



## **NEWS RELEASE**

June 13, 2023

### **State honors Caldwell County Historical Commission with Distinguished Service Award**

The Caldwell County Historical Commission has been awarded a 2022 Distinguished Service Award from the Texas Historical Commission.

The annual award affirms Caldwell County CHC appointees for managing well-rounded history and preservation-related programs that enrich Texas communities. The Caldwell County Commissioners Court serves as the CHC's governing body.

"The Caldwell County Jail Museum and the county historical commission's efforts are driven entirely by dedicated volunteers who put in more than 1,500 hours of service last year," Caldwell County Judge Hoppy Haden said. "Those volunteers help keep our county's museum alive and support additional programs aimed at promoting Caldwell County's rich history."

County CHC Chair Coyle Buehler said the commission's focus was to promote heritage tourism. The commission's chief way of doing this involves the Caldwell County Jail Museum located near downtown Lockhart. The commission's work also includes educational programs, maintaining historical markers and maintaining the museum as a de facto county visitors center.

"It has turned out to be a real draw," Buehler said of the museum. "It's quite visible from the main highway and we've received over 2,000 guests per year. About 90% of those are from out of the county. Over the past few years, we've had people from 144 different Texas cities and 38 states who have visited, and we've registered guests from 45 different countries."

CHCs provide critical volunteer efforts to preserve Texas' unique historic, architectural and cultural assets. They provided 294,634 volunteer hours in 2022, which is an in-kind donation to the state that is valued at more than \$9.3 million.

The THC assists more than 200 CHCs through programs and services that preserve Texas' heritage for the education, enjoyment and economic benefit of present and future generations. The THC's advisory role to CHCs is outlined in the Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 318. CHCs, as directed by county officials, initiate and conduct programs that preserve the historic and cultural resources of Texas.

The honor meant a great deal to Buehler and the volunteers serving on the commission, he said.

“This is the third time we’ve received this award and it means a lot to us to see some material recognition of the effort that our group has provided,” Buehler said. “We know the county appreciates us because they are happy to reappoint us every two years and the state measures our efforts with several criteria that go well beyond operating the museum. There’s a lot of work behind the scenes that makes this come together.”

For more information about CHCs in Texas, visit [thc.texas.gov/chcoutreach](http://thc.texas.gov/chcoutreach) or contact the THC’s History Programs Division at 512-463-5853.



Caldwell County Judge Hoppy Haden, right, presents a 2022 Distinguished Service Award from the Texas Historical Society to Coyle Buehler, who accepted the award on behalf of the Caldwell County Historical Commission on June 13 during a meeting of the Commissioners Court.