

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development

Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 2

Summer, 2026

FREE WEBINAR RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM SBDC

What is an SBDC Webinar Watch Party?

We know it can be challenging to watch a webinar on your own and walk away with practical, ready-to-use takeaways. Periodically, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development will host a watch party using one of the pre-recorded webinars in the Small Business Development Center library.

Most of these sessions are **FREE** and are curated by experts in their respected fields. Watching in a group setting not only makes the experience more engaging, it also gives you the chance to discuss the material afterward.

This type of interaction helps the information become more meaningful and memorable. In May, we hosted three watch parties (see below).

3 Ways to Start A Business—A very thoughtful webinar that challenges you to consider your idea against your risk tolerance, your available time and resources.

Success Through E-Commerce—Understanding e-commerce platforms and how they work with your website along with how to set-up your store. You are then shown how to launch your store and maximize your profits over time.

Cottage Food Laws Update- (Created March 2026) Very informative webinar that talks about the latest changes to the Cottage Food Laws including



what foods are now allowed, compliance issues including the new revenue cap and the addition of wholesale selling.

You can access these webinars and many more, along with other resources, on the SBDC website here: sbdc.uh.edu. Once you are on the site, create an account for **FREE**. Then click on Training and you can choose the webinar resources you'd like to see.

Follow us on Facebook at **BrenhamWashCoE-coDev** to get information on the upcoming Webinar Watch Parties. We always serve refreshments, and we'd love to hear your suggestions for future topics.

Reach out at (979) 337-7237



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 for more info.

SMALL BUSINESS MONTH A SUCCESS

| SMALL BUSINESS MONTH | | FREE events throughout the month of May! | | | | | MAY 2026 | |
|---|----------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|--|-----|----------|--|
| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | | |
| Sponsored By Brenham Washington County Economic Development | | Washington County Chamber | AMERICA'S SBDC | | 1 | 2 | | |
| 3 | 4 | 5 Wake Up Washington County SBDC <i>Webinar Watch Party</i> | 6 8:30 am - Board and Brush | 7 Brenham City Council Proclamation "Small Business Month" | 8 | 9 | | |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 8:30 am - Board and Brush | 14 Chappell Hill - Business After Hours Blinn College Foundation | 15 BURTON May Membership Mixer at Busted Oaks Cellars | 16 | | |
| 17 | 18 | 19 Small Business Workshop 5:30 - 7:00 pm | 20 8:30 am - Board and Brush | 21 Marketing Event 11:30 - 1:00 pm | 22 SBDC <i>Webinar Watch Party</i> | 23 | | |
| 24 | MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY | 26 SBDC <i>Webinar Watch Party</i> | 27 8:30 am - Board and Brush | 28 Success Luncheon sponsored by Citizens for the Gulf | 29 | 30 | | |



The Brenham City Council declared May of 2026 as Small Business Month, and to promote that, events were held throughout the City and Washington County.

In collaboration with SBDC—Blinn and the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development organized a variety of events and also showcased events that were already happening on behalf of businesses in Washington County. Many of the events were well attended and it gave us the

opportunity to show support for our ever growing small business community.

Our small business owners are the backbone of Washington County, and we are grateful for all they do to make our community attractive and inviting to residents and visitors.

(Pictured above: Matthew Wehring, Small Business Development Center (Blinn), Jamie Rankin, Washington County Chamber of Commerce, Teresa Rosales, Brenham | Washington County Economic Development and Mayor Atwood Kenjura.

DOWNTOWN GRANTS

Last Fall, the Brenham City Council approved the creation of the Life Safety Grant, a reimbursable matching grant program. Communication from the downtown property owners indicated that many of them were cost constrained when attempting to add development features related to ADA and/or Life Safety Improvements.

The initial budget allocation was \$120,000 with a maximum of \$60,000 per grant awarded. Two properties qualified based on parameters set and the hope is that further funding will continue to support improvements downtown.

All properties applying for the grant must be located in the Downtown District.

Objectives

- 1: Development of vacant second & third stories
- 2: Encourage repair of vacant, under-utilized buildings
- 3: Encourage private investment
- 4: Stimulate additional business
- 5: Promote code compliance

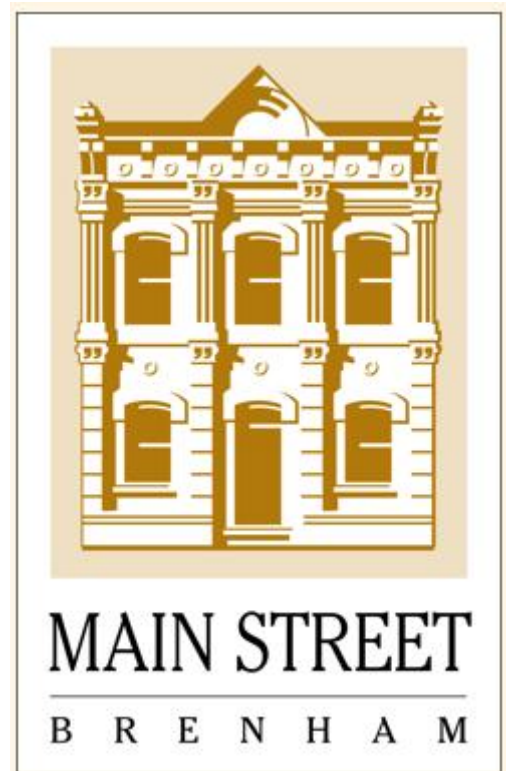


Main Street Brenham continues to offer their two signature grants.

The Façade & Sign Reimbursement Grant Programs helps enhance Brenham's unique downtown character through historic preservation. The grant aims to keep commercial storefronts aesthetically appealing, attracting more customers and preserving Brenham's charm

The Façade Incentive Reimbursement Grant focuses on exterior improvements only to storefronts for buildings located within the district, provided that the work has not already started.

The Sign Reimbursement Grant is specifically for signage and can cover items like signboards and pedestrian signage, including window/door signs, hanging signs, and awning/canopy signs for commercial buildings located in the Down-



Information about all three grants, including the downloadable applications, is available on the website DowntownBrenham.com under the About tab.

SMALL BUSINESSES: THE HEARTBEAT OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

When we think about what makes Washington County a special place to live, work, and raise a family, it's often the small businesses that come to mind first.

From locally owned restaurants and retail shops to professional services, manufacturers, tradespeople, and agricultural enterprises, small businesses are woven into the fabric of our community. They sponsor our youth sports teams, support local nonprofits, contribute to community events, and create the unique character that residents and visitors alike have come to appreciate.

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses account for the overwhelming majority of businesses across the country and serve as a critical engine of job creation and innovation. Here in Washington County, they are much more than economic contributors—they are our neighbors, friends, and community leaders.

Every purchase made at a local business has a ripple effect. Local businesses purchase goods and services from other local businesses, employ local residents, and reinvest in the community. When we choose to shop, dine, and do business locally, we help strengthen the economic foundation that supports our schools, infrastructure, public services, and quality of life.

Small businesses also play an important role in fostering entrepreneurship. Many of today's successful companies began as a simple idea pursued by someone willing to take a risk. By supporting small businesses, we encourage innovation and create opportunities for future generations of entrepreneurs.

While large corporations often capture headlines, it is important to recognize that small businesses face unique challenges. Rising costs, workforce shortages, regulatory requirements, and rapidly changing technology require business owners to constantly adapt. Their resilience and determination deserve our appreciation and support.

As a community, there are many ways we can help:

- Shop locally whenever possible.
- Leave positive online reviews.
- Recommend local businesses to friends and family.
- Attend community events and business promotions.
- Support new entrepreneurs as they launch and grow.
- Engage with local businesses on social media.

Economic development is not just about attracting new businesses; it is also about helping existing businesses succeed. When our local businesses thrive, Washington County thrives.

The next time you need a product or service, consider starting with a local business. Your support helps preserve the entrepreneurial spirit that makes our community strong and ensures that Washington County remains a vibrant place for generations to come.

Together, let's celebrate and support the small businesses that help make Washington County extraordinary.

CHAMBER Events

you're invited to
**CONNECT after
FOUR**
WASHINGTON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Washington County Chamber
Since 1917
Brenham Texas.com

SPONSORED BY:
BRENHAM MEMORIAL CHAPEL
Funeral & Cremation Services

DAY: THURSDAY, JUNE 11
TIME: 4 - 6 PM
WHERE: BRENHAM MEMORIAL CHAPEL
2300 STRINGER ST.
BRENHAM, TX 77833

BEVERAGES SPONSORED BY
MIKE HOPKINS DISTRIBUTING

2026 Housing Update—Washington County (thru April 2026)

Washington County Housing Report

April 2026



Median price

\$306,968

↑ **23.3%**

Compared to April 2025

Price Distribution



Active listings

↓ **9.2%**

198 in April 2026



Closed sales

↓ **19.4%**

29 in April 2026



Days on market

Days on market 82

Days to close 22

Total 104

58 days less than April 2025



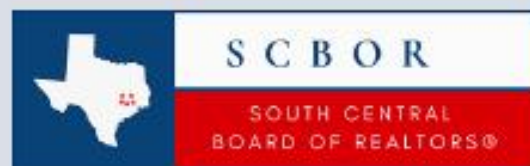
Months of inventory

6.1

Compared to 6.5 in April 2025

About the data used in this report

Data used in this report came from the Texas REALTOR® Data Relevance Project, a partnership among the Texas Association of REALTORS® and local REALTOR® associations throughout the state. Analysis is provided through a research agreement with the Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University.





What Can Our Startup Community Do for You?

1MillionCups is a free, nationwide program designed to educate, engage and accelerate early-stage startups. Drop in on our community of innovators and entrepreneurship enthusiasts to connect!



Meets Every Wednesday from 8:30 to 9:30 am



TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL

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

**HYBRID
CLUB**

In-Person



On-Line



Economic Development Partner



As President & CEO of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, I am continually reminded that the strength of our community lies in the partnerships that unite us. Economic Development is not the responsibility of a single organization. It is the result of businesses, local governments, educational institutions, healthcare providers, nonprofits, and community leaders working together toward a shared vision for our future.

Washington County continues to demonstrate the qualities that make communities thrive: a strong workforce, exceptional quality of life, entrepreneurial spirit, and a commitment to preserving the character that makes this region so special. While growth and development present opportunities, they also require thoughtful planning and collaboration. That is

why the Chamber values its partnership with Brenham | Washington County Economic Development and the many stakeholders dedicated to creating a prosperous future for our region.

As we look ahead, our focus remains on supporting local businesses, fostering leadership development, advocating for a business-friendly environment, and strengthening the connections that make our community resilient. Together, we are building more than a strong economy. We are creating opportunities for future generations to live, work, and succeed right here in Washington County.

Thank you for your continued investment in our community and the partnerships that make progress possible.

Jamie Rankin

President & CEO

Washington County Chamber of Commerce

BAND LINE-UP

20 26

HOT NIGHTS
Cool Tunes

CONCERT SERIES
BRENHAM

JULY 11
90 PROOF COUNTRY
DFW's 90's country powerhouse playing the era's biggest hits.

BRENHAM NATIONAL BANK
SEIDEL SCHROEDER
UPCHURCH & YATES LLP
Brenham Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

JULY 18
FLASHPOINT
Bringing an electrifying mix of rock, disco, and Top 40 hits to keep the dance floor packed.

Blue Bell Creameries
Citizens State Bank
STRAND ASSOCIATES
valmont

JULY 25
A SURE THING
From soulful grooves to funk, it's an energetic journey through the best of the 50s to now.

MHD
Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative
WOODSON
DARMANN & Associates



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