



History of Junior Achievement of the High Plains

Fall 2008-JA of West Texas

Community leaders Smith Ellis of FirstBank Southwest, Anita Perez (Schnauffer) of FirstBank Southwest, Tanya Sluder of Happy State Bank and Kevin Powlaski of TechSpray and Denise Blanchard of AISD all collaborated to implement JA programs in Travis Middle School and Palo Duro High School. They served 497 students in 23 classes. JA was operating under the JA of West Texas located in Midland, TX. Brian McDonald was the President of JA West Texas.

May 2010

Teresa Hillman was hired by the acting board of the aforementioned group and Brian McDonald to serve as District Program Manager for Amarillo. In 2010-2011 1,401 students were served in 67 classes.

May 2011

Smith Ellis contacted JA USA about the JA Amarillo office becoming its own entity. He was informed by Howard Bartner (JA USA Regional Manager for our area) that our population and revenue was not adequate to support that request but that we could explore moving under JA of the Chisholm Trail located in Fort Worth. It was then decided by the JA West Texas Board to absolve West Texas and reform under JA Chisholm Trail. Midland area would become JA of the Permian Basin and Amarillo would become JA of the High Plains. The President of JA of the Chisholm Trail was then Randal Mays. The Amarillo board along with Randal Mays and Howard Bartner interviewed Teresa Hillman and appointed her to serve as Executive Director of JA of the High Plains. In 2011-2012 1,605 students were served in 81 classes.

August 2013

As programs increased it was evident that the need for the position of Education Manager be added to JA of the High Plains. Interviews were held and Dana Watson was hired to fill the position. In 2013-2014 2,578 students were served in 130 classes.

July 2018

Teresa Hillman and Dana Watson met with Denise Blanchard and Doug Loomis, Superintendent of AISD. Doug let Teresa and Dana know that they had visited JA BizTown in Garland, TX and had a vision for a JA BizTown in Amarillo. Amarillo ISD would supply the space for JA BizTown in the to be built AmTech Career Academy. Teresa began talks with Randal and JA USA on the steps needed to build and manage a JA BizTown. In December of 2018 Randal Mays retired as President of JA Chisholm Trail and Cindy Hames was hired as the new President. In 2018-2019 4,361 students were served in 211 classes.

Fall 2019-Spring 2021

As COVID 19 flooded our world, JA of the High Plains was forced to find new ways to reach students. Dana Watson spearheaded creating a virtual Career segment for all JA of the High Plains middle and high school students and one of our long-time volunteers Kiley Bishop provided taped programs for elementary. With the help of two A/V students from Caprock, Dana conducted interviews of 14 of our community leaders which were uploaded to our YouTube channel for teachers to access. During this time, JA BizTown was in planning stages via Zoom meetings with existing JA BizTown's, the architect in charge and Jay Barrett, the Principal of AmTech Career Academy. In 2021-2022 2,872 students were served in 152 classes.

August 2022-March 2023

August 2022-Teresa Hillman and Cindy Hames appointed Dana Watson as JA BizTown Capstone Manager. August 2022 Stephanie Smith was hired as JA BizTown Capstone Assistant, In March of 2023 AISD 5th graders from five campuses were the first students through JA BizTown. In 2022-2023 3,772 students were served in 193 classes.

June 2023

Teresa Hillman retired as Executive Director and Kasey Long was hired.

October 2024

JA BizTown launched 1st full school year of JA BizTown simulations with 2,937 students from 6 school districts. JAHP was awarded the benefactor of the United Supermarkets Golf Charity Classic receiving over \$100,000 in donation. A record number 6,220 students were impacted through school programs. For the first time, JAHP held summer programs by partnering with Maverick Boys & Girls Club impacting over 350 kids.