



Above: Members of the Vernon Business Development Corporation and Vernon Leadership Class 2017 stand on the senate steps with Rep. Drew Springer and Sen. Charles Perry

Right: Grady Stowe and Bret McCormick, among others, share a jet to Austin to be recognized during a legislative session.

## City climbs out of debt to find surplus

When setting the 2017-18 budget, city commissioner Guy Spears stated that the budget includes a \$1.8 million surplus, set aside to build up balances. He suggested the commission set \$1 million aside for future capital projects such as replacing waterlines or a new sewer plant. For the protection of that \$1 million, he proposed adding the money to the existing electric plant trust fund. Past commissioner Judd Byars agreed to sit down for discussion with Spears at the Vernon Daily Record. Byars served the city commission from 1982 until 1986. He served during a time period that overlapped with Spears' mother. Both of whom were vital in creating the electric plant trust fund.



The trust fund, as Byars explained it, was created when the past commission decided to sell the city's power plant. With that money, they created a trust fund that could only be accessed by a public vote. Furthermore, those funds could only be used for capital improvements. Byars recalled his time on the commission and the state of the city prior to his election. "It was really a similar situation to the one we are climbing out of right now," he said. "It was a good ole boys operation and if you were in the right crowd you pretty much got what you wanted out of the city."

"I had no intention of getting involved in all of it but it had operated in the wrong way so long that it had just seized to function," he continued.

**Electric Plant Trust Fund**

"We were either going to have to redo the city's electrical system or we could sell it," Byars said. "West Texas Utilities came to the council and offered to buy the plant. At the time, the city hadn't been producing power out of its own plant in a long time. It was cheaper to buy electricity than it was to generate it. They bought it from Western Farmers, a facility in Oklahoma." It was at that time, Byars and the past commissioners agreed, after much debate, that the city would place the money from that sale into a trust fund that could only be reached by a vote of the public. "Stick to your guns," he told Spears. "It's not always or rarely ever, easy to do the right thing but you are protecting the future of this city and God honors those who do right." Spears said he would continue to seek ways to put money in the reserve during his time on the commission and that he hopes a compromise can be found that benefits Vernon tomorrow as much as today.



Two of Vernon's city commissioners, Guy Spears and Reuben Hinojosa, sit with Mayor Joe Rogers (right) and city manager Marty Mangum (left), during a special hearing at city hall.

# Tyson

It's what your *family* deserves.

Call for employment opportunities:  
**800-772-0844**

**1700 Wheeler Street  
Vernon, TX 76384  
940-553-1888**