

SAN SABA COUNTY

Population: 6,053 (2003 estimate)

History:

Celebrating its sesquicentennial in 2006, San Saba County, the easternmost county in the Central Texas Hills & Rivers Region, receives its name from the San Saba River flowing through it. The river and county were actually named for Mission San Saba found in nearby Menard County.

San Saba County was largely inhabited by Indian tribes (Tonkawas, Apache, Caddoans and Comanche) up until the 19th century. The first European exploration occurred in 1732 by then Spanish governor of Texas, Juan Antonio Bustillo y Ceballos. In 1842, San Saba County was included as part of the Fisher-Miller Grant, although original members of the German-Texan pioneers stayed south of the area due to raiding Comanche tribes. In 1856, San Saba County was formally organized.



Credit: San Saba Chamber of Commerce

Pecans, found naturally in abundance throughout the county, became the county's cash crop in 1874 when Edward E. Riesen, an English immigrant, invented the paper shell pecan. Riesen helped put San Saba County on the map, proclaiming it as the "Pecan Capital of the World." Today, pecans are still grown in abundance.

Geography:

San Saba County has two rivers: the San Saba, which bisects the county, and the Colorado River, that forms the northern and eastern boundaries of the county. (Note: The San Saba River flows into the Colorado River just eight miles northeast of the city of San Saba.) Elevation ranges from 1,100 feet to 1,800 feet above sea level. The principal city of San Saba County is San Saba.

San Saba: (pop. 2,637) Approximately 90 miles northwest of Austin and 110 southwest of Waco, San Saba is the county seat.

Things to See and Do:



Credit: TPWD

Colorado Bend State Park: Offers six miles of Colorado River frontage for tubing, fishing, kayaking and swimming, plus guided tours of Gorman Falls (left) and birdwatching. Open daily. Bend. 325/628-3240.

Alamosa Wine Cellars: Award-winning vineyard specializing exclusively in warmer climate varietals such as Sangiovese, Tempranillo, Syrah and more. Open the first weekend of every month, during Hill Country Wine Trail events and by appointment. Bend. 325/628-3313.

Outdoor recreation: From bird watching at Riesen Park along the banks of the San Saba River to bicycling the county's many different routes of varying length (10 to 90 miles) and difficulty, San Saba County features a variety of pursuits for the outdoors enthusiast. There's also primitive camping available at Pecan Capital River Park, where visitors can fish and kayak.

Mill Pond Park: City park including San Saba mill house and water wheel, picnic sites, pool, pavilion, campground, playground and more. San Saba.

San Saba County Museum: Housed in two 100-year old log cabins, this museum interprets the county's rich history from settlement days to pecan fame. Open Saturdays and Sundays April through October and also by appointment. San Saba. 325/372-5238.

Regency and Beveridge Suspension Bridges: The only two suspension bridges in the state open to vehicular traffic.



Credit: San Saba Chamber of Commerce

Millican Pecan Company: Descendents of E.E. Riesen carry on the family tradition by selling pecans for wholesale and retail; see the "Mother Pecan Tree" from which hundreds of trees were grafted. San Saba. 866/484-6358.

The Great San Saba River Pecan Company: Purveyor of pecan gift baskets, candy, cakes, pies and an orchard for pick-your-own pecans (November through January). Open Monday through Saturday. San Saba. 800/621-8121.

San Saba Municipal Golf Course: Follows the San Saba River and featuring hundreds of pecan trees, this scenic 18-hole course is available for public play. 325/372-3212.

Lodging:

Sulphur Springs Camp, Bend
Burnham's Lodging, San Saba
Hill Country Inn, San Saba

Shopping:

Alamo Pecan, San Saba
Bagley Pecans, San Saba
Harry's Department Store and Western Wear, San Saba
G&R Grocery (*where meat is still hand-cut*), San Saba
The Great San Saba River Pecan Company, San Saba
Little's Variety Store, San Saba
Millican Pecan Company, San Saba
Oliver Pecan, San Saba
Point Forward Art Gallery, San Saba
Sugar Baker's, San Saba

Dining:

Ma & Pa's Diner, San Saba
Texas 16 Barbecue, San Saba
Sante Fe Crossin' Barbecue, San Saba

Festivals/Events:

April: Wildflower Quilt Show
June: Annual Rodeo, Parade and Dance
July: July 4th in the Park
November: Hunter's Chili Feast

For more information about San Saba County and the Central Texas Hills & Rivers Region, visit their website at [www.](#)