

# Brenham | Washington County Economic Development

Quarterly Newsletter

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Summer, 2024

## Food Production/Processing: A Targeted Industry

**W**ashington County is proud to be the home to a number of highly successful international, national, regional and local food and beverage industries. NAICS code categories for these types of industries usually begin with 311 (selling wholesale and in bulk), but we're also highlighting 312 (Brewery and Winery) and 112 (Chicken Egg Production).

**WE LOVE MAKING  
FOOD HERE**  
*and it shows!*

There's a variety of reasons that food and beverage manufacturers choose

this part of Texas, but one reason is that our workforce stands out. Having a skilled labor force that's reliable and dedicated is a luxury in some places, but it's a necessity here. Products that are delivered with a commitment to quality can only come from proud Texans. Our prime location in the Texas Triangle helps goods that are produced here to get to market quickly! That's a competitive advantage that we enjoy in Washington County.

The Food Manufacturing Industry employs 1.71 million people nationwide and the 10-year forecast calls for a 30% annual industry employment growth rate. <sup>1</sup>

The recent trends show consumer spending

on food purchased for consumption off-premises (groceries rather than restaurants) surged by over 23% since the COVID outbreak. There's been a 69% increase in snack food products and a 93% increase in bakery and tortilla products. <sup>1</sup>

There's also been an animal food manufacturing boom. Pet adoptions skyrocketed, and the demand for higher quality pet food via e-commerce channels increased. <sup>1</sup>

What drives a company to choose a location for food manufacturing? Similar to other industries, there are definite factors that are considered—see graphic below.



<sup>1</sup> Source: Global Location Strategies, June 2024

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Here's a few logos that represent food industry companies who have chosen Brenham and/or Washington County as a home for their manufacturing business. Check out the economic development website at BrenhamED.com—choose "Invest Here" and then "Food Industries" to see these logos. ♦

### Should your company be listed on the website?

E-mail [CSimich@CityofBrenham.org](mailto:CSimich@CityofBrenham.org) and we'll add it!



# BRIANNAS®



KIEKE EGG FARM, LLC



FARM FRESH EGGS  
6615 Kieke Road - Burton, TX 77835  
979-289-5750



Chapelton Vineyards  
LYN RANCH



# WHITEHURST FARM

BRAZOS VALLEY  
BREWING COMPANY



DOUBLE R  
Brand Foods, LLC

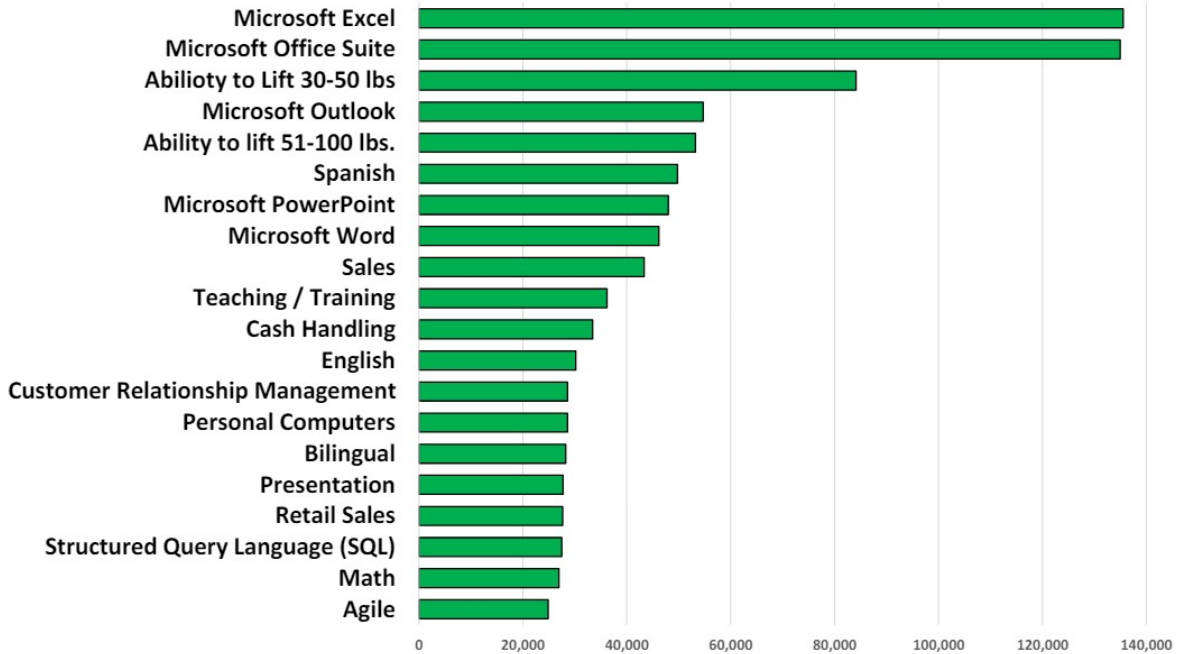


# Hard Skills? Soft Skills? What's important NOW in Texas?

Below are the results of the last 90 days of online Texas job postings (as of June 2024) for the hard skill or soft skill terms most in demand by Texas employers.

(Courtesy Mick Normington, Lee College)

## 'Hard Skill' terms most in demand now - Texas



Source: Chumura Workforce for last 90 days from job postings for Texas, June 2024

## 'Soft Skills' (Employability Skills) terms most in demand - Texas



## Circuit Breaker Law in Effect for 2024 Property Tax Year

The 88th Texas Legislature enacted new laws related to property taxes in their last session. Some may have gone unnoticed then, but they took effect with this tax year. One such law is a change to the Texas Property Tax Code—Section 23.231 which was effective January 1, 2024.

This change adds a section to provide a circuit breaker limitation on the appraised value of real property. It only applies to real property with an appraised value of not more than \$5 million in 2024 and requires the Comptroller to adjust the value threshold annually by the percentage increase or decrease during the preceding state fiscal year in the consumer price index rounded to the nearest \$10,000. It does NOT apply to residential homestead property or property receiving special appraisal under Sub-chapters C, D, E, F, G, or H.

This law provides that an appraisal office may increase the appraised value of qualified real property for a tax year to an amount not to exceed the lesser or the market value of the property for the most recent tax year that the market value was determined or the sum of 20 percent of the appraised value of the property.

**Your commercial property taxes may have gone up, but without this law, it could have been worse.**

If you own non-residential property valued at less than \$5 million in Washington County, take a look at your tax bill. For 2024, if your property meets these parameters, it will likely show both an Appraised Value and an Assessed Value that are

different. If so, take the Assessed Value for 2023 and add 20%. If the new total matches your 2024 Assessed Value, then your property tax value was determined based on this new law.

Details about this new law can be found on the Texas Comptroller's Website under Comptroller.Texas.gov. Search for Section 23.231. ♦

*Note: Why is it called “circuit breaker”? It's meant to avoid a property tax “overload”, in the same way a circuit breaker is meant to avoid an electrical overload.*



SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER  
TEXAS GULF COAST NETWORK  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON | BAUER

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](http://SBDC.UH.EDU) for more info.**



# Brenham | Washington County Economic Development

**RSVP BY  
7/12/24!  
Space is  
limited!**

Washington County, Texas

## COMMERCIAL BROKERS LUNCHEON

*Wednesday, July 17th*

11:30 - 1:00pm

Citizens State Bank Community Room,  
2007 S. Day, Brenham TX 77833

Program - What you need to know about

- Development in City of Brenham and Washington County
- Available land in Brenham
- Site selector criteria
- FREE Commercial Listing ads on Economic Development website

*RSVP here*



*Lunch Sponsor*

 **BLUEBONNET**<sup>®</sup>  
ABSTRACT & TITLE

For Questions, email or call  
Christine Simich  
[csimich@cityofbrenham.org](mailto:csimich@cityofbrenham.org) or  
979-337-7237

## 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](http://www.Toastmasters.org)**

## Economic Development Partner



The small town of Chappell Hill is home to numerous food manufacturers that not only impact our local economy but have an impact across Texas. Home to Chappell Hill Sausage, Chappell Hill Bakery & Deli, Texas Star Winery, and Bevers Kitchen, not only do these businesses employ numerous employees and contribute back to the community through their sponsorships and community support, their food products have state and national recognition. From award winning pies, kolaches, sausage and various meat products, and Texas wines – these businesses attract tourism, impact our local economy and have helped put Chappell Hill on the map.

Each business either ships their products across Texas and collaborates with retail stores, or individuals come from throughout Texas to purchase items in bulk or for that special occasion. Tour buses from the surrounding area bring visitors to tour the community, and each of these stops are a stop on their itinerary. Chappell Hill and Washington County are fortunate to have such unique and impactful businesses in our area and hat's off to each one of these family-owned businesses for making Washington County home!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joel Romo".

Joel Romo  
President

# Economic Development Partner (Continued)



Washington County boasts a thriving food processing and manufacturing industry, pivotal to its economic landscape. The region's rich agricultural heritage, coupled with modern infrastructure, provides an ideal environment for food production businesses. Local companies excel in processing a variety of products, including (but not limited to) dairy, meats, confections, coffee, containers, dressings, and produce; ensuring fresh and high-quality goods reach consumers.

The county's strategic location offers seamless access to major markets via well-connected transportation networks, including highways and rail systems. This logistical advantage enhances the efficiency of distribution, allowing local businesses to meet both national and international demand.

Employment opportunities in the sector are robust,

contributing significantly to the local economy as the largest private sector workforce in Washington County. The industry not only provides jobs but also fosters innovation through collaboration with local educational institutions and research centers. These partnerships focus on advancing food safety, sustainability, and technological improvements, ensuring the industry remains competitive and forward-thinking.

Moreover, the Washington County Chamber of Commerce actively supports food processing and manufacturing businesses. Through advocacy, networking events, and resource provision, the Chamber plays a crucial role in driving growth and addressing industry challenges. This collaborative effort ensures that Washington County remains a hub for food production, sustaining its economic vitality and community well-being.

Jamie Rankin  
President & CEO



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



@BrenhamWashCoEcoDev



@BrenhamED



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



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Brenham-Washington County

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Economic Development 

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