



Search for New THF Executive Director Underway

Long-time Texas Historical Foundation Executive Director Gene Krane has announced her retirement, and a search is now underway for her replacement. Key candidate skills include proven nonprofit leadership experience, donor cultivation, and a passion for Texas history. M. Gale & Associates, a consulting firm that works with nonprofits, is assisting with the hiring process. [Use this link to see a job description](#) and submit a resume.

Grants Spotlight

Rockdale Restoration Wins THF Grant



Rockdale, a small Central Texas town in Milam County, has an architectural distinction not shared with any other Lone Star community. It is home to what is known as “The 1895,” a public building designed and constructed that year by architect Arthur O. Watson of Austin, who is better known for creating courthouses and stately homes. This Romanesque Revival-style structure is believed to be the architect’s only City Hall project.

Even though it was built as a public structure, the building has served many other roles, resulting in repeated remodeling of both the interior and exterior. A group of forward-thinking citizens was able to look past those changes, though, and imagine a new life for the old building. They created [Vision Historic Preservation Foundation, Inc. \(VHPFI\)](#), chartered to preserve the historic structure and transform it into an arts and entertainment center.

In January, VHPFI applied for and [received a THF grant](#) for work that is scheduled to begin at the end of 2022. Phase One will focus on the front facade on the building’s south face and includes restoring and replacing windows, removal of stucco and masonry, restoration of plaster, and reconstruction of the bell tower.

As to the importance of THF’s assistance, Curah Beard, VHPFI spokesperson, said, “Receiving this grant not only brings much-needed revenue to The 1895 restoration project, but it also provides our organization more exposure in historic preservation circles.”

A project of this scope comes with a big price tag, and fundraising has begun in earnest. Beard explained, “VHPFI will host a live music event on May 7, bringing arts appreciation programming to the community in addition to garnering donations. We will continue to pursue grants and have already received vital funding from not only THF, but the National Trust, the Milam County Historical Commission, and at least one corporate grant.”

[GRANT FAQs](#)

Texas HERITAGE

Women’s History Month, Clara Tarpley

[The latest issue of Texas HERITAGE magazine is arriving now in mailboxes](#), and as Women’s History Month draws to a close, it is fitting to highlight a story in the new edition about a successful Lone Star businesswoman.



The Tarpley Music Company (TMC), founded in 1927 by Clara Tarpley, has the distinction of being the oldest family-owned and operated business of its kind in Texas—four generations strong, with a fifth waiting in the wings. Established in the Panhandle, today there are six TMC locations in Texas and New Mexico.

Clara, a piano teacher-turned-entrepreneur, employed savvy sales techniques in the early years of the music store. When she would receive a shipment of pianos, Clara would take out a list of people she knew were interested in buying. She then spoke to those prospects, claiming she didn’t have space for the new arrivals and asking if they wanted to store one in their home. Many successful sales were made when those “storing” the pianos decided they couldn’t live without the musical instrument.

To read the entire story of Clara Tarpley and her family business, become a THF member today and receive a copy of the award-winning magazine every quarter.

[JOIN TO BECOME A THF MEMBER TODAY!](#)



Around The State



[THF grants impact preservation](#) in Texas by providing much-needed funds to those saving the state’s past.

Top - left to right: **The Tom Lea Institute**, El Paso, will use its grant to fund the mobile website for the state portion of the Tom Lea Trail, on the Texas Historical Commission’s Texas Time Travel web page. Marfa’s **Blackwell School** received an award to purchase supplies and pay for labor to create and install a belfry at the 1909 school.

Bottom - left to right: **The Bryan Museum**, Galveston, secured a gift for student discovery guides to be used during museum field trips. **The Friends of the Pound House Foundation**, in Dripping Springs, won grant approval for a roof rehabilitation on the 1854 farmstead.

Website Update

Website Blog-Part II, La Villita



[In the second installment of a blog about San Antonio’s La Villita](#), THF Director Lewis S. Fisher, AIA Emeritus, explains how it is incorrect to describe the historic district as the city’s first neighborhood. According to Fisher, it is more appropriately identified as San Antonio’s first suburb. In the post, Fisher traces the history of several La Villita properties from land-grant status to the function they serve today, explaining significant architectural details.



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