

# Howe Area Chamber of Commerce

## A nickel and a prayer turns into 30 years in Howe



**THE SCHOOL ZONE IS NOW OPEN** - Owner Kathy Todd is congratulated by Jim Ogle, President of the Howe Chamber of Commerce.

Kathleen Todd had a dream and no one was going to stop her, not even the anti-growth city leaders in Howe of the 1980s. Not only did she succeed when the odds were against her; she grew the operation and now owns one of the longest tenured businesses in Howe as The School Zone Academy celebrates 30 years in business today.

Todd, originally from upstate New York moved to Texas in the early 1980s following her then husband who was in construction. Todd, was a pediatric nurse and couldn't find adequate care for her children. Not wanting to place her kids in a bad situation, she decided to leave her nursing career and build a daycare center.

"It took five years to get resources and financing to get started and we started from the ground up." said Todd.

Back in the 1980s it wasn't exactly easy to get a new business in Howe. According to Todd, the people running the city at the time were not in favor of new businesses and she was told by the city council that Howe didn't need another daycare center because one had just went out of business due to the lack of customers. Todd would not accept no for an answer and kept pushing the council. They told her that she had to brick the entire four sides of the building.

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## A walk to Sonic leads to 10 years



**Tashawna Sanders of Sonic in Howe**

Lets face it, starting a business in Howe hasn't been an automatic gold mine over the last 50 years. But one restaurant has done well in the small city even in the economic downturn a few years back. With sound experienced management, Sonic in Howe is now reaping the rewards and about to upgrade the facilities by \$90,000.

Back in 2005, before the concrete was even poured, Tashawna Sanders walked up to the construction site looking for a job.

"I remember walking on little piles of wood trying to get to the front door." said Sanders. "Matt Acevedo was here then and he hired me."

Sanders went from walking to the store to get a job as a carhop to later becoming Sonic's general manager at the young age of 21. Currently, she's a partner with 21 percent share of Sonic in Howe.

"It's not something they give out. They really have to trust you and you have to put in a lot for them to even offer you to buy a share." said Sanders. She had previously worked at Milano's Pizza restaurant in Howe and then worked at the family restaurant that opened up soon after. She then got a job at Sonic in Van Alstyne as a carhop just

*Continued on page 2*

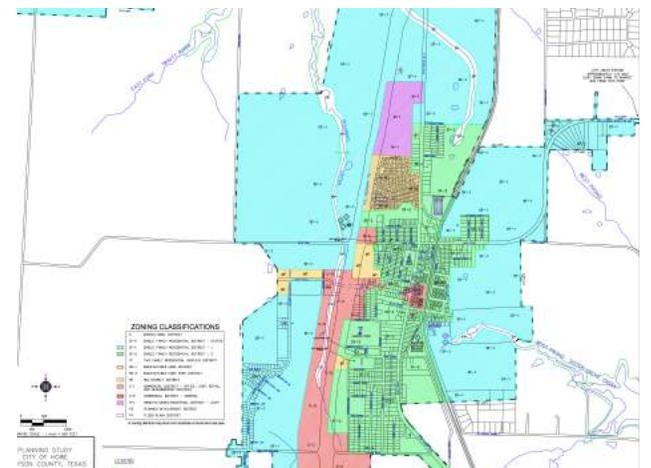
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before coming to Howe.

“I’ve never quit. I’ve never left.” said Sanders. “I’ve been here since day one, through all of the ups and downs.”

Sanders is a strong-willed woman with high expectations of herself and the 2005 Howe High School graduate hasn’t spent her life traveling the easy road.

“I had my first child at the age of 15.” said Sanders. “I was out to prove everybody wrong. The stigma of being a pregnant teen is that you’ll never graduate and you’ll never amount to anything and you’ll have seven kids before you turn 21 and all that. I was out to show those people that wasn’t true. You can go through the worst of the worst and it’s your choice to decide whether you want to be a good person or a bad person.”

When Sanders became a shareholder in the local Sonic, she then knew what her life would be like day-in and day-out. She still puts in 10-hour workdays, six days a week and is on-call 24-7.

“I enjoy it. I still love coming to work after these ten years.” said Sanders who does everything from manage and pay all of the bills to help with the staff. She says that she’s learned to be a do-it-yourself maintenance woman who tries to take care of everything internally before shelling out resources.

In 2007 and ’08, Sanders pointed as the most difficult time with the store due to only two managers.

“We literally didn’t get a day off for six months.” said Sanders. “At that point, this was not something I was interested in doing. But my feet were already plunged into the water pool so I just had to stick it through and keep faith.”

Upon entering the plan as a shareholder, she had to pay a \$430 note payment for that percentage.

“It was your goal every month to have a profit in the partnership.” said Sanders.

About the same time as Sanders had to start making the partnership payments, the great housing market collapse happened and the country fell into a deep recession. The remnants of the effect it had on Howe can still be seen in the lack of homes in the developed Summit Hill neighborhood.

“That was the hardest time. Not seeing any end in sight. But you know what? you have to do this. This is what feeds your children. You have to suck it up and work.” said Sanders.

Sanders says that the best part of her job is knowing that she’s here to help people try to get a start in life.

“I’m a people person and I genuinely care about strangers.” said Sanders. “People will

come in and give you a sob story and you can tell right off-the-bat that it’s not going to work. But I’m the person that gives them a chance to prove themselves right or wrong.”

Sanders has five employees that have been there for over six years. There are another two that have been at Sonic in Howe for nearly two years.

“We have a core group of eight people, which isn’t a lot.” said Sanders. “So we work our butts off. These carhops do everything. They make all of the drinks, bag all of the food, and then clean everything.”

The most popular food item at Sonic in Howe is the double meat cheeseburger followed by any chicken item.

Sanders estimates that the cherry limeades and ocean water are the most popular drinks. It is estimated that in the 10 years, over 108,000 cherry limeades have been sold at the Sonic in Howe. She also claimed that massive amounts of Diet Coke have gone through the store as well.

When talking about the ten year milestone, Sanders said that she hasn’t made a big deal of it because she’s been so busy.

“I honestly just work.” said Sanders. “I go home and I have three kids and I try my hardest to let my kids understand that mom has to work, but also has time for them too.”

Through the hard work and years of not making a profit from her shares, Sanders has now paid off the note that was \$430 per month and will now own 21 percent of the store for the rest of her life.

“All of that hard work is now, 10 years later, starting to pay off.” said Sanders.

Howe customers are now reaping the benefits of those dividends with a massive upgrade to the site. The \$90,000 project included the updating of all of the menus to digital.

“You’ll see your order come up on the screen like Braum’s or McDonalds.” said Sanders. “Eventually the technology will allow the regulars to wave their phone at the screen and it will identify that person and ask them if they want their regular item or something different.”

The credit card process outside is much improved with new technology and new processing. Inside the store, they now have new screens and the attendants have new headpieces to wear.

“It’s makes the everyday procedures smoother which make the customers more happy.” said Sanders.

The outside cost was less in Howe than other locations because there are only 11 stalls in Howe compared to over 20 at larger Sonic restaurants. The new menu boards are approximately \$5,000 each.

Sanders wanted to end the great debate on tipping at Sonic. She said that it can be confusing because some Sonics are different than others. In Howe, the employees are paid minimum wage to do their job, so they don’t necessarily live on tips.

“It’s a personal preference.” said Sanders. “It’s not always because they did a good job. Sometimes people will tip because a carhop was so nice to them. Most of tips comes from the fact that people are just genuinely nice to people. We know that people will take their bad days out on us. That’s just the way it is. We just try to make them smile. For my guys, a tip is great because they are literally working and working hard.”

Sanders understands that Sonic will not forever be the only fast-food location in Howe, but have been the beneficiary of the 10-year head start on anyone new that does come to Howe. One thing is for sure, it will be very unlikely for anyone to outwork her. The determined girl has fought through adversity and has chosen to be a good person.



## School Zone



**Kathleen Todd**

"Then I found out that it was, 'who you knew' or 'who you were' in the city because the rules didn't apply to everybody." said Todd. "In fact, they built a metal building within a few feet of my property and it wasn't brick and still isn't brick and now I own it."

Todd says that in 1985, a woman trying to open a business in Howe was nearly impossible. What makes her story even more improbable is that she did it all with only a dream.

"I had no money." said Todd. "I went to Goodwill and bought a woman's power suit and a briefcase."

With the Goodwill suit and briefcase, she went from bank to bank in North Texas trying to find someone who would finance her vision. Finally, she found a bank in McKinney called Texas American Bank.

"No local banks would touch it. I went to McKinney where they didn't know me." said Todd. "I wore that suit and acted like I knew

what I was doing."

Armed with experience in working in childcare and a degree in early childcare development, Todd was able to secure the loan.

She traded in her Pontiac Trans-Am for a school bus and the bus became her personal vehicle along with the daycare transportation.

Todd's husband at the time who was in construction began to find materials that were leftover on other job-sites and saved a lot of money by piecing things together like the Johnny Cash song "One Piece At A Time."

"When I told him five years before we opened the daycare, he started dragging stuff home." said Todd. "Whatever they were going to throw in the dumpster came home. A lot of the supplies we got came because he was resourceful and knew what he was doing. He's my ex now, but I still respect the heck out of him for everything that he did."

They began the construction of the building and even hired one of the family farm-hands from upstate New York named John Carr to come to Howe and help. A side note is that Carr never went back home and still resides in Howe.

On May 18, 1985, The School Zone Academy opened its doors. It wasn't at all what Todd was expecting. Todd had done a marketing survey and it showed that they would have 80 kids. They actually opened with 26.

"I was sick." said Todd. "How am I going to pay all of these staff members?"

However, things changed quickly and four months later they were having to add on to the facilities because they were pulling from not just Howe, but Van Alstyne, Tom Bean, Dorchester and other surrounding areas.

Todd picked Howe because of the school district. "I wanted to be in a town that cared about children." said Todd. "I felt very early on that Howe was the perfect fit because kids were the priority. Howe was circled around their children."

While owning The School Zone Academy, Todd had three more children, one of which, Haleen, is now the director of the school. "I was delivering her and was actually on my cell phone calling the workers who were adding an addition on the building to tell them to get it done because I'm having a baby." said Todd. "We built that addition because of Haleen and now she's the director."

Todd says that the best part now is that her grandchildren go there and she gets to be a part of their lives on a daily basis. She says that no grandmother could ever have it better than how she does.

"I never thought about being here at 60." said Todd. "I'll be 60 in July. "Everything about our school, the farm, the greenhouse, the gardens, the bicycle trails, the gym, the dance studio, everything that we have now was in my head back in May of 1985. The building is now paid off and I'm able to put the money back into the business and everything is unfolding."

Much has changed in the daycare business since 1985. Back then, the only people to answer to were Daycare Licensing and the Health Department. Now, Child Care Services, and the Federal Food Program have been put in place for standards. The big changes are having to have more staff due to ratios, educated staffs and a traceable food record.

It was a leap of faith by one strong woman who kicked down the doors of Howe. The School Zone Academy is now one of the longest standing businesses in Howe. Not bad for a city that said she'd fail.

**H**  **W** **E**  
**Area Chamber of Commerce**

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**H**  **W** **E**

**Area Chamber of Commerce**

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**H**  **W** **E**  
**Area Chamber of Commerce**

# 2015 Chamber activities



**Ribbon cutting for Howe Development Alliance and Howe Chamber**



**Howe Hall of Honor Ceremony**



**Laura Duree  
Norma J. Wallace Citizen of the Year**



**Chris McCandless Band Concert  
in Downtown**



**29th Annual Founders Day Celebration**



**Founders Day fun in the streets**



**Ribbon cutting for Howe Mercantile**



**Chamber Breakfast at Independent Bank**



**Back to School Blues  
Downtown Block Party**



**Ribbon cutting for Texas Home Emporium**



**The first Blue Bell Chamber Party in North Texas**



**Christmas Parade**

# Upcoming Chamber Events

**HOWE**  
Area Chamber of Commerce  
howechamber.com

*Chamber Breakfast*  
at Independent Bank  
100 S. Denny, Howe  
*Thursday,*  
*Feb 25*  
*7:30am- 9:00am*



**HOWE**  
Area Chamber of Commerce  
howechamber.com

*Chamber Mixer*  
*and Ribbon-Cutting*  
**1110 S. Collins Frwy,**  
**Howe, TX**  
*Thursday, March 3*  
*6:30am- 8:00am*



**HOWE**  
Area Chamber of Commerce  
howechamber.com

**Members Dinner**  
**Thursday,**  
**March 24, 6:30p**  
**\$15 plate**  
**Gabriela's**  
MEXICAN COCINA



**102 E. Haning St.**  
**Howe, TX**

**HOWE**  
Area Chamber of Commerce  
howechamber.com

*2nd Annual Howe Hall of Honor*  
*and Awards Ceremony*  
*May 6, 2016 at 7:00 pm*  
*Howe Development Alliance*  
*101 E. Haning St., Howe, TX*  
*\$15 per person*



# 30th Annual Founders Day - Downtown Howe



**May 7, 2pm**

**free concert**



**May 7**  
**2pm-**  
**9pm**  
**free**  
**concert**  
**6pm**

**HOWE**  
Area Chamber of Commerce  
howechamber.com

# A word from the president

On behalf of the Howe Area Chamber of commerce, we would like to welcome you to the great town of Howe, Texas.

As a Chamber of Commerce, our mission is to promote local business growth through the implementation of events and gatherings which encourage both prosperity and community growth. The city of Howe offers an unparalleled sense of community through our small town atmosphere and great residents. This is why the Howe Chamber of Commerce has made our primary goal to promote the growth of local business and community. As a member of our community, whether through business ownership or residency, you have not only joined as a member, but have become part of our "family".

We invite you to explore the vast history and heritage of this wonderful town as you discover all of the possibilities of our community.



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## Howe Area Chamber of Commerce Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Website: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type of Business \_\_\_\_\_  
 Area Served \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total Employees \_\_\_\_\_  
 Establishment Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Additional Information \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



## Board Members

**Robert Cannaday**  
 -President

**Sheryl Bentley**  
 -Vice President

**Jonathan Coleman**  
 -Secretary

**Leandra Beckemeyer**  
 -Treasurer

**Jesse Davis**

**Tom DeFrance**

**Holly Hawkins**

**Becky Hogenson**

**Monte Walker**

Annual Membership Dues	
Individual	\$25.00
Business	\$75.00
Additional Donation (Optional)*	

Membership Type (Business/Individual) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Send Invoice (Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please make all checks payable to the Howe Area Chamber of Commerce.

\*Please note that donations are not tax deductible as charitable contributions.

Signing members must be at least 18 years of age at the time of application.

# 2,600 home master planned community in Howe



Tomlin Investments has announced they will construct a 2,600 home master planned community in the southern portion of Howe, Texas near US 75 which draws more than a 72,000 traffic count daily.

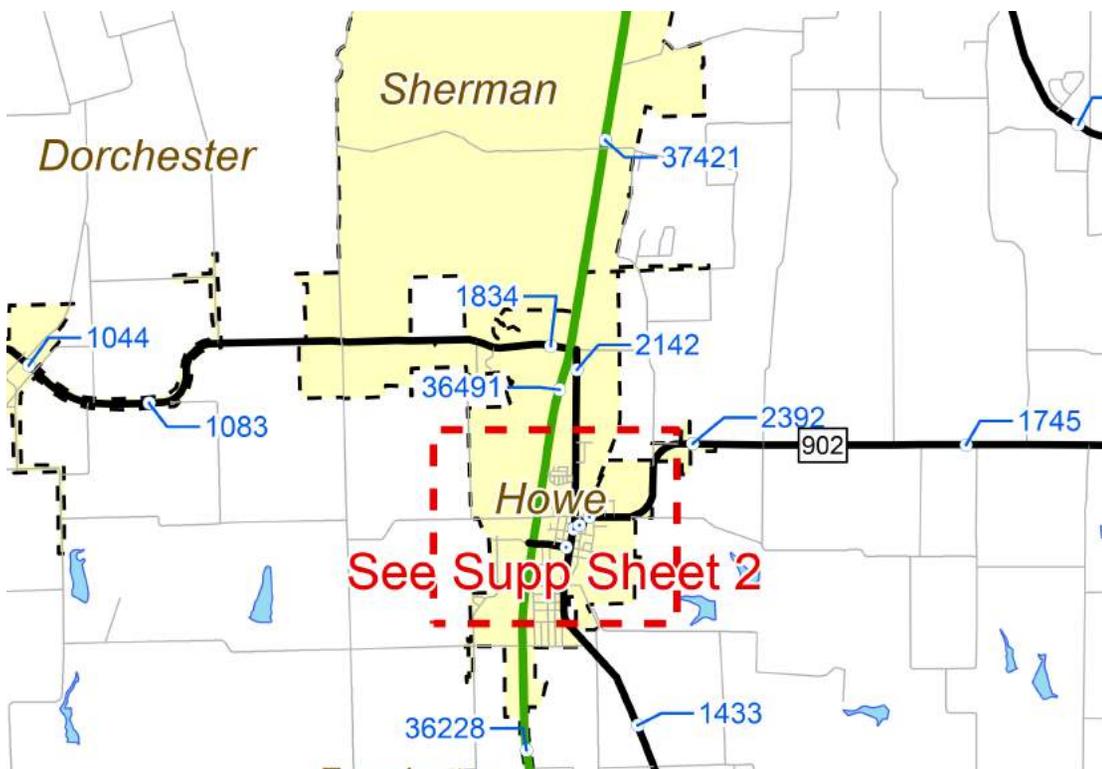
The ever-expanding Metroplex is pushing up 20 miles north of McKinney into the historically smaller cities that are preparing for the upcoming growth.

"We know it's coming here and we're taking the necessary measures to be as attractive as we can." said Monte Walker, President of Howe Development Alliance.

"I am excited to see an inertia point started for Howe with development at the front door (of the city)," said Scott Norris of Tomlin Investments. "I think it's a good opportunity to assist Howe in growing their tax base, and at the same time putting something that's needed as far as housing in the area on the ground. The opportunity to bring water and sewer to an area that currently doesn't have it gives Howe kind of another competitive tool in trying to attract business and expand their tax base."

The City of Howe has a population of 3,200 but is preparing to double that in the next five years.

## 72,000 traffic count daily on US 75 in Howe



Some say Howe, Texas is a passerby city between McKinney and Sherman. That is true in some respect as 72,000 people drive through the city daily in route to their destination.

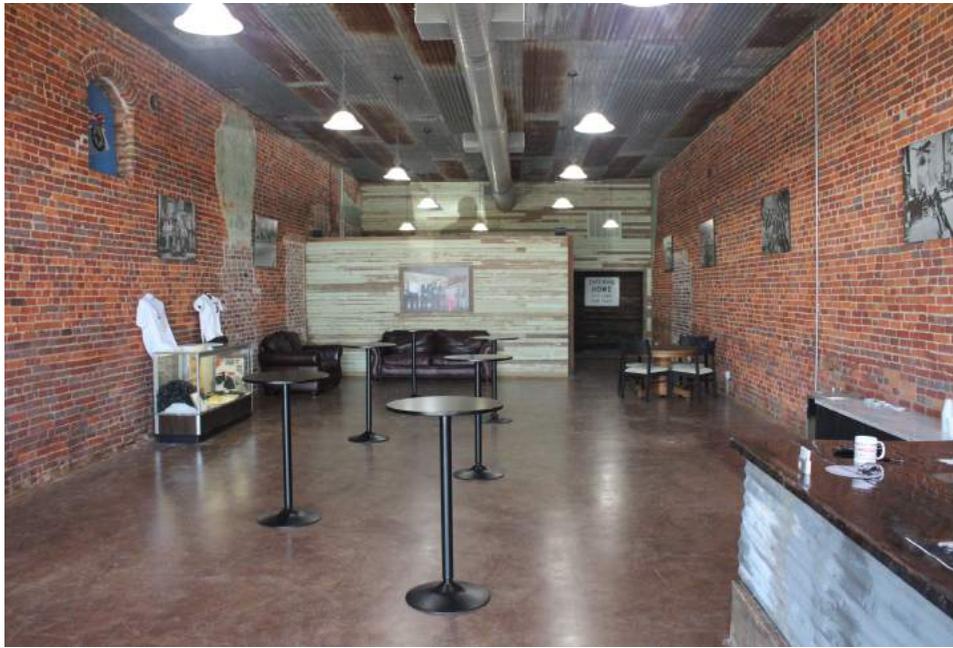
Howe, Texas is located on US 75 which is one of the main arteries from Dallas to the north exploding areas. With that main artery, Howe sees 36,491 northbound daily traffic and 36,228 southbound traffic on the major highway.

"We're in a situation were the wife works in Plano and the husband works in Denison." said City Administrator Joe Shephard.

"Our market is a small version of New Braunfels that is located between two major cities." said Howe Development President Monte Walker.



# Howe's downtown reinvention



With the push from the North Texas Metroplex up the US 75 corridor, Howe, Texas is seeing a change from a traditional farming community to the modern metro citizen seeking the amenities and the lifestyle of that they have grown accustomed to in the North Texas movement.

With the new dollars that have come into the city, the downtown area transformed from ghost town to home town. The historic district, built within steps of the railroad in 1900 is now taking on a vibrancy of food and shopping.

A hardware store of 50 years has

been completely renovated and improved to serve as the city's first home of the economic development office and chamber of commerce.

A building that housed a 38-year old upholstery business now is the most spectacular high-end antique and luxury gift shop.

The City of Howe recently sold a section of downtown to an investor who will make additions to the downtown area with a new structure.

The future is bright, even in the city's historic areas.

# Abbington Meadows near completion

HOWE — State officials recently announced a \$5 million investment to construct new apartment homes in Howe. The community, named Abbington Meadows of Howe, will create units at both market-rate and below-market workforce housing.

“The city council and I are very excited about Abbington Meadows coming to Howe,” said Mayor Jeff Stanley. “It is a well needed part of the future growth of the city.”

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs will provide the principal investment through a competitively-won allocation of 9 percent housing tax credits. Other funding includes a permanent loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

# Two markets for workforce



When a city has only a population of 3,200 citizens, companies worry initially about workforce issue. However, Howe is situated much differently with the ability to pull from 155,142 citizens of McKinney and 60,300 of Sherman/Denison. Both of those cities are within 20 miles of Howe with direct routes on US 75.

The growing North Texas region has to come through Howe.







**Monte Walker**  
President

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# North Texas Regional Airport



One FBO and long, wide runways for the largest commercial aircraft

North Texas Regional Airport is situated 17 miles north of Howe between Sherman and Denison in Grayson County. The airport property borders State Highway 289, connecting the DFW Metroplex to Lake Texoma, placing North Texas Regional Airport at the center of a booming corridor.

Beside State Highway 289 lie 325+ shovel-ready acres of airport land. An adjacent 9,000' x 150' runway makes the airport accessible to aircraft of every size, with a second 8,000' x 150' runway standing by. The staffed control tower with four instrument approaches, including ILS and automated weather observation system, round out the pilot's wish list.

Add the business-friendly leadership of Grayson County, the proactive economic development organizations of surrounding communities, the foreign-trade-zone status, triple-freeport exemption, and the trajectory for aviation-related business becomes clear. Straight up.

## Educated workforce



Austin College is a small liberal arts college in Sherman, Texas where big things happen. Students and faculty engage in partnerships in learning that allow its students to become truly invested in their education. Austin College's student body is a diverse one, but one that is welcoming and inclusive.

AC focuses on global awareness and are

proud of the fact that more than 70 percent of graduates of the last decade (and beyond) have studied internationally during their Austin College education.

Grayson College's diverse student body takes classes in a traditional classroom, online, during the day, at night, or on the weekend. Grayson College serves over 5,000 people



each year in academic transfer programs, career training, credit and non-credit certificate programs, customized training programs, and continuing education. Many other members of our community enjoy the College's cultural activities, sporting events, and community events. Grayson College has campus locations north and south of Howe.



# City of Howe, Texas

Population in 2013: 2,609 (0% urban, 100% rural). Population change since 2000: +5.3%



Males: 1,236 (47.4%)  
 Females: 1,373 (52.6%)

Median resident age: 33.1 years  
 Texas median age: 30.8 years

Zip codes: 75090, 75495.

[Howe Zip Code Map](#)

Estimated median household income in 2012: \$54,177 (it was \$34,963 in 2000)

Howe: \$54,177  
 TX: \$50,740

## For population 25 years and over in Howe:

- High school or higher: 84.9%
- Bachelor's degree or higher: 21.8%
- Graduate or professional degree: 6.4%
- Unemployed: 3.5%
- Mean travel time to work (commute): 28.9 minutes

## For population 15 years and over in Howe town:

- Never married: 22.9%
- Now married: 56.5%
- Separated: 0.5%
- Widowed: 3.5%
- Divorced: 16.5%

