

# Brenham Washington County Economic Development

Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 2

Spring, 2023

## Advocacy for Economic Development in Austin



The 88th Texas Legislature is currently in session and advocacy for economic development policies is well underway. TEDC (Texas Economic Development Council) prepared legislative priorities which promote a positive business environment and pro-

economic development initiatives to enhance Texas' ability to compete for jobs and investment. See graphic below.

Washington County Day at the Capitol on

Monday, February 27th convened leaders from across Washington County, representing governing bodies, local businesses, and non-profit organizations, to meet with legislators in Austin. Washington County leaders are working to make sure that local priorities are communicated to lawmakers. Along with the priorities listed below, we communicated other critical issues including:

Water Resources and Availability. It's imperative to maintain a balance between the demand for water from existing customers along with the developing potential water resources to meet the growth coming to our community.

Education. The Legislature must prioritize the needs of Texas students and educators to facilitate a safe and stimulating learning environment that leads to students graduating

Continued on p. 2

## Legislative Priorities



- 1 Protect the Economic Development Sales Tax for Economic and Community Development Purposes
- 2 Support the Proposed Legislation to Replace Chapter 313 as a Vital Economic Development Tool
- 3 Preserve Chapter 380/381 Agreements for Economic Development Projects
- 4 Support Continued Funding of the Texas Enterprise Fund
- 5 Support Continued Funding of Texas Workforce Development Programs and Investments in Worker Training
- 6 Support and promote Programs for Innovation and Entrepreneurship to spur Economic Growth

prepared with skills for a modern workforce. Additional funding for Career & Technical Education programs should be tied to the most highly in demand job skills by region.

**Broadband Access and Expansion.** All Texans need access to affordable and high quality internet broadband to maintain a competitive business advantage, to meet the needs of educating our workforce, and to facilitate access to healthcare in rural areas. The Federal definition of “high-speed” internet is woefully inadequate at 25 mbs down and 3 mbs up. Texas should lead the nation in access to true high-speed internet.

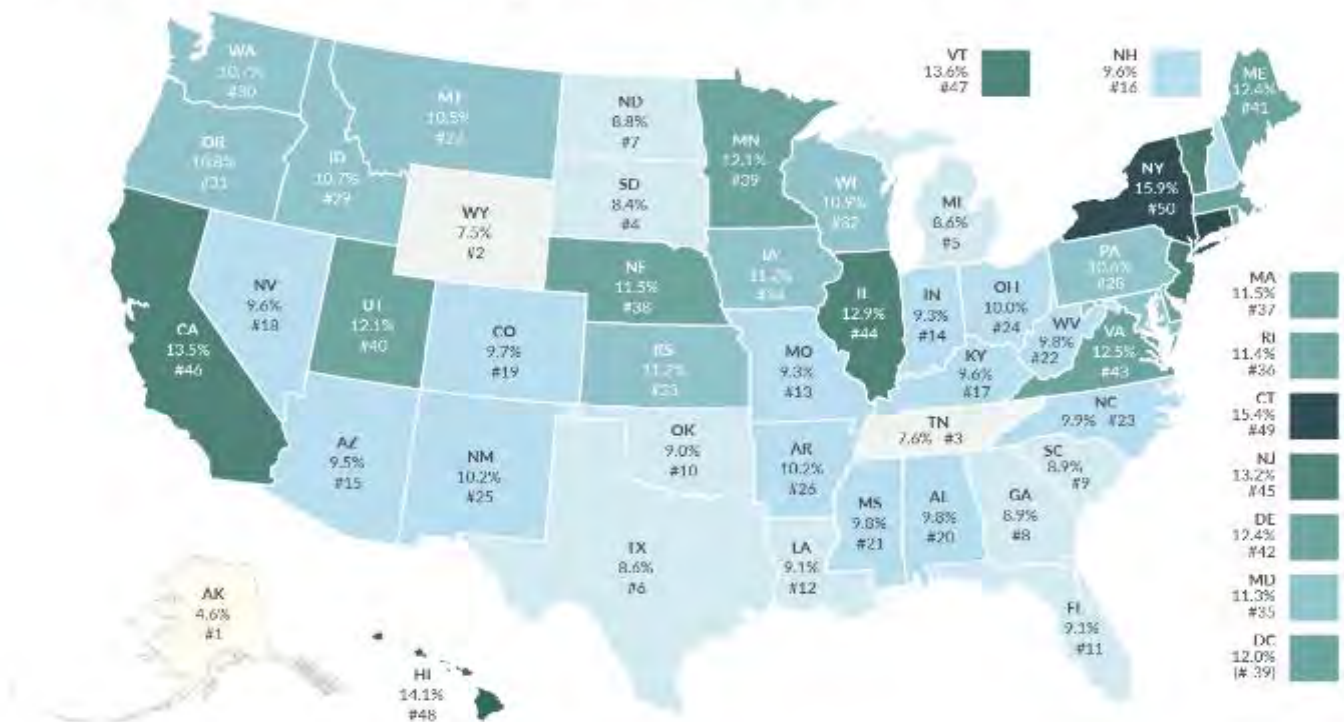
**Affordable Workforce Housing.** Although Texas real estate boomed over the last few years, workforce housing (for those at 80% Area Median Income) continues to be a challenge—especially in rural communities where it is difficult to develop housing projects that cash-flow with lower lease rates. Texas communities need effective tools that allow them to choose the projects that fit their community

while not adversely impacting the local tax base.

**Property Tax Reform.** Property Tax Reform is a hot topic! As you can see from the nationwide analysis graphic below, Texas remains in the Top 10 for Lowest Total State-Local Tax Burden. That is great news! But Texas must implement an equitable, simplified school funding formula, and the Legislature needs to reevaluate their 2019 no new revenue cap of 3.5% imposed on local governing authorities (City, County, ISD). The 3.5% cap prevents these entities from even keeping up with inflation. Inflation impacts your local government just as it impacts your home or business! Loss of purchasing power due to inflation creates long-term issues with maintaining infrastructure, supporting well-qualified first responders, and other critical issues.

**Stay informed and make your voice heard by reaching out to your lawmakers (see page 3). They want to hear your thoughts and opinions!**

### State-Local Tax Burdens by State, Calendar Year 2022



Note: D.C.'s rank does not affect states' ranks, but the figure in parentheses indicates where it would rank if included.  
Source: Tax Foundation calculations.

State-Local Tax Burden by State, Calendar Year 2022  
Lower Higher

Source: @TaxFoundation—<https://taxfoundation.org/tax-burden-by-state-2022/>

## How to Make Your Voice Heard

LOCAL



**Washington County**  
100 E. Main Street  
Brenham, TX 77833  
(979) 277-6200

For a list of all County officials,  
visit  
[Co.Washington.Tx.us](http://Co.Washington.Tx.us)



**City of Brenham TX**  
200 W. Vulcan Street  
Brenham TX 77833  
(979) 337-7200

For a list of Mayor and  
City Councilmembers,  
visit  
[CityofBrenham.org](http://CityofBrenham.org)



**City of Burton TX**  
12200 E. Mulberry St.  
Burton, TX 77835  
(979) 289-3402

For a list of Mayor and  
City Councilmembers,  
visit  
[CityofBurton-tx.gov](http://CityofBurton-tx.gov)

STATE

**Senator Lois Kolkhorst: District 18**  
E-mail: [lois.kolkhorst@senate.texas.gov](mailto:lois.kolkhorst@senate.texas.gov)

**Capitol Address:**  
P O Box 12068  
Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
(512) 463-0118  
**Brenham District Office**  
2000 S. Market St., #101  
Brenham TX 77833  
(979) 251-7888



**Representative Kyle Kacal: District 12**  
E-mail: [kyle.kacal@house.texas.gov](mailto:kyle.kacal@house.texas.gov)

**Capitol Address:**  
Room GS.6  
P. O . Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
(512) 463-0412  
**Bryan District Office**  
3000 Briarcrest Dr.,  
Suite 203  
Bryan TX 77802  
(979) 774-7276



FEDERAL

**Senator John Cornyn**  
[www.cornyn.senate.gov](http://www.cornyn.senate.gov)  
517 Hart Senate Office  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-2934  
**Houston Office**  
5300 Memorial Drive,  
Suite 710  
Houston, TX 77007  
(714) 572-3337

**Senator Ted Cruz**  
[www.cruz.senate.gov](http://www.cruz.senate.gov)  
127A Russell Senate Office  
Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-5922  
**Houston Office**  
Mickey Leland Federal Bldg.  
1919 Smith St., Suite 9047  
Houston, TX 77002  
(713) 718-3057  
(714) 572-3337

**Representative Michael T. McCaul**  
[www.mccaul.house.gov](http://www.mccaul.house.gov)  
2300 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-2401  
**Austin District Office**  
11614 FM 2244, Suite 160  
Austin, TX 78731  
(512) 473-2357



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

Scan the QR code to respond

**One. Question.**



**And you  
could win  
a \$25  
gift card.**





## JOIN US FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY PACE FINANCING WORKSHOP

★ Wednesday, April 26th  
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

📍 Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library, 100 Martin Luther King Jr. Pkway, Brenham

💰 FREE

⚡ Register Online:  
<https://bit.ly/41x5c2c>

Questions? Call 979.337.7234



Register Now!



### Thanks to our sponsors!



## Leigh Linden, New Main Street Manager



Leigh Linden joined the staff of the Brenham | Washington County EDO in March as the new Main Street Manager in February.

Linden, a former business owner in downtown Brenham, founded Sweet Repeats which she operated for 8 years. A lifelong resident of Brenham, she is

very familiar with downtown and all it's potential. "I'm very excited to be back in downtown and working with new and old friends," said Linden. "I've been in their shoes and feel I can bring valuable perspective to this role."

Linden has held positions in marketing and promotions—skills she will be relying on as Main Street Manager. In addition, she has

been a member of the Brenham Citizens Advisory Board, Camp For All Camp Friends Board, the Young Professional Organization of Washington County and the Board of the Heritage Society of Washington County. She is especially proud of her work as an advocate for CASA for Kids of South Central Texas.

Leigh is working closely with the Main Street Advisory Board which oversees the activities of the Main Street organization and develops plans and programs to stimulate both historic preservation and economic vitality for downtown Brenham.

**Leigh Linden**

O: 979-337-7239

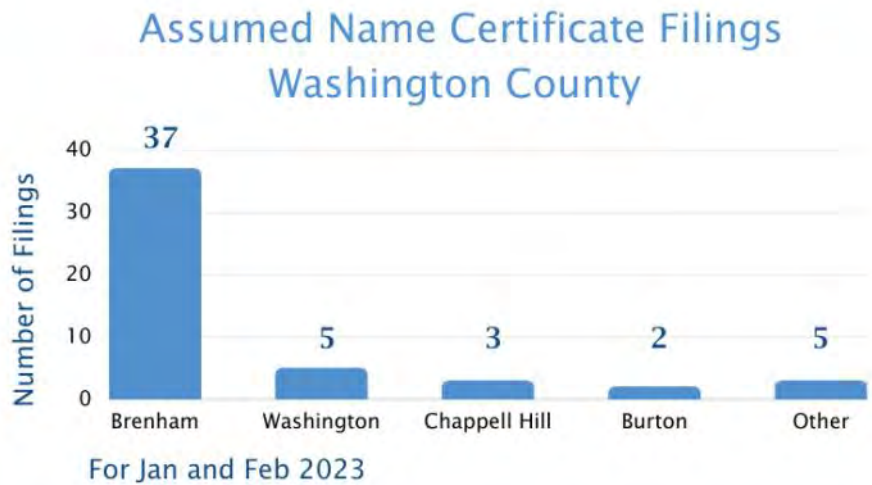
C: 979-251-0524

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

## Business Filings

The Assumed Name Certificate (also called DBA—Doing Business As) is necessary in order to give notice to the public that an entity is conducting business under that name. In January, 27 businesses filed the certificate in Washington County. In February, 24 businesses filed. This is an indication of entrepreneurial activity in our community.

To the right is the breakdown of business locations as filed.



# JOB FAIR

## EMPLOYERS: RESERVE YOUR TABLE TODAY

by emailing [EconomicDev@cityofbrenham.org](mailto:EconomicDev@cityofbrenham.org)

### OPPORTUNITIES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

## Wednesday, April 19th

### 10am - 2pm

### Fireman's Training Center

### 1101 Hwy 290 W, Brenham TX 77833

## OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- **FREE** Featured presentations at 11am and 1pm on resume/interviewing skills!
- **HR pros** on hand to review your resume

Thanks to our sponsors!



## Housing Task Force Highlights

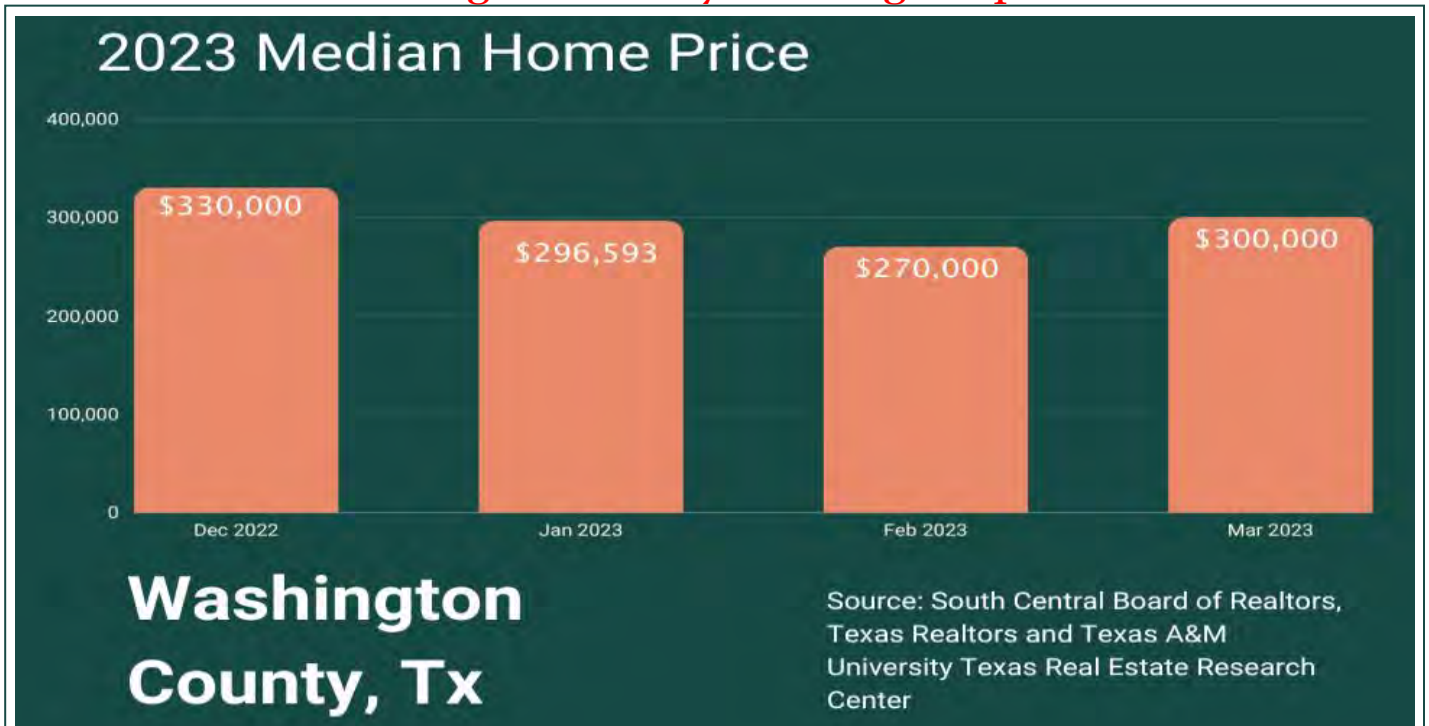
The City of Brenham Housing Task Force held its last meeting on August 31st culminating in a report to City Council on Thursday, April 6th. The 24-member group agreed that the primary area of concern regarding housing in Brenham is for housing within the reach of our middle-income workforce.

Some of the findings they shared included changes to the code in the R-1 Residential Single-Family District and the R-2 Mixed Residential District, removal of the "homestead requirement" for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU), opportunities for development on second and third-story residential units in Downtown Brenham, and the establishment of several sub-committees for further work.

The Task Force met six times since its establishment in July of 2022 and their report can be viewed online at [CityofBrenham.org](http://CityofBrenham.org) as part of the 4/6/23 Agenda Packet.



## Washington County Housing Snapshot



### ARE YOU HIRING?

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

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





The Washington County Chamber represents nearly 800 business

members in a variety of industries and employers throughout the county. The Chamber advocates for business-friendly policies and legislation working to ensure that the needs of our members are understood and represented at all government levels. With the 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature in full swing, the Washington County Chamber of Commerce encourages legislators to work in a bi-partisan manner to advance policies that will strengthen our local and state economy, create better paying jobs, support small businesses, and boost investments into our education system. This includes supporting policies and programs that protect businesses by prohibiting

regulation, provides economic development incentives, encourages education and workforce development, addresses housing affordability, and provides property tax relief on the business and homeowner. In collaboration with other Chamber Councils, Brenham Washington County Economic Development, Texas Workforce Solutions, and Texas Association of Business; the Washington County Chamber will work with our partners to champion a pro-business agenda and ensure that the voice of business - large and small, are heard and represented in Austin.

May God bless you, your business, and your family in 2023,

Jamie Rankin,  
President/CEO  
Washington County Chamber of Commerce

## Economic Excellence Recognition



TEDC 2022 Economic Excellence Recognition Recipients

For the fourth consecutive year, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development (BWEDO) was recognized for Economic Excellence from the Texas Economic Development Council. BWEDO is one of 54 EDOs to attain this professional recognition out of 475 EDOs in Texas.



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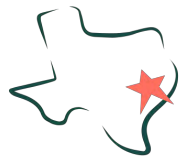
[www.WashCoTXJobs.com](http://www.WashCoTXJobs.com)



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Brenham-Washington County  
Economic Development



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Economic Development

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