

# Brenham

## Washington County

### Economic Development

Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 1

Winter, 2023

## Tourism As An Economic Driver

*Build a place where people want to visit, and you'll build a place where people want to live.*

*Build a place where people want to live, and you'll build a place where people want to work.*

*Build a place where people want to work, and you'll build a place where business has to be.*

*Build a place where business has to be, and you'll build a place that people want to visit.*

### IT ALL STARTS WITH A VISIT!

In 2021, Texas visitors spent \$76.1 billion dollars, generating an economic impact of \$155.7 billion and supporting 1.1 million Texas jobs. (Source TravelTexas.com). That's the reason that in Texas, within Governor Abbott's Office, is the Office of Economic Development and Tourism. Tourism *is* Economic Development.

Tourism is a significant source of revenue for local business, job creation opportunities, and tax revenue for local taxing jurisdictions—off-setting taxes paid by local residents. "Direct travel spending in 2021 in Washington County was \$113.7M," said City of Brenham Tourism & Marketing Director Jennifer Eckermann, "and local tax revenue attributed to travel-related purchases reached \$10.1M, with 770 people employed in the local tourism industry that year." Eckermann added that local tourism impacts for 2022, available later this year, are projected to show that even though visitation numbers declined, spending rose and the positive

effects of tourism on our community continue to grow.

The 3-year Visit Brenham/Washington County Tourism Strategic Plan—adopted in 2019—is a focus of action for Washington County communities. Read more here: <https://docs.cityofbrenham.org/Departments/tourism-marketing/tourism-sap.pdf>.

One recent example of tourism was Main Street's Annual Up-town Swirl on January 14th. Nearly 800 participants visited over 30 downtown merchants for wine tasting. Events like this



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drive foot traffic to all businesses in the area. Terri Harris, owner of Mimi's Brenham, stated, "It was my highest sales day since last year's Swirl!" In addition, funds raised are used to provide grants to downtown businesses for façade improvement and signage, which helps maintain our most visited tourism asset in Washington County—our historic downtown.

The events and amenities that fill the pipeline for visitors: Downtown Brenham, Blue Bell Creameries Visitor Center, wineries and breweries, live music venues, sporting facilities, etc. also serve to improve the quality of life of local residents because the community is more attractive and lively, and that leads to a sense of pride among residents.

As an economic development organization in our area, we love people to visit our community, explore our area, spend their money here, and then stay a while. There's a lot to do and see in Washington County.

## Local Tourism Website Links

[VisitBrenhamTexas.com](http://VisitBrenhamTexas.com)  
[ChappellHillTX.com](http://ChappellHillTX.com)

[BrenhamTexas.com](http://BrenhamTexas.com)  
[BurtonTexas.org](http://BurtonTexas.org)

## Teresa Rosales, New Economic Development Specialist



Teresa Rosales joined the staff of the Brenham|Washington County EDO in January as the new Economic Development Specialist after the departure of Erica Warren.

Besides a 30-year career in Real Estate, Teresa brings experience working with a business im-

provement district and time in local government.

"I was hired by the City of Riverside, California to concentrate on quality-of-life issues and economic development. I ultimately moved in-

to utility communications and finally, developing and executing initiatives and programs for an elected official."

Teresa has a B.A. and M.B.A. from California Baptist University and recently earned her Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator (BREC) designation from Business Retention and Expansion International (BREI).

She's a native Texan, born in San Antonio, and now calls Brenham home where she lives with her husband.

**Teresa Rosales**

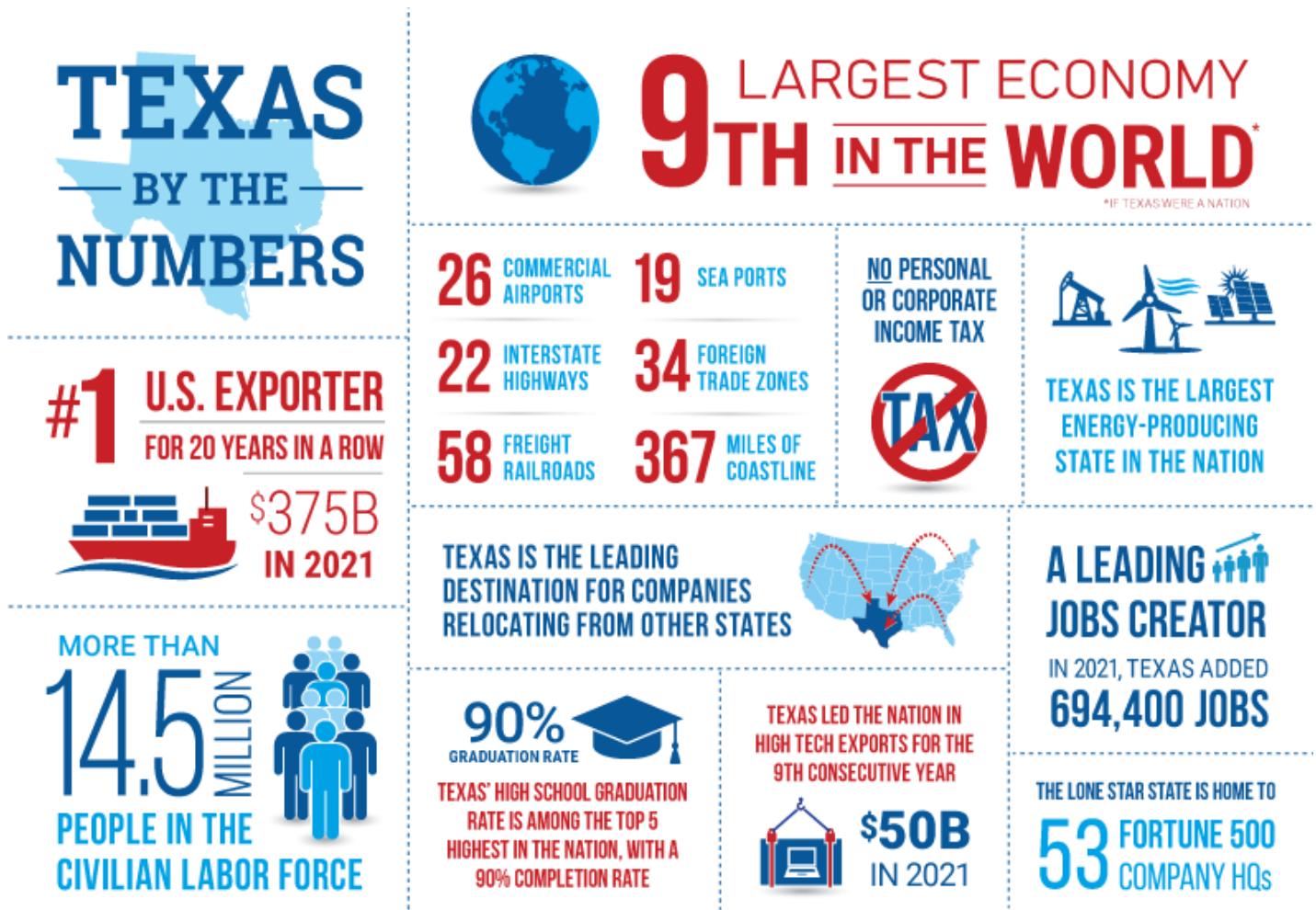
O: 979-337-7239

C: 936-727-0840

[trosales@cityofbrenham.org](mailto:trosales@cityofbrenham.org)

# The Texas Economy

How's the Texas economy stacking up, particularly after the pandemic? Texas Governor Greg Abbott regularly releases information and we thought it would be meaningful to share some of it here.

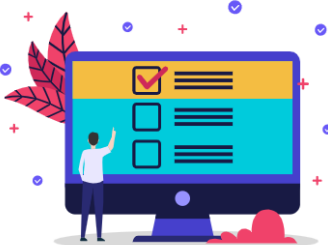



Texas Economic Development & Tourism | Office of Governor Greg Abbott  
512.936.0100 | [gov.texas.gov/business](https://gov.texas.gov/business) | [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [v](#) [e](#) [n](#) [u](#) [e](#) [s](#) @TexasEconDev

Revised: January 2023

For the full Texas Economic Snapshot, go to:  
<https://gov.texas.gov/business/page/texas-economic-snapshot>

## SURVEY



How is YOUR economy?  
Scan the QR code   
with your phone and take a quick 4  
question survey to tell us how your  
business economy is doing.





## EcoDev Highlights

- WashCoTXJobs.com advertising video at the Westwood Theater to help local employers cast a wider net to recruit top-notch employees
- Hosted the Annual Red, White, & You Job Fair in November and a Job Fair targeting part-time employees in January
- Brenham Crossing announced the addition of James Avery, Great Clips, Ulta, and Burlington
- Brenham Market Square announced Chick Fil A, Wendy's, Academy, and a Wyndham hospitality project
- Project Stones Throw has 50+ acres under contract in Southwest Industrial Park
- Project Color Guard is negotiating an option for 10 acres in Southwest Industrial Park
- Brenham Community Development Corporation sold two tracts of property in Brenham Business Center for projects currently in development
- Project permitting remained strong through 2022 with 432 total permits. Inflation and interest rates are slowing the permit volume going into 1st quarter 2023.
- New Downtown businesses include: Wild Ones Baby Boutique and Glamfetti
- Downtown relocations and expansions include: Southern Fox, The Tilted Windmill, and Jet Set Chocolates

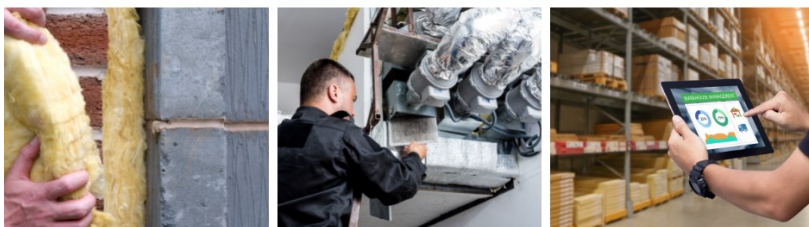
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### Focus: PACE Financing Opportunity

**PACE—Property Assessed Clean Energy—** is a financial tool that incentivizes Texas' property owners to upgrade facility infrastructure with little or no capital outlay. The program enables owners to lower their operating costs and use the savings to pay for eligible water conservation, energy efficiency, resiliency, and distributed generation projects. Eligible properties are Commercial Real Property, Industrial Real Property and Multi-Family Residential Real Property. More information is available here: [TexasPaceAuthority.org](https://TexasPaceAuthority.org).

BWEDO is co-sponsoring a PACE workshop on Wednesday, April 26th at the Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library at 3:30 pm.

**To RSVP, please email [EconomicDev@CityofBrenham.org](mailto:EconomicDev@CityofBrenham.org)**



### Who Should Attend?

- ◆ Local banks interested in being an approved lender
- ◆ Local Architects
- ◆ Those in HVAC industry
- ◆ Plumbers
- ◆ Electricians
- ◆ General contractors
- ◆ Any business that might want to learn more

**RSVP at**

**[EconomicDev@CityofBrenham.org](mailto:EconomicDev@CityofBrenham.org)**

ACTIVITY  
**SNAPSHOT**  
YEAR-TO-DATE



**289**

NEW JOBS  
CREATED



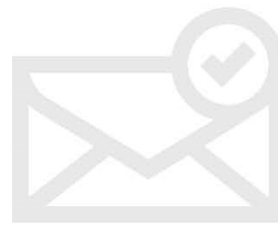
**32**

ACTIVE  
PROJECTS



**315**

REQUEST FOR  
INFORMATION (RFI)



**24**

RFI INFO  
SUBMITTED



**6**

BUSINESS  
EXPANSIONS



**498**

BRE  
CONTACTS

## HR ROUNDTABLE

The Human Resources (HR) Roundtable held its first meeting in January to discuss workforce challenges that employers are facing in Washington County. The group represented a wide range of employers from the private and public sector but they all shared similar stories related to hiring and retaining a solid workforce. Most private employers talked about their evolving talent requirements and the need for technical training. Some also shared the challenges of hiring reliable part-time workers.

One conclusion is that employers should work closely with local school districts, Blinn College and the A. W. Hodde, Jr. Technical Education Center to create career pathways so that the community of workers have clear employment goals.

**If you are an HR Professional,  
please contact  
[EconomicDev@CityofBrenham.org](mailto:EconomicDev@CityofBrenham.org)  
and join the group.**



## ARE YOU HIRING?

**Request a FREE Account to post your  
open positions by scanning QR code  
or visit**

**[WashCoTXJobs.com](http://WashCoTXJobs.com)**



## Economic Development Partners

Tourism is definitely a driving force in all of our hearts and minds here in Burton and surrounding areas. We are a small town with a population under 300, so we know how important it is to bring in as much traffic as possible to our small businesses and attractions. One of our most visible sites is the Texas Cotton Gin Museum. As the Official Cotton Gin Museum of Texas and home of the oldest operating gin in America, it is pivotal in bringing yearly visitors to tour the museum and grounds, as well as visit during the annual Burton Cotton Gin Festival. Throughout the year the museum sees about 9,000 visitors who

then frequent our businesses and spend money and time in our communities. We look forward to many more years of welcoming visitors year-round to our beautiful little town so we can share what is so special about Burton and the surrounding areas!



*Susan Kiel*

Susan S. Kiel, Secretary  
Burton Chamber of Commerce

## Economic Development Partners (Continued)



Your Washington County Chamber of Commerce remains focused on keeping our community connected through all that we do.

When looking at the statistics from 2022, what we have accomplished is amazing. I am humbled by the dedication of our Chamber staff, Board of Directors, and Blue Blazers putting in the hard work while focusing on our mission: *To promote a positive impact and quality of life while preserving the natural beauty and rich heritage of Washington County.*

We ended our year with 780 members strong, and we can't wait until we hit 800! Our retention rate averaged 87% throughout the year with the national average of 85%. 91 new businesses joined the Washington County Chamber and we held 56 ribbon cuttings. None of these accomplishments would have been possible without our faithful investors. With those numbers, we remain strong and committed to business, workforce and quality of life. We are extremely proud of our reach - 4,376 followers on Facebook and 1,488 Instagram followers.

With this momentum going into 2023, we have

only just begun. Our members are at the heart of everything we do, every decision we make, and what we do, every day. For this reason, we will be showcasing our members more strategically through our social media options, our monthly newsletter, weekly eblasts, and local media outlets. It is truly an amazing time to have a business during this unprecedented growth we are witnessing in Washington County.

One of our main focuses is to promote our members through our Information Center. We welcome people to visit us, enjoy a cup of coffee, and take home our award-winning magazine. We encourage you to shop local. Buying local goods and services puts money back into our local economy which supports our local businesses, our local workforce, and preserves our quality of life.

It is always a great day to live, work, and play in Washington County. May God bless you, your business, and your family in 2023.

Jamie Rankin,  
President/CEO

Washington County Chamber of Commerce

The small historical town of Chappell Hill may be calm and quiet on any given weekday, but transitions into a bustling town full of activity with tourists and events on any given weekend. The Chappell Hill Chamber of Commerce, their members and volunteers have created tourism events that are contributing to the economy of Washington County. Events varying from an Art Walk, Airing of the Quilts and now wine events in August and February have attracted tourists from throughout Texas that contribute to the local economy as well as the economy throughout Washington County.

The mission of the Chappell Hill Chamber of Commerce is to advance the business and public interests of Chappell Hill, Texas, both economically and culturally. The businesses throughout Chappell Hill vary from retail, agriculture, various manufacturing businesses, real estate, banking, to ranch management - each business impacts our economy locally, statewide and some even globally with the products they manufacture. We appreciate the opportunity to work closely with economic development leaders at the county and city

and look forward to identifying opportunities to engage in business

recruitment and identifying economic tools that will benefit our members and their businesses.

We host regular Coffee Chats and Business After Hours to help our members obtain information, network and promote their businesses. We welcome everyone to come and learn more about the great things happening in Chappell Hill, Texas.



Joel Romo, President  
Chappell Hill Chamber of Commerce





## From the Director, Susan Cates

“CH-CH-CH-CH-CHANGES!” I’m no David Bowie, but the Brenham | Washington County Economic Development office has been undergoing some significant changes—especially 4th Quarter 2022.

As you’ve read in this issue, Tourism is a significant economic development driver in our community and in August, recognizing that our Historic Downtown is Washington County’s #1 tourism asset, the City of Brenham transitioned Brenham Main Street over to Economic Development. This organizational change solidifies the strong partnership between EcoDev and our colleagues in the City’s Marketing and Tourism department under the leadership of Jennifer Eckermann. Huge shout out to Jennifer who was recognized by the Texas Downtown Association in November for her years of dedication and tireless efforts on behalf of Downtown Brenham and the downtown profession

with the Susan H. Campbell Award for Professional Excellence.

We celebrated an amazing Christmas Stroll in December and the 2023 Uptown Swirl was one for the record books! We look forward to welcoming a new Main Street Manager in the next couple of weeks and will introduce her in the next newsletter issue.

We said farewell and best wishes to Economic Development Specialist, Erica Warren as she joined her husband’s rapidly growing construction business. No surprise that a construction business in WashCo is growing! We were fortunate to hire Teresa Rosales (see page 2) to join our organization. She has already made a great impact on our team and I can’t wait for you to meet her in person—if you haven’t already!

We have some exciting announcements coming in 2023 building on the momentum of 2022. Hang on! Changes can be GREAT!

*Susan*



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



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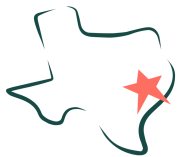
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Brenham-Washington County  
Economic Development



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**Quarterly Newsletter**  
**Winter, 2023**

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