

Northwest Texas Section Newsletter

February 2014

About our Section

The Northwest Texas Section encompasses 88 counties, equating to 35% of the total Texas counties. As indicated by its name, this Section is located in the northern and western portions of the state. The 2010 Census, provided by the US Census Bureau, identified six cities in this Section to have a population over 90,000. These included Abilene, Amarillo, Lubbock, Midland, Odessa, and San Angelo. Many smaller towns and communities are also peppered throughout the Section.

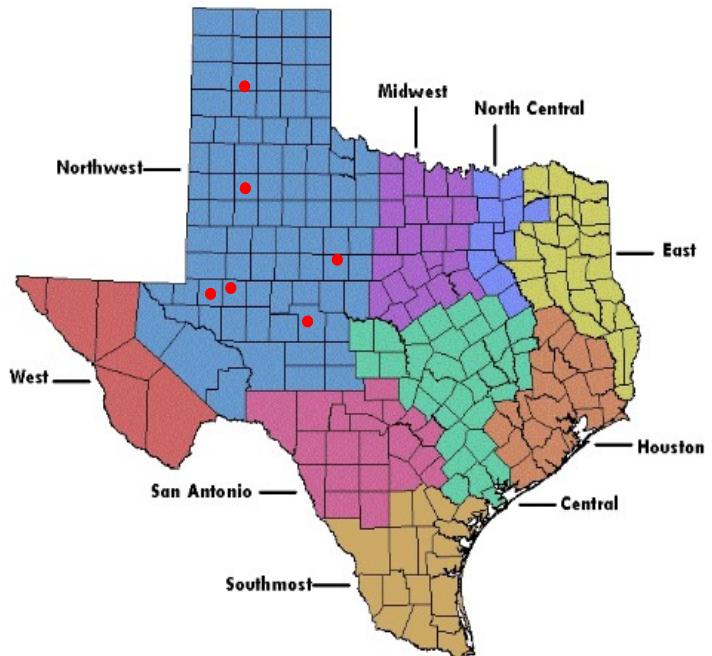
Geographically, the average distance between the larger municipalities is 120 miles

with the exception of Midland and Odessa, which are approximately 20 miles apart. For cities of this magnitude to be self-sustaining, it is beneficial to have a diverse economy, and a robust community with orderly growth and development.

Population, unemployment status, and the top three industries for these six major cities are identified below. Information was obtained from the 2010 Census and 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

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	Abilene	Amarillo	Lubbock	Midland	Odessa	San Angelo
2010 Census: Total Population						
	117,063	190,695	229,573	111,147	99,940	93,200
2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates: Selected Economic Characteristics						
Unemployment Status	3.8%	3.7%	4.4%	2.8%	3.6%	4.6%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	2.4%	1.2%	2.0%	17.0%	11.6%	4.6%
Retail Trade	12.3%	13.6%	12.8%	11.4%	10.9%	13.3%
Educational services, Health care, and Social assistance	29.2%	22.2%	29.0%	17.6%	19.5%	26.1%

City of Midland

Due to growth associated with the oil and gas industry, the City of Midland is facing a housing crisis that has been building for approximately four years.

In 2013, an all-time high of 732 single-family building permits were issued. Residential plats submitted for review contain between 600 and 1,000 lots, and with nearly 200 oil and gas wells inside Midland's city limits, developers are designing subdivisions around pump jacks.

As a result of the housing shortage, man camps or tent communities are popping up all around the County. To alleviate this issue, 11 apartment complexes are currently under construction. These will add nearly 2,500 dwelling units by the summer of 2014.

Mr. Compton, with the City of Midland's Development Services, noted that monthly rent for a one bedroom apartment— if you can find one— ranges from \$1,300 to \$1,500 and a two bedroom apartment ranges from \$1,800 to

\$2,000. Also, two bedroom houses lease for around \$4,000 a month while four bedroom homes rent for \$8,000 a month! He stated that the home he purchased nine years ago has doubled in value in the last four to five years.

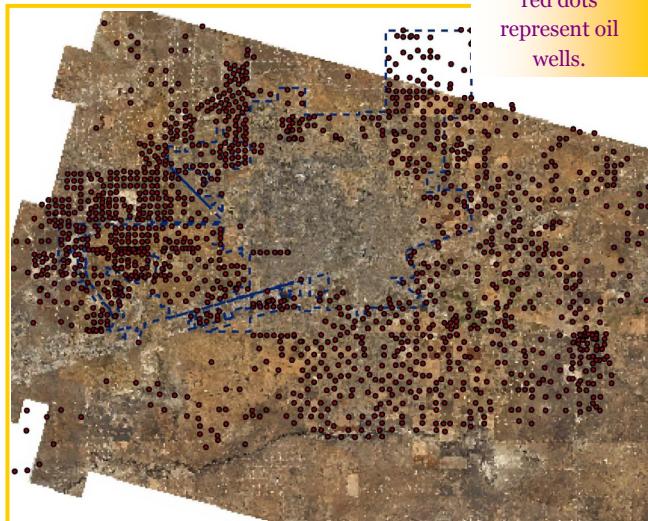
It has been rumored that property near city limits recently sold for \$36,000 per acre. Shockingly, there were no improvements to the property and mineral rights did not accompany the sale.

The housing crisis has also affected the City's teaching community. In an attempt to provide affordable housing for teachers, Midland's local school district has constructed a mobile home park at its bus barn. One family wrote a check for \$3 million and another family donated \$1 million to the school district as a stipend for teachers rent and utility expenses.

City of San Angelo

The City of San Angelo is experiencing some effects of the Cline Shale play, but not to the degree that Midland and Odessa are facing. This type of activity has stimulated the housing market and retail development.

Fortunately, the oilfield support services have brought a new focus to the notion of planning ahead and forecasting, and a different type of dialogue is underway. A housing committee was formed by private citizens to re-examine regulations for recreational vehicle, mobile home and manufactured home park placement within the city. In November 2013, San Angelo's City



The blue dashed line represents Midland's City Limits and the red dots represent oil wells.

Another challenge for Midland is the increased commercial traffic generated by the oil and gas rigs. Not only has traffic significantly increased, the commercial traffic generated by oil and gas rigs are tearing up roadways at a rapid rate. Within the county, 46 traffic related fatalities have occurred, almost double a few years ago.

The City of Midland is trying to hire a senior planner, so if anyone likes a challenge.....

Council passed a moratorium suspending development activity of such parks and made findings that current regulations were inadequate to address this development in the current context of oilfield activity. Currently, Staff is working to finalize draft revisions with the housing committee and recommend changes to the Planning Commission before returning to City Council with the final product.

Throughout 2013, San Angelo Staff amended their Comprehensive Plan (adopted in 2009). Collaboration with Gateway Planning resulted in a

master plan for Lake Nasworthy and the creation of a new sub-district surrounding the lake. A document including a market analysis, identification of character zones, and suggestions for three large catalytic projects accompanied this plan. Trail funding, roadway reconfiguration, environmental issues, and destination creation emerged as main areas of focus. This subject quickly became the most successful public engagement seen in a decade. City Staff is now working with Gateway to identify strategies for zoning and pursuing expressed interests in the catalytic projects. (continued on page 3)

City of San Angelo (continued from page 2)

In December 2013, San Angelo's City Council and Downtown Development Commission accepted a document outlining master development strategies for the downtown area, engaging Catalyst Urban

Development. This process included an analysis of development policies in the area, suggestions for land use programming, and three different downtown investment concepts on which San Angelo should focus its

efforts for the revitalization of its downtown district. City Staff is holding discussions about key project locations, while working with city partners to carry out the tasks outlined during this process.

City of Lubbock

The City of Lubbock is currently studying (internally) the impacts of growth and development as it relates to individual departments, particularly financial and infrastructure needs. The focus of this study addresses areas within the current city limits as well as areas near current growth leading towards potential annexations.

Downtown redevelopment continues with a few projects anticipated in the next few months. One property owner is pursuing historic designations at the local, state, and national level.

Within the next month, Lubbock's Planning Department will be hiring

either a Planner or Senior Planner. Anyone interested should contact the Planning Department.

Also, the City of Lubbock is implementing Energov Planning, Permitting, and Licensing Software. This GS-centric enterprise software solution will be a centralized system for Planning, Building Inspection, Public Works, City Secretary, Fire Marshal, and several other processes, taking the place of a jumble of large and small solutions that tracked almost 150 permits, licenses, and registration/certifications. IGInspect, an IPad inspection application will also be implemented for inspectors in

Building Inspections, Stormwater, Fire Marshal and Industrial Waste Monitoring and Pre-Treatment (IWMP). This system is expected to go -live in late April 2014. Soon after, a Citizen Access Portal (CAP) will be activated. This will allow citizens to request some permits and licenses online. Energov EReviews will facilitate electronic plan reviews and mark-ups for concurrent plan reviews will also be available. Phase II, scheduled later this year, will be an integrated application for Code Enforcement, including mobile application IGENforce.

City of Amarillo

While the City of Amarillo did not feel the harsh effects of the housing crisis as compared to other areas of the country, records indicated residential development leveled off between 2008 and 2012. In looking at the 2013 development related caseloads, it appears Amarillo's development activity is picking back up as 85 plats and 31 zonings were submitted for review and 1,055 housing units were permitted.

In January 2013, Amarillo Staff began reviewing the Subdivision process. Objectives of both City Staff and the development community included promoting better communication, coordination, timeliness of approvals, and creating a more fluid responsive development review process. City

Staff anticipate implementation of a new review process by fall of 2014.

Also, with water conservation as a hot topic, the City of Amarillo is in the process of amending the Landscape Ordinance. Water efficient plants are strongly encouraged. City Staff met with landscape contractors and architects, as well as business owners, and utility company representatives to solicit comments on the issues and proposed changes. City Staff is in the process of briefing City Council members on the results of the review process and will be moving forward with additional public meetings soon.

Amarillo ended its year with a celebration. The City Charter turned 100 in November 2013! Amarillo was one of the first in Texas to adopt a

council-manager charter. A special election was held in order to consider 21 amendments to the Charter. Many were recommended due to updated technology as well as state and federal laws. All propositions passed.

Also, a year-long celebration began in November 2013 with a gala and the unveiling of a new slogan "Open Spaces, Endless Opportunities". Following that, City Staff hosted an educational day where Amarillo Independent School District seventh graders learned about City departments and services offered. In the spring of 2014, City Staff will host an open house at City Hall. Citizens will have the opportunity to meet departmental staff and participate in a City Council meeting.

City of Abilene

The City of Abilene has experienced a surge in growth! Abilene's Planning Division processed more cases in 2013 than all of 2009 and 2010 combined. Also, more than 500 new single-family lots were platted in 2013. Commercial projects were valued at approximately \$31 million and \$21.5 million in 2012 & 2013, respectively.

With four Planners, a Planning Director, and an Assistant Planning Director, staff has managed the increased workload without adding

employees, upgrades to technology, or increasing response times.

Also in 2013, Abilene's Planning Division completed or made progress on a record number of special and long-range projects. These include:

- » Head Shop Ordinance
- » Ambler Ave. Corridor Overlay
- » Wind Energy Conservation Systems (WECS) Ordinance
- » TIRZ District # 2

Planning Staff are currently working on the Lake Fort Phantom Hill (LFPH) Overlay District as well as reviewing and updating the sidewalk policy and bicycle plan.

Year	Caseload (zoning changes, plats, & variance/ special exemptions)
2009	78
2010	81
2011	107
2012	127
2013	184

Upcoming Events

- » The Northwest Texas Section will host a meeting in Abilene on March 21, 2014. More information will become available in the upcoming weeks.
- » Come to Atlanta April 26-30, 2014 for the biggest, brightest, boldest event in planning! New this year are sessions, events, and resources designed for emerging professionals, including the Emerging Professionals Institute which provide you with hands-on, interactive, small group access to top professionals. Register by February 27 to save! For more information, visit www.planning.org/conference.



- » Join us in Frisco for the APA Texas Chapter Conference on October 15-18, 2014. The conference will include exciting sessions, mobile workshops, plenary and luncheon speakers, and social events. AICP members have the opportunity to receive up to 12.5 hours of Certification Maintenance credits during the conference. Online registration as well as hotel reservations will be available this summer. For more information, visit www.txplanning.org.

2014 TEXAS APA CONFERENCE

October 15 - 18, Frisco, TX



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2013-2015

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