

# WestStar Tower

AT HUNT PLAZA



## NEWS RELEASE

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## HUNT AND WESTSTAR BREAK GROUND ON HIGH-RISE PROJECT DOWNTOWN BUSINESS COMMUNITY CELEBRATES

El Paso, TX (June 20, 2018) – Today, Hunt Companies, Inc. (“Hunt”) and WestStar celebrated the groundbreaking of a landmark project that will bring the first high-rise office building to Downtown El Paso in almost forty years. Along with officials from the City of El Paso, El Paso County and countless civic and business leaders, Hunt and WestStar executives presented the most comprehensive set of images of the new multi-tenant, multi-level “Class A” office building. At 306 feet, WestStar Tower will be the tallest building in Downtown El Paso. Plans indicate that WestStar Tower will open during Summer 2020.

“We are proud to be breaking ground on WestStar Tower today for what we know will be a signature development for El Paso,” said Josh Hunt, Executive Vice President of Hunt. “This project signals continued investment in downtown El Paso’s economic revitalization, an increased tax base, and a competitive business environment for El Paso.”

Hunt will move its headquarters from Mesa Street on the City’s west side to the new facility in Downtown El Paso, bringing approximately 175 employees to the Downtown area. The office building will serve as the corporate headquarters for Hunt, occupying three floors of the building. The Hunt Family Foundation will also be located in the building.

WestStar will consolidate its four downtown facilities to the new office tower which will serve as the corporate headquarters for WestStar. WestStar will occupy three floors and will also have a commercial bank operation on the ground floor. WestStar will bring an additional 35 employees to Downtown El Paso. In total, WestStar and its affiliates will have approximately 260 employees working in the new location.

“At WestStar, we value the role our institution plays as a driver of economic development. It is exciting for us to be a part of such a tremendous catalyst for Downtown El Paso. Today, we are proud to break ground on the future home of WestStar and what we know will make a long-lasting impact on the Downtown economy and that of the entire region,” said L. Frederick “Rick” Francis, Chairman and CEO of WestStar Bank.

“Diversifying our local economy is pivotal to the long-term success of El Paso,” said Mayor Dee Margo. “Today’s groundbreaking is another step toward decreasing the tax burden on residential taxpayers while increasing our commercial tax base. Not only does WestStar Tower align with the City’s initiative on downtown revitalization, this development will be key in attracting new companies to move and invest into our community.”

WestStar Tower will convey world-class architecture, state-of-the-art office space and beautiful views to commercial tenants in the heart of the city. On the ground level, the outdoor Hunt Plaza will feature a beautifully landscaped green space with outdoor seating and dining in a park-like atmosphere, which will also serve as a venue for community events. Occupying a full city block, the building will offer proximity to area amenities such as Southwest University Park, the Museum District, San Jacinto Plaza, and the new El Paso Streetcar system.

“The construction of WestStar Tower is another boost to the great momentum being experienced in Downtown El Paso,” said Joe Gudenrath, Executive Director of the El Paso Downtown Management District. “This building, from the very start of construction to well beyond completion, will dramatically change our downtown and reshape our skyline. The investment, the relocation of businesses to the downtown and the activity associated with a bustling high-rise building are all indications of our downtown vision becoming a reality. Thanks goes to Hunt and to WestStar for believing in and contributing to our redevelopment.”

The overall project will include approximately 262,000 rentable square feet of true Class “A” space, 13,000 square feet of ground level office and retail space and 735 parking spaces in an 18-story commercial office building.

Project partners include Duda|Paine (architect), Gensler (design), OJB (landscape architect) and Moss (general contractor). Pre-leasing has begun. Sonny Brown & Associates are leading the leasing effort for commercial and retail users.

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## **ABOUT HUNT**

Hunt is comprised of a family of companies in the real estate and infrastructure markets. As a private, family-owned company, Hunt develops, invests, manages and finances assets at all stages to derive and deliver value. Founded in 1947, Hunt builds its reputation on integrity and performance. With a focus on excellence in corporate governance, Hunt is committed to a culture of transparency for employees, clients, investors and the communities it serves. Hunt employs over 1,700 direct employees, and its broader platform (including affiliates) employs over 6,000 additional employees across the United States and Europe. Learn more at [www.huntcompanies.com](http://www.huntcompanies.com).

## **ABOUT WESTSTAR**

WestStar is a locally owned community bank with assets of more than \$1.7 billion. Servicing the El Paso, Las Cruces and northern Mexico area (collectively known as the Borderplex region), it provides businesses and retail consumers local access to a broad array of banking, wealth management, insurance and title services. Additionally, WestStar team members serve on over

100 boards and committees of nonprofit and civic organizations and participate in a wide range of community betterment efforts and philanthropic causes. For more information, visit the WestStar website at [www.weststarbank.com](http://www.weststarbank.com).

## **ABOUT DUDA|PAINE**

Duda|Paine Architects provides a full complement of design, interior design, architectural, planning and master planning services to a diverse array of international corporate, academic, health care and cultural arts clients. The firm's enduring success results from an idea-based design process that engages participants and fosters inspiration to achieve visionary built work. The firm's extensive network of associate architects and expert consultants provides highly specialized and innovative design solutions. To date, Duda|Paine Architects has received 45 design, civic and industry awards and been featured in more than one hundred publications and exhibitions. With over five million square feet of completed projects in the United States and internationally, eighty-five percent of the firm's current work comes from repeat clients – a testament to Duda|Paine's process of engagement and focus on client satisfaction. For additional information visit [dudapaine.com](http://dudapaine.com).

## **ABOUT GENSLER**

Gensler is a global interior design firm grounded in the belief that great design optimizes business performance and human potential. Our 4,700 practitioners, networked across 46 offices, use global perspective and local presence to innovate at every scale. Whether we are refreshing a retailer's brand, planning a new urban district or designing a super tall building, we strive to make the everyday places people occupy more inspiring, more resilient and more impactful. For more information, go to [www.gensler.com](http://www.gensler.com).

## **ABOUT OJB**

Founded in 1989, OJB Landscape Architecture began with a focus on creating landscapes that provide unique and unforgettable sensory experiences. OJB's recent work has focused on the rejuvenation of American cities through the creation of distinctive public park spaces including ULI Urban Open Space Award winning Klyde Warren Park in Dallas and Myriad Gardens in Oklahoma City. Other notable projects include the artfully planted Sunnylands Center and Gardens in Rancho Mirage, CA, Levy Park in Houston and LeBauer Park in Greensboro. In 2016, James Burnett, FASLA, founder of OJB Landscape Architecture, received the ASLA Design Medal and in 2015, OJB received the ASLA Firm Award for its portfolio of work. Learn more at [www.ojb.com](http://www.ojb.com).

## **ABOUT MOSS**

Moss, a Hunt affiliate, is a national, privately held construction firm providing innovative solutions resulting in award-winning projects. With regional offices across the United States, Moss focuses on construction management at-risk, design-build and public-private partnerships. The company's diverse portfolio encompasses a wide range of sectors, including luxury high-rise residential, landmark mixed-use developments, hospitality, primary and higher education, justice and solar energy. Moss prides itself on a strong entrepreneurial culture that honors safety, quality, client engagement and employee development. Its employees consistently rank Moss as one of the best places to work. For more information, go to [www.mosscm.com](http://www.mosscm.com).