

April
2010



CITY OF BURNET

Office of Economic Development

Bluebonnets = \$\$\$

While the official numbers have not come in yet, this year's Bluebonnet Festival, was by all accounts, as successful as the real flower was prolific.

Beautiful weather and a bumper crop brought thousands of visitors to Burnet. According to one vendor (who made it a point to ask folks where they were from), people came from all over the country just to see the Texas bluebonnets. They were not disappointed. Thanks to sufficient rains, most of the roadways around the hill county are lined with a myriad of wild flowers, strikingly beautiful in both color and abundance.

Nature tourism is big business and our own bluebonnets (and other wild flowers) serve to bring dollars to the community. Recent estimates are that for every visitor traveling less than 60 miles to a rural Texas community event, \$129 is spent on travel. Travel spending, for events where more than 60 miles are

driven, average \$326 per person (/pp). The farther the distance traveled, the more dollars spent. Visitors attending events in rural Texas are estimated on average to travel over 98 miles and spend an average of \$170 per visitor. Also taken into consideration is the type of event being held. Nature Tourism spending is an average of \$250/pp where a food and wine festival is about \$139/pp. Of course, without a detailed study of a particular event, it cannot be ascertained the actual economic impact but judging from the crowd at the Bluebonnet Festival, the city received a much needed infusion of travel dollars during the event.

A giant thank you to the **Burnet Chamber of Commerce** for the amazing job they do every year for the Bluebonnet Festival. This year was one of the best ever and it takes a tremendous amount of work to make it happen.

Tourism Networking in Texas

"Tourism is a mighty part of the Texas economy, generating more than \$60 billion in direct spending, \$2.9 billion in state revenue and employing more than 544,000 Texans in 2008." .. *Texas Rising—March/April 2010*

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOURISM:

Texas Heritage Trails Program
www.thc.state.tx.us/heritagetourism/htprogram.shtml

Great Texas Wildlife Trails
www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildlife_trails

Central Texas Bluebonnet Travel Council
www.texasbluebonnets.org

Heart of Texas B&B Association
www.bbonline.com/tx/heartoftexas/members

html

Hill Country Economic Development Council
www.lakesandhills.com

Lower Colorado River Authority
<http://www.lcra.org/parks/index.html>

Texas Hill Country Visitor Center
www.hillcountryinfo.com

Texas Travel Industry Association
www.ttia.org

Commercial Development

The City of Burnet Building Official's Department recently reported that for fiscal year-to-date (2009-2010) a total of new commercial development permits is just under \$1m, a fraction of last fiscal year. However, a closer look tells a brighter story.

In 2008-2009, new commercial permit valuations totaled \$5.1m but that included \$4.8m for the Hill Country Fellowship Church on Highway 281 South. Excluding the church, 2009-2010 has shown a healthy increase. Even so, the last two years have not compared well to the three years prior when the city was experiencing commercial development in the three to four million per year range.

Texas is fairing about as well as the rest of the country when it comes to commercial real estate, reported Bruce Wright, in an article written for "Texas Rising" (a publication of the State Comptroller's office.) Wright interviewed Chief Economist, Mark Dotzour, who noted that the market for commercial buildings is hurting every bit as much as the residential real estate market across the country. Dotzour believes that as long as oil stays higher than \$60 and gas stays higher than four or five dollars, that Texas will rebound quicker than the rest of the country. He notes that, "The fundamentals of commercial real estate in Texas are pretty good."

As far as Burnet is concerned, there are developments planned (Paceline Auto Body, expansion of other existing industry and health related buildings) that have not applied for building permits yet. Timing may be the issue as to how well the fiscal year numbers end up.

News

Business

Hacienda El Charro, a Mexican food restaurant has opened at 306 S. Water Street (in the old Stonewalls building.) Go by and welcome them to Burnet.

D.J.'s Trading Post has opened downtown at 310 South Main Street. They offer antiques and collectibles. Take a moment and go by to say hello and check out their selection

of merchandise.

Unfortunately, American Cowgirl on the square has closed business after a very short run.

The Maxican will be moving to their new location at 3401 S. Water but a specific date has not been announced.

Sales Tax

Sales taxes for March (collected in January and paid to the city in February)

CONTACT INFORMATION

- **American Bus Association**—
www.buses.org
- **LCRA** – Community and Economic Development office, 800-776-5272,
www.lcra.org/community/develop.html
- **Texas Economic Development Council** – 512.480.8432,
www.texasedc.org/
- **Texas Economic Development and Tourism** – Office of the Governor, 800-843-5789,
www.governor.state.tx.us/ecodevo
- **Texas Hill Country Economic Development Council** – 830.798.8118,
www.hillcountryedc.com
- **Texas Online** - 877.452.9060,
www.state.tx.us/
- **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department** – 800.792.1112,
www.tpwd.state.tx.us
- **Go Texan** – Texas Department of Agriculture, email gotexan@tda.state.tx.us
www.gotexan.org
- **Travel Texas** -512/486-5876,
www.traveltex.com/
- **US Chamber of Commerce** - 800-638-6582, www.uschamber.com
- **SCORE**—512.928.2425,
www.scoreaustin.org
- **ACCION**—866.312.3771,
www.acciontexas.org

were \$106,901 as compared to \$104,329 for the same period last year and \$153,025 for last month. As predicted, March dropped from February. Fiscal year to date sales taxes are about even with last year.

Building Permits

In March, three new residential permits were issued with a valuation of \$505,200 and six residential remodel permits were issued with a total of \$68,650. This is compared to \$348,790 in new residential permits in March of 2009. There were also two commercial remodels for a total valuation of \$9,925 as compared to zero last year.