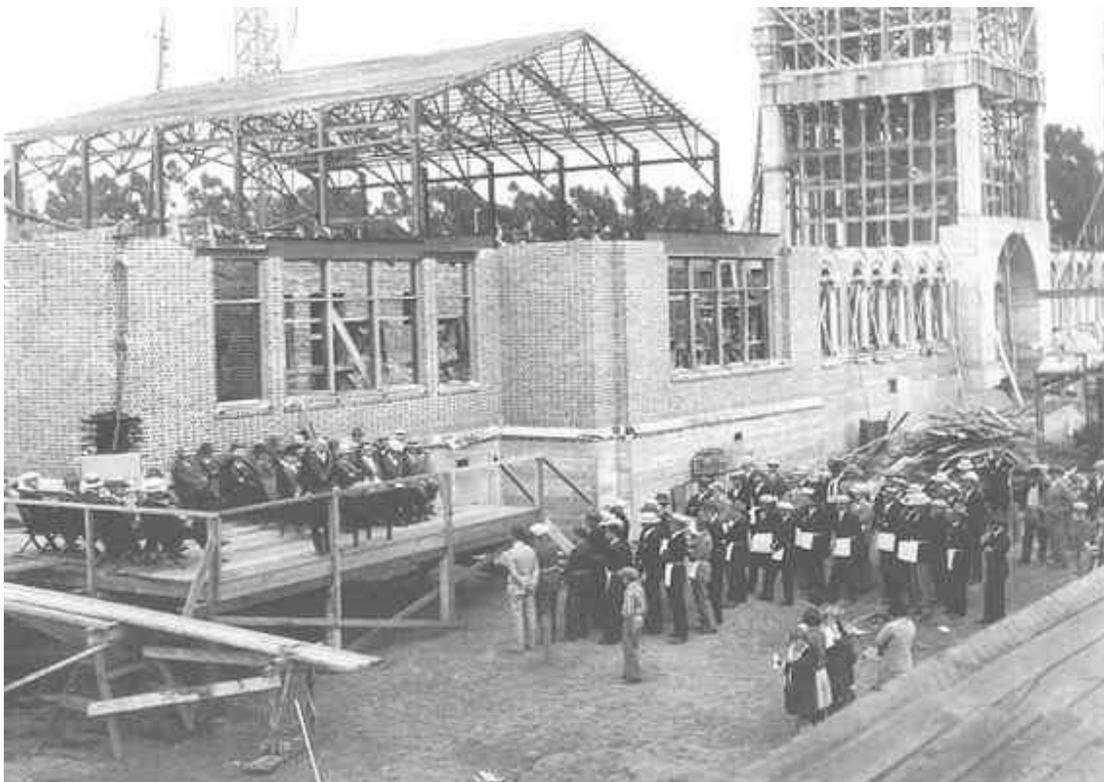


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DAILY BREEZE

El Segundo celebrates its 100th birthday with year of centennial events



Ceremony for the laying of the cornerstone at the El Segundo High School administration building on June 18, 1927. (Credit: Friends of the El Segundo Public Library)

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Undated historical photo shows a partial view of the Standard Oil refinery at El Segundo. (Credit: Friends of the El Segundo Public Library)

In the spring of 1911, Standard Oil Co. sent a team of surveyors to Southern California to find an ideal location to build its second refinery in the state.

The oil giant selected 840 acres of sand dunes and fields near the ocean on Rancho Sausal Redondo, a Spanish land grant that made up much of the South Bay.

Six years later, the small community of 1,000 residents surrounding the budding operation was incorporated into the city of El Segundo, which in Spanish means “the second,” a nod to the Standard Oil refinery.

Today, the city’s daytime population balloons to more than 70,000 mostly professionals, and dips to about 16,500 residents by night.

This week, “Mayberry by the Sea,” as it is affectionately called, kicks off a yearlong centennial celebration.

More than 1,000 people attended a 100th birthday bash at Library Park on Wednesday — the city’s actual centennial — and hundreds of guests are set to attend a sold-out Centennial Ball at the Automobile Driving Museum on Saturday.

All year long, El Segundo police officers will wear reproductions of the force’s original badges. Firefighters recently debuted a commemorative shoulder patch.

All of the city’s annual events — including the Hometown Fair, Fourth of July, and Movie in the Park, for example — will feature a “pop-up” museum featuring historical photos from a recently published [“Images of America” book](#) written by El Segundo Library Director Debra Brighton.

For City Manager Greg Carpenter, an El Segundo native, the centennial is an opportunity to highlight the lesser-known history and identity of a town that has long been defined by industry.

In addition to oil production, El Segundo became a hub for defense and aerospace companies over the course of the 20th century. Today, the city is experiencing a creative, biotech, and hotel boom.

“It still has its small-town charm,” Carpenter said. “That’s really been a challenge — to allow for change to occur and promote development, but maintain the character and charm at the same time.”

In 2014, El Segundo set a goal of attracting 100 new businesses by its 100th birthday. It was named the most business-friendly city in Los Angeles County the following year.

“As of the end of 2016, we overachieved and we have 117 new businesses,” Carpenter said.

The opening of The Point shopping center and the Elevon office complex helped reach the goal.

Meredith Petit, the city’s recreation and parks director, said a few more centennial events could be announced for the fall and winter. A fireworks spectacular is planned for September.

“We’ll be trying to add some centennial flair to our traditional events as well,” she said.

A special committee has spent the past year organizing the festivities with donations from sponsors.

For more information, visit elsegundo100.org

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