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...the Lubbock tornado - "jump-started" the local economy. The tragic catastrophe occurred on the night of May 11, 1970. The huge tornado, or series of tornadoes, swept through the eastern half of the city. It obliterated entire sections of town. In particular, the Hispanic barrio known as the Guadalupe neighborhood north of Fourth Street and east of Avenue Q and the nearby residential area south of Fourth Street between Avenue Q and Texas Avenue suffered almost complete devastation. The Country Club Addition, north of Loop 289 and west of 1-27 was also hard hit. The tornado killed twenty-eight people and injured over 1,750 others. The storm caused an estimated \$135 million in damage, destroying over 1,100 structures and damaging over 8,800 more. Federal, state, and private aid poured into the city.

As they considered the task of rebuilding the damaged sections of the city, government officials and local leaders proposed a number of physical changes. The Guadalupe neighborhood, they believed, was nearly a lost cause. The tornado destroyed most homes in the area, and the place was nearly leveled. Many Hispanic families relocated to other sections of town, mostly to the south and west of the area, but some to the Cherry Point neighborhood east of Mackenzie Park. Rebuilding in the Guadalupe section was slow, and many years passed before any substantial rebuilding took place.

The total devastation of the neighborhood between Fourth Street and Main Street east of Avenue Q presented the city of Lubbock with an opportunity long discussed. For many years, city leaders had lobbied for some sort of civic center and public development in the downtown area. To such leaders, the time seemed propitious, and from the rubble of some of the oldest neighborhoods in the city a new civic complex arose. The Civic Center, the Mahon Library, the Department of Public Safety complex, and a significant amount of open space emerged as the result of the use of federal relief and urban renewal funds. Workers cleared out damaged buildings and property along the east side of Avenue Q, and new commercial development took place in the form of hotels and restaurants.

The vast amounts of money and labor required to rebuild the damaged sections of the city pulled the local economy to new heights. The building boom already underway on the Texas Tech campus spilled across the entire city. The efforts to rebuild the downtown area and other projects to serve the growing southwestern part of the city joined to create a thriving economy. In 1972 the South Plains Mall opened its doors, and in 1976 a new and much improved Municipal Airport terminal opened.