all-time high, so the Friends is seeking assistance with several major projects.

"We need your help to give Texas history a boost, and restore some of our most treasured objects and



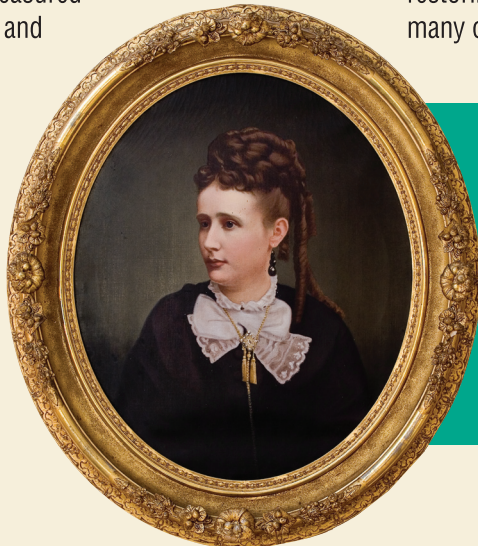
The Friends of the THC recently launched a new website (above), including information about Fulton Mansion restoration. The group is also raising funds for preservation projects, including conserving Starr Family Home portraits (below).

stories for all generations to explore," Borchers says. "We've shifted into high gear, and we're poised to have an exciting and impactful year ahead."

Borchers adds that the Friends' current fundraising initiatives include restoring the Fulton Mansion, restoring many of the 1936 Texas Centennial

Markers, funding a Texans in the Cold War Oral History Project, conserving Starr Family Home portraits, and funding a Historic Preservation Economic Impact Study for Texas. Other high-profile proposed projects include funding for the THC's Courthouse Stewardship and Diversity Internship programs; digitizing Main Street, National Register, and Recorded Texas Historic Landmark records; and developing a THC mobile phone app highlighting restored Texas courthouses.

"This is a very exciting time for our organization," Borchers says. "We've been on the road throughout Texas, meeting one-on-one with people to discuss the fascinating projects we're working on. Let us know if you're interested in supporting Texas history so we can share some of this excitement with you!"



The Friends of the Texas Historical Commission is seeking assistance with preservation projects. Funding for these initiatives is made possible with generous gifts from donors who are passionate about preserving Texas history. To become involved with the Friends, or make a gift, please visit www.thcfriends.org or call 512.936.2189. ★

Austin Activity

San Felipe de Austin Site to Receive New Visitor Center, Museum

By *Andy Rhodes*
Managing Editor, *The Medallion*

Heritage travelers looking for remnants of Stephen F. Austin's colony along I-10 near Sealy shouldn't be distracted by the log cabin at the entrance of San Felipe. Just two miles further north on FM 1458, the authentic site of Austin's colonial capital awaits.



The Texas Historical Commission's (THC) San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site honors the heart of the original township of San Felipe, which served as the social, economic, and political center of Mexican Texas from 1824–1836. Visitors are welcomed by a stately statue of Stephen F. Austin, a replica of Austin's log cabin, and a modest visitor center dedicated to telling the story of Austin's colony.

Because the existing visitor center lacks amenities and space for modern exhibits and public programs, the THC recently announced plans to construct a new and enhanced San Felipe de Austin visitor center and museum. In April, Rep. Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) met at the site with THC Chairman Matt Kreisle, THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe, and others to discuss the effort with local officials and preservation leaders. The THC recently acquired an adjacent 70-acre tract of land to support development of the new facility, and the Texas Legislature approved funding for the project in

May. The agency hopes to open the visitor center and museum in 2015. San Felipe de Austin was founded in 1824 by Stephen F. Austin as the capital of his colony. By 1828, the community had a population of about 200, with three general stores, two taverns, a hotel, a blacksmith shop, and nearly 50 log cabins.

“Austin lived in two different residences here at San Felipe—the first near Commerce Square where the historic site sits today, and the second on Bullinger's Creek, about a half-mile west of the Brazos,” explains Bryan McAuley, site manager.

“The colonial land office operated out of his residence and was managed by Austin and assistants, including Samuel May Williams and Gail Borden, Jr.”

By the eve of the Texas Revolution, San Felipe de Austin ranked second only to San Antonio as a commercial center. Its 1835 population approached



600, and many more settlers resided nearby within the boundaries of the municipality.

After the March 6, 1836, fall of the Alamo, Gen. Sam Houston's army retreated through San Felipe de Austin. On March 29, the small garrison remaining at San Felipe ordered the town evacuated and then burned it to the ground to keep it from falling into the hands of the advancing Mexican army. The terrified residents fled eastward during the incident known as the Runaway Scrape. ★

SAN FELIPE DE AUSTIN STATE HISTORIC SITE

15945 FM 1458, San Felipe
Visitor Center open Tues.–Sun.,
9 a.m.–5 p.m.
979.885.2181
www.visitsanfelipedeAustin.com

San Antonio's Old Spanish Missions, Inc. Receives Governor's Award



Pictured, from left to right: THC Chairman Matthew Kreisle; Sen. Donna Campbell; Gov. Rick Perry; THC Commissioner Nancy Steves; Archdiocesan Director Father David Garcia, Old Spanish Missions, Inc.; THC Commissioner Thomas E. Alexander; Rep. Joe Farias; THC Commissioner August W. Harris III; and Sen. Carlos Uresti.

Gov. Rick Perry and the Texas Historical Commission (THC) recently recognized Old Spanish Missions, Inc. (OSM, Inc.) with the prestigious Governor's Award for Historic Preservation at the Texas State Capitol.

Perry presented the award to Archdiocesan Director Rev. David Garcia and members of the OSM, Inc. board of directors. The award is in recognition of the organization's fundraising and preservation efforts for Missions Espada, San Juan, San José, and Concepción in San Antonio.

OSM, Inc. recently completed extensive preservation and restoration work at the iconic missions, which are owned by the Archdiocese of San Antonio. Continued evaluation and additional work is anticipated at all four properties.

"The missions of San Antonio are truly state treasures, a vibrant part of the South Texas community that provide a link to the origins of our state and help give San Antonio its distinct character," Perry said. ★

HOUSTON AFRICAN AMERICAN SOCIETY ADVANCES ITS MISSION



Houston's Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) invites preservationists to "like" the organization on Facebook (www.facebook.com/AAHGSHouston) and explore its web-based genealogical resources (www.htown.aahgs.org).

The group's Houston chapter is named for former THC Commissioner Willie Lee Gay, a renowned educator, historian, and community leader. Gay, who lives in Houston, served as the THC's first African American commissioner (1991–97), and is commemorated by Texas Southern University's Willie Lee Gay Collection and Houston Community College's Willie Lee Gay Hall.

AAHGS strives to advance African American genealogical research in Texas, and encourages greater involvement of African Americans in the study and preservation of their family history through sharing data and participating in historical activities. Membership is open to the general public, and the group meets monthly at Houston's Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research.

For more information about AAHGS or to request an informative brochure, email htown@aahgs.org. ★

AFRICAN AMERICAN PRESERVATION LEAGUE TO HOST SEMINAR, CEMETERY EVENTS



Dallas' African American Museum

The Dallas-based African American Preservation League will host preservation events on August 16–17 to raise awareness of regional and statewide preservation efforts in the African American community.

The first annual African American Abandoned Cemetery Conference will take place on August 16 at Dallas' African American Museum. The conference will feature seminars related to developing preservation partnerships, preserving historic documents, and restoring Dallas County's neglected African American cemeteries. The following day, a gravesite ceremony and tour will be held at Glen Oaks Cemetery commemorating noted African American architect William Sidney Pittman, son-in-law of Booker T. Washington.

For more information about the events, call 469.206.3769. ★

Planning for the Future

Program's 5th Anniversary Spurs Advice for Effective CHC Performance

By Amy Hammons, County Historical Commission Outreach Coordinator

April 2013 marked the fifth anniversary of the County Historical Commission (CHC) Outreach Program. While reflecting on our accomplishments, we're also meditating on changes that will increase the effectiveness of future Texas Historical Commission (THC) services.

The CHC Outreach Program was created to empower CHCs through knowledge and use of THC programs, and to encourage CHCs to plan, train appointees, and improve partnerships. To evaluate our work, we discuss what efforts we made toward these goals, what administrative resources we expended, and what worked for our partners.

An added challenge for the CHC Outreach Program is to identify which less-successful efforts we might eliminate to provide a manageable workload for our reduced staff. We look for ways our efforts helped or hindered the way CHCs and the public understand the value of preservation.



Franklin CHC members (above) organize planning efforts resulting in successful projects to engage their community.

EXCERPT: Discussion 1 Evaluating Organizational Capacity

This discussion should be used to accomplish the following:

- A. To evaluate an organization's past performance.
- B. To help participants articulate successful and challenging aspects of an organization's workload.
- C. To enable an open discussion of practical ways to improve your organizational capacity.
- D. To identify specific changes that will improve ongoing projects and introduce new projects.

We recommend using this type of discussion to evaluate efforts within your CHC or nonprofit organization. Gathering this information is one of the many planning exercises we suggest conducting to ensure you are meeting organizational goals and strengthening connections to your community.

To assist CHCs in this effort, CHC Outreach staff has placed sample discussion questions on the THC website. The first discussion addresses how

to evaluate your ongoing projects. Although contemplating change can be challenging, it is important to assess, redirect, and evolve to accomplish your goals.

To begin the process, use the search function at www.thc.state.tx.us and enter the words "developing organizational goals" to locate a page containing CHC planning information. Enter the phrase "CHC discussions" to locate a sample conversation on evaluating your organizational capacity. ★

The Medallion is published quarterly by the Texas Historical Commission. Address correspondence to: Managing Editor, *The Medallion*, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276. Portions of the newsletter that are not copyrighted or reprinted from other sources may be reprinted with permission. Contributions for the support of this publication are gratefully accepted. For information about alternate formats of this publication, contact the THC at 512.463.6255.

The Medallion is financed in part by a grant from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. All of the agency's public programs and activities are operated free from discrimination on

the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender, or disability. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against should write to Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

The Medallion is available online at www.thc.state.tx.us/medallion. If you would prefer to receive *The Medallion* electronically instead of through the mail, please send your name and address to thc@thc.state.tx.us. You will be notified by email when each new issue is available on the THC website and will no longer receive a printed copy.

Our Mission

To protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, enjoyment, and economic benefit of present and future generations.



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

P.O. BOX 12276 • AUSTIN, TX 78711-2276
PHONE 512.463.6100 • FAX 512.475.4872
www.thc.state.tx.us

The Medallion
Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
AUSTIN, TX
PERMIT NO. 1938

WHERE ON EARTH...IN TEXAS

Know your Texas history? Put your skills to the test by identifying the pictured site! The first three people who correctly identify the location will receive a prize and be named in the next issue of *The Medallion*. Send your answer to: *The Medallion*, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276 or email to medallion@thc.state.tx.us. Limit one prize annually per contestant.

Need a clue? This Texas Plains Trail Region site dates to 1915, when it served as a hotel, post office, and retail shop. It is now a charming bed-and-breakfast in a Main Street community.



of Alpine, and Lynna Shuffield of Houston. Thanks to all participants! ★

Answer to the photo from the last issue: The site pictured is the Castolon Historic District in Big Bend National Park. The district, which overlooks Santa Elena Canyon, has served as an agricultural center, military camp, and trading post for more than 100 years. Congratulations to the first readers who correctly identified the site: John Morlock of Fort Davis, Julia Moss

