

Inside Main Street NewsBLAST

November 2, 2010

Bastrop preps for Veterans Weekend

Flags are flying and it's pedal to the metal...as Bastrop prepares for the annual Bastrop Veterans Day commemoration and the fifth annual Veterans Day Weekend Car Show in less than two weeks.

The three-day weekend of activities—the work of the Downtown Business Alliance, sponsors, partnering organizations and an army of volunteers—is expected to draw as many as 10,000 visitors to Bastrop's historic downtown area.

And, at the moment...

Photos: organizers are gathering photographs of those who have served or are serving in the U.S. military in order to recognize them in a "Wall of Honor" to be displayed at 921 Main Street on Saturday, November 13. Photographs for this tribute should be mailed to Blanche Underwood at 610 Kelly Court, Bastrop, TX by Friday, Nov. 5. Please note the soldier's name, branch, rank, class and years of service. Please send copies only (no originals!); photos will not be returned. For more information, contact Blanche at bunderwood79@earthlink.net.

People power: early risers will be needed at 6 a.m. on Nov. 13 to help set up for the day's events; later risers are need in the Support Our Troops area from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; teardown crew members are needed at 5 p.m. Organizers are also looking for volunteers to assist with the Veterans Awards Ceremony at 11 a.m., to staff the information booth during the day and to assist with judging "DBA Choice" car show award in the afternoon. For more information, contact Terry Moore at tlbmoore@hotmail.com.

Further information on all the activities within the Veterans Day Car Show Weekend may be found at <http://www.bastropdba.org/vets.html>.

New City Hall nears completion

It will be business as usual—and more—for City Hall offices during November as staff relocates to the new City Hall on Chestnut. City Manager Mike Talbot will pick up the keys on Nov. 15; the City's Planning, Utility and Finance departments are scheduled to move the following Monday. The following week, Mike and his staff will move over to the new City Hall.

City Council meetings will continue to be held in the old City Hall through mid-December, with the exception of the Nov. 23 meeting, to be held in Tahitian Village.

On the spike for City Council discussion:

Wayfinding—devising, producing and placing signage better directing visitors and others to downtown facilities and resources—is tentatively schedule for the Nov. 23 meeting. Improved signage for both pedestrians and drivers has been a Bastrop Main Street Program priority for more than two years. The council discussion will center on basic concepts and available vendor solutions.

921 Main Street—community input on possible uses for this open space—will be the focus of a public hearing tentatively slated for the Dec. 14 meeting. The council will invite the public to provide guidance on best use of the property. Possible uses thus far identified include creation of a “vest pocket park” and respite space (a BMSP priority) and private development of commercial and/or residential space.

Becoming a ‘certified entrepreneur ready community’

The BMSP Economic Restructuring Committee is investigating adding Bastrop to the growing roster of cities that are “Certified Entrepreneur Ready Communities” with a community-based economic development plan.

Dr. Greg Clary, an economist and chair of the Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship will address the Committee at its meeting on November 22 (5:15 p.m. in the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room). The meeting is open to interested citizens; please email Nancy Wood at mainstreet@cityofbastrop.org to reserve a spot.

Further information on the program may be found at www.tcre.org.

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And the winners are...

- **Baxters on Main, Bastrop Copier and The Sugar Shack** are all finalists for “Small Business of the Year” honors in the Tri-County Small Business Summit on Tuesday in San Marcos. The Summit, hosted by the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the San Marcos Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the Governor’s Office and the Texas Workforce Commission is expected to draw as many as 400 small business owners, corporate executives and management, educators, civic leaders and elected officials. The annual conference focuses on providing training and tools for small business growth and on positively affecting future workforce opportunities. The **Bastrop Chamber of Commerce** is a named sponsor as are the Austin Asian American, Austin, Caldwell County Hispanic, Capital City African American, Dripping Springs, Kyle, Lockhart and San Marcos Area Chambers of Commerce and Austin Community College. (www.gahcc.org/tri_county)

- Bastrop is once again in prime position to snag gold—“President’s Awards”—on Thursday evening at the 2010 Texas Downtown Development and Revitalization Conference in El Paso. A joint production of the Texas Downtown Association and The Texas Main Street division of the Texas Historic Commission, the annual conference focuses on downtown revitalization and brings together downtown professionals, Main Street managers, preservationists, economic development and tourism specialists. It also showcases the best local projects and initiatives in Texas downtowns. Bastrop, a past winner in several categories is a finalist for the **Best Marketing Program** (for its three-year “Meet Me on Main Street” marketing initiative) and **Best Promotional Event** (for Yesterfest 2010). The **Bastrop Downtown Business Alliance (DBA)** is *sole* finalist in the **Best Downtown Partner** category. (<http://texasdowntown.org/awards>)

Veterans Weekend in final prep

Engines (and volunteers) are indeed revving up for Bastrop’s annual Veterans Day commemoration and the fifth annual Car Show—a three-day weekend that begins Friday with a “drive-in movie” in Fisherman’s Park.

A full run-out on the many activities will form the heart of a special **Bastrop Advertiser** tabloid insert to be published Thursday, 11/11. In the meantime, volunteers (and prospective volunteers) will gather Tuesday, at 5 p.m. at the Bastrop Opera House, for instructions and materials. Event coordinator Terry Moore indicates that volunteers are still needed Saturday in several areas, including the Support Our Troops area (921 Main) and selling bottled water during the Car Show and Street Market. She encourages anyone who would like to volunteer to attend Tuesday’s volunteer briefing.

Terry reports that local hotels and other lodgings are almost fully booked for the weekend. The weekend’s activities—the work of the Downtown Business Alliance, sponsors, partnering organizations and an army of volunteers—is expected to draw more than 0,000 people to Bastrop’s historic downtown area. (<http://www.bastropdba.com/vets.html>)

Art exhibit, auction and art supply drive this weekend

MorzArt—a husband-wife team—is putting their artistic and organizational talents to work over Veterans Car Show Weekend for a special exhibition, benefit auction and art supply drive to fund therapeutic workshops for children of deployed, wounded or fallen members of the Armed Services.

Local artists Robert and Jamaica Morz will be showcasing a variety of their wood and clay sculptures, of which 25 will be available for an “Outta the Woods” silent auction. Proceeds from the auction and donated art supplies will benefit Camp C.O.P.E., a Dallas-based organization providing therapy and coping skills to help soldier’s children. Camps are held at military installations across the U.S. and are at no charge to the children. (www.campcope.org)

The venue for the MorzArt show, auction and drive will be 908 Main Street. (Check out the window all this week for a sampling of MorzArt’s imaginative sculpting!) The

exhibition begins Friday with an open reception from 7 to 10 p.m. and continues on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Cash donations and donations of art supplies will be accepted throughout; silent auction bids will be accepted on Saturday. (www.morzar originals.com)

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921 Main Street—community input on possible uses for this open space—will be the focus of a public hearing tentatively slated for the Dec. 14 Council meeting. The Council will invite the public to provide guidance on best use of the property. Possible uses thus far identified include creation of a public “pocket park” and respite space (a BMSP priority) and private development of a commercial/residential space.

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November 16, 2010

Main Street Program awarded \$150,000 grant

Based upon a competitive rating system, the City of Bastrop has been awarded a 2011 Main Street Improvement Grant by the Texas Capital Fund. The grant, for \$150,000, will fund a new sidewalk from the Convention Center to the Chestnut Square parking lot on the north side of Chestnut and from City Hall to Texas 95 on the south side. The north sidewalk will include a pedestrian bridge over Gills Branch; both sidewalks will include inset bronze medallions marking significant events and places in Bastrop’s history.

Such grants are a part of the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, known in Texas as the Texas Community Development Program (TCDP). This federal program funds public infrastructure projects and real estate improvements that have the effect of creating or retaining jobs in cities with a population of less than 50,000.

Bastrop gets star treatment in magazine

Texas Live magazine—whose purview is “All Things Texan”—has declared Bastrop “one of the top places to live, play, stay and work in Texas” and has devoted much of its November/December holiday issue to making the case.

Bastrop is the cover story and the subject of a 32-page advertising insert...and bridge spitting makes ripples as well, with a story on the Bastrop tradition contributed by local historian and City Council member **Ken Kesselus**.

Headquartered in Brenham, the bimonthly magazine covers a “beat” that surveys lifestyle, arts, events and attractions for a multicounty area running from Houston to Austin. It reports an affluent subscriber base and a statewide readership of more than 78,000 per issue. It is available by subscription, at major newsstands across the state and is inserted in the ***Houston Chronicle*** Sunday edition for selected audiences.

Chamber of Commerce President and CEO **Susan Wendel** and Bastrop Main Street Program Director **Nancy Wood** worked closely with magazine staff to develop content and the advertising supplement. For more info on ***Texas Live*** and a glimpse of the current issue, visit www.texasliveblog.com.

Pure gold...

Bastrop brought home the gold in the form of two “President’s Awards” from the 2010 Texas Downtown Association/Texas Main Street Conference in El Paso last week.

The **Bastrop Downtown Business Alliance** was a natural, the sole finalist named in the Best Downtown Partner category. The **BMS Program’s** three-year marketing initiative was named Best Marketing Program. Bastrop’s program—under the “Meet Me on Main Street” banner—has been a multi-prong program reaching out to local audiences (to draw volunteers to the program, to enlist the support of the business community and to keep the community informed of developments within the 65-block Main Street Program area) and to distant audiences (for heritage tourism).

Finalists in that category included marketing efforts by the cities of Roanoke (for branding) and Winnsboro (for its website). **DBA’s Yesterfest** was one of three finalists for Best Promotional Event, a category won by El Paso’s “Chalk the Block” downtown arts event.

The President’s Awards annually showcase local projects and activities advancing downtown revitalization. Bastrop is developing a winning tradition, consistently named a finalist—if not a top award winner—in each of the past three years.

How sweet it is!

The **Sugar Shack’s** owner **Drusilla Rogers** has more than a taste of it after being named “Small Business of the Year” during last week’s Tri-County Small Business Summit in San Marcos.

Hosted by the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the San Marcos Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the Governor’s Office and the Texas Workforce Commission, the summit annually recognizes outstanding small business.

Honorees are singled out for one or more accomplishments: exceptional growth through job creation, revenue growth, innovative products or services, exemplary customer service and contributions to the local community. Also honored, as finalists, were **Baxters on Main** and **Bastrop Copier**.

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Main Street Program earns national certification

For the third year in a row, the Bastrop Main Street Program has been named a “National Main Street Program” and, in the process, racked up a “better than perfect” score on evaluative criteria used by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The honor, announced at Nov. 11 breakfast during the Texas Downtown Association/Texas Main Street annual conference in El Paso, is based on a self-audit of Main Street Program performance in 10 areas:

- Private and public sector support for revitalization
- Relevant vision and mission statements
- Comprehensive MSP work plan
- Existence of a historic preservation ethic
- Involvement of an active MSP board and committees
- Adequacy of operating budget
- Having a paid, professional program manager/director
- Ongoing training for staff and volunteers
- Reporting of key statistics
- Membership in the National Main Street Network

The BMSP was accorded very high marks in all areas and, with bonus points for having been singled out by the National Trust this year as a Distinctive Destination™, exceeded the a perfect score of 100.

Bastrop’s Main Street Program is one of 52 Texas programs (out of more than 85 Texas Main Street cities) earning national recognition this year.

Tuesday’s ‘way-finding’ discussion deferred

City Council’s “way-finding” discussion, initially anticipated for Tuesday’s Council meeting, has been deferred and may occur as soon as December 14.

The “way-finding” concept entails devising, producing and placing signage better pointing visitors and others to downtown facilities and resources. Improved signage for both pedestrians and drivers has been a Bastrop Main Street Program priority for more than two years. Council discussion will center on basic concepts and available vendor solutions.

Also anticipated for the December 14 Council agenda is a public hearing on **921 Main Street** to gather public input on the best use of this long vacant property in the heart of the 900 block of Main Street. Possible uses thus far identified include creation of a “pocket park” and respite space (a BMSP priority), and private development of commercial and/or residential space.

For agenda postings visit www.cityofbastrop.org/departments/city_council/agendas.html.

Help build the buzz!

While there’s no substitute for word of mouth, Facebook comes in close...with its potential to focus attention, and carry a message to friends and associates at cyber speed.

With that in mind, the Bastrop Main Street Program invites you to “go viral” and get in on the conversation...starting with the BSMP Facebook page. It’s a snap: go to www.facebook.com/BastropTXMainStreetand you’re there. Become a “fan”, post a “comment”, “share” or “suggest to friends”. The rest is “cyber-magic.”

While you’re at it, visit the BMSP’s Lost Pines Christmas Facebook page as well...and help spread the message that Bastrop is **THE** place to be for Christmas festivities, December 9-12. Go to www.Facebook.com/LPCBastropTX and, once there, become a “fan”, post a “comment”, “share” or “suggest to friends”. The magic repeats...and a new event is highlighted daily.

And don’t forget ‘Small Business Saturday’

American Express is tapping the amazing power of Facebook to promote the first-ever “Small Business Saturday” on November 27. Using your American Express card at a small business yields a \$25 credit on your AE monthly statement, and for every Facebook “like”, AE will donate \$1—up to \$500,000—to Girls, Inc. to teach young women how to become the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

For more information go to www.facebook.com/smallbusinessaturday or to www.smallbusinessaturday.com.

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Ten days and counting...

until the Lost Pines Christmas weekend begins. Over that extended December 9-12 weekend, 17 community organizations, businesses and churches will lay out the welcome mat to locals and tourists alike in offering more than 30 family-friendly activities of the season.

The marketing campaign is the work of Bastrop Main Street Program Promotions Committee members Terry Moore, Debbie Denny, Martha Granger and Dick Smith, along with program Director Nancy Wood, and is pitched to distant audiences, beyond the usual reach of the organizational sponsors' local and area advertising efforts. The campaign has included getting word out to travel press, particularly in the large Texas media markets, and putting into play a number of strategies aimed at potential visitors—rack cards, news releases, calendar entries, billboards, paid advertising in the Houston area (Bastrop's primary tourism market) and the Internet. The weekend is also being promoted through Facebook (search "Lost Pines Christmas" or go to www.Facebook.com/LPCBastropTX).

Visit www.LostPinesChristmasBastropTX.com to see the amazing list of activities that make up the Lost Pines Christmas weekend, and make note of those you'll want to see and experience.

Vote early and often...

for your favorite "FestiviTREE", now on display in 19 shops and restaurants in the Bastrop Main Street Program area.

"FestiviTREE" is all about recycling: a Christmas tree made of—or decorated with—recycled materials. Participating local businesses have brought a lot of creativity to the season and are inviting the public to identify a favorite. Ballots may be picked up at any of the participating businesses; voters then make the circuit and collect stamps from each site; completed ballots may be dropped in ballot boxes at any participating business. Voting will determine the winning FestiviTREE and voters will also be eligible to win gift bags laden with gifts from every store.

Participating businesses include Alize Hair Salon, Apothecary's Hall Antiques, Bastrop Copier, Blue Donkey Studio, Bluebonnet Home Health, CASA, Bastrop Chamber of Commerce, Deli Depot, Taylor Family Chiropractic, Frontier Bank, Lil' Bit of Country, Loblolly General Goods, Sugar Shack, First National Bank, Lock Drugs, The Grace Miller, Hula Hoops, Tommy Gunns and Stanberry & Associates (at Baxters).

Voting began Nov. 19 and continues until 5 p.m. Dec. 10. Winners will be announced during the Downtown Business Alliance's lighted parade the evening of Dec. 11. The

competition is sponsored by Keep Bastrop County Beautiful, in partnership with the Bastrop Downtown Business Alliance and the Bastrop Main Street Program.

‘Scenic City’ designation noted

Sunday’s *Austin American-Statesman* made note of the 14 Texas cities—including Bastrop—that have been designated as Certified Scenic Cities by the Scenic Texas and the Texas Municipal League.

The distinction is not about scenic splendors but about the a community’s banning new billboards, regulating on-site signage and requiring trees and landscaping along major roadways. Certification is based on evaluation of each city’s standards for urban design and development against a comprehensive set of model standards promoted by Scenic Texas.

And Bastrop garnered a bronze certification earlier this year. Others concurrently recognized were (gold) Belton, Flower Mound, Georgetown and Westlake; (silver), Granbury, Keller, Mesquite and Sugar Land; (bronze) Irving, Missouri City and University Park, and (recognized) Horseshoe Bay and South Padre Island.

www.sceniccitycertification.org

Grab your calendar

And make note of the upcoming Bastrop Main Street Program meetings:

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|---------|---|
| Dec. 6 | Main Street Advisory Board , 6 p.m. in (old) City Hall |
| Jan. 21 | Economic Restructuring Committee , 8:00 a.m. in the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room |
| Jan. 18 | Promotions Committee , 5:30 p.m. in the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room |
| Jan. 19 | Organization Committee , noon in the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room |
| Jan. 20 | Design Committee , 5 p.m. in the BEDC Board Room |
| Jan. 22 | Strategic Planning Workshop , 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa (all volunteers for BMSP are invited!) |

All meetings are open to the public; scheduling conflicts may prompt changes in meeting time and place. For updated information, please check with Nancy Wood at Mainstreet@cityofbastrop.org.

While you’re updating your calendar...

mark December 14 for the next City Council meeting (beginning at 6 p.m.) and plan to attend.

In addition to being the last Council meeting to be held in the old City Hall Council Chambers at 904 Main Street, the meeting is expected to address two topics of particular importance to the Bastrop Main Street Program: “way-finding” and the city’s plans for the vacant lot at 921 Main Street.

The “wayfinding” concept entails devising, producing and placing signage better pointing visitors and others to area attractions, facilities, and resources. Improved signage for both pedestrians and drivers has been a Bastrop Main Street Program priority for more than three years. Council discussion will center on basic concepts and available vendor solutions.

Also anticipated for the December 14 agenda is a public hearing on **921 Main Street** to gather public input on the best use of this long-vacant, city-owned property in the heart of the 900 block of Main Street. Possible uses thus far identified include creation of a “pocket park” and respite space (also a Bastrop Main Street Program priority) and private development of commercial and/or residential space.

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Inside Main Street NewsBLAST is a weekly communiqué from the Bastrop Main Street Program. To contribute items, contact Dick Smith at soyrps@gmail.com or Nancy Wood at 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.