

# ***Inside Main Street***

## **News and information on Bastrop's Main Street Program August 28, 2010**

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### **'Lost Pines Christmas' gaining momentum**

While three-digit temperatures may sour visions of sugarplums, Christmas is indeed not that far off...and local groups are scurrying to develop their plans for Bastrop's "Lost Pines Christmas" weekend, Dec. 9-12. And the results so far are amazing.

At this point, more than 32 events—each of broad interest to the community and to visitors alike—are in the works. The activity-rich weekend kicks off with a Thursday afternoon holiday open house at the new City hall (replete with a community Christmas tree, choral music and goodies) and closes with the Sunday evening Bastrop Presbyterian Fellowship Christmas Concert featuring the GraceNotes Vocal Ensemble and the *Pro Musica* Hand Bell Choir from Covenant Presbyterian Church in Austin.

This BMSP Promotions Committee initiative entails "bundling" all the activities under the "Lost Pines Christmas" marquee and undertaking a marketing campaign to entice distant audiences to Bastrop for the weekend. Central to making Bastrop the place to be that weekend is getting word out early to travel press and putting into play a number of strategies aimed at potential visitors—rack cards, news releases, calendar entries, billboards, paid advertising and the Internet. The weekend will also be promoted through social media (Twitter and Facebook) and a website which just went "live" August 28 ([www.LostPinesChristmasBastropTX.com](http://www.LostPinesChristmasBastropTX.com)).

As in the past, sponsors of each of the component events will continue their efforts to get out word of their event locally and to nearby communities, including Austin. For purposes of cross marketing, each event sponsor is being asked to include in their materials reference to the Lost Pines Christmas and the URL of the website.

For further information, contact Terry Moore ([tlbmoore@hotmail.com](mailto:tlbmoore@hotmail.com)), Debbie Denny ([ddenny@bastropadvertiser.com](mailto:ddenny@bastropadvertiser.com)) or Dick Smith ([soyrps@gmail.com](mailto:soyrps@gmail.com)).

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### **Kudos Bastrop, Kudos Nancy**

Once again, Bastrop is in the spotlight at the Texas Downtown Association...recognized for the third consecutive year for its downtown development/revitalization initiatives and Bastrop Main Street Program Director Nancy Wood newly named to TDA's governing board.

Bastrop has three finalists in TDA's annual President's Awards: the BMSP's multi-pronged "Meet Me on Main Street" marketing plan (as "Best Marketing Program"), the Downtown Business Alliance's 2009 Yesterfest ("Best Promotional Event") and DBA

itself (“Best Downtown Partner”). In the last category, a field in which there were many nominations, DBA emerged as the sole finalist.

Category winners will be named at TDA’s annual conference, to be held in El Paso Nov. 9-12. Further information on the awards program and this year’s finalists may be found at [www.texasdowntown.org/awards](http://www.texasdowntown.org/awards) and under “Honors & Awards” on the BMSP website ([www.BastropTXMainStreet.org](http://www.BastropTXMainStreet.org)).

In what is beginning to be a tradition of such honors, Bastrop was first recognized in 2008 for two projects: Baxters on Main won “Best Renovation/Rehabilitation – Private Sector” and Bastrop’s 175<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration won as “Best Promotional Event”. Last year, Bastrop had three finalists: the Hepker Building (1004 Main) as “Best Restoration”, the Store House and Union Hall (811 Main) as “Best Renovation/Rehabilitation” and DBA in the “Best Downtown Partner”.

Also as a mark of recognition, Nancy has been newly appointed to the 13-member Texas Downtown Association Board of Directors. The board includes city officials, representatives of Main Street Programs across the state, business owners, architects and planners. Serving as *ex officio* members are Debra Farst, Texas Main Street Program State Coordinator, and Jill Robinson, Assistant State Coordinator.

TDA, founded in the early 1970’s has over 400 members involved in more than \$1 billion in downtown revitalization projects. The organization provides services that include direct assistance, educational opportunities, grants and certification.

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## **‘Off Kilter’ film fest in the making**

Upstart is looking for the squirrel running amok in the Christmas tree...or, rather, short films that present an offbeat take on the season and that have a Bastrop connection.

Winning submissions will be showcased in Upstart’s “Off Kilter Xmas Film Fest” scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 12—the final day of Bastrop’s “Lost Pines Christmas” weekend—and will be broadcast on Bastrop Community Access Television. Films must be less than 10 minutes long and submitted in DVD format, along with the \$15 per film entry fee, to Upstart Executive Director Carolyn Banks no later than November 1.

Carolyn reports that two films are already confirmed for the festival:

- “You Say,” directed by Sidney Brammer and written by Chad Dean. The characters, Frank and Edna, are weird as can be, but this offbeat romance proves that even they can find romance in Bastrop at Christmas time.
- “A Child’s Christmas in Texas,” based on a short story by William Browning Spencer and directed by Jessica Gardner. A young woman looks back at the highly unusual way her family celebrated the holidays. Filmed in Bastrop.

For further information, visit [www.upstartbastrop.com](http://www.upstartbastrop.com).

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## Who knows what lurks...

at the back of those closets or the attic? Chances are good it's a stray piece of furniture that no longer fits the need/space/décor or what was once a "treasure", now relegated to "just more stuff".

Your castoffs may be just the ticket for the next Bastrop County Historical Society citywide garage sale, to be held Oct. 9 from 7 a.m.- 3 p.m. at 67 W. Loop 150 (in Colorado Crossing, next to Super Donuts).

Donated items are eligible for federal income tax deduction (receipts will be given) and will help BCHS down its path toward a new Museum and Visitor Center. All items should be in good condition. (Please, no TVs or paint.) Unsold items will be recycled to local charities or discarded.

All donations may be dropped off at the at the garage sale site the week preceding the sale between the following hours:

Fri, Oct. 1	10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Sat, Oct. 2	10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Sun, Oct. 3	1 – 5 p.m.
Mon-Thurs, Oct 4-7	10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

If you have a furniture item that needs to be delivered before Oct. 1 or outside the scheduled drop-off hours, please contact Lucy Todd at 303-9501 to arrange for drop-off at the garage sale site. (Lone Star Storage has provided BCHS space for storing furniture thus far collected for the sale; space is now available at the sale site.)

For further information or to volunteer to assist in the garage sale, contact Lucy or Barbara Vana at the BCHS Museum (303-0057).

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## Mark your calendar and...

- Savor an artful afternoon—at the Bastrop Fine Arts Guild's **Art on the Courthouse Green**—and a pleasant stroll down Main for Keep Bastrop County Beautiful's **Wine in the Pines**' wine tasting, hosted by downtown businesses. Saturday, October 23
- Conjure up a costume for **Halloween Fest 2010**—the Downtown Business Alliance's always "spooktacular" Halloween celebration. Saturday, October 31
- Gear up for the annual Veteran's Day Car Show weekend, a production of the Downtown Business Alliance in association with the Bastrop Area Cruisers. Thursday, November 11 through 13.

And look for a special "Get Outta Town Guide" to Bastrop in the October 15 *Austin American-Statesman* and for the September ***Inside Main Street*** for further information on these events and web links.

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## New DBA website sees high traffic

In the five months since its April launch, the revamped Downtown Business Alliance website has seen brisk traffic and substantial jumps over previous levels. The number of visitors has increased 25 percent—from 800 to 1,000 weekly—and that number jumps to more than 3,000 “hits” in the weeks leading up to a DBA event.

The site is the work of Jamaica Moers of MorzArt Originals and can be accessed through [www.BastropDBA.org](http://www.BastropDBA.org) (or, alternatively, .com or .net). Website stats show that the site speaks to users’ interests and has good holding power: visitors click, on average, 10 different areas within the site during their visit.

The site provides detailed information on DBA sponsored events and downloadable registration forms; event sponsors are shown, with links to their websites. It also aims at providing “one-stop shopping” pathway to information on downtown shops and restaurants. Users can download the shoppers’ guide that lists all downtown retail businesses and restaurants by category and includes the business address, phone number and hours.

The site also carries paid advertising for downtown business and includes a “members only” gateway containing contact information on all DBA Members as well as a calendar of DBA committee meetings and sponsored events.

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## **Bastrop, how do I love thee?**

At least 365 ways, says Jolene Smith, author of “365 Things to Do in Bastrop, Texas”, a new website that premiered on Facebook last week.

According to her website ([www.bastrop365.wordpress.com](http://www.bastrop365.wordpress.com)), Jolene’s love affair with Bastrop and Bastrop County began when she moved here five years ago from Austin and her focus shifted to her new hometown:

“I’m on a mission to prove that even though we don’t have a Target yet (fingers crossed), there is still plenty to do in Bastrop County. From cool places to eat and shop, to fun events and activities, we’re going to explore all that Bastrop County has to offer. I would have kept the list to just Bastrop, but there’s so many fun things to do in Smithville, Elgin, and Cedar Creek, that I couldn’t resist expanding the list to include all of Bastrop County.”

To follow Jolene’s posts, subscribe on her website (to receive email notifications) or call up “365 Things to Do in Bastrop, Texas” on Facebook and “Add to My Page’s Favorites”.

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## **Works in progress**

The Bastrop Main Street Program is driven by its four all-volunteer citizen committees, working in close collaboration with BMSP Director Nancy Wood and meeting monthly or more frequently:

- The Organization Committee continues to focus on recruiting volunteers.
- The Promotions Committee continues to work on elements of the “Lost Pines Christmas” weekend marketing campaign. (See story in this issue.)

The committee has completed a database of business contacts throughout the BMSP area and is working on a strategy to highlight and foster good customer service.

- The Design Committee continues to work on vehicle and pedestrian wayfinding signage welcoming visitors and leading them to the central business district, convention center, historic neighborhoods and other community assets of interest.
- The Economic Restructuring Committee continues to recruit new committee members and to research business mentoring programs and to lay the groundwork for drawing new business and business reinvestment into the Chestnut Street corridor.

Committees welcome greater community participation—either through adding your time, talents and energies to the mix by joining one of these four standing committees (Promotions, Economic Restructuring, Design and Organization) or by attending committee meetings to better track BMSP activities. Please contact Nancy at [Mainstreet@cityofbastrop.org](mailto:Mainstreet@cityofbastrop.org) if you would like to volunteer or need additional information.

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## **Come on in and take a seat**

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.

Meetings penciled in on the calendar thus far include:

September 8	Economic Restructuring Committee, 5:15 p.m. in the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room
September 9	BMSP Advisory Board, 6 p.m. in City Hall (rescheduled from September 6)
September 16	Design Committee, 5 p.m. in City Hall
September 20	Promotions Committee, 5:30 p.m. in the Chamber of Commerce Conference
September 29	Organization Committee, noon in the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room
October 4	BMSP Advisory Board, 6 p.m. in City Hall
October 13	Economic Restructuring Committee, 5:15 p.m. in the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room
October 18	Promotions Committee, 5:30 p.m. in the Chamber of Commerce Conference
October 21	Design Committee, 5 p.m. in City Hall

October 27            Organization Committee, noon in the Chamber of Commerce  
                                 Conference Room  
October 26-30        National Preservation Conference in Austin at the Downtown Hilton

**Please note:** holidays and scheduling conflicts among members may prompt changes in meeting time and place. For updated information, please check with Nancy Wood at [Mainstreet@cityofbastrop.org](mailto:Mainstreet@cityofbastrop.org).

For information about upcoming community activities, consult the events calendars at [www.bastropchamber.com](http://www.bastropchamber.com) and [www.visitbastrop.org](http://www.visitbastrop.org). Advance information on upcoming events also may be posted at [www.bastropadvertiser.com](http://www.bastropadvertiser.com).

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## ***Inside Main Street...***

is an electronic newsletter to keep Bastrop Main Street Program volunteers, the business community and other interested citizens informed on program activities and to provide news on events, plans and issues affecting the 65-block BMSP area.

Produced monthly (except December), ***Inside Main Street*** is compiled and edited by BMSP volunteer Dick Smith. Feedback and suggestions welcomed! Contact Dick at [soyrps@gmail.com](mailto:soyrps@gmail.com) or Nancy Wood at [Mainstreet@cityofbastrop.org](mailto:Mainstreet@cityofbastrop.org).

**Please share this newsletter** with others who have an interest in learning how the program is making a difference. Past newsletters are available online at [www.bastroptxmainstreet.com](http://www.bastroptxmainstreet.com).