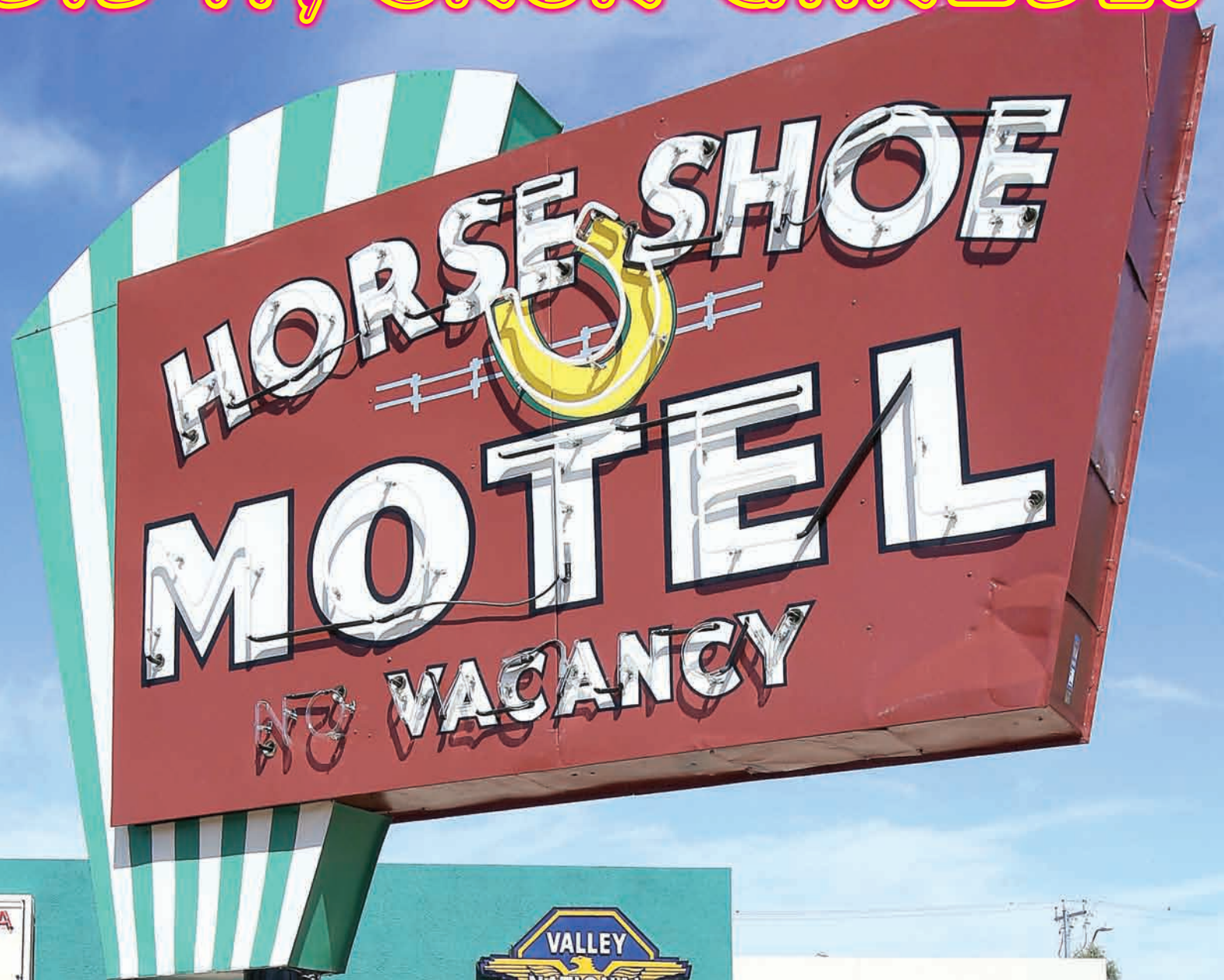


WE DID IT, CASA GRANDE!



GRAND OPENING: Saturday, April 13, 2019

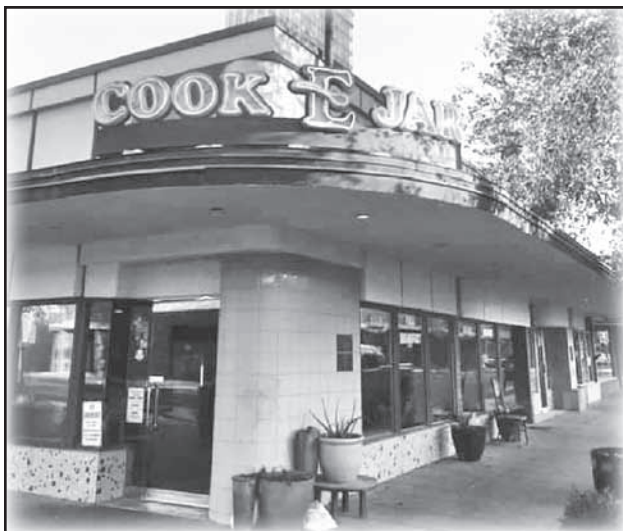
The Significance Of Highway 84

The popularity of Route 66 is well known. Our area of the state had Highway 84, often referred to locally as the Old Tucson Highway. Although less famous than Route 66, it arguably was more important. This all-weather southern route carried many more vehicles to California than did the "Mother Road", as a short cut for through traffic between San Diego and Tucson traveling U.S. Highway 80.

Presently, it's a short connecting road between Casa Grande and Interstate 8. The road was first designated as a state highway in 1927 from Tucson to Picacho. In 1928 it came through Casa Grande and on to Gila Bend by 1930.


Highway 84 originally came through Casa Grande on Main Street and what is now known as Jimmie Kerr Boulevard. In 1952, Second Street was designated as Highway 84 through town, rather than Main Street. This portion was later decommissioned in 1997. Today, the unsigned route travels between Arizona 87 and Interstate 10.

To commemorate Highway 84, on December 15, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) had a Window to the Past celebration to




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State Route 84 signage
(prior to 1942).



State Route 84 signage
(after 1942).

Until 1942, the state route marker signs contained a Native American swastika, but they were removed after the US entry into World War II against Nazi Germany which had a reversed swastika as its emblem.

reveal their latest art project in the downtown. The history of Top and Bottom Street, the history of the original State Route 84 sign, as well as the State Route 84 signage after 1942, appears on the Casa Grande Dispatch window at the far northern end of Top and Bottom Street.

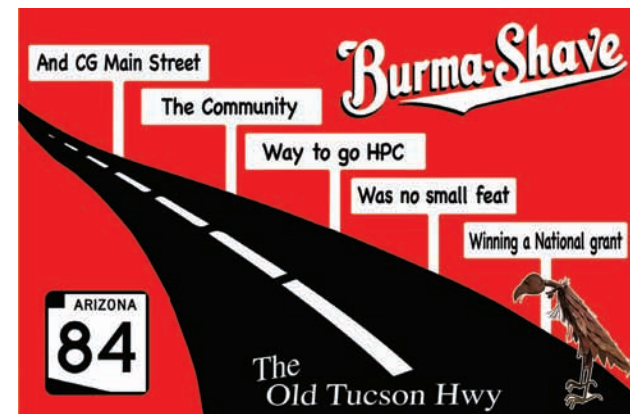
On April 3, 2018 another commemoration was held to reveal Main Street's latest art project in the downtown. The Highway 84 History Trail Mural on the south wall of the Western Trading Post building captures trading posts, lodging, historic buildings and other historic points of interest on Highway 84, downtown Casa Grande and the surrounding area.

An authentic Highway 84 state route sign on the History Trail Mural directs you to the Casa Grande Neon Sign Park, where we carry through with a Highway 84 theme. Over 60% of the signs in the park once shined brightly on the famed Highway 84. Over 60% of the signs are mid-century creations of the 1940s and 1950s. All but one of the restored signs is from Casa Grande. The HPC selected a Dairy Queen "Lips" from Route 66 in Holbrook, Arizona to join our sweet downtown Dairy Queen cones.

**CASA GRANDE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION COMMISSION**



**Preserving Casa Grande's
Sign History & Neon Sign Park Partner**



Burma-Shave Signs

Burma-Shave was an American brand of brushless shaving cream, famous for its advertising gimmick of posting humorous rhyming poems on small sequential highway roadside signs in the 1925 to 1964 era. They reached their peak in the early 1950s, when 7,000 sets were on display in 45 states. The signs delighted motorists with their wry, winsome way of peddling Burma-Shave in rhymed couplets. They appeared in clusters of six, spaced 100 feet apart on straight stretches of road in rural America. In 1963 the company was sold and the signs were removed shortly thereafter.

Over the years there's been periodic resurgence of these bygone signs that have a unique place in the minds and hearts of many older Americans.

We have expressed jingles along the entryway to our Neon Sign Park as you stroll down the imaginary old Tucson highway (Hwy. 84). The signs were a vision of the City Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), jingles crafted primarily by Cindy Patterson, signs donated by The Sign Shop and check out our new downtown mascot "Buzz" along the side of the road.

**Margery, Margery,
puddin' & pie
Saved Neon Signs and
again they shine!
Kudos to our friend,
Marge Jantz!
- The Pattersons**

Casa Grande Neon Sign Park Timeline:

2004, AUGUST



Horse Shoe Motel demolished; City/Main Street salvaged first sign.

2006, DECEMBER



Goddard Shoe Store; Main Street salvaged second sign from property owner, Irwin Krugel.

2013, MAY 13



Sunset Court; Historic Preservation Commission salvaged third sign from property owner, Tuffy Randolph.

2014, OCTOBER



Tools; Historic Preservation Commission salvaged fourth sign from property owner, Harbor Freight.

2016, FEBRUARY



Donovan M. Kramer Sr. Family gave a "yes" nod to providing the land for a potential neon sign park.

2016, APRIL 5



First participation in Arizona Gives Day to fund raise for restoration of the Sunset Court sign.

Continued on page 5



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Congratulations
to everyone who saw the
light and made the
Neon Sign Park a reality



City of Casa Grande

What's magical about the 13th

With a vision of a Casa Grande Neon Sign Park, for preserving and sharing Casa Grande's sign history with the community, there has been a common thread tied to the 13th. There have been six of them.

- May 13, 2013: the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) salvaged the Sunset Court sign from property owner Tuffy Randolph.
- June 13, 2017: Cook & Co. took the Sunset Court sign for restoration in Tucson.



- October 13, 2017: Sunset Court Lighting Ceremony at Western Trading Post.
- June 13, 2018: Horse Shoe Motel and Arizona Edison signs left for restoration in Tucson at Cook & Co.
- February 13, 2019: First three signs were installed in the Neon Sign Park by Cook & Co.
- April 13, 2019: Grand Opening of Casa Grande's Neon Sign Park.



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The Story of Buzz

In 2004, the Arizona Main Street program hired an advertising consultant to develop a single mascot to represent all the Main Street communities in Arizona. It never came to fruition.



In 2018 on a hot August night, a couple friends were in idol conversation about what could be chosen as a downtown mascot. It wasn't the first time the topic had been discussed. And then...What about a buzzard? How many places do you know of where buzzards roost in the downtown park? A buzzard it could be! Two days later while driving past Norris Pool and Supply guess what was sitting outside their front door for sale? A buzzard, of course! Over the next three or four months a small flock were purchased. You can spot them at a variety of places in the Downtown Arts and Culture District and also within the Neon Sign Park.

Definition: In the United States, when someone refers to a buzzard it means a turkey vulture, a member of the New World vultures.

Since the adoption of our downtown mascot and his naming by a vote of the City Historic Preservation Commission, there has been media awareness of the turkey vultures that roost at Boyce Thompson in Superior, the ones in Casa Grande and even an interest by Fox 10 news traveling to Casa Grande for a story.


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Casa Grande Neon Sign Park Timeline (continued from page 3):

2016, SEPTEMBER



A Historic Resource Survey of
Historic Signs of Casa Grande
Casa Grande, Arizona

Historic Preservation Commission receives the Historic Resource Survey of Historic Signs of Casa Grande. 32 signs are eligible for the local historic register.

2017, JANUARY 17



Downtown Dairy Queen cones were salvaged by Historic Preservation Commission, fifth and sixth signs, from property owner Jeff Trendler.

2017, JUNE 13



Sunset Court sign leaves for restoration in Tucson at Cook & Company Sign Makers. In attendance are three generations of the Earl Osborne family.

2017, AUGUST 28



Historic Preservation Commission salvaged 7th sign, Holbrook Route 66 Dairy Queen "Lips", from owner Sandra Reyes.

2017, OCTOBER 13



Sunset Court Neon Sign Lighting Ceremony at Western Trading Post.

2017, SEPTEMBER 25-OCTOBER 31



Vote Your Main Street campaign was held.

Continued on page 7



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Acknowledgements ~ Gratitudes ~ Thank-Yous ~ Appreciations

The Casa Grande Neon Sign Park received a grant from the American Express Partners in Preservation program, a partnership of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and The American Express Foundation. Casa Grande Main Street took second place among 25 cities nationwide and was awarded \$144,000 in January 2018. Funding provided for restoration of 14 vintage and neon signs, installation and landscaping in the Arizona Plaza site in Historic Downtown, owned by the Kramer Family of Casa Grande Valley Newspapers Inc.

Casa Grande Main Street and the City of Casa Grande Historic Preservation Commission celebrates the commemoration of the Casa Grande Neon Sign Park, April 13th, 2019 with the following dedications:

To Marge Jantz, our Downtown Champion, for having the foresight to save these iconic treasures from the wrecking ball, and the vision to see them restored to their former glory.

To the Kramer Family, for their continued commitment to preserving the legacy of Casa Grande's pioneering history and serving as stewards for the Casa Grande Neon Sign Park.

To the Museum of Casa Grande, for their partnership and entrusting us with the Arizona Edison, Hotel Sacaton, Photo Shop and Valley National Bank signs for display in the park.

To the business owners who donated their historic signs including Brad and Cheryl Coxon (Coxon's Sign), The Ballard Family (Ralph's Café), Jeff Trendler (Downtown Casa Grande Dairy Queen Cones), Sandra Reyes (Dairy Queen Lips, Holbrook Route 66), (Tools) Harbor Freight, and (Goddard Shoes) Irwin Krugel.

To Audrey Rodriguez and AGE Landscape, for designing an inspired park concept and seeing it through fruition.

To Richard Rosales and Arizona Public Service, for providing the juice to light the lights.

To Jude Cook of Cook & Company Sign

Makers and Larry Graham of Graham's Neon for their artistry and painstaking care in authentic restoration of these unique artifacts. Cook & Company Sign Makers restored/produced 12 of our 14 signs and were responsible for the entire installation. Thanks to Scotty, Steve and those working behind the scenes painting and bending neon. Jude, you and your team were awesome!

To Mike Mills of Ellison Mills Contracting, who donated a solid foundation for each and every sign and a path to discover them from The Museum of Casa Grande.

To our Park Founders, who provided the icing on the cake, represented by the tailgate benches, personalized plates on the Founders Wall, pavers lining our Founders Walk and tales told through our Story Plaques.

In appreciation for media coverage on the Neon Sign Park:

- Doug Towne, Editor- Society for Commercial Archeology News (SCA Road Notes magazine Fall 2016)
- Ty Brennan, Anchor Fox 10 News, Fall 2017
- Doug Towne, Editor- Society for Commercial Archeology News (SCA Road Notes magazine Winter 2017)
- Doug Towne, Writer- Phoenix Magazine, May 2018
- Arizona Historic Preservation Conference – June 2018
- Doug Towne, Editor- Arizona Contractor & Community Magazine, Nov-Dec 2018
- Casa Grande Valley Newspapers Inc. – Various
- City of Casa Grande Website - Historic Preservation
- Golden Corridor Living Magazine – Various

And finally, to everyone who voted for the Partners in Preservation Grant, five times a day, every day, for six weeks. When we light up the downtown every night, know that you helped build this.



Cover photo by:
Oscar Perez/PinalCentral

Photos by: Oscar Perez/PinalCentral,
Marge Jantz, Chuck Wright, Audrey
Rodriguez, Kim McWherter

Editorial by: Marge Jantz,
Kara Kramer Cooper, Rina Rien

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Casa Grande Neon Sign Park Timeline *(continued from page 5):*

2017, NOVEMBER



Cecil Kinser/Historic Preservation Commission salvaged eighth sign, Coxon's Building Materials, from property owners Brad and Cheryl Coxon.

2017, NOVEMBER 17



Partners in Preservation Grant awarded from Vote Your Main Street campaign. Casa Grande placed 2nd in 25 cities nationwide.

2018, JUNE



The Museum of Casa Grande gave four signs to the Neon Sign Park on permanent loan: Arizona Edison (neon steel box sign), Hotel Sacaton (arrow shaped metal painted box sign), Casa Grande Photo Shop (neon novelty sign) and Valley National Bank (fiberglass sign).

2018, JUNE 13



Horse Shoe Motel and Arizona Edison signs leave for restoration in Tucson at Cook & Company Sign Makers.

2018, SEPTEMBER



Historic Preservation Commission salvaged ninth sign, Ralph's Cafe, from property owners the Ballard Family.

2018, OCTOBER 9



First restored sign, Goddard Show Store, returns from Graham's Neon in Mesa.

Continued on page 9

Congrats on the completion of Phase I of the Neon Sign Park!



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- Amy Gerrish-Hoban
- Mark Gerrish
- Joseph Gerrish
- Larry Hoban

Neon Sign Park sign histories

There will be 14 signs in the park; 11 signs restored; the neon on the Arizona Plaza façade is new; Paul, the Waver, next to the Horse Shoe Motel is a replica; the "Tools" sign on Florence Blvd. has been repurposed.

The signs have been collected over the years by Casa Grande's Historic Preservation Commission, one by Casa Grande Main Street and one by the City of Casa Grande. In addition, The Museum of Casa Grande has donated four signs from their collection. With the exception of the Dairy Queen "Lips" from Route 66 in Holbrook, all signs represent Casa Grande's history. The majority of the signs are from the 1950s and nine were located either on Hwy 84 (Old Tucson Highway) or just off Hwy 84.

Arizona Edison - 1950 sign

Arizona Edison was the area's power provider prior to Arizona Public Service. Their office was located at 408 N. Florence Street from 1929 to 1950. In September 1950 they moved to 200 E. 2nd Street. On August 21, 1952 a Casa Grande Dispatch article reports that the Arizona Edison sign was given to the City of Casa Grande and it was installed at the City Hall located on Marshall Street. The sign was modified to read "Casa Grande, Arizona". The caption under the photo in this newspaper article mentioned the colors of the neon and how it flashed, which was great since all the neon was missing. This one-sided sign is on permanent loan from The Museum of Casa Grande and was restored to read Arizona Edison.

Casa Grande Photo Shop - 1950 sign

Jim Gorraiz was a photographer and long-time resident of Casa Grande. He opened the Casa Grande Photo Shop in 1950 on the corner of 2nd Street and Washington Street (now Top and Bottom St.), which later became the Casa Grande Photo and Record Shop. His photo collection is at The Museum of Casa Grande and a Gorraiz Book Project is underway to provide a historical mid-

century portrait of Arizona. After Gorraiz death in 1990, Marvin Carlton, who grew up in Casa Grande and had purchased his first camera in this photo shop, acquired the sign. It spent the next 26 years in Phoenix, Arizona displayed in his business. In early 2016, Marvin and Lynn Carlton were planning to move and felt inspired to return the sign to The Museum of Casa Grande in honor of his mother, Mickey Carlton, who loved history and the museum dearly. The sign is on permanent loan to the sign park.

Coxon's Building Materials, Inc. - c.1950 sign

In c.1941 O'Malley's Lumber Company, based in Phoenix, acquired the lumber yard and store at 99 N. Sacaton Street. Originally this sign belonged to O'Malley's Lumber. In 1950, Quentin Marion Coxon, at the age of 24, started Coxon's Building Materials at Five Points in Casa Grande. In 1967, O'Malley's Lumber Company sold to Mr. Coxon. The original sign was changed to read Coxons Building Materials and later it was covered with a newer Coxon sign. Since the Coxon's have offered the residents of Casa Grande flooring and hardware for more than 50 years, the sign has been restored to read Coxon's Building Materials. In 1989 Quentin handed over the reins to his son, Brad and his wife Cheryl.

In the fall of 2017, Cecil Kinser asked them to donate the sign to the neon park.

Dairy Queen Sign & Dairy Queen Cones - c.1976 Sign & c.1987 Cones

The Holbrook Dairy Queen "lips" sign had been cracked during its removal when Dairy Queen corporate was changing to a new branding. Sandra Reyes was looking for a new home for her custom-oversized sign when she learned Casa Grande was building a neon sign park. The oversized sign had been special ordered when Interstate 40 bypassed Holbrook and the Route 66 Dairy Queen. The sign traveled to Casa Grande in August 2017 to be a great match with

the downtown Dairy Queen cones that had been removed for the same reason in January 2017. The cones were donated for use in the park by Jeff Trendler. These cones had served the Steinhoff family well for almost three of the four decades they owned and operated the downtown Dairy Queen at 211 E. Florence Boulevard.

Goddard Shoe Store - 1945 sign

The shoe store was located at 123 N. Florence Street. Ray Goddard operated the store from 1945 to 1950. Charles and Ona Green took over the store in 1951 and were in and out of business over the next decade. This enamel sign was covered in grey paint when the building owner, Irwin Krugel, gave it to Casa Grande Main Street in 2006. The old goose lived on the campus of The Museum of Casa Grande for nearly a decade. In 2014 the paint was removed on one side of the sign and placed on display in the barn. The sign is on permanent loan to the park. Both shoe stores specialized in Red Goose Shoes. There's been a lot of conversation and speculation over the missing goose head that was constructed during the restoration to recreate the sign to its original vintage glory.

Horse Shoe Motel and Paul, the Waver - 1953 Sign & 2019 Waver

The Horse Shoe Motel, originally built as the Horse Shoe Lodge in 1943 at 1136 E. Main Street on Hwy. 84, was demolished in 2004. The sign has been restored for the neon park and the awnings were previously repurposed for other art projects in the downtown. This was the first sign salvaged and the beginning of Casa Grande's sign inventory. The base for the sign has changed over the years. Last year a photo was revealed to us showing a Waver next to the sign in the early 1950s. These Wavers were developed in the late 1940s. A light was installed behind the waving arm's hand to indicate when a motel had vacancies or whether a business was open. Paul, our Waver, is a replica

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of what once appeared next to sign's pole. Only two of these original bellhop signs remain in the country, others are in private sign collections. Thanks to Leah Kiser for Paul's friendly face.

Hotel Sacaton - 1954 sign

The hotel was built in 1917; however, this sign was added after the extensive 1951 remodel. It wasn't located on their property at 204 N. Sacaton Street but instead positioned on Hwy. 84 on the northwest corner of Sacaton and Second streets. Due to its location in the right-of-way, at an undetermined point in time, the sign and pole were removed as one unit and donated to The Museum of Casa Grande. They have given the sign to the park on permanent loan. Once the restoration began, a single action flasher was revealed and a date on the transformer helped fill in the absence of the history for this sign.

Ralph's Café - 1956 sign

R.F. "Ralph" Honeycutt was a long-time resident and farmer in the Casa Grande Valley. He opened Casa Grande's first truck stop with a café in 1952 at 1174 E. Main on Hwy. 84. His 24-hour service café specialized in golden brown fried chicken and a complete line of steaks. The sign was designed and manufactured in Phoenix, by the encouragement of his friends Gene Lehman and John Cress, to showcase his business. The chaser lights along the side and bottom of the directional arrow are missing and the sign was painted over a good many years ago. A great photo of this 1956 state of the art sign has been located in the Dispatch archives. Funds were not available for restoration of this sign prior to the opening of the park. The pole and plaque are installed and funding is currently being solicited to return Ralph's to its original glory. The sign was donated by The Ballard Family.

Tools - 1976 Sign

The Tools aluminum panel signs were donated in October 2014 when Harbor Freight Tools purchased the CO-OP Building at 1484 E. Florence Boulevard. Four of the five panels have been lighted with neon to be used as our Casa Grande Neon Sign Park gateway and welcome signage.

Valley National Bank (VNB) - 1950 Sign

VNB was founded in 1900 and originally based in Phoenix, Arizona. They were the first major bank to locate in smaller cities in Arizona. They opened in Casa Grande at 59 N. Florence Street in 1934. In 1950 they built a new bank at Florence Street and Second Street. The restored Valley National Bank sign was displayed over the night deposit box. After the merger with Bank One in 1992 it was moved inside the building before it was donated to The Museum of Casa Grande, which has given it to the park on permanent loan.

Casa Grande Neon Sign Park Timeline *(continued from page 7):*

2018, NOVEMBER 28



Historic Preservation Commission approved and funded a replica "Waver" sign to accompany Horse Shoe Motel sign, as they were in the early 1950s.

2019, JANUARY 18



Ground breaking of the Casa Grande Neon Sign Park.

2019, FEBRUARY 13



First three signs installed in Neon Sign Park by Cook & Company Sign Makers. Two Dairy Queen cones and Hotel Sacaton.

2019, APRIL 13



Grand Opening of the Casa Grande Neon Sign Park.

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Neon Sign Park sign plaques and pedestals

There are 11 sign story plaques and nine custom pedestals in the Neon Sign Park. The bronze plaques are in the shape of the State of Arizona, same as the State Route 84 signage prior to 1942. The green patina background represents the copper mining that was prevalent in the area until the Hecla and Asarco mines closed in the mid-1970s.

Pueblo Deco symbols appear on each pedestal. Pueblo Deco is a hybrid architectural form that incorporates the distinctive style of Southwest pueblos and Native-American inspired design

motifs associated with the Art Deco movement. Casa Grande's Southern Pacific Railroad depot, built in 1939 and destroyed by fire on June 5, 2009, was considered to be one of the best examples of Pueblo Deco style in the Southwest. The Navajo-inspired symbols were referred to as stepped diamond motif, running arrows and truncated pyramids. Over the years these symbols have been used in other artwork in the downtown area.

The plaque design was suggested by Casa Grande's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and was produced

by Eastern Products Foundry in Phoenix, AZ. The pedestals were a labor of love inspired by Marge Jantz who could not have completed the project without a team of committed volunteers which included Ole Solberg, Valley Pump and Machine Works, Central Arizona College Welding Technology Department, and Casa Grande Street Rods.

Each sponsored plaque gives a brief overview of the sign's history which was provided by Marge Jantz, Patricia Steele and Kara Kramer Cooper, as well as the original locations of each historic sign.



Pedestal photo on page 14.

Janie Garza Brown

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Valley Pump and Machine Works

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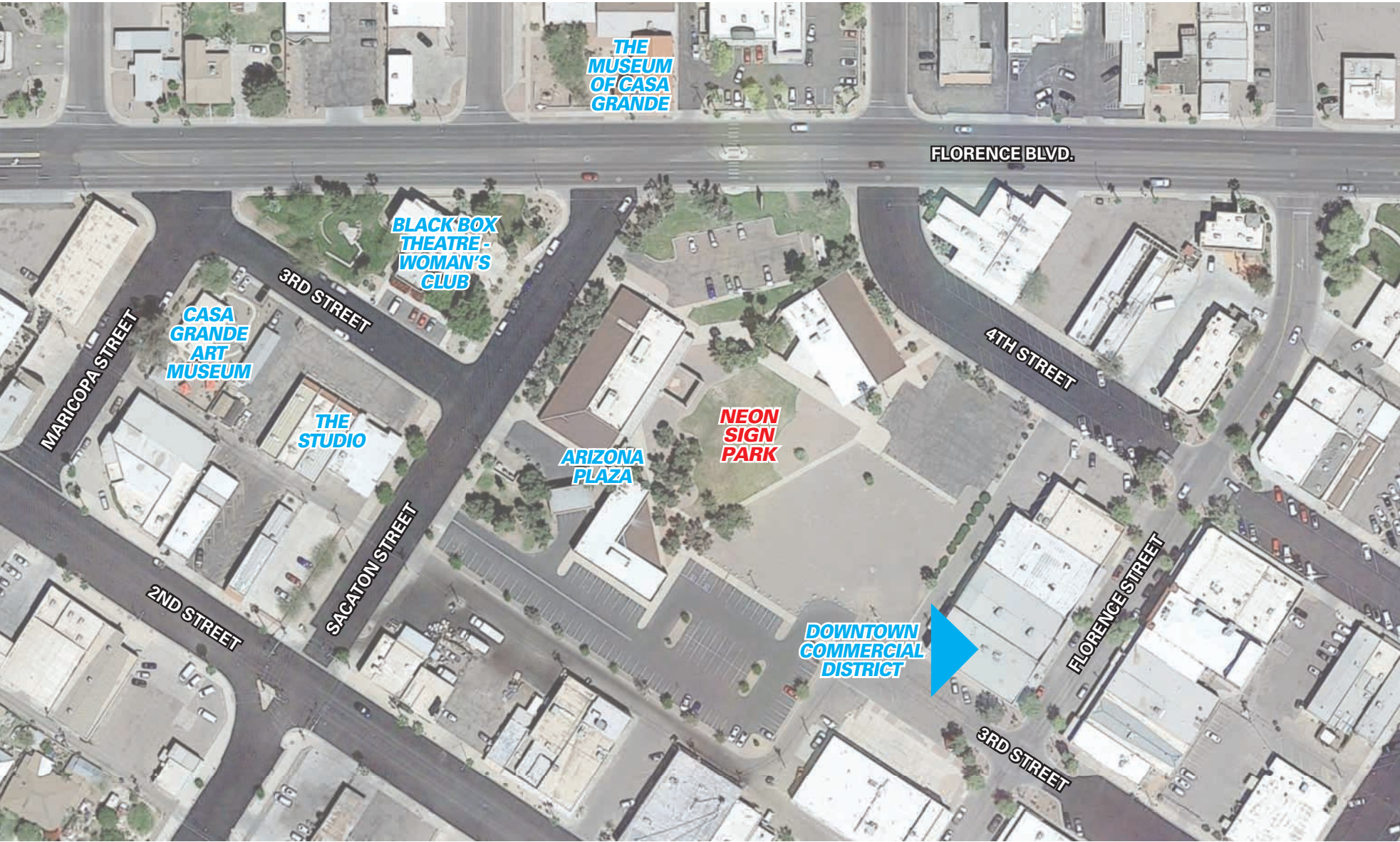
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Central Arizona College and their wonderful world of Welding Technology Department

Many of us refer to CAC as our gem in the desert. There is a diamond at the far end of the campus that served the Historic Preservation Commission's pedestal project well. Nine of the sign story plaques in the park are mounted on custom steel pedestals fabricated primarily by Ben Cruz, Jonathan Benally and Kolby Cassese, students in the welding technology department.

Pueblo Deco symbols that appeared in our 1939 Railroad Depot architecture, destroyed by fire on June 5, 2009, are proudly displayed in powder coated metallic gold.

Their contribution will be a long lasting icon in the sign park. Thank you to Central Arizona College for this partnership.



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Remembering Early Cotton Farmer Diwan Singh

A Punjabi immigrant from India, Diwan Singh farmed cotton fields along Florence Boulevard, Cottonwood Lane and what is now I-10 starting in the early 1920s. He was one of the first farmers to switch from horses to tractors, used a sump pump to transfer wasted water back to the top of the field and did tough tillage to let land aerate.

In the 1950s, he farmed 12,000 acres or more in Casa Grande and Picacho. He was respected by farm workers, employees at the gin and bankers who financed farming ventures.

Descendants and their families have continued living and working in the area: Fred and DeAnna Diwan, Max Nichols Properties, B.J. Singh and Kathy Singh.

History of Arizona Plaza, Home of Casa Grande Neon Sign Park

Central School was built on this property in 1914 and was the first school in Casa Grande for its 113 students. It consisted of the original building that had two stories and a basement along with an auditorium that housed the library. The building faced west along Sacaton Street and had central heating and modern, indoor plumbing. Cost to construct the spatterdash finish, mission-style building was \$21,500. A.A. Ray of Phoenix constructed the red, roof tile building designed by renowned architect H.O. Jaastad of Tucson. Jaastad later designed some of the most ornate Spanish Colonial Revival and Mission Revival buildings in the Southwest.

"B" building was added later and also faced west along Sacaton Street. It was positioned closer to Florence Boulevard. It had classrooms on both sides of a long hall. The school cafeteria was at the corner of Sacaton Street and the alley. Students washed their hands outside in a long sink that sprinkled water and had soap containers as they walked from the north into the building. Casa Grande Union High School students were bused over in the mid- to late-1960s to eat at Central School while their cafeteria along Florence Boulevard was remodeled. Japanese relocation barracks were placed on the property after World War II for "temporary use" to accommodate lower grades. The buildings ran west to east, behind "B" building. Central School housed all classes until CGUHS was opened in 1921. The only thing that

remains on the former schoolhouse grounds is the olive trees, which were planted as twigs in 1915 by family in memory of 8-year-old Alice Marie Kruse, who died from diphtheria. Original educators were Dan Peart, Mrs. T.C. Travis and Principal W.J. Macaw.

The last classes left the school in May of 1969 after the school board ruled it unsafe. The school had additional fencing placed around the buildings and some of the original playground was used for downtown parking. The school was torn down in 1974. The bell and cupola are on display at The Museum of Casa Grande on Florence Boulevard.

In 1977, Harlyn Griffiths of Mi Casa Builders constructed the Arizona Plaza. Arizona Bank, Southwest Gas and a building running north and south for business offices and retail spaces were opened. Plans called for the plaza to have a fourth building on the east, but owners over the years never constructed another. Arizona Bank later moved to Florence Boulevard and Trekell Road. Central Lutheran Church now utilizes the Arizona Bank building for its church activities and tutoring. Southwest Gas is moving to a new location on the west side of the city later this year. The rental building is used as it was originally planned.

The Donovan M. Kramer Sr. family purchased the property in 2000. Its proximity to their other property of Casa Grande Valley Newspapers Inc. along Second Street made it a valuable addition

for parking and office space. The family was approached in 2016 by Casa Grande Main Street and Historic Preservation Commission members to utilize part of the Central School site to display neon signs. An American Express competition to revitalize 15 projects across the U.S. was entered. Casa Grande came in second and received \$144,000. People voted daily for their favorite projects. Sign donations and partnerships to borrow signs were made along with many other enhancement projects to make this park what it is today.

Special accolades to Marge Jantz, former Casa Grande Main Street director and Casa Grande Historic Preservation Commission chairperson, for her tireless work along with Rina Rien, present Main Street director, for their perseverance to make this project a reality.

To the late Donovan M. Kramer Sr. for having the vision to lead the family in the right direction: the move from Illinois in 1963 to taking the risks that he and our mother Ruth (Heins) Kramer have taken to build our newspapers and websites in the Casa Grande Valley and White Mountains, and most recently Payson. The family remains committed to the downtown and its importance to our city along with the news dissemination industry.

Donovan M. Kramer Jr., Diana Kramer, Kara K. Cooper, grandchildren Zoe A. Cooper and Brian D. Kramer

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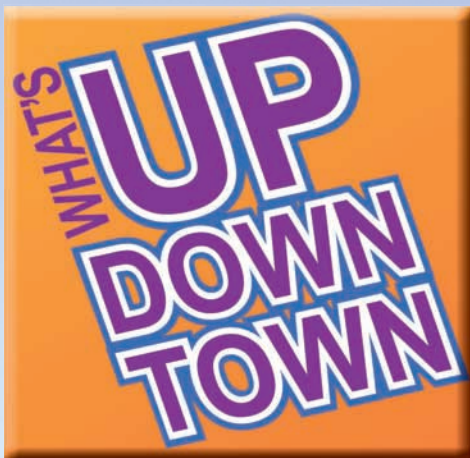
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CONTINUE TO SUPPORT CASA GRANDE NEON SIGN PARK

With the opening of The Casa Grande Neon Sign Park April 13th, 2019, we will mark the completion of the first phase of this ongoing endeavor. Casa Grande Main Street will continue to support the maintenance of the park, along with spearheading future phases of vintage sign restoration in existing historic locations. Join us as we embark on the next wave to promote downtown as a destination for locals and tourists who wish to discover and celebrate our history as authentic neon time travelers...

MAKE YOUR MARK ON THE NEON SIGN PARK

Over 100 local businesses and families supported our "Make Your Mark on the Neon Sign Park" Founders Campaign since we launched with AZ Gives Day April 2018. To date, we have raised over \$20,000 used to sponsor Sign Plaques, Tailgate Benches and other features to enhance the ambience of the park.

We will continue to provide opportunities to include your family name and/or business as a founder with a \$100 Paver on the Founders Walk and \$250 Historic License Plate on the Founders Wall. You may download an order form from our website or email downtown@cgmailbox.com to have one sent to you.



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AZ Gives Day April 2019 launched a new Planned Giving Program that conveniently deducts monthly or one-time donations from your bank account. Proceeds will support the maintenance of the park and future downtown sign restoration.

Future fundraising campaigns include commemorative holiday ornaments picturing the neon signs, "Neon Nights" events and more. To stay tuned to all the updates and contribute to our fund, visit www.cgmainstreet.org.

Questions? Contact Casa Grande Main Street at 520-836-8744 or email: downtown@cgmailbox.com



With the assistance of Brutinel Plumbing & Electric and Al & Riley's Air Conditioning and Sheet Metal, the Ralph's Cafe sign has been safely removed and taken to storage until funds are raised to place it in the Neon Sign Park, where an installed pole and story plaque anticipates its arrival.