

# BIG BEND TAKES ON NEW YORK (AND WINS!)

Though *The New York Times* bid “Goodbye to the Great American Road Trip” in an op-ed piece this summer, a few folks in West Texas beg to differ.

Even in a tightening economy, the Texas Mountain Trail program, the tiny community of Fort Davis and the gateway city of Midland are aggressively marketing West Texas with a 15-second commercial on a video billboard in Times Square (of all places!) and on a new Web site, [www.westtexastrip.com](http://www.westtexastrip.com).

So far, the numbers are working in West Texas’ favor. Visitations to Big Bend National Park in April and May were the park’s highest ever for those months, and Fort Davis’ hotel/motel and retail tax revenues were up. That’s a trend the partners running [westtexastrip.com](http://westtexastrip.com) are working to continue across the region.

“Only by working together can we get the word out that a West Texas frontier vacation is still worth the investment,” said Lisa Nugent of the Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce. “And that it is still so much fun.”



### GO TEXAN MARKETING TIP:

Seek partnerships. Leverage limited marketing resources by working together with neighboring communities.

SOURCE: “*Fighting for the Frontier: Wilderness Tourism Faces High Gas Prices*,” July 2008, [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com)

### Texas Department of Agriculture GO TEXAN Rural Community Program

P.O. Box 12847  
Austin, Texas 78711  
Issue 3, February 2009

**GO TEXAN Rural Community Team**  
We’re ready and set to GO TEXAN!  
Have questions? We’re here to help.  
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For general program information including Membership, Grant Opportunities, Hardworking Communities and Workshops:

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### RESOURCES

Check out these resources for tourism ideas:

- **Developing Tourism in Your Community**  
[www.rpts.tamu.edu/tourism/](http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/tourism/)
- **GO TEXAN Rural Community Event Starter Kit**  
[www.gotexan.org](http://www.gotexan.org), click on Rural Community Program, Member Corner, Resources

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February  
2009

# NO PLACE LIKE HOME *When Home is Texas!*

*From Todd Staples, Commissioner  
Texas Department of Agriculture*

From the seed first planted in 1999 as an agriculture promotion campaign, GO TEXAN has grown deep roots and branched out to include non-agricultural products, rural communities, retirement communities and tasty Texas restaurants.

In those 10 years, we’ve celebrated the initiative, innovation and hard work of families, businesses and communities all across the Lone Star State.

We have also weathered droughts and floods, and so much more. And though budgets may be tight now, Texans are tough — full of grit and plain ol’ know-how.

There really is no place like Texas. That’s why one major focus in the coming year will be on

growing local and regional tourism by encouraging Texans to see what’s around the bend, just outside of town in rural Texas.

The GO TEXAN Rural Community Program creates a single rallying call for rural communities while educating the public about all rural Texas has to offer.

We encourage you to share and promote your successful ideas. What’s working for your community? Your region? And how can we help you grow more? Give us a call.



A DECADE OF EXCELLENCE  
1999-2009

**Ten years. Two words. One big idea that’s growin’ still — GO TEXAN!**

*Todd Staples*

# Texas Country. Make Your Getaway

## SURVEY SAYS...

"Vacations are a non-negotiable part of contemporary life, even in challenging economic times," notes Peter Yesawich, YPartnership, co-author of a national travel survey conducted in April 2008.

Even with increases in the price of gas, the survey found six of 10 Americans planning a road trip last summer would not change travel plans.

Among the 41 percent of respondents who stated their plans would change if gas prices rose further, the greatest percentage would simply drive a shorter distance to their vacation destination.

### GO TEXAN MARKETING TIP:

Sharpen focus. Market your community more heavily to nearby communities, counties and regions, all within a short drive.

The 2008 State Fair of Texas reinforces these statements. Attendance for this year's fair was the second highest in its history, and sales of GO TEXAN company products in the Food and Fiber Pavilion were the highest ever. Even with all of the concerns of today, people still want to get out and experience what their backyard has to offer.

SOURCES: "Gas Prices Not Likely to Affect Travel Plans of Most American Travelers," May 2008, Travel Industry Association, www.tia.org.



# FIVE FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

Successful tourism development depends on five factors:

**1.** Attracting appropriate visitors to your destination area.

*Are you targeting seniors? Shoppers? Families? Or bikers?*

**2.** Providing tourists with a satisfying experience that meets or exceeds their expectations.

*You can't be all things to all people; can you deliver on what is promised?*

**3.** Keeping tourists in your destination area for as long as possible.

*Do you market the total package: touring, shopping, dining and lodging?*

**4.** Satisfying the needs and concerns of local residents by involving them in directing, controlling and providing the tourist services and experiences.

*Are local businesses involved early in the planning stages?*

**5.** Ensuring sustainable tourism development with a community-based vision of how to grow as a unique Texas destination.

*Do you seek input from the community?*

SOURCE: *Developing Tourism in Your Community*, www.rpts.tamu.edu/tourism/.

# ROPE 'EM IN!

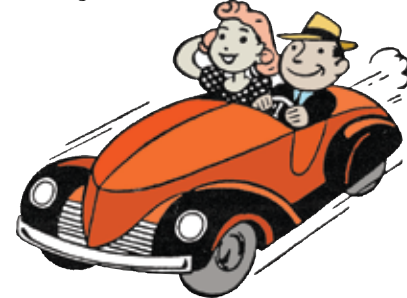
More than a name or logo, a brand is a promise of an experience.

In today's complex marketplace, a destination brand has to be a simple, easy-to-understand message that stands out from the clutter. It should capture the emotions of the experience offered to a targeted customer group.

### Here are a few standouts:

- **Athens** – Naturally East Texas
- **Brownwood** – Feels Like Home
- **Dripping Springs** – Gateway to the Hills of Texas
- **Friona** – Cheeseburger Capital of Texas
- **Granbury** – Where Texas History Lives
- **Mount Pleasant** – Living Up to Our Name
- **Palestine** – Embrace Nature

*What does your community offer? What is your brand?*



### GO TEXAN MARKETING TIP:

Brand it. One of the most powerful tools you can use is the GO TEXAN mark. Show your Lone Star pride to more than 24 million Texans who shop, dine and travel Texas.

# TEXAS TRAVEL FACTS

- Total direct travel spending in Texas for 2007 reached \$56.7 billion, an increase of 5.4 percent over 2006.
- During 2007, travel spending directly supported 534,000 jobs with earnings of \$16.3 billion.
- Texas lodging room revenues gained 9 percent to \$6.7 billion in 2007.

SOURCE: Office of the Governor Economic Development and Tourism Division, www.travel.state.tx.us; Dean Runyan Associates 2007 Economic Impact Report.

# 2007 REGIONAL TOURISM ACTIVITIES

The chart below shows the primary reasons for visiting the following destinations for business and leisure travel. Percentages represent the number of "person-days" spent in each region. Business travel includes group meetings (conventions, seminars, etc.) and transient business (sales, consulting, etc.). Leisure travel includes vacation (getaway weekend, general vacation) and non-vacation (visiting friends and relatives, special event, etc.).

Region	Big Bend	Gulf Coast	Hill Country	Panhandle Plains	Piney Woods	Prairies & Lakes	South Texas Plains
Percentage of Total Texan Visitors	54%	61%	72%	67%	68%	56%	64%
Percentage of Total Non-Texan Visitors	46%	39%	28%	33%	32%	44%	36%
Texas Region Travel Ranking	7th	2nd	4th	5th	6th	1st	3rd
Business Visitors	41%	29%	34%	31%	21%	34%	23%
Leisure Visitors	59%	71%	66%	69%	79%	66%	77%

# 2007 TOP TOURISM ACTIVITIES

The chart below lists five general activity categories visitors participated in whether the purpose of travel was for business or leisure. Multiple responses are recorded; therefore, the total percentage may not add up to 100.

Region	Big Bend	Gulf Coast	Hill Country	Panhandle Plains	Piney Woods	Prairies & Lakes	South Texas Plains
Touring	18 %	22 %	18 %	10 %	15 %	13 %	23 %
Nature	14 %	17 %	7 %	7 %	11 %	8 %	10 %
Culture	12 %	15 %	11 %	7 %	11 %	21 %	20 %
Attractions	9 %	15 %	16 %	10 %	5 %	14 %	24 %
Outdoor Sports	3 %	7 %	8 %	6 %	11 %	5 %	5 %

Source: 2007 Destination Reports, www.travel.state.tx.us/travelreport.aspx. Research and Data provided by Office of the Governor Economic Development and Tourism Division, D.K. Shifflet and Associates.

