

TEXAS FOREST TRAIL

R E G I O N

This travel guide is made possible through the Texas Historical Commission's partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation, Office of the Governor - Economic Development and Tourism, Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas Commission on the Arts.

The Texas Historical Commission, the state agency for historic preservation, administers a variety of programs to preserve the archeological, historical and cultural resources of Texas.

The Texas Historical Commission is a leader in implementing and promoting heritage tourism efforts in Texas. The Texas Heritage Trails Program is the agency's top tourism initiative.



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**TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

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Funding provided through TxDOT's Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program
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Printed in Texas, No. 7/04-450M

Inset: Sam Houston Statue and Visitor Center, Huntsville



**EXPLORING THE
HERITAGE
OF EAST TEXAS**

Spanning 35 East Texas counties, from Red River County on the Oklahoma border to Jefferson County on the Gulf of Mexico, the Texas Forest Trail Region was the “Gateway to Texas” for prehistoric Caddo Indians, Spanish and French explorers, Anglo pioneers, enslaved and freed African Americans and European immigrants. Shadows of early Caddo and Spanish occupation linger, and the stories of Texas’ emergence from a wilderness to a great state unfold in the region’s numerous towns, many among the state’s oldest.

All you expect from Texas is here: wide-open spaces, oil derricks, rodeos and that proud-to-be-Texan spirit. But there’s more. Add four national and five state forests, abundant lakes and rivers, the incomparable Big Thicket, old southern plantations, historic courthouse squares, festivals galore, spectacular spring and fall color, bayous, swamps and alligators, and the Texas Forest Trail Region becomes the perfect place for tourists to indulge their appetites for history, culture and nature.

The Texas Forest Trail

Gateway to Texas

Texas heritage is everywhere – from historic downtowns with restored Victorian buildings, antique shops, soda fountains, museums and Civil War monuments to historic sites, railroads, sawmill towns and oil boomtowns. East Texans love their heritage, and if sometimes they get carried away it’s because they’re good storytellers not adverse to embellishing the already colorful facts. Legend has it East Texas is home to the invention of the hamburger and a biblically inspired flying machine which may have flown before the Wright brothers’ famous flight.

The region boasts one of Texas’ greatest heroes, Sam Houston. A complex man, he lived with Cherokees in Oklahoma and was governor of Tennessee before leading Texas’ fight for independence from Mexico. Houston became the first elected president of the Republic of Texas, and when Texas became a state, he served as both a U.S. senator and governor.

Exhibits at the Sam Houston Homestead & Museum Complex in Huntsville explore the life of the famous Texan.



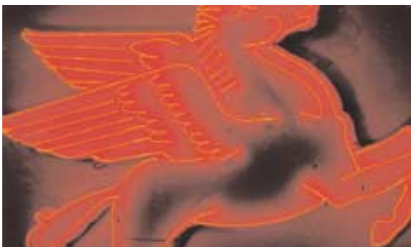
The area's original inhabitants were the Caddo Indians, an advanced prehistoric civilization of mound builders with sophisticated trade networks. The state owes its name to the Caddos. They welcomed Spanish explorers, calling them tejas, meaning friends.

Texans declared independence from Mexico in 1836, but the spirit of independence flared earlier in East Texas. Nacogdoches was the site of three separate rebellions. After the fall of the Alamo, settlers from all over Texas fled their homes during the Runaway Scrape. Many headed for the Louisiana border and took refuge in East Texas towns until word came of the decisive victory at San Jacinto.

Western expansion and European immigration brought many people to and through Texas beginning in the mid-1800s. They drove out most Native American tribes, but the Alabama-Coushatta remained on land set aside as a reservation near Livingston.



Visitors can walk over a 560-foot historical bridge at the center of Footbridge Park in Rusk.



The Mobil Oil Pegasus, above, symbolizes the impact oil had in East Texas.

The engineer checks his pocket watch at the Texas State Railroad State Park in Rusk and Palestine.



During the Civil War, Texas chose secession. Nowhere did passions run higher than in East Texas. Some towns were suppliers and mustering points for the Confederate Army, and most lost a significant number of men.

Following the Civil War, railroad expansion in East Texas and the depletion of forests in northern states gave rise to the timber industry. Clear-cutting destroyed many old-growth forests, but eventually modern forestry and conservation practices were adopted.

Texas heritage is everywhere...



from historic downtowns with restored Victorian buildings, antique shops, soda fountains, museums and Civil War monuments to historic sites, railroads, sawmill towns and oil boomtowns.

When the Lucas Gusher blew at Spindletop in 1901, the word Texas became synonymous with oil. In the 1930s, the discovery of oil in Gladewater and Kilgore brought fortune hunters as well as desperate families seeking relief from the Great Depression. Boomtowns sprang up overnight.

Historically, the Texas Forest Trail Region's climate, natural beauty, wildlife and medicinal springs attracted tourists and winter residents as far back as the early 1800s. Today the development of lakes, parks and trails, the creation of heritage attractions and the historic restoration of a dozen Texas Main Street cities make the region more inviting than ever.



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



A cenotaph dedicated to those killed in the 1937 school explosion in New London.

Visitors can participate in hands-on exhibits at the many heritage festivals throughout the region.


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TEXAS FOREST TRAIL REGION

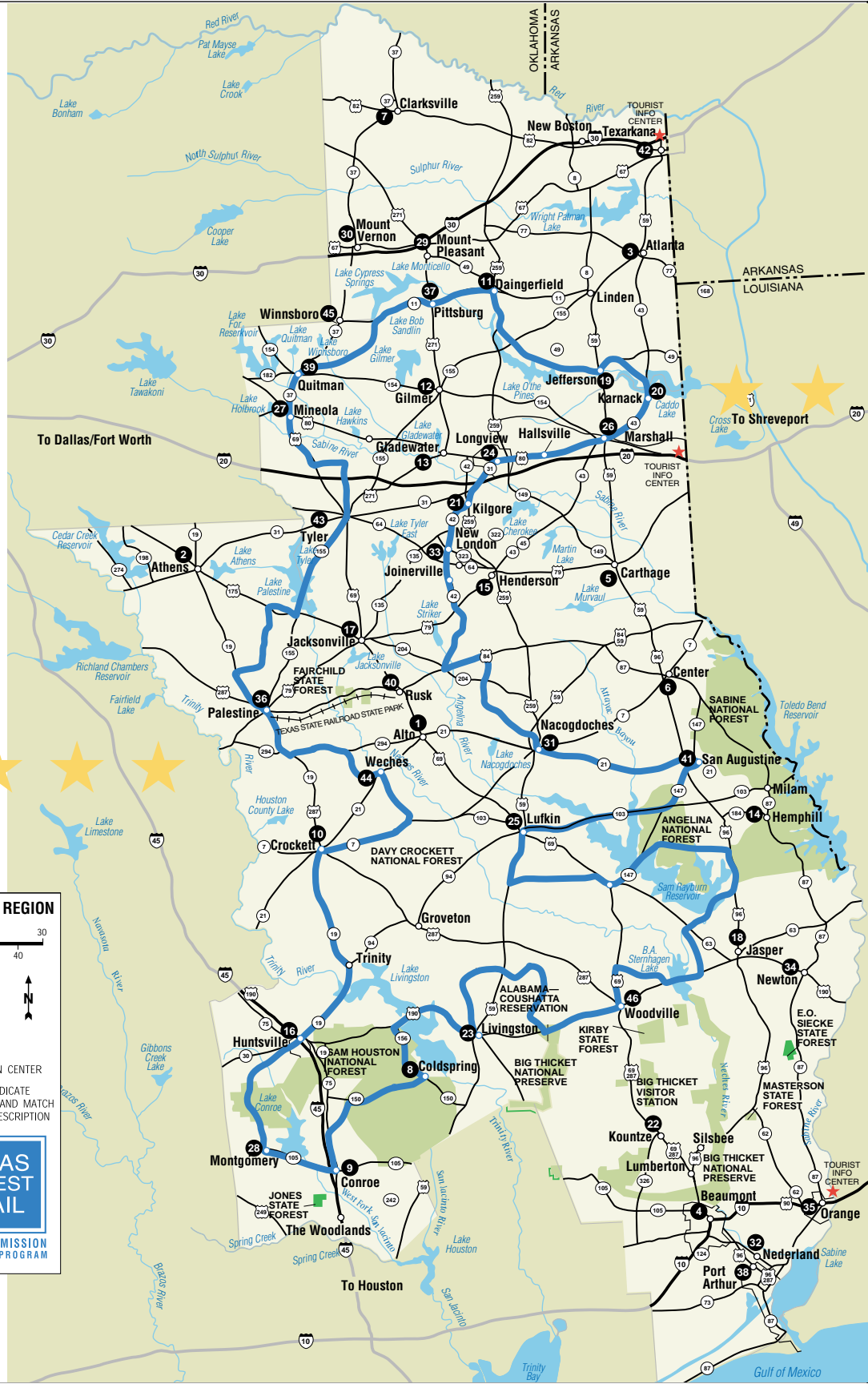
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INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
 U.S. HIGHWAY
 STATE HIGHWAY
 TEXAS FOREST TRAIL
 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER
 NUMBERS ON MAP INDICATE POINTS OF INTEREST, AND MATCH NUMBERS IN TRAIL DESCRIPTION



TEXAS FOREST TRAIL

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
TEXAS HERITAGE TRAILS PROGRAM



1 ALTO

For centuries travelers followed El Camino Real, or the Royal Highway, which roughly follows Texas State Highway 21 through Alto. It was blazed by Spaniards in the 1690s with the help of Ais Indian guides who traced their ancestors' footpaths. Southwest of town, the scenic highway opens onto the spectacular Neches River Valley and the area occupied by Caddo Indians from A.D. 800 to 1300. Learn how the Caddos worked and lived at the interpretive center of Caddoan Mounds State Historic Site. A short walking trail leads to ceremonial mounds, a village site and a reconstructed Caddo house built with Stone Age tools.

2 ATHENS

Discover history and nature in this spirited town. Local celebrations include Uncle Fletch's Burger and Bar-B-Q Cook-off in honor of the café owner who, legend has it, invented the hamburger and introduced it at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. Step into the past in the recreated law office, kitchen and schoolroom at the Henderson County Historical Museum, which is housed in the 1896 Victorian-style Faulk and Gauntt Building. Then visit the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center to watch divers feed fish in huge aquariums, try a hand at casting or view displays of antique fishing gear.

3 ATLANTA

Atlanta's early settlers came from Georgia and vestiges of the Old South linger. Visitors to the renovated Texas & Pacific Train Depot Museum will find more than a proud southern heritage exhibited. One prominent display honors Bessie Coleman. Born here in 1892, Coleman was the world's first African American pilot. At Atlanta State Park, situated on Lake Wright Patman Dam, archeologists have uncovered evidence of early Caddo Indians.



4 BEAUMONT

Historic pride flourishes in this Texas Main Street City, especially in the Crockett Street Entertainment District, where abandoned historic buildings became restaurants and nightclubs. The opulent 1927 Jefferson Theatre's Mediterranean-influenced interior



Grand historic homes, such as the McFadden-Ward House in Beaumont, grace the entire region.

features a white marble staircase and an organ that rises from the orchestra pit on hydraulic lift. The 1903 Tyrrell Historical Library, a former Baptist church, houses thousands of books on Texas history, genealogical resources and art collections. The nearby cultural district is home to the Texas Energy Museum, the Art Museum of Southeast Texas and the Edison Plaza Museum. "The world's largest fire hydrant" and the historic 1927 Beaumont Fire Department Headquarters mark the location of the Fire Museum of Texas.

Bordering downtown is Old Town, where 100 years' worth of luxurious furnishings fill the 1906 Beaux Arts McFaddin-Ward House. Visitors glimpse another side of life at the turn of the 20th century while strolling the streets of a reconstructed boomtown at the Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum. For an overview of all the area's attractions — and to learn about the pioneering golfer who earned the title "the greatest woman athlete of the first half of the 20th century," — visit the Babe Didrikson Zaharias Museum and Visitor Center.



5 CARTHAGE

This Texas Main Street City was the birthplace of two country music greats, Woodward Maurice “Tex” Ritter and “Gentleman” Jim Reeves. The Tex Ritter Museum and Country Music Hall of Fame honors both, along with other Texas country music stars, through displays of movie posters, guitars and memorabilia.



The magnificent 1885 Shelby County Courthouse stands at the heart of Center.

6 CENTER

Center won an 1866 dispute over the location of the Shelby County seat, but Shelbyville, the acting seat, would not concede. So some Center folks stole the county records in the dead of night. In 1885, the town built the distinctive Shelby County Courthouse, which reflects the heritage of its architect, J.J.E. Gibson, an Irish immigrant descended from builders of cathedrals and castles. An interesting touch in this courthouse, which is now a visitor's center, is a trap door behind the bench so the judge could make a hasty retreat if necessary. Visitors can learn more about the county at the Shelby County Museum, where a timeline and period rooms interpret history from the days of Caddo Indians to Spanish explorers to pioneer settlers.

7 CLARKSVILLE

The “Gateway to Pioneer Texas,” Clarksville was the first stop for settlers crossing the Red River from Oklahoma. Its historic courthouse and town square take visitors back through time.

Nearby, the restored 1898 Queen Anne-style Lennox House greets visitors with its gracious front porch and comfortably elegant original furnishings.

8 COLDSRING

A narrow window of time is captured on Main Street where most buildings were erected between 1916 and 1923. The town site and courthouse were moved there just blocks from their original location after a 1915 fire destroyed the wooden courthouse. The San Jacinto County Museum, housed in the 1887 jail, remains on the old town site along with other original and relocated buildings.

9 CONROE

After several epidemics and two major fires early in its history, this town's fortunes changed in 1931 when the discovery of oil lifted it from the Great Depression. Unique displays and a general store filled



with activities for children bring history to life at the Heritage Museum of Montgomery County. Downtown, the 1934 Crighton Theatre, built for vaudeville productions and then converted to a movie theater, stages live local and touring productions.

10 CROCKETT

Established in 1837 as the seat of one of the oldest counties in the Republic of Texas, the town was named for the famous coon-skin-capped scout who is said to have camped there on his way to the Alamo. During the Civil War, Crockett was a mustering point and training center for Confederate forces. Today, visitors can enjoy the town's many historic homes and take part in events, such as the Fiddlers Festival in June.

11 DAINGERFIELD

Imagine the area's Civil War-era iron foundries, sawmills and cowhide tanyards working full speed to supply the Confederacy. Today, much of the region's vitality centers around Daingerfield State Park, developed as a recreation area by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1940s.

12 GILMER

Red brick streets and old-fashioned shops invite a leisurely stroll around the square of this Texas Main Street City, located on the site of a former Cherokee Indian village. Enjoy a wide-ranging collection of county memorabilia in the Historic Upshur Museum, which occupies the former 1925 post office. Exhibits include a 20th-century photographic record of the area and a history of the region's industries and agriculture. Farmers lost their market for yams, an important cash crop, when weevils invaded in 1930, and officials imposed a five-year shipping quarantine. When the quarantine lifted in 1935, a celebration called the East Texas Yamboree was held at harvest time. Now about 100,000 people gather each October to attend the Yamboree, one of Texas' oldest continuous festivals.

13 GLADEWATER

While the nation suffered during the Great Depression, Gladewater became a thriving oil boomtown. Once called the "Hub of the East Texas Oil Field," this Texas Main Street City is now known as the "Antique Capital of East Texas." A replica of Old Snavelly No. 1, the discovery well that started the 1931 boom, stands in the middle of town.



Daingerfield State Park

14 HEMPHILL

On the easy-going town square, men gather almost daily under the cedar tree to play dominoes. The tree and tradition go back to the early 1900s. County memorabilia and genealogy records share space with jail cells and trap-door gallows at the Sabine County Museum and Virgie Speights Memorial Library. The setting for this multi-use facility is the Victorian 1903 jail, remodeled in 1925. The gallows was used only once, two years before hangings were outlawed in 1924.



15 HENDERSON

Prior to the Civil War, cotton was the foundation of Henderson's early economy, and was even used as legal tender. Although cotton trading is no longer, this Texas Main Street City preserves much of its early charm and the town square is a National Register Historic District. Heritage abounds at the Rusk County Depot Museum Complex. Children and adults enjoy its Children's Discovery Center, a hands-on learning center in the former cotton warehouse of the 1901 Missouri-Pacific Depot. The museum also boasts the Victorian-style Arnold Outhouse, the only outhouse in Texas with a state historical marker. The Gaston Museum, outside of Henderson and near Joinerville, focuses on life during the oil boom era. It is located near the site of the Daisy Bradford #3, which blew in 1930, establishing the East Texas Oil Field.



1930
EAST TEXAS OIL BOOM

16 HUNTSVILLE

From its founding as a trading post in 1836, Huntsville quickly established itself as a prominent Texas town. In 1847 this Texas Main Street City became the site of the Texas State Penitentiary, and in 1850 it vied unsuccessfully with Austin to become the state capital. The Sam Houston Homestead & Museum Complex features an impressive museum as well as the Woodland Home, which Houston sold to pay campaign debts, and Steamboat House, where Houston's body lay in state for 24 hours before being laid to rest at Oakwood Cemetery. For a fascinating look at life and death behind prison walls, visit the Texas Prison Museum which houses the electric chair nicknamed "Old Sparky."

17 JACKSONVILLE

Not ones to be left behind, the residents of Jacksonville picked up and moved the town in 1872 when the International-Great Northern Railroad laid tracks several miles from their original townsite. The Vanishing Texana Museum, in the Jacksonville Public Library, displays Native American artifacts, old farm implements and photographs.

18 JASPER

Alligators, herons and bass attract hikers, birders and fishermen to this community, which is located west of B.A. Steinhagen Lake and south of Lake Sam Rayburn. A trail in Boykin Springs National Forest leads to the unrestored ruins of the Old Aldridge Sawmill and Ghost Town. Once a thriving sawmill town, residents abandoned Aldridge in the 1920s after the native timber was depleted.



The region boasts magnificent lakes such as B.A. Steinhagen Lake near Jasper.

19 JEFFERSON

A bustling river port in its heyday, much of Jefferson's glamorous past is preserved for today's heritage tourist. Imagine railroad tycoon Jay Gould entertaining friends aboard his elegantly appointed 1888 private railroad car called "The Atalanta." The coach, which is open for tours, was restored after serving as a family's home during the 1930s oil boom. Visitors can tour or spend a night at the 1852 Excelsior House, Texas' second-oldest continuously operating hotel. Nearby, the Jefferson Historical Museum occupies an 1888 federal building and features local memorabilia. At the intersection of Lafayette and Market streets is the bronze Sterne fountain, graced by the goddess Hebe who pours water in three levels — for horses, people and dogs.

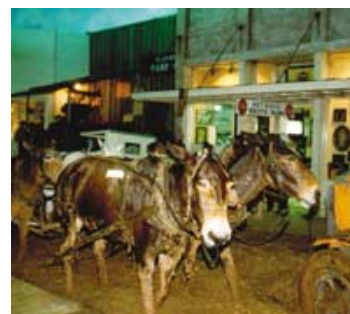


20 KARNACK

Named after a city in Egypt, Karnack was the childhood home of Lady Bird Johnson, former First Lady of the United States. Today, it serves as a gateway to the mystical Caddo Lake. Covering 26,000 acres, the lake is a swampy maze winding through overgrown cypress, with 42 miles of channel marked to keep boaters from getting lost. One theory is the lake formed behind a Red River logjam. Another is that it resulted from the 1811 earthquake centered in Missouri, a theory similar to a Caddo Indian legend that says the lake was formed at night by angry shaking earth spirits.

21 KILGORE

In the early 1930s, two gushers miles apart signaled the discovery of the biggest oil field of its time. Overnight the tiny farming community of Kilgore swelled to 10,000 people eager to strike it rich. Today, a park filled with replicated derricks marks





The mystical Caddo Lake, near Karnack, draws recreational and nature enthusiasts to the area.

One Caddo Indian legend says that the lake was formed at night by angry shaking earth spirits.

23 LIVINGSTON

A suspicious 1902 fire, purportedly set over local liquor prohibition, forced residents to rebuild this Southeast Texas community. An old log-hauling locomotive and the 1933 Jonas Davis Log Cabin mark the location of the Polk County Memorial Museum and Heritage Park. Outside of town, in the heart of the Big Thicket, is the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation. The tribe settled in East Texas around 1780, and Sam Houston had the land declared a reservation as a reward for the tribe's courage in remaining neutral during the War for Independence from Mexico.

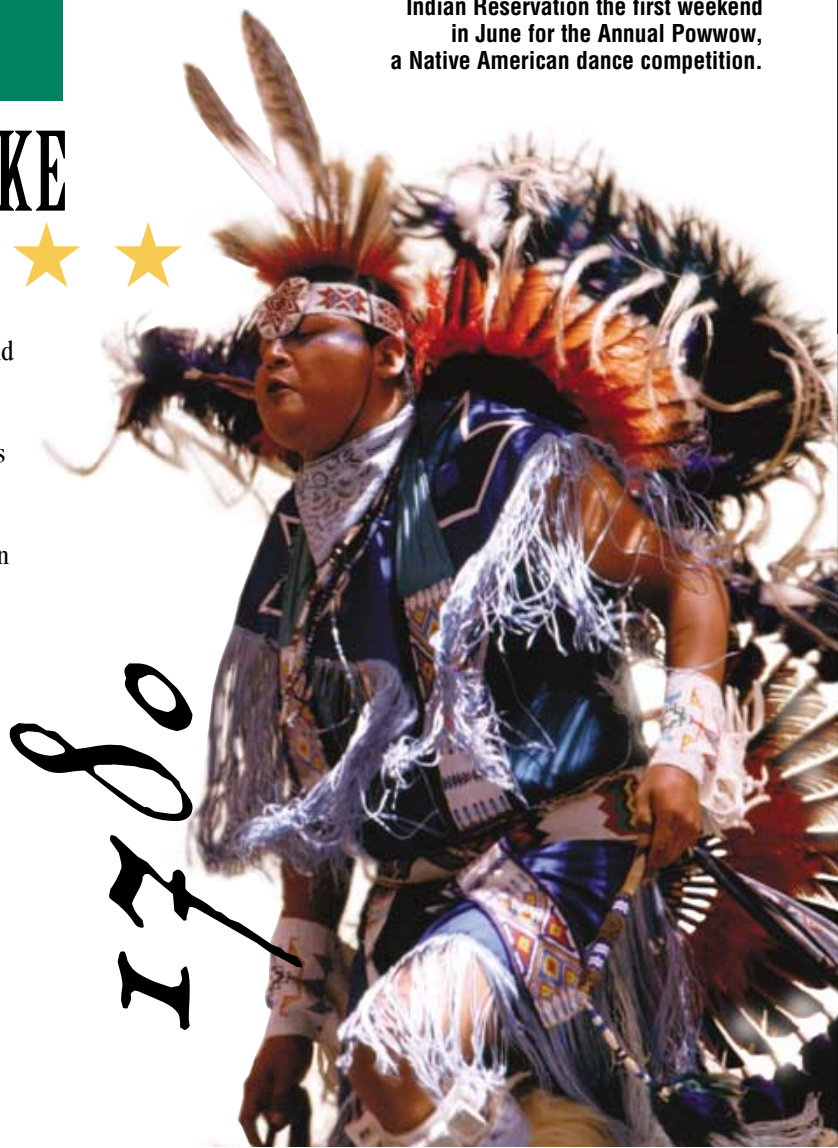
Visit the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation the first weekend in June for the Annual Powwow, a Native American dance competition.

LEGENDS OF CADDO LAKE

the spot known as “the world’s richest acre.” The excitement and harsh realities of that period are realized at the East Texas Oil Museum, where visitors can walk the streets of Boomtown USA. In the realistic, full-sized street scene, workers toil to free vehicles mired in the mud, while visitors, like yesteryear boomtown residents, can enjoy an ice cream soda, go to the theater, listen to a jukebox or browse the shops. Kilgore’s glamorous side is on display at the Rangerette Showcase, which honors the world-famous precision drill and dance team. Visitors will get a kick out of seeing memorabilia dating back to the team’s founding in 1940.

22 KOUNTZE

“The Big Light in the Big Thicket,” is a gateway to the vast, impenetrable woods that were once hideouts for murderers, thieves and Civil War draft dodgers. Today, the Big Thicket is a major biological crossroads where desert, swamp, barrens and piney woods collide. The 97,000-acre Big Thicket National Preserve serves as a living laboratory for the study of diverse ecological systems. Visitors to this natural setting can view fascinating exhibits and explore hiking trails at the preserve’s visitor center, located seven miles north of town on US 69.



24 LONGVIEW

During World War II, Longview gained national prominence as the gathering point for the Big Inch pipeline, designed to protect crude oil for the war effort from sabotage on its way to Pennsylvania. That story is one of many described on wall panels in Heritage Plaza Park, where visitors can see Longview's first century, from 1870 to 1970. At the Gregg County Historical Museum, exhibits range from the thrilling Dalton Gang bank robbery to an old-fashioned dentist's office.

25 LUFKIN

When the railroad came in 1881, this town in the heart of the Piney Woods became a thriving timber center. Legend has it the railroad originally went through Homer but shifted to Lufkin after Homer's constable threw the surveying crew in jail for rowdiness. The Texas Forestry Museum tells the story of the establishment and expansion of the East Texas timber industry. Visitors enjoy outdoor exhibits, an indoor interpretive center and the Urban Wildscape Trail's native landscapes. The Museum of East Texas features art and history exhibits, as well as a discovery room for children.



26 MARSHALL

In the early 1900s, trainloads of westward-bound immigrants stopped briefly at the T&P Depot, located in today's Ginocchio Historical District. To accommodate feeding several hundred immigrants each day, the beautiful Ginocchio Hotel set up tables in its lobby and ballroom. The hotel is now the temporary home of the Harrison County Historical Museum, which will return to the 1901 Harrison County Courthouse pending renovation. The historic T&P Depot, built in 1912 to replace an older depot, is both an active Amtrak station and railroad museum. View the lives of four generations of one family at the Starr Family State Historic Site. The attraction's centerpiece is "Maplecroft," an 1870 Italianate house with early 19th-century furnishings. A surprise for many visitors to Marshall, the Michelson Museum of Art displays the life work of Russian-American impressionist Leo Michelson (1887–1978).

27 MINEOLA

The birthplace of Miss Ima Hogg, this Texas Main Street City was founded in 1873. Charming by day, it turns magical at night with lighting from period street lamps. The Select Theater, believed to be the longest continuous running theater in Texas, features both movies and live productions. A 19th-century railroad town, Mineola's 1950s depot is still used by Amtrak passengers.

28 MONTGOMERY

A bustling town in the mid-1800s, today Montgomery boasts many historic commercial buildings and gracious homes. The N.H. Davis Pioneer Complex and Museum showcases period furnishings and memorabilia in a pioneer home. Its original owner was a lawyer who built the first section in 1851 from logs received as payment for legal fees.

MAIN STREET CITIES & TEXAS PINEY WOODS



The Harrison County Courthouse in Marshall sparkles in December.

29 MOUNT PLEASANT

Water is the elixir of life to this Texas Main Street City. A century ago, red mineral springs lured visitors. Today the attraction is excellent fishing at lakes Bob Sandlin, Monticello and Welsh. Within Bob Sandlin State Park is the Fort Sherman cemetery and archeological evidence of Caddo Indians who occupied the area from 200 B.C. to A.D. 1700.

30 MOUNT VERNON

This Texas Main Street City boasts a gracious plaza, restored town square and more than 65 historic homes, many of which can be seen on a driving tour. The recently restored 1880s Thruston House is now open as the Bankhead Hwy Visitors' Center, which features exhibits on Mount Vernon native Henry Clay Thruston. Standing 7 feet 7 1/2 inches tall, Thruston is said to be the tallest soldier to fight for the Confederacy in the Civil War.

The Franklin County Historical Museum, housed in a 1940 structure built by the Work Projects Administration, boasts natural

history collections, Ice Age and more recent Native American artifacts, and pioneer memorabilia. A model train captures the imagination in the restored 1894 Railroad Depot, where exhibits highlight the town's agricultural and rail heritage.

31 NACOGDOCHES

Called the "Cradle of Texas Liberty," this Texas Main Street City was the site of three failed attempts to establish a republic prior to the Battle of Nacogdoches, an early battle in the War for Independence. Four signers of Texas' Declaration of Independence, including Thomas J. Rusk, are buried in the historic Oak Grove Cemetery. Visitors enjoy artifacts and memorabilia at the Stone Fort Museum, a 1936 replica of the home of Don Antonio Gil Y'Barbo, founder of present-day Nacogdoches.

The Sterne-Hoya House Museum and Library, built by Adolphus Sterne around 1830, is a house museum that was restored to reflect the lives of its earliest occupants. At Millard's Crossing Historic Village, a cluster of 19th-century buildings including a schoolhouse, church and boardinghouse, conjures up images of a bygone era.

Stone Fort Museum, a 1936 replica of the home of Don Antonio Gil Y'Barbo, founder of the present-day Nacogdoches.



The Sterne-Hoya House Museum and Library, built by Adolphus Sterne around 1830, in Nacogdoches



32 NEDERLAND

Promoters gave the town its Dutch name in 1897 to attract settlers from Holland to the area's railroad jobs and rich farmland. The opportunities also lured Acadians from South Louisiana. At the Windmill Museum and La Maison de Acadiens, replicas of a windmill and log cabin showcase the heritage of those Dutch and Acadian settlers.



33 NEW LONDON

"The Day a Generation Died" describes the horrific impact of the 1937 school explosion that killed 311 local students and teachers. Within weeks after the tragedy caused by an undetected natural gas leak meeting a spark, survivors testified before the State Legislature and succeeded in getting odor added to natural gas. The New London Museum tells the poignant story in photographs, oral histories and memorabilia that includes a sympathy telegram from Adolph Hitler. The museum lies behind the drugstore where survivors met for reunions. Visitors can enjoy pie and sodas at its tearoom soda fountain. Situated between the museum and the rebuilt school is a landmark cenotaph, or empty tomb, bearing the names of victims.

ALL ABOARD

34 NEWTON

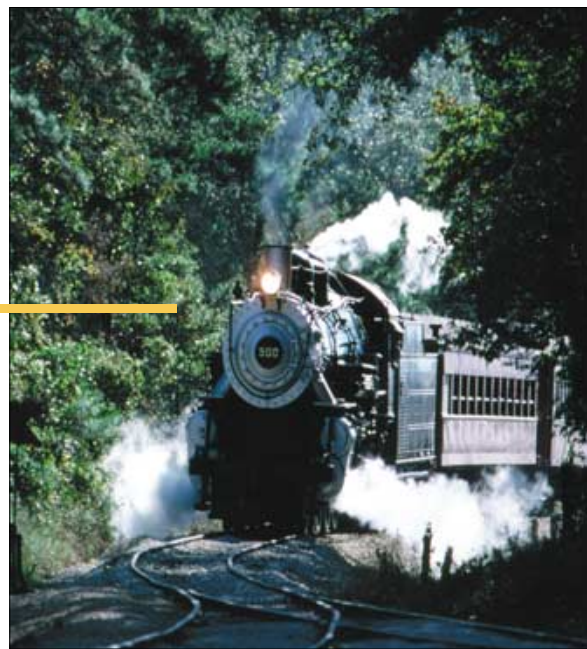
Since the 1800s, nature lovers have enjoyed the longleaf pines, rock bluffs and spring blooms of wild honeysuckle at Wild Azalea Canyons. Visitors can see the influence of pioneer families and sawmill towns at the Newton County Historical Center and Museum, which houses memorabilia dating to 1846. Nearby, the restored Powell Hotel, open for tours but not for overnight lodging, has an unpretentious charm recalling its 1914 conversion to a hotel from its original purpose as the W.H. Ford Male and Female College.

35 ORANGE

Because of its isolated location on the Louisiana border, Orange was a stopping place for outlaws and renegades crossing the Sabine River into Texas. The town's colorful history is chronicled in photographs and memorabilia at the historic Woodmen of the World Lodge building. The adjacent Heritage House Museum looks at upper-middle-class family life from the turn of the 20th century to the 1940s. See the striking difference between the middle class and the fabulously wealthy by visiting the 1894 W.H. Stark House, a three-story Victorian mansion with authentic furniture and room settings.

36 PALESTINE

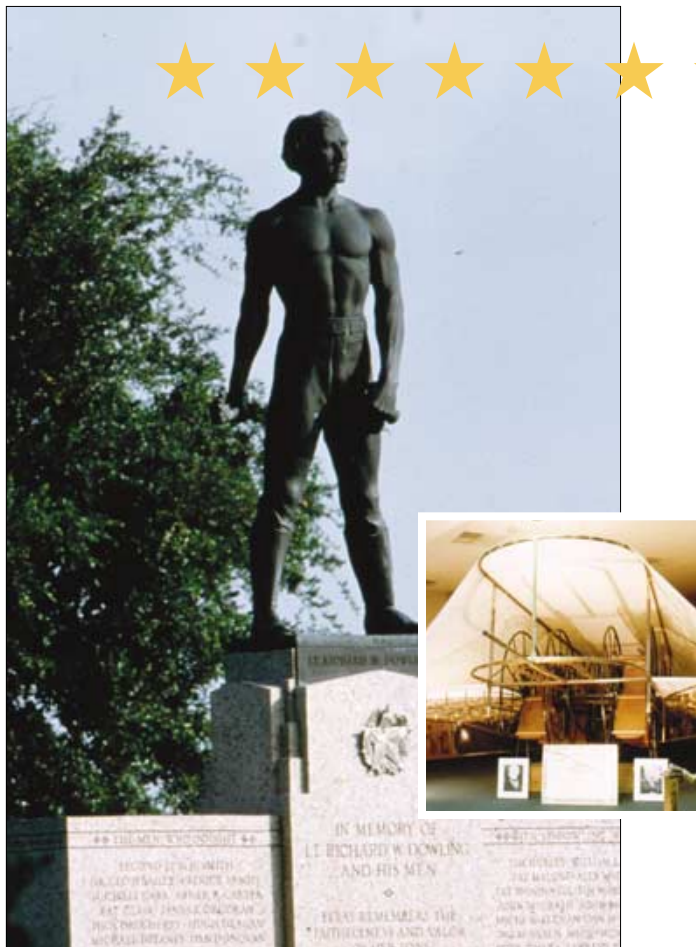
Historic homes, magnolias and dogwoods impart a gracious southern feeling to this town. In addition to the Dogwood Trails, visitors find more than 1,300 historic homes and buildings, many in two National Register Historic Districts that can be viewed on a driving tour. The conductor sounds the "all aboard," for the steam excursion train at the Texas State Railroad State Park Victorian depot. The 25 miles of rails, known as the nation's "longest and skinniest state park," offers boarding for one-way or round-trip excursions at depots in Palestine and Rusk.



Board the steam excursion train at the Texas State Railroad State Park for the round-trip from Palestine to Rusk.

37 PITTSBURG

Experience rural life, railroad heritage and one man's fanciful idea of a flying machine in this Texas Main Street City. The Northeast Texas Rural Heritage Center offers exhibits in its Depot Museum, a former Cotton Belt Railroad Depot. It showcases a working telegraph office, history of the poultry industry and the story of the Center Point Training School, established after the Civil War to educate African American children from Texas and other states. The site also houses a full-sized replica of the Ezekial Airship, a curious flying machine inspired by a biblical verse and built before the Wright Brothers' historic flight. Ironically, a train accident destroyed the original airship. At the nearby Farmstead Museum, history comes alive in a blacksmith shop, smokehouse, general store and a fully restored 100-year-old farmhouse.

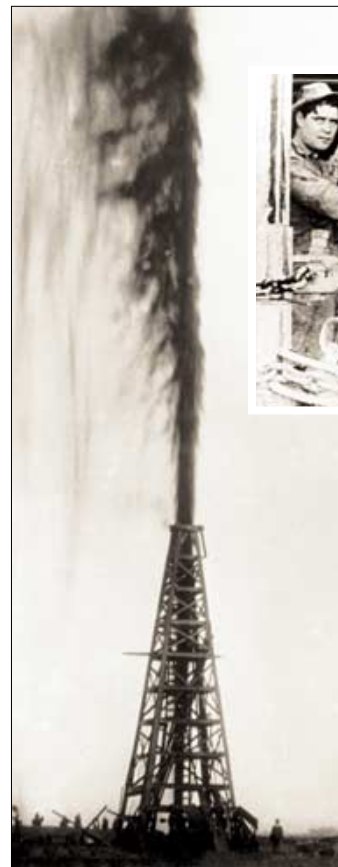


A statue honors Lt. Dick Dowling, a Civil War hero, at Sabine Pass Battleground State Park and Historic Site. Inset, Ezekial Airship, Northeast Texas Rural Heritage Museum in Pittsburg.

38 PORT ARTHUR

The town began as an inland port for shipping midwestern grain, but with the Spindletop oil discovery in 1901, this Texas Main Street City became a leading center for refining and shipping oil. Experience the area's industrial history and stories of Paleo-Indians and Spanish explorers at the Museum of the Gulf Coast. The museum's Music Hall pays tribute to musical greats, such as the Big Bopper and Janis Joplin, and houses a replica of Joplin's psychedelic Porsche. At Sabine Pass Battleground State Park and Historic Site, a statue honors Lt. Dick Dowling who led a small Confederate force in preventing a Union fleet of gunboats from invading this Texas port during the Civil War.

1901 SPINDLETOP!



Full of drive and determination, wildcatters, roughnecks and roustabouts changed the world with the discovery of oil in Texas. Experience the event at the Gladys City Boomtown Museum in Beaumont.

39 QUITMAN

Governor Hogg City Park, honoring Texas' first native-born governor, has three museums. On special occasions, visitors can watch the Stinson House Quilters work in the 1869 house that belonged to Mrs. Hogg's parents. The Honeymoon Cottage, the early home of Gov. and Sallie Hogg, features original furnishings and the Ima Hogg Museum, named for the Hoggs' only daughter, houses Northeast Texas and family memorabilia.

40 RUSK

Rich iron ore deposits were the basis of this Texas Main Street City's early economy. Restored Victorian commercial buildings on the downtown square and the ghost town of New Birmingham, an ill-fated iron boomtown, are reminiscent of that past. A 560-foot bridge, located in Footbridge Park, was built in 1889 to enable people living east of the valley to cross the rising waters of One Eye Creek to get to town. Authentic steam engines, Victorian depots and magnificent scenery draw both tourists and Hollywood filmmakers to the Texas State Railroad State Park. Puffs of steam, a rhythmic rocking motion and the sound of wheels on tracks accompany the 25-mile train ride through scenic piney woods from Rusk to Palestine. Historically, the railroad belonged to the Texas Prison System. Prisoners laid the tracks in 1893 to haul iron ore and wood from convict work camps to smelting furnaces at the East Texas State Penitentiary in Rusk. Just outside town is Jim Hogg City Park, a day-use park that features a replica of the log cabin birthplace of the Texas governor who served from 1891–95.



The Honeymoon Cottage, in Quitman, is the early home of Gov. and Sallie Hogg, features original furnishings.

41 SAN AUGUSTINE

Historic homes and churches dot the town called "The Cradle of Texas." The eastern gateway for settlers from southern states, it became one of the first Anglo communities when Texas was part of Mexico. The Mission Dolores Visitor Center is the site of an early Spanish mission, founded in 1716. Exhibits describe life among the missionaries and Ais Indians, and territorial struggles between Spain and France. The Ezekial Cullen House, built in 1839, was the home of a prominent judge in the Republic of Texas.

The
Cradle of Texas
1716



The Mission Dolores Visitor Center in San Augustine

42 TEXARKANA

A vibrant mural honoring Scott Joplin, Pulitzer Prize-winning “King of Ragtime Composers,” marks the heart of the city’s lively cultural district. Inside the Discovery Place Children’s Museum, fun and learning go hand-in-hand amid such interactive exhibits as a 12-foot musical wall, a post office and an old-fashioned kitchen. A brick building nearly as old as the city itself houses the renovated Museum of Regional History. Permanent exhibits include the Native American Gallery, Scott Joplin Gallery and period rooms.

The Regional Arts Center, which hosts national touring and juried shows, occupies a former U.S. district courthouse, built in 1909. The grand, ornate structure boasts a 26-foot vaulted ceiling, copper cage elevator and abundant marble. Nearby, the beautifully restored Perot Theater, built in 1924, offers exhilarating live performances in a historic setting.

Just outside the cultural district is the unique Draughton-Moore Ace of Clubs House. Legend has it a lucky card drawn in a poker game inspired its cloverleaf shape. Inside, its rooms provide a glimpse of Texarkana high society between 1880 and 1940.



43 TYLER

Following the Civil War, Tyler was known for its abundance of fruit trees. When disease threatened the trees, growers turned to cultivating rose bushes. Eventually this Texas Main Street City became “The Rose Capital of America” and since 1933, the site of the Texas Rose Festival each October. At the Tyler Municipal Rose Garden and Museum, more than 450 varieties of rose bushes, including antique varieties, bloom in the garden. The museum showcases glamorous gowns worn by Texas Rose Festival Queens, as well as the history of the rose industry.

Another outstanding homegrown attraction grew from a little backyard menagerie to become the first-rate Caldwell Zoo, one of only three free zoos nationally. Relax with a cool lemonade on a shaded porch and watch elephants, zebras and lions roam the realistic East African-style savannah where natural barriers separate predators and prey. Children will enjoy The Discovery Science Place where hands-on, crawl-through and climb-over activities disguise learning.

A traditional center for learning, the 1904 Carnegie Library, now houses the Smith County Historical Museum, which has wonderful Work Projects Administration wall murals and exhibits that include a pioneer Chinese family’s memorabilia.

At the Goodman Museum, visitors can imagine living in an 1859 Texas colonial-style mansion. Camp Ford, one of the largest prisoner-of-war camps during the Civil War, is located outside of town and features nature trails and informational displays.



Tyler, a Texas Main Street City that became “The Rose Capital of America” and since 1933, the site of the Texas Rose Festival each October.



44 WECHES

The town is the entry to Mission Tejas State Park where Spanish missionaries set up their first mission in the wilderness around 1690. A replica of Mission San Francisco de los Tejas stands in the park that is located in the Davy Crockett National Forest. Visitors can see the restored 1828 Rice Family Log Home.

45 WINNSBORO

A noon stop for three passenger trains in the early 1900s, Winnsboro acquired a reputation for its food and hospitality. Visitors especially enjoy the historic town during the Autumn Trails Festival. Held every weekend in October, it features driving tours through colorful forests of oak, maple, sycamore and pine trees and a famous trail ride that draws thousands of riders and horses.

46 WOODVILLE

One of many East Texas towns that celebrate spring's floral wonders, Woodville traces the origin of its Dogwood Festival to a 1938 barbecue held to lobby state officials for construction of a highway from Huntsville to the Louisiana border. Taken with the dogwood's beauty, someone suggested an annual observance, and the festival emerged quite a few years before the highway.

Mementos and memorabilia are exhibited in the Allan Shivers Museum, dedicated to Texas' longest-serving governor (1949–56). Just outside town is the Heritage Village Museum, built as a tourist attraction in the 1950s and featuring more than 30 relocated and replicated pioneer structures.



**Around every curve, another
surprise awaits the traveler.
On the journey, sunlight filters
through lush green woods
and spills through towns filled
with the historic sights and
sounds of East Texas.**

The Texas Historical Commission
offers free travel brochures on
the people and places
that shaped Texas history.
To request copies, visit
www.thc.state.tx.us/travel
or call 866/276-6219.



**TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

www.thc.state.tx.us

COMMUNITIES IN THE TEXAS FOREST TRAIL REGION

Regional Travel Resources

For more information on the sites in this brochure, use the Texas State Travel Guide as a reference or call the sources listed below for site locations and hours, as well as details about events and other local attractions. Many information centers are closed weekends, please contact in advance.

Alto

Caddoan Mounds State Historic Site
936/858-3218
www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Athens

Welcome Center
903/677-0775
www.athenstx.org

Atlanta

Chamber of Commerce
903/796-3296
www.atlantatexas.org

Beaumont

Convention & Visitors Bureau
409/880-3749
www.beaumontcvb.com

Carthage

Chamber of Commerce
903/693-6634
www.carthagetexas.com

Center

Shelby County Chamber of Commerce
936/598-3682
www.shelbycountychamber.com

Clarksville

Red River County Chamber of Commerce
903/427-2645
www.red-river.net

Coldspring

Chamber of Commerce
936/653-2184
www.coldspringtexas.org

Conroe

Lake Conroe Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
936/538-7112
www.lakeconroecvb.org

Crockett

Crockett Area Chamber of Commerce
936/544-2359
www.crockettareachamber.org

Daingerfield

Chamber of Commerce
903/645-2646

Gilmer

Gilmer Area Chamber of Commerce
903/843-2413
www.gilmerareachamber.com

Gladewater

Chamber of Commerce
903/845-5501
www.gladewaterchamber.com

Hemphill

Sabine County Convention & Visitors Bureau
409/787-1421
www.sabinecountytourism.org

Henderson

City of Henderson Tourism Dept.
866/650-5529
www.hendersontx.us

Huntsville

Sam Houston Statue/Huntsville Visitor Center
800/289-0389
www.huntsvilletexas.com

Jacksonville

Chamber of Commerce
903/586-2217
www.jacksonvilletexas.com

Jasper

Jasper/Lake Sam Rayburn Chamber of Commerce
409/384-2762
www.jaspercoc.org

Jefferson

Marion County Chamber of Commerce
903/665-2672
www.jefferson-texas.com

Karnack

Caddo Lake Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
903/679-3500
www.caddolake.org

Kilgore

Chamber of Commerce
903/984-5022
www.kilgorechamber.com

Kountze

Chamber of Commerce
409/246-3413
www.kountze.com

Linden

Chamber of Commerce
903/756-3106
www.linden-texas.com

Livingston

Polk County Chamber of Commerce
936/327-4929
www.livingston.net/chamber

Longview

Convention & Visitors Bureau
903/753-3281
www.longviewtx.com

Lufkin

Chamber of Commerce
936/634-6644
www.visitlufkin.com



Experience the kaleidoscope of cultures at small town festivals across the state.

Lumberton

Chamber of Commerce
409/755-0554

Marshall

Chamber of Commerce
903/935-7868
www.marshalltxchamber.com

Mineola

Chamber of Commerce
903/569-2087
www.chamber.mineola.com

Montgomery

Lake Conroe Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
936/538-7112
www.lakeconroecvb.org

Mount Pleasant

Chamber of Commerce
903/572-8576
www.mtpleasant-tx.com

Mount Vernon

Franklin County Chamber of Commerce
903/537-4365
www.mt-vernon.com

Nacogdoches

Convention & Visitors Bureau
888/564-7351
www.visitnacogdoches.org

Nederland

Chamber of Commerce
409/722-0279
www.nederlandtx.com

New London

New London Museum
903/895-4602
www.londonmuseum.us

Newton

Newton County Chamber of Commerce
409/379-5527
www.newton-texas.com

Orange

Convention & Visitors Bureau
800/528-4906
www.org-tx.com/chamber

Palestine

Convention & Visitors Bureau
800/659-3484
www.visitpalestine.com

Pittsburg

City of Pittsburg
888/257-6318
www.pittsburgtexas.com

Port Arthur

Convention & Visitors Center
409/985-7822
www.portarthurtexas.com

Quitman

Chamber of Commerce
903/763-4411
www.quitman.com

Rusk

Chamber of Commerce
903/683-4242
www.rusktx.net

San Augustine

San Augustine County Chamber of Commerce
936/275-3610
www.sanaugustinetx.com

Silsbee

Chamber of Commerce
409/385-5562
www.cityofsilsbee.com

Texarkana

Chamber of Commerce
903/792-7191
www.texarkana.org

Trinity

Chamber of Commerce
936/594-3856
www.trinitychamber.org

Tyler

Convention & Visitors Bureau
800/235-5712
www.tylertexas.com

Weches

Mission Tejas State Park
936/687-2394
www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Winnboro

Chamber of Commerce
903/342-3666
www.winnboro.com

Woodville

Tyler Co. Chamber of Commerce
409/283-2632
www.woodvilletx.com



Davey Crockett National Forest

The Texas Historical Commission promotes the highest national standards for historic preservation and does not endorse the relocation of historic structures without thorough documentation of the building on its original site. The professional processes required for such action are intended to record and preserve historic properties for the full enjoyment and education of present and future generations.

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
TEXAS HERITAGE TRAILS PROGRAM

www.thc.state.tx.us/travel
www.txforesttrail.com



View exotic birds and other animals at the historic Caldwell Zoo in Tyler.

TEXAS FOREST TRAIL REGION TEXAS MAIN STREET CITIES

Visitors can stroll the sidewalks and peruse shops in one of the region's 17 Texas Main Street Cities. Partnering with the Texas Historical Commission, these communities work to revitalize their historic commercial area, which is often the heart of a town.

- Beaumont
- Carthage
- Clarksville
- Gilmer
- Gladewater
- Henderson
- Huntsville
- Lufkin
- Marshall
- Mineola
- Mount Pleasant
- Mount Vernon
- Nacogdoches
- Pittsburg
- Rusk
- Tyler
- Winnsboro

Quiet shops line
downtown Winnsboro,
a Main Street city.



REGIONAL STATE PARKS AND HISTORIC SITES

Travelers to the Texas Forest Trail Region can visit the area's beautiful parks and historic sites owned and operated by Texas Parks and Wildlife. For more information on the following sites, please call 800/792-1112 or visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

- Atlanta State Park, Atlanta
- Caddoan Mounds State Historic Site, Alto
- Caddo Lake State Park, Karnack
- Daingerfield State Park, Daingerfield
- Governor Hogg Shrine Historic Site, Quitman (Operated by the City of Quitman)
- Huntsville State Park, Huntsville
- Jim Hogg Historic Site, Rusk (Operated by the City of Rusk)
- Lake Bob Sandlin State Park, Pittsburg
- Lake Livingston State Park, Livingston
- Martin Creek Lake State Park, Longview
- Martin Dies Jr. State Park, Jasper
- Mission Tejas State Park, Weches
- Palestine State Park, Palestine
- Rusk State Park, Rusk
- Sabine Pass Battleground State Historic Site, Sabine Pass
- Sea Rim State Park, Sabine Pass
- Starr Family State Historic Site, Marshall
- Texas State Railroad State Park, Palestine and Rusk
- Tyler State Park, Tyler
- Village Creek State Park, Lumberton



TEXAS HERITAGE TRAIL REGIONS



The State Agency for Historic Preservation

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