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

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Mark Your Calendar

May 15 - 16
Soul Food Festival
La Villita

Out & About Downtown

by Paula X. Stallcup, Director, Downtown Operations



As school lets out, downtown gears up to host family-friendly activities that are enjoyable for everyone. Bring your blanket or lawn chair and enjoy **Movies by Moonlight**, which returns in June with my family's favorite *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. You can also come down to Market Square for extended hours of shopping, plus live entertainment and delicious dining options. For a cultural treat, try the Soul Food Festival in La Villita which even features a gospel competition with talent from all over the state.

The River Walk is one of downtown's biggest attractions - and it gets even bigger this month with the opening of the new Museum Reach segment. Be sure to take a barge ride and watch the lock and dam feature first-hand. Walking and biking enthusiasts will also want to participate in the Walk&Roll River Fest.

The streets of downtown will soon get some much-deserved attention with a \$10.7 million bond improvement project. Read about how we will determine priorities for the funding, as well as how to track our progress. While you walk along the streets, visit the new VIA Information Center with improved amenities for riders.

There is always something happening downtown, and every month we are making sure you know about it. As always, 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.

Movies by Moolight

by Tonya Drake, Special Projects Manager

For info call 213-7066

May 15 - 16, 22nd, 29th

Party on the Plaza
Tower of the Americas
For info call 378-2738

May 16 - 17

Ragtime Festival
Market Square
www.marketsquaresa.com

May 20

Tejano Music Academy FanFare
La Villita
For info call 207-8612

May 22 - 25

Memorial Day Arts & Crafts Show
River Walk Extension
For info call 227-4262

May 30

Houston Street Fair & Market
Houston Street (Broadway to 3rd)
www.houstonstreetfair.com

May 30 - 31

Museum Reach
Grand Opening Weekend
Lexington to Josephine Street
www.sanantonioriver.org

May 31

Walk&Roll River Fest
Pearl Brewery
www.walkandrollSA.com

June 4 - 26 (Thurs. only)

Movies by Moonlight
HemisFair Park
For info call 207-3677

June 12 - 14

Texas Folklife Festival
HemisFair Park
For info call 458-2330

Conventioneers Crossing Improvements

by Michael Ereti, P.E.,
Public Works Department



Get ready to enjoy the outside scenery of downtown, relax by moonlight and watch a superb movie - the movies are back for the summer! The Movies By Moonlight outdoor cinema series in HemisFair Park begins June 4th and continues with family-friendly movies every Thursday. Come early for the preshow at 7:30 pm, followed by cartoons. The feature film premieres at 8:30 pm.



June's feature schedule includes:

June 4th WILLY WONKA & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

June 11th MADAGASCAR

June 18th KUNG FU PANDA

June 25th RATATOULI

Keep a look out for more movies throughout the summer months.

Movies By Moonlight is a family-friendly event that is FREE to the public. Do not forget to bring your blankets and lawn chairs. Concessions are available for those must-have items like soda, popcorn and cotton candy.

Movies will be shown in the Arch Plaza at HemisFair Park, located at Alamo and Nueva Streets. FREE parking is available after 6 pm at Alamo Lot near the park and across the street from the Federal Courthouse at the Durango Lots on a first-come first-serve basis. For more information, please contact (210) 207-3667.

See you soon under the moonlight!

Walk&Roll River Fest

by Scott Ericksen, San Antonio-Bexar County MPO

Over 700 downtown workers participated in the Walk&Roll to Work Rally held on May 1st at Main Plaza. Participants walked from meeting sites to the rally in an effort to encourage alternative forms of transportation to work, including walking and biking. In addition to the health benefits of the early morning walk, the event included information booths, free water and fruit, music and door prizes.



The Walk&Roll on the River Fest will be held on Sunday, May 31st from 8 am - 1 pm. This year's Fest partners with the San Antonio River Authority to celebrate the grand opening of the San Antonio River Walk's northern extension. People of all ages will enjoy complimentary refreshments, music, health screening opportunities, bike check-ups, educational exhibits and prizes at the Pearl Brewery (312 Pearl Parkway).

Participate in walking activities with 5 km and 10 km routes designed by the Texas Wanderers www.walktx.org/TexasWanderers. Bike enthusiasts can choose from two events. The 28-mile Historic Missions Cycling Tour will be led by a member of the San Antonio Wheelmen and features a round-trip to Mission Espada. The Family Bike Ride is led by the South Texas Off-road Mountain Bikers (STORM) and is a short ride through Brackenridge Park. Sign-in for both rides starts at 8:00 am. A safety briefing will be provided and helmets are required for all riders.

Walk&Roll is sponsored by the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization. For more on Walk&Roll 2009, please visit www.walkandrollSA.com.

In an effort to assist visitors with crossing Commerce Street and Market Street to the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, the City of San Antonio is installing a new signalized pedestrian crossing on Market Street, and upgrading the two existing signalized pedestrian crossings. The Commerce Street crossing is completed this week, and the Market Street crossings will be completed by the end of the month.

Commerce Street and Market Street are two of the busiest streets used by visitors, and the work at the three pedestrian crossings will improve pedestrian safety.

Downtown Transportation

by Cynthia Martinez,
Special Projects Manager



In May 2007, the voters of San Antonio approved a \$550 million bond program, the largest in San Antonio history. Categories for the 151 projects include streets, bridges and sidewalks; drainage improvements; parks, recreation, open space and athletic improvements; library improvements; and public health facilities improvements.

Of the \$550 million approved by voters, \$10.7 million was identified for Downtown Transportation Infrastructure Improvements. Eligible improvements include construct and/or reconstruct sidewalks, driveway approaches, curbs and wheelchair ramps; repair street brick pavers; and install wayfinders, lighted street signs and other pedestrian, street and traffic signal improvements as needed.

A committee of staff members from Public Works, Downtown Operations and Capital Improvements Management Services has been meeting with design consultants PBS&J since February 2008 to define the best approach for identifying downtown needs and improvements. Three studies have been completed that are assisting with a master plan approach in identifying and prioritizing projects:

- San Antonio Central Business

Ride the Rio - Museum Reach

by JoAnn Boone, Rio San Antonio Cruises



Rio San Antonio Cruises will be offering passengers the opportunity to enjoy a part of the San Antonio River that has been previously unseen. The highly anticipated "Museum Reach" is set to open May 30 and Rio San Antonio Cruises is on board with daily Rio Taxi Service of the approximately 1.5 mile extension, for which you can

purchase your tickets right on board. Just flag us down!

Narrated tours will be soon available from 10 am - 8 pm and will showcase the highlights of this exciting new part of the San Antonio River Walk area. In addition, tours will have a special focus on the 12 original art installations along the way, created by local and international artists.

One of the most interesting new features of the tour will be the actual Lock and Dam system consisting of two lock chambers that will allow a single barge to enter in opposite directions, or two in the same direction. The system allows water to enter or leave the chamber, changing the difference in water elevation by nearly 9-feet.

The turnaround point of the tour is the Pearl Brewery complex with its eclectic mix of residents including retailers, restaurants and the Culinary Institute of America. The Museum Reach is a tribute to a long-standing commitment of San Antonians to preserve and protect the natural heart line of our city, the San Antonio River.

Downtown PID Renewed

by Cynthia Martinez, Special Projects Manager



On May 7, 2009, City Council approved the re-establishment of the Downtown Public Improvement District (PID) for an additional five years. As part of the renewal process, the City held a public hearing on April 30 to receive comments from property owners. Residents and downtown business owners alike signed up to speak on the positive improvements they attribute to the Amigos. Dressed in signature turquoise shirts, Amigos are often seen watering landscaped areas, giving a tourist directions, picking up trash or cleaning sidewalks. As a result of the Downtown PID, stakeholders see a cleaner and safer downtown that they are proud to live in.

The re-establishment of the PID also comes with an expanded boundary to include Market Square/El Mercado and Milam Park as well as the City Hall complex which includes Plaza de Armas and the Spanish Governor's Palace. With the large number of tourists in these areas, the expanded boundaries are a welcome addition.

Centro San Antonio is the non-profit organization responsible for management of the Downtown PID. For more information, visit www.downtownsanantonio.org

New VIA Information Center

by Andy Scheidt, VIA Metropolitan Transit

District Traffic Operation Analysis
 · Downtown Bond Project
 ADA/Pedestrian Mobility Study Phase I
 · Downtown Bond Project ADA/
 Pedestrian Mobility Study Phase II

The group has identified ADA projects a priority and work is expected to begin in the fall of 2009. A stakeholder meeting will be held soon to get community input in other proposed improvements. For more information on the project, visit <http://www.sanantonio.gov/2007Bond/>

Soul Food Festival

by Stephanie McNeil,
 La Villita Heritage Society



The La Villita Heritage Society has been serving up "gospel and greens for the soul" at their annual Soul Food Festival for the past 10 years. The tradition continues May 15-16 at Maverick Plaza in La Villita with gospel performances, delicious comfort food, cool beverages and soul music. Proceeds benefit the Little Church at La Villita and the Eastside Boys and Girl's Club.

The free festival kicks off 5 pm with "Gospel on the Plaza", a gospel choir competition sponsored by American Legacy Magazine and the San Antonio Convention and Visitors Bureau. May 16 is Family Day, beginning at 11 am. The young ones will enjoy a kid's area complete with a moon bounce, face painting and a book giveaway. Great music will be featured throughout the day and 4th Quarter Band will take the stage at 9pm to close out the festival with their high energy performances of soul, R&B and funk classics.

The public is invited to bring a canned food item that will be donated to the Little Church at La Villita. In addition to food and music, there will be raffles, art vendors and an area dedicated to San Antonio's Buffalo Soldiers. For more information, call 210-213-7066.



In June, VIA passengers traveling through the downtown area will have a new facility to serve them with comfort and convenience. Construction is almost complete for VIA's new Downtown Information Center, which will replace the current information center on Houston and Navarro. The new Downtown Information Center is in the Melrose building at the intersection of Commerce and Flores Streets. The center will open May 18 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony to be held June 1.

Like the current facility, the new center will have pocket schedules available, a system map, a staffed window for ticket sales and information requests, and the ability to process photo identification cards. Additional services that will be offered in the new location include an air-conditioned waiting area with seating, a bus arrival display that will inform riders when the next bus will be arriving, public restrooms, pay phones, water fountains, vending machines, and on-site security personnel.

Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm and Saturday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. The facility will be accessible from Commerce Street. For more information on VIA visit www.viainfo.net

ThankYou, Taxi Drivers!

by Nanca Baca, The CE Group



What sites should I see while I'm in town? Where can I find the best crispy tacos? Who offers unique San Antonio souvenirs? Taxi drivers recommend the sites you should see and they tell you about the great restaurants and fun hang-out spots in town. In celebration of National Tourism Week, Ruth's Chris Steak House Downtown honored San Antonio taxi drivers with free lunch on May 13. On the Taxi Driver Appreciation Day, the restaurant served lunch to roughly 250 taxi cab drivers from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

The lunch menu included a filet sandwich with barbecue butter and horseradish sauce, Cajun chips, bottled water and fresh-baked cookies all packed in a Ruth's Chris Steak House thermal bag. Lana Duke, owner of both Ruth's Chris locations in San Antonio, is the driving force behind initiating and continuing San Antonio's Taxi Appreciation Day. "People's relationships with cab drivers often begin in the airport and continue as they visit the rest of the city," says Duke. "We really want to thank our cab drivers for representing San Antonio so well."

The tourism industry is one of San Antonio's largest economic generators and we strive to inform visitors about all downtown has to offer. Our friendly taxi drivers are often the first "local" contact visitors have with San Antonio and these individuals are key representatives of the City. We value their contribution to bringing visitors downtown, and welcome you to find creative ways to show your own appreciation for these hardworking men and women!

Summer in Market Square

by Patricia Rosas, Facilities Operations Coordinator



Historic Market Square is only 150 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border and is the largest Mexican market place outside of Mexico. It exists on a plaza that is part of the original ejido, a gift of land to the settlers 'for their use and

entertainment' from the King of Spain in 1730. Today, we offer music, dining, shopping and fun for visitors and locals alike.

Join us for the Ragtime Festival, sponsored by the San Antonio Ragtime Society (210-541-0760), on May 16th and 17th. This special celebration highlights a type of American music (c. 1890-1920) with strong syncopation in even time. The music begins at 10:00am and continues through 6:00pm. While listening to the music, pick up a gordita to munch on and a refreshing glass of aguas frescas. You will find yourself enjoying the diversity of our culture in a festive atmosphere.

Our summer hours begin on June 1st and run through August 31st, with shops open 10:00am to 8:00pm. Whether you are a music, food or festival aficionado, there is something for everyone at Market Square. Come join us!

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.

202 E. Nueva San Antonio, Texas 78205

www.sanantonio.gov/dtops

Hours: Monday-Friday 7:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Phone: 210-207-3677

Director: Paula X. Stallcup

Assistant Director: Colleen Swain

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