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Top ten local stories of 2012

1 After watching the impressive structure come together for months, Brownfield residents got their first peek inside the state of the art Field House and indoor practice facility at Cub Stadium during a holiday open house in December.

The highly-visible project was one of several completed by Brownfield ISD this year, all part of a \$5.4 million district-wide construction plan paid for in part by a \$4 million bond approved by voters in 2010.

BISD went to work immediately on the procedure of getting the bonds, obtaining bids for the various projects planned and then preparing the sites for construction.

The project was financed and executed without raising anyone's taxes.

First on the list of building projects was a \$370,000 multi-purpose building constructed at Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Center on Seagraves Hwy.

The open-enrollment pre-school in a converted building which began in 2009 was retrofitted with the multi-purpose room at the former location of outdoor basketball courts.

The new room is carpeted and can serve as a gymnasium or meeting room, previously lacking on the campus.

Second on the list was completion of the resurfacing project at the high school tennis courts. The southernmost courts were refurbished in 2010 and \$400,000 was included in the proposal to finish the others.

The Cubs baseball field received a \$570,000 makeover, including a new press box, concession stand, rest rooms and bleachers, all ADA compliant.

The lion's share of the funds went to replace the aging field house at Cub Stadium and to construct a new indoor practice facility south of the football field.

The proposal included \$1.8 million to demolish the former, long-standing field house and replace it with the new modern facility capable of housing both boys and girls athletic teams.

A \$2.1 million indoor workout facility was constructed on the south side.

The new metal building is heated, but not cooled and includes motorized batting cages, as well as an artificial turf practice field.



2 In November, Jerry Jones, superintendent of Brownfield schools, announced his intent to retire from his role at helm of the local school district.

Jones, who has served as superintendent since 2004, will remain at the helm of the district through the end of the current school year.

"I have enjoyed working with the board over the last nine years as superintendent," he told the *Brownfield News* just prior to the announcement. "It's been a real privilege working with everyone in the school system and the community for the last 27 years."

Prior to Jones' nine year stint as superintendent, he was principal at Brownfield High School from 1998 until 2004.

He entered administration at Brownfield Middle School in February, 1993.

He was a teacher at BMS before that.

Jones, a lifetime resident, is a 1967 graduate of Brownfield High School.

His wife, Karen, retired from BISD in May of this year.

The couple have two grown children, Craig and Lori, both BHS grads.

Jones has overseen numerous changes at BISD, including the expansion of Oak Grove Elementary following the fire that destroyed Intermediate School, the opening of Bright Beginnings pre-school campus and, most recently, the completion of a \$5.4 million bond project to revamp numerous district locations led by the field house at Cub Stadium.

Following his announcement, the BISD school board enlisted the Texas Association of School Boards for assistance with their new-superintendent search. Service fees will cost the district \$7,000.

TASB representative Kathee Lupton recommended the board follow her agency's standard superintendent-search-and-hire process, which she said had successfully filled long-term positions at dozens of other Texas school districts.

The board also opened a subsequent meeting up to public comment before setting criteria for the right candidate.

A Feb. 13 application deadline was set and the interview process will begin following that date.

The board will then select their lone finalist, then after a 21-day waiting period vote to formally hire him or her.



Jerry Jones

3 Brownfield's new director of economic development came to town with plenty of ideas for revamping local industry, and wasted no time getting started on them.

David Partlow officially came to work in January, and quickly got busy meeting with the former director of economic development and Brownfield Industrial Development Corporation's board of directors to make sure everyone was working in unison. He reviewed and updated BIDCorp.'s annual plan of work, prioritizing its goal list and developing specific ways to meet them. He then inventoried the community's existing available buildings and land plots to be able to provide that information to prospective business owners.

Partlow is just as strongly focused, though - if not more so - on expanding existing businesses as he is on attracting new ones to town. Through his newly-formed Business Retention Committee, he seeks input from local business owners about how they feel they could create more jobs, noting that 80 percent of new positions are created from already-established companies.

One of Partlow's other main goals is to revitalize BIDCorp.'s website, which he described as "the number-one marketing tool" for an organization.

And after having spent the previous 14 years in the city, he is quickly adjusting to the friendly faces and slower pace of life in rural West Texas. Even stopping at a convenience store for coffee brings a light to his day with all the smiles, waves and pleasant attitudes he encounters, he quickly noticed.

"It amazes me the customer service in this town," he said. "It's so nice when people look you in the eye and they're not afraid to say 'Howdy.' That personal touch is so great. It makes you feel like things are still OK in America."

BIDCorp.'s board of directors selected Partlow after holding a series of closed-session meetings in which they reviewed the 21 total resumes they received for the position. They furthered the application process by interviewing their two top candidates. Partlow replaces former director Jackie Cargill, who retired Dec. 31, 2011.



David Partlow

5 For the first time in school history, the Brownfield Cubs competed in the UIL Class 2A ranks in 2012, after the biennial realignment conference held in Lubbock last spring.

Bryan Welps, Cubs Head Coach and Athletic Director, told the *Brownfield News* immediately following the realignment conference in Lubbock that Brownfield "could not have come out of the process any better than we did."

Brownfield, as anticipated, moved from 3A to 2A and competed this year in District 2-2A with opponents Idalou, Denver City, Kermit, Slaton and Lamesa for football.

The basketball district is slightly different, as Brownfield will be paired in District 4-2A with Coahoma, Colorado City, Denver City, Lamesa and Stanton.

Baseball and Softball will include the same district opponents as the basketball schedule.

For the Cubs, the change in ranks paid off, as the Brownfield gridiron squad made its first playoff appearance in several years, finishing the district schedule with only one loss.

The Cubs traveled to Lub-

bock Cooper's Pirate Stadium to take on the Bushland Falcons in round one of the 2012 playoffs.

Brownfield got off to a quick start, jumping out to a two-touchdown lead in the opening minutes of the game, but the more experienced Falcons came back for the win, ending the Cubs' season.

However, Brownfield led the district with 13 players named to the All District squads, as well as Coach of the Year honors to Welps.

Elsewhere in Terry County, when six-man football stadiums lit up this fall, the UIL realignment placed Wellman-Union and Meadow not only in separate districts, but in different divisions.

The Meadow Broncos competed in District 3-1A Six-Man for football with Anton, Lubbock Harmony, Ropes and Whiteface.

On the basketball court, the Broncos are in District 5-1A, Division 2, competing against Lorenzo, Lubbock Harmony, New Home, Petersburg, Ropes, Southland and Wilson.

The Wellman-Union Wildcats are a part of District 5-1A, Division 2 for football with Sands, Loop and Dawson.

In hoops action, the 'Cats are in District 6-1A with Sands, Borden County, Klondike, Grady, Loop, O'Donnell and Dawson.



4 Foundations are underway a block east of Lubbock Hwy between Broadway and Main Streets, kicking off the long-awaited construction of Brownfield's first new police department in forty years.

The Brownfield Public Safety Building will house the city's police force in a 7,200 square foot state-of-the-art facility, as well as a 2,500 square foot lecture hall.

The \$2.3 million project broke ground in September, but recently took an unexpected turn when the remnants of a long-gone school house were unearthed beneath the site.

Pharr & Company, already busy in Brownfield with the school district's bond projects, submitted the best of three sealed bids to obtain the contract.

The approved bid came in at \$2,330,000.

The council voted in December to increase the amount by not more than \$100,000 to handle cleanup of the underground foundation.

The construction of the building is estimated to take about a year.

The entire project, including plans to add a new fire station on the building's west side, will be paid for using the city's reserves.

No new taxes or bonds will be passed to fund the venture.

Last year's budget included \$750,000 for the planning and engineering phase.

The current budget includes \$900,000 for construction.

The remaining portion of construction costs will be included in the next budget, thereby spreading the amount over three consecutive budget cycles.

The new police department will be located west of the Alamo between Main and Broadway streets on the former location of Brownfield Intermediate School.

Currently, the police station is located in the former post office at the corner of Hill and 5th streets.

That building -- an historical landmark -- has been renovated several times, but the department has outgrown it.

The new layout includes numerous offices for the police chief and officers, a dispatch room large enough for four employees, a briefing room, interrogation room, evidence room, fingerprint room and property vault.

Other amenities include a three-bay impound garage, locker rooms for both male and female officers equipped with showers, break room and records room.

The police headquarters will face south with frontage on Broadway, with ample parking for visitors included in the plans.

The lecture hall will incorporate tiered seating and is designed to accommodate 60 people.

The layout calls for five rows of chairs each row stair stepped down to where a lecturer can stand in view of everyone. The room will be fitted with audio-visual equipment for presentations.

The hall will be fully handicapped accessible and will have its own entrance on the north side of the building.

City administrators plan to allow the public to use the training facility for meetings and lectures for a fee.

The council will let reserves replenish for a few years before undertaking the addition of the fire department.

Total cost of the project in its entirety, including the police and fire departments, training hall, furnishings and landscaping is roughly \$4.5 million.



Sat 12/29	Sun 12/30	Mon 12/31	Tue 1/1	Wed 1/2



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