

Inside Main Street

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

Past, present, future sketched for Bastrop Main Street program

What it has accomplished in less than three years?
What's going on this year?
What then?

These three perspectives formed the presentation Bastrop Main Street Program Manager Nancy Wood made to City Council on August 25. Wood indicated that the Bastrop program, three years old next January, is one of the most active in the state and has already progressed, snagged awards, and established distinctions well beyond the norm for new programs.

Nancy lavished credit on Main Street's active partners: the Bastrop Economic Development Corporation, the Bastrop Chamber of Commerce, the Bastrop Downtown Business Alliance and the Bastrop County Historical Society, among others, and the "army of volunteers" that advances the Main Street agenda.

To see Nancy's PowerPoint presentation chronicling the Main Street story, visit www.cityofbastrop.org. (click "Departments" and then click "Main Street Program")

Blazing a trail, making headlines

Jimmie Ann Vaughn has long recognized as a mover and shaker on Main Street and in the Bastrop community at large...and late this summer the ***Austin Business Journal*** acknowledged her as one of the top 25 women in Central Texas for making a difference in their communities, blazing new trails and leaving a mark on Central Texas business.

Jimmie Ann, owner of the 908 Main Street real estate business that bears her name, and the other 24 Women of Influence were recognized at the Journal's 15th annual "Profiles in Power" conference in late July at the Renaissance Austin Hotel.

According to the Journal, honorees "have forged their own path and developed their own leadership principles. These women have something to offer the next generation of women leaders."

Jimmie Ann's nomination recognized the role she has played in residential and commercial real estate in this area, and the energy and vision she has brought to downtown Bastrop. Jimmie Ann was a founding member of the Bastrop Downtown Business Alliance and a strong booster of Bastrop's successful effort to become a Texas Main Street City. Jimmie Ann also served as president of the Advisory Board during the Bastrop Main Street Program's critical first 18 months.

Streetwise:

- **New business opens:** Loomis Partners has gone uptown/upstairs at the Old First National Bank Building, 1018 Main Street. With the opening of this office in August, the firm—which provides civil engineering, land surveying and environmental consulting services for public and private sector clients—now has offices in Austin, Bastrop, San Marcos and San Antonio. (512) 327-1180
 - **New business to open:** look for the opening—around October 15—of a new gallery in the circa 1909 Citizen’s State Bank Building at 928 Main Street. Owned by Dee Dee Peddy, the new shop called Cripple Creek & Company will feature art, collectables, accessories and decorative pieces having a Texas flair (and made in Texas) and will also include Texas wines.
 - **Ownership change:** Susan Rodriguez, a veteran stylist of 18 years, has opened Salon 1018, upstairs in the Old First National Bank Building at 1018 Main Street. The Salon is the successor to JeniJade Salon previously in that site. New clients receive a credit of \$10 on their first visit. (512) 332-2022
 - **Business shuttered:** Big Mouth Grill has gone silent as owners Montie and Jory White have closed and locked the doors for the last time on Labor Day. The owners, who have enjoyed a three-year run in providing locals and visitors Southwestern-style cuisine, live music and Texas Hold ‘Em nights, are refocusing their energies on their newly acquired restaurant in New Braunfels (1050 South Seguin Ave.). The brothers harbor hopes of returning to Bastrop restaurant scene in the near future.
 - **City acquisition:** the City of Bastrop has purchased from owner Violet Johns the vacant lot at 923 Main Street, next door to Baxters. Preliminary plans call for using the back half of the lot (which runs from Main to Water Streets) to expand the public parking lot at the corner of Pine and Water Streets.
 - **SOMA blog:** six businesses down south on Main Street (aka “SOMA”) have joined the blogosphere—at <http://www.somashopsbastrop.blogspot.com>. The handiwork of Loblolly General Goods owner Mark Elson, the blog focuses on that cluster of businesses: Loblolly, Green Chai Café, Lil’ Bit of Country, Adjust Chiropractic, Apothecary’s Hall Antiques, and Hollyhocks and Hand Me Downs. Check out the blog spot for information on SOMA’s weekend events for October...from brats and beer to verbal appraisals on antiques and collectibles. (512) 308-1168
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Main Street has ‘fans’!

153 of ‘em...and counting!!!. Sign on www.facebook.com, search for “Bastrop TX Main Street” to access the Main Street Program Facebook presence for regular updated information on Main Street events, activities and oddities. While there, click on “become a fan” and visit often. The page is Nancy’s work...applying skills learned at a Small Business Stimulus Summit session on social media.

Chestnut Street rebuilding to begin

The economic downturn paid off handsomely in savings on the cost of the Chestnut Street Improvement Project, due to start on October 1.

With the final bid less than 60 percent of the \$1.4 million initial cost estimate, prepared before the impact of the economic downturn was realized in the construction industry, the City gained financial headroom to bring in an arborist to assess and protect trees that will be affected by the construction and to commission historical medallions to be placed in the sidewalks.

The project is essentially a badly needed upgrade of utility infrastructure; the extensive digging and reconstruction needed to make that happen will eventually yield sidewalks on both sides from Main Street to the convention center/city hall site. The project entails replacing crosswalk brickwork at Main and Chestnut with stamped concrete and building continuous sidewalks from Water Street east along both sides of Chestnut to the railroad tracks.

The medallions will be two-foot-wide bronze castings by Deep In the Heart Foundry from the designs of Foundry owner Clint Howard. Nineteen of the medallions will be historical in nature with each portraying a significant event or place in Bastrop's history; 22 others will be of uniform design and will commemorate El Camino Real de los Tejas—the Mexican royal road that ran through Bastrop from San Antonio to Nacogdoches.

The project schedule extends across nine months and progresses in phases designed to minimize inconvenience to motorists, businesses and residents of the areas along Chestnut. The first placement of medallions is not expected to occur until early next year as the sidewalk work phases in.

Main Street in the *Advertiser* news:

- The Kerr Foundation has awarded a \$16,000 grant to the Bastrop County Historical Society museum project. The grant is intended to help fund the creation of a history exhibit the lives, times and contributions of African-American residents of the county. (*Advertiser*, 8/22/09)
- Development of a new B&B ordinance that addresses owner and neighborhood interests continues—in the City Planning and Zoning Commission—while the issues spill over to City Council meetings. (*Advertiser*, 9/1/09)
- Questions about the wisdom and legality of providing a valet parking service on Chestnut Street, to serve patrons of downtown businesses, have generated much discussion. (*Advertiser*, 9/3/09)
- Main Street Advisory Board President Tim Shuminsky penned his reflections on what a revitalized downtown Bastrop means to others and to him, on the unique collaboration of public and private interests and organizations that came together to make it revitalization possible, and on the immense role that volunteers have played. (*Advertiser*, 9/12/09)

Small Business Stimulus Summit series update...

The six-months-long Small Business Stimulus Summit that began last spring concluded its first run on September 17—with a session on Extraordinary Customer Service facilitated by LCRA's Alycia Cook—and plans are afoot to start anew new spring.

The Summit—a series of free, twice-a-month sessions for local business owners—has had a successful run, according to Main Street Program Manager Nancy Wood, with its largest audiences in the spring. The Summit is the brainchild for the Economic Restructuring Committee, with financial support provided by the Bastrop Economic Development Corporation.

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.

Fresh recruits: Aleta Peacock, who has a family law practice and recently relocated her practice to Bastrop, has joined the Organization Committee. Connie Naumann, former owner of a florist, antique and collectible shop in Buda, will be joining the Organization Committee. The Design Committee welcomes CASA case worker Debbie Moore and Kellogg Landscaping's Sandra Chipley

Main Street Advisory Board welcomes new member...

Former City Council member Dock Jackson has rejoined the Bastrop Main Street Program Advisory Board, following Council action on August 25.

Dock previously served in an *ex officio* capacity, as the Council's representative to the Board; that service ended in May 2009 at the conclusion of his final term on Council. Dock assumes the regular Board position previously held by Robbie Sanders. Since leaving the Council last May, Dock has taken a position with County Judge Ronnie McDonald's office.

With Dock's appointment, the Main Street Advisory Board now has its full complement of 17 members. Voting members, appointed by the Mayor with approval by the Council, are: Debbie Denny, Steve Dewire, Dan Hays-Clark, Frank Huffman, Jane Hunt, Dock Jackson, Reid Sharp, Tim Shuminsky and Dick Smith

Ex officio members representing various City Commissions and city-related entities are Julie Hart (City Council), Joe Newman and Pat Crawford (Bastrop Economic Development Corporation), Christy Kosser (Planning and Zoning Commission), Susan Weems Wendel (Chamber of Commerce), Marilyn Whites (Historic Landmark Commission) and Mike Talbot (City Manager).

Come on down!

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.

September 30	Organization Committee, noon in the Chamber Board Room
October 5	Bastrop Main Street Program Advisory Board meeting, 6 p.m. in City Hall
October 13	Economic Restructuring Committee, 5:15 p.m. in Chamber Board Room
October 15	Design Committee, 5 p.m. in City Hall
October 19	Promotions Committee, 5:30 p.m. in Chamber Board Room
October 28	Organization Committee, noon in the Chamber Board Room
November 2	Bastrop Main Street Program Advisory Board meeting, 6 p.m. in City Hall

November 10	Economic Restructuring Committee, 5:15 p.m. in Chamber Board Room
November 19	Design Committee, 5 p.m. in City Hall
November 16	Promotions Committee, 5:30 p.m. in Chamber Board Room
November 25	Organization Committee, noon in the Chamber Board Room

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 a monthly electronic newsletter for Bastrop Main Street Program participants...intended to keep you “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. It 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 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