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News, Issues & Events from City of San Antonio Downtown Operations
March 2009

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Mark Your Calendar

March 28
Houston Street Fair & Market
Houston St (Broadway to Ave. E)

Out & About Downtown

by Paula X. Stallcup, Director, Downtown Operations



Spring is in the air, and with warmer weather families are looking for outdoor activities. We have many great events coming up, including a new Fiesta Opening Ceremonies in front of the Alamo. Fiesta Fiesta will be fun for the whole family, and you will want to be part of this new tradition. Before you go, read our article on the story behind Fiesta medals - there is rich culture with this tradition.

Sunny spring skies make now the ideal time to clean up downtown. Read about volunteers helping with landscaping and painting projects in HemisFair Park. You should also make plans to go by Main Plaza for Fresh Air Friday and learn what you can do to help us all have cleaner air downtown.

[Luminaria](#) brought thousands of art lovers downtown, and we have a recap of the highly successful event, including a link to see the breathtaking photos. Don't miss your chance to see more downtown art at the [La Villita Spring Arts Festival](#) - and even enjoy a free musical performance at the Arneson River Theater.

There is always something happening downtown, and every month we are making sure you know about it. We look forward to seeing you out and about downtown!

We're located at 202 E. Nueva. Contact us at (210) 207-3677 or via email at downtown@sanantonio.gov for questions or assistance related to downtown San Antonio.

Fiesta Fiesta at the Alamo

by Tonya Drake, Special Projects Manager

The City of San Antonio's largest festival is just



www.houstonstreetfair.com

March 28

Cesar Chavez March & Rally
Avenida Guadalupe
For info call 842-9339

April 3

First Friday Concert
St. John's Lutheran Church
For info call 223-2611

April 3

Fresh Air Friday
Main Plaza
www.aacog.com

April 4

SnoCore Concert Tour
HemisFair Park
For info call 698-2856

April 4 - 5

Spring Arts Fair
La Villita
www.lavillita.com

April 10

River City Fellowship
Good Friday Prayer Service
La Villita Arneson River Theater
For info call 207-8612

April 10 - 11

Museo Alameda
2nd Anniversary Celebration
Museo Alameda, Market Square
For info call 299-4300

April 16

Fiesta Fiesta
Alamo Plaza
www.fiesta-sa.org

April 16 - 25

Fiesta San Antonio
For a complete listing of Fiesta events, visit
www.fiesta-sa.org

May 1

First Friday Concert
St. John's Lutheran Church
For info call 223-2611

St. Anthony Back in Main Plaza

by Tamara Langwell,
Public Art Program,
City of San Antonio

around the corner. Fiesta San Antonio is getting bigger in 2009 with a brand-new kickoff event scheduled for April 16th beginning at 5 pm. Starting this year, Fiesta is 11 days long, thanks to the new Fiesta Fiesta at the Alamo-a bigger-than-a-block party in and around Alamo Plaza.

Parts of Alamo and Houston Streets will be closed to traffic for the evening. The event will feature live music, including the Rick Cavender Band, Henry Brun and the Latin Playerz, and Javier Galvan and Fama. There'll be a special area for children. Fiesta nonprofit groups will sell merchandise, event tickets and other items. Vendors will offer food, beer, wine, beverages and frozen margaritas. The Fiesta® Store will offer official Fiesta merchandise.

The crowd-pleasing Pin Pandemonium will be on hand, with Fiesta groups offering their medals for sale. It all ends with a bang as fireworks blaze above the Emily Morgan Hotel after 10 p.m. So mark your calendar today to join in this fun downtown event!

The Fiesta San Antonio Commission coordinates the more than 100 events during Fiesta. For a complete schedule of events, visit their website at www.fiesta-sa.org.

A Breath of Fresh Air

by Annette Prosterman, Alamo Area Council of Governments

As a prelude to the 2009 Ozone Season, the [Alamo Area Council of Governments \(AACOG\)](http://www.aacog.com) and the City of San Antonio are hosting this year's Fresh Air Friday event on April 3, 2009 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Fresh Air Friday promotes walking to lunch rather than driving, and the event is centrally located at [Main Plaza](#) in downtown San Antonio.



Downtowners are encouraged to bring a brown-bag lunch or buy lunch at Main Plaza. Enjoy live music, informative talks, and exhibits on the latest alternative commuting options, potential improvements to air quality, energy efficiency, sustainable living, and many other healthy, green topics.

Fresh Air Friday exhibitors include several nonprofit organizations, green businesses, and government agencies. Door prizes will be awarded, and brochures, informational packets, free samples, and other promotional items will be given out during the event.

The Ozone Season occurs between April and October, when air quality in the region is more likely to reach unhealthy levels. This is primarily due to the interaction of car exhaust and gasoline fumes with the hotter sunlight. Walking to lunch rather than driving is one way that folks can take an active role in reducing ground-level ozone, which is harmful to our health as well as to the environment. Walking rather than driving provides exercise and saves money, too!

In case of rain, Fresh Air Friday will be rescheduled to April 17, 2009.

La Villita Spring Arts Festival

by Janet Paduh, La Villita Tenants Association



[La Villita](#) is a historical arts district which has hosted decades of specialty programs for the community. Generations of families have enjoyed activities in the



The next time you visit [Main Plaza](#), pay a visit to its newest resident: San Antonio de Padua (Saint Anthony). This marble and granite statue depicts Saint Anthony holding a spray of lilies and a bible and was originally installed in front of the Bexar County Courthouse in 1955. Due to Main Plaza redesign plans, as well as potential damage to the statue due to recent construction, Saint Anthony was relocated to a new home. He is now flanked by two red oak trees in front of the San Fernando Cathedral gift shop.

Commissioned by the local Caravan of the Order of Alhambra, artwork designer Louis Rodriguez sketched the design for this sculpture in honor of the city's namesake. In Europe, Rodriguez found the marble in the Italian province of Carrara, as well as a very talented group of unknown Italian artisans who sculpted the actual piece. In a 1955 San Antonio Light newspaper article, Rodriguez is quoted as saying, "I found exactly what I wanted in the village of Pietra Santa near Pisa. There, also, I found the sculptors with generations of artistic skill behind them whom I felt could give us a fine piece of work."

Much of Saint Anthony's work was in Italy, and it is fitting that the statue's medium and sculptors originate from the same country. St. Anthony is the patron saint of lost articles, and we are happy he has found a new home!

A Royal Beginning for Fiesta Medals

by Mary Yturri,
Contract Coordinator

area, and it is with excitement that we announce the creation of a new artistic tradition - the La Villita Spring Arts Festival 2009. The La Villita Tenants Association and the City of San Antonio have partnered together to sponsor this family-friendly cultural event on April 4 & 5.

The inaugural art festival will include 110 artists from San Antonio and beyond. The event features original artworks (no reproductions allowed!) and attendees will have the opportunity to meet the talented artisans.

Admission to the [La Villita Spring Arts Festival](#) is free and the fun begins at 10 am on April 4 and 5. As a special Saturday treat, the Arneson River Theater will feature free music at 8 pm. Food and beverages will be available and La Villita tenant businesses will participate in the activities with their own art, crafts, specialty items and food.

As the weather warms, we encourage you to bring your family to La Villita and enjoy this new festival of art. Your participation will also benefit others as a portion of the monies received will be donated to the Little Church of La Villita to perpetuate the Church's mission of helping those in need. At the La Villita Spring Arts Festival, you can have a heart and enjoy some art!

Majestic Theatre Restoration

by Marty Yturri, Contract Coordinator



The next time you take a stroll along Houston Street, be sure to stop and admire the recent, stunning restoration of the [Majestic Theatre](#) canopy. Thorough renovation of the canopy had been delayed since 1989, when financial constraints and scheduling conflicts had prevented the canopy from being restored with the same love and attention to detail as the Majestic Theatre. T

Test stripping had revealed the underlying canopy colors -- rich hues of blue, aqua and green. Research of the original 1928 John Ebersson design also indicated that a significant portion of the canopy was copper, which had been severely

damaged over time.

In October 2008, Majestic Development Co. President Virginia Van Steenberg undertook the enormous task of renovating the canopy by utilizing the design specifications from the 1989 Heinsberger Studio survey. As multiple layers of paint were stripped away, the beauty of the copper, as well as the gray cast iron columns, was exposed.

Working closely with Cleveland, Ohio-based theatre restoration expert Sonya Winner and San Antonio's Jacob Otani, Martinez painting and American Roofing, Ms. Van Steenberg decided to forge ahead with a full, historic restoration of the canopy. This entailed replacing 150 ft. of copper plating, removing rust from the cast iron columns and filling joints and holes. The result, completed in March 2009, is a faithful recreation of the canopy's original 1928 design.

Thank you, Ms. Van Steenberg, for this historic gift to downtown San Antonio -- it is truly a masterpiece! Special thanks to Judy Eoff of the Majestic Development Co. for contributing to this article.

Make HemisFair Shine!



The tradition of **Fiesta** medals began in 1946, when it became common practice for the Texas Cavalier's King Antonio to issue royal "coins" to the public during Fiesta. Far from being plain or ordinary, these coins were imprinted with the King's name and royal ordinal and thus became instantly collectable mementos.

In 1971, King Antonio XLIX, Charles Orsinger, attached ribbons to the traditional coins and distributed approximately 250 "medals" to his court as tokens of appreciation. This bit of regalia was an instant hit and medals soon became a sought-after Fiesta item. It wasn't until 1991, when the Battle of Flowers Association issued its own commemorative medal honoring the 100th anniversary of Fiesta that medals became a popular way for organizations to raise money and to "brand" their event.

Fiesta medals have become enduring, colorful symbols of the diversity and eclecticism that distinguish all of Fiesta's events and are a fun way to celebrate San Antonio's greatest party.

In 2004, the City of San Antonio developed our own Fiesta medals. The limited edition medals have been inspired by public artwork from a variety of projects in San Antonio. The City's medals have become very popular and each edition has sold out. The City's 2009 Fiesta medal will feature The Beacon, a sculpture at Blanco Road & Fulton Street by local artist Angel Rodriguez-Diaz. The medals will be available for sale at the Fiesta Store, 2611 Broadway and the San Antonio Visitor Center, 317 Alamo Plaza

Luminaria Lights Up San Antonio

by Tonya Drake,
Special Projects Manager

by Jerry Castillo, Horticulturist II



Make Downtown Shine! made a comeback on February 27 in HemisFair Park. Twenty-two volunteers from the San Antonio Apartment Association (SAAA) worked in cooperation with the Downtown Operations Department to beautify the park. Under sunny skies and a light breeze, volunteers planted over 1600 annual flowering plants at the archway flower bed and painted the newly refurbished HemisFair gazebo. The gazebo is a favorite site for the exchange of

wedding vows, and the facelift is much appreciated by spring brides and park visitors alike!

The volunteer efforts have surely benefited downtown, and the experience proved positive for participants, too. Ms. Lupe Pruitt, community relations liaison from SAAA, stated "Consensus has it that it was among one of our more rewarding activities. I was pleasantly surprised that only one volunteer from the group did not show for the day - that's a record. We even had tourists and San Antonio residents stopping to take photos." District 1 Councilwoman Mary Alice Cisneros visited with the volunteers on the day of the event and thanked them for their participation and support of downtown.

If you are interested in participating on a future "Make Downtown Shine" program, you can contact Veronica Garcia at 207-8477 and help in the beautification of the downtown area.

La Villita Salutes Black History Month

by Jesse Moreno, Special Activities Coordinator



On March 1, the La Villita Tenants Association and the City of San Antonio's Downtown Operations Department partnered with St. Philip's College to rededicate the original historic building complex of San Antonio's oldest institution of higher learning. The school opened on March 1, 1898 as a trade school for recently emancipated African Americans. In 1902, Artemisia Bowden became the head mistress and served the college for 52 years. [St. Philip's College](#) moved to the City's eastside in 1917.

To celebrate 111 years of education to the city, the community joined together on the steps of the original school building in [La Villita](#). Councilwoman Cisneros read a proclamation from Mayor Hardberger and Councilwoman McNeil conveyed congratulations on behalf of the entire City Council. In addition, Sherry Disdier, president of the La Villita Tenants Association, presided over the ceremony. Rev. Antonio Regest, Rector of St. Philip's Episcopal Church, gave the invocation and the St. Philip's Women's Choir had a stunning performance. Dr. Denver McClendon, chairman of ACCD Board of Trustees, Dr. Adena Williams Loston, President of St. Philip's College, Daniel Mezza, Regional Director Office of U.S. Senator John Cornyn, as well as several family members of Mrs. Bowden joined the celebration. During the ceremony, President Loston laid a wreath in honor of Mrs. Bowden and the college founders. Paula Stallcup, Director of Downtown Operations Department, gave the closing remarks.

Following the ceremony, attendees enjoyed an art exhibit, Purple Doors...Eyes of the Past Seeing the Future, by Cristina Jimenez Sanchez. Dr. Frederick Preston, author of *Historic Doorways of San Antonio*, signed copies of his new book that features two doorways in La Villita. Also in attendance were special guests the Somali Bantu children of San Antonio. Audio Glow, led by Roberto Sanchez, entertained the crowd.



Luminaria: Arts Night in San Antonio was held on March 14th in downtown San Antonio and at various City-wide venues, galleries, studios, museums, and other artist spaces. This event was an ambitious undertaking with over 1,500 artists, 50 non-profit organizations, 200 volunteers and an executive committee that represented every major discipline in the arts.

This was the second year Luminaria was held as an all-day and evening-long celebration of the artists in our city. The free event brought more than 175,000 people to the downtown area throughout the evening. A huge variety of visual and performing arts, music and light shows turned heads all evening long as Luminaria immersed attendees in nearly every type of art imaginable. Families were constantly entertained with vibrant colors, exotic cultural shows, artist meet-and-greets and unique artistic pieces and performances.

The central celebrations footprint included Alamo Plaza to HemisFair Park from 6pm-midnight, and ended with a spectacular fireworks finale. To see pictures and for more information, visit www.luminarias.org

The event was a successful tribute to the college's more than century-long dedication to the community. To quote Mrs. Bowden, "It takes faith, hope and persistence to make a dream a reality" and the event highlighted St. Philip's College commitment to each of these ideals.

City of San Antonio - Downtown Operations

The mission of the Downtown Operations Department is to provide centralized services for activities related to maintaining the core of San Antonio in an exemplary condition and support downtown facilities, programs and events that highlight the city's unique qualities as a business center and tourist destination.

Need assistance? Have a suggestion for the newsletter? Contact us with comments or questions at downtown@sanantonio.gov.

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www.sanantonio.gov/dtops

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