



HELP SAVE OUR HISTORIC COURTHOUSES!

Shown above: Bexar County Courthouse

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COURTHOUSE CORNERSTONES

A Quarterly Update of the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program

ROUND III OF TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM LAUNCHED

With a \$50 million appropriation from Texas legislators, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) is ready to move into Round III of its Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. The announcement of a tentative timeline for the review of master plans and the awarding of Round III grants is another step in the ongoing success story of the program.

The proposed timeline for Round III calls for the completion of the initial review of master plans by September 14, 2001; final review of master plans by October 31, 2001; applications due no later than November 15, 2001; and December 2001 for staff and committee reviews. Grant awards will be announced in January 2002. A point system with specific criteria ranging from the age of a courthouse to its historical significance is used to rate grant applications.

Of the Round I grants awarded in May 2000, Shackelford County emerged as first to complete its restoration work through the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. The county rededicated its 1883 courthouse June 30.

"We are now beginning to see the results of the hard work that has gone into this program," said THC Executive Director

Larry Oaks. "Counties that complete their restoration work will begin to serve as inspirations and examples of what can be accomplished."

To date, THC staff have assisted in the restoration and preservation of 44 county courthouse projects. In Rounds I and II, the THC received 115 master plans, the first step required in the assistance process. Of those 115, 93 were approved. The 115 plans identified \$478 million worth of work that needed to be done.

In May 2000, the THC awarded \$42.4 million to 19 counties. Last October, the THC awarded nearly \$7 million to 28 counties, which was the remainder of the

original appropriation from the 76th Legislature.

Gov. George W. Bush and the Texas Legislature created the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program in 1999 with an initial appropriation of \$50 million. A second \$50 million allotment came from the 77th Legislature.

"With this allocation from the 77th Legislature, our work will continue for several more years," said Stan Graves, THC architecture division director. "We have laid a strong foundation on which to build an even stronger program."

Below: THC officials cut the ribbon at the Shackelford County Courthouse rededication ceremony.



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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM

WORKING
Timeline
 2001 - 2002



Shown right: Shackelford County residents at the rededication ceremony of the courthouse on June 30.

2001 | 2002

To date, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) has assisted in 44 county courthouse restoration and preservation projects. In Rounds I and II, the THC received 115 master plans, the first step required in the assistance process. Of those 115, 93 were approved. The 115 plans identified \$478 million worth of work that needs to be done. The Shackelford County Courthouse in Albany is the first to be restored through the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program and was rededicated June 30.

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY
14	31	15	1-31	DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED
Deadline for submitting master plans for Round III	Deadline for final approval of master plans for Round III	Applications due for Round III	Staff and committee reviews for Round III	THC awards grants for Round III

Restored Shackelford County Courthouse Rededicated June 30

The question lingers whether the recently restored Shackelford County Courthouse in Albany was dedicated or rededicated last month. In an 1883 edition of *The Albany Echo* an article states, "In connection with some of our county officials we learn that the subject of laying the cornerstone of the courthouse with appropriate ceremonies had not been thought of. This may be everybody's business, if so, nothing will be done, but it occurs to us a cornerstone properly baptized with corn and wine would be the proper thing." No record exists this was ever carried out.

There is, however, no question about the success of Shackelford County's effort to become the first to complete its courthouse restoration through the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program or the success of the events held recently to commemorate that.

Nearly 500 people, some from as far as Houston, paid tribute to the beautifully restored 1883 Shackelford County Courthouse on June 30. The event coincided with the release of the book,

For 500 Years: The Shackelford County Courthouse, co-authored by THC Vice-chair Shirley Caldwell, along with West Texas Bob Green and Reilly Nail, co-founder of the Old Jail Art Center in Albany. Caldwell was one of several speakers at the afternoon ceremony, along with THC Chair John L. Nau, III, and THC Architecture Division Director Stan Graves.

"This beautiful courthouse is a classic example of what the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program is designed to accomplish," said Nau. "It will also serve as an inspiration and example for other courthouses to follow."

At one time, the Victorian-era courthouse was severely threatened by a dangerous electrical and gas space heater system. Leaks flooded portions of the interior, damaging historic elements and valuable documents.

Today, no evidence of any past damage or destruction to the building remains. Gleaming wood floors and banisters and sparkling glass pane windows shine against the freshly painted interior walls. Visitors of all ages toured the structure to the accompaniment of

bagpipes, performed to remind citizens of the early Scottish stonemasons who were instrumental in the courthouse construction. Some of the more adventurous in the crowd even made it to the top of the old clock tower, from which the view of the surrounding community was unbroken for miles.

As the aroma of barbecue drifted across the courthouse lawn and lingered along the side streets of the courthouse square, you could almost imagine some of the early Shackelford County residents shaking their heads and saying to themselves, "Why, we should have done this in the first place!" ★



Above: THC Architecture Division Director Stan Graves is shaded only by his hat while speaking to the crowd on the courthouse lawn.

Left: Hundreds attended the rededication ceremony.



Above: A lone bagpipe player reminds Albany residents of the early Scottish stonemasons who crossed an ocean to build their courthouse.



USE YOUR VOICE

By Lori Glenn, Preservation Texas communications coordinator

For our ancient ancestors, the spoken word was so powerful that through speech worlds could be created or destroyed. Those beliefs hold true when it comes to advocacy. By means of advocacy, preservationists express their voices, making legislators aware of how they, as concerned citizens, want our state to continue to tell the story of Texas through our historic courthouses, main streets and schools.

The basic message of a preservation advocate is to promote the many contributions historic preservation makes in our communities. How has preservation brought a sense of community to your town? How has it helped your economy? In what way does preserving historic courthouses, schools and corner drugstores affect Texans for generations to come?

Preservation Texas (PT) is a statewide non-profit organization for preservation in Texas, existing to preserve the historic resources of our state through education, communication, advocacy and collaboration. Through PT's newsletter, the *Reporter*, Preservation Alerts, Preservation Day and other activities, PT informs Texans of preservation issues around the state.

More than 70 counties comprise PT's Courthouse Team. These counties have three or more representatives who work with PT on advocacy and education regarding courthouse preservation. During the recent legislative session, Texas preservationists educated legislators about the need for more funding for the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. Even though the session has ended, continue to write or visit your legislators and add your voice to the cause.

When Texas' historic courthouses were placed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's (NTHP) 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in America list in 1998, NTHP President Richard Moe made this observation, "Courthouses, like jazz and baseball, are uniquely American contributions in the world. With more than 225 historic courthouses, Texas has one of the nation's best collections. Great things can happen when people work together to save their history. It is now time to rally behind these temples of democracy to ensure that they continue to serve as symbols of community pride."

Historically, Texans have never backed down from expressing their voice, and we need to preserve that heritage as we advocate for our historic treasures.

Please keep Preservation Texas informed about your advocacy efforts. By working together, the voice for historic preservation will be heard loud and clear. Contact PT at 888/295-2885 or 512/472-0102. ★

COMMON COURTHOUSE QUESTIONS

Q: Does the Texas Historical Commission (THC) anticipate changes to the Master Plan and Application Review processes in Round III?

A: The THC's courthouse committee met on June 26 to review policies and procedures associated with the first two rounds of funding. The discussion included points raised by the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program Advisory Committee, a group of citizen advisors provided for in the programs enabling legislation, during an earlier meeting on the same matter. At this time, the commissioners feel the program is developing as originally planned and that no significant changes will be necessary. They may choose, however, to clarify some elements of the process to ensure a broader range of uniformity and participation.

Q: How can our county maximize its scoring potential in the upcoming round?

A: Check the THC courthouse web page at www.thc.state.tx.us for a copy of your county's score sheets from previous rounds and for information on the criteria used in the review process. While some categories cannot be changed, such as "prior compliance" and "existing easement," there are a number of areas where counties might gain additional points. Additional points might be earned for new easements, county preservation supports and historical designations.

For more information about designations, contact the THC History Programs Division at 512/463-5853. For more information about easements and county support, contact the THC Architecture Division at 512/463-6094. ★

Visit the THC web site at www.thc.state.tx.us.