

FROM BARREN TO BOOMING

by samantha licon

Located off of I-10 West and Hawkins, and just seven minutes from the campus, The Fountains at Farah has brought life back to an uninhabited plot of land once the home of the Farah manufacturing plant. The new outdoor mall is now a convenient attraction for people from all around the city, including teens who shop, eat and hang out there.

Customers fill the restaurant foyer. Orders rush in and out while junior Jamie Canales helps serve the constant flow of hungry patrons at Twin Peaks. This is how it is every day for many of the new restaurants and stores at the new Fountains at Farah.

"It's always crazy," Canales said. "There's always people coming in and saying how much they love the Fountains. It makes working there so much fun because people are seeing what El Paso is turning into and how the city is improving. It makes me proud of my city."

Since its opening Nov. 8, 2013, The Fountains has been a public sensation. The new shopping center, currently with 12 restaurants and eateries and 37 stores, has been especially popular among teenagers like senior Kayla Farias.

"I go there at least once a week," Farias said. "At first I thought The Fountains was going to be a bad idea and take revenue away from Cielo Vista Mall, but it has really made the surrounding area better and it's made El Paso better."

Built on the former 600,000 square foot property where Farah Incorporated was located for

45 years, The Fountains has the media and junior Marquis Boyd questioning why popular stores are the only ones included.

"From the beginning, I thought The Fountains was going to be a good idea," Boyd said. "I just think underground-type stores would help The Fountains be more diverse."

Two tiers of restaurants and stores, six fountains, an outdoor amphitheater, a trolley system, and more than 1,100 covered parking spaces stand on 55 acres of land. It is located right across from Cielo Vista Mall, which is a 1.2 million square foot shopping center.

The Fountains is the result of a three year construction period that developer West Miller said is not yet done.

"The land that was there before was just an eyesore," Miller said. "We wanted to put something on the property to get it back in production in a positive and fun way to reignite the Cielo Vista area. We kept the name to honor the Farah family for their contributions to this city. The Fountains is still a working project and I'm excited to see how it turns out, but it has brought something very unique to El Paso."

THEN AND NOW

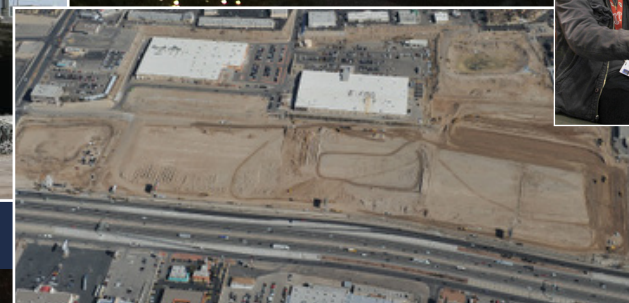
Established in 1920, Farah Incorporated eventually became the largest clothing manufacturer in the world. It expanded plants around the country, but in 1988, Farah closed its local plant. It sat idle and remained blocked off. In 2010, the property was torn down in hopes to put something else there. In the fall of 2012, construction of the Fountains at Farah began.



(source: google)



(source: el paso times)



(source: city-data.com)

(photo by annabeth burgess)

GRIMALDI'S 13%
TWIN PEAKS 38%
KONA GRILL 57%
LA MADELEINE 39%
FIREHOUSE SUBS 16%

"I really like Grimaldi's. I've never had pizza like that before and I've never been in a restaurant with that kind of atmosphere. I actually forgot I was in El Paso."
-karla orozco-9



"La Madeleine is probably my favorite. The food is so memorable. I love the variety of soups they offer."
-michael dominguez-10

What is your favorite restaurant at The Fountains? (300 students surveyed)

SPECIAL GIFTS
Volunteering on a Sunday, freshman Viviana Cordero wraps gifts to help the Special Olympics of El Paso. "I thought it would be nice to help out," Cordero said. "It's an act of kindness that wouldn't be possible without the new opportunities that the Fountains has created." The gift wrapping event was took place at Barnes and Noble.



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WINTERLAND EXPERIENCE
On Christmas day, sophomore Lisa Gandara spends part of the holiday with her family at The Fountains' Ice Pond. "We decided it was the best thing to do that day since we celebrate at midnight," Gandara said. "I'm always asking to go. I think The Fountains is beautiful."



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COFFEE BREAK
After a long day of finals, juniors Xavier Perez and Alberto Jimenez stop at Starbucks at The Fountains for a caffeine break. "I hate being stuck in a classroom for so long," Perez said. "The Fountains is so close to the school. It makes it easy to shop and hang out."