

# Brenham | Washington County

## Economic Development

Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 3

Summer, 2025

### The Secret Worth Sharing—Burton's Newest Non-Profit is Set To Share It

Tucked along quiet roads just off the beaten path, there's a town most people aren't aware of as they pass by on Hwy 290. Burton, with its rural charm and history, has long been one of Texas's best-kept secrets. Once discovered, this little town leaves people wanting to explore more.

This secret is soon to be out with Burton's newest non-profit: **Destination Burton Association**, a freshly minted nonprofit with a simple but powerful mission — to share the magic of Burton with the world.



Bryan would've needed to spend an extra \$5,500 just to keep their economy humming. That's the power of tourism.

And the state is paying attention. Governor Greg Abbott has launched the *Tourism Friendly Texas Certified Community* program — an initiative that gives towns across Texas the tools and recognition they need to grow through tourism. He has already recognized Brenham for its efforts, calling it a model for local economic development.

#### CREATING EXPERIENCES

The idea behind Destination Burton is more than just promoting a place. It's about creating experiences, building partnerships, and generating economic growth by inviting others into what locals already know — this town is something special.

Tourism isn't just a passing trend. It's a lifeline that fuels small towns across the state. Just look at our neighbors.

In 2024, *Destination Bryan* welcomed a staggering 4.8 million visitors. Without that influx of travelers, each household in

As Jennifer Eckermann, former director of Visit Brenham, once said: "Tourism is economic development."

#### THE BEAUTY OF BEING DISCOVERED

But here's the part that really makes hearts beat faster: people aren't just traveling anymore — they're *seeking*. They're hungry for stories, simplicity, and soul. They crave authentic experiences that reconnect them with nature, heritage, and hands-on creativity. That's where Burton shines.

Whether it's exploring the historic Texas Cotton Gin Museum — home to the oldest operating cotton gin in America — or strolling through a guided *Soundwalk* that whispers stories of Burton's past, visitors are invited to slow down and step into a living history.

Nearby gems like **Deeply Rooted Ranch** and **Milk and Honey Ranch** offer guests the opportunity to roll up their sleeves and reconnect with the land, animals, and traditions that define rural Texas life. This is **experiential tourism**, and Burton is with local businesses, short-term rentals, and nearby attractions to turn Burton into more than a stop — but a true experience.

Social media campaigns and a future website will help tell the story. Grants and state programs will help fund it.



*Photo credits: Natalie Lange (all images)*

But it all begins with a shared belief: Burton is ready to open its doors a little wider. Because when a tourist pays sales tax, it means Burton profits — without asking more of the people who already call it home.

And maybe, just maybe, the best-kept secret in Texas won't be a secret for much longer.

*By Tiffany Eckhardt*



## Entrepreneur Ecosystem

### STARTING A BUSINESS IS GETTING EASIER IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

Economic Development exists because of businesses, and growing them in our community today has never been a more perfect time. We've assembled community leaders who want to create an Entrepreneur Ecosystem.

information.

The Washington County Business Roundtable is a new group of businesses who gather and share challenges and successes. It's a FREE quarterly meeting where all businesses are invited and co-hosted by the Washington County Chamber of Commerce and Brenham | Washington County Economic Development.

#### STAY TUNED!!!

A meeting was held with Blinn College recently about the need for local entrepreneurial training. Based on this, they've indicated a desire to resurrect a program offering an Entrepreneur Certificate. Let's look for this some time in the fall.

Finally, we have a business owner who wants to create a networking group called The Breakfast Club. This group, which would be made up of 1 representative from different industries, would meet weekly for breakfast. Each member would have an opportunity to talk about their business in detail and ask for referrals from their fellow group members. It's a great networking concept, but you have to commit to showing up.

If you are interested in finding out more about the elements of the Entrepreneur Ecosystem in Washington County, please contact

**Teresa Rosales**  
**[trosales@cityofbrenham.org](mailto:trosales@cityofbrenham.org)**  
**or sign up for the**  
**quarterly Newsletter at**  
**[BrenhamED.com](http://BrenhamED.com)**

**One Million Cups** is a weekly meeting of the minds for entrepreneurs who have been in business 5 years or less. We expect the group to begin meeting in late August or early September and it's FREE. Find out more at: **[OneMillionCups.com](http://OneMillionCups.com)**.

A Small Business Development Center office is located right here in Brenham, Texas. They are tasked with offering FREE business counseling and training opportunities. This is perfect for those who prefer one-on-one

### Entrepreneur Ecosystem



# Work Experience Programs

## Work Experience

Work Experience was created as part of Workforce Solutions commitment to building a strong, stable, and well-trained workforce while addressing the labor challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our Work Experience Program is a year-round program for job seekers trying to get back into the workforce. Its purpose is to provide valuable and meaningful experiences to trainees in order to help prepare them to obtain permanent employment. We do this by collaborating with local businesses, like yours, who are willing to mentor and train local candidates. Employers who agree to partner with Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley are asked to host an employee for eight weeks. Workforce will underwrite the cost of this training program enabling businesses and candidates to focus on achieving training proficiently without financial concerns for either party. In other words, we will pay all the wages for eight weeks and carry a liability insurance on each participant.



A proud partner of the  
**AmericanJobCenter**<sup>®</sup>  
network

## On the Job Training (OJT)

On the Job Training offers participants an opportunity to earn as they learn, while employers benefit from a partial wage reimbursement during the training period. OJT focuses on jobs that involve new technologies, production, service, or additional skills for full-time positions (30 hours per week is considered full-time) paying at least \$14.00 per hour or more. Advantages to the employer include:

- No cost access to a carefully screened pool of available talent
- You set the qualifications, interview, and select the individual

- Customized training your way, at your workplace
- Receive up to a 75% reimbursement of the new employee's wage, up to \$21.00 per hours, while they are training (up to 1040 hours and based upon targeted occupation)
- Simple process with minimal paperwork

We partner with employers in various industries and locations throughout the 7-county region and offer a team of specialized recruiters to help match skill sets and positions.

OJT is only available for new employees, and training information must be established prior to the start date, so don't delay, and contact us before you hire!

## SEAL Program

Our Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) Program was created as part of the Workforce Solutions commitment to build a support system for students with disabilities. Our purpose is to provide our SEAL participants with meaningful work-based experiences that will develop them into strong workforce candidates in the future. We also provide participants with eight hours of Job Readiness training prior to their start date of the five-week summer program. Vocational Rehabilitation will ensure participants have any devices or job coaches needed to achieve job skills proficiency. Workforce will underwrite the cost of this training program enabling businesses and candidates to focus on achieving training. We will pay all the wages and cover the liability insurance on each participant.

## Workfare

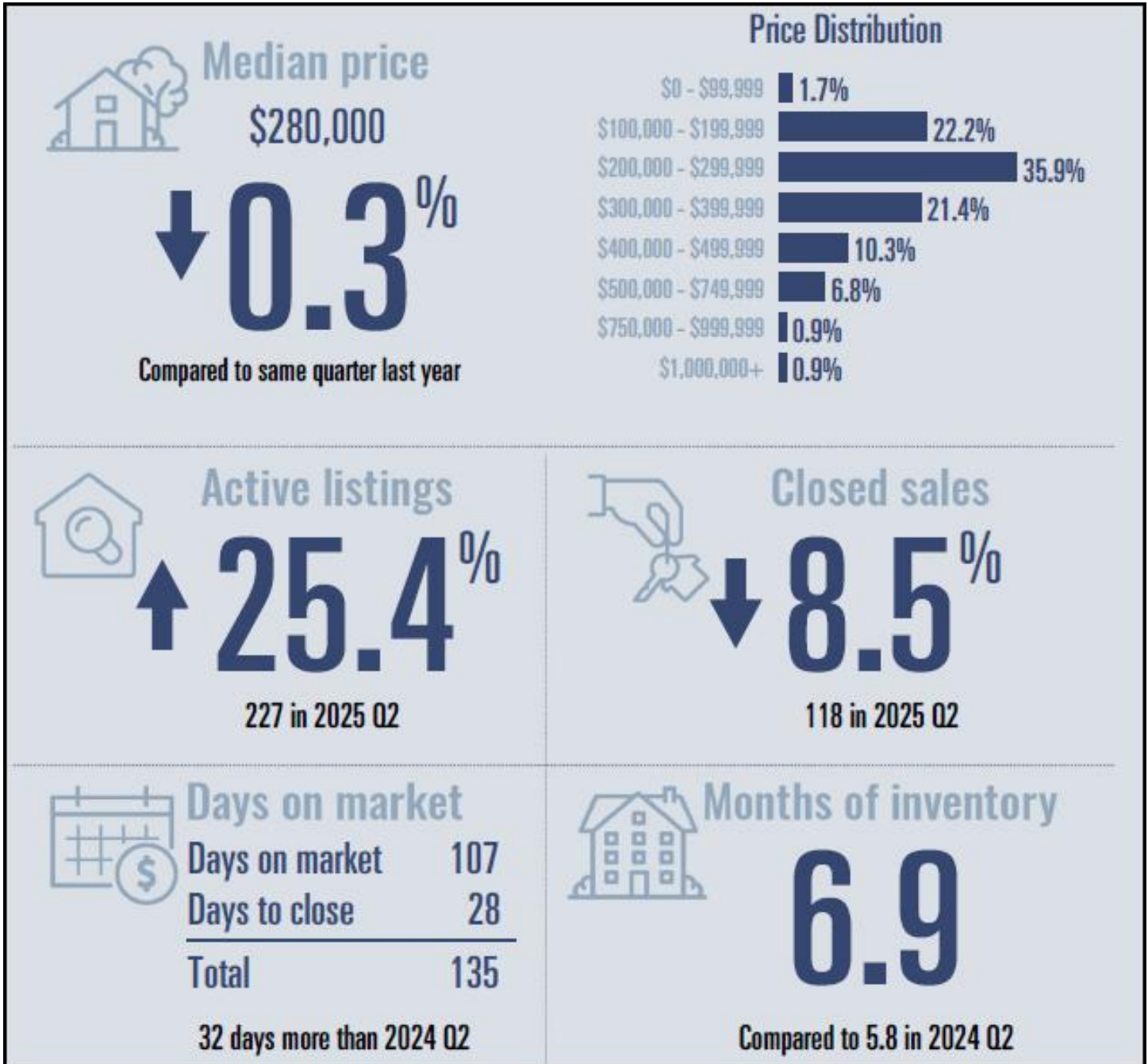
A work-based activity that consists of placement of job seekers with a public or private nonprofit entity in an unpaid job assignment.

When the programs end the business can hire each candidate(s) they train. Our long-term goal is to assist all candidates in obtaining permanent job placement with a company that can utilize their skills while allowing them to meet or exceed their personal goals.

### ***For more information:***

Patricia Lindblom | (979) 595-2801 Ext 2107  
<https://www.twc.texas.gov/find-locations/workforce-solutions-brazos-valley-3>

## 2025 2nd Qtr Housing Update—Washington County



Source: South Central Board of Realtors, Texas Realtors and Texas A&M University Texas Real Estate Research Center



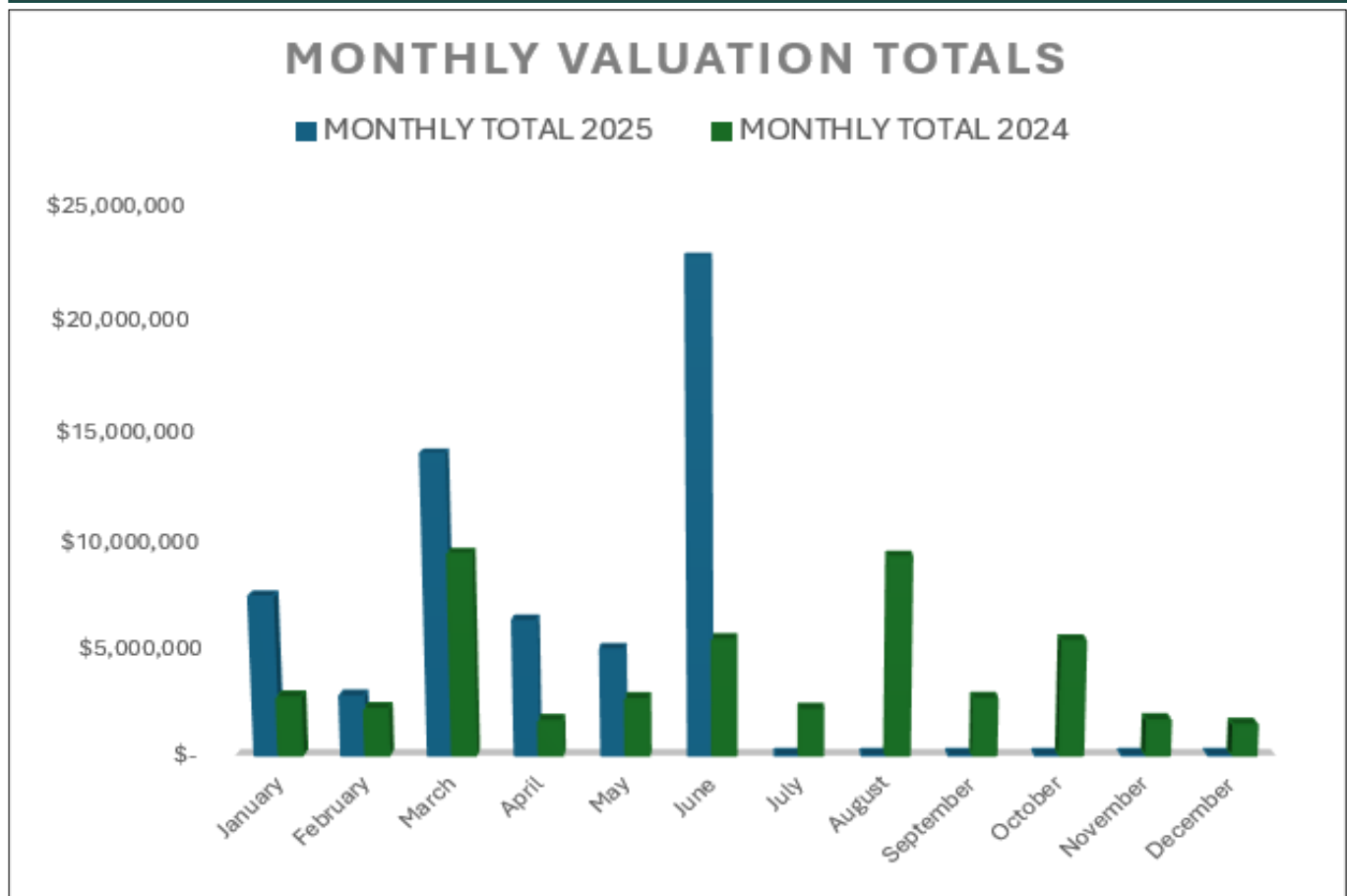
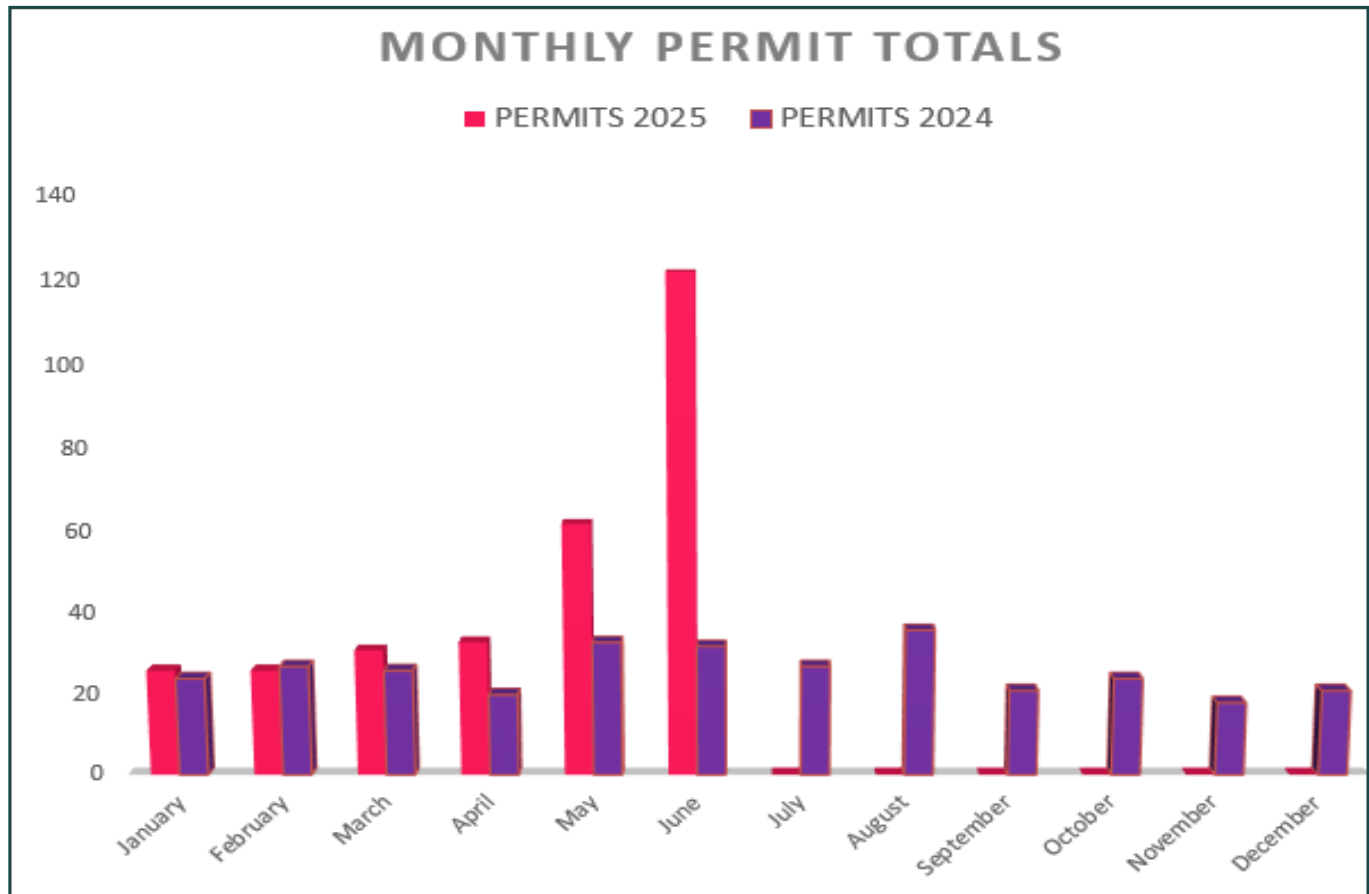
### 2025 COUNTY AKA Filings

All owners of businesses in Washington County must file an Assumed Name Form (or DBA—Doing Business As).

1st Qtr	January	23
	February	19
	March	20
<b>62</b>		

2nd Qtr	April	18
	May	11
	June	12
<b>41</b>		

## 2025 Building Permit Data—City of Brenham, Tx





# TEXAS TOUTS

MAY 2025

TOP TEXAS TOUTS: Economy



- At an estimated \$2.7 trillion, the Texas economy is eighth largest compared to the nations of the world, larger than Russia, Canada, Italy, and more
- Texas is home to 52 Fortune 500 HQs, 1 in 10 of all publicly traded companies in the U.S., and more than 3.3 million startups and small businesses
- Best State for Business: 21 years
- Best Business Climate in the U.S.
- Governor's Cup winner 13 years in a row for the most business location/expansion projects
- 2025 Prosperity Cup winner as top state for attracting business investments
- Texas produces more than 9% of U.S. GDP and 22% of all U.S. exports
- Top exporting state 23 years in a row; top semiconductor exporting state 14 years; top tech exporting state 12 years
- Best State to Start a Business
- Texas entrepreneurs filed nearly 500,000 new business applications in 2024
- Attracting 314+ corporate HQs since 2015
- Top state for foreign direct investments over the last 20 years and a top global destination

[gov.texas.gov/top-texas-touts](http://gov.texas.gov/top-texas-touts)

**TOASTMASTERS**  
INTERNATIONAL

**HYBRID  
CLUB**

**WHERE LEADERS ARE MADE**

**Unlock your leadership potential**

- Build strong leadership skills
- Develop better speaking & presentation skills
- Gain self-confidence
- Boost your ability to collaborate & inspire

Meetings are Mondays from 5:30 to 6:30 pm

Brenham Police Dept Community Room

1800 Longwood Dr., Brenham TX 77833.

**Questions or to RSVP, text**

**(713) 204-5678**

You must RSVP to get the ZOOM link

**Meets In-Person and On-Line via Zoom**

**A Strategic Planning Committee has been assembled  
for Brenham Independent School District (BISD)**



**Education is at the heart of Economic  
Development, so stay informed by visiting  
BrenhamISD.net**

**and clicking on the strategic planning icon.**



Every Wednesday, 1 Million Cups provides a supportive, inclusive space for entrepreneurs and their communities to gather and connect, where they can work through business challenges and identify opportunities.

Inviting all community members to be part of the conversation, 1 Million Cups fosters entrepreneurship and helps support an economy that works for everyone.



[www.BrenhamED.com](http://www.BrenhamED.com)



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Brenham-Washington County

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