



# Banner Newsletter

Brownsville Historical Association

Volume 12, Issue 1

January 2026

## Over 150 Years of Service: The Brownsville Fire Department, 1875-2025



Entrance  
Display at  
Brownsville  
Events Center

individuals who have shaped the department's growth, reflect on a century and a half of dedicated service, and honor the lives lost in service to the community. In addition to the ceremonies and presentations, attendees explored a temporary exhibit of artifacts and memorabilia curated by the Fire Department with support from the BHA's archives and collections. The exhibit featured materials such as: 1940s ledgers, early pull-style fire stations, historic helmets, and various fire extinguishers-

items that illustrate both technological advancements and pivotal moments in the department's history.

To fully appreciate this milestone, it is important to look back at the origins and evolution of the Brownsville Fire

Department. The department began in 1875 as a volunteer organization known as, Protection Hook and Ladder Company Number One. It was not until the early 1900s that it became officially established as a city department. Initially operating out of City Hall at Market Square, the department later moved into its first

freestanding facility with the construction of the Central Fire Station on Adams Street in 1928. Today, the Brownsville Fire Department operates nine stations across the city and provides service to the Brownsville International/South Padre Island Airport. Most recently, the department marked another historic milestone with the promotion of Lt. Amanda Ely as its first female fire



Newspaper Clippings, Badges, Patches,  
and other memorabilia

lieutenant. As it moves into its next chapter, the Brownsville Fire Department continues to build on this legacy of service and dedication.

It was a privilege to work with the Brownsville Fire Department in gathering artifacts, panels, and photos to help commemorate this occasion. We are grateful for their service, sacrifice, and dedication to our community. Cheers to 150 years!



1940s Ledgers



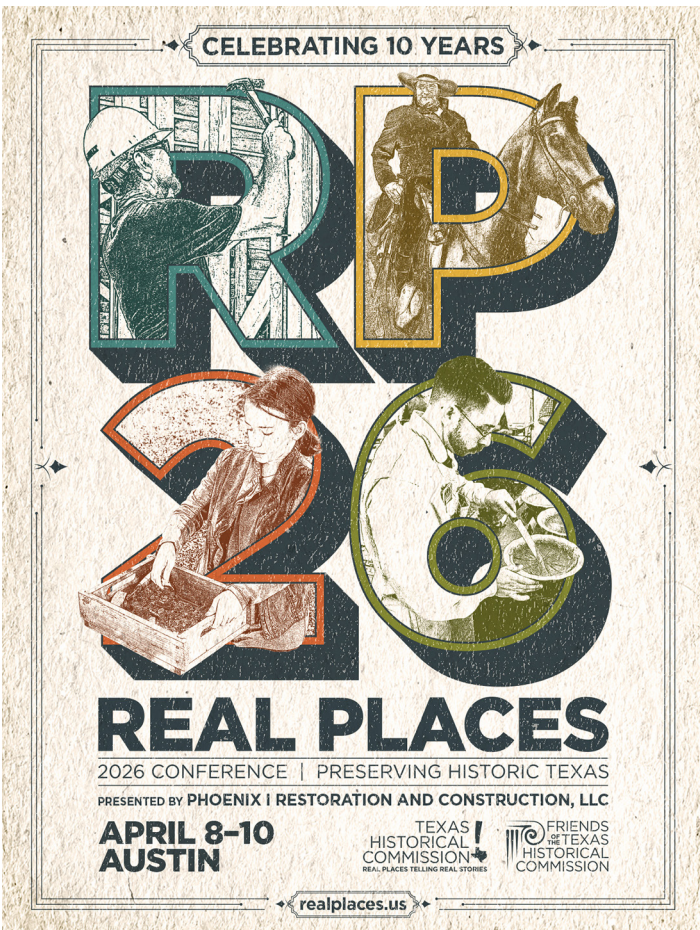
Pull Station &  
Enlarged 1918  
Photograph





## Celebrating 20 Years: The Costumes of the Americas Museum

This anniversary exhibit reflects on the 20-year journey of the Costumes of the Americas Museum. From its grassroots beginnings, founded by a dedicated group of women passionate about preserving cultural traditions, to becoming a space for education and connection, the museum has grown far beyond its original vision. *Celebrating 20 Years* highlights the individuals who shaped its story, showcases select costumes from the museum's rich collection, and traces the evolution of its mission to celebrate the diverse costumes and traditions of Mexico, Central America, and South America. Visitors are invited to explore how this small museum became a vibrant cultural cornerstone in our community. *Celebrating 20 Years* will be on display at the Costumes of the Americas Museum through March 10, 2026.



*Welcome!*

### NEW BHA MEMBERS

Dennis Acosta and Family  
Roy Budnik and Family  
Maria Cabanas  
Brent Campney  
Guillermo and Lupita Chapa  
Donald and Judy Crouse  
Debbie & John Kilroy  
Elizabeth Larkin  
Martha & Marti Muchnicki

Matthew Neece  
Joseph L. Owens  
Ricardo Rodriguez  
Tony Rodriguez  
Yuri Soto  
Karen & Michael Stowe  
Brenda Watson  
Nathan Watson

### Thanks for your membership renewal!

Carmen Aldape  
Gilbert Hernandez and Alejandra Juarez  
Sally Ali  
Viola Currier  
Roberta Dotterer & Dan Hoobler  
James & Martha Gomez  
Peter & Gail Goodman  
Kathryn & Greg Keeling  
Deli Lanoux  
Steven Lanoux  
Arnulfo & Rosa Mar

Miguel Salazar & Angela Mar  
Erik McGee  
Jane McKinney  
Cheryl & LeRoy Paulson  
Rita Reger  
Miles & Gaynelle Schulze  
Leanne Tattersfield & Mark Pingrey  
San Juanita & Fred Vasquez  
Ambrosio Villarreal Jr.  
Laura Works

### BROWNSVILLE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

1325 E. Washington Street, Brownsville, Texas 78520  
956.541.5560 Fax: 956.435.0028 | [www.brownsvillehistory.org](http://www.brownsvillehistory.org)



## *Shades of Haunted History Walking Tour*



## *Historical Happy Hour: Costume Contest*



## *BISD Dia De Los Muertos Student Art Exhibit Reception*



## *Historical Happy Hour: Texas Embers*



## *Historical Happy Hour: Country Christmas*



## *Toys for Tots Classic Car Show*





# Ranch Days at Laureles

SATURDAYS IN MARCH

9AM TO NOON

LAURELES RANCH HOUSE MUSEUM

1501 E. 7TH STREET

LINEAR PARK

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 47  
Brownsville, TX

Brownsville Historical Association  
1325 E. Washington Street  
Brownsville, Texas 78520