

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



TEXAS
BRAZOS
TRAIL

TEXAS HERITAGE TRAILS PROGRAM

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Texas Brazos Trail Region



Contents

03 - 04

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD
PRESIDENT WELCOME

05 - 07

GET TO KNOW THE BRAZOS TRAIL REGION

08 - 15

BY THE NUMBERS/HIGHLIGHTS/
PARTNER FOCUS

16 - 18

MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS/
EDITORIAL FEATURES/DIGITAL
OUTREACH

19 - 20

FINANCIAL REPORTING/
2024 ECONOMIC IMPACT

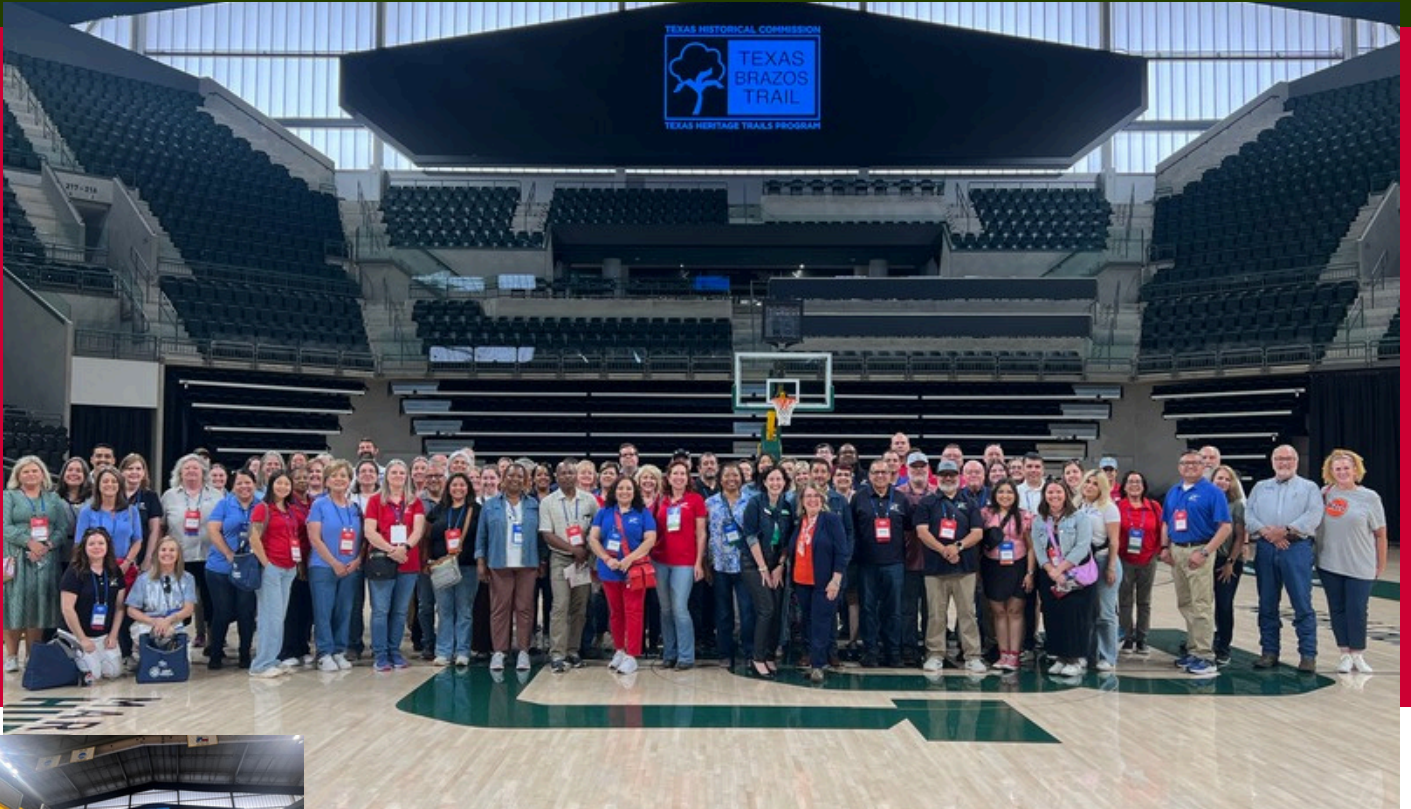
21

TEAM BRAZOS TRAIL

22

CERTIFICATION OF EXPENDITURES





Letter from the Director

What an incredible year for the Texas Brazos Trail Region! FY25 was filled with momentum, meaningful connections, and a growing spirit of collaboration across our 18-county region. Thanks to our outstanding Board of Directors, dedicated task force members, and passionate volunteers, TBTR strengthened its reach and deepened the storytelling of our region's heritage—from prehistoric beginnings to the transformative moments just 50 years ago that shaped our communities, counties, and culture. Our partners remain the heartbeat of everything we do. This year, we engaged more than 75 communities and expanded relationships with historical commissions, museums, Main Street programs, tourism offices, counties, and preservation allies. Together, we launched new initiatives—including the Boots to the Ground program #BTB2G, our Heritage Events Program, and the Heritage Teen Volunteer Program—while amplifying regional stories through Authentic Texas and other major statewide platforms.

"Heritage isn't something we simply preserve—it's something we activate together."

Partnership truly powers our progress. Our Partner Program grew 2500% over the past two years because we consistently show up—building relationships and supporting sites, events, and attractions with assessments, technical assistance, grants, and visibility that is far reaching.

TBTR's mission remains unwavering: to preserve, promote, and celebrate the heritage of the Texas Brazos Trail Region. I'm deeply grateful for every collaborator who makes this work possible—and energized by our partners and the trails ahead.



Pamela Anderson

Pamela Anderson
Executive Director
Texas Brazos Trail Region



Howdy Folks!

Letter from the Board Chair

As 2025 wraps up, we're proud of a year defined by action and collaboration for the Texas Brazos Trail Region. We truly put Boots to the Ground, traveling across our 18 counties to connect with partners, attend events, and share the story of our region's rich heritage.

Our efforts paid off in meaningful ways—welcoming new partners, supporting local destination initiatives, and helping promote heritage events and sites across the region. Thanks to your engagement, our network grew stronger than ever, creating opportunities that will benefit communities for years to come.

This year also demonstrated the power of shared purpose. Serving on the leadership team has shown firsthand how partners, communities, and dedicated leaders are strengthening heritage tourism. Our Executive Director and board worked closely to guide programs with unity and intention—from authentic storytelling around European migration heritage to celebrating Main Street development, revitalization, and the region's energy legacy. This steady leadership continues to move key initiatives forward.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to the Texas Historical Commission for their continued support and guidance. With 300+ newsletter subscribers, a digital audience of 15,000+ followers, and a traveler reach exceeding 10,000+, we're entering 2026 stronger than ever. We'll keep our boots on the ground, seeking new ways to collaborate and celebrate the history and culture that shape our region. Together, we'll continue telling stories that connect the past to the present and inspire future generations.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Here's to another year of making the Brazos Trail shine *Big & Bright!*

Joy Summar-Smith

Board Chair

Texas Brazos Trail Region



In this photo: Joy Summar-Smith, Dr Pepper Museum Associate Director, stands in the new Sip Shoot Share exhibit.

Mission

To educate, engage and promote cultural and heritage tourism in the 18-county Texas Brazos Trail Region.

Vision

The Texas Brazos Trail Region will increase the economic impact in its 18 county territory through regional partnerships, heritage tourism, marketing & preservation.



In this photo: Glimpse of Waco Country * Mart

About the Brazos Trail Region

The Texas Heritage Trails Program (THTP) is the award-winning heritage tourism initiative of the Texas Historical Commission (THC). This economic development program encourages heritage regions and the state to partner and promote Texas' historic and cultural resources. THTP helps preserve and celebrate Texas' history, benefiting communities and future generations. The Texas Brazos Trail Region, part of the Texas Heritage Trails Program, spans 18 counties, connecting communities like Navasota, Bryan, College Station, Georgetown, Belton, Salado, Waco, Clifton, and more. Established by the Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas Historical Commission, we amplify regional stories through partnerships, driving heritage tourism, and boosting local economies.

The Texas Brazos Trail Region is an extension of local governments, chambers of commerce, historical commissions, and preservation organizations. The Texas Brazos Trail Region amplifies regional stories through strategic partnerships. Supported by the THC and enhanced by our Brazos Trail Partner Program and co-ownership of the Texas Heritage Trails LLC, we drive heritage tourism and bolster local economies by promoting Texas' destinations, historic sites, and cultural attractions.

Our 18 Counties

Bastrop

Bell

Bosque (ee)

Brazos

Burleson

Coryelle

Falls

Freestone

Grimes

Hamilton

Lee

Leon

Limestone

McLennan

Madison

Milam

Robertson

Williamson

About the Texas Heritage Trails Program

The Texas Heritage Trails Program (THTP) is the award-winning heritage tourism initiative of the Texas Historical Commission (THC). This economic development program encourages communities, heritage regions, and the state to partner and promote Texas' historic and cultural resources. These robust local preservation efforts, combined with statewide marketing of heritage regions as tourism destinations, increase visitation to cultural and historic sites and bring more dollars to Texas communities. This in turn supports the THC's mission to protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, economic benefit, and enjoyment of present and future generations. The THTP is based around 10 scenic driving trails created in 1968 by Gov. John Connally and the Texas Highway Department (now the Texas Department of Transportation) as a marketing tool. These driving Trails were established in conjunction with HemisFair, an international exposition that commemorated the 250th anniversary of the founding of San Antonio.

Summary of Work

FY25

In FY25, the Texas Brazos Trail Region (TBTR) significantly expanded its impact across the 18-county region, strengthening partnerships, enhancing heritage tourism visibility, and delivering measurable value to communities, agencies, and local organizations.

TBTR engaged 60+ communities and collaborated with county leaders, historical commissions, museums, Main Street programs, tourism offices, nonprofits, and preservation partners—including Belton, Temple, Calvert, Copperas Cove, Riesel, Killeen, Williamson County, Bell County, Brazos County, Burleson County, Round Rock, Rockdale, Groesbeck, Mexia, Buffalo, Salado, Waco, College Station, Bryan, Bastrop County, and more.

Major accomplishments included the expansion of the Boots to the Ground Initiative, development of new programming such as the Historic Downtown Heritage Events Program and Heritage Teen Volunteer Program, and broadened regional content through four published articles in Authentic Texas.

TBTR supported partners through site assessments, technical assistance, grant support, and visibility at major statewide platforms including the Governor's Summit, Texas Downtown Conference (TXD), State Fair of Texas, Texas Heritage Trails LLC Retreat, and multiple statewide expositions.



(Top Left) Partner Engagement Event-Salado; (Top Right) THC Quarterly Commission Meeting-Amarillo; (Bottom) Texas Downtown Roundtable-Elgin

The Partner Program experienced exceptional growth, exceeding its annual goal by 150%, increasing from 8 to 25 partners—with another 8 pending to end FY25. Organizational strength increased with the addition of three new board members, expanding leadership and capacity. In FY25, TBTR generated \$27,505.21 in in-kind value, delivered more than 3,400 promotional materials, and supported hundreds of stakeholders through heritage tourism initiatives.

TBTR's continued mission is clear: to preserve, promote, and elevate heritage tourism across the Texas Brazos Trail Region—ensuring partners benefit from increased visibility, collaborative opportunities, and unified regional advocacy.

By the Numbers

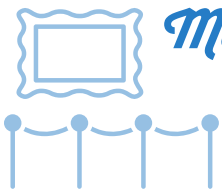
The information below has been captured by Datify for FY25

Region Population



2,500,000

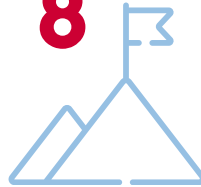
..... Attractions



Museums

55+

8



State Parks

State Historic Sites

2

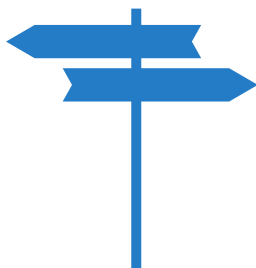


..... Regional Stakeholders



8

Designated Main Streets



8

Certified Local Governments



18

County Historical Commissions

Metrics In Motion



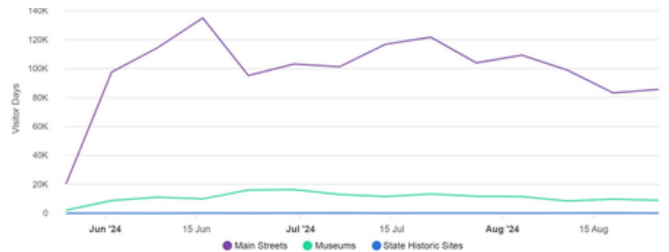
TRAVEL VISITOR DAYS BRAZOS TRAIL REGION DATA

Visitor Days

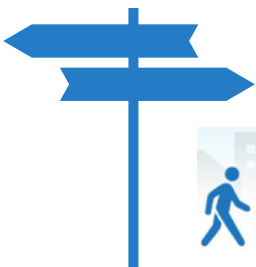


1,428,426

2024



TRAVELER TOTAL TRIPS BRAZOS TRAIL REGION DATA



Total Trips

926,902

2024



TRAVEL STAYS BRAZOS TRAIL REGION DATA



Average Length of Stay

1.7 Days



10 Heritage & Cultural Highlights



Tonkawa Tribal Land & Archeological Field Research

The Texas Brazos Trail Region has begun building relationships with Tonkawa President Russell Martin, Secretary/Treasurer Racheal Starr, and documentarian Bob Odell, and is actively pursuing collaboration with Executive Director Steven Gonzales of El Camino Real de los Tejas, the Texas Archeological Society, the THC Division of Archeology, and the Milam County Historical Commission to explore and share Tonkawa history, including recent TAS field work at Red Mountain, aka Sugarloaf Mountain.

Heritage Youth Volunteer Program Awards

The Texas Brazos Trail Region strengthened relationships with the Calvert Historical Foundation, Calvert Preservation, the City of Calvert, and the owners of the Eloia Theater, Landmark 1868, and Calvert Main Street Preservation through a partner engagement event, heritage tour, and board meeting that united tourism leaders from nine counties. These collaborations continue to grow, including expanding our Heritage Youth Volunteer program with high school students across the region.

Photo Captions: Top to Bottom - Tonkawa Tribal PowWow; THC Real Places Conference with El Camino Real de los Tejas, TBTR, TAS reps; TBTR Partner Event-Calvert; Heritage Youth Volunteers-at Eloia Theater, Calvert. Photo Credit: Jen Jones

Tonkawa Tribe PowWow

Red Mountain, Gause, TX

The Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma & Milam County Historic committee invited the Texas Brazos Trail and 150 exclusive attendees to witness the first Powwow at Red Mountain in over a century. The land, which is a sacred site for the Tonkawa people located near Gause in Milam County, Texas, was bought by the Tribe to preserve and protect it in perpetuity. The Tribe is working with the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association to eventually open it as a historical park for public access.



DOCUMENTARY SUPPORT TOUR & FEATURE CONTENT AUTHENTIC TEXAS: The Texas Brazos Trail Region is in early conversations with regional partners, community leaders, and local theaters about broadcasting the story of the Tonkawa Tribe with the 2026 Documentary by Bob Odell "Tonkawa: They All Stay Together." Several venues and heritage youth volunteers are being considered, including possible community viewing opportunities as these collaborations continue to take shape.

The Tonkawa's name actually means "they all stay together" (from the Waco word Tonkaweya), reflecting their historical unity as a confederation of bands.

Historic & Military Partner Focus

Museums Historic Sites Focus



The Texas Brazos Trail Region partnered with TxDOT Travel Counselors and the City of Waco to sponsor and co-host the 2025 TxDOT Travel Information Counselors Conference (TTCC), held April 28-May 1 in Waco. Co-hosted with the Waco Convention & Visitors Bureau, the conference featured the Texas Travel Expo, connecting destinations with counselors who guide millions of travelers.

Photo: Travel Counselors Conference 2025, Waco Mammoth National Monument Tour

New Partner Focus



We are thrilled to have the National Mounted Warfare Foundation as a new partner supporting the National Mounted Warrior Museum. This year, we are focusing on supporting military museums and other cultural sites, collaborating with foundations that help sustain them. We plan to continue this focus into 2026 and look forward to strengthening this partnership through engagement, marketing, and promotion with the National Mounted Warrior Museum and other military museums in our region.

Growth & Economic Impact

As a partner at statewide travel events, we focus on fostering relationships with counties, communities, and local sites and businesses to market their destinations and drive economic impact. By providing marketing collateral and highlighting programs, resources, events, and grant opportunities, we serve as a connector for our partners. This approach is driving increased engagement, increasing travel, and showcasing lesser-known sites, histories, and stories across our region.

Thank Top Tier Partners 2025

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



TEXAS
BRAZOS
TRAIL

TEXAS HERITAGE TRAILS PROGRAM

PARTNERS

LEGACY PARTNER: MCLENNAN COUNTY

PLATINUM PARTNERS:

DESTINATION WACO, DMO
GEORGE H.W. BUSH LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

SILVER PARTNERS:

BURLESON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
COLLEGE STATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM
DESTINATION BRYAN
GEORGETOWN CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
ELGIN MAIN STREET
CITY OF NAVASOTA
DR PEPPER MUSEUM
HAMILTON EDC/MAIN STREET
VILLAGE OF SALADO

BRONZE HISTORIAN PARTNERS:

BELL COUNTY MUSEUM
EXPLORE BASTROP COUNTY
NATIONAL MOUNTED WARFARE FOUNDATION
WILLIAMSON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

BRAZOS TRAIL BACKER PARTNERS:

BASTROP COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BRAZOS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
CALVERT HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

PATRON LEVEL:

BELL COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
BOSQUE MUSEUM
CONFEDERATE REUNION GROUNDS STATE HISTORIC SITE
FANTHROP INN STATE HISTORIC SITE
MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN G.I.
PRESERVATION GEORGETOWN
SALADO MUSEUM & COLLEGE PARK

The Stars at Night are Big & Bright - Deep in the Heart of the Texas Brazos Trail Region

Boosting Partner Growth 2025

Increasing Support & Development Resources

25

TOTAL PARTNERS

2024--2025

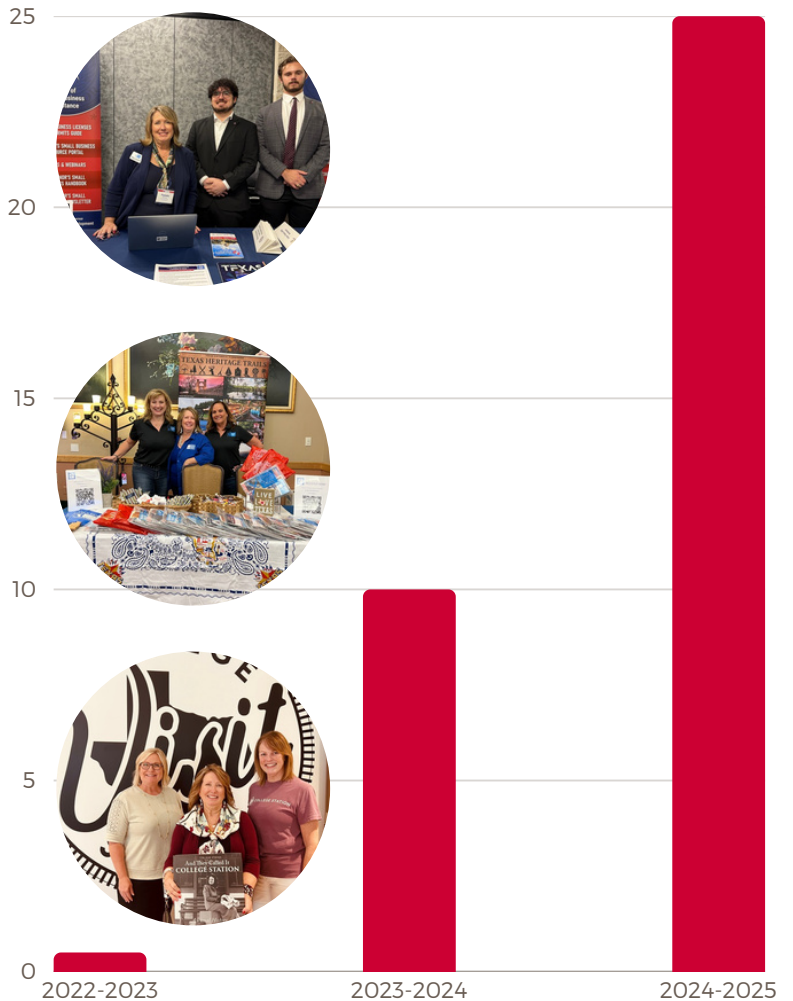
150%

PARTNER COUNT

TEXAS BRAZOS PARTNER COUNT INCREASE FROM 2023-2024

2500%

INCREASE IN PARTNER INGAGEMENT OVER A TWO YEAR PERIOD



Our Partner Program continues to grow in the Texas Brazos Region supporting our communities with boots to the ground support and a powerful resource for economic impact!

Boots 2 the Ground

Boots 2 the Ground Miles Travelled

Partner Program Growth



New Program 2024-2025 Youth Heritage Volunteer Program

Meeting & Events: Elgin ISD , Calvert ISD, Round Rock ISD , Texas State University, Salado Museum/ISD, Texas Tech, Taylor, Waco, Homeschools, TX State University, Texas Tech



Performance Measures

This section highlights annual metrics assessing regional impact and accountability, covering partner engagement, marketing reach, heritage tourism development, community support, and service delivery. Metrics include visitor engagement, promotional efforts, community partnerships, and project support.

Performance Measures

		<u>#Org Assisted</u>	<u>#Resources Distributed</u>
#1	Hospitality, Resource Development, Other Training	3000	6300
#2	Destination and Technical Assistance	185	1500
#3	Destination/Exhibit Consultation, Tourism Promotion	600	6200
#4	Site Interpretation	180	8700

Strategic Priorities

This section outlines the program’s four strategic priorities guiding regional planning and statewide alignment.:

Strategic Priorities

- #1 **Raise Heritage & Cultural Attractions Standards**
- #2 **Foster Heritage Preservation & Education**
- #3 **Regional Cooperation & Promotion of Heritage & Cultural Attractions**

Our Partner Promise



New Partner Spotlight

The Texas Brazos Trail Region is excited to welcome the National Mounted Warfare Foundation (NMWF) as a new partner! Their mission to honor, preserve, and share the history of mounted warfare complements the rich military heritage of our region, state, and nation.

National history has a strong presence in the Brazos Trail Region, and military heritage is a key part of the story that shapes our communities and cultural identity. Foundations like NMWF play an important role in fostering regional collaboration. Through our Partner Program, we look forward to working together to expand visibility, enhance heritage tourism, and connect visitors with the deep military roots of Central Texas



Photo: National Mounted Warfare Foundation Meeting

Partners In FY25

A heartfelt thank you to our FY25 partners—their dedication, collaboration, and shared passion make all of this possible. We continue outreach efforts to grow partner engagement and support counties, communities, and historic destinations across the Texas Brazos Trail Region. Through relationship building and collaboration, we provide our partners with assistance and resources, raise awareness, and strengthen local economic development.

Bastrop County, Explore
Bastrop County Historical Society
Bell County Historical Commission
Bell County Museum
Bosque Museum
Brazos County Historical Commission
Bryan, Destination
Calvert Historical Foundation
Clifton Chamber of Commerce
College Station Tourism
Confederate Reunion Grounds
State Historic Site
Dr Pepper Museum

*Thank
you,
Partners!*



Elgin Mainstreet
Fanthorp Inn State Historic Site
George HW Bush Library & Museum
Georgetown CVB
Hamilton EDC/ Main Street
McLennan County
Museum of the American GI
Navasota Tourism
Preservation Georgetown
Salado, Village of
Salado Museum & College Park
Waco DMO
Williamson County Historical
Commission

Marketing Highlights

This year was impactful with a Boots to the Ground approach that exceptionally productive for our Texas Brazos Trail partners. Our efforts supported our key partners in Central Texas with educational spotlights in Calvert, numerous Partner Engagement events, Main Street collaborations in cities like Elgin, Heritage Youth Volunteer opportunities with Calvert ISD and Salado Museum. We support marketing efforts for our partners by reaching far across the state to deliver destination collateral to travelers at various local, county, regional, and statewide events such as Welcome Home Rio Grande Valley Winter Texan Expositions and Dallas/Fort Worth Travels shows, and many more.



Type	Activity / Project	Outcomes
Authentic Texas Magazine Email/ Newsletter/ Partner Communication Marketing Collateral Regional Retail Collateral	Total Subscribers: 25,000+ Constant Contact list increased 300% Newsletter Open Rate @ 74% with Cultural & Heritage Focus Articles Email Click Through Rate: 70% TBTR Travel Guide Distributed Events Marketing Mobile Expo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New constant contact features, such as Texas Time Travel website events and heritage site social links, appeared to increase the click rate by 20%.
Tradeshows, Info Fairs, Governmental Relations and Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lackland AFB Multi-Trail Event THC Real Places Conference & Statewide Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributed 20,000+ guides at 72 events. 150% increase in partnership with Bots to the Ground efforts and marketing the Partner Program
Collaboration & Program Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with Friends of THC at Real Places 2025, Partners like Calvert, City of Navasota, Salado, Buffalo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacting our Partners and Resource Partners with connection boosting economic impact and marketing exposure.
Training & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Training & Development Empowering Communities Education Sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We provided event support and assistance to create impact in 2025
Partner Engagement Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calvert Partner Engagement Event & HYVP Elgin Main Street Round Table Salado Museum Heritage Youth Volunteer Drive Governor's Summit-Buffalo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community event participation yielded interactions with over 25,000 heritage travelers.

Editorial Features

Note: This page is optional. If there were no such special features this year, leave it out.



"The Czech Connections is alive and well in the Brazos Trail"

Czech heritage reflects the lasting impact of Czech immigrants on Texas culture, from early farming settlements to enduring contributions in food, music, and traditions. Today, this influence is seen in kolaches, vibrant Czech communities and festivals, and preservation efforts by organizations like the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center.

Authentic Texas
Summer 2025

"Waco's vibrant Main Street is the heart of the historic district"

Waco's Main Street is the heart of downtown, blending historic charm with modern shops, restaurants, cafés, galleries, and cultural attractions. Lined with preserved 19th- and early 20th-century buildings, it hosts festivals, community events, and gatherings, connecting residents and visitors to Waco's rich heritage.

Authentic Texas
Fall 2025

Photos on Previous Page: Caption goes here.

Digital & Boots to the Ground Outreach



Facebook

Followers / Posts
15,000+ / 250+
Engagement + 52%



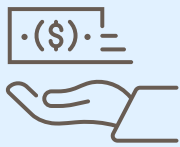
Followers / Posts
3800+ / 110



Financial Reporting

Total Income **\$101,986**

Grant Funds	\$81,500
Project Funds	
+ County Partner Contributions	\$10,000
+ Community Partner Contributions	\$21,965
+ Partner Participation Fee	\$600

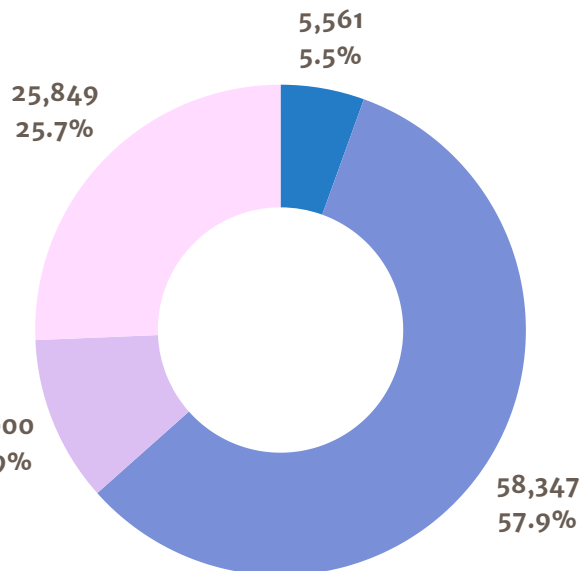


\$18,242 *In-Kind Gifts*

\$103,521

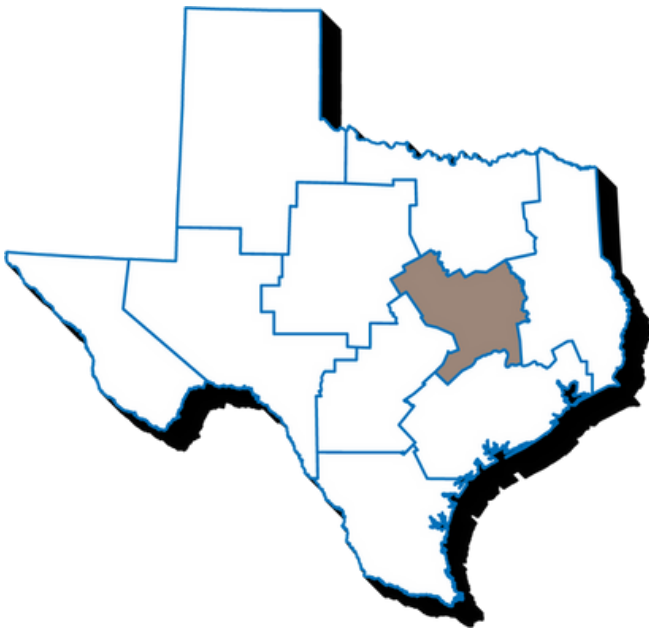
Total Annual Expenses

- Regional Travel & Training
- Salaries, Benefits & Payroll
- Print Expenses/ Events Production **11,000**
10.9%
- Marketing & Program Development
- Operational Expenses



BRAZOS TRAIL REGION

Economic Impact



The 18-county Texas Brazos Trail Region features rich heritage, rich culture, and unforgettable history, including two Texas Historical Commission state historic sites.

Travel and tourism are vital to the Texas economy, and the Brazos Trail Region is no exception. In 2024, direct travel spending in the Brazos Trail Region accounted for roughly \$3.9 billion of the overall \$97.5 billion spent by visitors to the state.

Visiting historic sites, communities, and museums is a significant component of the state's and region's travel industry. A 2015 study by The University of Texas at Austin and Rutgers University determined that more than 10.5 percent of all travel in Texas is heritage-related.

Following devastating declines due to the pandemic, the Texas travel industry continues its rebound in 2024. Travel spending increased an estimated 3.5% compared to the prior year, and all economic indicators now exceed the pre-pandemic level.

Travel Matters

Travel Means Jobs



\$3.9 billion
direct travel spending in 2024



32.7 thousand
jobs directly supported by tourism spending within the region



\$380.5 million
state and local taxes generated from travel spending



\$1.2 billion
travel-generated earnings

Source: Dean Runyan and Associates, Travel Texas, April 2025

For more information, contact the Brazos Trail Region at info@texasbrazostrail.com or the Heritage Tourism Program at the Texas Historical Commission at THCheritagetourism@thc.texas.gov.



23 Team Brazos Trail



Texas Brazos Trail, Executive Director

Pamela S. Anderson



Executive Board of Directors

Joy Summar-Smith, President

Dr Pepper Museum



Marsha Hendrix, Vice President

THC State Historic Sites



Sharon Whitaker, Treasurer

Preservation Georgetown



Erin Shields, Secretary

Executive Director, Bosque Museum

Board of Directors

Cynthia Hernandez

Belton EDC

Chris Riggins

Destination Bryan

Susan Morton

Waco Convention & Visitors Bureau

Rebecca Aydelotte

Carnegie History Center

Christina Alvarez

Elgin Mainstreet

Lynette Jones, Incoming Vice President

Salado Museum of College Park

Executive Task Force:

Michael Rhodes

Robin Shallard

Debbie Lufburrow

Shagufta Ellam

Judy Anderson

Marketing & Program Development

Jennifer Jones



@texasbrazostrail



info@texasbrazostrail.com



www.texasbrazostrail.com



HERITAGE REGION CERTIFICATION OF EXPENDITURES

CONTRACT #:

808-26-253473

As the the authorized representative of the Texas Brazos Trail Region, I hereby state that the facts and information submitted in this report are true and correct, and that,

Procurement Process: (select appropriate circumstance)

a. Followed an open and competitive procurement process as established by the Region and/or Fiscal Agent

PA

Reported Costs:

b. were incurred, and work was performed during the contract period,

PA

c. were relevant to the contract scope of work,

PA

d. represent actual cash transactions which have been paid by the Region and/or Fiscal Agent,

PA

Project Accounting:

I further state that properly segregated books or accounts of grant have been maintained, and that documentation:

e. exists and includes, but is not limited to the following:

- signed / dated (sub)contract copies for all contractual services,
- signed / dated timesheets or payroll statements for all personnel costs,
- individual receipts for all materials and supplies.


PA

f. will be kept in an auditable condition for a period of no less than five (5) years from the date of this certification.

PA

g. will be provided immediately upon request for any and all reported charges.

PA



Signature of Legally Authorized Representative of Region

Pamela Anderson, TBTR Executive Director

Print Name and Title of Above



Signature of Legally Authorized Fiscal Agent (if applicable)

Joy Summar-Smith, TBTR President

Print Name and Title of Above