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Quality of Life

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The Rich History of Sweetwater, Texas

An oasis with sweet water amid bitter-tasting gypsum streams, Sweetwater has always been a place to rest one's head and weary feet. Long before the settlers and ranchers arrived, the Kiowa Indians named the site "Mobeetie," which was their word for "sweet water".

The area of Nolan County had no Anglo settlers until after the Civil War, when buffalo hunter came to the plains. The first stirrings of the community might be set in 1877, when Billie Knight ran a dugout store for buffalo hunters in the area. The county's first post office was opened in 1879 in the village of Sweet Water, which was two words until the spelling was officially changed in 1918. The original name of the post office was Blue Goose, supposedly because some local cowboys killed a great blue heron under the impression that it was a variety of goose.

[Sweetwater Municipal Auditorium](#)

Sweetwater's historic Municipal Auditorium is an 800-seat performing arts center that was built in 1926-1927 – at the time the railroads were the primary means of travel. Sweetwater has been a major railroad center since 1881, and its location midway between the Atlantic Seaboard and the Pacific coast meant that the Auditorium was a frequent performance venue used extensively by the glittering names during the golden era of traveling entertainment troupes. Audiences here have experienced the brilliance of Fred and Adele Astaire, the Ziegfeld Follies, John Philip Sousa, tent showman Harley Sadler, Sir Harry Lauder, and Broadway touring companies from such early productions as *Seventh Heaven*, *The Bohemian Girl*, *Rita Rita*, *The Rain Maker*, and *Carmen*.

Later, regional audiences enjoyed such musical talents as Eddie Arnold, Roy Acuff, and Jerry Lee Lewis. Elvis Presley rocked the stage in 1955 – twice!!

[Nolan County Coliseum Complex](#)

The Nolan County Coliseum is a beehive of activity virtually every weekend of the year. Not only does it host the World Largest [Annual Rattlesnake Roundup](#) but it also has livestock events such as rodeos, horse cuttings, Team Penning, bull sales, and more. They also host arts

and crafts shows, specialty products expositions, and a variety of community events. The World's Largest Rattlesnake Round up has been held in Sweetwater since it started in 1958 and continues to host people and film crews from all over the world. National Geographic and ESPN, to name a few, have covered the Round up.

[Pioneer City/ County Museum](#)

More than a dozen Pioneer Museum display rooms depict the lives of early Nolan County settlers with extensive photograph files, farm and ranch exhibits, Indian artifacts, and WASP exhibits.

[The National WASP WWII Museum](#)

The National WASP WWII Museum seeks to educate and inspire all generations with the story of the WASP: Women Airforce Service Pilots – the first women to fly American's military aircraft – women who forever changed the role of women in aviation! They were trained at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas.

Built in 1929 and originally the home of the Sweetwater Airport, Hangar One now houses the National WASP WWII Museum. Explore the rich aviation history of Sweetwater. During WWII, this hangar was on the "Civilian Side" of Avenger Field, where commercial planes landed. The military side was located where the Texas State Technical College campus is today.

Sweetwater's Mustang Bowl

Sweetwater's Mustang Bowl, home to the Sweetwater Mustangs, opened in 1939. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), established by newly elected President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, built the stadium during World War II. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) began in 1933 with two purposes: to provide outdoor employment to Depression-idled young men and to accomplish badly needed work in the protection, improvement, and development of the country's natural resources. Camps housing 200 men each were established in every state: 1,468 in September 1933, 2,635 in September 1935, and, because of the improving economy, down to 800 by January 1, 1942. The bowl has a seating capacity of 6,500 and a standing room only capacity of almost 10,000. Today the bowl is covered with Astroplay turf and hosts many playoff games each year.

Sweetwater Parks and Recreation

Sweetwater hosts many youth sports activities each year in their park system. From softball, baseball, tennis, football, and soccer, young boys and girls participate in organized sports. Sweetwater also supports a community pool during the summer in Newman Park near the coliseum complex and many of the youth sporting fields.

Sweetwater Lakes and Golf Courses

Sweetwater owns three lakes in their system, Lake Sweetwater, Oak Creek, and Lake Trammel. All three lakes are used as part of the drinking water system along with recreational activities. Lake Sweetwater Municipal Golf Course is located south east of Sweetwater and it is a public course. Sweetwater Country Club also has an 18 hole course with meal facilities that is membership based. It is located on the north eastern edge of Sweetwater.

Sweetwater, with a population just under 11,000, has more than its fair share of recreational/ entertainment opportunities for both young and old. From school activities, to Coliseum events, to sporting events and more, Sweetwater is a place where you can be a part of the community and its activities. As Tom Henderson say, "if you are bored in Sweetwater, it's your own fault!"