

Brenham | Washington County

Economic Development

Quarterly Newsletter

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I feel the need for speed.

There aren't too many topics you can bring up that cause so much angst as the topic of broadband and internet speed. At conferences, we all end up comparing upload and download speed with our fellow communities and wondering why there's such a vast difference. How much is enough?

According to the Texas Broadband Development Office¹, if you're doing a lot of things on multiple devices simultaneously (gaming, downloading files, streaming video, video calling, streaming music, checking e-mail and searching the internet), you need at least 500—1,000+ Mbps. The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) benchmark for high-speed internet is at least 25 Mbps for downloads and 3 Mbps for uploads.



What does it all mean?

Let's get some terms out of the way. When speaking of broadband, we mean always-on, high-speed internet access usually delivered by fiber, but it can also be delivered wirelessly.



TEXAS BROADBAND
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Just like water and electricity, we often speak of broadband as a vital part of modern life—especially after the pandemic.

Why such a hot issue?

Some inventions start out as luxury items for the very rich, like those that had the first radio or telephone. Over time, the price comes down and more can afford it. Then it turns into oxygen—we must have it in order to enjoy an even and fair playing field in terms of jobs, technological opportunities and education.

Experts have warned that the digital divide (those that have access and those that do not) is deep and lawmakers are working on combatting barriers to broadband access by passing legislation to make broadband more accessible to Texans.

House Bill 5, established the Texas Broadband Development Office¹ (Housed in the

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¹ More info at Comptroller.Texas.gov/programs/broadband

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Texas Comptroller’s Office) and one of their many goals is to establish a long-term, statewide plan that addresses strategies for expanding access to and further adoption of broadband service. Offering grants to internet service providers (ISPs) is part of the plan, so that explains the increase in ISP’s entering the market. Once these grant funds are awarded, they have a finite amount of time to get fiber in the ground or on a pole.

How does this affect you and your business?

Businesses already talk about their desire for more speed and reliability when it comes to broadband. Whether you have a highly technical business or you have a retail store—internet is vital for payment processing, accessing customer data or online sales. Glenn Hegar, Texas Comptroller, conducted a Broadband Listening Tour which included a survey of Texans asking them to share their broadband experience. They received over 16,000 responses—results are below.

Texas Broadband Plan

If you are interested in the plan, you can find it at the Comptroller’s website at:
Comptroller.Texas.gov/programs/broadband.



Do you have fast and reliable internet broadband service at your Washington County business?

Scan the QR code below to respond



Of the 16,241 public survey respondents:



have a wired internet connection at home.



reported a lack of high-speed broadband at their residence.



reported that their internet connection is not affordable.

Of the 47 elected official survey respondents:



ranked access as the top priority for their community.

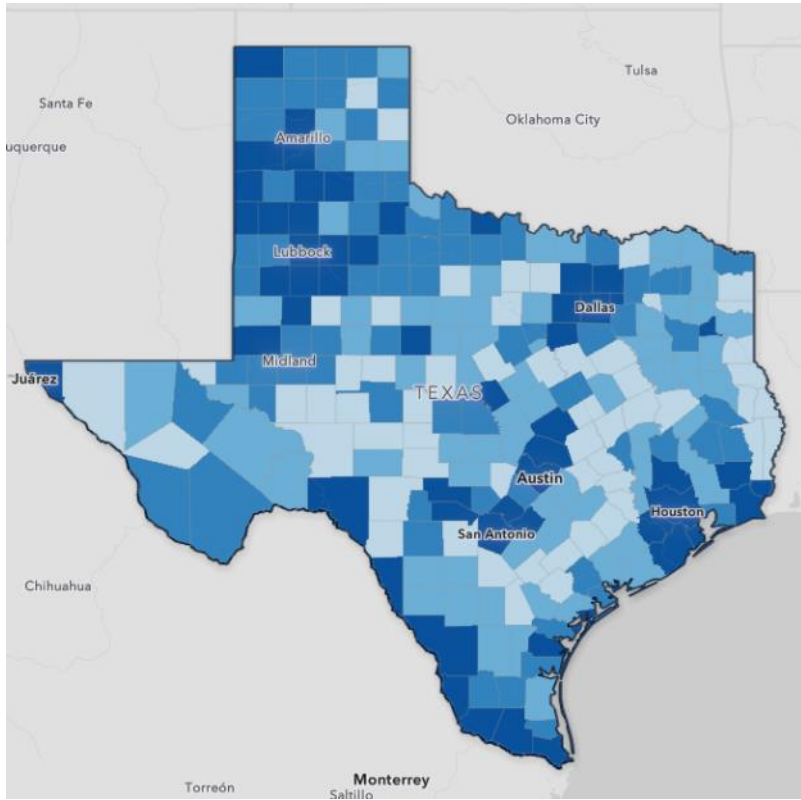


have a broadband plan in place or are currently developing one.

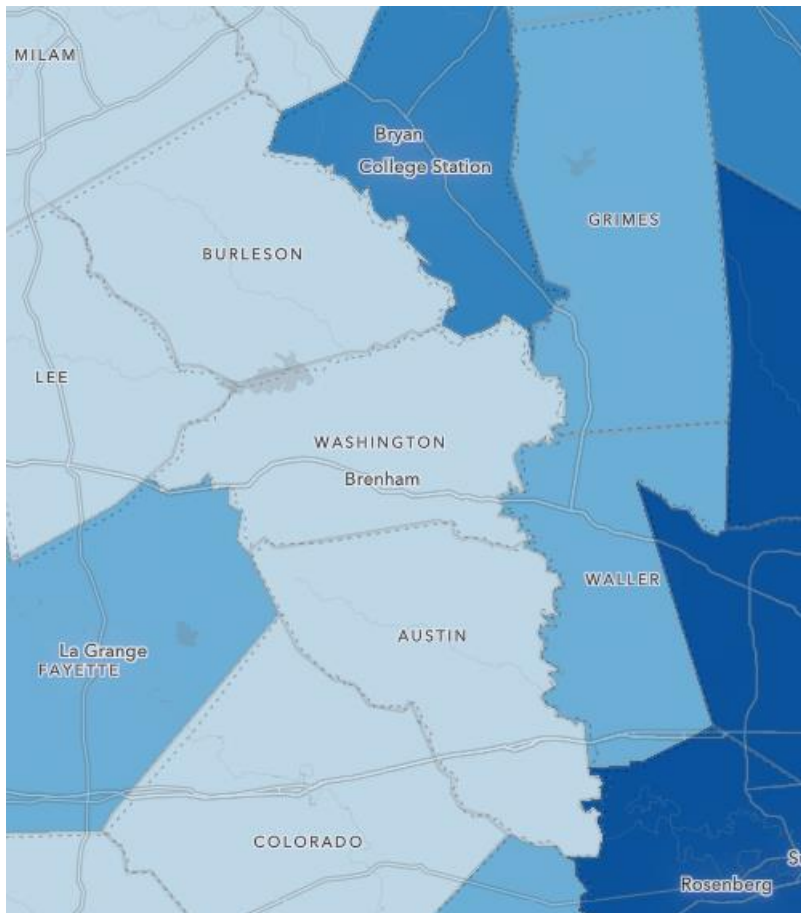
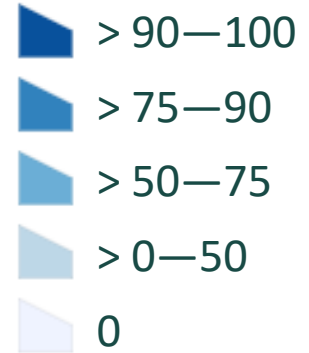


reported that they have the financial resources necessary to meet their community’s broadband needs.

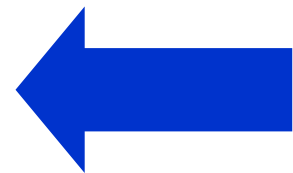
Texas Broadband Development Map



Counties Served Percent Served



Zooming in on Washington and surrounding Counties



Map taken from
[Comptroller.Texas.gov/
programs/broadband](http://Comptroller.Texas.gov/programs/broadband)

Project Kuiper—Amazon’s Answer to the Broadband Mix

Gerard Kuiper is considered to be the father of modern planetary science. The Kuiper Belt, a region of the solar system that exists beyond the eight major planets, is named after him.

Project Kuiper is a new initiative for Amazon to provide fast, affordable broadband to communities around the world that are currently unserved or underserved by traditional internet and communications options.

They plan to launch 3,232 satellites into space into Low Earth Orbit (LEO) - which means they will be placed from 367—392 miles above the earth. This initial satellite constellation design will group these similar satellites to work together with tightly coordinated movements, which will provide reliable broadband coverage. This close proximity to earth’s surface means they can deliver fast connectivity.

The project started in 2018 with research and development, and the U.S. FCC granted a license to Amazon in 2020. They’ve already launched proto-

type satellites with 100% success and expect to begin deploying in early 2025. Commercial service to customers will roll out later in the year.

Pricing has yet to be determined, but Amazon says that affordability is a key principle of Project Kuiper. In terms of speed, they expect their ultra-compact model to provide speeds of up to 100 Mbps, the standard model to deliver up to 400 Mbps and their largest model to deliver up to 1 Gbps.



The Small Business Development Center helps small businesses start, grow and succeed. If you need advice, schedule a business advising session with the local Blinn College SBDC here in Brenham by calling (979) 830-4137 or sending an email to sbdc@blinn.edu.

SBDC also offers training in person and via webinars for convenience. Some upcoming webinar topics include:

- ◆ Texas Sales and Use Tax
- ◆ Using YouTube to Grow Your Business
- ◆ 3 Ways to Start a Business
- ◆ How To Expand Your Restaurant Business
- ◆ How to Start a Business Without Any Money
- ◆ Grants for Small Business...and much more!

Visit SBDC.UH.EDU for more info.


New and Updated Demographic Data

It's sometimes hard to gauge Quality of Life. However, this is an important aspect of our community that attracts employers and job seekers.

Having detailed information about education, income, housing, workforce, the number of parks we have, the weather, etc. is something that prospects will look at before even picking up the phone to call.

We've recently updated all of the demographic data on the website so it's all available to anyone interested—even current Washington County firms and citizens.

Go to BrenhamED.com and scroll through some of the tabs to find out interesting data about Brenham and Washington County.



The small town that's ready to be your home town.

Learn more about our

- Cost of Living**
Affordable housing, low taxes, and charming small-town atmosphere
- Location**
Near Houston airports; Charming towns like Chappell Hill nearby
- Climate**
Warm summers, mild winters, perfect for outdoor activities year-round
- Diversity**
Brenham boasts a vibrant mix of cultures and traditions
- Schools**
Schools with strong community ties and vibrant extracurricular programs
- Colleges**
Diverse programs close to major Houston and Austin markets
- Outdoors**
Diverse landscapes, beautiful parks, and famous bluebonnet fields in spring

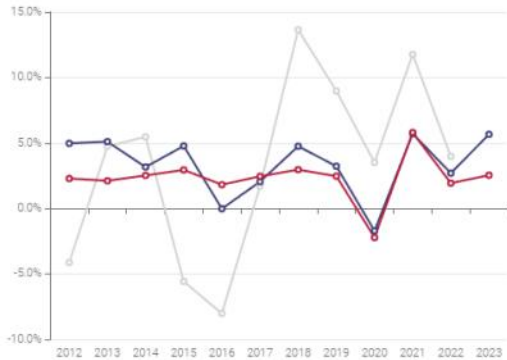
- Economic
- Resident
- Household
- Dwelling
- Construction
- Workforce
- Livability

\$62.1K

19,142

\$52,664

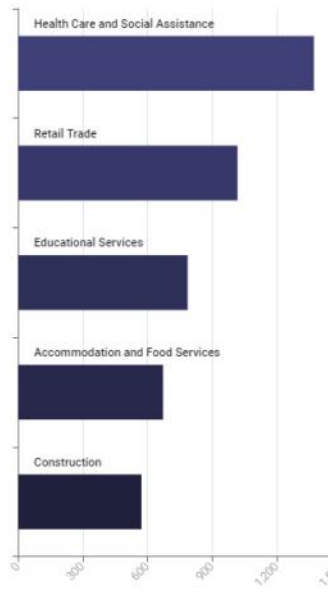
Real GDP - Annual Growth



Unemployment Rate
4.4%

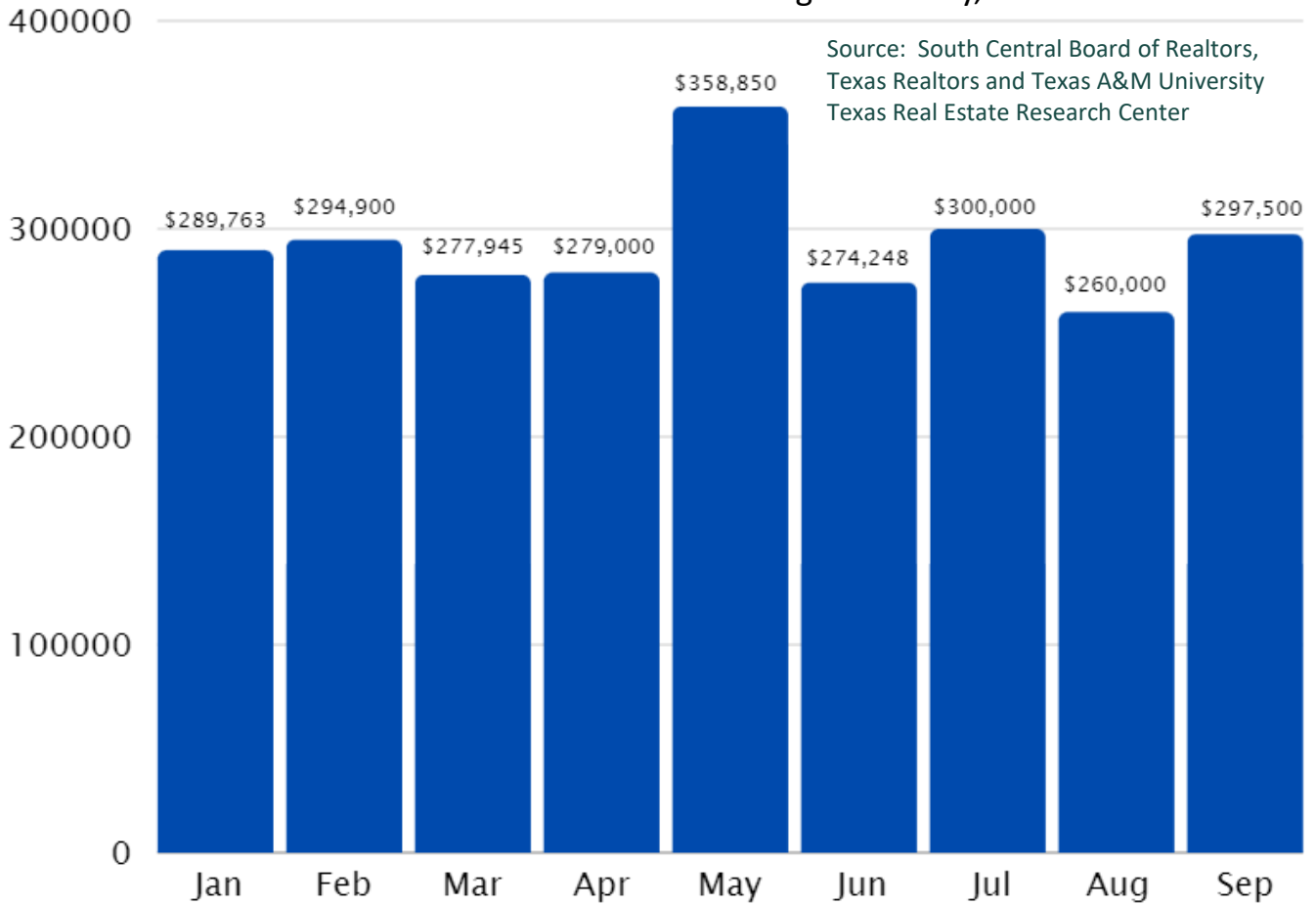
Total Employment
16.0K

Total Establishments
1.01K

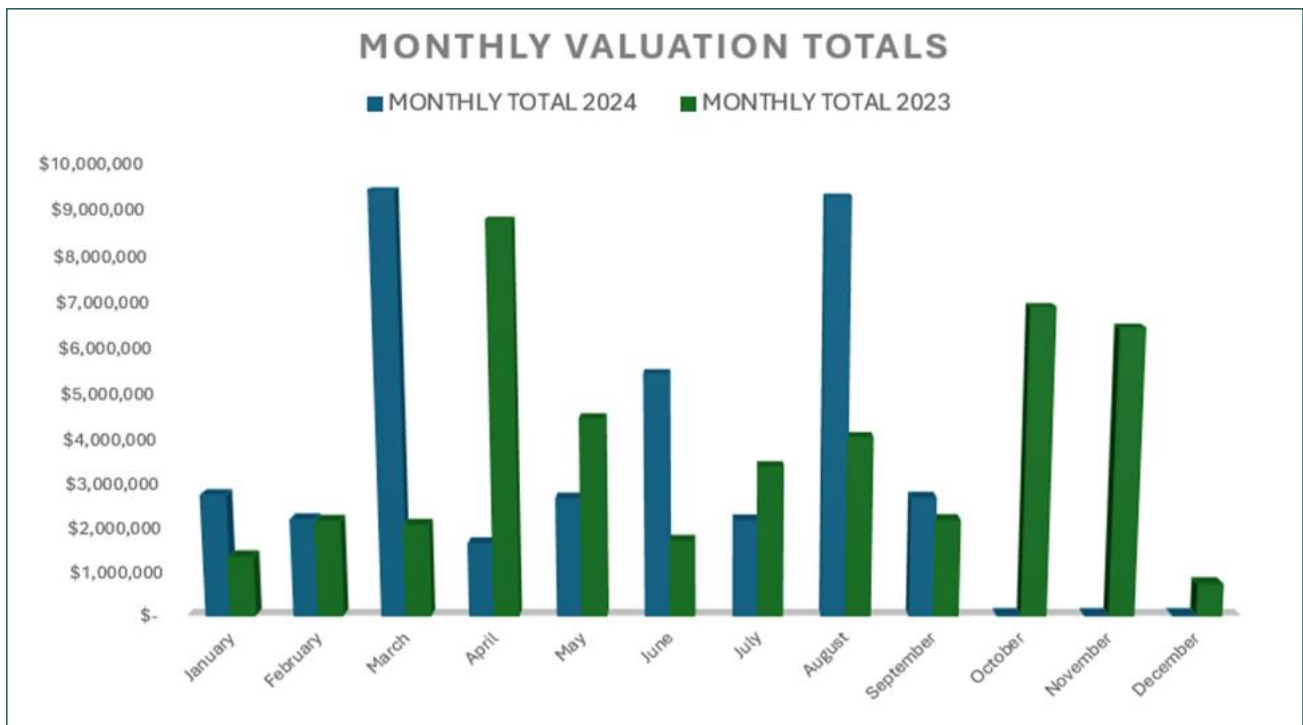


Washington County Housing Snapshot

2024 Median Home Prices in Washington County, Texas



Monthly Building Permit Data—City of Brenham, Tx



Toastmasters Club Forming in Brenham

Toastmasters allows you to engage with people who share similar interests with you in a supportive and comfortable setting.

INVEST IN YOURSELF!

- ◆ Improve your public speaking skills
- ◆ Build leadership skills
- ◆ Gain self-confidence and self-awareness
- ◆ Work on networking in a small and supportive environment
- ◆ Practice writing speeches and presenting in a group setting
- ◆ Gain a competitive advantage in the workplace

TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE

A new Brenham, Tx group is being created!
We meet every Monday at Brenham Police
Dept Community Room, 1800 Longwood Drive
Stop by! We meet 5:30 - 6:30 pm
Questions? Text 936-727-8820
For more information about Toastmasters,
go to www.Toastmasters.org

Economic Development Partner



Chappell Hill Chamber of Commerce Unveils New Visitors Center & Office

We are excited in the community of Chappell Hill to announce that as of August 1 – our community now has a Visitors Center & Chamber Office. It is located across the street from Bever’s Kitchen at 5145 Main Street and will be open from 11AM to 3PM on Friday & Saturdays and as needed for local events. This will serve as an information center for visitors to the community, chamber office, and meeting space for chamber members.

Chappell Hill is a destination for many tour-

ist groups and organizations throughout Texas and this new venue will allow for increased scheduled tours, a venue for tourist to gather information about businesses in Chappell Hill and of course, learn more about all the upcoming events.

Be sure to stop by next time you are in town and if you need a place to meet while in Chappell Hill, reach out to the chamber by calling 979-337-9910.

To learn more about the Chappell Hill Chamber of Commerce visit www.chappellhilltx.com



Joel Romo
President

Economic Development Partner (Continued)



As the President & CEO of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, I want to emphasize the critical importance of expanding broadband access in our region. In today’s digital age, reliable, high-speed internet is no longer a luxury—it is a necessity for businesses, schools, healthcare, and everyday life. Unfortunately, many areas in our county still lack adequate connectivity, hindering opportunities for growth and development.

Our Chamber has heard from local businesses, educators, and residents about the challenges they face due to limited broadband access. From students struggling with online learning to small businesses unable to fully participate in the digital

economy, the impact is significant.

This upcoming legislative session, we have added this as a top priority for our community. We will advocate for investment in broadband infrastructure by working closely with local officials, internet service providers, and state agencies. Expanding access will foster economic growth, improve educational outcomes, and enhance healthcare services through telemedicine.

We urge community leaders and residents to join us in supporting these efforts. Together, we can ensure Washington County remains a vibrant, connected community where everyone has the tools to succeed.

Jamie Rankin
Jamie Rankin
President & CEO



www.BrenhamED.com



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[Brenham-Washington County](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Brenham-Washington-County)

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