The Amarillo Pioneer
Local News. Honest Journalism.

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MPEV PROFILES: BROWN & HODGE

PROFILING RICHARD BROWN AND JERRY HODGE

In an effort to inform our readers about the people behind the new downtown MPEV, the Amarillo Pioneer plans to profile those who helped make the deal official. Today we profile Richard Brown and Jerry Hodge.

Richard Brown

Richard Brown is a local attorney and former chairman of the Amarillo Local Government Corporation. In his capacity as the chairman of the LGC, Brown was a frequent spokesperson in favor of the multi-purpose event venue and often lobbied the City Council in favor of an MPEV.

As chairman of the LGC, Brown oversaw the creation of the catalyst plan for downtown Amarillo, which included a multi-purpose structure (rendered as a ballpark), several parking garages, a convention hotel and an ultimate sports arena. The plan was ultimately modified several times and has now morphed into the current project in downtown Amarillo.

Brown served as a non-voting member of Downtown Amarillo, Inc., a tax-supported non-profit which catered to downtown projects. Brown was also a member of the Center City Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone. Brown's business partner, Michele Fortunato, was one of the voting members of the Amarillo College board of regents that ultimately voted to create the TIRZ board.

At one point, Brown also served as the chairman of Center City.

Brown resigned from City boards in late 2015, citing differences with members of the Amarillo City Council. Brown then became a spokesperson for VoteFORAmarillo, a local campaign supporting a "For" vote on the 2015 MPEV referendum. Brown debated local attorney Vince Nowak at an event for the Amarillo League of Women Voters and often shared a stage with Paul Matney, Meghan Riddlespurger, Jason Herrick and other supporters of the MPEV to campaign for the "For" vote.

Brown also debated University of Texas professor Heywood Sanders during a meeting held by the Amarillo Tea Party Patriots in 2015.

In a 2015 interview, Brown was praised as the creator of a plan for downtown to be a "shared living room" for Amarillo by officials of DAI.

Jerry Hodge

Jerry Hodge, a former mayor of Amarillo, also played a key role in the development of the current MPEV plan.

Hodge, a long-time board member throughout the state of Texas, served as mayor of Amarillo beginning with a term in 1979. Hodge first served on the City Commission in 1975.

In 1987, Hodge began his tenure on Texas Board of Criminal Justice and served there until 1994. Hodge was the vice chairman of the board and was often thought to be the front-runner for the job of board chairman until the "The Ultimate Hunt" scandal rocked the board.

In the scandal, it was alleged that Hodge had participated in prison dog training sessions by saddling up his horse and chasing inmates who volunteered for the exercise. Hodge then had jackets embroidered with the phrase "The Ultimate Hunt." Hodge later apologized for the creation of the jackets.

In 1995, after his departure from the board, a prison unit in Rusk, Texas was named after Hodge.

Hodge purchased Maxor Drug in the 1960's and has since served as one of the leaders of the company during its expansion. In 1991, Hodge took over the outpatient pharmacy at Johns Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland.

In the mid-2000's Hodge launched a bid for another term as mayor of Amarillo. He ultimately lost the race to Debra McCartt.

Since ending his political career, Hodge has been a major supporter of Republican candidates. In 1990, Hodge was a backer of Republican governor candidate Clayton Williams. Williams ultimately lost his election to State Treasurer Ann Richards.

Most recently, Hodge supported Nevada Congressman Joe Heck for the vacant U.S. Senate senate held by Harry Reid. Hodge hosted a fundraiser for Heck at his home which included admission tickets upwards of $250 per person. Heck ultimately lost the election in Nevada to Catherine Cortez Masto.

During the 2015, Hodge was a backer of several candidates in the races for Amarillo City Council. Later that year, he became a proponent for the MPEV and often told media outlets in Amarillo about his concern for a "lack of funding" for the stadium's creation.

It was reported in 2016, that Hodge had joined the MPEV negotations with a AA baseball team. Hodge was later reported to be one of the members of the negotiation team that, along with local resident Alex Fairly, brokered a deal for a letter of intent from Elmore Sports Group.

Former City Councilman Brian Eades also said in a 2016 interview that Hodge was a possible buyer of the naming rights of the MPEV for at least $2 million.

Hodge served on an LGC sub-committee that ultimately helped spearhead the final touches on the MPEV project.

Amarillo's McDonald Lake, Southeast Park Closed for Flooding

Amarillo's McDonald Lake has closed to the public due to flooding.

According to a spokesperson for the City of Amarillo, the McDonald Lake off of Coulter Street has been closed for flooding. The entrance will remain barricaded until the waters recede.

Southeast Park has also closed for flooding. The closings will stay in effect until further notice.

City staff reportedly hope to have both locations back open by next week.

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Rosser's Ramblings

Thoughts from Trent Rosser

"Squirrels"

As I have said before, I aint right in the head sometimes. I get to thinking, and something will happen and for some reason a great idea will come to mind. Well, I think it is a great idea. I could be wrong but I came up with an idea for a great enterprise and money making opportunity that would make any self made billionaire jealous. I call it, "Squirrels".

Let's start from the beginning. It is a simple process that has been done many times before. Years ago, when a new super Wal-Mart would be built, another construction would be built next to it. It would be the hardware and lumber store called "Lowes". Now next to most of the Wal-Mart there will be a Lowe's right next to it. Or even a Murphy's gas station. So what had happened is that Lowes and Murphy's used the flow of traffic and customers of Wal-mart to capitalize by selling something that Wal-Mart does not sell. Lumber and gasoline, it was a great partnership. Needing to get a piece of particle board? Might as well get a gallon of milk and fill up with gas while you're there. A true one-stop shopping, right. So here is where the idea comes from.

My wife and I were trying to figure out where to eat without starting to fight (see my previous article "Men vs. Women"). Somehow we ended up at Hooters. Now I know they are known for their scantily clad young women. I also know that they have a lot of, umm, certain body parts, exposed more than normal. It is more of a "man's" restaurant. It caters to men with the pretty young women that don't leave a lot to the imagination. Truthfully, some of them would make Victoria's Secret blush. That would be hard to do, I have been in Victoria's Secrets and honestly, Victoria does not have many secrets left! But back to Hooters, it is catered to the men with many TV's across the walls. Sports on just about every channel and what part of the wall that does not have any TV on it, will have some kind of "man cave" décor. Now they were known for their buffalo wings at one time. I was told that they were pretty good. I will say that the food is not to actually bad.

Now every time we go, there is a man to woman ratio of about 25 to 1. There are not a lot of women that go there. Again it is catered to the men. There are over 430 Hooters across the nation. I want to open a restaurant right next to every Hooters only my place would cater to the women. That is right, instead of beer and wings, we would serve wine and cheese and nuts. We would have décor for women. Like flowers of all kinds, romance books that you can read as you are waiting for your meal. There will be TV also. Lots of TV just like Hooters except of having sports, it would be different channels like "Lifetime" channel "Oxygen" channel and of course "Oprah."

We would serve comfort food. Our menus will have things like ice cream and cookies. Everything would be a comfort food. If there is something you want and it is not on the menu, request to have the chef prepare it for you if they can. There would not be tables or booths, they would all be soft cushion couches and recliners that you can curl up on. If you want to lay back and eat a gallon of ice cream while watching "Dr. Phil", then we will provide the throw blanket. It can be a family theme also, we will still have the occasional booth and table if the entire family wanted to come. The mascot for Hooters is an owl, so to keep with the "animal" theme; our mascot will be a squirrel. Just a little bitty squirrel with fat chubby cheeks and a black bow tie.

Ok, now I know what you're thinking. This could be like any restaurant, just right next door to Hooters, but you have not heard the good part yet. Instead of waitress and cooks, like "Hooters" there will be servers and chefs. The chefs will be in the back cooking the comfort food and the servers would be taking the orders and serving the customers. Did I mention the servers would be young, tanned, fit and muscular men? They would be wearing tight spandex shorts and no shirt. Just a vest that is about 3 sizes too small and of course, a small black bow tie. Now this would not be like the Chippendale's, there will be no dancing, just serving you to help you relax a little. Need little sprinkles to go with the ice cream while you are watching the "Ellen." Let one of our "Squirrel Servants" get that for you. We will cater to the women and Hooters will cater to the men.

Hooters and Squirrels..... It goes together like, peanut butter and chocolate. You can park in the middle parking lot. Your husband walks one way, you walk another and after a couple of hours of fun and a little bit of food. You both can meet back at the car and head home. Everyone happy and got to eat what and where they wanted to eat at with a good looking Hooters girl or a good looking "Squirrel Servant" either way, it is a win-win situation.

We will also offer complimentary peanuts when you walk in the door. Sam the squirrel will be at the front door with a cup and unlimited peanuts. After all, Hooters motto is "Delightfully tacky yet unrefined." The motto for Squirrels is "We have nuts."

Well, like I said before, sometimes, I just ain't right in the head!

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QUOTE *of the* DAY

"Nothing's ever easy as long as you go on living."

-Marilyn Monroe

Quote by brainyquote.com

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Building Dreams, Solving Problems

AC to Break Ground on Greenhouse Project

Amarillo College is set to break ground on a new greenhouse project on campus.

On Monday, October 9th, the construction manager and crews will begin breaking ground on the new greenhouse at Amarillo College. The project is projected to be a benefit for students in the STEM field.

During the project, parking lot seven at AC's Washington Campus will be blocked off. Drivers are advised to find alternate routes.

For more information, visit actx.edu.

Amarillo Municipal Court Holding Veteran Docket and Service Day

The Amarillo Municipal Court will be holding its third annual veteran docket and service day on October 11th.

According to information released by the City, City staff are partnering with the Amarillo VA Healthcare System to provide assistance on outstanding City-issued citations and violations. The VA Healthcare System plans to help educate veterans on available resources and services.

Attending agencies for the event include: the Texas Veterans Commission, Veteran Resource Center, Legal Aid of Northwest Texas, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Texas Workforce Solutions, Military Veteran Peer Network, Vet Center, VetStar, MET Inc., and the Salvation Army.

For more information, contact the Amarillo Municipal Court at (806) 378-4224.

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WORD *of the* DAY

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Definition by dictionary.com

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Amarillo City Council to Consider Approving $3 Million for Water Improvements

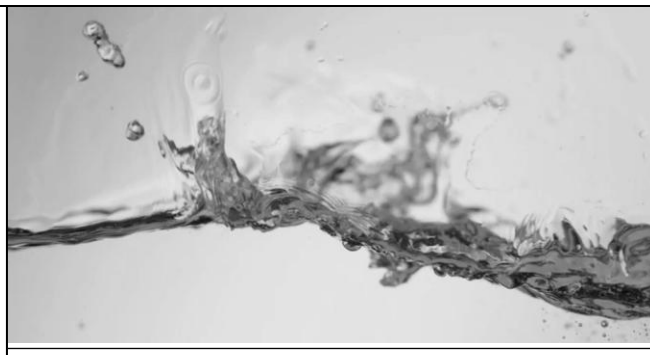
The Amarillo City Council will consider spending over $3 million on water system improvements during Tuesday night's meeting.

Members of the City Council will consider awarding a $3.23 million contract to DN Tanks, Inc. for water treatment plant clearwell improvements. Under the contract, DN Tanks will be installation of clearwell baffles in the three, five million gallon Osage Water Treatment Plant Clearwells. The improvements will help the City meet Texas Commission on Environmental Quality regulations.

City Councilmembers will also consider approving appointees to the Amarillo Construction Advisory Board and the Potter-Randall Appraisal District boards.

Tuesday's meeting will begin at 5pm in Amarillo City Hall (509 SE 7th Ave.) on Tuesday, October 10th.

For more information, visit amarillo.gov.



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