

## CITY OF AMARILLO

### PROFILE OF AMARILLO

#### **Location and Climate**

The City of Amarillo is located on the boundary of Potter and Randall Counties in the High Plains of the Texas Panhandle, and is currently the county seat of Potter County. The City is located at the crossroads of Interstate Highway 40 and Interstate Highway 27, with the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railways intersecting the heart of the City. Amarillo is approximately 120 miles north of Lubbock, 360 miles northwest of Dallas-Fort Worth, 285 miles east of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and 265 miles west of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Geographically, Amarillo is located within the High Plains section of the Great Plains. The High Plains is a vast, gradually sloping apron of material that washed down from the Rocky Mountains. Beneath the limestone caprock covering the High Plains is an agglomerate of gravel, sand, and clay carried down from the Continental Divide called the Ogallala Formation. The Ogallala is significant to the Panhandle as it provides irrigation water and a portion of the industrial and municipal water for this region.

Amarillo has a dry, semi-arid climate with four distinct seasons. The annual average temperature is 57 degrees. Spring and autumn temperatures usually range from 60 to 80 degrees in the daytime and from 30 to 50 degrees at night. Summer days are warm with average daytime temperatures around 90 degrees, while nights are cool with temperatures falling into the 60s. Rainy days are rare, whereas annual rainfall averages 20 inches and can vary considerably from year to year. Most of the annual rainfall occurs between April and September due to thunderstorm activity. Average winter temperatures range from daytime highs in the 50s and nighttime lows in the 20s. Snow can fall between October and April, and average approximately 18 inches annually. The year-round humidity averages 56%. With little wind resistance in the area, average wind speeds are approximately 13.1 miles per hour. Amarillo is known for its spacious skies and clean air.

#### **History**

The City of Amarillo had its beginnings in 1887 near a bend in the Fort Worth and Denver (FW&D) Railroad, then under construction. This railroad was the first in the Panhandle of Texas, opening the way for settlers. By way of showing the importance of the railroad to early settlement, the first streets were laid parallel to the railroad lines. The economy was based on cattle, becoming one of the largest cattle shipping points in the world.

The intersection of the FW&D and Santa Fe railroads, completed in 1898, formed a logical site for the growth of what was to become the Panhandle's premier city, Amarillo. Completion of the Santa Fe railway assured the City's future and inaugurated a new period of stability. Amarillo was incorporated in 1899, and the young city grew quickly. With the discovery of natural gas in the area during the early 1900s, Amarillo became the heart of the Panhandle's oil and gas business. By 1910, new churches, schools, and a library were built and water, gas, and electric systems were in place. Three new railroad depots were built as the City became linked to a new transcontinental rail line. The first automobiles were used and a new streetcar system was initiated. In 1913, following state-enabling legislation, Amarillo wrote its own charter and became one of the first cities in the United States to adopt the commission-manager form of government. This was considered quite progressive and was part of a movement to clean up government.

From cattle trails and railroads, to highways and airports; transportation has always been the cornerstone of Amarillo's economy. In the 1920s, the City boomed both in population and assembly when the construction of Route 66 passed through Amarillo, connecting Chicago to Los Angeles. West Sixth Street was paved as part of Route 66 in 1921. The interstate highway system allowed Americans to become more mobile, and since the early days of automotive travel, Amarillo has been an important stopping point for travelers.

During the 1930s, the City was significantly influenced by a growing reliance on automobiles. Oil and gas production kept Amarillo from feeling the full effects of the Depression. With increased traffic, the downtown area became congested and more parking was needed. The opening of Wolflin Village Shopping Center drew retail trade out of downtown and into the southwestern portion of the City. As a result, downtown to become the financial heart of the city with its banks and other office buildings.

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Amarillo's next link to the world was heralded by the opening of the Amarillo Army Air Base in 1942 (later known as the Amarillo Air Force Base). With the Air Base closing in 1968, Amarillo's population decreased by approximately 11,000 by 1970. Strong leadership helped the City survive and thrive after this event. Over time, the Air Base would become the Amarillo International Airport, now known as the Rick Husband International Airport.

In the 1950s, due to the increase in traffic along Route 66, the highway moved from Sixth Street to Amarillo Boulevard. Interstate Highway 40 opened in 1976, continuing Amarillo's tradition as a respite for travelers and further connected the region. Other changes in the 1960s included a bond election passed to build a new Civic Center, the start of the Amarillo Medical Center, and construction of the new international airport terminal. The 1960s provided the building blocks for Amarillo's future as a regional center with cultural, medical, and transportation services.

The 1970s were a period of recovery for Amarillo, as the population and development grew during this decade. Moderate growth continued into the late 1980s and early 1990s. Amarillo's downtown saw major private investment in buildings, predominately banking facilities and offices. A new regional mall in western Amarillo was constructed as well as numerous apartment complexes in the area. A maximum-security prison, named the Clements Unit, located east of the city limits became operational in 1990 and housed 3,619 inmates. In 1994, the prison expanded to house 1,000 additional inmates. Also completed in 1994 was the Neal Unit; a new women's prison housing 1,667 inmates. In 1997, this unit was converted to a prison for men.

In 2008, Amarillo finalized a Downtown Strategic Action Plan. Key goals included maintaining Downtown as a strong financial, civic, and governmental center, continuing to support the Historical District by attracting urban-type lifestyle living, and developing quality hotels in an effort to draw a variety of conventions and conferences to the area. Renovations of the 11-story historic Fisk Building, originally constructed in 1927, began in 2009. The \$12 million project was completed and the Courtyard by Marriott held its grand opening on January 1, 2011.

In 2009, the City of Amarillo hired a consultant to assist the community in developing a new Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a document designed to represent the Community's vision and goals regarding development, redevelopment, and community enhancement over the next 15 to 20 years. Through a variety of community and leadership outreach efforts, the appointed Steering Committee helped sharpen the focus of each section of this Plan and on October 12, 2010, the Plan was adopted by Amarillo's City Commissioners.

Today, new residential areas continue to develop in various parts of Amarillo. Between 2000 and 2010, approximately 7,500 living units were constructed. The first six months of 2012 have seen 70 new residential lots platted with approximately 446 new residential lots pending at year-end.

### **Amarillo's Relationship to the Region and the State**

The regional trade territory surrounding Amarillo is made up of 55 counties and portions of five states. Amarillo is the regional service center for the Texas Panhandle. Its isolation is one of the City's assets and most significant characteristics in regards to managing major transportation facilities and regional wholesale and retail trade. Wholesale and retail trades comprise about 18% of the metropolitan area's employment. Average retail sales for the area total approximately \$3.8 billion annually (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Economic Census, 2007).

According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, Amarillo is the 14<sup>th</sup> largest city in Texas with a population of approximately 190,695. Having an average increase of 1% to 2% each year, Amarillo is an important developing metropolitan center in the southwest. The conversion of Amarillo from a local to regional urban service center over the past several decades reflects a nationwide trend toward dominant urban centers and the City's commitment to meeting the needs of surrounding communities.

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### LOCAL ECONOMY

Although Amarillo was a city built solely on agriculture and energy production, Amarillo's economic base has diversified significantly. Today's economy is comprised of business and industry ranging from energy research and development, beef processing, agriculture, copper refining, wholesale distribution, fiberglass production, defense contracting, aviation maintenance, metal machining and finishing, to oil and gas production. The economy consists of all the manufacturing and service tools necessary for the operation of the City and the region. Amarillo's business attitude, central location, and low cost of living make it an attractive destination for new businesses. In the 2010 spring edition of Forbes magazine, Amarillo ranked twentieth as one of the best cities in the country for new jobs.

Local governmental entities in the Amarillo area have remained extremely strong, and are presently in sound financial condition. The City of Amarillo adheres to a policy of a balanced budget and conservative management of the City's resources, as do all local taxing entities. Planned construction is carefully budgeted on a "pay as you go" basis and consequently, the City has maintained a strong financial condition for the benefit of the taxpayers.

Another indicator of the City's traditionally stable and strong economy is total sales tax collections. In 1980, the City's tax receipts for retail sales were \$7.7 million. In 1989, the citizens of Amarillo displayed their pro-business attitude by approving a 1% sales tax increase of which half is dedicated to property tax relief and the other half is dedicated to economic development. Due in part to the nation's recession, the 2009 tax receipts fell to \$41.98 million. However, tax receipts for retail sales recovered in the 2010-2011 fiscal year and grew to an all-time high of \$45.61 million. The 2011-2012 fiscal year forecasts similar totals of tax receipts.

Amarillo was created as an agricultural servicing center and a significant portion of its economy is still based upon the important economic activity. In fact, the Texas High Plains is one of the most unique and diversified agricultural areas in the world. The temperate weather conditions and the availability of irrigation water have made the area well suited for a number of agricultural enterprises.

Cash receipts for crops, value-added livestock, and livestock products totaled in excess of \$3.7 billion in the 26 counties known as the High Plains Trade Area. The total of value-added agricultural commodities, government payments to producers, and payroll of agribusiness firms averaged more than \$5 billion per year in the trade area for 2005 through 2008.

According to the Texas Cattle Feeders Association, cattle production provides more than 3,500 jobs in direct employment at area feed yards, with more than \$140 million in the combined annual payroll of area feed yard operations. On an annual basis, cattle on feed within a 150-mile radius of Amarillo total approximately 6 million head or 28% of the nation's fed beef. Appropriately so, the High Plains is often referred to as the Cattle Feeding Capital of the World with approximately 2.6 billion pounds of beef produced each year. The area has access to an ample supply of feed grains, a mild climate, and large major meat packers with modern plants which makes it ideal for cattle feeders. The total benefit to the Texas High Plains Area from the cattle feeding industry is approximately \$15 billion.

The same conditions that brought the cattle industry to the area have also attracted the hog and dairy industries. In 2010, the Texas High Plains Area raised 95% of the state's hogs linking over \$125 million in cash receipts to the area. Three of the five top milk producing Texas counties are also located within this region. The 2011 Texas Farm Bureau indicated that approximately 190 million gallons of milk are produced in these three counties. The Texas Association of Dairymen acknowledged Castro County, located within the Texas Panhandle, for becoming the number one milk producer in the State.

Crop production is also important to the region's economy. More than 25 crops are grown commercially in the area. The top three wheat producing counties are within the High Plains Trade Area and over 65% of the state's corn is produced in the region. Other major crops for this area include grain sorghum, silage, hay, and cotton. A number of industries in Amarillo are related to agriculture, including grain storage and distribution, livestock feed companies, meat and cheese processing, packaging and distributing as well as fertilizer and pesticide distribution. As has been the case in the past, the future of agricultural production in the High Plains is bright.

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Amarillo is also an important hub for natural resource storage and/or extraction. Mined resources include oil, gas, and helium. Although Amarillo is not located directly in a major oil-producing field, it benefits heavily from the region's petroleum industry. Despite stabilization and cutbacks in petroleum development, the industry will remain a significant element of the Amarillo economy. Amarillo is known as the "Helium Capital of the World" due to a large percentage of the world's helium supply is located within 250 miles of Amarillo. The Cliffside Gas Field is owned by the federal government and operated by the Bureau of Land Management. The Amarillo Helium Plant, on the western edge of the City, was built in 1929 to process helium-rich natural gas. Although the Plant has closed, area gas fields will continue to store government and privately owned crude helium for many years to come.

The professional and technical services segment of the economy includes such services as medical, financial, real estate, insurance, and other miscellaneous services. There has been an increase in employment in these types of services in the past decade. There is expected to be a continued gradual increased demand for such required services in the Amarillo area.

Manufacturing firms employed 10% of the total work force in the Amarillo area according to 2006-2010 American Community Survey data. Additionally, Amarillo's centralized geographic location is an ideal strategic transportation service hub for the United States, accounting for 6.2% of Amarillo's employment.

Amarillo has become a strong leader in the aviation manufacturing industry. The Bell Helicopter Amarillo Assembly Center is a leader in the latest vertical lift aircraft technology. Bell Helicopter's facility in Amarillo is the final assembly and delivery site for the V-22 Osprey, the UH-1Y Yankee, AH-1Z Zulu, and the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior--all destined for the Armed Forces of the United States. Bell's Amarillo facility is also planning for future commercial work on Bell's newest helicopter, the Bell 525 Relentless, the first-ever super-medium helicopter. Employment numbers have reached an all-time high with nearly 1,500 employees. The recent decision to add commercial work to the facility's programs will fit easily into the plant's overall growth plan by benefiting from the state-of-the-art facilities as well as partnerships with the City of Amarillo and the Amarillo Economic Development Corporation.

Because of the numerous attractions in and around Amarillo, tourism is a major industry. Some of the more prominent tourist attractions include Route 66, Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Don Harrington Discovery Center, Amarillo Art Center, Amarillo Little Theatre, the Lone Star Ballet, Amarillo Symphony, the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame and Museum, Wonderland Amusement Park, Cadillac Ranch, and Palo Duro Canyon State Park, which hosts "TEXAS", a musical production, in the Pioneer Amphitheater. Also, annual events such as the World Championship Ranch Rodeo, Farm and Ranch Show, July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks display, Tri-State Fair and Rodeo, Pirates of the Canyon Balloon Festival, Center City Block Party, Good Times Celebration Barbeque Cook-off, and various professional sporting events bring numerous visitors to Amarillo each year. Tourism and convention activities in Amarillo contributed to over \$324 million to the area's economy in 2011. The variety of attractions in this area of Texas not only add to the economy, but also to Amarillo's quality of life.

The government sector of Amarillo's economy encompasses a wide array of public employers, such as the independent school districts, higher educational institutions, prison systems, and other state operated facilities; federal agencies, including the United States Postal Service, United States Department of Agriculture, and the Pantex Plant operated by the Department of Energy; and local public employers, such as the City of Amarillo as well as Potter and Randall Counties. Local, state, and federal governments continue to be a consistent and growing source for employment in the Amarillo area. According to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey data, approximately 13,085 government workers were employed in Amarillo. This accounts for nearly 14% of the workforce.

The adequate reserves of land and energy, along with Amarillo's geographical location, are an ideal place for business and industry. The same type of commitment that has made Amarillo what it is today drives current City leaders to continue to vigorously undertake strategies to attract future business and industrial development.

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**COST-OF-LIVING/QUALITY OF LIFE**

The cost-of-living index measures relative price levels for consumer goods and services in many cities throughout the nation. The cost-of-living index does not measure inflation but it does compare relative prices at a single point in time using a national average of 100 as a base. The following table shows the differences between Amarillo's overall cost-of-living and that of other Texas cities.

**Cost-of-Living Comparison\***

<u>City</u>	<u>Composite Index</u>	<u>Percent Difference*</u>
AMARILLO	92.7	Base
Austin	95.7	+3.0%
Corpus Christi	91.8	-0.9%
Dallas	99.8	+7.1%
El Paso	91.0	-1.7%
Lubbock	88.4	-4.3%
Odessa	93.3	+0.6%
San Antonio	88.8	-3.9%

\*Between Amarillo and other cities

Source: American Chamber of Commerce (ACCRA Cost-of-Living Index), 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2012.

**CONSUMER PRICE INDEX**

The consumer price index (CPI) represents price changes for items individuals purchase for living such as food, clothing, automobiles, homes, home furnishings, fuel, etc. This index measures only prices and does not take into account changes due to quantity or quality differences. Many times, CPI is used by economists to determine whether prices are increasing or decreasing from month to month.

A variation of this national index has been developed for the Amarillo area to measure the prices of a fixed basket of goods and services representing consumption patterns of the community. It is realized that in a dynamic economy, measures such as CPI are complicated by the fact that many factors vary including price levels, employment, output, value of assets, and demographic patterns. The local CPI is an individual area index which measures the change in prices in a particular area. It does not determine whether prices or living costs are higher or lower compared to other locations.

Amarillo's CPI is as follows:

**Amarillo Annual Average CPI (Base 1988=100)**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amarillo CPI</u>
Dec 2000	201.90
Dec 2001	210.51
Dec 2002	216.88
Dec 2003	221.72
Dec 2004	179.60
Dec 2005	206.70
Dec 2006	181.30
Dec 2007	210.79
Dec 2008	188.10
Dec 2009	202.32
Dec 2010	220.95
Dec 2011	199.09
July 2012	217.00

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### QUALITY OF LIFE

The City of Amarillo and the associated region have a high quality of life that make living and working in the area very attractive. Below is a brief discussion of various quality of life aspects in and around Amarillo.

#### **Schools**

Educational institutions in Amarillo, from the public elementary schools to the higher learning institutions, are highly valued symbols of community identity and achievement. Amarillo is well represented on every educational level. Texas Tech has a medical and pharmacy school located in Amarillo; and with our nation's aging population, both schools should do very well in the future. Amarillo is home to Amarillo College (AC) and West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) is less than 20 miles from Amarillo. In the last legislative session, the legislature authorized Texas colleges and universities to set their own tuition. With higher education costs rising, both AC and WTAMU remain very good values. Amarillo's educational facilities are discussed in more detail below.

#### **School Districts**

Within the corporate city limits of the City of Amarillo, there are five independent school districts. The Amarillo Independent School District (AISD) is made up of 37 elementary schools including one magnet school centering on mathematics, science, and the arts; ten middle schools including one middle school focusing on mathematics, science, and technology; four high schools and two specialty campuses. Amarillo Area Center for Advanced Learning (AACAL) is an extension of the home high school campuses and offers classes in the following specialized areas: Automotive Technology, Computer Systems Technology, Engineering Technology, Health Science Technology, and Animal Science Technology. North Heights Alternative School focuses on credit recovery and preparing students to become self-directed learners.

The Canyon Independent School District (CISD) has eight elementary schools; two intermediate schools (grades 5 and 6); two junior high schools (grades 7 and 8); two high schools and one alternative education high school in the Amarillo area. River Road Independent School District (RRISD) has one elementary, intermediate, middle, and high school respectively. Highland Park Independent School District (HPISD) has a facility that serves elementary, junior high, and high school students located within the Amarillo city limits. These school districts are generally located in areas of the City which are less densely developed than AISD. The Bushland Independent School District (BISD) has one elementary, middle school and high school respectively and is located in the southwestern portion of Potter County.

There are also several private, religious, and vocational schools that meet the educational needs of the community.

#### **Higher Education Facilities**

West Texas A&M University (WTAMU), a member of the Texas A&M University system, celebrated its centennial year during 2010 with a long history of educational excellence. High quality academic offerings that are both engaging and challenging combined with a dedicated faculty committed to teaching excellence have helped WTAMU land a spot within the top 100 regional universities in the western United States by *U.S. News and World Report*.

University officials are preparing for WTAMU's second century with an ambitious plan to enhance the campus and set the stage for future growth. New facilities, high-tech classrooms, renovations and improvements along with the University's Amarillo Center guarantee that students of today and tomorrow will enjoy a college experience that prepares them for a life of learning, leadership, and service.

Amarillo College (AC) is an accredited community college offering instruction on six campuses as well as one outreach center. AC averages more than 11,500 academic students a semester and 28,000 students enroll annually to continue their education.

AC's Washington Street campus is nearly 31 acres in size, with 18 buildings, and is located adjacent to S.W. 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Washington Street. The West Campus, being 42 acres in size and includes 10 buildings, is located north of the Amarillo Medical Center and is the primary location for Dental Assisting,

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Nursing, Emergency Management Training and many more vocational programs. An 8-acre downtown campus houses the Business and Industry Center while the East Campus, located near the Amarillo International Airport, mainly focuses on Industrial and Transportation Technologies.

Community Link, AC's outreach center in Northeast Amarillo, offers GED courses, basic computer training as well as English as a Second Language courses. AC has two additional campuses located in the outlying communities of Hereford to the southwest of Amarillo and Dumas to the north of Amarillo.

Wayland Baptist University, whose main campus is in Plainview, Texas, conducts night and weekend classes in Amarillo for students earning degrees in business administration, human services, career technology education, Christian studies, management, and applied science.

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) in Amarillo currently has a School of Medicine providing training to 82 medical students and 79 residents; School of Allied Health Sciences offering a Doctor of Physical Therapy, and trains nearly 60 students annually; the state-of-the-art School of Pharmacy admits 115 first-year students annually, and the Laura W. Bush Institute for Women's Health improves the lives of women and their families by developing education, research, and outreach programs.

TTUHSC in Amarillo offers first-class medical services in family medicine, internal medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, psychiatry, and geriatrics care to area residents.

The Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center provides information, technology, and assistance in the areas of agriculture, community development, along with family and consumer sciences. This is one of 13 research centers within the Texas A&M System. Texas AgriLife Research in Amarillo is dedicated to science that will aid in making crop and livestock production in the region more efficient. Also housed at the AgriLife Center is the district office of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, which has a network of agents and specialists trained to aid producers, homeowners, and families with its many programs. The Texas A&M Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, located next door, assists veterinarians, feed yard managers, and cattlemen in diagnosing the causes of diseases and other health problems affecting livestock in the region.

### **Amarillo's Professional Sports Teams**

In the fall of 2010, the Amarillo Bulls began their inaugural season in the North American Hockey League's Southern Division, by offering exciting, affordable family entertainment. The Bulls team consists of some of North America's best young hockey players, ranging from age 17 to 20, in an effort to advance their hockey careers. The Amarillo Bulls won the Southern Division Championship in 2011. Their six-month season runs from September to March, with 60 regular season games. With each home game, the puck drops in the "Bull Pen", better known as the Amarillo Civic Center's Coliseum, where nearly 3,000 spectators attend. Hockey has taken Texas by storm with a half dozen cities hosting teams.

This year, the Amarillo Sox Baseball Club completed their inaugural season of play in the American Association of Professional Baseball with 138,865 guests attending games at the Amarillo National Bank Sox Stadium. Since 2006, nearly 800,000 guests have enjoyed affordable family entertainment at the historic Potter County Memorial Stadium. The management core of the Amarillo Sox includes former major league pitcher and current Vice President/General Manager, Mark Lee. Lee was drafted by the San Diego Padres in the 13th round of the 1976 amateur draft. In 1977, Lee made his first appearance in Amarillo pitching for the Amarillo Gold Sox of the Texas League. A year later, he was pitching for the big league club, making his MLB debut with the San Diego Padres on April 23rd, 1978 against the Atlanta Braves. The Sox are managed by former major leaguer and Amarillo resident, John Harris. A three-time All-American at Lubbock Christian University, Harris was drafted in the 29th round by the California Angels and played professionally for nine years, spending three years in the major leagues with the Angels from 1979-1981.

Amarillo welcomed the Amarillo Dusters, a professional indoor arena football team in 2004, and began their play in the Intense Football League. After winning the 2004 championship, the Dusters left the Intense Football League and joined the af2 League, where they played for five seasons. In 2010, the team moved to the Indoor Football League and changed their name to the Amarillo Venom. The team

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was successful in 2010, with 11 wins, 3 losses, and winning the Lonestar West Division Championship. The Venom had a rough 2011 season with only 4 wins and 10 losses, but bounced back in 2012 by winning the Lone Star Football League's Championship with a 10-4 record.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION**

Park land, open space, and recreational facilities serve an important function for the City of Amarillo. The park system improves the quality of life by providing recreational opportunities for people and protecting the natural environment. Location and design of park lands along with open space can be beneficial to Amarillo's image by providing a visual improvement to a neighborhood and, in some cases, serve as a buffer between differing land uses. Amarillo's park and open space facilities include school playgrounds and parks, neighborhood, community, and regional parks as well as four 18-hole golf courses. Amarillo currently has 64 park and recreation/athletic areas, totaling nearly 3,890 acres of dedicated open space, of which 60% has been developed for public use.

In addition to Amarillo's parks system, recreational areas within the community are supplemented by athletic-type improvements found on elementary, middle school, and high school sites. Middle school sites that contribute to Amarillo's open space include Austin, Bonham, Bowie, Crockett, Fannin, Houston, Mann, Travis, Valleyview, and Westover. Facilities for recreational activities such as baseball, track events, and football are also found at high schools such as Amarillo, Caprock, Palo Duro, Tascosa, Randall, River Road, and Highland Park. Privately owned recreational facilities such as the Maverick Club, YMCA, numerous health clubs, as well as the Amarillo, Tascosa, and La Paloma Country Clubs also provide community services. Amarillo's municipal golf courses include Ross Rogers and Comanche Trail. In 2010, the City Commission voted to renovate the Ross Rogers golf course.

In the 2010-2011 fiscal year, the Amarillo Zoo initiated the next phase for a proposed 3,485 square foot Zoo Education Center. This education center will feature a large interactive classroom, offices for zoo staff, and a large area to house the zoo's education animals. The education center is scheduled to be completed and opened to the public in April 2013.

Ross Rogers "Old Course" Renovation, which includes an extensive redesign and construction of the old 18-hole east course was initiated in the 2010-2011 fiscal year. This renovation included a revised routing plan of the golf holes, new sand bunkers, larger greens and tees, and a state of the art computerized irrigation system. This \$3.6 million renovation project is scheduled for completion in April 2013.

Parks Capital Improvements that were initiated and/or completed in the 2012-2013 fiscal year include the following:

- Park improvements at Hamlet Park, including installation of a new playground, splash pad, and a new trail lighting system were completed in May 2012.
- Multi-use sports fields together with parking, restrooms, and a plaza area located near the Rick Klein baseball complex are to be completed in September 2013.

### **Major Regional Recreation Facilities**

The Texas Panhandle region is the location of numerous major recreational areas. These recreational areas allow Amarillo citizens to participate in outdoor activities such as fishing, camping, hiking, hunting, etc. Even though the regional facilities may range up to 55 miles from Amarillo, they are considered supplemental to Amarillo's park system because of the type, size, and quality of recreational opportunities provided.

Area lakes, such as Greenbelt Reservoir located north of Clarendon, Lake McClellan south of Pampa, Lake Mackenzie northwest of Silverton, and Lake Meredith near Fritch, offer excellent public fishing recreation. Due to low water levels at each lake, personal watercrafts have been prohibited since 2010. The Canadian River, located north of Amarillo, provides areas for hunting and off-road driving and riding, and the Buffalo Lake Conservation area, a wildlife refuge near Canyon, provides both active and passive recreational areas from hiking trails to picnic areas. Palo Duro State Park, located southeast of Amarillo,

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is one of Texas' most spectacular scenic features since the colorful and rugged terrain of this canyon provides a sharp contrast to the level plains of the Panhandle. The park offers camping, hiking, picnicking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. An amphitheater is also situated within the park where the Nation's best-attended outdoor musical drama "TEXAS" is performed seasonally. "TEXAS" has been named one of North America's 100 Best Events in 2012 by the American Bus Association.

### **MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION**

Municipal administration services are housed in Amarillo City Hall and associated public buildings. Amarillo's major municipal building needs are provided at the Municipal Complex located in the vicinity of S.E. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Buchanan Street. The complex includes the City Hall, Civic Center, Centennial Plaza, Central Library, Globe News Performing Arts Center, the Facilities Administration Building, and associated parking areas. The entire municipal complex is appropriately located at the edge of the Central Business District and is accessible to the major street network and transit system.

#### **City Hall**

The Amarillo News-Globe, on Sunday January 8, 1967, announced the Grand Opening of the new Municipal Building and estimated the attendance to be more than 8,000 people. The article read "First Jewel in the setting that will become the Civic Center Complex in 1968 is the new Municipal Building completed last month. It is now the home for 21 city governmental offices and has four levels that incorporate 84,000 square feet of floor space. The Municipal Building, like the Auditorium-Coliseum combination being constructed to the north, was financed through the sale of bonds authorized by the voters in 1964. It cost \$2,126,427, including the land, architect fees, paving, lighting, and storm sewer relocation. The outside finish consists of pre-cast concrete panels in which marble chips have been mingled and it will conform architecturally with the auditorium-coliseum." Originally, a water fountain and pool were constructed at the main entrance with the stairs wrapping around either side of the water feature.

The Municipal Building today is known as the Amarillo City Hall Building and is currently home to 19 city departments. The building has several of its original design features; however, one notable change has been the removal of the water fountain and pool adjacent to the main entrance to make room for the installation of a ramp and steps, making the building more accessible for all community members. City Hall is home to the Mayor's office, the City Commissioners, Finance Department, Utility Billing, Vital Statistics, Planning Department, Community Development, Building Safety, Public Works, Utility Engineering, Parks and Recreation Administration, Human Resources, the City Attorney offices and many other departments. As established in 1968, the City Hall building remains a focal point for the citizens to access their city officials and services.

#### **Amarillo Civic Center Complex**

When the Amarillo Civic Center opened in 1968, it housed a coliseum (7,200 capacity) and an auditorium (2,324 capacity). In 1978, the first expansion of the Civic Center added what is now known as the South Exhibit Hall and Regency Room. In 1989, the coliseum was renamed the Cal Farley Coliseum in memory of Mr. Farley. In 1990, the Grand Plaza was added. This unique venue for banquets, parties, and dances enclosed an outdoor area, giving the Civic Center its first indoor ballroom complete with Texas shaped terrazzo floor and Gulf of Mexico fountain. In 2003, the most recent expansion was completed, adding the North Exhibit Hall and the Heritage Ballroom. Additional parking was added throughout the years to accommodate the expansions.

A jewel in the heart of downtown Amarillo, the Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts houses a 1,300 seat auditorium and the Gilliland Education Center. Opened in January 2006, the facility is owned by the City of Amarillo and operated as part of the Amarillo Civic Center Complex. The idea behind the facility was birthed in 1999, when Caroline Bush Emeny opened fundraising for the Center with a very generous donation. The overall project cost was approximately \$32 million. The acoustically sound, state-of-the-art facility was designed by Holzman Moss Architects and hosts an average of 100 ticketed performances and nearly 200 other events annually.

The Amarillo Civic Center and the Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts are the center of cultural activity in Amarillo; including symphonies, concerts, ballets, Broadway shows, and sporting events.

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Conventions, conferences, graduations, community meetings, parties, and consumer shows round out the bulk of events that take place at the facility. Totalling over 400,000 square feet, nine separate events can be accommodated at any one time within the complex. Resident companies and primary use tenants include the Amarillo Venom, Amarillo Bulls, Amarillo Opera, Amarillo Symphony, Lone Star Ballet, and the Broadway Spotlight Series. Approximately 700,000 patrons attend over 1,000 events each year.

### **Police Department and Municipal Courts Building**

In 1992, the Police Department and Municipal Courts relocated to a newly renovated building located at S.E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Taylor Street in downtown Amarillo. This facility was purchased from private owners who absorbed the entire cost of renovation. The facility allows all Police Department functions, with the exception of the City Jail, to be located in one building. Additionally, the Municipal Court received a much needed court document storage space, as well as larger jury and customer service areas. This facility has improved the Police Department by enhancing efficiency and improving crime fighting capabilities.

### **Solid Waste Collection**

The City of Amarillo provides its citizens with a state-of-the-art solid waste collection system, which utilizes dumpsters and fully automated loading trucks. This system collects approximately 155,000 tons of solid waste annually and transports it to the Amarillo Sanitary Landfill. There are approximately 61,919 residential accounts and 3,708 commercial accounts. The dumpster system has proven to be a very cost effective operation because one person driving and operating a self-loading truck can serve 1,400 residences daily. The automated system saves on labor and labor-related costs. A fully automated system also eliminates most of the hazards to collection work such as back injuries resulting from heavy lifting and other injuries associated with physical contact of waste materials. There are 58 automated residential routes, four hand pick-up residential routes, and 19 commercial routes served. However, with expanding development, more routes will be needed in the near future.

### **Amarillo Sanitary Landfill**

The Sanitary Landfill for the City of Amarillo is five miles west of the city limits in Potter County. Sanitary landfilling is a method of disposing solid waste on land without creating nuisances or hazards to public health or safety. Principles of engineering are used to confine the waste to the smallest practical volume and to cover it with layers of earth at pre-set intervals.

The current landfill site is permitted by the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality to include 662 acres of which 486 acres are suitable for disposing of solid waste. The existing site is ideal and is expected to be utilized for another 100 years. Amarillo, therefore, has a long-term commitment to burying its solid waste at this location. The landfill disposes of approximately 220,000 tons of waste per year.

The Amarillo Sanitary Landfill has been successful in disposing of its solid waste because of proper preliminary planning and design of the site, the application of proper engineering principles, and the competent operation of the facility. The benefits of disposing waste in this fashion include the relatively low cost of disposal, no pollution of air, land or water, and the potential future use of the site once operations are completed.

### **Amarillo Animal Control and Shelter**

The Amarillo Animal Control Department is located in southeast Amarillo at 3501 South Osage Street. The Animal Control building and associated facilities are situated on a tract of land of about three acres in size and are open to the public from 10 am to 7 pm, Monday through Friday.

Amarillo's Animal Control Officers are State and nationally certified to protect and serve the Amarillo citizens relating to animal situations within the city limits.

The Animal Control Department makes space available at their facilities to house the local Humane Society to assist with an array of services to our community and surrounding areas:

- Offer pet education programs to daycares, elementary and middle schools, and civic groups.
- Offer bite prevention training and animal safety/welfare training programs.
- Annually participate with the Humane Society to provide a low cost vaccination clinic.
- Provide a low cost spay/neuter program when State grant funds are available.

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- Offer domestic companion pets, some barnyard/livestock animals, and a few exotic pets for adoption.
- Conduct bite, cruelty and welfare investigations.
- Euthanizing animals, as necessary.
- Removing dead or injured animals from roadways.
- Holding animals for bite observation.
- Impounding abandoned, stray or lost animals and providing a safe haven until owners reclaim their lost pet.
- Return lost pets to their owners that have been tagged or micro-chipped.

### **Rick Husband Amarillo International Airport**

The Rick Husband Amarillo International Airport became a public use airport in 1941 when the City of Amarillo purchased the current airfield portion of the airport in order to receive development assistance from the federal government. The military utilized the airport in World War II and the airport became the Amarillo Air Force Base in 1951. The airport operated as a joint-use facility through 1968.

In February of 2003, Amarillo City Commissioners voted to change the name of the Amarillo International Airport to Rick Husband International Airport in memory of Astronaut Colonel Rick Husband who was born and raised in Amarillo, Texas. Colonel Husband was the Commander of the Space Shuttle Columbia and died alongside his entire crew, ironically over Texas, on February 1, 2003 as the shuttle disintegrated upon reentry after their 16-day mission in space.

In 2008, the Rick Husband International Airport began a multi-million dollar air terminal rehabilitation project. The project included a major renovation of the existing terminal building consisting of a dedicated meet-and-greet area, a consolidated gate area, a spacious security screening checkpoint, new passenger boarding bridges, and a new inline baggage screening system. The major components of this project were completed and opened July 12, 2011. The overall project was completed in March 2012. In addition to terminal renovations were projects that added a cell phone waiting area as well as reconstruction of the ticket level bridge and lower-level roadways.

In 2011, the airport had over 70,000 annual operations that included commercial, general aviation, and military aircraft. During calendar year 2011, more than 820,000 passengers flew in and out of the airport. Presently, American Eagle, United, and Southwest Airlines serve the airport with up to 44 scheduled airline arrivals and departures daily.

### **Amarillo Public Library**

Amarillo citizens have enjoyed library service since 1902, when a group of women known as the JUG (Just Us Girls) Club formed a lending library of 123 books. Potter County assumed responsibility for the library in 1921, until the City of Amarillo took over in 1940.

Today, the Amarillo Public Library System consists of a Central (Downtown) Library and four branches, serving well over 2,000 people every day. The library collection includes more than 800,000 books, magazines, and media materials which circulate over two million times per year. The library maintains 83 public computers which supply more than 100,000 hours of internet access per year. Non-profit organizations from across the state take advantage of meeting facilities available for a small fee at all five library locations.

The Amarillo Public Library also offers a great many other resources and services, including Story Time for Young Children, Summer Reading Program, Xtreme Reading (summer reading for teens), book clubs, film series, and the community reading program (AMARILLO READS) recipient of the 2008 Highsmith Library Award from the Texas Library Association. Visit the library's website at [www.amarillolibrary.org](http://www.amarillolibrary.org) for information on a wealth of online resources including homework assistance, test preparation, language instruction software, animated picture books, and research tools. The website also allows patrons to access the online catalog, place materials on hold or request additions to the library collection.

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### Amarillo Public Library Locations and Contact Information:

Downtown Library	413 E 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	(806) 378-3054
East Branch	2232 E 27 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	(806) 342-1589
North Branch	1504 NE 24 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	(806) 381-7931
Northwest Branch	6100 W 9 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	(806) 359-2035
Southwest Branch	6801 W 45 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	(806) 359-2094

The Amarillo Public Library System is a member of, and serves as the headquarters for, the Harrington Library Consortium (HLC). HLC is the only multi-institutional cooperative library network in Texas, allowing public, school, academic, and special libraries to share resources and provide additional services to patrons. The Consortium also offers member libraries consulting services, continuing education opportunities, and support for literacy, English as a Second Language, and automation projects. HLC membership enables the Amarillo Public Library to increase the quality and quantity of resources available to the citizens of Amarillo and to serve as a leader in library innovations throughout the state of Texas.

### Fire Stations

The Amarillo Fire Department (AFD) responds to approximately 18,800 alarms annually (2011). This means dedicating more than 23,000 man hours to emergency incidents. Seventy percent of the Department's call volume is comprised of basic and advanced life support. The AFD is also responsible for mitigating emergencies involving structural and grassland fires, hazardous materials, technical rescue, aircraft emergencies, and assistance calls.

The time it takes for the AFD to respond to an incident scene is a critical measure of effectiveness in saving lives. Response times are measured from when the firefighters are dispatched until their arrival at the incident scene. Emergency response times in Amarillo are approximately 4 minutes and 17 seconds per alarm, which is outstanding for a metropolitan area the size of Amarillo.

These times are closely related to the distribution of fire stations throughout the City. In the last fifty years, Amarillo has experienced a significant growth; from 33 square miles to over 100 square miles. Before 2009, the AFD had not added a single fire station to keep up with the City's expansion. The leaders of the City began to address this problem when Fire Station #11 opened in the Westcliff subdivision. A new fire station (Fire Station #12) near The Shores subdivision was constructed and staffed in 2011. Additional fire stations in the southeast and southwest quadrants of Amarillo, as well as a new station in the Hospital District, are in the planning stages. With these new stations, the AFD will ensure firefighters continue to arrive quickly at the scene of life-threatening emergencies in all areas of the City.

### Major Medical Facilities

Amarillo is a major health care center for portions of five states and includes three acute care hospitals, several medical-education facilities, long-term health care facilities, and medical clinics. The major hospitals and their respective locations are identified below:

#### Hospital

Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center  
Baptist Saint Anthony's Hospital  
Northwest Texas Health Care System

#### Location

6010 W Amarillo Blvd. (Medical Center)  
1600 Wallace Blvd. (Medical Center)  
1501 S Coulter St. (Medical Center)

### Amarillo Medical Center

In 1959, Amarillo began developing into a regional health care center and continues to be committed to providing an array of health care services to a large geographic area. Under the sponsorship of the Amarillo Area Foundation, the Medical Center is the product of cooperation and interaction among private enterprise, local and county governments, and voluntary nonprofit groups. This multi-purpose medical complex, consisting of facilities which provide hospital and health care, medical research, as well as vocational and professional training; is designed to promote the development of a coordinated program of health care by concentrating a full range of services in a single location. Significant institutions include Texas Tech University, Veteran's Hospital, Baptist Saint Anthony's Hospital, and Northwest Texas Health Care Systems.

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Texas Tech University has a consolidated 20-acre medical center comprising the schools of pharmacy, medicine, and allied health located in Amarillo. The pharmacy and medical research have brought in millions of research dollars to Amarillo from several health organizations and pharmaceutical companies.

Amarillo is home to the Southwest Veteran Affairs Health Care Network, which provides extended care and primary specialty care for veterans in the region. The Veteran's Hospital treats nearly 25,000 patients annually. Geriatric and extended care can also be provided in the 120-bed skilled nursing home care unit. Community-based outpatient clinics located in Lubbock, Childress, and Clovis, New Mexico also serve veterans.

Baptist Saint Anthony's Hospital (BSA), a major hospital in Amarillo, was rated in the top 100 hospitals in the United States by Thompson Reuters in 2012. It was also named in the top 5% of all hospitals for patient safety. BSA undertook a substantial upgrade of its facilities under the hospital's long-range plan known as "Creating the Future". BSA opened a part of its \$60 million building project in February 2007. The BSA construction project provided a six-story addition to the existing hospital that houses a ground level Outpatient Diagnostic Imaging Center, four floors totaling 120 new private rooms and expanded Pediatric services.

Northwest Texas Healthcare System, also a major hospital in Amarillo, specializes in advanced trauma and was certified as an advanced primary stroke center in 2012. Northwest Texas Healthcare System is also known for their excellence in pediatric and neonatal intensive care, as well as women's, heart, and mental healthcare. A 44-bed freestanding rehabilitation facility opened in a joint venture between Northwest Texas Healthcare System and RehabCare Group, Inc. in October 2006.

All three acute care hospitals in Amarillo are within the medical center where ample undeveloped property for additional facilities is available. Therefore, most major medical facilities are expected to be constructed in the medical center area in the future.

### **Amarillo Economic Development Corporation**

On November 7, 1989, the citizens of Amarillo voted to increase the City sales tax by ½% to fund economic development in the City. The Amarillo Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) was created to foster economic development in the City and to manage the revenues from the ½% City sales tax that started April 1, 1991. The Corporation consists of a five-member board appointed by the City Commission. Excluding the administration costs, the majority of the funds (90%) must be used for economic development projects with up to 10% of the sales tax receipts available for promotional activities. The AEDC has been instrumental in bringing new business and industry to Amarillo and assisting existing companies via variety of incentive programs that provide grants and loans.

### **Center City of Amarillo, Inc.**

In 1989, a group of community leaders began to share their concerns about the decline of the central area of the City. Out of the process grew Center City of Amarillo, Inc. Center City is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to historic preservation and revitalization of Downtown Amarillo, focusing on community, social, aesthetic, recreational, and economic interests in Amarillo's historic core area. Center City is a nationally recognized member of the Texas and National Main Street programs.

Center City events include:

- High Noon on the Square, a series of events held each Wednesday in June and July on the Potter County Courthouse lawn,
- Center City Block Party, a festival situated downtown open to the public,
- The Center City Electric Light Parade, a citywide Christmas parade and tree lighting event,
- Hoof Prints of the Great American Quarter Horse, an art in public places project,
- Design Review, a partnership with the City of Amarillo to provide façade grants,
- Restoration of historical signage along Polk Street including the Paramount sign and the Kress sign,
- Partnerships with other downtown organizations including the Center City Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone and Downtown Amarillo, Inc.,

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- Partnerships with other nonprofit organizations which bring people downtown, including the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, Go Red for Heart, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce,
- Historical preservation efforts with the Amarillo Historical Preservation Foundation, the Texas Historical Commission and Preservation Texas,
- A street banner program to welcome residents and visitors to the downtown neighborhood, and
- Downtown business alliances to retain and recruit new businesses to the downtown area

### ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

#### **Sixth Street**

Sixth Street in Amarillo is Texas' most intact collection of commercial buildings possessing significant associations with early Route 66. This area is on the National Register of Historic Places as it represents the roadside architecture and development produced by the first transcontinental highway linking mid-America to the west coast. The Sixth Street Enhancement Project consists of landscaping, beautification, and historic preservation. A Route 66 mural is in place and a landscaped gateway near the Georgia Street entrance was completed in 1995.

#### **Rails to Trails Project**

A 3.88-mile section of the former Chicago, Rock Island, & Pacific rail line was purchased by the City of Amarillo to construct bike and pedestrian trail and linear park. The multi-use trail extends from the intersection of SW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Crockett Street to Coulter Street. The trail was named the Rock Island Rail Trail to give recognition to the historical significance of the railroads that once traveled this section of the City.

#### **Amarillo-Potter Events Venue District**

On January 17, 1989, voters of the City of Amarillo and Potter County approved a venue project along with corresponding tax levies. The approved project consisted of expanding the Civic Center convention facility and constructing the Tri-State Fairgrounds Event Center. The Tri-State Fairgrounds Event Center (officially the Amarillo National Center) is used for community events or other events including rodeos, livestock shows, agricultural expositions, promotional events and other civic or charitable events. The facility is designed to complement, not compete with, the existing Civic Center facility and was completed during the 1999/2000 fiscal year. The Civic Center expansion is used for banquet and meeting rooms in conjunction with the Amarillo National Center.

#### **Strategic Action Plan for Downtown**

In 2008, the City of Amarillo adopted the Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Amarillo after almost two years of study. Center City of Amarillo, a nonprofit organization dedicated to downtown revitalization, and the City of Amarillo commissioned the Fort Worth firm, Gideon Toal, Inc. to develop the Plan. After a series of community meetings and months of research, the Plan concluded that Amarillo's downtown was ready for redevelopment. Gideon Toal pointed to downtown assets including the new Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts and a workforce of 20,000 people who work either in downtown or within a five-mile radius.

The Plan covers a large area from the railroad tracks north of downtown, to 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the south, and from the east railroad tracks to Washington/Adams Street on the west. This accounts for nearly a 116-square block area. Recommendations in the Plan included the formation of a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone, which was established in 2006 and a proposed Business Improvement District for downtown. Other goals in the Plan include developing approximately 400 to 600 new housing units in downtown, attract multiple retail centers, draw family-friendly venues, develop one or more quality hotels with at least 300 rooms to support and meet needs of the revitalized downtown area, and retain and grow downtown as a financial, business, and government center.

In 2010, the City adopted the Downtown Amarillo Urban Design Standards; an overlay zoning district, in order to provide guidance for modifications to building exteriors, walkways, landscaping and signage within downtown. These standards are to aid in protecting downtown property owners' investments by providing for quality redevelopment in a safe, attractive, pedestrian-friendly environment, producing a better livable downtown. A Local Government Corporation Board was formed to encourage, implement,

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and manage downtown projects. This Board explores the feasibility of potential projects as well as expedites and facilitates construction of City projects.

Completed Downtown projects include:

1. Courtyard by Marriott near Polk St. and 7<sup>th</sup> Ave.
2. Ellwood Park near Washington St. and Park Pl.
3. Happy State Bank near Pierce St. and 10<sup>th</sup> Ave.
4. Cal Farley's Alumni Housing near Monroe St. and 11<sup>th</sup> Ave.
5. Amarillo College Streetscape near Downtown campus
6. Potter County Streetscape project near 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Taylor St.

Potential Downtown projects include:

1. Convention Hotel near Pierce St. and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.
2. Multi-level Parking Garage near Buchanan St. and 7<sup>th</sup> Ave.
3. Multi-Purpose Entertainment Venue which will include a baseball park near Buchanan St. and 7<sup>th</sup> Ave.
4. Toot 'n Totum near 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Buchanan St.