

# Brenham | Washington County

## Economic Development

Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 1

Winter, 2025

### Downtown Is THE Amenity

A recent issue of this newsletter touted the factors that site selectors use when rating a community for their business. One of the most desired factors of a community relates to Quality of Life and it is a vibrant downtown.

Downtowns are unique places. Especially smaller historic downtowns like the ones we have in Texas. In Brenham, Chappell Hill and Burton, the downtowns have older (sometimes historic) structures. They have boutique stores, dining and entertainment, office space, cultural amenities and residences—either in downtown or within walking distance. All of these elements create a sense of place that leads to a robust quality of life.

***“Create the conditions in which people WANT to be downtown.”***

Daniel Lurie  
San Francisco City Mayor

The density of businesses in one area like downtown contributes to the overall fiscal health of a community.

#### Everyone Loves Downtowns

In Live First, Work Second, Rebecca Ryan writes, “The next generation first picks a place to live and then looks for work.” They choose quality of life first. They want walkable downtowns that are alive and have things to do. Downtown should be a destination for various types of activity with a diverse economic ecosystem.

Underestimating the importance of a downtown in economic development would be detrimental. In a 2023 article titled “Why Downtowns Matter”, Golden Shovel writes, “...a dynamic downtown is a compelling factor for professionals who increasingly seek quality of life amenities, cultural experiences and social opportunities.”

#### How do we do it?

All three Washington County communities have elements that are unique to them. Capitalizing on and showcasing these elements will lead to the type of vibrancy necessary to compete with other counties.

#### Main Street America

Main Street America is an organization that is



The Barnhill Center (Brenham) Photo Credit: Natalie Lange

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dedicated to reenergizing and strengthening older and historic downtowns nationwide.

Their approach consists of activities in four broad areas represented by: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion and Organization. Main Street Brenham follows this approach and the

*“People talk about wanting amenities—downtown is the amenity.”*  
Jack White, Musician

Main Street Board creates activities in each area with the ultimate goal of positive community transformation.

### Downtown Belongs To All Neighborhoods

If we want our downtown to thrive, we must all take ownership of downtown as part of our DNA or community identity. Our downtown must be walkable so that residents and visitors can easily manage the pedestrian-friendly sidewalks. Parking throughout the district should be available along with various diverse economic uses like retail, dining and cultural spaces. Adding an element of green space improves aesthetics but also contributes to community well-being and environmental sustainability. Family-friendly spaces that encourage multi-generational use of the downtown area should be included and can be accomplished through community events, festivals and activities that draw people.



Hot Nights, Cool Tunes (Brenham)



First Friday Farmer’s Market (Brenham)

### Healthy Downtown = Healthy City

It’s been said, as goes downtown goes the rest of the city. Downtowns must be alive and in order to remain vibrant, they must have community support. A commitment from citizens to “own” downtown means, shop there, dine there, enjoy downtown entertainment including festivals and concerts, visit the farmers market and more, because Downtown belongs to YOU.

### References

1. Rebecca Ryan, Life First, Work Second, July 2007, Madison WI, Next Generation Consulting.
2. (08/26/2024), “Why Downtowns Matter”, Retrieved 02/01/2024 from <https://www.goldenshovelagency.com/news/p/item/58822/why-downtowns-matter-and-10-strategies-for-fostering-a-vibrant-downtown>
3. MainStreet.org

Go to [VisitBrenhamTexas.com](http://VisitBrenhamTexas.com) for information about Brenham, Burton, Chappell Hill, Independence and Washington



Cotton Gin Museum (Burton) Photo Credit: Gabri Means



Car Show (Burton) Photo Credit: Gabri Means



Downtown (Burton) Photo Credit: Gabri Means



Annual Airing of Quilts (Chappell Hill) Photo Credit: Natalie Lange



Downtown (Chappell Hill), Annual Art Walk (Chappell Hill) and Cottage Blue on Main (Chappell Hill) Photo Credit : Natalie Lange

# Texas Legislative Session—2025



The 89th Texas Legislative Session stated on January 14th, 2025, and all Texas citizens have the ability to contact their elected officials directly. Below is the contact information for our local (Washington County, City of Brenham and City of Burton) elected representatives along with your state and federal representatives.

LOCAL  
STATE  
FEDERAL



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



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



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

**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 or (979) 251-7888



**Representative Trey Wharton: District 12**  
E-mail: [trey.wharton@house.texas.gov](mailto:trey.wharton@house.texas.gov)

**Capitol Address:**

Room E1.312  
P. O . Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
(512) 463-0412



**Senator John Cornyn**  
[www.cornyn.senate.gov](http://www.cornyn.senate.gov)  
517 Hart Senate Office  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-2934  
**Houston Office**

**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**

**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**



# 2024 Housing Update—Washington County

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

## SOUTH CENTRAL BOARD OF REALTORS YTD 2024 - LOCAL MARKET REPORT BY ZIP CODE

### Washington County, Texas

ZIP	CITY	Closed Sales	DOLLAR VOLUME	AVERAGE PRICE	MEDIAN PRICE
77426	Chappell Hill	19	\$10,302,300	\$542,226	\$505,000
77833	Brenham	379	\$117,702,285	\$310,560	\$281,845
77835	Burton	11	\$7,695,000	\$699,545	\$355,000
77880	Washington	6	\$2,048,000	\$341,333	\$279,000
78932	Carmine	2	\$966,500	\$483,250	\$483,250

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## COMMERCIAL BROKERS LUNCHEON

Thursday, March 27th, 2025

11:30 - 1:00pm

Blinn College Student Center, 1007 Walter  
Schwartz Way, Brenham TX 77833

Lunch  
Sponsor



For Questions, email or call  
Christine Simich  
csimich@cityofbrenham.org or  
979-337-7237

RSVP Here



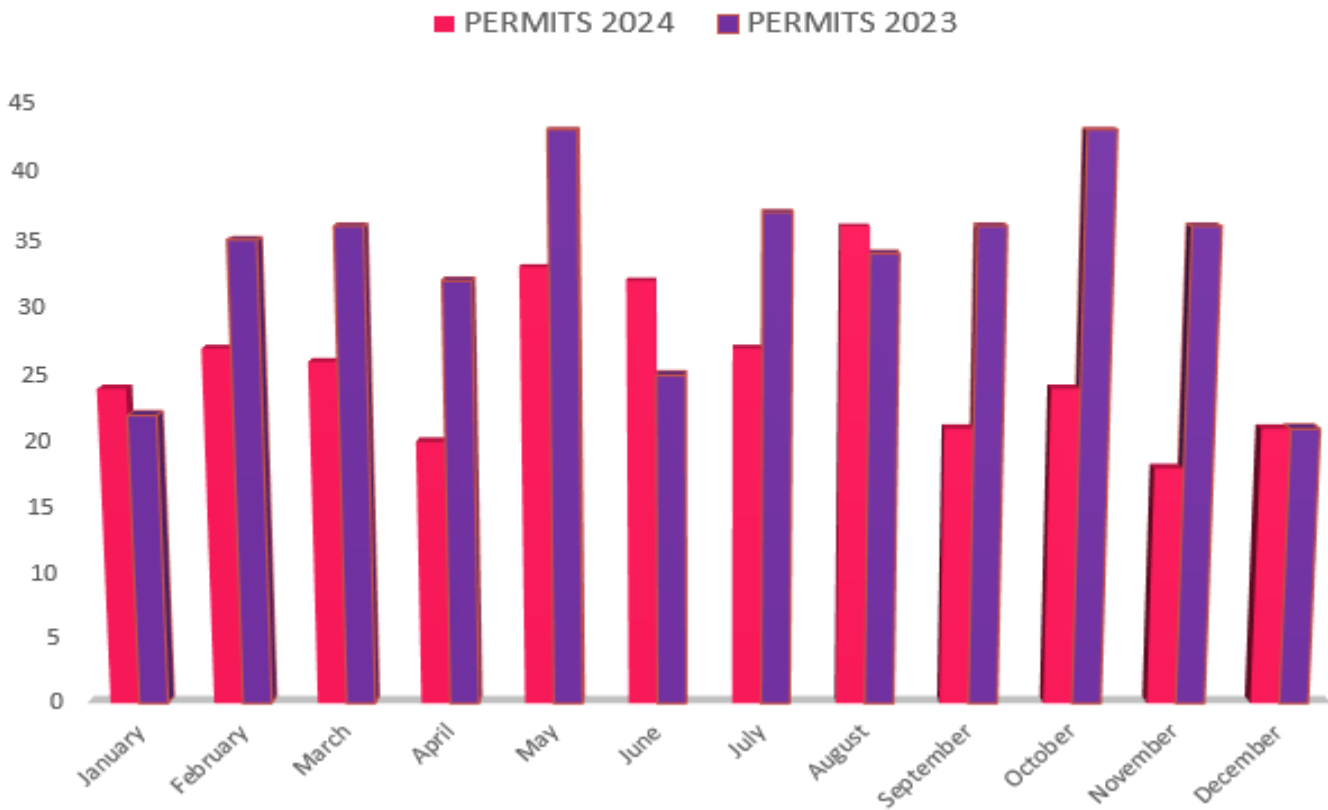
## 2024 COUNTY AKA Filings

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

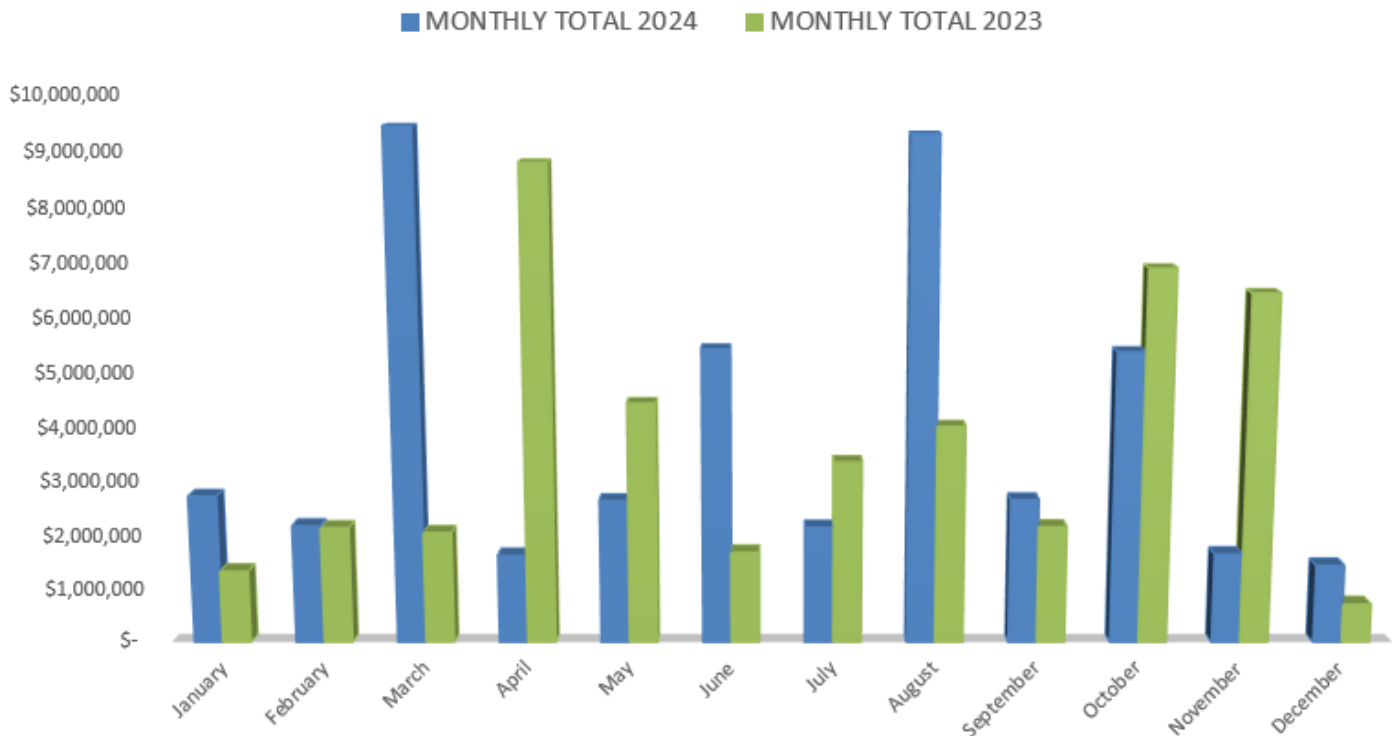
Month	Number	YTD
January	30	30
February	12	42
March	16	58
April	19	77
May	17	94
June	18	112
July	14	126
August	11	137
September	17	154
October	14	168
November	10	178
December	13	191
<b>Total for 2024</b>		<b>191</b>
<b>Compared to 2023</b>		<b>249</b>

# 2024 Building Permit Data—City of Brenham, Tx

## MONTHLY PERMIT TOTALS



## MONTHLY VALUATION TOTALS



## Toastmasters Club Forming in Brenham

**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



In small towns, the downtown area is often the heart of the community. A vibrant downtown is not just a place where people shop; it plays an important role in the town's economy and overall well-being.

Firstly, vibrant downtowns help small towns to stand out on the map. Towns that invest in beautification projects, cultural festivals, and events capitalizing on local history not only enhance their appeal but also capitalize on their uniqueness, differentiating themselves from larger cities.

Secondly, vibrant downtowns bring people together and energize the community. Lively downtown hubs can host local events and festivals. These

events can include farmers' markets, car shows, or holiday celebrations. When people gather in downtown, they not only support local businesses but also build friendships and a sense of community.

Moreover, vibrant towns attract tourists, which can lead to significant economic benefits. Tourists contribute to the economy by spending money on dining, shopping, and accommodations, creating a ripple effect that supports various sectors.

In conclusion, the health of a small town's economy is closely connected to the vibrancy of its downtown. By investing in this area, towns can encourage economic growth and create a lively place where everyone can enjoy unique, small-town charm.

Barbee Gonzales  
Bluebonnet Leather Shop Owner  
Member— Burton Chamber of Commerce

## Economic Development Partner (Continued)



The Washington County Chamber of Commerce emphasizes the critical role vibrant downtowns play in driving economic development. These crucial hubs serve as the heart of a community, attracting businesses, residents, and visitors alike, while preserving local history and culture. A thriving downtown fosters a sense of pride, enhances quality of life, and creates a magnet for investment.

Economic growth stems from the synergy between locally owned shops, restaurants, and cultural attractions that draw foot traffic and sustain small businesses. These establishments create jobs, boost tax revenue, and encourage entrepreneurial activity. Furthermore, well-designed downtowns with walkable streets and public events strengthen community bonds and appeal to both residents and tourists.

The Chamber recognizes that revitalizing and maintaining downtown areas requires collaborative efforts. Partnerships between public and private sectors, as well as investments in infrastructure, parking, and beautification, are essential to ensuring long-term success. Additionally, hosting events like festivals, farmers markets, exhibits, and parades inject vibrancy and supports local commerce.

For the Washington County Chamber, promoting a vibrant downtown aligns with its mission to enhance economic opportunities and improve the overall quality of life. By supporting and promoting the downtown economy, the Chamber envisions a brighter, more prosperous future for the entire community.

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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