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# TTC

TEXAS TOWN & CITY



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### ABOUT THE COVER

This month's cover features *Intimate Apparel and Pearl Earrings*, a rotating Texas Star sculpture made of 400 donated cowboy hats—on display at the Fort Worth Convention Center, site of the 113th TML Annual Conference and Exhibition.

# ABOUT ★ TML

The **Texas Municipal League** exists solely to provide services to Texas cities. Since its formation in 1913, the League's mission has remained the same: to serve the needs and advocate the interests of its members. Membership in the League is voluntary and is open to any city in Texas. From the original 14 members, TML's membership has grown to more than 1,150 cities. Over 16,000 mayors, councilmembers, city managers, city attorneys, and department heads are member officials of the League by virtue of their cities' participation.

The League provides a variety of services to its member cities. One of the principal purposes of the League is to advocate municipal interests at the state and federal levels. Among the thousands of bills introduced during each session of the Texas Legislature are hundreds of bills that would affect cities. The League, working through its Legislative Services Department, attempts to defeat detrimental city-related bills and to facilitate the passage of legislation designed to improve the ability of municipal governments to operate effectively.

The League employs full-time attorneys who are available to provide member cities with information on municipal legal matters. On a daily basis, the legal staff responds to member cities' written and oral questions on a wide variety of legal matters. The League annually conducts a variety of conferences and training seminars to enhance the knowledge and skills of municipal officials in the state. In addition, the League also publishes a variety of printed materials to assist member cities in performing their duties. The best known of these is the League's magazine, *Texas Town & City*. Each issue focuses on a variety of contemporary municipal issues, including survey results to respond to member inquiries.

For additional information on any of these services, contact the **Texas Municipal League** at 512-231-7400 or visit our website, [www.tml.org](http://www.tml.org).

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## MESSAGE ★ FROM THE PRESIDENT

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**ALLISON HEYWARD, CMO**

Mayor Pro Tem, Schertz  
TML President

Dear Texas City Official,

I hope you find the theme of this month's magazine, city beautification, as appealing as I do. We each selected our city or town, at least in part, for its beauty, and it's important that we all contribute to enhancing it.

Beautiful towns don't just happen by chance, we play a vital role in their improvement. This issue is dedicated to providing you with the tools to leave your community more beautiful than when you first took office.

A great way to celebrate our communities is through signature festivals, showcasing vibrant colors, local traditions, and a captivating communal spirit. Be sure to check out the great article previewing fall festivals all across our great state.

While I may not be able to visit every city festival, my enthusiasm for hearing about them remains strong. I would love to hear your stories, experiences, and the special elements that made each celebration unique when we come together this October in Fort Worth.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allison Heyward".

Allison Heyward, CMO  
Mayor Pro Tem, Schertz  
TML President



# Ten Ways to Get More from TML

1. EXPAND Your Knowledge
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10. ASK questions 512-231-7400







## TML Annual Conference and Exhibition Is Coming to Fort Worth

Big ideas, bold conversations, and breakthrough solutions are heading to Fort Worth! Join more than 3,000 city officials and municipal professionals from across Texas at the 2025 TML Annual Conference and Exhibition, taking place October 29–31 at the Fort Worth Convention Center.

From small, rural towns to major metros, local leaders will come together to connect, collaborate, and confront the most pressing challenges facing our communities. This year's conference features inspiring keynote speakers, expert-led sessions, and a buzzing Exhibit Hall filled with innovative products and services to help your city thrive.

In this issue of *Texas Town & City*, you will get a sneak peek at the conference program, meet our dynamic keynote speakers, and explore the valuable affiliate events happening throughout the week.

Stay plugged in! Follow #TMLAC2025 on Instagram, Facebook, and X, and check LinkedIn for updates. For full details and the latest announcements, visit [tmlconference.org](http://tmlconference.org).

## Your All-in-One TML Conference Companion

Get the most out of your TML Annual Conference experience with the official conference app — your go-to tool for planning, navigating, and connecting.

Before the event even begins, you can:

- ✓ Build your personalized schedule
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- ✓ Bookmark must-see exhibitors and locate them on the exhibit hall map
- ✓ Stay up to date with real-time alerts and announcements

With session listings, speaker bios, exhibitor info, maps, and more right at your fingertips, the conference app puts the entire event in the palm of your hand. The app will be available for download in September on iPhone, iPad, and Android devices. Keep an eye on your inbox — we'll send out a notification as soon as it's ready!

## Show Your Hometown Pride: City Shirt Day Is October 29

Rep your roots and wear your city spirit loud and proud! Wednesday, October 29, is *City Shirt Day* at the 2025 TML





Annual Conference and Exhibition, and we want to see your city swag on full display. Whether it's a city logo polo, hometown tee, or matching team shirts — come dressed to represent. It's a fun way to celebrate where you're from and connect with other local leaders across Texas. Don't forget, our TML photographer will be on the lookout for city shirts and group shots, so gather your team, smile big, and show off your civic pride. Pack your shirt, bring the energy, and let's make City Shirt Day one to remember!

## TML Salary Survey

The TML Salary survey collects salary information for 27 common city positions. To access the data, go to [salariesurvey.tml.org](https://salariesurvey.tml.org). The site allows you to search by region, population, job title, and more. If your city hasn't completed the survey for this year, please contact Rachael Pitts at [rpitts@tml.org](mailto:rpitts@tml.org).

## New! TML Budget and Tax Rate Webinar Online

TML now offers a recorded budget and tax rate webinar that is available on demand for city officials and staff who have a role in developing or implementing the city budget. The one-hour webinar can be viewed at your convenience from your home or office. Access the *Basic Legal Requirements for Budget and Tax Rate Setting* webinar via TML On Demand at <https://www.tml.org/218/>.

# TML Training Calendar

## August-October 2025

### August 5-8

BOAT Annual Conference  
Montgomery

### August 7-8

TML Newly Elected City Officials' Orientation  
Waco

### August 7

Making Your City a Great Place to Work  
Webinar

### August 21-22

TML Land Use Essentials Conference (Sold Out)  
Round Rock

### August 21

Economic Development Basics: From Incentives to Impact  
Webinar

### September 4

Leading with Presence: Your Personal Brand  
Webinar

### September 17

Leadership and Your Legacy  
Austin

### October 29-31

2025 TML Annual Conference and Exhibition  
Fort Worth



TML Risk Pool Board of Trustees Adopts 2025-2026 Rates

TML Risk Pool member cities will soon receive their fiscal year 2025-2026 coverage declarations. For 2025-2026, rates have begun to stabilize in the wake of the pandemic and several large property losses. That said, inflation and continued major convective (wind and hail) storm damage make modest Property Coverage increases unavoidable. Despite these pressures, the Pool will increase overall rates across all lines of coverage by just 2.9 percent, on par with the current rate of inflation.

Listen to Episode 42 of the "Local Officials: Stronger, Together Podcast" (click on the Stronger, Together Podcast button at [www.tmlirp.org](http://www.tmlirp.org)) for an interview with Executive Director Jeff Thompson for more details. Also, your risk management advisor will contact you directly to review this year's changes and how they will impact your entity.

The increases – and proper apportionment of costs among members – ensure relative rate stability compared to the commercial insurance marketplace and other competitors. Through volatile times, the Pool's fidelity to its *Core Values* (Integrity, Public Service, Fiscal Responsibility, and Operational Excellence) continue to provide Texas cities with the best source of municipal risk management and financing. The chart below shows the Pool's city rate changes for 2025-2026.

The 3.2 percent "overall rate change" is for city members only. The *Pool-wide* number is higher, at five percent. Of course, the overall rate change *doesn't necessarily mean a*

*city will see only a 3.2 percent increase.* Instead, each city's contribution will – as always – depend on its experience, rates, and exposures based on the following individual lines:

- **Cyber:** Last year, the Pool's board of trustees created a new Cyber Fund and approved changes to the Pool's Coverage structure, effective on October 1, 2024. For 2025-2026, the board approved a contract with a new provider, called Cowbell Cyber. The change includes broader coverage, higher limits, free cyber risk training and dashboards, and – most importantly – no aggregate cap for Pool coverage. The change also means coverage costs for this emerging and highly volatile risk *will increase* to at least \$1,850, depending on member type and coverage level.
- **Workers' Compensation:** The Pool is *decreasing* workers' compensation rates. With the expiration of the COVID-19 first responder disease presumption, the workers' compensation program has rebounded, which allows for the reduction. The rate for firefighter, EMS, street repair, and solid waste class codes will decrease by 10 percent, resulting in an overall decrease of 3.6 percent. Of course, each member's contribution will depend on its experience, classifications, and/or payroll changes.
- **Liability:** The Pool is *increasing* the overall Liability rates by 5.7 percent. That overall number comes about even though the General Liability rate is increasing by only one percent, and the Errors and Omissions and Law Enforcement Liability rates are each *decreasing* by five percent. That's because – largely due to the increase in loss trends and inflation in repair costs, medical treatments, and attorneys' fees for settling claims – the Pool is increasing Automobile Liability by 17 percent. (Auto Liability generates the largest number of claims and the greatest indemnity costs of all the liability coverages.)

Final Recommended Rating Changes for 2025-26			
Line of Coverage	Overall Rate Changes	Total % Change in Contribution*	Conning Commercial Market 2025 Price Forecast
Workers' Compensation	-3.6%	-10.6%	+0.8%
Liability	5.7%	6.3%	GL: +6.2% AL: +11.2%
Property	8.3%	12.0%	+12%
Overall (Weighted)	3.2%	5.0%	
*Including 5% inflationary factor and estimated experience mod/surcharge changes			



Also, as with Auto Liability, the Pool is *increasing* Auto Physical Damage coverage by 10 percent and Auto Catastrophe coverages by 50 percent.

- **Property:** The Pool is *increasing* Property rates in several ways, which is necessary to ensure appropriate coverage. For most members, property rates will increase 4.7 percent. In addition, an inflationary factor of five percent will be applied to all building and contents values. (Housing authorities, which have special exposures due to the residential nature of their property, will see a larger, 35 percent increase. The increase is borne out of the Pool's Membership Philosophy, which Jeff Thompson discussed in detail in the podcast mentioned above.)

The increases are based on actuarial indications, property schedule values, reinsurance modeling and prices, and construction costs, as well as increase in demand with infrastructure investments and influx of residents to Texas.

- **Minimum Contributions:** Some members will see their minimum contribution increase in an amount necessary to cover their administrative costs of mem-

bership. For most coverages, the amount will be \$50 or less by line.

The Pool's board of trustees takes rate decisions very seriously. The Pool is governed largely by local government officials, and they understand the consequences of their actions on local budgets.

Unlike the commercial insurance industry, which uses profits to measure success, the Pool provides coverage, services, and risk management tools with the goals of saving lives, preventing injuries, and protecting property. Our goal is to stabilize costs year-to-year for the membership. Put simply, the Pool is member-owned, member-governed, and member-driven. This member-first risk management philosophy ensures that, over time, the Pool offers the best value proposition for cities and the taxpayers who support them.

Please contact your risk management advisor (click on Contact Us at [www.tmlirp.org](http://www.tmlirp.org)) with questions about coverage, rates, and contributions.



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# CITY★LIGHTS

## Texas Cities Embrace Beautification Programs

Texas cities are actively engaging in beautification programs, often partnering with organizations like Keep Texas Beautiful and offering matching grant programs to improve their urban environments. Many of these initiatives focus on litter prevention, recycling, and enhancing the overall aesthetics of cities through landscaping, public art, and infrastructure improvements. These efforts take a variety of forms, with cities offering different types of programs tailored to local needs and priorities such as:



**Neighborhood Matching Grants:** Round Rock is among the Texas cities that offer matching grant initiatives where registered neighborhood organizations can partner with the city to beautify public spaces. The projects must provide a public benefit to the neighborhood with eligible projects including clean-up activities, enhancements like sidewalk and lighting features, neighborhood community gardens, tree planting, and mural projects.

**Corridor Beautification Programs:** Cities like Waco and Bryan provide matching grants that assist owners and tenants of retail, commercial, and multiple-family properties located along high-priority gateway corridors within the City. Incentive funds may be used to support landscaping, façade, parking, circulation, signage and public art improvements to their businesses.

**Neighborhood Partnering Programs:** The City of Austin's Neighborhood Partnering Program (NPP) empowers residents to work collaboratively with the City to improve their communities by providing cost-sharing opportunities for small-scale public improvement projects. Through this program, neighborhood groups, community organizations, and non-profits can propose projects—such as sidewalks, landscaping, traffic calming, or public art—and contribute matching resources in the form of volunteer labor, donated materials, or funding. The program fosters civic engagement and enhances neighborhood identity while leveraging public-private partnerships to enhance public spaces and infrastructure.



**Adopt-A-Spot Programs:** Cities like Lake Dallas, Elgin, and Saginaw in Texas offer Adopt-A-Spot programs that encourage community members—individuals, families, schools, and organizations—to take responsibility for maintaining specific public areas such as parks, trails, or streets. Volunteers commit to tasks like litter pickup, planting, and light landscaping, helping to keep shared spaces clean and attractive. In return, cities often provide supplies, safety gear, and public recognition through



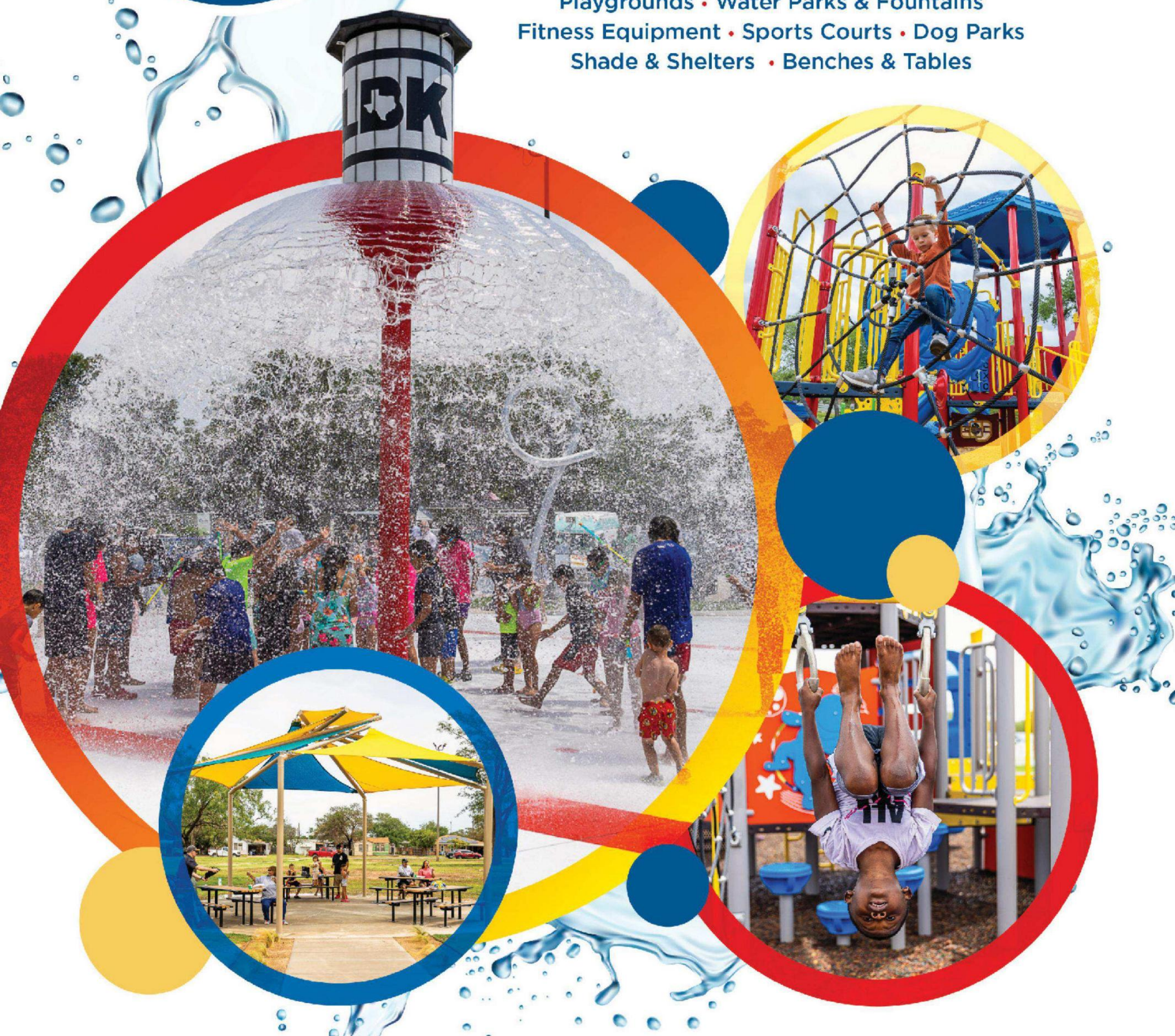


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signage or certificates. These programs foster local pride, environmental stewardship, and stronger community connections.

**Public Art Initiatives:** Many cities incorporate public art into their beautification efforts. For example, League City's Public Art Initiative transforms public spaces through murals, sculptures, and other visual arts that celebrate local history and culture. Guided by City staff, art experts, and community volunteers, the program has created murals on traffic signal boxes, an indoor gallery, interactive installations, and student art displays, with plans for more large-scale and diverse artworks. The initiative fosters community engagement and expands access to art across the city.



**Community Clean Ups:** In many Texas cities, community clean trash-off events are organized to encourage residents to help beautify their areas. These events often provide resources like trash bags, gloves, and even transportation for bulk items. The Don't Mess with Texas program also hosts state-wide cleanups, focusing on roadsides and other public areas. Additionally, cities like Pilot Point and Glenn Heights host their own community clean ups which can include brush and trash collection, small electronics recycling, medical waste disposal, clothing and household item drop off, and tire collection.

City beautification programs offer a wide range of benefits that go beyond aesthetics. These initiatives play a vital role in shaping a positive community image, making cities more attractive to residents, tourists, and businesses. A well-maintained urban environment signals a community that values quality of life and civic pride. Beautification efforts – such as landscaping, public art installations, and clean-up initiatives – enhance visual appeal and can also increase property values, providing tangible economic returns for property owners and communities.

More importantly, beautification projects engage residents in hands-on efforts, from community gardens to mural painting and litter removal. This participation fosters a stronger sense of ownership and pride among citizens, which can lead to more cohesive, active communities. As cities across Texas continue to grow, investing in beautification is a strategic way to support environmental health, livability, and economic vitality. ★



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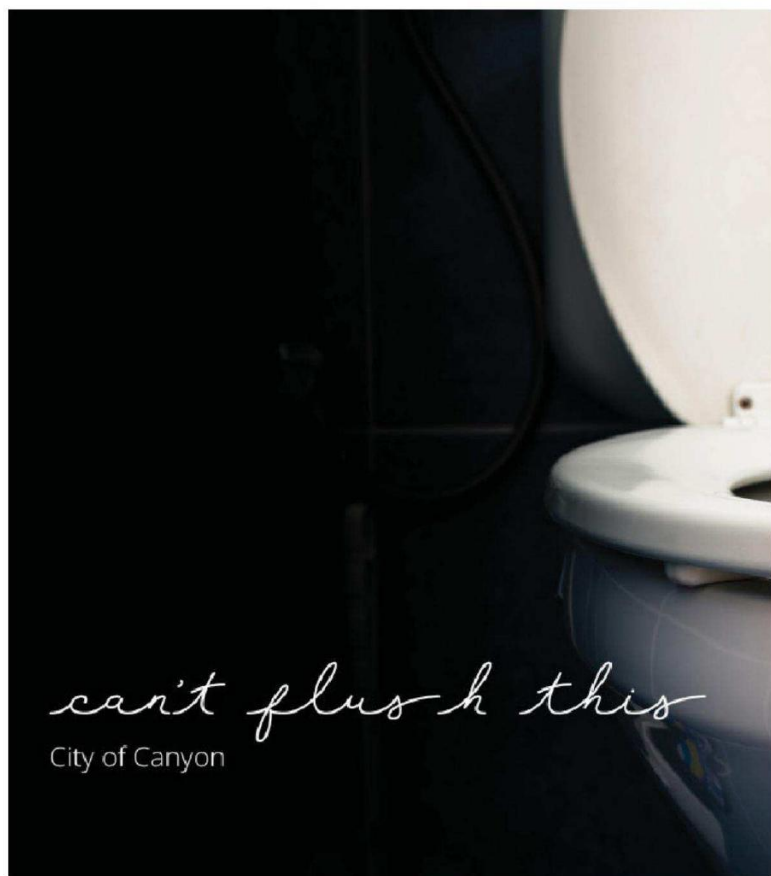
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## SMALL CITIES' ★ CORNER



### Can't Flush This: How a City Used Spotify to Unclog Public Awareness

By **Megan Nelson**, CPC, Director of Communication and Community Engagement, City of Canyon

Things started easy with titles including "Grease" by Frankie Valli, "Paper Towels" by Jack Stauber's Micropop, "Q Tips" by Ethab, "Medicine" from Dayglow, "Cotton Pads" by ASMR Bakery (a seven-minute ASMR of cotton pad sounds), and "Dirty Laundry" by Carrie Underwood. These were all things that had been pulled out of our wastewater pipes, which is why they ended up on the City of Canyon's first and only Spotify album *Can't Flush This*.

When the Canyon City Commission adopted its strategic plan in 2021, one of the approved initiatives tasked city staff to "create a public educational program to help limit the amount of grease and hygiene products that enter the collection system." With no budget or clear goals, Canyon

Director of Communications and Community Engagement Megan Nelson worked with the Public Works Department to educate residents about items that shouldn't go through the wastewater system.

Wastewater is one of the least attractive departments in a city, so we knew we would need something to catch people's attention. As part of the larger program to educate Canyon residents about what not to flush down their toilets and drains, we wanted our message to stick in their heads, not their pipes.

Inspired by the City of Garland's "Can't Flush This" parody video in 2020 and Barilla Italia's Spotify playlists that played for the exact amount of time you needed to cook a specific type of pasta, Canyon used Spotify as a tool to catch people's attention and start a conversation about items that shouldn't be flushed down their toilets or sink drains.

Knowing practical items would only get us so far, we expanded our musical taste beyond the obvious (such as grease) to items that would make residents think about what our wastewater crew really has pulled out of the pipes. Fun titles included "100 Tampons" by Marcia Belsky, "Paper Rings" by Taylor Swift, "Bags" by Clairo, "Make Up" by Avril Lavigne, "Bacon [Slowed and Reverb]" by MR. NHEAH, and "Eggs and Sausage (In a Cadillac with Susan Michelson)" by Tom Waits. Later additions include "(Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear" by Elvis Presley after an unfortunate stuffed animal incident. The playlist took eight months and countless hours of listening to songs to put together.

The public works staff were the first listeners, making sure none of the songs had any inappropriate words or suggestive lyrics. We wanted the songs to be appropriate enough to play in an office but humorous enough to make you think, "Why is the City of Canyon so concerned with people flushing tissues?"

The main goal of the playlist was to start a conversation and grab people's attention. The diverse range of genres from musicals to jazz to ASMR and math problems would make at least a few people listen, right? The playlist cover was meant to mimic a cheap EP that you might see at a local



## JAMS MEDIATOR SPOTLIGHT

### B. Adam McGough, Esq.

- Four-term Dallas City Councilman and former chief of staff, chief of community prosecution, deputy mayor and special assistant U.S. attorney
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bar. We wanted people to laugh and listen and think before they flush.

The playlist was posted on Facebook on February 1, 2023, and immediately sparked conversation in the comments with over 300 interactions on the post.

Local news media picked it up soon after with one local radio station releasing an article titled *Best Thing on the Internet Today? Canyon's Flushing Playlist*. The article was quoted saying, "I'll be honest. Usually when local government offices, educators, authority figures....my parents...try to get in on the latest fads, it ends up being cringe inducing embarrassment fuel. However, I have to tip my hat to the City of Canyon... Have you seen the City of Canyon Wastewater Department's Spotify playlist about flushing? The playlist is titled 'Can't Flush This' and it's gold. Pure gold."

"We successfully started a conversation about something no one wants to talk about: wastewater," remarked Canyon City Manager Joe Price. "With just 36 songs, we created two hours' worth of education in the form of entertainment. Our staff are still asked about this playlist by residents, and I have no doubt that we will see a second playlist the next time there's a tricky subject that can hold a tune."

The playlist has been reposted on social media after its initial post in February 2023 as a reminder of what not to flush down drains with no money spent to date. The playlist was reshared on Facebook for Thanksgiving 2023, a holiday known for wastewater problems.

The Thanksgiving post read "A friendly reminder that while you're basting and brining or roasting and toasting, don't pour everything down your drains! That can be very harmful to your lines, as well as main city lines. If you need a reminder of what you can't flush down your sinks and drains (or maybe need some light dinner music), you can download the City of Canyon's Spotify playlist 'Can't Flush This'."

The Spotify playlist and social media posts have received two local awards, three state/district awards, and two national awards in communications. We have seen neighboring visitors' bureaus and cities around Texas begin to use Spotify playlists for communication and engagement

purposes, and we're happy to be a part of residents all around the state humming a tune they just can't get out of their heads (as long as it *can* get out of your pipes).

Listen to the City of Canyon's "Can't Flush This" Spotify playlist at [www.CanyonTX.gov/comms](http://www.CanyonTX.gov/comms) or by scanning the QR code. ★







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## Removal of Municipal Officers

This Q&A is designed to help city officials in general law cities understand how municipal officers – including city council members, mayors, and appointed officers like city secretaries and city attorneys – can be removed from office. It explains the differences between elected members of the governing body and other municipal officers, and it outlines the processes available under Texas law for removing someone from one of these roles. Because the majority of general law cities in Texas are either Type A or operate under Type A provisions through borrowing authority, this Q&A focuses mainly on the rules and procedures that apply specifically to Type A general law cities, but many of these concepts apply to Type B and C general law cities as well.

**Q** What is a “municipal officer” in the context of a Texas general law city?

**A** “Municipal officer” is a title that appears in Texas law, and it includes two distinct categories of individuals: (1) the elected members of the governing body – aldermen and the mayor; and (2) other municipal officers provided for by law or created by ordinance. State law defines a number of municipal offices in a Type A city, including the city secretary, city treasurer, assessor and collector, city attorney, marshal, and municipal engineer. The city council may also create additional officer positions by ordinance and provide for their appointment or election. Tex. Loc. Gov’t Code § 22.071(a) – (b). The council may assign duties to these officers, require additional responsibilities, and even require that they post a bond to ensure faithful performance of their duties. *Id.* at § 22.072. There is no requirement that these positions be filled by employees of the city.

**Q** What is a “public officer?”

**A** A public officer, unlike a public employee, exercises

a sovereign function of government largely independent of the control of others and for the benefit of the public. See *Aldine Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Standley*, 280 S.W.2d 578, 583 (Tex. 1955). This distinction reflects the two essential elements of public office: (1) the authority to exercise governmental power on behalf of the public; and (2) a degree of independence from the control of other governmental bodies or officials. *Harris Cnty. v. Schoenbacher*, 594 S.W.2d 106, 110 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 1979, writ ref’d n.r.e.). Knowing whether or not an individual is a public officer requires an analysis of the duties they actually perform for the city.

**Q** Is every “municipal officer” a “public officer?”

**A** No, not every municipal officer is a public officer. Whether a municipal officer qualifies as a public officer depends on the nature of the position and the authority it carries. A public officer is someone who exercises a sovereign function of government – such as making policy decisions or enforcing laws – largely independent of the control of others and for the benefit of the public. Members of a city’s governing body are public officers, because they carry out legislative functions for the public benefit. *Weber v. Fernandez*, No. 02-18-00275-CV, 2019 WL 1395796, at \*7 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth Mar. 28, 2019, no pet.). In contrast, an employee who is also a municipal officer, such as a city secretary or city attorney, who primarily performs administrative or advisory tasks under the direction and supervision of the city council, likely does not meet that definition and would not be a public officer.

**Q** When it comes to removal from office, does it matter whether the position qualifies as a “public office?”

**A** Yes, while all municipal officers can be removed from office, removal of a municipal officer who is also a public officer is significantly more difficult and is accomplished in the courts through a *quo warranto* judicial process,





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another similar judicial proceeding, or as a result of criminal conviction. For municipal officers who are not public officers, removal follows a simpler set of statutory procedures that do not involve the courts. Both processes are addressed below, beginning with the removal of municipal officers who are public officers, followed by the procedures for removing municipal officers who do not hold public office.

## **Q** What is a *quo warranto* proceeding?

**A** Literally meaning "by what authority," a *quo warranto* proceeding is a legal action used to challenge whether a person has the lawful authority to hold a public office. It is the exclusive procedural vehicle by which a court can determine whether a person is entitled to hold a seat on a city council. See *Goodwin v. Hohl*, No. 03-20-00433-CV, 2021 WL 6129001, at \*3 (Tex. App.—Austin Dec. 29, 2021, no pet.). In Texas, *quo warranto* is governed by Chapter 66 of the Civil Practice and Remedies Code which authorizes this type of action when a public officer commits or allows an act that by law causes forfeiture of the office. Tex. Civ. Prac. & Rem. Code Ann. § 66.001. The process begins when the attorney general, or the county or district attorney of the appropriate county, files a petition in district court seeking permission to file a formal *quo warranto* suit in the name of the State of Texas. *Id.* at § 66.002. **The prosecutor may file the petition on their own or at the request of a private individual called a relator.** *Id.* If the judge finds there is probable ground for the proceeding, the judge must grant leave to file the information and order that the case move forward. *Id.*

If the court finds that the public officer unlawfully holds office – for example, by becoming disqualified or violating a statutory standard for removal – the judge must enter a judgment removing that person from office. *Id.* at § 66.003. The court also enters judgment for the costs of prosecution in favor of the relator and may impose a fine on the officer for unlawfully holding office. *Id.*

## **Q** Is there a city-specific *quo warranto* process to remove members of the governing body?

**A** For general law cities in Texas, a city-specific version

of the *quo warranto* process exists under Subchapter B, Chapter 21 of the Texas Local Government Code (the "Chapter 21 Process"). This process applies only to members of the governing body – such as the mayor or city council members – of a general law city. Tex. Loc. Gov't Code § 21.022(3). While the proceeding is still handled in district court and prosecuted by the district attorney in the name of the State of Texas, this process differs from the general *quo warranto* provisions in one important way: a qualifying resident of the city – rather than the attorney general or a district or county attorney – may initiate the case by filing a sworn petition for removal. *Id.* at § 21.026. The petition must state, in clear language, the grounds for removal and describe when and where each alleged act creating the grounds for removal occurred. *Id.* If the petition is accepted by the judge and the proper notice and bond are provided, the case proceeds to trial, where the officer is entitled to a bench or jury trial. *Id.* at §§ 21.027–029. Either side may appeal the final judgment. *Id.* at § 21.030.

## **Q** On what grounds may a member of the governing body be removed?

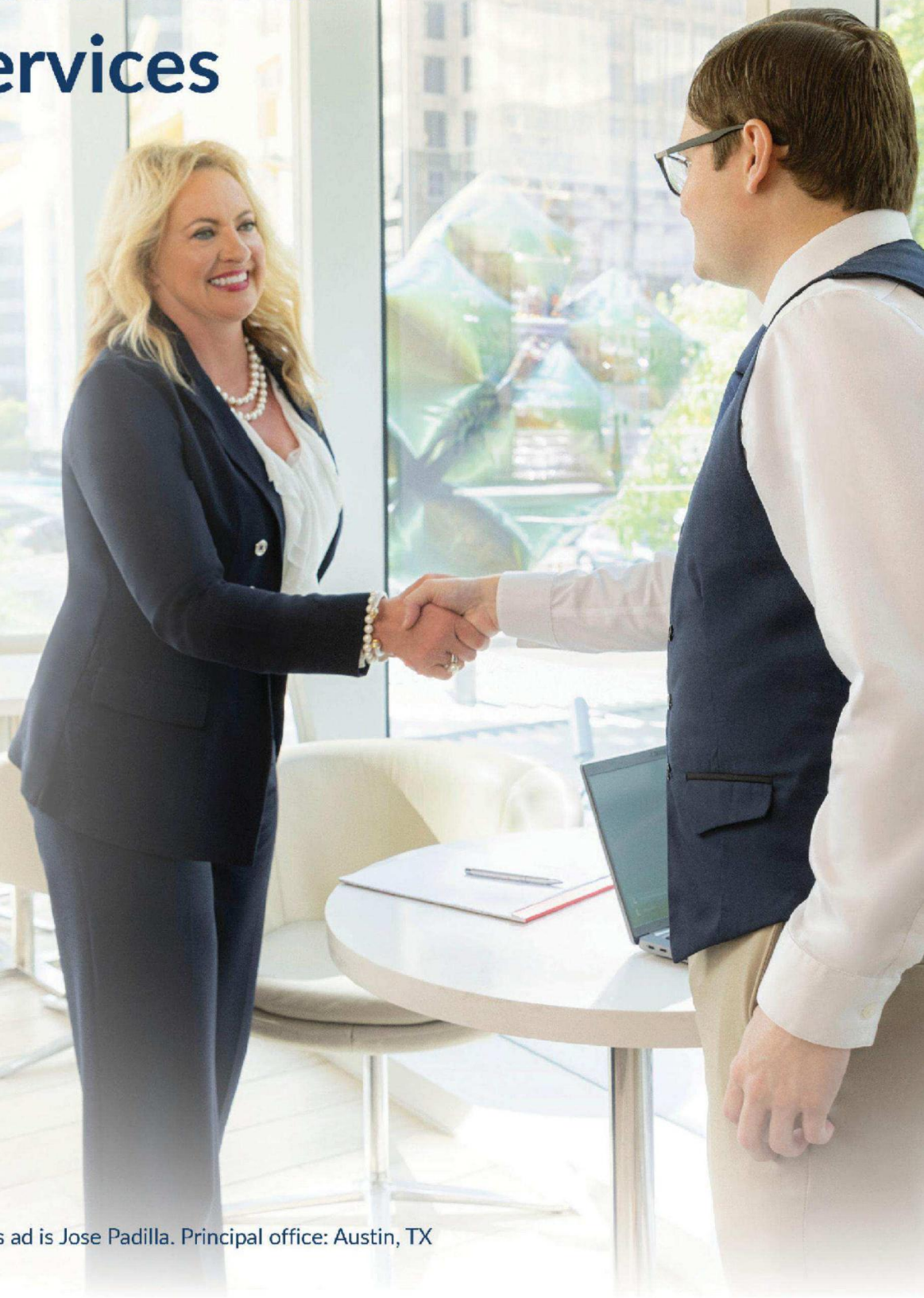
**A** Under the Chapter 21 Process, a council member or mayor may be removed for incompetency, official misconduct, or intoxication. *Id.* at § 21.025. "Incompetency" includes gross ignorance of official duties, gross carelessness, or a mental or physical condition that makes the officer unfit for service, while "official misconduct" includes intentional unlawful behavior relating to official duties. *Id.* at § 21.022. Violations of certain other laws, detailed below, are also considered official misconduct by law. Intoxication can be either on or off duty, though it is excused if caused by prescribed medication. *Id.* at § 21.025(b).

The *quo warranto* statute authorizes removal if "a public officer does an act or allows an act that by law causes a forfeiture of office." Tex. Civ. Prac. & Rem. Code Ann. § 66.001(2). In effect, this provision makes many other statutes across Texas law enforceable through removal proceedings if they expressly or implicitly state that certain conduct disqualifies a person from holding office. These additional statutes help define the specific types of conduct that result in automatic or court-ordered removal.





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The following list contains examples of state laws the violation of which can result in a remove a municipal official from office:

- A municipal officer who unlawfully appoints or retains a close relative in violation of the nepotism laws must be removed by *quo warranto*. Tex. Gov't Code § 573.081.
- Failure to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement, such as adopting or enforcing a policy that limits immigration law enforcement, can constitute forfeiture of office. *Id.* at § 752.0565.
- Misuse of confidential information or failure to provide access to public records under the Public Information Act may constitute *official misconduct*, which is grounds for removal under the Chapter 21 Process. *Id.* at §§ 552.352 – .353.
- Failure to publish required legal notices or financial statements may result in removal for continued nonfeasance. *Id.* at § 553.022.
- Misappropriation of money contained in certain special city funds by a municipal officer is malfeasance in office and mandates removal and future ineligibility. Tex. Loc. Gov't Code § 22.009.
- Violations of procurement laws may also lead to removal. *Id.* at § 252.063.
- Conviction of certain criminal offenses, including bribery, theft of public money, perjury, coercion of a public servant, tampering with a government record, misuse of official information, and abuse of official capacity lead to automatic removal and immediate vacancy of office upon conviction, deferred adjudication, or a plea of guilty or no contest. *Id.* at § 180.010. There is no requirement that the conviction be for a felony.
- An elected or other official who imposes or participates in a plan that evaluates or pressures peace officers or municipal judges based on the number of traffic citations issued or the amount of fines collected may be removed from office. Tex. Transp. Code § 720.002.

**Q** What happens if a trial is held and the officer is not removed?

**A** If a *quo warranto* trial is held and the court determines that the municipal officer has not unlawfully held or forfeited

their office, the officer remains in place and continues to perform their official duties. The court will deny the State's request for removal, and no further action is taken against the officer. While the statute allows the court to assess fines and costs against an officer found guilty of unlawfully holding office, there are no such penalties when the officer prevails. In that case, the *quo warranto* action is simply dismissed. The officer may recover court costs, but no damages are awarded by statute unless authorized under a separate legal claim. See Tex. Civ. Prac. & Rem. Code §§ 66.001 – .003.

If a trial is held under the Chapter 21 Process and the district court finds that the grounds for removal are insufficient or untrue, the officer is entitled to remain in office. In addition, the person who filed the removal petition may face financial liability. At the start of the case, the judge must require the petitioner to execute a bond with at least two sureties, in an amount set by the judge, to cover potential damages to the officer if the case is unsuccessful. Tex. Loc. Gov't Code § 21.028. If the officer prevails, the court must order the petitioner to pay a compensation amount determined by the judge to cover the officer's damages resulting from the removal action. *Id.* However, in order to collect on the bond, the officer must take certain steps within 90 days of the bond's execution, stating their intent to seek damages and the grounds for doing so. *Id.* Thus, an unsuccessful Chapter 21 removal case not only allows the officer to remain in office but may also result in monetary consequences for the person who initiated the proceeding.

**Q** Did state law ever allow a general law city council to remove one of its own members without going through the courts?

**A** Yes, previous state law allowed a city council of a general law city to remove one of its own members without going through the courts. Prior to 1999, Chapter 21 of the Local Government Code appeared to authorize members of the governing body to remove fellow members by vote of the council following a trial on the matter conducted by the council. However, this provision came under scrutiny in the Texas Supreme Court case *Bradley v. State ex rel. White*, 990 S.W.2d 245 (Tex. 1999), wherein the court reversed the removal of the mayor by the City of Westlake's aldermen.



The Court held that the process was unlawful because allowing the aldermen who testified in a proceeding to also vote on the ultimate question of removal violates fundamental evidentiary and due process principles. In response, the legislature passed House Bill 3836, removing the council-based removal process and enacting the judicial removal process now found in Chapter 21 and discussed above. Act of May 30, 1999, 76th Leg., R.S., ch. 1567, 1999 Tex. Gen. Laws 5381 (H.B. 3836). In short, although the law once permitted councils in general law cities to remove their own members, that approach was rejected by the courts and the legislature and replaced by a formal judicial process more than two decades ago.

**Q** What is the process to remove a municipal officer who is not a public officer?

**A** A municipal officer who is *not* a public officer – such as an appointed city secretary, city attorney, treasurer, or other officer designated by the city council – may be

removed by the governing body. *Id.* at § 22.077. The exact process depends on the reason for removal. If the officer is alleged to have engaged in incompetency, corruption, misconduct, or malfeasance in office, the city council may vote to remove the officer after first providing due notice and an opportunity to be heard. *Id.* at § 22.077(a). Alternatively, if the officer was appointed by the city council and the governing body simply lacks confidence in the officer's performance, the council may remove the officer at any time by adopting a resolution declaring a lack of confidence. This resolution must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the elected aldermen. *Id.* at § 22.077(b). While this statute authorizes removal, the city must still comply with other applicable legal requirements such as the terms of any employment contract, civil service protections, other statutory provision, municipal personnel policies, or constitutional due process standards. Failure to do so could expose the city to claims for breach of contract, wrongful termination, or violations of state or federal law. ★



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# PRELIMINARY AGENDA FOR THE 113TH TML ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

All conference events will be held at the Fort Worth Convention Center located at 1201 Houston St, Fort Worth, TX 76102, unless otherwise noted. Conference information will be updated as program details are added. Check the conference website often for the most current information at <https://tmlconference.org>.

## Tuesday, October 28

1:00-5:00 p.m.  
**Registration**

2:00 p.m.  
**TML Board of Directors Meeting**

## Wednesday, October 29

7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.  
**Attendee Registration**

10:15 a.m.-Noon  
**Opening General Session and Presentation of Awards**  
**ON FIRE: Ignite a Radically Inspired Life**  
**John O'Leary,**  
Best-Selling Author and Speaker



11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.  
**Affiliates' Board, Business, or Educational Sessions**

Noon-5:00 p.m.  
**Exhibit Hall Grand Opening**



1:45-3:00 p.m.  
**Concurrent Sessions**

3:30-4:45 p.m.  
**Concurrent Sessions**

## Thursday, October 30

7:30-8:45 a.m.  
**TML Risk Pool Breakfast** (separate ticketed event at no charge)

7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.  
**Attendee Registration**

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
**Exhibit Hall Open**

8:30-9:30 a.m.  
**Continental Breakfast in the Exhibit Hall**

8:00-11:45 a.m.  
**Affiliates' Board, Business, or Educational Sessions**

9:15-10:30 a.m.  
**Concurrent Sessions**

10:45-11:55 a.m.  
**Concurrent Sessions**

Noon-1:30 p.m.  
**Luncheon and Keynote Speaker** (separate ticketed event)  
**From Leadership to Leadering: The Shift We Need for the Future We Want**  
**Nancy Giordano**,  
Futurist and Strategist



1:45-3:00 p.m.  
**Concurrent Sessions**

2:00-5:00 p.m.  
**Affiliates' Board, Business, or Educational Sessions**

3:30-4:45 p.m.  
**Concurrent Sessions**

3:30 p.m.  
**TML Business Meeting**

## Friday, October 31

7:30-10:30 a.m.  
**Attendee Registration**

8:00-10:00 a.m.  
**Exhibit Hall Open**

9:00-10:15 a.m.  
**Concurrent Sessions**

9:15 a.m.  
**TML Board of Directors Meeting**

10:30 a.m.-Noon  
**Closing Brunch and Keynote Speaker** (separate ticketed event)  
**Leading with Heart, Acting with Honor**  
**Frank B. Ashley III**,  
University Leader, Educator, and Coach





## AFFILIATE PROGRAMS

There are 21 organizations officially affiliated with TML that represent various professions in city government. Many of the League's affiliate organizations support the TML Annual Conference and Exhibition by holding special programs for their members, as well as for any conference registrants who would like to attend. These programs are listed below in alphabetical order by affiliate name, and on the Conference website at [www.tmlconference.org](http://www.tmlconference.org).

In addition, some of the League's affiliate organizations plan and organize broader concurrent sessions that are part of the Conference program and open to all attendees. These sessions are listed in the Preliminary Agenda on pages 26-27, as well as on the Conference website.

The League is grateful to all affiliate members who contributed to the 2025 TML Annual Conference and Exhibition program.

Please keep in mind that:

- Sessions, times, and speakers are subject to change.
- All events will be held at the Fort Worth Convention Center unless otherwise noted.
- You may contact your affiliate president with questions.

### Association of Hispanic Municipal Officials (AHMO)

**Wednesday, October 29**

6:00-10:00 p.m.

#### Reception

Omni Fort Worth Hotel, Texas Ballroom F-J  
1300 Houston Street

**Thursday, October 30**

3:00-5:00 p.m.

#### Business Meeting

### Texas Association of Black City Councilmembers (TABCCM)

**Tuesday, October 28**

Noon Shotgun Start

#### 21<sup>st</sup> Annual T.J. Patterson Sr. Golf Tournament

Rockwood Park Golf Course, Fort Worth, 76114

**Wednesday, October 29**

12:30-2:30 p.m.

#### President's Luncheon

Tarrant County College – Trinity River Campus  
300 Trinity Campus Circle, 76102

\*Transportation Provided

**Thursday, October 30**

2:00-5:00 p.m.

#### Annual Meeting

7:00-9:00 p.m.

#### Reception

Thompson's Bookstore  
900 Houston Street

### Texas Association of Municipal Health Officials (TAMHO)

**Thursday, October 30**

9:00-9:15 a.m.

#### Welcome

Mandy Pippen, TAMHO President



9:15-10:15 a.m.

**Measles Outbreak 2025**

Dr. Katherine Wells, Director of Public Health, Lubbock

10:15-10:45 a.m.

**Break** (TML Conference Break)

10:45-11:45 a.m.

**Environmental Health in Texas Legislature 2025 Session**

Christopher Sparks, Bureau Chief, City of Houston

11:45 a.m.-Noon

**Annual Business Meeting**

Noon-1:30 p.m.

**Lunch**

1:45-2:45 p.m.

**One Health**

Dr. Todd Bell, Amarillo Local Health Authority

3:00-3:30 p.m.

**Break** (TML Conference Break)

3:30-4:30 p.m.

**Vector Control**

Samantha Blair, Environmental Health Administrator, City of Wichita Falls – Wichita County Public Health District

**Texas Chapter of American Public Works Association (Texas Chapter of APWA)**

**Wednesday, October 29**

Noon-5:00 p.m.

**Board Meeting**

**Texas City Attorneys Association (TCAA)**

**Thursday, October 30**

8:00-8:30 a.m.

**Registration**

8:30-8:45 a.m.

**Welcome and Opening Remarks**

8:45 a.m.-Noon

**Educational Sessions**

Noon-1:45 p.m.

**Lunch Break**

1:45-2:15 p.m.

**Business Meeting**

2:15-5:00 p.m.

**Educational Sessions**

**Texas Municipal Clerks Association, Inc. (TMCA)**

**Thursday, October 30**

1:45-3:00 p.m.

**Orientation Session**

**Texas Municipal Library Directors Association (TMLDA)**

**Thursday, October 30**

2:00-5:00 p.m.

**Texas Legislation Affecting Municipal Libraries**

**Tad Cleaves**, Assistant General Counsel, Texas Municipal League, and **Lyndsay Lujan**, Senior Assistant City Attorney, City of Georgetown





## **CELEBRATING THE PLACES TEXANS LOVE 2025 GCAA WINNERS LEAD WITH BEAUTY, INNOVATION, AND COMMUNITY PRIDE**

Each year, Keep Texas Beautiful and the Texas Department of Transportation recognize 10 standout communities with the Governor's Community Achievement Award (GCAA) – one of the most esteemed environmental honors in the state. Winners are selected for their outstanding leadership in community engagement, environmental stewardship, and innovative beautification efforts that transform public spaces.

Each award includes funding for landscape enhancements along state rights-of-way, but the impact goes far beyond roadside aesthetics. Whether it's restoring a riparian corridor, planting trees in a historic downtown, or turning vacant lots into vibrant gathering spaces, this year's winners show that beautification isn't just about appearance – it's about belonging.

Read on to discover how each 2025 GCAA recipient is raising the bar and how your community might be next. Learn more and apply at [ktb.org/gcaa](https://ktb.org/gcaa).





*Volunteers at cleanup along Blanco River as part of the Don't mess with Texas® Trash-Off*

## Blanco

CATEGORY 1 – POPULATION 2,100

**Landscape Award: \$90,000**

In Blanco, restoration is a long-term commitment. Since 2017, the Town Creek Riparian Restoration Project has been slowly transforming a downtown waterway from a weed-choked channel into a healthy, native habitat. Volunteers – many of them students – have removed invasive species, installed erosion controls, and replanted with native grasses and trees.

This work goes hand in hand with Blanco's efforts to preserve its dark skies.

Since earning International Dark Sky Community status in 2022, Keep Blanco Beautiful has continued to educate residents on light pollution and work with the City to update outdoor lighting.

Each year, volunteers remove more than 16,000 pounds of litter, maintain pollinator beds, and care for downtown plantings. "It's the consistency that makes the difference," said a longtime board member. "We don't just plant – we return, we learn, we adapt." In Blanco, stewardship is woven into the rhythm of the seasons.



*Prepping for Texas Sandfest with Flynn the Sea Turtle.*

## Port Aransas

CATEGORY 2 – POPULATION 4,477

**Landscape Award: \$110,000**

In Port Aransas, environmental stewardship comes with a mascot – and a movement. "Flynn the Turtle," the friendly face of the City's "Respect Our Island Home" campaign, reminds residents and tourists alike to keep beaches clean, dunes protected, and waste properly disposed of. Flynn's message appears everywhere: on signs, banners, social media, temporary tattoos, and event materials throughout the island.

What makes the campaign especially powerful is its youth involvement. Flynn's Beach Squad, a local student-led group, actively participates in beach cleanups and outreach, instilling a sense of pride and responsibility in the next generation. Their efforts amplify a broader community commitment. In 2024, Port Aransas volunteers removed thousands of pounds of debris from the shoreline and hosted educational events to promote sustainable tourism.

"Flynn makes it fun, but he also makes it stick," said one organizer. With a blend of creative messaging, youth leadership, and year-round action, Port Aransas is proving that even the smallest voices can help protect the coast for generations to come.





*Never daunted by rain, Parks and Public Works staff helped citizens to unload their full trailers during the Spring Trash Off*

## Pilot Point

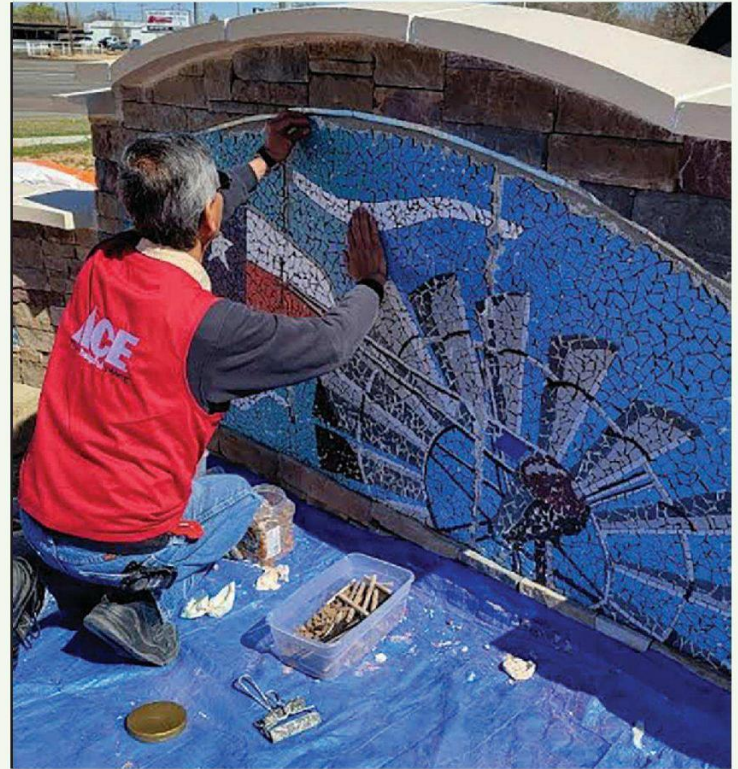
CATEGORY 3 – POPULATION 8,000

**Landscape Award: \$130,000**

Pilot Point brings its history and future together through creative downtown revitalization. In recent years, the City has restored its historic square with native landscaping, decorative lighting, and interpretive signage – blending beautification with heritage tourism.

Keep Pilot Point Beautiful supports these efforts through seasonal cleanups, a recycling drop-off center, and community-wide days of service. In 2024, volunteers logged over 500 hours, focusing on litter removal, flowerbed maintenance, and repainting public benches.

"People stop to tell us how beautiful the square looks – and that makes you want to do more," shared a volunteer. The City also engages local youth through garden clubs and clean campus contests, keeping momentum going across generations. For Pilot Point, beautification is how they care for their past and shape their future



*A volunteer works on a new mosaic welcoming visitors to Levelland*

## Levelland

CATEGORY 4 – POPULATION 12,530

**Landscape Award: \$160,000**

In Levelland, mosaic art is more than a beautification tool – it's a language of shared identity. The City's long-standing mosaic program places hand-crafted panels in sidewalks, parks, and public spaces, with contributions from students, senior groups, and professional artists. In 2024, the newest installations highlighted local history and environmental themes and were featured during school-led unveiling ceremonies.

This program works alongside cleanups like Fall Sweep and targeted recycling drives, where residents collected over 15,000 pounds of waste in a single year. "It's art that the community builds together," said a Keep Levelland Beautiful volunteer. "And when you see your work in the sidewalk, it's a reason to keep it clean."

Through partnerships, data-driven cleanups, and the expanding visual footprint of mosaics, Levelland connects public pride to environmental progress – one tile at a time.





*Angleton offers residents opportunities to recycle common household waste*

## Angleton

CATEGORY 5 – POPULATION 20,206

**Landscape Award: \$180,000**

Angleton's Parkland Dedication Ordinance has re-shaped how the City grows – ensuring that every new subdivision contributes green space or funding toward public parks. Since its adoption, this policy has resulted in more than 15 acres of new parkland and helped finance pocket parks and trails in developing areas.

Keep Angleton Beautiful plays a key role in translating policy into impact. Their annual Fall Sweep engages more than 100 volunteers, while recognition programs like Yard and Business of the Month foster visible neighborhood pride. "You can see the difference it makes – not just in how things look, but in how people feel about where they live," shared a board member.

With bilingual outreach and coordinated partnerships across City departments, Angleton ensures that every resident benefits from its vision for a greener, more connected community.



*Volunteers cleanup litter in conjunction with the pink warrior dash*

## Copperas Cove

CATEGORY 6 – POPULATION 39,636

**Landscape Award: \$210,000**

Nestled near Fort Cavazos, Copperas Cove is a community shaped by service – and it shows in their approach to environmental care. The Adopt-a-Spot program has become the beating heart of beautification. With more than 60 active adopters, including military families, school clubs, and civic groups, the program covers roadways, parks, and creek beds across the City.

The initiative gained momentum after the 2024 solar eclipse, when hundreds of volunteers united to clean high-traffic areas and reinforce the City's welcoming image. "Everyone stepped up," said Keep Copperas Cove Beautiful (KCCB) Chairperson Tiffany Dietz. "It showed what we can do when we all care for the same space."

Beyond cleanups, KCCB holds regular workshops, school presentations, and recycling events that help sustain long-term behavior change. With steady volunteerism and City partnership, Copperas Cove is proving that local ownership is the strongest tool in beautification.





*Participants building rain barrels at a workshop*

## Haltom City

CATEGORY 7 – POPULATION 46,048

**Landscape Award: \$250,000**

Haltom City takes a data-driven approach to cleaner streets. Every year, the City conducts a Litter Index – a systematic survey of roads and public spaces that guides cleanup planning and ordinance enforcement. In 2024, the results helped target 17 illegal dumping sites and launch a community-wide beautification campaign.

Keep Haltom City Beautiful reinforces this strategy with events like Spring Sweep and "Make a Difference Day," drawing in families, scout troops, and seniors. Multilingual outreach in Spanish and Vietnamese ensures access for the City's diverse population.

"Knowing where the issues are helps us act faster – and smarter," said Christi Pruitt, director of parks and recreation for Haltom City. With support from City departments and local nonprofits, Haltom City is showing how data, community voice, and action go hand-in-hand.



*Volunteers work alongside Town staff to maintain the Monarch Waystation at Town Hall*

## Flower Mound

CATEGORY 8 – POPULATION 81,270

**Landscape Award: \$270,000**

Flower Mound is growing, but it's doing so under a canopy of trees. In 2024, the City planted 50 native shade trees in Glenwick Park, one of its older neighborhoods, through a grant from the Texas A&M Forest Service. The effort revitalized the park and renewed community connections to place. "These aren't just trees, they're a legacy," said one volunteer.

Keep Flower Mound Beautiful supports the Town's environmental goals through cleanups, composting workshops, and public art installations that highlight the natural world. Their partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department ensures that resident voices – gathered through "FloMo Convos" and other listening sessions – guide what gets planted and where.

In Flower Mound, beautification means planting with purpose.





*Volunteers create new beds at the garrison community garden*

## Waco

CATEGORY 9 – POPULATION 144,816

**Landscape Award: \$290,000**

In Waco, beautification and food security go hand-in-hand. The Garrison Garden project –located in East Waco and managed in partnership with Keep Waco Beautiful, World Hunger Relief, and local nonprofits – has transformed an underutilized space into a thriving hub for community health. In 2024, the garden produced more than 3,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, much of which was distributed to local residents free of charge.

The site also serves as an education center, hosting composting workshops, volunteer days, and youth field trips that teach environmental stewardship alongside practical growing skills. "It's not just about growing food; it's about growing trust and connection in our neighborhood," said a garden coordinator.

The project complements Waco's broader vision for sustainable growth, which includes a \$17.9 million EPA grant supporting resilience hubs, tree planting, and zero-waste programs. With partners ranging from Baylor to Habitat for Humanity, Waco is cultivating community from the ground up – one garden, one cleanup, and one neighborhood at a time.



*Keep Laredo beautiful's national cleanup day*

## Laredo

CATEGORY 10 – POPULATION 261,711

**Landscape Award: \$310,000**

Laredo's Beautification Grant Program is helping residents reclaim and reimagine their neighborhoods. In 2024, more than 30 small grants funded community-driven projects – from mural installations to pollinator gardens to revitalized medians – each designed by locals and supported by Keep Laredo Beautiful.

The program is especially impactful in underserved areas, where funding and resources have been historically limited. "This gives neighborhoods a voice and a way to lead," said a community liaison. Volunteers also participate in cleanup campaigns, recycling events, and school programs that reinforce a culture of care.

Backed by the City and stormwater fees, the grant program shows how even small-scale projects can create large ripples – both in appearance and in community pride. ★



# BUILDING BLOCKS FOR DOWNTOWN FUTURES: TEXAS' FIRST STREET INITIATIVE

By **Meredith Johnson**, Community Liaison, Texas Main Street Program at the Texas Historical Commission



The Texas Main Street Program (TMSP) is a well-known path for communities interested in downtown revitalization. Since the Main Street Program arrived in Texas over 40 years ago, the program has grown to become the Texas Historical Commission's primary effort to support preservation-based economic development in cities across the state. Today, the TMSP consists of 80 communities, each with its own dedicated staff working toward downtown revitalization. The success of TMSP inspired the creation of a new initiative that offers free educational and networking opportunities to communities interested in the revitalization of historic commercial districts. This educational effort is called the First Street Initiative.

## What is the First Street Initiative?

The First Street Initiative, facilitated by the TMSP, enables communities to learn more about downtown revitalization and historic preservation through virtual quarterly meetings, strategic assignments, and quarterly discussion sessions. Each quarter, the cohort meets virtually to explore a new topic related to downtown revitalization and historic preservation. Registration for First Street is free and open to

communities of any size. Communities must attend quarterly virtual meetings and submit assignments to remain in the program.

All first-year communities follow the program's established four-point core curriculum. In the first quarter, the cohort will learn how to identify, categorize, and examine assets in their historic commercial cores. In quarter two, the cohort learns how to access and interpret socioeconomic data to drive their planning and decision-making processes for their unique downtowns. In quarter three, participants will begin to examine the physical assets of their downtown spaces, including how to develop a streetscape inventory and identify potential threats to historic buildings. Finally, in quarter four, the First Street members will cross-examine the information from the last three quarters, including identified assets, community data, and physical analysis, to determine a plan for revitalization efforts in the coming year.

Each quarterly meeting is paired with one assignment and one optional office hours session. The assignments align with the quarterly topic and are designed to support



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both new and experienced participants. For example, in the first quarter of the core curriculum, participants identify assets based on the planning documents currently in place for their downtown. In quarter two, they are asked to find specific data points from the Census and develop a data-driven narrative for their downtown. Assignments are completed outside of the First Street meetings and submitted in the following quarter. All participants have access to a shared digital folder that serves as a repository for assignments and resources. Office hours are held quarterly and are primarily used to brainstorm assignment ideas, encourage peer learning around downtown-specific challenges, and share helpful resources.

### Current Cohort Experience

The inaugural cohort consists of 13 cities: Abilene, Alpine, Borger, Cibolo, Dripping Springs, Floresville, Kenedy, Killeen, Lewisville, Liberty Hill, Navasota, San Juan, and Weatherford. These communities have seen a variety of accomplishments while in First Street. For example, one community is now working on revising local ordinances related to economic development and attracting new businesses, utilizing the Assets Worksheet from quarter one and resources shared by other participants who have tackled the same issue. Another community has used its time in First Street to re-examine its need for a dedicated downtown employee, ultimately resulting in the creation of a new position. Several communities are using their time in First Street to prepare for a TMSP application. They have consulted with TMSP staff to discuss job descriptions, salaries, and a future program work plan.

### Beyond Year One

Communities that have successfully participated in one year in First Street may choose to continue participation. Continuing communities meet quarterly to explore more advanced topics related to the goals they established during their first year. In 2026, the second-year cohort will learn about topics such as working with contractors on historic buildings, developing a request for proposals, and using the National Register of Historic Places as a tool for revitalization. Similar to the first year, these advanced communities will be expected to attend the virtual quarterly meetings and complete the associated assignments.

### Connecting to TMSP

For communities interested in applying to the TMSP, the core curriculum directly correlates with the revised application. For example, the activity in quarter three guides participants to take photos of specific components of their downtown to practice photography of the built environment for marketing and revitalization purposes. The TMSP application asks for 10 photos that illustrate the current condition of the downtown area. First Street participants will already have at least 10 photos that meet the application criteria. First Street helps communities better understand the commitments and expectations of joining the TMSP, and it also allows communities to prepare for the TMSP at their own pace. By joining the First Street Initiative, communities will have a direct connection to the THC and TMSP staff, who can answer questions and provide resources whether or not the community plans to apply to the TMSP. Movement into the TMSP is optional. If a community does not want to apply for the TMSP, they are welcome to continue in First Street.

### Registration for First Street

To register for the First Street Initiative, communities must attend an information session and submit a complete registration form. The information session will introduce the initiative, provide meeting dates, review the topics for new and continuing participants, explain the registration process, and answer questions. Next, interested communities will complete the online registration form. The online registration form is simple and consists of three parts: point of contact identification, a brief description of the community's existing downtown conditions, and approval from the city manager or administrator.

The first part of the registration asks for a point of contact and a backup point of contact to be identified. The point of contact is the person who will receive communication for First Street and who will attend the quarterly meetings throughout the year. The point of contact can be a city employee, a dedicated volunteer, or even an employee of a nonprofit that focuses on that community's downtown. The selected individuals should be knowledgeable about the historic commercial core—its physical and social infrastructure, as well as recent and ongoing planning activity for the area. They should be familiar with the current conditions of buildings, roads, sidewalks, sewer, and water. They



should also understand the individuals and organizations who contribute to the livelihood of downtown. The contacts will need to be able to set aside approximately 6–10 hours per quarter to participate in First Street meetings and assignments. There is no fee to register for the First Street Initiative, but the community contacts must attend the quarterly meetings and participate in activities to remain active in the First Street Initiative.

The next part of the registration form briefly asks about existing conditions of the downtown through the presence of preservation tools, such as a preservation ordinance or a downtown master plan, and assets, which may include a listing on the National Register of Historic Places or a city employee dedicated to downtown. Of the 2025 cohort, 57 percent of participating communities have specific downtown zoning in place, 42 percent have properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and 20 percent have no assets or tools in place. This information helps staff understand the types of investments that the community has already made in their downtown area, if there are any. Responses to this section of the form do not determine First Street eligibility, as the initiative's goal is to provide free educational opportunities to any community that registers.

The final step of the registration form requires a signature from the city manager or administrator. This is a significant step to ensure that city leadership is, at a minimum, aware of the community's participation in First Street. The city manager or administrator should know who represents the community in First Street and ensure that this person, whether or not they are a city employee, has permission to spend time on First Street-related activities. All three steps of the registration form must be completed for the form to be accepted. There is no limit on the number of communities that may be accepted into the Initiative.

### Learn More and Receive Updates

Once the registration form is approved, the point of contact will meet with TMSP staff for one hour to discuss the community's current downtown conditions, identify any goals they might have, and answer questions about First Street participation. Registration for the 2026 cohort will open in the fall of 2025.

More information about First Street, including newsletter updates, a program overview, registration form examples, and a recording of the 2024 pre-registration meeting, is available on the THC website at [thc.texas.gov/firststreet](https://thc.texas.gov/firststreet). If you have questions, email [firststreet@thc.texas.gov](mailto:firststreet@thc.texas.gov). ★





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# HOW EXPLORATORY WAYFINDING ENCOURAGES EXPLORATION IN YOUR CITY

By **Ryan Short**, Co-Founder, CivicBrand

Exploratory Wayfinding relies less on traditional signage with arrows and maps and more on creative placemaking to invite people to parts of the city they may not have seen before, helping them develop a more holistic vision of the city.

We all know how essential directions are. Whether we get them from an app like Waze, a paper map, or follow wayfinding signs, most of us need some kind of guidance to get to where we're going.

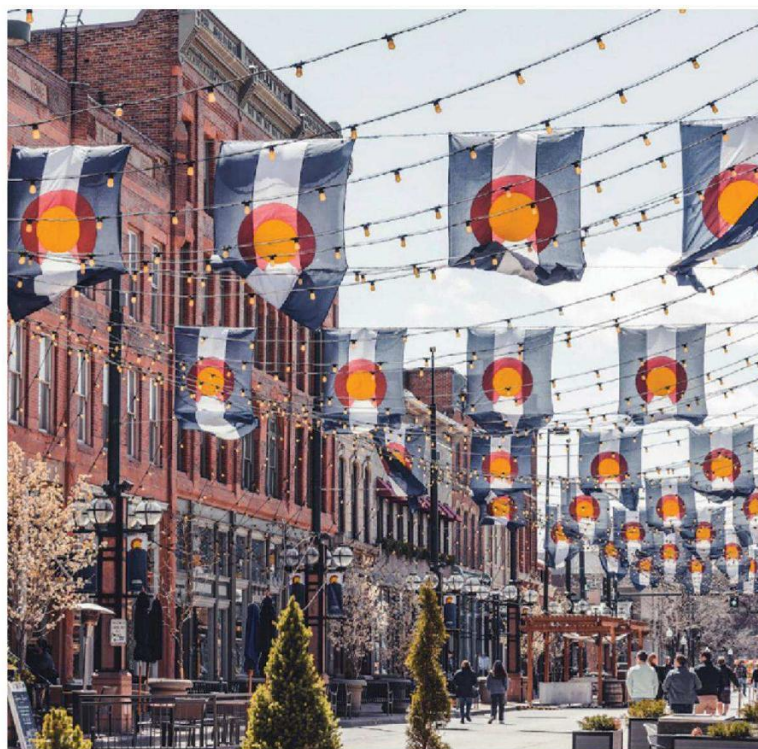
For cities, investing in wayfinding signage (especially for downtowns or heavily visited destinations) is essential for ensuring residents and visitors develop a positive perception of the city. Few things can hurt a city's reputation more than being perceived as difficult or confusing to navigate.

We've found that cities eager to solve this problem often rely solely on traditional wayfinding methods like maps and signs with arrows. This is a step in the right direction, but too often, it focuses only on helping people get to the destinations they've already chosen. What cities might also consider is Exploratory Wayfinding: a placemaking-based approach to guidance that focuses less on helping people get to predetermined destinations and more on empowering them to discover something new.

## What is Exploratory Wayfinding?

Exploratory Wayfinding is an approach to navigation that relies on placemaking tools to guide people around a neighborhood or city. This might look like colorful flags, street lights, textured stones in the sidewalk, or streets painted in bright colors. No matter the exact features, the goal is to invite people to different neighborhoods and streets in a way that makes them feel comfortable and

encourages them to explore. Exploratory Wayfinding at its best will feel like a natural part of the environment and subconsciously guide users through the city.

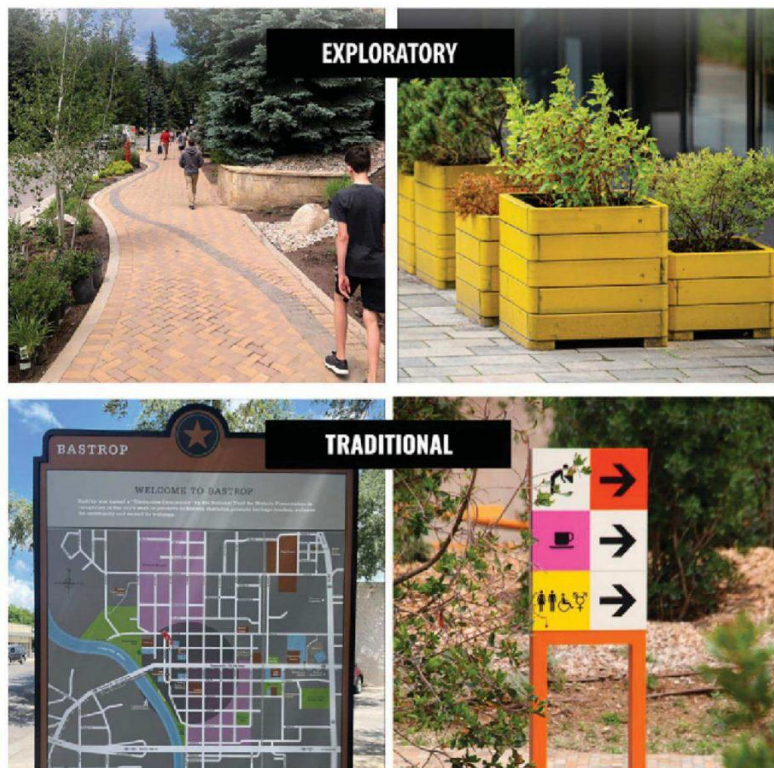


The colorful lights, flags, and cafe umbrellas in Larimer Square in Downtown Denver can be seen from blocks away. They don't need a wayfinding sign that says, "shops two blocks away." People can see it and they sense there is something there to go explore. Additionally, because it is attractive, people take photos of it and share it on social media which brings even more people to the area.



## How is this different from traditional wayfinding?

Compared to traditional wayfinding, Exploratory Wayfinding focuses less on providing information about specific destinations and more on creating visual invitations for people to explore on their own. Sometimes it can be big and bold like the Larimer Square example above. Other times it can be very subtle such as a pavestone design or colorful planters along the way that naturally guides you and makes you feel like you're on the right path.



## Three benefits of using Exploratory Wayfinding in your city:

### 1. It makes it easier for people to embrace spontaneous exploration

When it comes to navigating the built environment, humans have a wide variety of needs. On the more practical end of the spectrum, we want to arrive at our intended destination as quickly, comfortably and efficiently as possible. This is where traditional wayfinding, with its emphasis on logistical information, arrows, distances and maps is extremely helpful.

But on the other end of the spectrum, humans also want to explore and wander. Sometimes, we just want to “be

in the city” without having an exact destination in mind so we can discover something new. This is where Exploratory Wayfinding can help. It allows cities to leverage creative placemaking to invite people to explore, focusing less on helping them arrive at a specific destination and more on making them feel safe as they wander around.

### 2. It helps ease demand for door-to-door parking

One of the biggest pressures city leaders face is the demand for easy, free parking in their downtowns or historic neighborhoods. This is understandable given that most Americans live in car-centric environments where they are used to driving straight to their destinations and parking directly in front of them. For more dense areas though, trying to meet this kind of parking demand is impossible, leaving leaders to face residents and visitors who are frustrated by the perceived lack of parking super close to their desired endpoints.

Exploratory Wayfinding can ease this frustration by drawing visitors to other parts of the city, thereby introducing them to other destinations and businesses they might find attractive, and consequently, expanding their perception of “good places to park.”

### Case Study: Waco, Texas

Waco's city council initially asked us to provide more parking signage within the extremely popular Silo District. They knew that abundant parking existed downtown, but not all of it was directly in front of Magnolia, so there was a common misperception of insufficient parking. Instead of focusing just on parking (we did help with signs), we also encouraged the City to install a brightly colored pedestrian walkway that would lead tourists away from the Silo District and on to Austin Avenue, a historic street lined with several cute shops.

The goal was to help expand tourists' perception of the City's attractive destinations, which, in turn, would make it easier for them to be flexible about where to park. After we installed the colorful walking corridor, we interviewed local business owners on Austin Avenue who reported an increase in foot traffic.

In the photo below from our Downtown Waco Placemaking Case Study, you can see how we used both. There is tra-



ditional wayfinding telling visitors which way the Silos are, but there is also a bright colorful walkway naturally leading them both to The Silos as well as to Austin Avenue, another area of the City they may not have known about.

The logic is simple: if you increase the perception of good destinations, you increase the perception of available parking.

### 3. Exploratory Wayfinding relies less on signage and more on creative design

If you've ever visited an old city – say Rome, Paris or Charleston, South Carolina – and found yourself walking aimlessly down narrow, winding streets peeking around every corner to see what small shops you might discover, then you've experienced the genius of Exploratory Wayfinding in real life. Instead of relying only on signs and maps, the design of the city streets themselves invited you to keep exploring, without really explaining anything about directions, distances or destinations.

This is the magic of Exploratory Wayfinding. It's an approach to the built environment that relies less on signs (which can quickly clutter up the visual appearance of a city) and more on good design to inspire curiosity and exploration.

### Conclusion: A complement to traditional signage


While they are on opposite ends of the spectrum, cities don't necessarily have to choose between traditional or Exploratory Wayfinding. The two can be combined, meeting both the human need for straightforward, logistical information and our need to explore.

For example, while traditional signage can help people get to permanent, historic and/or high-demand destinations, Exploratory Wayfinding can be there to guide people around the city when they're tired of making decisions about where to go and simply want to wander. ★

*Ryan Short, Cofounder of CivicBrand, will be presenting at the TML Economic Development Conference on Thursday, November 13, on "Branding Is the New Economic Development." Learn more and register at [TMLeconomicdevelopment.org](http://TMLeconomicdevelopment.org).*

*CivicBrand is a city branding, engagement, and place-making firm that helps communities uncover and express their authentic identity. Through strategic storytelling, public engagement, and built environment design, they empower cities to become more inclusive, resilient, and loveable places. Visit [CivicBrand.com](http://CivicBrand.com).*





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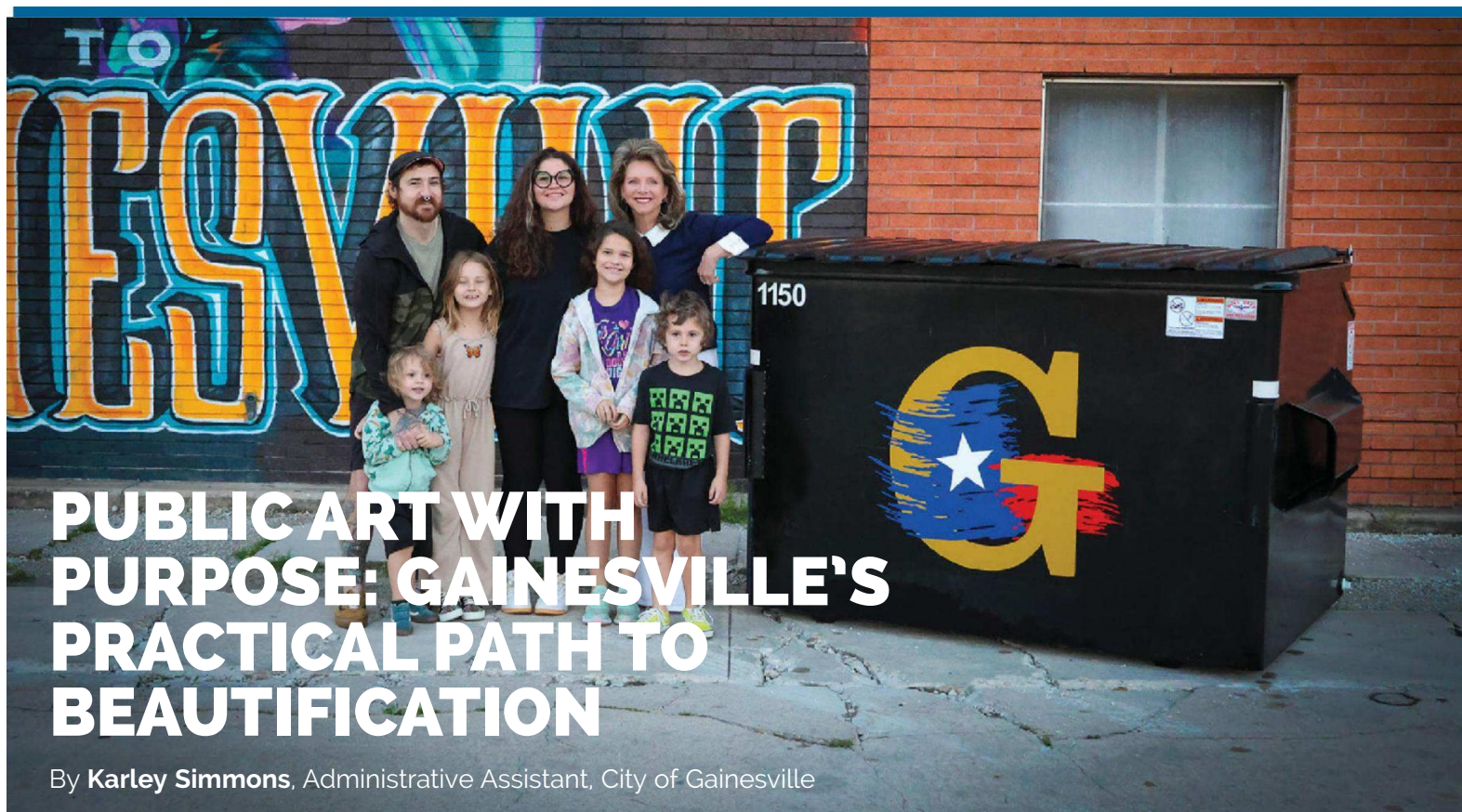


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# PUBLIC ART WITH PURPOSE: GAINESVILLE'S PRACTICAL PATH TO BEAUTIFICATION

By **Karley Simmons**, Administrative Assistant, City of Gainesville

In Gainesville, we believe that beauty and functionality go hand in hand. That's why our latest downtown beautification effort involved something most cities overlook: dumpsters.

Through a creative collaboration between the City of Gainesville's General Services Department and local artists Charlie and Ruthie Partin, we launched a project to reimagine the role of these necessary and often unsightly infrastructure pieces. The result: sleek, black dumpsters proudly displaying the City's logo, stationed throughout our downtown area as a visually cohesive part of our public spaces.

Our revitalized dumpsters are more than just a cosmetic upgrade; they reflect Gainesville's broader commitment to community vibrancy and responsible use of public resources. This project shows that even simple, low-cost changes to everyday items can make a big difference in creating a more welcoming and connected community.

## The Creative Process: Idea, Investment, and Execution

Planning for the project began in January 2025. The idea emerged during a walking tour of the downtown area, conducted by the Gainesville Downtown Master Plan Advisory Committee. As part of this process, committee members divided into groups to examine different parts of down-

town, looking for opportunities to improve aesthetics and functionality. When they regrouped, they noted that the presence of dumpsters had become so routine that their unsightly appearance was often overlooked. This moment of realization helped spark the idea of integrating them into the City's broader beautification efforts.

From there, the project continued as part of ongoing efforts to enhance Gainesville's downtown experience and a desire to maintain visual consistency across public assets. Our team recognized that newly purchased dumpsters offered an opportunity to meet that need through a creative approach.

The City purchased 32 dumpsters at a cost of \$34,308 and allocated an additional \$5,000 for the artistic work, bringing the total to \$39,308. Funding came from the current year's operational budget, demonstrating that infrastructure improvements don't always require large capital investments.

City staff worked with experienced local artists to ensure the design aligned with Gainesville's aesthetic, vision, and values. Over the course of a month, the artists transformed the dumpsters into uniform, eye-catching features by painting the City logo onto each one. This prominent display of



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our logo reinforces civic pride and a cohesive visual identity.

### **Keeping Residents in the Loop**

As with all our major projects, we kept the community informed through our Gainesville Engage website (GainesvilleTXEngage.org). This initiative was created to improve transparency and communication with residents. The platform shares updates on City projects and spending in real time, offering residents a clear window into how decisions are made and how funds are used. Gainesville Engage is interactive, allowing residents to ask questions directly on the website and receive responses from City staff, encouraging two-way communication and building public trust.

In addition to the website, we used the City's social media channels to share photos as the new dumpsters were introduced downtown. These posts helped generate public interest, provided visual context for the project, and kept residents engaged during the rollout.

### **Why This Works and Why It's Replicable**

What makes this project worth replicating isn't just the painted dumpsters themselves, it's the approach behind them. For cities looking to enhance their public spaces without straining their budgets, here are a few key takeaways that may help:

**Rethink Routine Upgrades:** Beautification doesn't always require new projects, sometimes it's about rethinking what's already planned. Gainesville had a replacement plan in place for its downtown dumpsters, and City staff saw an opportunity to turn a routine update into a visual enhancement. Many municipalities own functional assets, like dumpsters, utility boxes, benches, or electrical cabinets, that often go unnoticed. Incorporating these into a beautification strategy can offer a meaningful impact with minimal added cost.

**Partner with Local Artists:** Public art beautifies spaces and celebrates local culture. By partnering with artists who were already established in the community, the City ensured the project carried credibility and reflected shared values. Their involvement brought authenticity to the effort and demonstrated the City's commitment to working in partnership with the community.

**Use Operational Budgets Strategically:** This project used funds from our current operational budget. Many cities could find similar room in their budgets by aligning beautification goals with routine infrastructure purchases or replacements.

**Build Resident Support Through Transparency:** Projects like this are more successful when residents understand the "why" behind them. Gainesville Engage helped us explain not just what we were doing, but how it aligned with broader goals, helping turn curiosity into support.

**Think Long-Term, Even with Small Changes:** While painted dumpsters may seem like a minor change, they contribute to a larger vision. When small improvements are consistent and well-designed, they help shift perceptions and expectations around public spaces over time. Well-maintained and thoughtfully designed public spaces foster a sense of pride among residents and strengthens their shared commitment to keeping the City clean.

Beautification doesn't always require bold murals or large-scale redevelopment. Sometimes it starts with asking a simple question: "How can we make this better?"

Even the most practical city equipment can become a point of pride. Gainesville's redesigned dumpsters reflect both our visual identity and our pride in serving the public with care and intention. Since their debut, the dumpsters have been such a hit that residents outside of the downtown area have asked if they, too, can receive one, demonstrating how small, thoughtful changes can inspire civic pride. With strategic funding, artist collaboration, and clear communication, any city can take steps toward making public spaces more welcoming, memorable, and reflective of community values.

For us, it started with a dumpster. What could it be for your community? ★



## TEXAS FESTIVALS: Where Texas Comes to Celebrate

Texas is home to a vibrant mix of cultures, landscapes, and traditions, which is made more evident with its lively festival scene. From sipping wine to holiday celebrations, these delightful small-town traditions offer something for everyone. Whether you are drawn by food, art, music, or community, hometown festivals showcase the unique spirit and diversity that make Texas unlike any other place. Get ready to explore some of the most popular and distinctive festivals that bring communities together year-round.





**CITY OF BEDFORD:**  
BEDFORD BEATS AND EATS FESTIVAL  
August 30, 2025  
[www.bedfordtx.gov/beatsandeats](http://www.bedfordtx.gov/beatsandeats)  
Free admission

Bedford Beats and Eats Fest returns to Generations Park on August 30 from 2:00 to 11:00 p.m. with a killer lineup, including the Eli Young Band! Enjoy live performances, a kid's zone, food trucks, vendors, and free shuttles.

**CITY OF AZLE:** AZLE STING FLING  
September 13, 2025  
<https://www.azlestingfling.com/home>  
Free admission

Azle Sting Fling is the City's largest annual event, hosted by the Azle Area Chamber of Commerce. Thousands of visitors will enjoy a full day of affordable, wholesome family fun, shopping, food, and entertainment.



**CITY OF BURLESON:**  
BE HEALTHY BURLESON RUN  
September 20, 2025  
<https://runsignup.com/Race/Info/TX/Burleson/BeHealthyRun>

Join the City of Burleson's Be Healthy Initiative for the annual Be Healthy Burleson 5K, 10K, and Fun Walk in Old Town Burleson. This festival supports health, wellness, and safety and features vendors, chair massages, a Kid-Zone, and food trucks.







### **CITY OF GIDDINGS:** **GIDDINGS FIESTA**

September 20, 2025

<https://www.giddingsfiesta.org>

Free Admission

Giddings Fiesta, held on the third Saturday of September, is a free event that celebrates Hispanic culture through music, food, and fun. With live entertainment every hour, more than 60 vendors, and a colorful, festive atmosphere, there's something for all ages in Downtown Giddings.

### **CITY OF GREENVILLE:** **LEE STREET JAMBOREE**

September 20, 2025

<https://www.ci.greenville.tx.us/1290/Event-Lee-Street-Jamboree>

Free admission

The Lee Street Jamboree is an outdoor street party featuring vendors, food trucks, local restaurants and shops, and live music. Visitors can take part in the Cotton Patch Challenge Bike Race in the morning, then stick around for a night of great music in historic downtown Greenville. This year's headliner: Southall.





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**CITY OF KERMIT:**  
KERMIT CELEBRATION DAYS

September 21-22, 2025

<https://www.kermittx.gov/171/Kermit-Celebration-Days>

Free admission

Kermit Celebration Days is one of the largest free festivals in Texas! Held over two days, it features more than 125 vendors, live music, children's events, a softball tournament, and performances by Kin Faux, Conjunto Relincho, and Mini-Kiss.

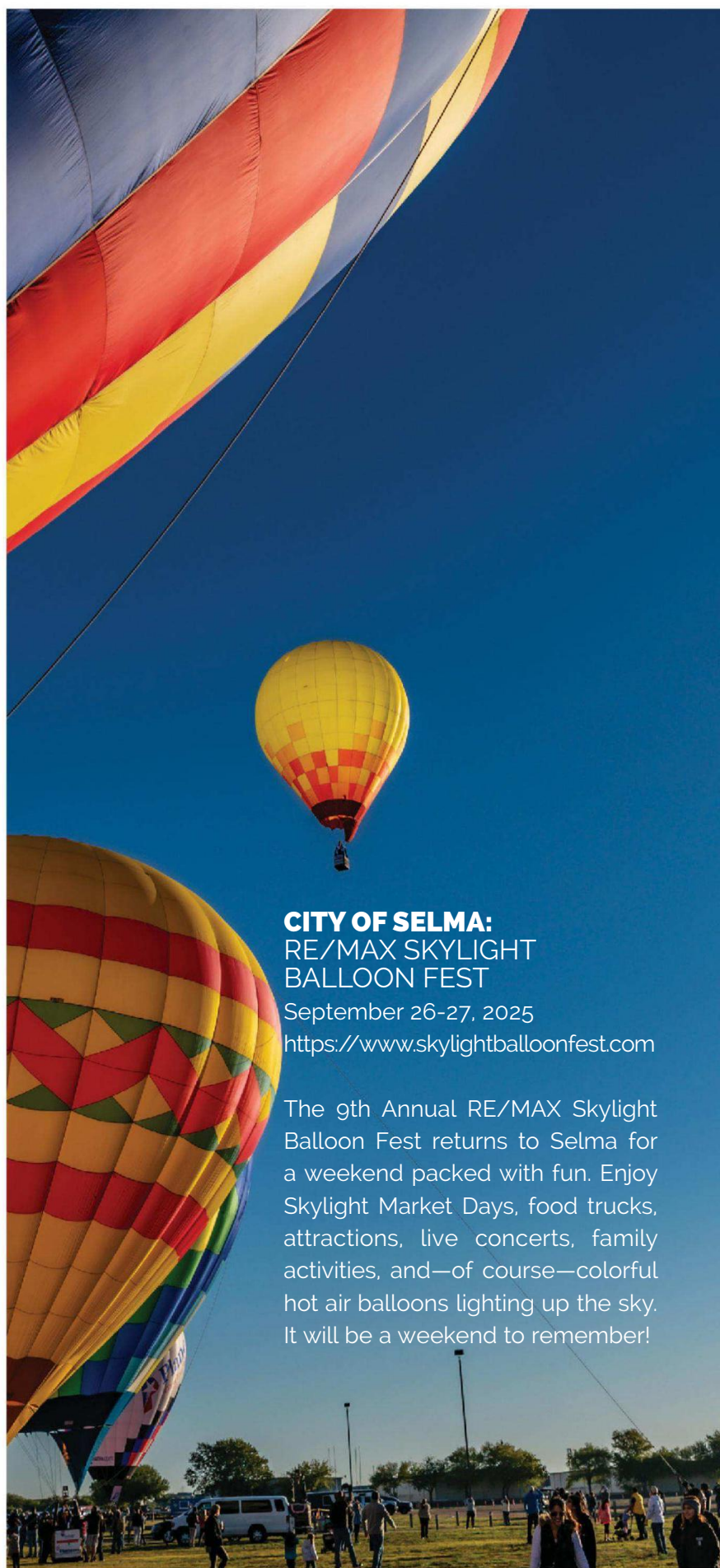
**CITY OF BELTON:**  
BELTON'S BACON, BLUES, AND BREWS FESTIVAL

September 26-27, 2025

254-721-3180

Free admission

Belton's two-day festival is a bacon lover's dream! The event features live music, adult beverages, and a bacon cook-off with local food trucks serving up creative bacon-inspired dishes. It's everything bacon, blues, and brews—all in one place.



**CITY OF SELMA:**  
RE/MAX SKYLIGHT BALLOON FEST

September 26-27, 2025

<https://www.skylightballoonfest.com>

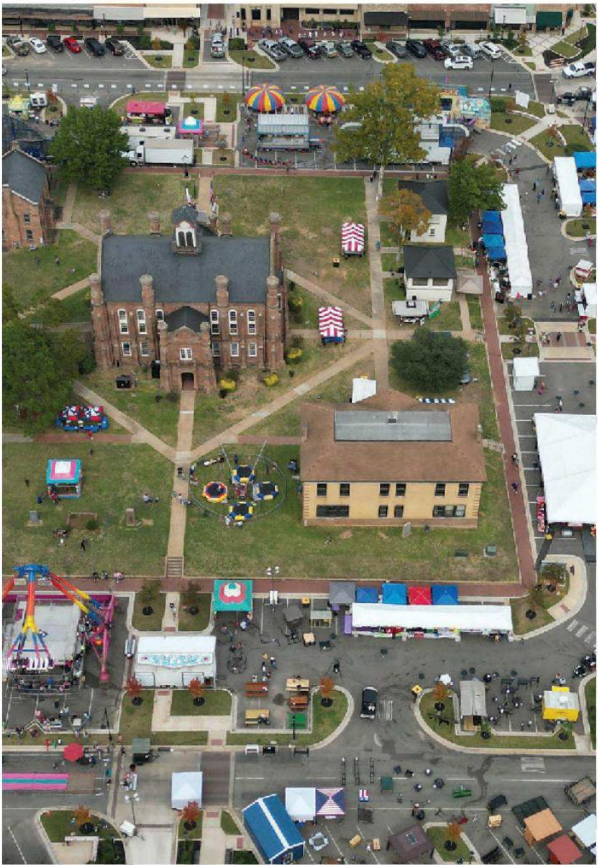
The 9th Annual RE/MAX Skylight Balloon Fest returns to Selma for a weekend packed with fun. Enjoy Skylight Market Days, food trucks, attractions, live concerts, family activities, and—of course—colorful hot air balloons lighting up the sky. It will be a weekend to remember!



**CITY OF CENTER:**  
EAST TEXAS POULTRY FESTIVAL

October 2-4, 2025  
936-598-3682

The three-day, family-friendly East Texas Poultry Festival features great food, live entertainment, local vendors, a creative arts show, musical guests, and a carnival. Saturday brings even more excitement with a 5K run, car show, hot wing eating contest, and chicken clucking contest



**CITY OF ROCKPORT:**  
ROCKPORT FULTON SEAFAIR

October 3-5, 2025  
361-729-6445

Rockport's Seafair celebrates 50 years with a weekend packed with activities. The event features gumbo, crab races, arts and crafts, food vendors, and market stalls – all held at the Rockport Festival Grounds.

**CITY OF ANNA:**  
ANNAFEST

October 4, 2025  
[annatexas.gov/AnnaFest](http://annatexas.gov/AnnaFest)  
Free admission

AnnaFest brings western flair to the heart of Texas. The event features western-themed games, armadillo races, live music, mouthwatering food, and photo ops with a live longhorn. Don't forget your boots and cowboy hat!

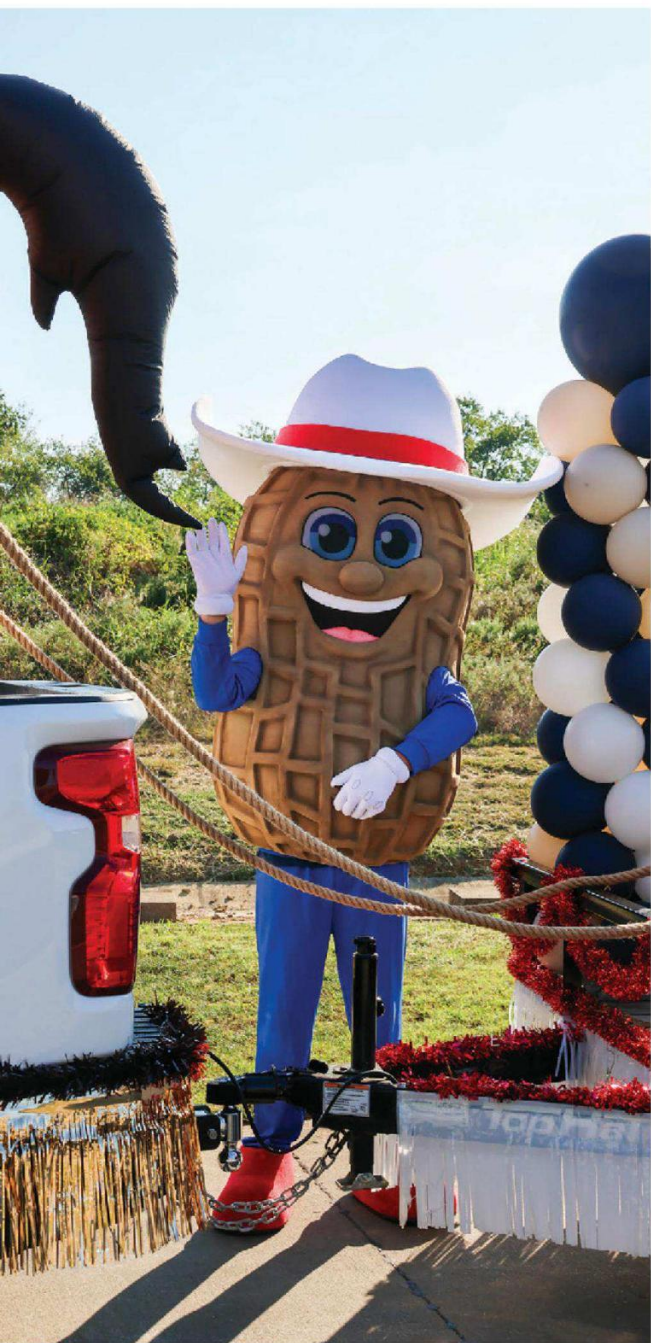




**CITY OF AUBREY:**  
AUBREY PEANUT FESTIVAL

October 4, 2025  
940-500-7877  
Free Admission

Aubrey's beloved Peanut Festival welcomes over 8,000 visitors each year. With a vibrant parade boasting more than 100 colorful entries, a free Kid Zone, live music, tons of vendors, and plenty of peanuts, the festival captures the heart and spirit of this close-knit community.



**CITY OF BURKBURNETT:**  
FRIENDSHIP FESTIVAL

October 4, 2024  
<https://tinyurl.com/ygth2jhb>  
Free Admission

Burkburnett's Friendship Festival brings the community together with great food, local vendors, and live music. The event celebrates local pride and the town's "You're Home Now" spirit. It continues to grow each year and will wrap up with a live concert starring country music artist Casey Donahew.

An advertisement for Core &amp; Main. The top half features a photograph of a white water truck with a blue water tank, parked in a lot. The truck is loaded with blue pipes. The Core &amp; Main logo is in the top left, and the website coreandmain.com is in the top right. The bottom half has a black background with the text "We're All About Texas" in a large, white, cursive font. Below this is a white map of Texas with yellow dots indicating locations. To the right of the map is the text "A Leading Specialized Distributor of Water, Wastewater and Storm Drainage Products, and Related Services". In the bottom right corner is a QR code with the Core &amp; Main logo and the text "SCAN ME" below it.



**CITY OF CLEBURNE:**  
CLEBURNE WINE AND ARTISAN FESTIVAL

October 4, 2025  
<https://www.cleburne.net/1610/Wine-and-Artisan-Festival>  
Free Admission

The Cleburne Wine and Artisan Festival takes place from Noon to 8:00 p.m. in Downtown Cleburne. Visitors can enjoy Texas wines, artisan vendors, and live music in a relaxed, cheerful atmosphere. Admission is free, with tasting packages and goods available for purchase.



**CITY OF EASTLAND:**  
RIPFEST

October 5, 2025  
<https://www.eastlandchamber.com/ripfest>  
Free Admission

The 45th Annual RipFest is packed with exciting activities, delicious food, unique vendors, and fun for the whole family. It's a beloved Eastland tradition that brings the community together each year.

**CITY OF NIEDERWALD:**  
NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

October 7, 2025  
Free admission

Niederwald's National Night Out offers a relaxed evening where neighbors come together with food, music, and family-friendly activities. It's a great opportunity to meet local law enforcement and strengthen community connections.

**CITY OF WHITE SETTLEMENT:**  
NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

October 7, 2025  
817-246-7070  
Free admission

White Settlement's award-winning National Night Out returns to Veterans Park for its fourth year. Families can meet local police officers, and enjoy bounce houses, military vehicles, Kona Ice, games, and a dazzling aerial drone show.





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## CITY OF PHARR: AVOCADO FESTIVAL

October 11, 2025

<https://avocadofest.com>

Free admission

The Avocado Festival celebrates Pharr's culture, agriculture, and role as the top United States' entry point for avocados. The event honors industry workers and highlights the Pharr International Bridge's impact through food, music, and family fun.



## CITY OF SEABROOK: CELEBRATION SEABROOK

October 11, 2025

<https://www.celebrationseabrook.com/> Free admission

Celebration Seabrook: Music and Art Festival brings coastal vibes to Rex L. Meador Park each October. Enjoy live music, a kid zone, a vendor market, food trucks, and a display of Seabrook's iconic six-foot-tall painted pelican sculptures.



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## CITY OF TOMBALL: SPOOKTACULAR

October 11, 2025

[https://tomballtx.gov/Calendar.aspx-](https://tomballtx.gov/Calendar.aspx-?EID=7144&month=10&year=2025&day=20&calType=0)

[?EID=7144&month=10&year=2025&day=20&calType=0](https://tomballtx.gov/Calendar.aspx-?EID=7144&month=10&year=2025&day=20&calType=0)

Free Admission

Put on your Halloween costumes and head to Tomball Depot Plaza for a Spooktacular 2nd Saturday celebration. The evening is packed with Ghostbusters-inspired games, bounce houses, face painting, crafts, local vendors, and spooky surprises. Admission and parking are free—bring chairs, blankets, and snacks for a night of family fun.







## CITY OF BRONTE: BRONTEOBERFEST

October 18, 2025

214-683-6154

Bronteoberfest is a full day of celebration on the third Saturday of October. This West Texas spin on Oktoberfest features live music, a BBQ cook-off, craft beer and wine, food trucks, and kids' zones. Proceeds will help revitalize the city.



## CITY OF DRIPPING SPRINGS: SONGWRITER'S FESTIVAL

October 17-19, 2025

[drippingspringssongwritersfestival.com](https://drippingspringssongwritersfestival.com)

Free Admission

Dripping Springs invites everyone to the heart of the beautiful Texas Hill Country to enjoy an exciting weekend of singer/songwriter showcases. This three-day music festival features a wide variety of amazing songs—and the talented people and stories behind them.

## CITY OF GRAPEVINE: 28TH ANNUAL BUTTERFLY FLUTTERBY

October 18, 2025

<https://www.grapevinetexasusa.com/events/annual-events-festivals/butterfly-flutterby>

Free Admission

The 28th Annual Butterfly Flutterby is a vibrant celebration of Monarch butterflies and their incredible migration journey from Canada to Mexico—passing right through Grapevine. This free, family-friendly event offers fun for all ages, including a butterfly release.



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## **CITY OF JOHNSON CITY:** JCTX JAZZ AND ART FESTIVAL

October 18, 2025

<https://www.johnsoncitytx.org/jazz>

Free admission

The JCTX Jazz and Art Festival takes place in the heart of Johnson City's historic Downtown District. Live jazz begins in the evening, with musicians performing under the gazebo. Visitors are encouraged to show up early and claim their favorite spot. Don't forget to bring a blanket or chair!

## **CITY OF SEGUIN:** PECAN FEST

October 25, 2025

<https://visitseguin.com/pecan-fest>

Free admission

Get ready to go nuts at Pecan Fest 2025! This lively, fun-filled day celebrates Seguin's pecan pride with shopping, history, a pub crawl, and—naturally—plenty of pecans.



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## **SAN MARCOS:** TEXAS CAPITAL AIR SHOW – SAN MARCOS

November 1-2, 2025

<https://texascapitalairshow.com>

The skies above San Marcos come alive with heart-pounding thrills and jaw-dropping aerial feats during the Texas Capital Air Show at the San Marcos Regional Airport. Visitors can catch performances from the USAF F-22 Raptor, US Navy F/A-18, C-17 Globemaster III, legacy warbirds, and a variety of aerobatic acts. The show runs from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., rain or shine.

## **CITY OF TERRELL:** BRITISH BASH

November 8, 2025

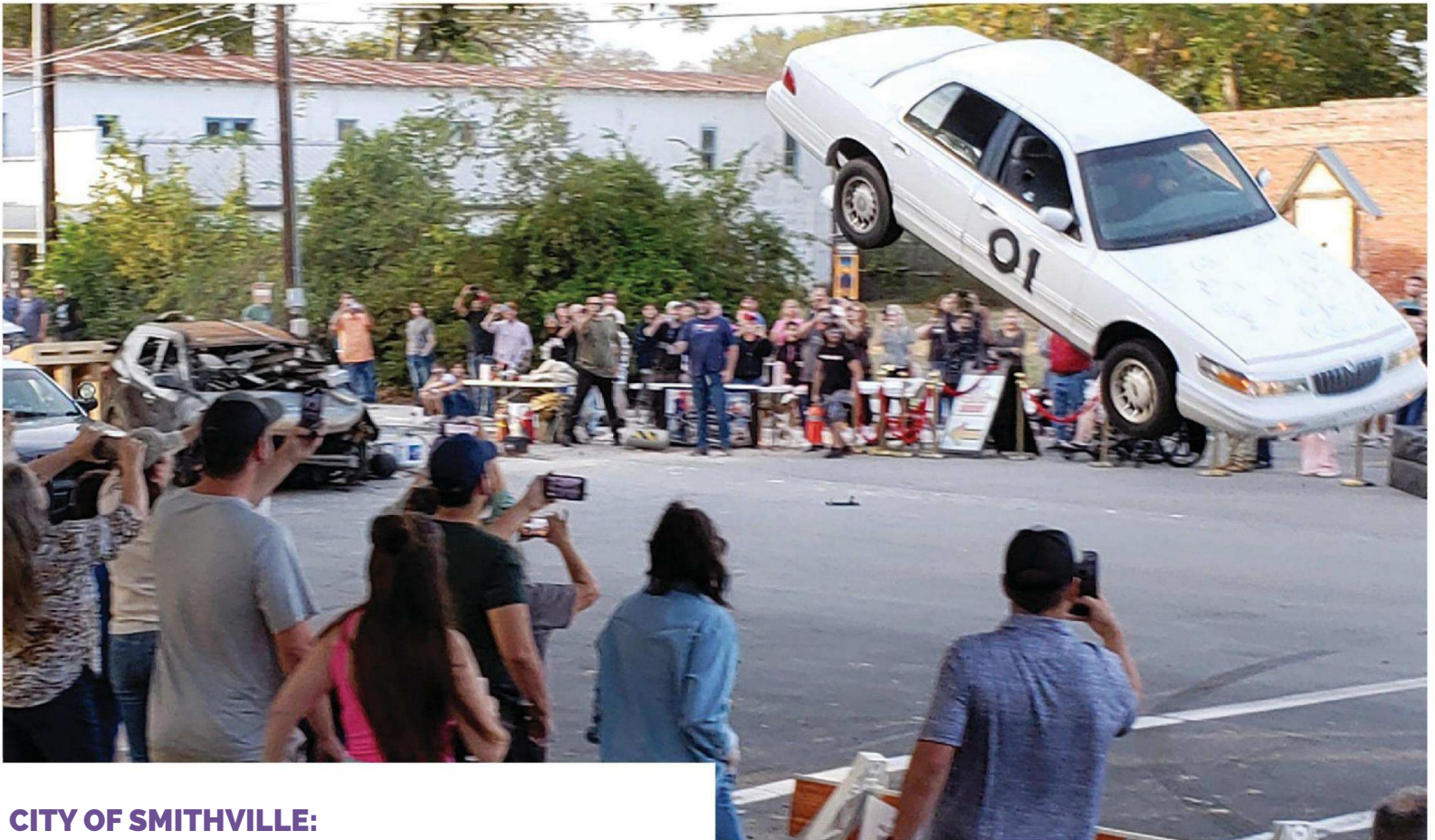
972-563-5703

Free admission

The British are coming! This fun celebration features live music, entertainment, shopping, food, adult beverages, and plenty of excitement. It's all about sharing Terrell's historic ties to the United Kingdom.







## CITY OF SMITHVILLE: REEL FILM EXPO

November 15-16, 2025  
512-237-2313  
Free admission

The Reel Film Expo brings movie magic to life with industry speakers, hands-on activities, a live stunt show, and exclusive vendors. Meet filmmakers, browse unique merchandise, and experience a family-friendly celebration of cinema.

## CITY OF LIBERTY: LIGHTS FOR LIBERTY

Each Tuesday from November 18 - December 16, 2025  
936-402-3565  
Free admission

Liberty lights up the season with 72,000 sparkling white lights surrounding City Hall. Visitors can play in the snow, take photos with Santa or the Grinch, shop artisan goods, sing carols, listen to live music, and enjoy sweet holiday treats.

## CITY OF CROCKETT: CHRISTMAS IN CROCKETT

November 22, 2025  
<https://crockettareachamber.org/christmas-in-crockett>  
Free admission

Kick off the holiday season in Historic Downtown Crockett. Shop over 250 vendors on the square, explore local shops, and enjoy a day packed with activities – including a car show, climbing wall, kids' train, and even visits from the Grinch.







### **CITY OF GAINESVILLE:** GAINESVILLE WINE AND COUNTRY FESTIVAL

November 22, 2025

[gainesville.tx.us/1160/Gainesville-Wine-Country-Festival](https://gainesville.tx.us/1160/Gainesville-Wine-Country-Festival)

Free Admission

Get ready to experience the heart and soul of Texas at the Gainesville Wine and Country Festival. Immerse yourself in the flavors of North Texas, enjoy local food and shopping, and listen to live music in a festive, welcoming atmosphere.

### **CITY OF KENNEDALE:** KENNEDALE HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS

November 29, 2025

817-985-2139

Free admission

The City of Kennedale invites you to celebrate the season at Kennedale Hometown Christmas. This free event features cookie decorating, an ugly sweater contest, letters to Santa, and plenty of festive fun for all ages.



### **CITY OF BELLAIRE: HOLIDAY IN THE PARK**

December 4, 2025

<https://www.bellairetx.gov/717/Holiday-in-the-Park>

Free Admission

Holiday in the Park is Bellaire's annual winter celebration. Town Square transforms into a festive wonderland with 40,000 pounds of snow, a petting zoo, local school choirs, and photos with Santa. Come celebrate the holiday with seasonal cheer.

### **CITY OF BELTON:** CHRISTMAS ON THE CHISHOLM TRAIL

December 5-6, 2025

[https://www.beltontexas.gov/departments/parks\\_and\\_recreation/events/index.php](https://www.beltontexas.gov/departments/parks_and_recreation/events/index.php)

Free admission

Experience a Hallmark-style Christmas in Belton. On Friday, enjoy a holiday movie and Christmas tree lighting. On Saturday, there's a free skating rink, a festive market, parade, food vendors, and Belton's cozy downtown charm.







### **CITY OF LEAGUE CITY** HOLIDAY IN THE PARK

December 6-7, 2025

Free admission

League City's Holiday in the Park is a beloved three-day holiday tradition filled with food, shopping, entertainment, and festive parades—including the Grand Night Parade, the largest holiday parade in Galveston County.

### **CITY OF RICHMOND:** MIRACLE ON MORTON STREET

December 6, 2025

<https://www.historicrichmondtx.org/miracle-on-morton>

Free admission

This free family-focused event kicks off the holiday season with a kidz zone, visits with Santa, letters to Santa (each one gets answered before Christmas), artisan vendors, food trucks, and live performances throughout the day.



### **CITY OF ROCKWALL:** ROCKWALL'S HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS

December 6, 2025

[https://www.rockwall.com/event\\_hometownchristmas.asp](https://www.rockwall.com/event_hometownchristmas.asp)

Free admission

Experience the magic of the season in Rockwall. The day begins with the Kiwanis Christmas Parade at 9:00 a.m., followed by festive downtown activities like inflatables, snow, train rides, treats, and photos with Santa. The day wraps up with a beautiful tree lighting.

### **CITY OF KARNES CITY:** FOUNDERS DAY CELEBRATION

December 13, 2025

830-780-3422

Free admission

The 10th Annual Founders Day Celebration kicks off with an 8:00 a.m. color run and keeps going all day with vendors, live entertainment, carnival rides, food trucks, dummy roping, snow, and fireworks. It's a full day of free fun at Karnes City Park! ★

Would you like your city festival listed here? We will publish spring and summer festivals in the March 2026 issue of *Texas Town & City*. You can submit your city's festival online now. For more information, please visit <https://tml.org/formcenter/business-development-4/festival-listing-form-46>.



# OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND IN THE STATE OF TEXAS

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**Bureau Veritas** is growing to meet the needs of our flourishing state as it continues to attract numerous high profile projects and benefits from sustained economic development.

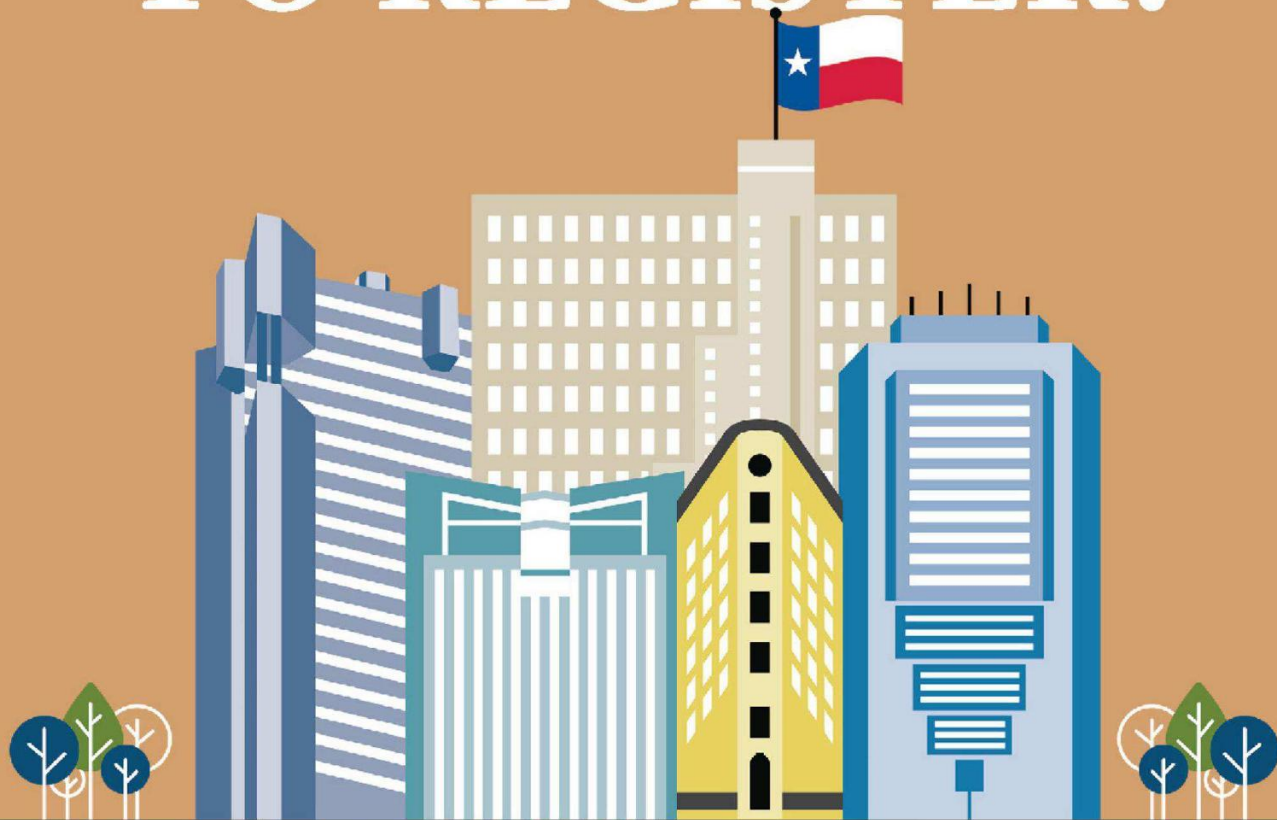
- Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (City of Dallas)
- Texas Instruments facility (City of Sherman)
- Google data center (City of Midlothian)
- SpaceX raptor engine facility (City of McGregor)
- Globe Life Field (City of Arlington)
- Amazon distribution and fulfillment centers (Houston and Waco)
- Zoo Midland (City of Midland)
- Global Wafer (City of Sherman)
- And more...



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# THERE'S STILL TIME TO REGISTER!



★ **TEXAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE** ★

**113th Annual Conference and Exhibition**  
October 29–31, 2025

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