

Texas Case Studies

City of Amarillo, Texas & Panhandle Region

Based on its strategic location in the Texas Panhandle, Amarillo has long been the commercial center for parts of Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas. Currently, approximately 250,000 people live within 100 miles of the Amarillo Metropolitan Statistical Area (Amarillo MSA)². Over the past decade, communities within the Amarillo MSA have broadened the region's appeal by positioning the area as a preeminent cultural arts destination. While looking towards the future, local arts and community leaders continue to leverage the region's rich history and well-known attractions.

The Amarillo region's approach to the arts focuses on: 1) supporting a nationally acclaimed performing arts center, 2) redeveloping downtown Amarillo through the arts and entertainment, 3) expanding arts education programs, and 4) maximizing the Amarillo MSA's tourism opportunities.

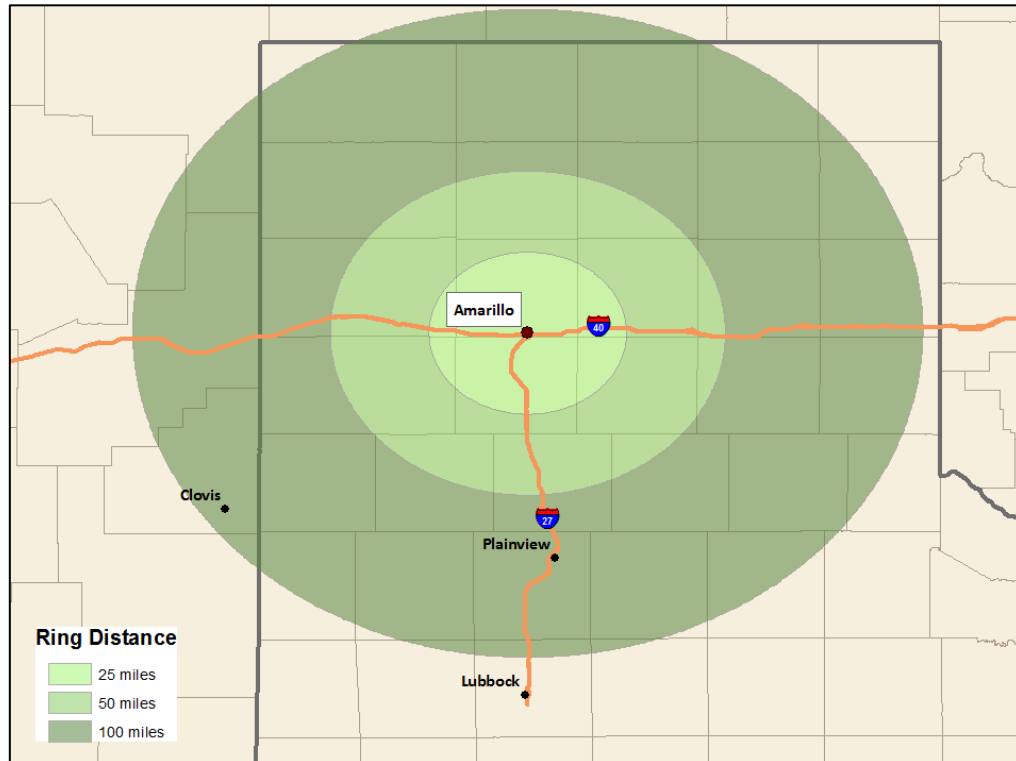
Key Findings & Lessons Learned from Amarillo & Texas Panhandle

- With private donations in excess of \$30 million, the Amarillo arts and philanthropic community financed and built a new performing arts venue in downtown. Largely through private contributions, the residents of Amarillo now have a venue that the public sector would have been unable to solely fund.
- The Globe-News Center, a performing arts facility, has also served as an anchor for downtown redevelopment. Selecting a downtown location was a conscious decision by the planning team to draw residents and tourists back to the historic town center. Since the facility opened in 2006, office vacancies have declined, renovation projects have occurred, and the City of Amarillo is master planning a number of major entertainment projects. Due to the Globe-News Center, downtown revitalization was not only possible, but was a sound investment in the regional economy.
- The *TEXAS* musical drama illustrates the long-term success and potential that exists by combining an outdoor amphitheater, state park, and a historically-based musical production. The cities of Canyon and Amarillo have economically benefited from the 40-year continuously running musical which draws an annual audience of 60,000 to 80,000 visitors. In 2009, the *TEXAS* musical drama and related tourism spending had a \$17.5 million economic impact on the local economy.

² The Amarillo MSA is comprised of four counties: Armstrong, Carson, Potter, and Randall.

- The educational component of the Globe-News Center, Window on a Wider World, has been a success in its own right. The arts education program has grown from a pilot program serving 2,700 students in 2005 to a highly sought after collaborative program by more than a dozen school districts throughout the Panhandle region. In 2009, Window on a Wider World served 14,400 students from more than 43 schools.

Figure 2: Amarillo Region



Source: TXP, Inc.

Globe-News Center and Downtown Redevelopment

Beginning in 1999 with the vision of local leader and philanthropist Caroline Bush Emeny, the Globe-News Center took only seven years from the first fundraising efforts until it opened its doors in 2006. City leaders and arts supporters had discussed building such a facility for years, but Bush Emeny’s passion and initial donation were the catalysts for the construction of the facility. Within three months of Bush Emeny’s gift, \$12 million had been raised and the architectural design phase began. An additional \$3 million was raised in 2003 when the parent company of the Amarillo *Globe-News* newspaper, Morris Communications Company LLC, gifted the funds in return for the theatre taking the paper’s name.³ The final cost of the facility was about \$32 million, including the education center and other enhancements. Private donations primarily paid for the Center, but the City of Amarillo donated the land and committed \$1.8 million to the building. In January 2006, the City of Amarillo assumed

³ Phillip Yates, *It All Started With a Vision*. Amarillo Globe-News. January 15, 2006: 4-6.

management of the building when it opened. Two and a half years later, after the full cost of the Globe-News Center was paid off, formal ownership of the facility was transferred to the City of Amarillo.

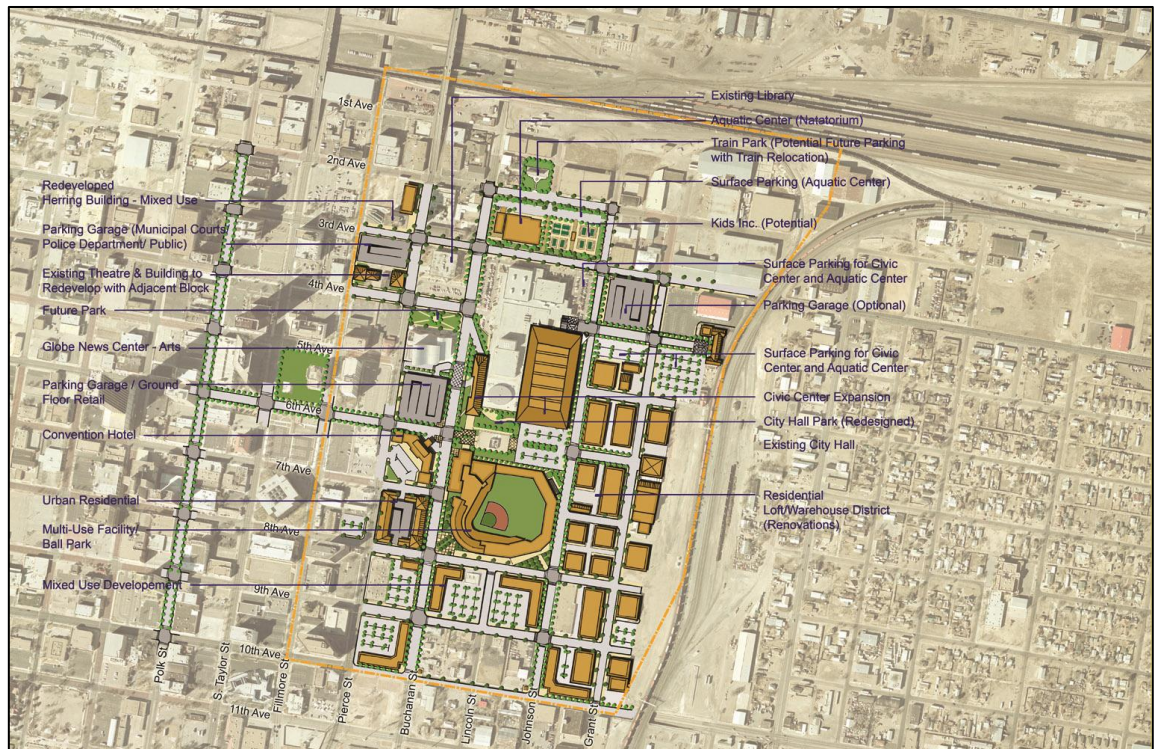
Touted as the “centerpiece for the rebirth of downtown,” the Globe-News Center was a success before it even opened its doors. The impact of the a 1,300 seat, state-of-the-art venue on the ability of the resident performing companies to recruit talented performers and directors as well as new audience members was immediate. The Lone Star Ballet Company credits the successful recruitment of its new directors in 2005 with the promise of the new facility. The world-class acoustics and intimacy of the space increased the demand of Amarillo Symphony subscribers from 1,550 for the 2005 season to 2,483 in new facility’s inaugural 2006 season.⁴ The Symphony sold out its first season in the Globe-News Center before the building opened.

While Amarillo residents had witnessed public and private attempts to revitalize its downtown area since the 1960s, it was not until the Globe-News Center opened that these efforts gathered enough support to have a sustainable effect. The decision by the Globe-News Center planning team to locate the performance hall downtown, across the street from the Amarillo Civic Center, was made in hopes that it would spur revitalization of the entire downtown area. In 2007, the Center City Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) was established, signaling the City of Amarillo’s financial commitment to the redevelopment of downtown. Three projects have received TIRZ financial support including a mixed-use building, the renovation of an historic building into a business hotel, and a residential loft warehouse project located blocks from the Globe-News Center. These projects demonstrate the increasing demand for residential and commercial space downtown. In 2008, the City provided funding for the nonprofit Downtown Amarillo Inc. which is responsible for implementing the new strategic downtown redevelopment plan.

While the Globe-News Center cannot take full credit for all new downtown activity, stakeholders agree that the Globe-News Center was the catalyst for a downtown redevelopment plan being taken seriously by civic leaders, business owners, and residents. Now, most of the major projects under consideration by the City of Amarillo such as the convention center hotel, multi-use ball park, and an aquatic center are located in downtown.

⁴ Ibid.

Figure 3: Amarillo Civic Center Master Plan



Source: Downtown Amarillo Inc.

Beyond providing a cultural amenity to local residents, the Globe-News Center is an important tourism attraction for Amarillo. Patrons from throughout the Texas Panhandle, Oklahoma, and New Mexico travel to the city to attend concerts, performances, and other events. Based on a sampling of online and box office tickets sales, approximately 20 percent of attendees come from outside of Amarillo. In 2009, the Globe-News Center operating expenditures and nonlocal attendee spending on tickets, food, lodging, and shopping generated \$3.8 million in economic activity, \$2.2 million in earnings, and about 50 permanent jobs. Cultural arts tourism also creates significant local tax revenues (e.g. sales tax) that support basic government services throughout the City.

Table 2: Economic Impact of the Globe-News Center Operations & Nonlocal Attendee Spending (2009)

	Output	Value Add	Earnings	Employment
Agriculture & Forestry	\$17,580	\$5,789	\$2,274	0
Mining	\$10,018	\$5,084	\$2,060	0
Utilities	\$61,370	\$36,661	\$12,737	0
Construction	\$16,663	\$8,256	\$6,444	0
Manufacturing	\$74,410	\$27,235	\$15,244	0
Wholesale Trade	\$92,857	\$62,702	\$29,891	0
Retail Trade	\$197,607	\$129,521	\$69,109	3
Transportation & Warehousing	\$228,282	\$90,744	\$74,138	3
Information	\$89,584	\$47,662	\$23,175	0
Finance & Insurance	\$179,447	\$106,022	\$51,034	1
Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing	\$238,777	\$176,989	\$13,059	1
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	\$103,336	\$69,108	\$48,995	1
Management of Companies & Enterprises	\$27,977	\$17,325	\$11,518	0
Administrative & Waste Management Services	\$61,662	\$40,630	\$26,251	1
Educational Services	\$18,884	\$10,679	\$8,230	0
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$159,362	\$97,702	\$74,770	2
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	\$1,332,382	\$803,327	\$461,125	23
Accommodation	\$262,207	\$168,782	\$80,886	3
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$474,428	\$246,904	\$152,985	10
Other Services	\$76,600	\$38,964	\$24,163	1
Total	\$3,723,433	\$2,190,088	\$1,188,088	50

Source: TXP, Inc.

Window on a Wider World (WOWW)

The WOWW education program was an important selling point for the Globe-News Center fundraising efforts. This initiative offered donors a return on investment that extended beyond the physical facility. WOWW is dedicated to enriching the education of Texas Panhandle students through art, science, and cultural experiences. From its inception, WOWW was also committed to developing an education program that would benefit children in rural areas. WOWW integrates the arts into core curriculum by complementing many traditional lesson plans. When designing WOWW, Amarillo modeled the experience after Dallas’ successful Big Thought.⁵

⁵ More information is available at www.bigthought.org.

The program allocates \$15 per child for arts and cultural experiences, one-third of which is contributed by the participating schools. In order to address issues specific to the Panhandle region, WOWW has emphasized decreasing transportation costs and providing opportunities for distance-learning experiences. WOWW seeks to integrate the arts into the core curriculum. It works with both educators and artists to design field trips and other in-classroom arts experiences which directly complement the core curriculum and build on the knowledge areas assessed by standardized tests. These experiences include live performances at the Globe-News Theatre, trips to museums and other cultural arts attractions, and in-classroom workshops with artists and performers.

One of WOWW’s goals is to use cultural arts experiences to improve student outcomes of skills and knowledge measured by standardized tests. In order to quantify the impact of the program, WOWW began a longitudinal study with West Texas A&M University in 2007. The study will measure the changes in math and reading scores as well as psychological, sociological, and educational development of participating students.

In 2005, the WOWW pilot program began with 7 schools and 2,700 students. Currently, 43 schools, 13 districts, and over 14,000 students participate in WOWW. As a part of WOWW, each student has an average of 3-5 experiences during the year.

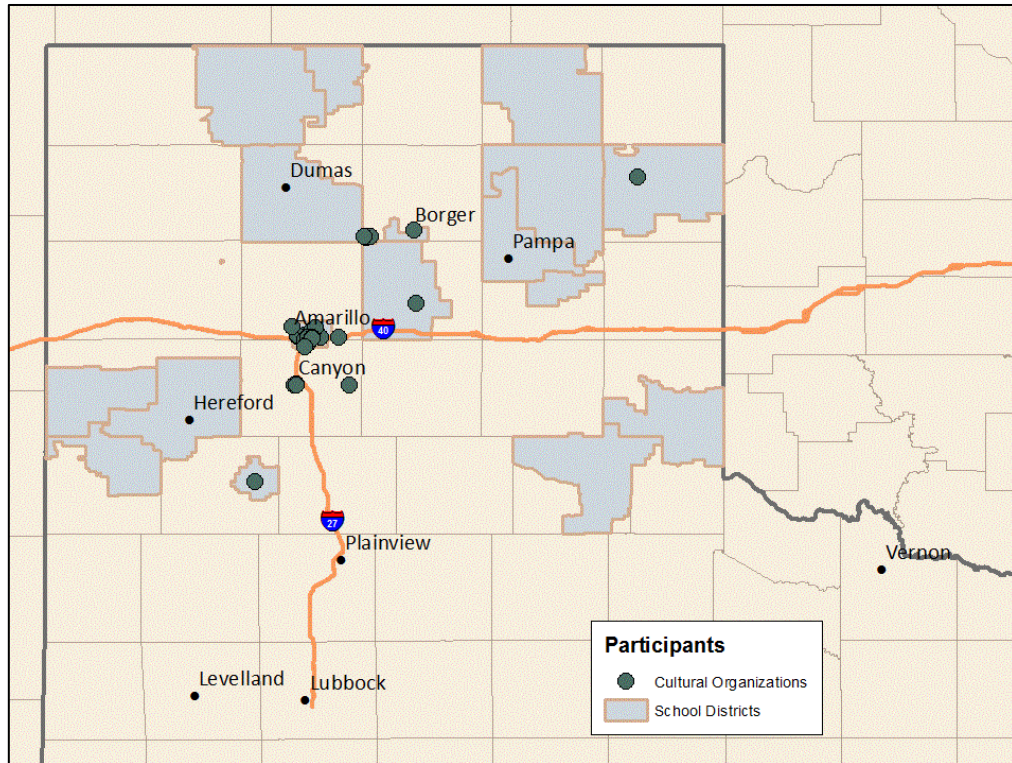
Table 3: Growth of Participation in WOWW Program over Time

School Year	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
School Districts	3	3	5	11	13
Schools Participating	7	7	23	40	43
Students	2,717	2,712	9,100	12,499	14,441

Source: Window on a Wider World

WOWW is not only working towards academic achievement for the participating students, but also a closer collaboration of its 32 partner organizations. The WOWW program marks the first time many of the arts organizations had come together to collaborate on a shared project. The success and appeal of WOWW is demonstrated by the increasing number of participating arts organizations and school districts.

Figure 4: Regional Reach of the Window on a Wider World Program (09/10 Academic Year)



Source: Window on a Wider World, TXP, Inc.

TEXAS the Musical Drama at the Pioneer Amphitheatre

Amarillo's role as a regional hub for arts and entertainment is not new. The musical drama *TEXAS* has been performed in an open-air, natural amphitheater in the Palo Duro Canyon State Park for more than 40 years. This internationally-acclaimed musical version of the history of Texas draws between 60,000 and 80,000 audience members to its performances each year. Featuring impressive special effects and a fireworks display, this family-friendly musical drama is performed from early June through late August. Approximately 65 percent of the attendees travel for more than 125 miles for the performance. Hotels in Amarillo and Canyon specifically target visitors for the *TEXAS* performances, offering packages in cooperation with the performance management staff. By linking Palo Duro Canyon State Park and a unique outdoor musical, Canyon and Amarillo have been able to generate measurable economic activity in the form of production spending and nonlocal visitor spending. In 2009, the economic impact of *Texas* production expenditures (for example, salaries and materials for set design) and nonlocal attendee spending on tickets, food, lodging, and shopping generated \$17.5 million in economic activity, \$5.5 million in earnings, and about 233 permanent jobs.

Table 4: Total Economic Impact of the TEXAS production and Nonlocal Attendee Spending

	Output	Value Add	Earnings	Employment
Agriculture & Forestry	\$101,918	\$33,651	\$12,994	1
Mining	\$55,749	\$28,121	\$11,317	0
Utilities	\$330,590	\$197,640	\$68,778	1
Construction	\$84,362	\$41,940	\$32,560	1
Manufacturing	\$392,074	\$139,627	\$76,695	2
Wholesale Trade	\$483,513	\$326,525	\$155,617	2
Retail Trade	\$1,118,326	\$733,002	\$391,269	16
Transportation & Warehousing	\$1,516,391	\$570,593	\$480,455	19
Information	\$401,196	\$214,123	\$102,260	2
Finance & Insurance	\$830,830	\$492,777	\$235,032	4
Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing	\$1,077,026	\$798,435	\$58,869	2
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	\$447,536	\$299,372	\$212,135	3
Management of Companies & Enterprises	\$145,443	\$90,249	\$59,913	1
Administrative & Waste Management Services	\$259,642	\$170,036	\$108,418	5
Educational Services	\$83,128	\$47,119	\$36,206	2
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$729,998	\$447,573	\$342,382	9
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	\$3,430,247	\$2,068,399	\$1,187,105	58
Accommodation	\$2,022,856	\$1,302,035	\$623,884	24
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$3,536,994	\$1,840,675	\$1,140,170	76
Other Services	\$360,189	\$183,225	\$113,464	5
Total	\$17,408,010	\$10,025,117	\$5,449,522	233

Source: TXP, Inc.

Summary

Amarillo has long been the hub for economic and cultural activity in the Texas Panhandle. A number of performing arts groups and the *TEXAS* musical drama largely defined the Amarillo arts scene. It was the opening of the Globe-News Center in 2006 that caused the arts in Amarillo to expand beyond a regional audience. The Globe-News Center has also brought tourists and residents alike back to the downtown. Real estate developers, for example, are now investing significant resources in the central city. This increasing activity and interest has encouraged the city to plan new public-private ventures downtown. Beyond traditional economic development and tourism promotion, Amarillo’s cultural arts scene has also helped establish the new and innovative regional education program Window on a Wider World (WOWW). By bringing together various arts groups and attracting private funding, WOWW is able to provide educational learning opportunities that would not be available without an arts component.