

Strategic Development

Advancing Next Level Strategy

Efforts to implement the recommendations in the Next Level Strategy for Economic and Community Development began in earnest in 2011, the first of the five-year plan.

The Strategy included a Competitive Realities report that compared Greater Waco to three peer cities: Albuquerque; Eugene, Ore.; and Greenville, S.C.

A benchmark report allows the Chamber to track economic and community progress. The Chamber will update the report quarterly to track our success in 2011-2015.

A Steering Committee comprised of local business and community leaders oversaw the development of Next Level Strategy and continues to meet. They have begun a process for reviewing new initiatives identified in the Strategy including advancement of sports events and the arts.

The Chamber integrated Strategy Action Plans for 2011 into the day-to-day activities of each department. Monthly reports to the Board of Directors were adapted to reflect progress under the Strategy Goals of Grow Greater Waco, Develop Greater Waco's Workforce, Reinforce Positive Perceptions, Improve Strategic Community Areas, and Support a Culture of Implementation.

Entrepreneurship

Through a collaborative effort, the Chamber hosted a Texas Small Business Forum in August. The forum was sponsored by the Office of the Governor Economic Development & Tourism – Small Business Development. The regional conference attracted more than 100

individuals representing businesses and agencies from throughout Central Texas. The event brought together several local agencies including Heart of Texas Economic Development District, Texas Workforce Solutions, Cen-Tex African American Chamber of Commerce, CenTex Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, McLennan Community College, Small Business Development Center at MCC and Texas State Technical College Waco.

Urban Development

In May 2011, Fort Worth-based architecture and planning firm Gideon Toal (now Bennett Benner Pettit)

presented the Near Northside Master Plan for redeveloping the Colcord Avenue area from the Brazos River to 19th Street.

The Chamber was a partner with Mission Waco, the City of Waco and others in bringing this award-winning firm to the community. The Chamber also assisted with technical and community support during the process.

The Near Northside Plan is consistent with the Greater Downtown Master Plan Imagine Waco and advances the next step of small neighborhood plan development. The Chamber anticipates working with



..... PROPOSED BAYLOR STADIUM



Conceptual rendering by Populous

Baylor University has released an architectural rendering of an on-campus riverfront football stadium that would connect both sides of the river. The preferred location for the proposed stadium is adjacent to Interstate 35 where more than 100,000 vehicles travel each day providing a unique opportunity for exposure for Baylor and Waco.

other neighborhoods in the Greater Downtown study area to develop detailed plans for future growth and investment.

The Chamber convened representatives of performing and visual arts organizations and businesses in Greater Waco to establish an arts alliance, which oversaw the development of two reports by college interns on key issues for growing the arts community.

The Waco Arts Alliance Marketing Survey evaluated the local arts events organizations and made recommendations for marketing initiatives that could expand their markets and better coordinate programming between the entities.

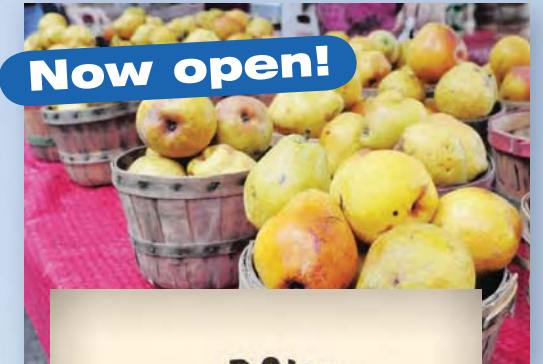
The Performing and Visual Arts

Center Report evaluated the facility needs of the local arts organizations and reviewed several recently built performing arts centers to determine costs, usage and size.

Downtown Farmer's Market

The new Waco Downtown Farmer's Market opened to a great crowd in November. Located along the Brazos River off University Parks Drive just west of Interstate 35, the tree-shaded park hosted more than a dozen vendors and approximately 2,000 shoppers.

The Downtown Farmer's Market is a key development for the downtown area as it will bring people to the central business district on weekends. It has been championed by the Chamber and identified in the Imagine Waco plan as an opportunity to create excitement in downtown.



Sports & Special Events

Starburst Junior Golf Classic

The 13th annual Starburst Junior Golf Classic attracted more than 1000 junior golfers to one of the premier junior golf tournaments in the country.

TriWaco

In just three short years, this triathlon has grown to 975 triathletes from around the country. Indian Spring Park, Brazos River and Cameron Park make it one of the most attractive and fan-friendly venues in Texas.

Sports Luncheon Series

The three sports luncheons presented by the First National Bank Central Texas continue to attract 1,200 area fans each. The luncheons provide a unique opportunity for fans and Chamber members to generate



Photo by Mark Randolph/City of Waco

TriWaco attracts hundreds of triathletes from around Texas and beyond to compete in Olympic and sprint distance events. The beautiful Brazos River and the scenic trails of Cameron Park provide the ideal location for this event each summer.

enthusiasm and community spirit for the upcoming football, basketball and baseball/softball seasons.

Allen Samuels Chamber Golf Classic

The tournament was sold out for the third consecutive year and is considered by many to be the premier golf scramble tournaments in Greater Waco.