

# Scenic America 2014 Conference

Houston, Texas | April 10-12, 2014

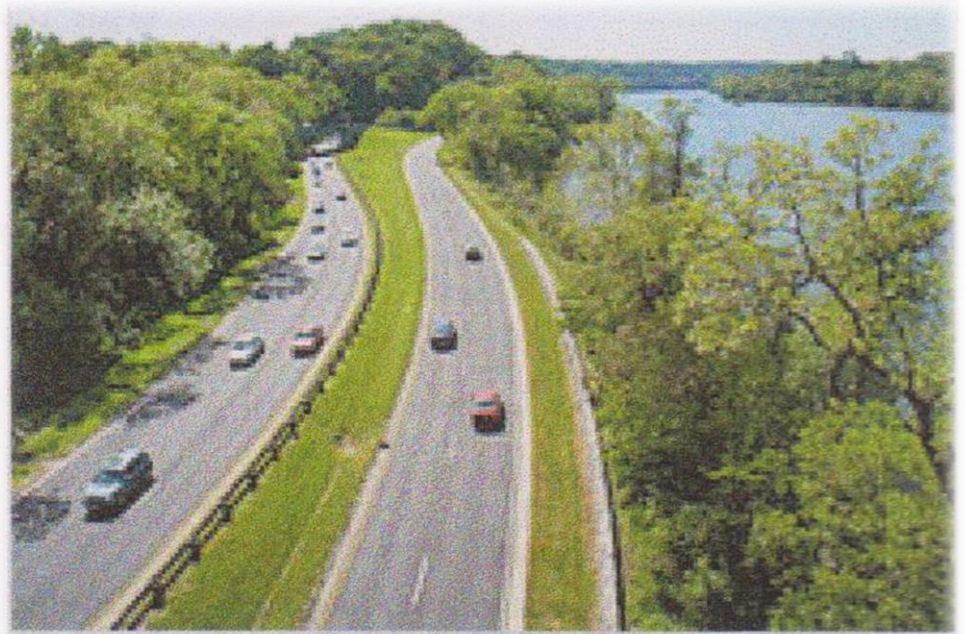
## TOURISM--TAKING THE SCENIC ROUTE

**Douglas Harman,**

Ph.D., CDME, TDMC

Harman Consulting

# Old Town Alexandria



Northern section of the George  
Washington Memorial Parkway,  
Arlington, Virginia



## Editorial

# Billboard compromise a good sign

### Council's agreement on roadside advertising should give I-35W expansion a green light

No matter how much you love Fort Worth, calling its long stretches of interstate highway "beautiful" would be somewhat of an overstatement.

That's not for lack of trying. Beautifying the roadways has been part of the city's agenda for years.

And a 20-year-old ordinance restricting new construction of off-premise signs (billboards) has made great strides toward cleaning up the appearance of local highways.

City policy allows existing billboards — there are 668 — but prohibits their replacement if government projects, such as road expansions, force the signs to come down.

Still, for two decades, the local sign code has put reasonable limits on this sometimes unsightly segment of the outdoor advertising market and has improved the look and feel of local freeways.

Yet after some heated debate at Tuesday's City Council meeting, the city made an exception to its rule, at least in part to expedite the expansion of I-35W.

The long-delayed I-35W project has been a source of headaches for North Texans for years but finally seems to be within reach. The groundbreaking is tentatively scheduled for early May.

The proposed expansion, which includes rebuilding existing lanes and adding two toll lanes in each direction as well as improvements to access roads and ramps, will require the Texas Department of Transportation to remove 25 freeway signs on I-35W between downtown and Loop 820. And TxDOT is eager to get the sign acquisition underway immediately.

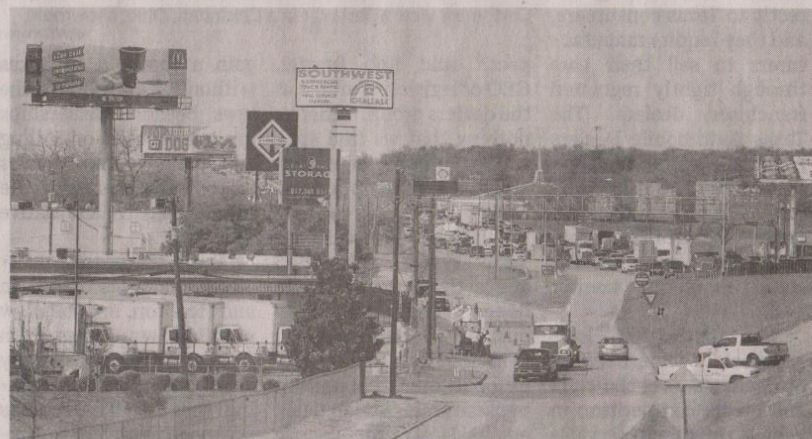
Per standing policy, those signs would come down and stay down for good.

However, TxDOT asked the city to grant an exception in this case, allowing signs in the affected area to be relocated elsewhere along the corridor.

And the transportation department's request was not as arbitrary as it seems.

During Tuesday's pre-council meeting, Assistant City Manager Fernando Costa explained that giving the sign owners an outside option might help the state agency, which must compensate owners of condemned signs for their value, avoid paying millions for the signs that are relocated. North Tarrant Express Mobility Partners, TxDOT's private-sector partner in the project, indicated that such savings could be reinvested in the expansion.

Costa pointed to the anticipated cost of 15 signs removed during the construction of the Chisholm Trail Parkway in southwest Fort Worth. The department hasn't tallied its costs yet, but could spend an average \$1 million on each billboard acquired for construction of the parkway.



The City Council voted Tuesday to allow for sign relocations along part of the I-35W corridor.

Star-Telegram/Paul Moseley

Balancing aesthetics with economics is never an easy equation. So the city split the difference, settling on a compromise that permits owners to relocate signs in the I-35W corridor only if each sign moved means four others in scenic districts of the city — there are 194 of those — are taken down.

City council members seemed skeptical that many sign owners would take such an option, and they could be right.

Star-Telegram City Hall writer Caty Hirst reported that Jake Smith, president of Clear Channel Outdoor, a national advertising company that owns 14 of the affected signs, said the compromise will result in a laborious condemnation process and only serve to delay the freeway expansion.

Eminent domain procedures are onerous, but threats that the ordinance will

postpone the expansion are just hot air.

City spokesman Bill Begley told the Star-Telegram Editorial Board a delay because of the legal process is unlikely: "Once the money is placed in the registry of the court, after the commissioner's hearing, the property is subject to development for the project even though the lawsuit over actual damages will continue."

Although there may be a nasty and expensive fight in TxDOT's future, the I-35W expansion shouldn't be compromised — at least not because of the billboards.

And while most businesses will get to keep their larger-than-life advertisements, a small stretch of Fort Worth highway will get a little more beautiful.

We'll consider the council's action to be a good sign.



# DOWNTOWN FORT WORTH







**AIRPORT**

Fort Worth  
Nature Center

Texas Civil  
War Museum

Billy Bob's Texas  
Cattle Drive  
Museums  
Shopping  
Dining  
Rodeos  
Entertainment

Stockyards  
District

Cultural  
District

Museums  
Will Rogers Center  
Botanical Research  
Institute of Texas (BRIT)  
Parks  
Dining  
UNT Health  
Science Center

Texas  
Christian  
University

Meacham  
Airport

Convention Center  
Water Gardens  
Bass Performance Hall  
Entertainment  
Shopping  
Dining

Downtown /  
Sundance  
Square

**FORT WORTH**

Near  
Southside

Fort Worth Zoo

C.R. Smith Museum

Six Flags  
Hurricane  
Harbor

Rangers  
Ballpark  
in Arlington

Six Flags  
Over Texas

AT&T Stadium  
Home of the Dallas Cowboys

**ARLINGTON**

820

26

121

121

820

30

30

West  
7th

287

35W

20

20

To Meaco, Austin



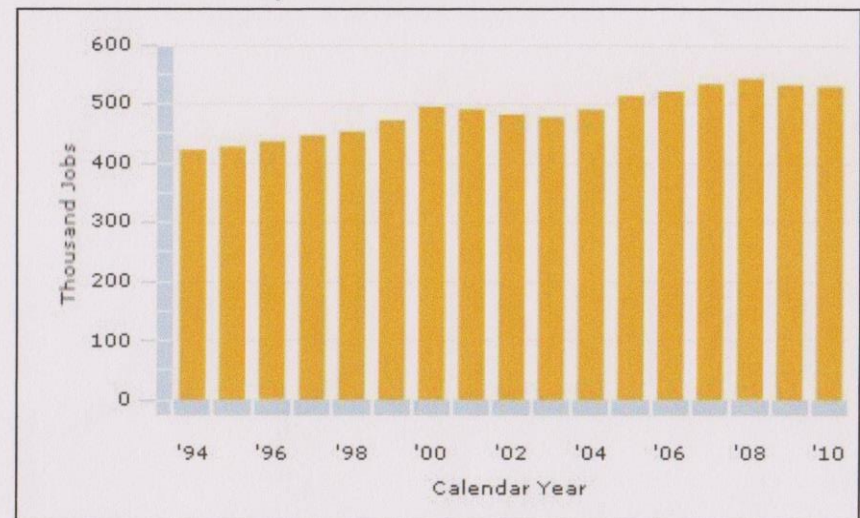


## Employment Driver

- Travel spending directly supported 529,400 jobs with earnings of \$16.5 billion.
- Jobs directly supported in industries like Accommodations, Food Services, Retail Trade, Transportation and others.
- Travel spending supported jobs in all 254 Texas counties.

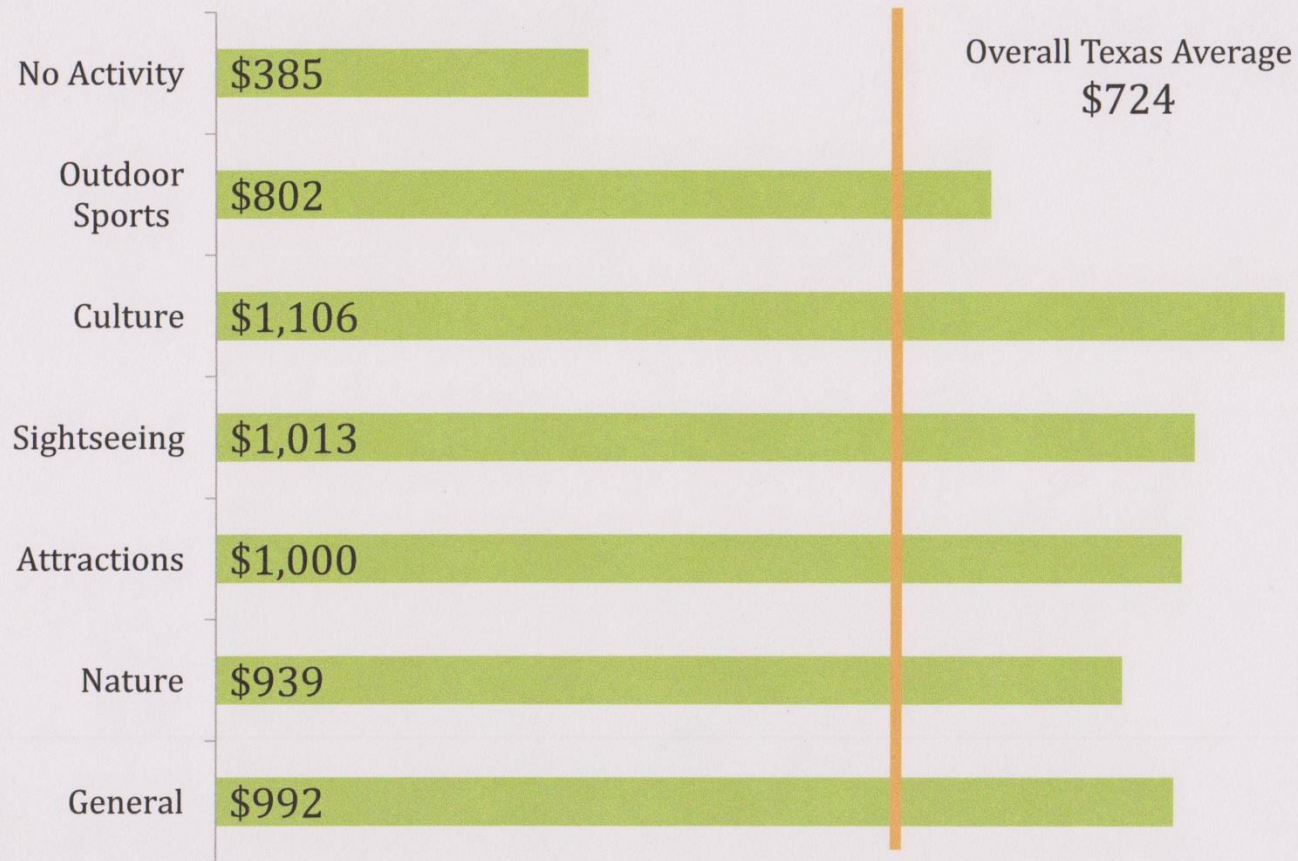
### Travel Supported Employment in Texas

Source: Dean Runyan & Associates



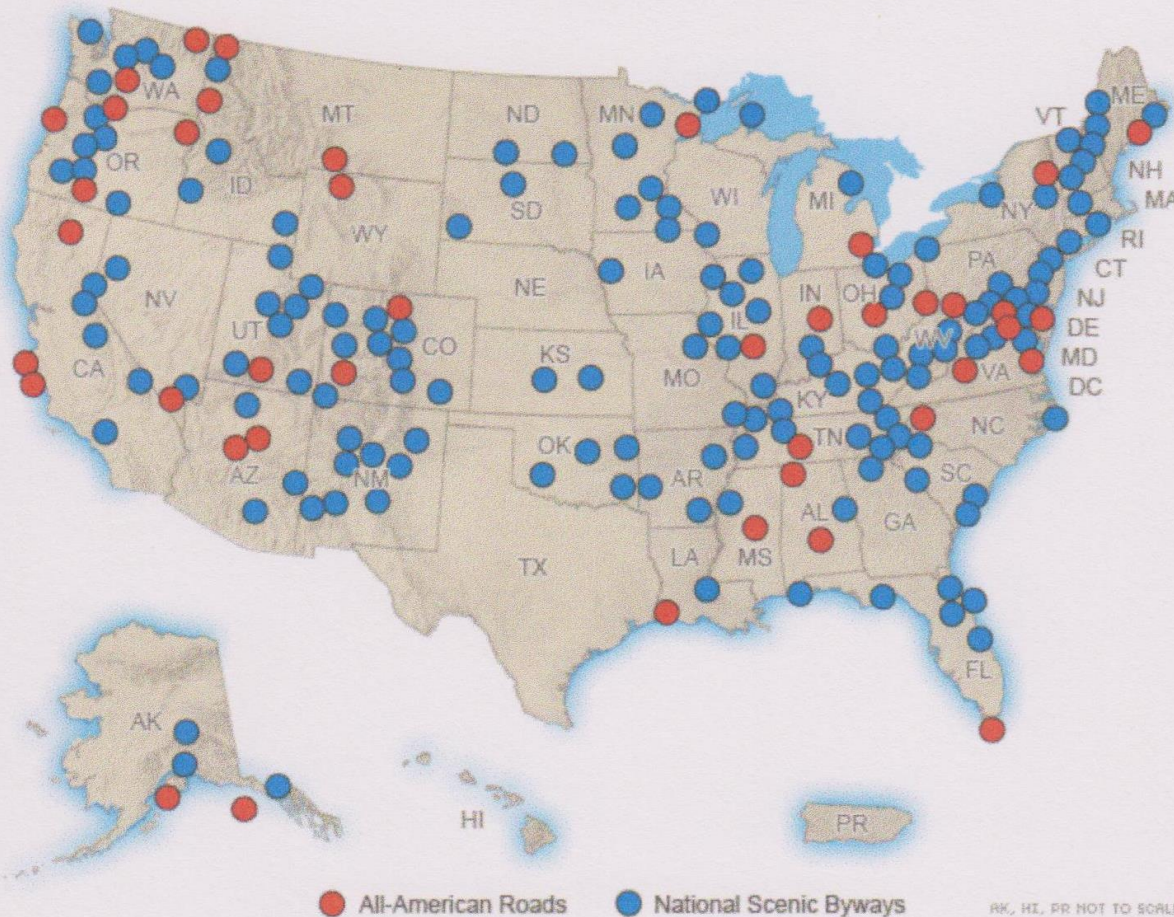
# Average Spending Per Party- Primary Activity

Source: D.K. Shifflet & Associates and Texas Tourism. 2008-2010 Overnight Leisure Travel in Texas.





Choose from the map or list below to find byways in a State.



Jump to a State:

## Find Byways

Search near any U.S. location:

## Nearby Byways

📍 Finding your location...

## America's Byways

America's Byways® is the umbrella term we use for the collection of **150 distinct and diverse roads** designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. America's Byways include the National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads.

America's Byways are gateways to adventures where no two experiences are the same. The National Scenic Byways Program invites you to **Come Closer to America's heart and soul....**

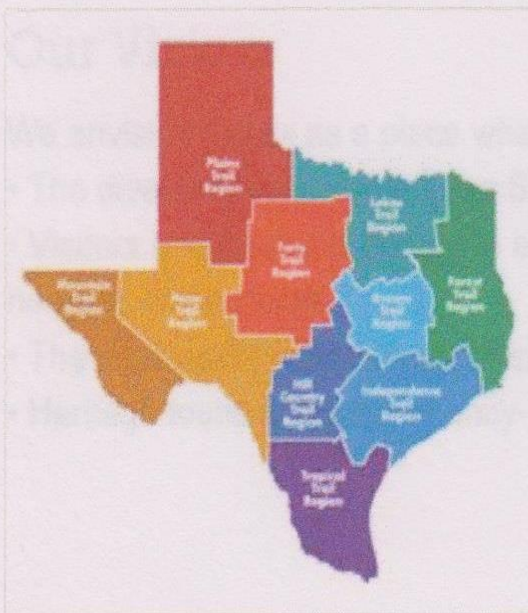


# MARBLE FALLS, BURNET COUNTY



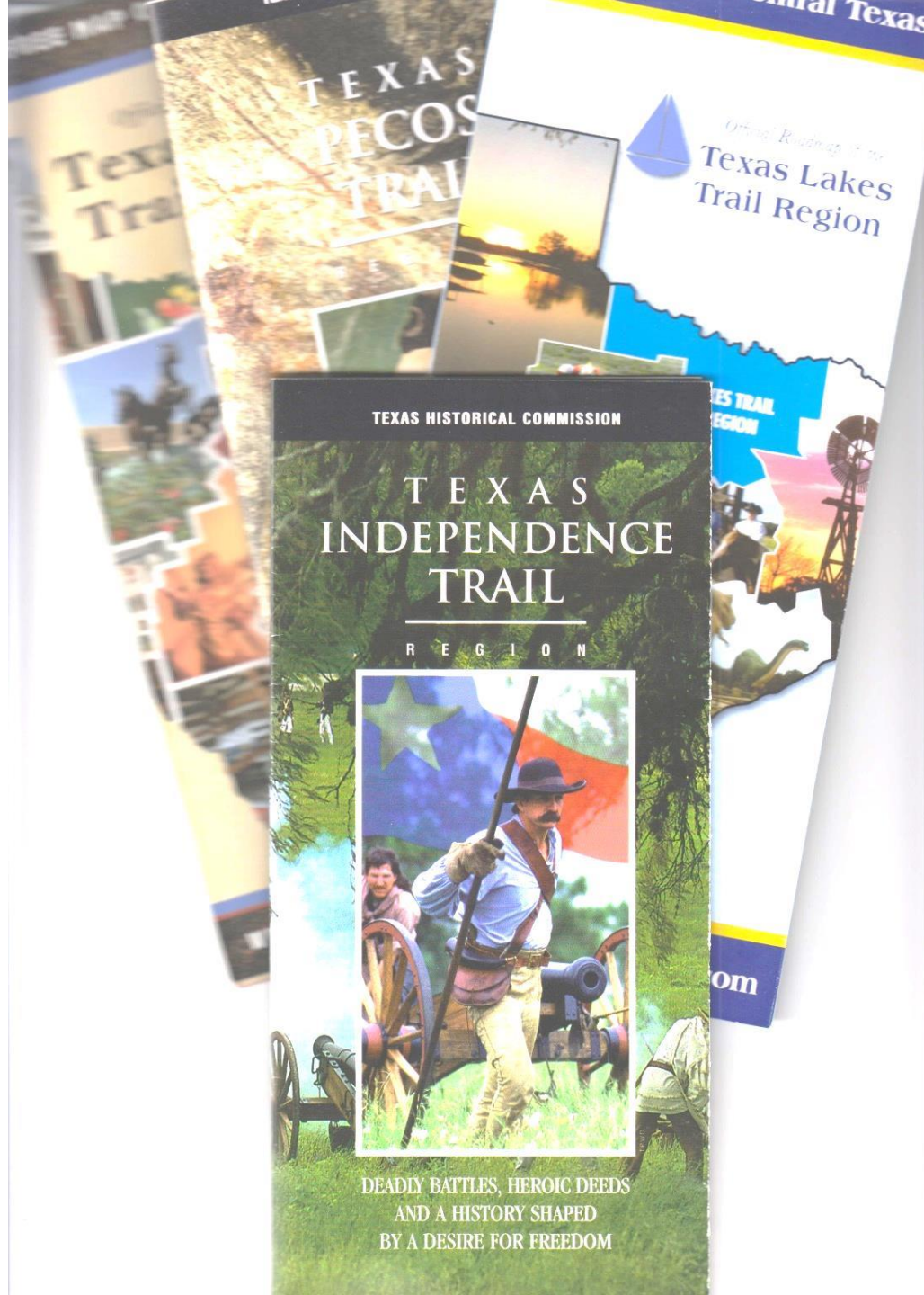


# Texas Heritage Trails



The Texas Heritage Trails Program is the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) award-winning heritage tourism initiative. This economic development initiative encourages communities, heritage regions, and the state to partner and promote Texas' historic and cultural resources. These successful local preservation efforts, combined with statewide marketing of heritage regions as tourism destinations, increase visitation to cultural and historic sites, and bring more dollars to Texas communities. This, in turn, supports the THC's mission to protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education economic benefit, and enjoyment of present and future generations.

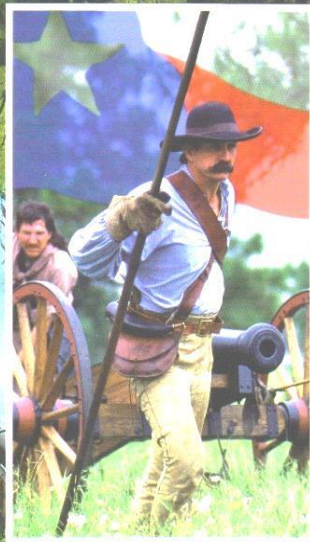




TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

# TEXAS INDEPENDENCE TRAIL

REGION



DEADLY BATTLES, HEROIC DEEDS  
AND A HISTORY SHAPED  
BY A DESIRE FOR FREEDOM



# TEXAS COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION



Parker County



Goliad County





GARD

THE

THE  
CHISHOLM  
TRAIL

CHISHOLM

UNIVERSITY  
OF OKLAHOMA  
PRESS

TRAIL

WAYNE GARD

ABILENE

NEWTON

WICHITA

CALDWELL

RED RIVER  
STATION

FORT WORTH

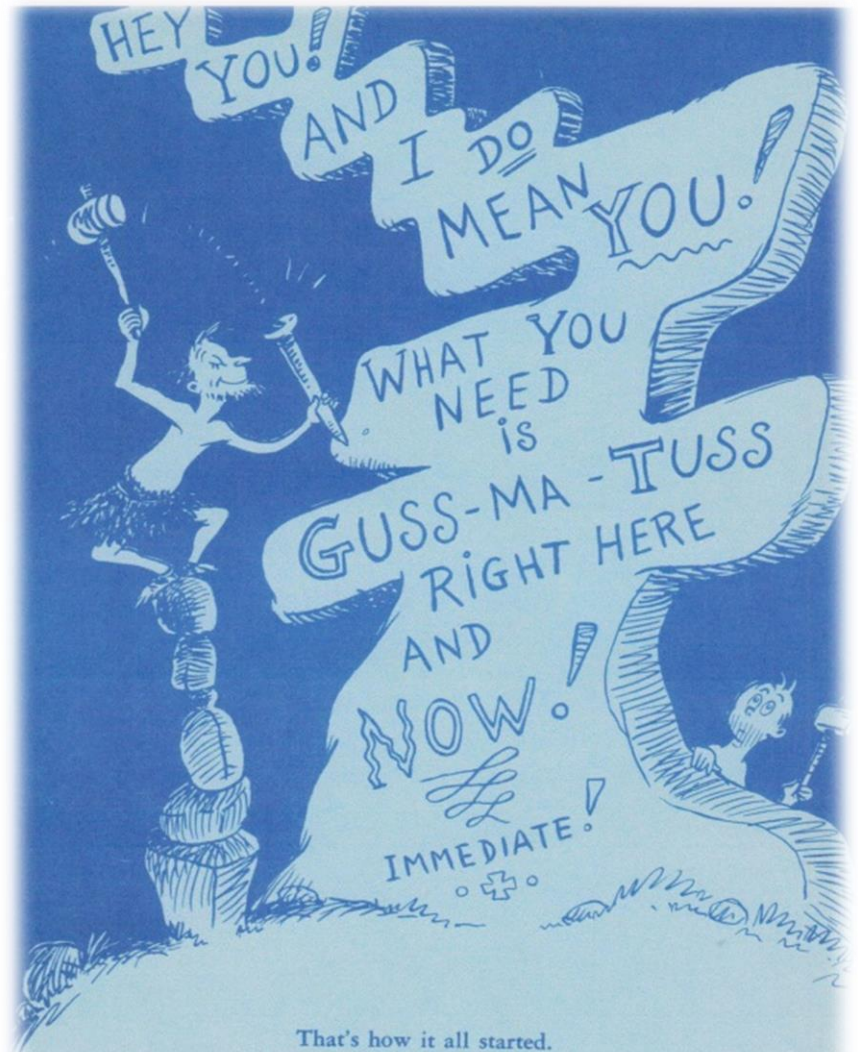
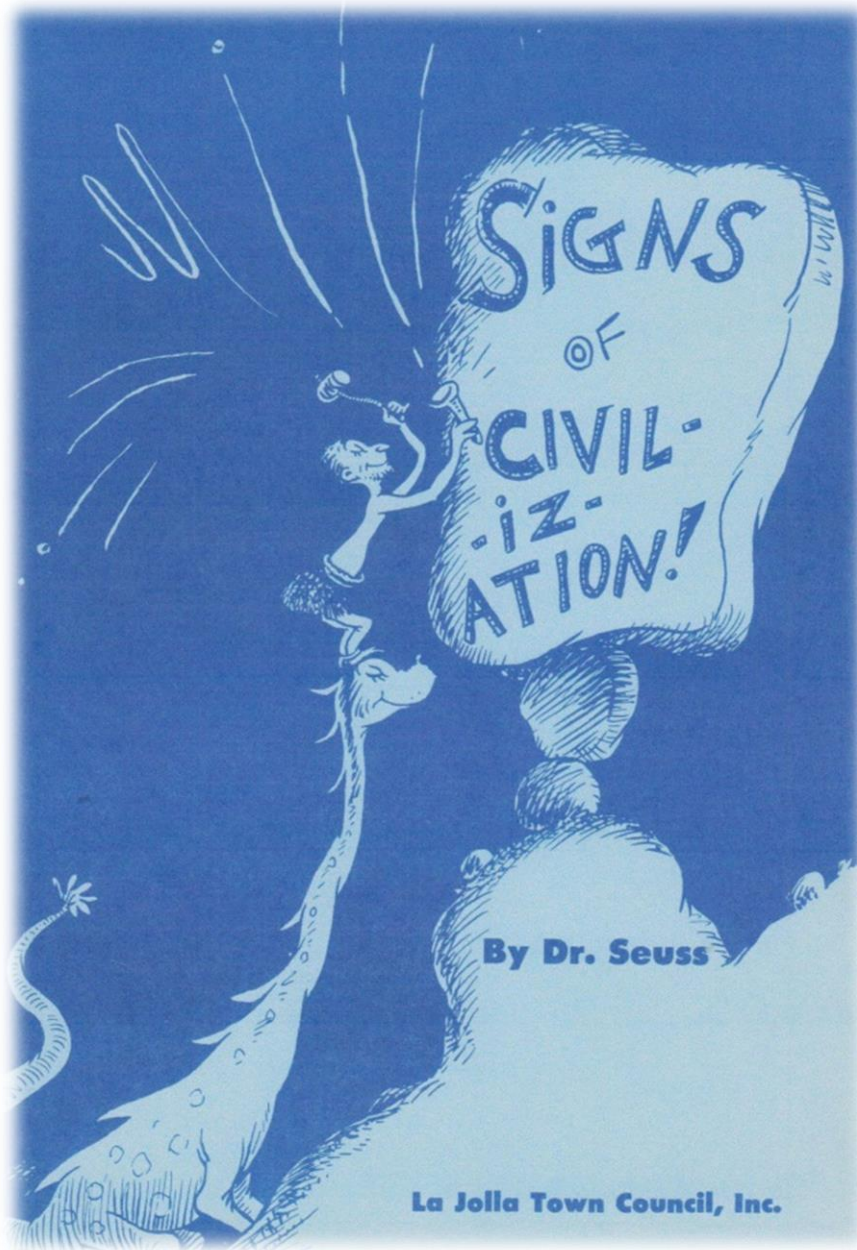
DALLAS

WACO

AUSTIN

SAN ANTONIO

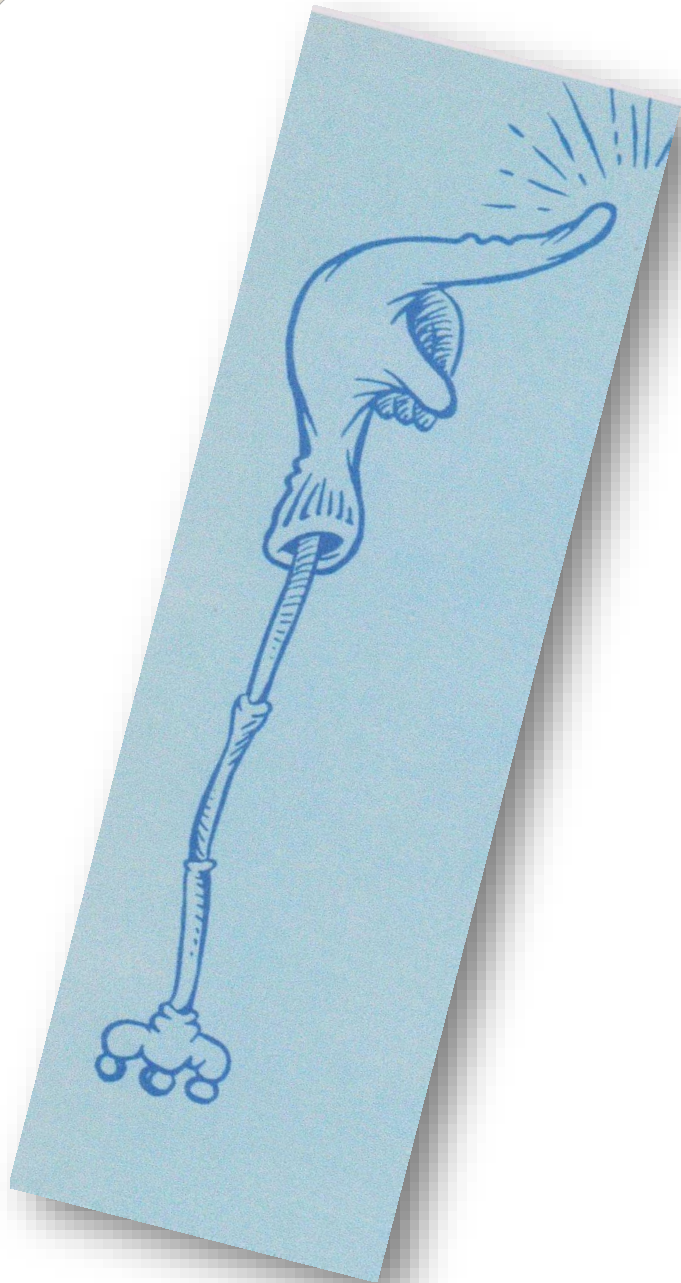




That's how it all started.  
THEN good old Guss  
Put a bigger pitch in  
For Guss-ma-Tuss!

*mm*





**Good taste, we've  
discovered, means  
Better Business**