

Chandler land deal worth \$585,000 nears closing

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The contract to acquire more than two dozen acres near Winchester Park has been signed by Chandler officials and the property owner, and the title is being researched by a Tyler company, city administrator Jim Moffeit said.

"We've signed the contract, and the title is at Landmark Title in Tyler. The property will be transferred to the Texas Parks and Recreation Foundation on a temporary basis."

The deal came more than two months after city officials here voted to purchase 29 acres from Stanley McCurley. Once Landmark Title's work is complete, Chandler will make a \$200,000 down payment on the property at 802 Martin St.

The remaining \$385,000 will be paid at 6 percent over the next 10 years. If the city satisfies the debt in five years, the early-payoff penalty would be about \$18,000.

McCurley has four months to vacate the prop-

erty, which includes a house, swimming pool and other buildings.

The land could be used to expand Winchester Park or to build a new government complex that would house City Hall, the Chandler Police Department, Chandler Brownsboro Area Chamber of Commerce, and Chandler Community Center. And Texas Parks and Wildlife Department grant programs are a motivating factor in the acquisition.

One of the agency's grant programs offers money to state municipalities and

counties with populations under 20,000. It provides 50 percent matching funds, with the maximum amount awarded \$750,000.

Moffeit has said the state agency allows the assessed value at purchase to be used as matching funds in a parks grant. However, state law prohibits Chandler from us-



Moffeit

ing that program if it owns the property, according to the foundation.

"State regulations do not allow the use of government-owned park property as an in-kind match for park development grants," the foundation's Web site says. "By holding title to property during the grant review process, the foundation makes it possible to (use) the value of the property and maintain its eligibility for grant assistance."

Park land typically remains with the foundation for five years, Moffeit has

said. The cost to use the program is \$100 a year.

Planning Concepts, a consulting firm in Tyler, has been retained to draft plans on how to best use the land and Winchester Park as Chandler prepares for what is projected to be substantial growth in Smith and Henderson counties over the next 30 years.

Chandler officials initially discussed purchasing 14 acres of McCurley's land before an offer was made on the entire property. McCurley's asking price was \$650,000.

A PLACE IN TIME



Paul Bryant Photo

A summer celebration in Chandler to mark the city's 50 years of incorporation will raise money to create a museum, the collections of which are housed in the Chandler Public Library (above).

Chandler to celebrate 50 years in July

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A celebration marking 50 years of Chandler's incorporation has been scheduled for July 10 at Winchester Park, and money raised during the event will help finance the creation of a city museum, Nancy Bertholf said.

"We have two cases at the (Chandler Public Library) displaying items of interest, including ... items from the Ralph Yarborough collection. This includes correspondence from Jackie Kennedy and items relating to President Kennedy's assassination. This space is not adequate to display or store other items donated to the library."

Activities planned for the July celebration at Winchester Park include a street dance, concert, and

fireworks exhibition. Food concessions will be available, Bertholf said.

"As part of the fundraising, a Heritage Cookbook is being compiled. Residents are asked to submit a family recipe, picture and short narrative describing their family's Chandler history. The cookbook will serve as an update for the 1980 centennial publication, "Chandler: Its History and People," which is no longer in print."

Though the city was incorporated in 1960, its history dates to 1880 when the Texas and St. Louis Railway established a station on land donated about 31 years earlier by Alphonso Chandler, for which the town was renamed. It was originally called Stillwater.

Bertholf, Chandler's librarian, said organizers haven't decided whether to expand the library or move the historical collection.

"This summer's celebration will serve as the kickoff for donations and fund-

raising," she said. "We are pursuing the possibility of obtaining grants as well.

Chandler's history can be traced back to the 1850s and many descendants of these first settlers still reside in the area. There would be an abundance of items that would help preserve and illustrate the history of local residents, their homes, businesses, schools and churches."

Chandler Public Library is a branch of the Henderson County Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library. Originally housed in a book mobile, the Chandler branch was moved to Broad Street in 1983 and relocated again 13 years later to its current building 900 State Highway 31.

The late Yarborough, a Democratic senator, was born in Chandler in 1903. He taught school in Henderson County, practiced law in El Paso and Austin, was

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Ben Wheeler to host first crawfish boil

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Texas musicians Clay Hammond and Tutu Jones will perform here Saturday during the town's first-ever community crawfish boil at Moore's Store.

"Sponsored by Ben Wheeler Development Company and Ben Wheeler Arts & Historic District Foundation, the boil is being put on for the community to enjoy good food, a friendly staff, great music and a good time," marketing director Veronica Terres said.

Hammond, a soul and blues artist, will be accompanied by a six-piece band while he shares the stage with R&B performer Jones.

Jones is the son of Dallas-based guitarist Johnny B. Jones. According to his Web site, the younger Jones became a product of his environment with luminaries such as Ernie Johnson, Freddie King and Little Joe Blue frequenting his home when he was a child.

— VAN ZANDT COUNTY —

He has received critical acclaim for his music and has received rave reviews on his self-titled, 10-track album, "Tutu Jones Live," Terres said.

From 5 to 7:30 p.m., Cajun music will be played. And until 10 p.m., Hammond and Jones will perform.

Hammond is a founding member of Mighty Clouds of Joy and the author of Little Johnny Taylor's soul hit, "Part Time Love." He is a "Sam Cooke-style-soul singer spending time with the Drifters and the Rivingtons, as well as recording with Z.Z. Hill," his Web site says.

"This will be some serious 'get-down' entertainment," said Brooks Gremmels, founder of Ben Wheeler Development Company and co-founder of Ben Wheeler Arts & Historic District Foundation.

Ben Wheeler Development Company and Ben Wheeler Arts & Historic Foundation have led the

multimillion-dollar effort to redevelop the small Van Zandt County town. Several stores — including Flying Fish Gallery, Harrison & Sons Knifeshop, Sojourn Gallery, Whimzee, and Antiques & Texas Heritage — have opened downtown.

Whimzee and Antiques & Texas Heritage have opened in the Rave building, and artist Brent Hale is expected to open a gallery there as well.

Gremmels' redevelopment started with a single initiative to renovate and reopen Moore's Store. Almost immediately, landowners approached Ben Wheeler Development Company about selling their properties.

Since, Gremmels has acquired about 40 acres in and around downtown for nearly \$3 million.

The assets include seven acres under a park and lake will be built; old houses

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'Strongest Redneck' to perform in Brownsboro

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Christian entertainer and motivator Steve McGranahan, "the world's strongest redneck," is scheduled to perform at Brownsboro High School on March 25, Parent Involvement Coordinator Perry Eaton said.

"He's going to bring a positive message about staying in school and acting right. He's also going to talk about parents being parents. We just wanted to have something neat for the community to say 'thank you' and offer some quality entertainment for all the families here."

A self-proclaimed "redneck to the bone," McGr-



Courtesy Photo

'World's Strongest Redneck' Steve McGranahan bends a horseshoe while country-music star Wynonna Judd (right) looks on. McGranahan, a Christian entertainer and motivator, is scheduled to perform his feats of strength March 25 at Brownsboro High School. The Pennsylvania man is 375 pounds and six feet tall. He's performed in athletic events and has appeared on national television shows.

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• Then, Soul/R&B favorites Clay Hammond & Tutu Jones Perform, 7:30 -10 p.m. \$8 Cover

For more information about these performances, call Moore's Store at 903.833.5100.

