

## Midwest City



Visitors to Town Center Plaza have a new park to enjoy located near the clock tower on Mid-America Boulevard. PHOTO BY JOSH RYAN

# Bond issue creates new park, upgrades another

By Jeff Harrison

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Visitors to Town Center Plaza in Midwest City may notice something new.

The city recently opened its newest park, W.P. Bill Atkinson Park, located near the clock tower on Mid-America Blvd., just north of the shopping center.

W.P. Bill Atkinson Park will serve as a gathering place and connection between the Original Mile neighborhood with the commercial district. It includes performance and event space, splash pad, playground, dog park and more.

The park is linked to the nearby retail center by a paved pedestrian plaza that includes historical panels telling the story of Midwest City's past.

A statue of Midwest City Founder, W.P. Bill Atkinson, has also been added at the south entrance of the new park. The

statue had most recently had a temporary home in Charles J. Johnson Park.

A grand opening celebration will take place this spring.

The new park is part of a 2018 bond issue approved by voters. The bond funds will also be used to spruce up another park on the city's north side.

Mid-America Park, 1295 Midwest Blvd., is undergoing a major renovation. The project includes adding new amenities such as a paved nature trail, community garden, spray park, inclusive playground, and disc golf course.

The city will also improve access to the park from Midwest Blvd.

Crews are in the process of selectively clearing vegetation in areas that are planned for expansion.

The project is currently in the design phase. City officials said they could see bids for the next phase in late spring.

## Nicoma Park

# Growing infrastructure opens city for business

By Ryan Horton

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Nicoma Park has made major infrastructure investments in recent years.

The city, established in 1926 and incorporated in 1959, now has developing infrastructure that can help the community thrive moving into the future.

The small eastern Oklahoma County city broke ground on its first citywide water project in September of 2019, and the upgrades are now ready to help the community combat fires and attract economic development.

Officials hope to see an improved quality of life for residents through the city offering water services, for the first time ever, as well as attracting new restaurants and retailers that citizens will enjoy. New business in the city will generate sales tax revenue, which is how municipalities fund services, as well as improvements and repairs to infrastructure.

The small eastern Oklahoma County city has an area of just over three-square miles and a population of around 2,500. Those numbers have held true since about 1980, and officials say the lack of water and sewer lines has been the major factor for such little development within the city.

Efforts have been made in recent years to take advantage of the plentiful traffic provided by State Highway 62.

In addition to attracting potential

commercial retailers looking to setup shop, the new waterlines will greatly improve the community's firefighting capabilities.

With two water wells, a chlorine booster station and a water tower the city will be able to more effectively access fire hydrants.

There were previously 13 hydrants within the city limits, while the new waterline calls for a fire hydrant on each side of the street every 900 feet. That makes a fire hydrant available every 450 feet offset on each side of the streets.

Residents can now tie into utility services.

Recent commercial development includes the opening of Del Rancho in the former home of Jim' Fa-mous Fried Chicken, and the businesses found in the Shoppes in the Park development just east of Del Rancho.

The 7,440-square foot commercial building hosts retail, dining and service business space.

Other improvements along NE 23rd Street includes the installation of a main stage, bar and digital billboard by Liberty Entertainment.

The host site of the state's largest firework tent and a community festival and fireworks display each summer is now a live entertainment venue with concerts and festivals attracting thousands of visitors, and their tax dollars, to eastern Oklahoma County each year.

The small eastern Oklahoma County community has come along way since its founding as a poultry colony by Gilbert Apple Nichols, who also established Nichols Hills.

Recent work to improve infrastructure shows the community has plenty of growth ahead despite its small geographical boundaries.

