

Inside Main Street

News and information on Bastrop's Main Street Program November 23, 2009

Almost perfect!

The Bastrop Main Street Program earned an almost perfect score—99 on a 100-point scale—for hitting its marks in terms of scope, effort and focus over the past year and, for the second year in a row, has earned recognition as a National Main Street City.

Texas Main Street Program Director Debra Farst commented, “Bastrop has set a strong foundation for continued success as a Main Street program and is well on its way to becoming a premiere Main Street community.” Her written comments ascribe Bastrop’s achievements to “the leadership and vision of the many people involved in helping the program succeed, including Main Street staff and volunteers, city management and elected leadership, and partnership organizations.”

Bastrop is among 56 of Texas’ 89 Main Street cities to receive national recognition. Bastrop’s company in this distinction are Amarillo, Bay City, Beaumont, Bowie, Brenham, Bridgeport, Canyon, Carthage, Celina, Clifton, Colorado City, Comanche, Corsicana, Cotulla, Del Rio, Denison, Denton, Electra, Elgin, Farmersville, Gainesville, Georgetown, Goliad, Gonzales, Grapevine, Greenville, Harlingen, Henderson, Hillsboro, Kerrville, Kilgore, La Grange, Levelland, Livingston, Llano, Longview, Lufkin, McKinney, Mineola, Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon, Nacogdoches, New Braunfels, Odessa, Palestine, Plainview, Royse City, San Angelo, San Marcos, Seguin, Sonora, Taylor, Texarkana, Tyler and Waxahachie.

Bastrop Main Street Program Manager Nancy Wood noted that Bastrop’s score were WAY above average. Bastrop earned a perfect 10 on each of 9 criteria:

- Broad-based public and private sector support for the revitalization process
- Vision and mission statements
- Comprehensive Main Street work plan
- Active board of directors and committees
- Adequate operating budget
- Paid, professional program manager
- Program of ongoing training for staff and volunteers
- On-time reporting of key statistics
- Current member of the National Main Street Network

On a tenth indicator—“Historic preservation ethic”—Bastrop scored a 9 based upon having not yet completed its application to become a Certified Local Government under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Becoming a CLG will entitle the city to technical assistance and grant opportunities for preservation planning. Nancy indicated that the application process has begun and certification is expected to occur within the next few months.

Another Boo-dacious Halloween Fest!

This year's Halloween Fest was again a huge success with entire families of Flintstones, as well as angels, scarecrows, puppy dogs, kings and queens, pirates, ghost, goblins and a pumpkin fairy overrunning Main Street on October 31. It was clearly the stuff that prompted a national blogger—with just a smidge of hyperbole—to declare Bastrop's Halloween doings among the top five in the U.S.

The Downtown Business Alliance, sponsor of the event, estimates that more than 9,000 people participated in this year's event. Event chair Terry Moore (aka "pumpkin fairy") credits the throng of volunteers and city staff for making this event a thoroughgoing treat. All that was missing this year was Need For Speed's haunted house—an annual "must see to believe" attraction that, in itself, brings throngs downtown. Construction work on that corner—part of the Chestnut Street improvement project—prompted the auto services business to forego its magical transformation this year.

The Bastrop Fire Department hosted over 3,000 riders on the hayride and more than 25 local and regional businesses hosted trick or treat booths for the children. The pumpkin decorating contest, sponsored by Sherwood Forest Faire, drew 17 entries, up from last year. New this year were the Opera House's "Living Wax Museum" and a Whataburger-sponsored Lip Sync contest. Winning the latter was a "keepsake" performance from a Grapevine, TX incarnation of Patsy Cline; Elvis (aka City Manager Mike Talbot) shook up both the stage and the audience. Third place in the contest went to "The Mamas Said"—a most affirmative statement from Nancy Wood, Debbie Moore (Design Committee), Shawn Pletsch (Organization Committee) and City Councilwoman Kay McAnally.

Winners of the window decorating contest—an event organized by the First National Bank of Bastrop—fell into two categories. Winning in "display windows and porches" were Piney Creek Candles (first), Richards Family Bakery (second), Tanalee's Tea and Sympathy Tea Room (third); winning in "flat windows and doors" were the Bastrop Economic Development Corporation (first), the Visitor Center (second), Anita's Restaurant (third).

Veterans Weekend and Car Show

The Bastrop Area Cruisers car club teamed with the Downtown Business Alliance to make the second weekend in November a stunning success by any count. The participant count was huge: according to Tim Shuminsky, Main Street Advisory Board Chair and one of the event organizers, the event drew as many as 13,000 people on Saturday alone.

And the schedule was packed: the weekend event included a Friday night "drive-in movie", on Saturday, a heartfelt tribute to veterans, a "Red, White, and Blue" quilt show, a celebration of nine decades of auto-making, a Second Saturday Market Day street fair with entertainment throughout the day, and on Sunday, a brunch at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa.

Make mine the '37 Packard convertible

or, for that matter, just about any of the great cars that turned out for the fourth annual Veterans Weekend Car Show. Eye candy for car lovers was everywhere: cruising the streets on Friday

afternoon or massed along two blocks of North Main Street and four blocks of adjacent side streets.

Shuminsky reports that the number of autos registered has grown steadily each of the show's four-year history; the registration count for this year was just under 400 and a record. Produced by the Bastrop Area Cruisers car club in conjunction with the Downtown Business Alliance, the event is gaining a national following and leaves little doubt of its appeal to owners of vintage cars and to the appreciative crowd.

For the Friday night kick-off, approximately 300 registrants and locals gathered at the site of the new convention center for a reprise of last year's "drive-in movie"...with its own vintage offerings: 50-cent hot dogs and pop, 25-cent popcorn and, of course, "American Graffiti." On Sunday morning, show participants queued up at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa—to the delight of guests there—for a rally and brunch.

In honor of veterans...

Sharing star billing with the Car Show was Bastrop's commemoration of the "Eleventh month, eleventh day, eleventh hour" beginning of the armistice ending World War I and, in subsequent years, also honoring the sacrifices of members of the armed forces and civilians in times of war.

The ceremonies began at 11 a.m. and included:

- a keynote address by Major General Jose Mayorga, the 50th Adjutant General for Texas
- a salute to local "Veterans of the Year" Bill Stanberry and James "Doc" Clopton
- recognition of Veterans Day student essay winners: Amy Whitworth (overall), Chance Zigal (sixth grade) and Luke Schneider (fifth grade)
- a helicopter fly-over commemorating "no soldier left behind"

Saturday was the culmination of a multi-day "Red, White, and Blue" quilt show, at the Opera House. The event, mounted by local members of the Austin Area Quilt Guide, showcased more than 90 quilts made for veterans wounded in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and undergoing treatment at Brooke Army Medical Center and Temple's Veterans Hospital.

While they didn't take home the gold...

They carted off a load of silver from the Texas Downtown Association's prestigious 2009 President's Awards Program, winners of which were announced in early November:

- **The Hepker Building** (1004 Main Street) was a runner-up in the Best Restoration category, won by the International & Great Northern Passenger Depot in Rockdale .

Constructed in 1880 and empty for over 30 years, the Hepker Building was extensively restored, inside and out, and now provides space for a thriving business, The Bridal House & Company.

- **The Store House and Union Hall** (811 Main Street) was a runner up in the Best Renovation/Rehabilitation category, won by the Brazos Valley Decorative Center in Bryan.

The Store House (or Union Hall) is among downtown Bastrop's oldest buildings with records of its existence dating back to 1848. It now houses Green Chai Cafe and the renovation of this historic property ensures that the building continues its usefulness to the community well beyond its 160+ years.

- **Bastrop's Downtown Business Alliance** was edged out by the City of Tyler in the Best Downtown Partner category.

DBA is a five-year-old group of approximately 150 business owners and individuals focused on maintaining the integrity of Bastrop's historic downtown district as a center of community activity and as an attractive and compelling visitor destination, "the heart and pride of a fast-growing city within one of the most historic and naturally unique areas in Texas."

The rehabilitations of two of Bastrop finalists—the Hepker Building and the Store House (or Union Hall) —were funded in part by grants from the Bastrop Economic Development Corporation, a valued partner of the Bastrop Main Street Program and grantor for most of the building renovations seen in downtown Bastrop in the past two years.

Since 1998, the TDA awards program has recognized more than 150 projects, events, and people for efforts to preserve, revitalize and redevelop Texas downtowns. Last year—Bastrop's first year to enter the competition—two local projects brought home top honors in their category: the Louis Eilers Building (Baxters on Main restaurant) was recognized as the "Best Renovation/Rehabilitation – Private Sector" while the City of Bastrop walked away with the top honor for "Best Promotional Event" for its 175th Birthday Party.

Bastrop's Main Street Program Manager Nancy Wood finds the recognition—both "gold" and "silver"—from a large field of nominees statewide as "a wonderful testament to the hard work and commitment of Bastrop property and business owners towards restoring downtown." She also sees it as "a tribute to thousands of hours spent by volunteers to produce events and welcome visitors to events that contribute greatly to the economic vitality of Bastrop's historic core."

'Lost Pines Christmas' heralds busy weekend

With the URL and information provided to travel editors in key media markets across the state, the "Lost Pines Christmas" website has pulled more than 1,500 hits in just a few weeks. The website— www.LostPinesChristmasBastropTX.com—catalogs the many local events that make Bastrop a terrific place to visit over the December 11-13 weekend.

The initiative centers on packaging and promoting the weekend throughout the state and regionally, and complements the Downtown Business Alliance's efforts to promote Saturday's events throughout Bastrop and the surrounding counties. This initiative is the work of a broad collaboration involving the Bastrop Chamber of Commerce, Bastrop County, the Bastrop County Historical Society, the Bastrop Opera House, the City of Bastrop, the Bastrop Downtown Business Alliance, with the Bastrop Main Street Program serving as lead.

The website, premiering in late October, has been updated to reflect plans for the weekend as they evolve. Recent updates include further information on the Bastrop Public Library's open house and announcement of a new Opera House production for that weekend. Look for

updates this week to the Friday night tree lighting celebration at the courthouse, the Lumberyard offerings for Saturday, and the Sunday breakfast buffet at the Hyatt.

New ‘Main Street’ businesses open

The Bastrop Main Street Program area—encompassing the downtown business district as well as Chestnut Street from Highway 71 to Highway 95—boasts three new-to-Bastrop businesses, all in the Colorado Center, west of the Colorado River.

- Texas Country Title, a Cameron-based company, now expanding its service area to an eighth south central Texas county.
 - Paramount Mortgage, a statewide mortgage lender
 - Goodwill Donation Center and Store, part of the national Goodwill network.
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Good reads, great prices...

Mark your calendar for the Bastrop Public Library’s next book sale—December 3 through December 5. Produced by the Friends of the Library, the sale will be open to Friends members on Thursday, from 6 to 8 p.m. and will open to the general public on Friday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., on Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Downtown Business Alliance elects new leadership

The Sugar Shack’s Drusilla Rogers has been elected president of the Bastrop Downtown Business Alliance, succeeding founder and longtime president Jimmie Ann Vaughan.

Jimmie Ann becomes immediate past president; other officers elected at DBA’s November 17 meeting are Debbie Denny, vice president (***Bastrop Advertiser***); Nancy Wood, secretary (Bastrop Main Street Program), and Trish Bevens, treasurer (business research and bookkeeping services). These officers, along with the following, comprise the organization’s Steering Committee:

Michelle Adams, volunteer and Bastrop Art Guild member
Troyanne Bush, Chamber of Commerce
Martha Granger, volunteer and owner of Fringe Me! LLC
Terry Moore, entertainer and event planner
Paula Pate, Magnolia Inn on Main
Pete Sommers, volunteer
Deborah Viesel, German Kraft Auto Repair
Richie Williams, Sonic Drive In

During January, this leadership team will undertake its annual strategic planning exercise, with recommendations subsequently submitted to DBA membership for approval.

Main Street in the news

- DeeDee Peddy's new Cripple Creek & Company got featured billing in the November 5 **Bastrop Advertiser**. (Written by Main Street Program volunteer Joan Russell)
 - That same issue features photos of "trick or treaters" caught in the act at DBA Halloween Fest on October 31. (Among the treats depicted was City Manager Mike Talbot channeling Elvis.)
 - Also in that issue was a story announcing the start of ticket sales for the December 12 Bastrop Holiday Homes Tour. A reminder appeared in the November 14 **Advertiser**.
 - Many great photos—by Terry Haggerty and Andy Ross of the **Advertiser** staff—dominated that paper's November 19 multi-page coverage of the Veterans Weekend Car Show.
 - The November 19 coverage following close on the heels of the **Advertiser's** November 12 special supplement on these events and in tribute to veterans.
 - The November/December issue of **TexasLIVE**, a glossy bimonthly magazine focusing on south central Texas events and attractions, features Bastrop's Veterans Weekend Car Show events and Lost Pines Christmas events along with local advertising. (On newsstands; see also: http://www.texaslivemag.com/featured_texas_towns)
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Strategic planning retreat booked for January

The Bastrop Main Street Program's annual strategic planning retreat will be held January 30 at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa...and **all Main Street volunteers** are invited to attend.

The event presents Bastrop Main Street Program participants an opportunity to shape the direction of the program for the coming year and put ideas in the hopper for the years that follow. Participants are asked to gather between 8:30 and 9 for registration and coffee; the workshop begins at 9 a.m. and will run through 3 p.m., with lunch hosted by Steve Dewire, Hyatt Regency general manager and Main Street Advisory Board secretary.

Please let Nancy Wood (Mainstreet@cityofbastrop.org) know if you will be attending and if you would like to bring a prospective volunteer as your guest. Nancy will share further details by email.

How about getting with the program!

The Bastrop Main Street Program advances on the talents and energies of its all-volunteer army...and fresh recruits are always needed and welcomed. Pick up some volunteer brochures from Nancy Wood and enlist your friends and neighbors.

Come on in!

Bastrop Main Street Program volunteers and other members of the public are welcome to attend any Committee and Advisory Board meeting in which they have an interest. Holidays and scheduling conflicts among participants may prompt changes in meeting, time and place; please check with Nancy Wood at Mainstreet@cityofbastrop.org for updated information.

December 7 Bastrop Main Street Program Advisory Board meeting, 6 p.m. in City Hall

December 9	Economic Restructuring Committee, 5:15 p.m. in Chamber Board Room
December 17	Design Committee, 5 p.m. in City Hall
December 21	Promotions Committee, 5:30 p.m. in Chamber Board Room
January 13	Economic Restructuring Committee, 5:15 p.m. in Chamber Board Room
January 18	Promotions Committee, 5:30 p.m. in Chamber Board Room
January 21	Design Committee, 5 p.m. in City Hall
January 27	Organization Committee, noon in the Chamber Board Room
January 30	Main Street Strategic Planning Retreat, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa

For information about upcoming community activities, consult the events calendars at www.bastropdba.org, www.bastropchamber.com, www.cityofbastrop.org and www.visitbastrop.org

Inside Main Street is an electronic newsletter to keep Bastrop Main Street Program participants “in the loop” on program developments, the work of its four standing committees (Promotions, Economic Restructuring, Design and Organization) and the activities of the Advisory Board. Produced monthly (except December), ***Inside Main Street*** is compiled and edited by Dick Smith on behalf of the Organization Committee and the Advisory Board.

Please share this newsletter with others who have an interest in learning how Bastrop’s Main Street Program is making a difference.

Feedback and suggestions welcomed! Contact Dick at soyrps@gmail.com or Nancy Wood at Mainstreet@cityofbastrop.org