

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

MORNING

EVENING

SUNDAY

AMON G. CARTER, PRESIDENT

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

April 13, 1936.

Mr. R. H. Grant,
General Sales Manager,
General Motors Corporation,
Detroit, Mich.

Dear Mr. Grant:

I am writing to both you and Mr. Knudson in the hope that we can interest you in some character of participation by General Motors in Fort Worth's \$5,000,000 Frontier Centennial.

This Centennial will be in no sense an exposition and in no wise will compete with Dallas. There will be practically no industrial, agricultural or scientific exhibits. Our principal exhibit of such nature will be the all-resource exhibit of the West Texas Chamber of Commerce, embracing 130 West Texas counties, including 195 towns and cities, which we believe fitting, because the Frontier Centennial itself will depict the frontier as it was in the early days of West Texas and the exhibit as it is today.

There will be spent approximately \$5,000,000 on this celebration. Half of it will go to the construction of a 6,000 capacity arena-coliseum; 3,000 capacity auditorium; memorial tower 208 feet high, surmounted by an airplane beacon; two large exhibit halls; rodeo and horse show barns. This unit will constitute one of the finest livestock exhibition plants in the nation and will be used yearly after the Frontier Centennial by our Southwestern Exposition & Fat Stock Show, which has recently concluded its Fortieth Annual Show. Likewise, it will give Fort Worth the best convention facilities in Texas. This part of the exposition will probably open about October 15th, following the opening of the Frontier Centennial July 1st., which will consist of frontier villages, rodeo, numerous institutions of frontier days - the idea being to have the old West live again with all of its romance, thrills and action. Supplementing this will be all the modern entertainment we can pack into it. We have let the contract for the largest open air cafe in the world, seating 3,500, with a revolving stage 150 feet in diameter and costing \$205,000.

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✓ We have engaged one of the ablest, most colorful and enterprising showmen in the business to direct it. He is none other than Billy Rose, producer of "Jumbo" now playing at the Hippodrome in New York. The designer is Albert Johnson, who is responsible for the stage effects in "The Great Waltz".

✓ Our show will be purely entertainment. "Jumbo" will be moved from the Hippodrome to the Frontier Centennial in Fort Worth, on which we will spend \$150,000 housing it in a picturesque old time circus building, clipping of which I enclose, herewith. Paul Whiteman and his orchestra have been signed to play six weeks in the open air cafe and the program is to have one of the outstanding radio and moving picture stars here each week during the 15 weeks of the show. On this special star program entertainment alone will be spent over \$150,000.

Ⓞ Inasmuch as General Motors are spending a substantial sum in Dallas, we feel you should be represented in some manner in the Fort Worth Frontier Centennial, which would help our show to great success. It would be entirely in keeping with the occasion as you are the pioneer motors manufacturers of the country. In fact, you have been pioneering all of your existence and since our background is pioneer an exhibit of this type by General Motors, I believe, would be of great value to you and could be had at comparatively small cost.

Since we are not having exhibits generally as yet, we have sold no space. It would be my idea for you to build your own building, put on your own exhibit and such entertainment as you figure would be appropriate for the occasion. The building would be erected in keeping with the period which the Frontier Centennial represents.

✓ In connection with the PWA grants bonds voted by the City of Fort Worth, the Frontier Centennial is an Independent Corporation organized for \$750,000 under the laws of the State of Texas. The location of this show is on Camp Bowie Boulevard, two miles from the heart of the City and just beyond your present Chevrolet plant. The ground embraces approximately 140 acres of the old Van Zandt homestead which has never been on the market for the past fifty years.

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✓ We are selling 4% bonds and all proceeds from the show over and above expenses will be allocated to the retirement of the bonds, it being purely a civic enterprise with no profit to any individual. Any profits accruing after the bonds have been paid off will go to the City of Fort Worth.

✓ The three public utilities; The Texas Electric Service Company, Lone Star Gas Company and the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company have each bought \$25,000 worth of bonds. The Fort Worth Clearing House Association is subscribing for \$75,000.00 worth of bonds. As an evidence of our faith in the enterprise, the Star-Telegram is subscribing for \$25,000 worth and other subscriptions range from \$100.00 to \$25,000. At the present time we have sold over \$500,000 in bonds. It is our intention to sell the full \$750,000 worth of bonds.

7 This brings me to the proposition you would be interested in. Namely, as to what it would cost General Motors. My idea would be to furnish you sufficient ground space, all you need, on a basis of your purchasing \$50,000.00 worth of 4% bonds, on which there will be very little chance of their not being paid off in full. As a matter of fact, the kind of show Billy Rose is going to produce should make from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 profit, after paying all expenses and paying off the \$750,000 in bonds. So, it would bring you down to the point that your main expense would be in the type of building you would erect and the expense of carrying on your display or entertainment, whatever you should decide best fitted for the occasion. The type of building representing this period will naturally be inexpensive as they will be built of lumber and could be covered with canvas. The fronts of all the buildings will be typical of the structures which prevailed in early days, such as the old opera house, general stores, saloons, hotels, etc.

✓ There are 2,000,000 people within 150 mile radius of Fort Worth. With our Frontier Centennial, our modern entertainment, Whiteman's orchestra, "Jumbo", stage, screen and radio celebrities each week, we can draw sufficient attendance from this area alone to more than pay off the bonds. It will be the kind of show that people will attend almost each week for the 15 weeks period.

Dallas will have a great show and is expecting ten or twelve million paid attendance. We are confident we can attract from 50 to 60 percent of all who attend

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✓ The Dallas show; and, in our bond setup we can pay off with even two million attendance. This attendance, we can secure irrespective of what Dallas may do and what percentage we may obtain from the Dallas visitors.

Of the \$5,000,000 Fort Worth will be putting into the show, more than half of it will go into the large group of buildings, mentioned above, made possible by the taxpayers' bond issue, a PWA grant and \$250,000 received from the federal government Centennial fund. Of the \$500,000 worth of bonds already sold, \$350,000 worth of them were sold to approximately 60 firms and individuals.

I think you will have another advantage in Fort Worth. You will not have the competition of the various exhibit buildings. General Motors should be the big, standout exhibit, with an entirely different appeal from that at Dallas and a different background.

Incidentally, we have had this matter up with John E. Johnson, Chevrolet Regional Manager, to whom I am sending a copy of this letter.

I feel this is a great opportunity for General Motors at a minimum expense and while I regret the necessity of writing you such a long letter, there is really so much to tell that it could not be covered in any other than a lengthy communication of this kind. I am so thoroughly sold on this project, if I had had, personally, the money to invest, I wouldn't even look back in subscribing the entire amount of the bonds, which, of course, is in no sense a guarantee but merely an evidence of my faith in the opportunity Fort Worth has to produce the greatest, most thrilling, colorful and interesting show ever held in America as indicated above to you, and I hope we may have your careful consideration.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

