



Amarillo, Texas

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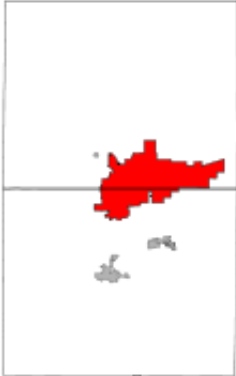
Amarillo /æməˈrɪlə/ is the fourteenth most populous city in the state of Texas, also the largest City in the Texas Panhandle, and the seat of Potter County.^[4] A portion of the city extends into Randall County. The population was 190,695 at the 2010 census (105,486 in Potter County, and 85,209 in Randall). The Amarillo metropolitan area has an estimated population of 236,113 in four counties.

Amarillo means "**Yellow**" in Spanish.

Amarillo, originally named Oneida, is situated in the Llano Estacado region.^[5] The availability of the railroad and freight service provided by the Fort Worth and Denver City Railroad contributed to the city's growth as a cattle marketing center in the late 19th century.^[6]

The city was once the self-proclaimed "Helium Capital of the World" for having one of the country's most productive helium fields.^[7] The city is also known as "The Yellow Rose of Texas" (as the city takes its name from the Spanish word for yellow),^[8] and most recently "Rotor City, USA" for its V-22 Osprey hybrid aircraft assembly plant.^[9] Amarillo operates one of the largest meat packing areas in the United States. Pantex, the only nuclear weapons assembly and disassembly facility in the country, is also a major employer. The location of this facility also gave rise to the nickname Bomb City. The attractions Cadillac Ranch and Big Texan Steak Ranch are located adjacent to Interstate 40. U.S. Highway 66 also passed through the city.

Contents
1 History 2 Geography and climate 2.1 Cityscape 2.2 Climate

Amarillo
City
City of Amarillo
 Downtown Amarillo
 Logo  Location in Potter, Randall within the State of Texas

- 3 Demographics
- 4 Law and government
 - 4.1 Local government
 - 4.2 County, state and federal representation
- 5 Economy
- 6 Education
- 7 Culture
 - 7.1 Museums and art collections
 - 7.2 Local media
 - 7.3 Outside media attention
 - 7.4 Sports
- 8 Infrastructure
 - 8.1 Air transportation
 - 8.2 Ground transportation
 - 8.3 Medical centers and hospitals
 - 8.4 Utilities
- 9 See also
- 10 References
- 11 Further reading
- 12 External links



Location in Texas

Coordinates: 35°11′57″N 101°50′43″W

Country	 United States
State	 Texas
Counties	Potter Randall

Government	
 • Type	Council-Manager
 • Body	City Council
 • Mayor	Paul Harpole
	(Since May 2011)
 • Commissioner Place 1	Elisha Demerson
	(Since May 2015)
 • Commissioner Place 2	Brian J. Eades
	(Since May 2007)
 • Commissioner Place 3	Randy Burkett
	(Since May 2015)
 • Commissioner Place 4	Mark Nair
	(Since June 2015)

Area	
 • City	90.3 sq mi (233.9 km ²)
 • Land	89.8 sq mi (232.7 km ²)
 • Water	0.5 sq mi (1.2 km ²)

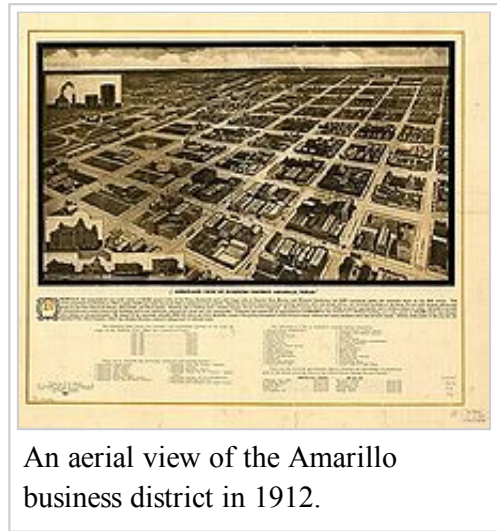
Elevation	3,605 ft (1,099 m)
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History

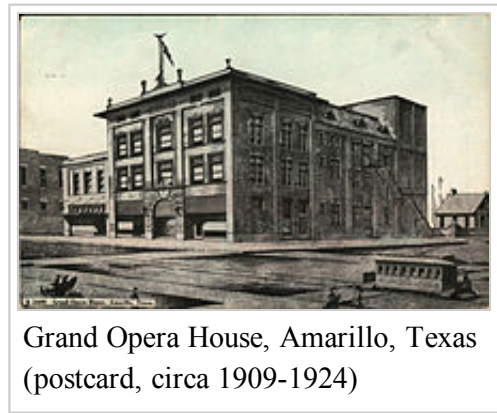
Large ranches exist in the Amarillo area: among others, the defunct XIT Ranch and the still functioning JA Ranch founded in 1877 by Charles Goodnight and John George Adair. Goodnight continued the partnership for a time after Adair's death with Adair's widow, Cornelia Wadsworth Ritchie Adair, who was then the sole owner from 1887 until her death in 1921.

During April 1887, J.I. Berry established a site for a town after he chose a well-watered section along the way of the Fort Worth and Denver City Railroad, which had begun building across the Texas Panhandle. Berry and Colorado City, Texas merchants wanted to make their new town site the region's main trading center. On August 30, 1887, Berry's town site won the county seat election and was established in Potter County. Availability of the railroad and freight service after the county seat election made the town a fast-growing cattle marketing center.^[6]

The settlement originally was called Oneida; it would later change its name to Amarillo, which probably derives from yellow wildflowers that were plentiful during the spring and summer or the nearby Amarillo Lake and Amarillo Creek, named in turn for the yellow soil along their banks and shores (*Amarillo* is the Spanish word for the color *yellow*). Early residents pronounced the city's name first according to the Spanish pronunciation [aːmaˈɾi.ʝo], which later gave way to the English pronunciation /æməˈɹɪlo/.^[10]



An aerial view of the Amarillo business district in 1912.



Grand Opera House, Amarillo, Texas (postcard, circa 1909-1924)

On June 19, 1888, Henry B. Sanborn, who is given credit as the "Father of Amarillo,"^[11] and his business partner Joseph

F. Glidden began buying land to the east to move Amarillo after arguing that Berry's site was on low ground and would flood during rainstorms. Sanborn also offered to trade lots in the new location to businesses in the original city's site and help with the expense of moving to new buildings. His incentives gradually won over people, who moved their businesses to Polk Street in the new commercial district.^[12] Heavy rains almost flooded Berry's part of the town in 1889, prompting more people to move to Sanborn's location. This eventually led to another county seat election making Sanborn's town the new county seat in 1893.^[6]

By the late 1890s, Amarillo had emerged as one of the world's busiest cattle shipping points, and its population grew significantly. The city became a grain elevator, milling, and feed-manufacturing center after an increase in production of wheat and small grains

during the early 1900s. Discovery of gas in 1918 and oil three years later brought oil and gas companies to the Amarillo area.^[6] The United States government bought the Cliffside Gas Field with high helium content in 1927 and the Federal Bureau of Mines began operating the Amarillo Helium plant two years later.^[13] The plant would be the sole producer of commercial helium in the world for a number of years.^[14] The U.S. National Helium Reserve is stored in the Bush Dome Reservoir at the Cliffside facility.^[15]

Following the lead of the Fort Worth and Denver City Railroad, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway and Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad established services to and from Amarillo. Each of these three carriers maintained substantial freight and passenger depots and repair facilities in the city through most of the 20th century and were major employers within the community.^[16]

Population (2010)	
• City	190,695 (US: 121st)
• Estimate (2013) ^[1]	196,429
• Density	2,075.5/sq mi (746/km2)
• Metro	249,881 (US: 185th)
Demonym	Amarilloan
Time zone	CST (UTC−6)
• Summer (DST)	CDT (UTC−5)
ZIP code	79101-79111, 79114, 79116-79121, 79123-79124, 79159, 79163, 79166-79168, 79171-79172, 79174, 79178, 79182, 79185, 79187, 79189
Area code	806
FIPS code	48-03000 ^[2]
GNIS feature ID	1351066 ^[3]
Website	www.amarillo.gov (http://www.amarillo.gov)

In 1929, Ernest O. Thompson, a decorated World War I general and a major businessman in Amarillo, was elected mayor to succeed Lee Bivins. Thompson instituted a major capital improvements project and worked to reduce utility rates. He joined the Texas Railroad Commission by appointment in 1933 and was elected to full terms in 1934, 1940, 1946, 1952, and 1958. He became an international expert on national petroleum and natural gas production and conservation. The first Mrs. Thompson, May Peterson Thompson, a former Metropolitan Opera singer, was involved in the arts while in Amarillo and later when the couple lived in Austin.



Home of Lee Bivins, businessman, mayor (1925–1929)

Amarillo was hit by the Dust Bowl and entered an economic depression. U.S. Routes 60, 87, 287, and 66 merged at Amarillo, making it a major tourist stop with numerous motels, restaurants, and curio shops. World War II led the establishment of Amarillo Army Air Field in east Amarillo and the nearby Pantex Army Ordnance Plant, which produced bombs and ammunition. After the end of the war, both of the facilities were closed. The Pantex Plant was reopened in 1950 and produced nuclear weapons throughout the Cold War.^[6] The following year, the army air base was reactivated as Amarillo Air Force Base and expanded to accommodate a Strategic Air Command B-52 Stratofortress wing.^[17] The arrival of servicemen and their families ended the city's depression. Between 1950 and 1960, Amarillo's population grew from 74,443 to 137,969. However, the closure of the Amarillo Air Force Base on December 31, 1968, contributed to a decrease in population to 127,010 by 1970.

In 1970, the Census Bureau reported Amarillo's population as 6.1% Hispanic and 88.5% non-Hispanic white.^[18] In the 1980s, ASARCO, Iowa Beef Processors (present day Tyson Foods), Owens-Corning and Weyerhaeuser built plants at Amarillo. The Eastridge neighborhood houses many immigrants from countries such as Vietnam, Laos, and Burma; Many of them found employment at the nearby Iowa Beef Processors plant.^[19] The following decade, Amarillo's city limits encompassed 60 square miles (155 km²) in Potter and Randall counties. Interstate 27 highway connecting Lubbock to Amarillo was built mostly during the 1980s.^[6]

In 2006, the historian Paul H. Carlson, professor emeritus at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, published *Amarillo: The Story of a Western Town*.

Geography and climate

Amarillo is located near the middle of the Texas Panhandle. It does not share similar weather characteristics with its south and east. Amarillo sits closer in proximity to Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming state capitals than it does to Austin. The region has a surface that is relatively flat and has little soil drainage. Due to the lack of developed drainage, much of the rainfall either evaporates, infiltrates into the ground, or accumulates in playa lakes.^[5] According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 90.3 square miles (234 km²), with 89.9 sq mi (233 km²) of it land and 0.4 sq mi (1.0 km²) of it (0.50%) water. The Amarillo metropolitan area is the 180th-largest in the United States with a population of 236,113 in four counties: Armstrong, Carson, Potter, and Randall.

About 20 miles (32 km) northeast of Amarillo is the Canadian River, a central corridor of the Southwestern Tablelands ecology region, which divides the Western High Plains ecological region. The southern divide of the Western High Plains is the Llano Estacado or Staked Plains geographical region. The river is dammed to form Lake Meredith, a major source of drinking water in the Texas Panhandle region.^[20] The city is situated near the Panhandle Field, in a productive gas and oil area, covering 200,000 acres (81,000 ha) in Hartley, Potter, Moore, Hutchinson, Carson, Gray, Wheeler, and Collingsworth counties. The Potter County portion had the nation's largest natural gas reserve.^[21] Approximately 25 miles (40 km) south of Amarillo is the canyon system, Palo Duro Canyon.



Lighthouse pinnacle in Palo Duro Canyon. The canyon system is located south of the city.

The underground structures known as Amarillo Mountains are an extension of the Arbuckles of Oklahoma and the Ouachita of Arkansas and Oklahoma. They are some thousands of feet underground. The range was discovered by pioneer oilmen. Some of the peaks are believed to be 10,000 feet (3,000 m) high.^[22] The tallest peak is reported to be 2,500 feet underground in northeast Potter County under the Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument.^[23]

Cityscape

Most of Amarillo's population growth and commercial development are occurring in the southern and northwestern parts of the city.^[24] Similar to many towns in the Texas Panhandle, the city's downtown has suffered economic deterioration throughout the years.^[25] To help revitalize it, the organization Center City of Amarillo was formed to establish partnerships with groups who have a large presence in the city.^[26] Since its conception in the 1990s, Center City has sponsored public art projects and started block parties in the downtown area.^[27]

The 31-story Chase Tower, was opened in Amarillo's downtown in 1971.^[28] Completed in the same year as the Chase Tower, the Amarillo National Bank Plaza One building houses the headquarters of Amarillo National Bank, the city's largest financial institution.^{[29][30]} The Santa Fe Building, completed in 1930, was the regional offices of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, but was vacant for several years until Potter County bought the building for \$426,000 in 1995 to gain new office spaces.^[31]

Amarillo's historic homes and buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places reflect the economic growth from around 1900 to the start of World War II. Polk Street contains many of the city's historic downtown buildings and homes. The large historic homes on this street were built close to downtown, and homes were located on the west side of the street as a symbol of status because they would be greeted with the sunrise every morning.^[32]

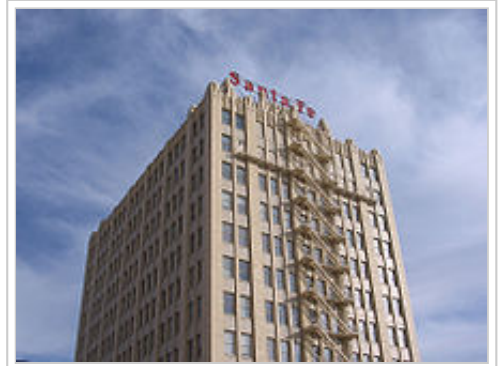
The City of Amarillo's Parks and Recreation Department operates over 50 municipal parks, including a skatepark west of the city. Amarillo's largest parks are Medical Park, Thompson Memorial Park, and Memorial Park, near Amarillo College's Washington Street Campus. From 1978 to 2002, the Junior League of Amarillo and the City of Amarillo's Parks and Recreation Department co-sponsored Funfest, a family entertainment festival, benefiting the city parks and the league's Community Chest Trust Fund. Funfest was

held in Thompson Memorial Park during Memorial Day weekend.^[33] The festival included Amarillo's only 42.2-kilometre (26.2 mi) foot race, the Funfest Marathon.

Climate

Amarillo and the Texas Panhandle's climate is semi-arid (Köppen climate classification *BSk* or *BSh*);^[34] both the city and the region as a whole lie in USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 7.^[35] It is characterized by high diurnal temperature variation, day-to-day variability, a rush of cold air from the north or northwest into a warmer area and occasionally, by blizzards during the winter season and a hot summer with low humidity. The normal annual precipitation is 20.4 inches (518 mm), most of it occurring in the late spring and summer months. The monthly daily average temperature ranges from 37.0 °F (2.8 °C) in January to 78.3 °F (25.7 °C) in July. Sunny weather prevails year-round, with nearly 3300 hours of bright sunshine annually. The National Weather Service in Amarillo forecasts and provides climatic data for the city.

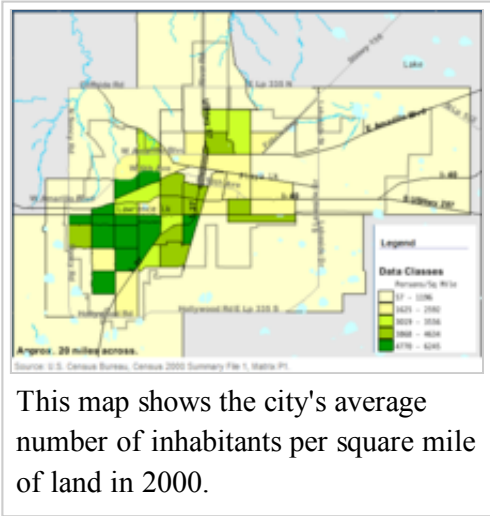
Extreme temperatures range from −16 °F (−27 °C) on February 12, 1899 to 111 °F (44 °C) on June 26, 2011, but lows do not typically lower to 0 °F (−18 °C) in most years, while highs above 100 °F (38 °C) are seen on 4.7 days. There is an average of 5.9 days of lows at or below 10 °F (−12 °C), 8.9 days where the temperature fails to rise above freezing, and 61 days of 90 °F (32 °C)+ highs; unlike in the Rio Grande Valley or eastern portions of Texas, days where the low does not fall below 70 °F (21 °C) are uncommon due to the aridity and elevation. Blizzards are very possible, but snowfall is typically light, averaging nearly 18 inches (46 cm) seasonally and the median figure is near 10 inches (25 cm).^[36] Much of Amarillo's precipitation falls during heavy convective showers and thunderstorms. According to 'Cities Ranked and Rated' (Bert Sperling and Peter Sander), Amarillo averages 48 days per year during which thunder and lightning is reported. This is above the national average. These storms can be severe - Amarillo and the Texas Panhandle are situated in the western portion of "Tornado Alley".^[37] Amarillo is also recorded as the windiest city in the U.S. by the Weather Channel "America's Windiest Cities" (<http://www.weather.com/tv/tvshows/americas-morning-headquarters/10-windiest-large-cities-america-20140408?pageno=10>). weather.com. 2014. Retrieved April 16, 2014.



The Santa Fe Building in the downtown area.

Climate data for Amarillo, Texas (1981–2010)													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °F (°C)	83 (28)	88 (31)	96 (36)	99 (37)	104 (40)	111 (44)	106 (41)	107 (42)	103 (39)	99 (37)	87 (31)	83 (28)	111 (44)
Average high °F (°C)	50.6 (10.3)	54.2 (12.3)	62.5 (16.9)	71.1 (21.7)	79.5 (26.4)	87.7 (30.9)	91.4 (33)	89.4 (31.9)	82.6 (28.1)	71.9 (22.2)	60.0 (15.6)	49.7 (9.8)	71.0 (21.7)
Average low °F (°C)	23.4 (−4.8)	26.4 (−3.1)	33.3 (0.7)	41.6 (5.3)	51.8 (11)	61.0 (16.1)	65.2 (18.4)	64.2 (17.9)	56.4 (13.6)	44.7 (7.1)	32.5 (0.3)	24.0 (−4.4)	43.8 (6.6)
Record low °F (°C)	−11 (−24)	−16 (−27)	−3 (−19)	13 (−11)	26 (−3)	38 (3)	51 (11)	48 (9)	30 (−1)	12 (−11)	0 (−18)	−8 (−22)	−16 (−27)
Average precipitation inches (mm)	.72 (18.3)	.56 (14.2)	1.39 (35.3)	1.40 (35.6)	2.29 (58.2)	3.16 (80.3)	2.84 (72.1)	2.91 (73.9)	1.92 (48.8)	1.66 (42.2)	.80 (20.3)	.71 (18)	20.36 (517.2)
Average snowfall inches (cm)	5.0 (12.7)	3.1 (7.9)	2.9 (7.4)	.6 (1.5)	.2 (0.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	.2 (0.5)	2.4 (6.1)	4.3 (10.9)	18.6 (47.2)
Avg. precipitation days (≥ 0.01 in)	3.9	4.3	6.0	5.6	7.7	8.5	7.2	8.2	6.3	5.3	4.0	4.7	71.7
Avg. snowy days (≥ 0.1 in)	2.6	2.3	1.9	.4	0	0	0	0	0	.1	1.1	2.8	11.2
Mean monthly sunshine hours	223.2	217.5	269.7	300.0	325.5	342.0	353.4	322.4	264.0	266.6	213.0	201.5	3,298.8
Source #1: NOAA (extremes 1892–present), ^[38] The Weather Channel ^[39]													
Source #2: HKO (sun only, 1961–1990) ^[40]													

Demographics



population was of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin (they may be of any race).^[44]

There were 67,699 households out of which 33.9% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 50.6% were married couples living together, 12.8% had a female householder with no husband present, and 32.4% were non-families. Of 67,699 households, 2,981 were unmarried partner households: 2,713 heterosexual, 82 same-sex male, and 186

At the 2010 Census, there were 185,743 people residing in Amarillo, an increase of 9.8% since 2000.^[44]

According to the 2010 Census, 59.7% of the population was White, 6.3% Black or African American, 0.5% American Indian and Alaska Native, 3.1% Asian, 0.1% from some other race (non-Hispanic) and 1.5% of two or more races (non-Hispanic). 28.8% of Amarillo's

Historical population		
Census	Pop.	%±
1890	482	—
1900	1,442	199.2%
1910	9,957	590.5%
1920	15,494	55.6%
1930	43,132	178.4%
1940	51,686	19.8%
1950	74,246	43.6%
1960	137,969	85.8%
1970	127,010	−7.9%
1980	149,230	17.5%
1990	157,571	5.6%
2000	173,627	10.2%
2010	190,695	9.8%
Est. 2014	197,254 ^[41]	3.4%

U.S. Decennial Census^[42]
Texas Almanac: 1850-2000^[43]

same-sex female. 27.7% of all households were made up of individuals and 9.9% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.53 and the average family size was 3.10.

The age distribution of the city was as follows: 27.9% of the population was under the age of 18, 10.2% from 18 to 24, 28.8% from 25 to 44, 20.5% from 45 to 64, and 12.6% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 34 years. For every 100 females there are 92.4 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 88.5 males.

The median income for a household in the city was \$34,940, and the median income for a family was \$42,536. Males had a median income of \$31,321 versus \$22,562 for females. The per capita income for the city was \$18,621. About 11.1% of families and 14.5% of the population were below the poverty line, including 19.6% of those under age 18 and 9.3% of those age 65 or over.

Law and government

Local government

In 1913, Amarillo became the first Texas city and the fifth in United States to use the council-manager form of municipal government, with all governmental powers resting in a legislative body called a council (since 2014; previously commission).^{[45][46]} Amarillo's commission is composed of five elected commissioners, one of whom is the mayor of the city. The mayor and each commissioner serves a two-year term. The role of the commission is to pass ordinances and resolutions, adopt regulations, and appoint city officials, including the city manager. While the mayor serves as a presiding officer of the commission, the city manager is the administrative head of the municipal government, and is responsible for the administration of all departments. The city commission holds its regular meetings on Tuesday of each week.^[47]

2014 Commission members

Mayor	Paul Harpole
Council Place 1	Elisha Demerson
Council Place 2	Brian Eades
Council Place 3	Randy Burkett
Council Place 4	Mark Nair

City administration

City manager	Jarrett Atkinson (Since 2010) ^[48]
Assistant city manager	Bob Cowell (Since 2013) ^[49]

County, state and federal representation

As the seat of Potter County, the city is the location of the county's trial, civil, and criminal courts. The Randall County Amarillo Annex building is located within the city limits and houses its Sheriff's Office and Justice of the Peace Court, Precinct 4.

The Texas Seventh Court of Appeals is located in Amarillo.^[50]

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice operates the Amarillo District Parole Office in the city.^[51] It also operates the Clements Unit in unincorporated Potter County, east of Amarillo.^[52]

The United States Postal Service operates the Amarillo Main Post Office.^[53] Other post offices in the city include Downtown Amarillo,^[54] Jordan,^[55] Lone Star,^[56] North Amarillo,^[57] and San Jacinto.^[58]

In the U.S. House, Amarillo is located in Texas's 13th congressional district, and is represented by Representative Mac Thornberry. In the Texas Legislature, the city is in the 31st District in the Texas Senate, represented by Republican Kel Seliger, a former Amarillo mayor. It is in the 87th District in the Texas House of Representatives, having been represented by Republican David A. Swinford since 1991. Swinford retired in January 2011 and was succeeded by fellow Republican Four Price, who is the current representative. That part of Amarillo within Randall County is represented by Swinford's Republican colleague, John T. Smithee, who has served in the 86th District since 1985.

Grady Hazlewood, a 1930s district attorney in Amarillo, served in the Texas Senate from 1941 to 1971. He authored the first state school loan programs for returning World War II veterans and college students. He is the father of the farm-to-market road program in Texas.^[59]

Economy

Amarillo is considered the regional economic center for the Texas Panhandle^[60] as well as Eastern New Mexico and the Oklahoma Panhandle. The meat packing industry is a major employer in Amarillo; about one-quarter of the United States' beef supply is processed in the area. The city is also the location of headquarters for the Texas Cattle Feeders Association. Petroleum extraction is also a major industry. The helium industry has decreased in significance since the federal government privatized local operations in the late 1990s. Bell Helicopter Textron opened a helicopter assembly plant near the city's international airport in 1999.^[60]

The city's largest employer in 2005 is Tyson Foods, with 3,700 employees. The Amarillo Independent School District is next with 3,659 employees followed by BWXT Pantex, Baptist St. Anthony's Health Care System, City of Amarillo, Northwest Texas Healthcare System, Amarillo College, and United Supermarkets.^[61] Other major employers include Bell Helicopter Textron, Owens-Corning, and ASARCO.

Approximately 14 million acres (57,000 km²) of agricultural land surrounds the city with corn, wheat and cotton as the primary crops. Other crops in the area include sorghum, silage, hay and soybeans.^[62] The Texas Panhandle, particularly in Hereford, Texas, serves as a fast-growing milk producing area as several multi-million dollar state of the art dairies were built in early 2000s.^[63]

The Amarillo Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) is funded by a city sales tax, and it provides aggressive incentive packages to existing and prospective employers. In the mid-to-late 1990s, the AEDC gained notoriety by sending mock checks to businesses across the country, placing full-page advertisements in *The Wall Street Journal*, and paying an annual \$1 million subsidy to American Airlines to retain jet service.^{[64][65]} The AEDC is largely responsible for bringing Bell Helicopter Textron's development of the V-22 Osprey hybrid aircraft and the future site of Marine One assembly in Amarillo.^[66]

Education

According to the 2000 United States Census, 20.5% of all adults over the age of 25 in Amarillo have obtained a bachelor's degree, as compared to a national average of 24.4% of adults over 25, and 79.3% of Amarillo residents over the age of 25 have earned a high school diploma, as compared to the national average of 80.4%.^[67]

The higher education institutions in the city are Amarillo College, a two-year community college with over 10,000 students; Wayland Baptist University, a private university based in Plainview, has a branch campus in Amarillo; Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at Amarillo School of Pharmacy, and Texas Tech University at Amarillo, a branch campus of Texas Tech University that offers selected master's degree programs. West Texas A&M University, a regional university headquartered in nearby Canyon, has a satellite campus in the Chase Tower in downtown Amarillo.



The clock tower at the Amarillo College's Washington Street Campus.

The public primary and secondary education are mostly handled by the Amarillo Independent School District (AISD) and Canyon Independent School District. (CISD) The AISD has approximately 29,000 students in 2004 while CISD has over 8,000 students in 2005.^{[68][69]} The AISD operates 4 high schools, 9 middle schools, 36 elementary schools, a specialty high school, and an alternative school. While, the CISD has 2 high schools, 2 junior high/intermediate schools, and 4 elementary schools in Amarillo. Randall High School is located on the southern edge of Amarillo. Other school districts in the city are River Road, Highland Park, and Bushland Independent School Districts. Nonreligious and Christian denomination private schools in Amarillo include Ascension Academy (<http://www.ascensionacademy.org/>), Holy Cross Catholic Academy, San Jacinto Christian Academy (<http://www.sanjac.org/>), Amarillo Montessori Academy (<http://www.amarillomontessori.com/>), St. Andrew's Episcopal School, St. Joseph's Catholic School and St. Mary's Catholic School.

From 1922 to 1938, the author Laura Vernon Hamner, who wrote a novelized biography of Charles Goodnight, served as the Potter County school superintendent. She was a ranch historian and radio personality. In her later years, she lived in the Herring Hotel, owned by Ernest Thompson, and was often known informally as "Miss Amarillo".^[70]

Culture

Amarillo has a number of natural attractions near the city. The Palo Duro Canyon State Park is the United States' second largest canyon system, after the Grand Canyon and is located south of Amarillo. Palo Duro has a distinct hoodoo that resembles a lighthouse. Another natural landmark near the city, the Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument is located 30 miles (48 km) north of Amarillo. It is once known as the site for prehistoric inhabitants to obtain flint in order to make tools and weapons. About 100 miles (160 km) southeast of Amarillo in Briscoe County is Caprock Canyons State Park and Trailway, the state park is the home of the official Texas State Bison Herd, who were captured and taken care of by cattle rancher Charles Goodnight.^[71]

From 1932 to 1977, the Paramount Theater, originally built for \$250,000, flourished in Amarillo. It had plush red carpet, murals and a pipe organ, 1,433 seats, and was considered the finest theater north of Dallas. The building is now an office and parking garage.^[22]

Local millionaire Stanley Marsh 3 funded many public art projects in the city including the Cadillac Ranch, located west of Amarillo on Interstate 40, a monument of painted Cadillac automobiles that were dug into the ground head first. Marsh participates as well in an ongoing art project called the Dynamite Museum, which consist of thousands of mock traffic signs. These signs, bearing messages such as "Road does not end" or displaying a random picture, are scattered throughout the city of Amarillo.^[72] Besides these works, one can find close to the city the final earthwork of Robert Smithson (and another commission by Marsh), *Amarillo Ramp*.

The city has events and attractions honoring the cowboy and Texas culture. During the third week of September, the Tri-State Fair & Rodeo brings participants mostly from Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas to Amarillo since 1921.^[73] On the Tri-State Exposition grounds, the Amarillo National Center is a special events center for events ranging from national equestrian competitions to motor sports and rodeos. The World Championship Ranch Rodeo sponsored by the Working Ranch Cowboys Association is held every November in the Amarillo Civic Center. Amarillo hosts the annual World Championship Chuckwagon Roundup the first weekend in June. Teams in competition prepare a feast of breaded beef cutlets, mashed potatoes, baked beans, and sourdough biscuits and attempt to duplicate the food served on western cattle trails of the 1860s and 1870s.^[74] The Amarillo Livestock Auction on Bull Road holds a free-to-the-public cattle auction on Tuesdays. Now located on Interstate 40, The Big Texan Steak Ranch is famous by offering visitors a free 72 ounce (2 kg) beef steak if it (and its accompanying dinner) is eaten in under an hour.

Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts, opened in 2006, houses the Amarillo Opera, Amarillo Symphony, and Lone Star Ballet (<http://www.lonestarballet.org/>) concerts. The facility, located just across the Amarillo Civic Center, features a 1,300-seat auditorium. The Globe-News Center was built in hope by city officials and others that it will revitalize the downtown area.^[75] The nonprofit community theater group, Amarillo Little Theatre, has its season run from September to May. The theater group's two facilities, the Mainstage and the Adventure Space, are located west of Amarillo's downtown. The Pioneer Amphitheater, located in nearby Palo Duro Canyon, is the setting for the outdoor musical drama *Texas*, which plays nightly during the summer. The musical depicts a story about the history of Texas Panhandle settlers throughout the years. In 2002, the producers changed its name to *Texas Legacies* after



Entrance to Texas Panhandle War Memorial in Amarillo



Listing of Amarillo-area personnel killed in the Vietnam War



The Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts building is located near the Amarillo Civic Center.

retiring the previous script that was used for 37 years for a more historically-accurate one, but attendance declined over the next four seasons, so it was decided to revert to the original Paul Green script in 2006.^{[76][77]}

The Amarillo Public Library is affiliated with the Harrington Library Consortium. The consortium consist of public, college, and school libraries located in the Texas Panhandle that share resources and cooperate with one another. Other members include the Amarillo's public schools, Amarillo College, Canyon Area Library, Lovett Memorial Library in Pampa, Texas, and Hutchinson County Library in Borger, Texas.^[78] The Amarillo Public Library's main branch is located in downtown and operates 4 neighborhood branches.



A coyote sleeps in the afternoon heat in the Amarillo Zoo.

Wonderland Amusement Park is located in northern Amarillo at Thompson Park, named for Ernest Thompson. The park also houses the Amarillo zoo and offers picnicking.

Amarillo residents are known as Amarilloans. Notable Amarilloans include actress Ann Doran (1911–2000), old-style journalist Bascom N. Timmons, prominent surveyor W. D. Twichell, the Dory Funk wrestling family, former UFC Champions Heath Herring and Evan Tanner, astronaut Rick Husband, professional golfer Ryan Palmer, rockabilly pioneer Buddy Knox, actress Carolyn Jones, actress and dancer Cyd Charisse, actor and poet Harry Northup, State Senator Max Sherman, Republican state chairman Tom Mechler, clergyman W. Winfred Moore, politicians Beau Boulter, Roy Whittenburg and John Marvin Jones, businessman T. Boone Pickens, Jr., singer-songwriter J. D. Souther, gambler Thomas "Amarillo Slim" Preston, and music artist and composer Terry Stafford ("Amarillo by Morning"; "Suspicion"). Tom Blasingame, considered to have been the oldest cowboy in the history of the American West, worked for seventy-three years, primarily, on the JA Ranch south of Amarillo. Pulitzer-prize-winning author Mark E. Neely, Jr. was born in Amarillo on November 10, 1944. In nearby Clarendon and Canyon, Texas, lived the Western artist Harold Dow Bugbee, whose early works were patronized by Ernest Thompson. Physician Steven Berk wrote *Anatomy of a Kidnapping: A Doctor's Story* about his kidnapping from his Amarillo home in 2005 and how the four-hour ordeal changed his perspective on life. Singer Lacey Brown of Amarillo advanced to the top 24 in season 8 on the hit show *American Idol*. She returned to the show again in season 9 and advanced to the top 12 but was eliminated from the program on March 17, 2010.

Museums and art collections

The American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) is an international organization dedicated to the preservation, improvement and record-keeping of the American Quarter Horse breed. The organization is headquartered in Amarillo and has a museum. There is also an American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame exhibited in the museum; among the inductees was J. L. "Dusty" Rhoades of Odessa, who served as AQHA president in 1966 and 1974. In addition, the AQHA and Center City of Amarillo co-sponsors the project, "Hoof Prints of the American Quarter Horse" which consist of horse statues located in front of several Amarillo businesses, such as the downtown Amarillo National building, Nationwide Insurance, and Edward Jones. An area business would purchase a horse statue and a local artist paints on it.^[79]

Two of the Amarillo area's higher education institutions have at least one museum in their campuses. The Amarillo Art Center [1] (<http://www.amarilloart.org/>), opened in 1972, is a building complex with the Amarillo Museum of Art (AMoA)^[80] and concert hall located on the Washington Street Campus of Amarillo College. In addition, Amarillo College's Washington Street Campus is the home to the previously mentioned AMoA^[80] and is regarded as the largest natural history museum belonging to any two-year college in the United States.^[81] Located on the campus of West Texas A&M University, the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum claims to be the largest historical museum in Texas.



Medical Center Park adjacent to Amarillo Botanical Gardens

Don Harrington Discovery Center, located in the city's hospital district, is an interactive science center and space theater with over 60 hands-on exhibits.^[82] Outside of the building is a steel structure called the Helium Monument which has time capsules and designates Amarillo the "Helium Capital of the World."^[6] Near the proximity of the Discovery Center, the Amarillo Botanical Gardens has gardens, indoor exhibits, and a library for visitation throughout the year.

The Texas Pharmacy Museum

(<http://www.ttuhsc.edu/sop/museum/>) claims to be the only Texas museum specialized in the research, collection, preservation, and exhibition of the history of pharmacy, is also located in the city's

hospital district.^[83]

Other notable museums in the area are the Kwahadi Kiva Indian Museum and the English Field Air & Space Museum. The Kwahadi Kiva Indian Museum features a collection of Native American artifacts and provides dance performances. Sadly, the English Field Air & Space Museum, which had been operated by the Texas Aviation Historical Society featuring aircraft and space exhibits, in 2007 closed its doors and lost many of its aircraft. The museum is now rebuilding its aircraft collection as Texas Air & Space Museum and is located on American Drive on the south side of the airport.

Local media

The major local newspaper is the *Amarillo Globe-News*, owned by Morris Communications, was a combination of three newspapers: *Amarillo Daily News*, *Amarillo Globe*, and *Amarillo Times*. Other publications include a local monthly magazine dealing with city and regional issues in the Amarillo area called, *Accent West*. The American Quarter Horse Association publishes two monthly publications, *The American Quarter Horse Journal* and *The American Quarter Horse Racing Journal*, HISPANIC Newspaper El Mensajero owned by Dr. Ramon Godoy started printing in 1989.

Amarillo's major network television affiliates are KACV-TV 2 (PBS), KAMR 4 (NBC), KVII 7 (ABC), KFDA 10 (CBS), KCIT 14 (Fox), and KCPN 33 (MyNet). In the 2005–2006 television season, Amarillo is the 131st largest television market in the United States designated by Nielsen Media Research.^[84]

Amarillo is the 195th largest United States radio market in autumn 2005 designated by the radio audience research company, Arbitron. According to Arbitron the top 5 rated commercial radio stations in Fall 2012/Spring 2013 are:

1. KXGL-FM -100.9 FM- Classic Hits Station
2. KGNC-FM -97.9 FM- Country Music Station
3. KGNC -710 AM- News, Talk and Sports Station
4. KXSS-FM -96.9 FM- Hit Music Station
5. KQIZ-FM -93.1 FM- Top 40 Station

The regional public radio network, High Plains Public Radio, operates KJJP-FM 105.7. Other notable radio stations around the area include the college stations KACV-FM 89.9 (Amarillo College) KZRK-FM (107.9), and KWTS-FM 91.1 (West Texas A&M University) in nearby Canyon.

Outside media attention

The city gained national media attention in 1998 when television talk show host Oprah Winfrey was unsuccessfully sued by local cattlemen for comments made on her show connecting American beef to mad cow disease, costing them and their industry millions of dollars.^[85] In order to attend the trial in Amarillo, she temporarily relocated her show to the Amarillo Little Theatre for nearly a year. During the trial, Winfrey hired Dallas-based jury consultant Phil McGraw to aid her attorneys on selecting and analyzing the members of the jury.^[86] McGraw would later become a regular guest on Winfrey's television show and subsequently started his own talk show, *Dr. Phil*, in 2002. Another notable trial in Amarillo includes the Fort Worth-area murder case of T. Cullen Davis, which involved one of the richest men in the United States, his former wife, and her daughter and boyfriend. The trial was moved from Fort Worth to Amarillo in 1977 on a change of venue.^[87] The murder of Brian Deneke also brought attention from outside of the Texas Panhandle mainly due to the crime revolved around a conflict between two different cultures. The small town of Tulia, Texas, approximately 47 miles (76 km) south from Amarillo, was the scene of a controversial drug sting in 1999. Local civil rights attorney Jeff Blackburn took up the case of the Tulia defendants, which became a *cause célèbre* and resulted in the exoneration and pardon of the defendants.^[88] A federal lawsuit directed at the officials responsible for the sting operation was held in Amarillo. In the final settlement, the City of Amarillo agreed to pay \$5 million in damages to the former Tulia defendants; disband the Panhandle Regional Narcotics Task Force that it set up to oversee the sting operation; and require early retirement for two Amarillo Police Department officers who were responsible for supervising the sting's sole undercover agent.^{[89][90]}

Amarillo has been mentioned in popular music such "Amarillo by Morning" by Paul Fraser and Terry Stafford, Nat King Cole's "(Get Your Kicks) on Route 66", Bob Dylan's "Brownsville Girl" (Amarillo was referred to as the "land of the living dead"), Rob Zombie's "Two Lane Blacktop", Amarillo Sky by Jason Aldean, and the song "Is This the Way to Amarillo" written by Neil Sedaka and Howard Greenfield, recorded famously by Yorkshireman Tony Christie and Sedaka, and revived in the UK by comedian Peter Kay through performances in the comedy series *Peter Kay's Phoenix Nights* and in a charity performance for Comic Relief. Christie's version, which only managed to reach 18 when originally released in 1971, made it to the number 1 spot in the UK Singles Chart in 2005 for 7 weeks.^{[91][92]} In 2010, Damon Albarn wrote the song "Amarillo" whilst on tour in America with the Gorillaz, although it is not known to what extent the song is reference to the city.



Amarillo National Bank
Plaza One building in
downtown Amarillo

The Amarillo Film Commission is a division of the Amarillo Convention and Visitor Council that was created to provide film crews with locations and other assistance when filming in Amarillo.^[93] Amarillo was the setting for many motion pictures, including *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, *Switchback* 1997, and *The Plutonium Circus*, the 1995 South by Southwest Film Festival winner for best documentary feature.

Sports

The Lone Star Football League team Amarillo Venom and the NAHL Jr. A hockey team, the Amarillo Bulls both play in the Amarillo Civic Center. Amarillo's minor league baseball team, Amarillo Sox of the American Association, plays its home games in the Potter County Memorial Stadium. Before the founding of the Dillas, the city was the home of the AA Amarillo Gold Sox.^[94] Amarillo had a minor league indoor soccer team called the Amarillo Challengers that competed in the SISL and later the USISL.^[95]

West Texas A&M University features a full slate of NCAA Division II teams; however, Amarillo College is one of the few community colleges in Texas without an athletic program. From 1968 to 1996, Amarillo hosted the annual National Women's Invitational Tournament (NWIT), a post season women's college basketball tournament.^[96] During high school football season, the Amarillo Independent School District schools' home games are in Dick Bivins Stadium which had a \$5.7 million renovation in 2005.^[97] Randall High School (part of the adjacent Canyon Independent School District) plays its home games in Kimbrough Memorial Stadium in Canyon. As well as the yearly Clinton Invitational horseshoe tournament. River Road, Highland Park, and Bushland High Schools, also play football, as well as other sports.

Amarillo is home to the Amarillo Gun Club, which features a variety of clay target sports including trap, skeet and 5-Stand.

Another part of Amarillo's sporting history was its roots in professional wrestling. Amarillo residents Dory Funk, Stanley Blackburn and Doc Sarpolis promoted the territory for several decades. Funk's sons, Dory Funk, Jr., and Terry Funk were both National Wrestling Alliance World Heavyweight Champions and represented Amarillo.

Infrastructure

Air transportation

Rick Husband Amarillo International Airport is a public airport located 10 miles (16 km) east of the central business district of Amarillo, north of Interstate 40. A portion of the former Amarillo Air Force Base was converted to civilian use and became part of the airport.^[98] The airport was named after NASA astronaut Rick Husband, an Amarillo native and commander of the final flight of Space Shuttle Columbia, STS-107, which disintegrated on re-entry, killing Husband and his crewmates. The airport is served by several major air carriers with non-stop service to Dallas, Houston, Denver, and Las Vegas.



The American Quarter Horse Association and Center City of Amarillo sponsors an ongoing public art project that consist of decorated horse statues located in front of several Amarillo businesses.

Tradewind Airport is a public-use general aviation airport located in Randall County, 3 nautical miles (3.5 mi; 5.6 km) south of Amarillo's central business district. The airport covers 595 acres (241 ha) and has two asphalt-paved runways and one helipad.^[99]

Buffalo Airport is a public-use general aviation airport located in Randall County, 9 nautical miles (10 mi; 17 km) south of Amarillo's central business district. The airport covers 40 acres (16 ha) and has two grass runways.^[100]

Ground transportation

Local transit services in the city have been available since 1925 and have been provided through the City of Amarillo's Amarillo City Transit (ACT) department since 1966; before that time the system was privately owned. ACT operates bus services that include fixed route transit and demand response paratransit which are designed for people with disabilities. The ACT transports approximately 350,000 passengers per year on the fixed route and 30,000 paratransit passengers, but it is a declining ridership. ACT has no plans to scale back any of their transit routes or services.^[61]

Amarillo has no passenger rail service but remains an important part of the rail freight system. The BNSF Railway complex in Amarillo continues to serve a heavy daily traffic load, approximately 100-110 trains per day.^[101] The Union Pacific Railroad also sends substantial shipments to or through Amarillo. In addition to intermodal and general goods, a big portion of rail shipments involve grains and coal. There have been various proposals over the years to add passenger service. One, the *Caprock Chief*, would have seen daily service as part of a Fort Worth, Texas—Denver, Colorado service, but it failed to gain traction.



Several streets around Amarillo's downtown area are still paved in bricks.

The streets in Amarillo's downtown area conform to a grid pattern. The city's original street layout was set up by William H. Bush, beginning at the west end of the town moving to the east. Bush named the north to south streets for past United States presidents, in chronological order except for John Quincy Adams because the surname was taken with the second president, John Adams.^[102] (The last president so honored was Grover Cleveland; though the city has expanded eastward the pattern was not continued.) While the streets running north–south honor past presidents and are designated 'streets', east–west streets are numbered and are designated 'avenues'. North of the Fort Worth & Denver (now Burlington Northern-Santa Fe) railyard, the numbers are "NW" (northwest) west of Polk Street, and "NE" (northeast) east of Polk. South of the railyard (including the downtown-city center area), numbers are

officially "SW" (southwest) west of Polk, and "SE" (southeast) east of Polk. Colloquially, though, most tend to dub the SW/SE avenues as W (west)/E (east), respectively. One example of the numbering difference regards the former U.S. Highway 66 routing west of downtown and into the San Jacinto neighborhood. Most call it 'West Sixth Street' when it's actually SW Sixth Avenue.

In 1910, the Amarillo voters approved to pay for street paving and the materials used to pave the streets were bricks.^[103] As of 2003, the city still has 16.2 miles (26.1 km) of brick streets in some parts of the downtown area. The city spent \$200,000 in 2002 to restore one block of brick street on Ninth Avenue between Polk and Tyler streets.^[104]

Less than one mile (~1.6 km) of Interstate 27 highway is located in Potter County. The highway terminates at the city's main west-east highway, Interstate 40, just north of the Potter-Randall County line. The roadway continues northward into downtown Amarillo via U.S. 60, 87, and 287, via a series of four one-way streets including Buchanan, Pierce, Fillmore and Taylor. North of downtown the highway becomes US 87 & 287 and continues northward to Dumas, Texas.^[60]

Interstate 40, the city's major east–west thoroughfare was completed entirely through Amarillo in November 1968 across the center of the city. Previously, U.S. Highway 66 was the major east–west highway through the city, generally following Amarillo Blvd. to the north of the downtown area and then curving southwest to leave the city near the Veterans Hospital. A city route (which was an original alignment of US 66 through central and west Amarillo) followed Fillmore south into the downtown area and turned on West 6th through the San Jacinto Heights district which is now home to many antique shops, restaurants and other businesses, passing the Amarillo Country Club and veering onto West 9th Street and Bushland Blvd. before tying into the through route at a traffic circle near the Veterans Hospital. Loop 335 circles around Amarillo in all four directions and consists of four-lane roadway on its northeast and southwest quadrants and two-lane paving to the southeast and northwest.

Amarillo is also mentioned in the song "Route 66".

Medical centers and hospitals

Amarillo is home to medical facilities including Baptist St. Anthony's and Northwest Texas Hospitals, the Don & Sybil Harrington Cancer Center, Bivins Memorial Nursing Home, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Texas Tech School of Pharmacy, and Texas Panhandle Mental Health and Mental Retardation. All are located in the Harrington Regional Medical Center, the first specifically designated city hospital district in Texas.^[105]



The Harrington Regional Medical Center has two of the city's major hospitals.

Baptist St. Anthony's, known locally as BSA, had some of its services listed on the *U.S. News & World Report*'s "Top 50 Hospitals" from 2002 to 2005.^[106] BSA was a result of a merger between the Texas Panhandle's first hospital, St Anthony's, with High Plains Baptist Hospital in 1996.^[107] The BSA Hospice & Life Enrichment Center provides important services to the Amarillo area. The BSA facility, opened in 1985, was the first free-standing hospice west of the Mississippi River that was built and opened without debt.^[108]

Northwest Texas Hospital is home to the area's only Level III designated trauma center.

The Thomas E. Creek Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center is located east of Harrington Regional Medical Center. The facility opened in 1940 and was renamed in 2005, honoring the 18-year-old Amarillo Marine who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.^[109] Construction began in 2006 for a new Texas State Veterans Home in northwest Amarillo. The United States government, through the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, provided the funding to build the facility, while the Texas government will run it after construction is completed.^[110] The home is scheduled to open in 2007.

Utilities

Drinking water is provided by the City of Amarillo and its Utilities Division. Amarillo's water supply used to come from both from Lake Meredith and the Ogallala Aquifer. Due to the lake's low water level, water is now only supplied by the aquifer. Lake Meredith is located northeast of Amarillo and in 2005 it contained at least 114 billion US gallons (430,000,000 m³) of water. By 2011, lake levels had dropped so much due to the Texas drought, the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority voted to stop using it entirely.^[111] Generally, the city's daily water production averages between 40–50 million US gallons (150,000–190,000 m³).^[112]



Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

Collection and disposal of the city's trash and garbage are the responsibilities of the City of Amarillo's Solid Waste Collection and Solid Waste Disposal Departments. Amarillo's non-hazardous solid waste is collected and disposed of through burial in the city's landfill. The City of Amarillo also operates recycling collection centers, one located near the downtown area and 4 at fire stations in the city.^[113] Other utilities are primarily provided by private organizations. Natural gas is distributed by Atmos Energy. Electric power service is distributed by Xcel Energy, which bought out the Amarillo-based Southwestern Public Service (SPS) in 2006. Wired telephone service is primarily provided by AT&T. Cable television is provided by Suddenlink Communications.

See also

- List of museums in the Texas Panhandle
- List of notable people from Amarillo, Texas

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Further reading

- Carlson, Paul H. (2006). *Amarillo: The Story of a Western Town*. Texas Tech University Press. ISBN 978-0-89672-587-4. An illustrated history of the Queen City of the Texas Panhandle.

External links

- City of Amarillo (<http://www.amarillo.gov/>)
- Visit Amarillo - A Local & Travelers Guide To Amarillo (<http://www.visitamarillo.net/>)
- Amarillo Chamber of Commerce (<http://www.amarillo-chamber.org/>)



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- Amarillo Convention and Visitor Council (<http://www.visitamarillotx.com/>)
- Amarillo Economic Development Corp. (<http://www.amarilloedc.com/>)
- Amarillo Area Parks (http://www.wildtexas.com/parks/results.php?nearby_cities=Amarillo)
- Amarillo Public Library Photoarchive Collection (<http://images.amarillolibrary.org/>) – Displays historical pictures of Amarillo and the Texas Panhandle
- Amarillo traffic webcams (<http://amaitz.dot.state.tx.us/its-cameras/?Speed=High>)



Wikivoyage has a travel guide for ***Amarillo***.

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