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HENDERSON HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

Southwest corner of Water and Army

Business

In 1943, Clark County grocer Mark S. Schulman announced the opening of the first townsite grocery market. Located on Water Street and Atlantic Ave., the 12,000-square-foot store was the first business to open in the new Water Street shopping district. As Water Street developed, it became the social and commercial center for residents.

On August 24, 1945, leading members of the Henderson business community formed a Chamber of Commerce focused on the city's viability since BMI had ceased war production. To attract new industries, the chamber promoted the development of schools and churches. Local efforts encouraged Stauffer Chemical Company and WECCO to occupy the vacant BMI facilities.

Herschel Trumbo, an early area settler, founded the Henderson Telephone Company, turning an outdated phone system into a modernly equipped one. On April 1, 1954, Nevada Governor Charles Russell made the first direct dial call from the new company to Morry Zenoff, owner of the Henderson Home News and the local radio station, KBMI, which had broadcast for the first time on March 11.

A Bank of Nevada branch opened on March 11, 1954, a major sign of progress for local residents. By May of that year, California-Pacific Utilities Company installed a \$36,000 street light system on Water Street, with an electric eye mechanism that switched street lights on and off at the proper time. In August, N.D. Van Wagenen, owner of the Victory Theatre, made Nevada history when he installed the state's largest cinema screen at 21x43 feet.

The La Porta Building, Ideal Appliance, and the Jonsbach buildings were all completed in 1954. In 1955, a former department store building on Market Street was transformed into a row of modern stores. A new beauty shop, barbershop, and grocery opened on Army Street. The Hollywood Furniture Company became the largest building yet constructed on Water Street, followed by The Flower Pot and many other new stores. In 1954, Water Street became completely commercial from Ocean Ave. to BMP Road.

As Henderson grew, much of the commercial development occurred outside Water Street District along Boulder Highway and, since the 1980s, in Green Valley. In 1993, Water Street underwent renovations, making it more pedestrian friendly and more hospitable to shoppers. This was followed by a more concerted redevelopment effort with the founding of the Downtown Redevelopment Area in 1995. Though Water Street has undergone many changes since the 1940s, it continues to be a center of commerce for Henderson, now offering unique shops and boutiques to residents and visitors alike.

