

# Stripes Renovates its Outdoor Lighting

By Wayne Gosnell

September 10, 2012 - Have you noticed anything different lately about Blanco's nights? There are more stars out. Why?

Walk outside tonight and look over towards the Stripes service station south of town. What do you see? Or better put, what don't you see? There is no longer a big glow there caused by canopy lights from the station shining up into the night sky.



Recessed canopy lights and directed area lighting recently installed at the Blanco Stripes facility provide a safe and attractive environment for customers while protecting Blanco's view of the stars by preventing light from shining up into the nighttime sky.

Stripes has done a complete renovation of the canopy lights on its station on Highway 281, South in Blanco. They have replaced the old style lights above the pumps with modern, LED lights recessed into the canopy itself. Additionally, they have scrapped the bright area lights that used to shine from the canopy straight onto the front of the building and far beyond. They have replaced them with full-cutoff area lights that do not shine above the horizon. These lights provide a safe and attractive environment for Stripes patrons and, very importantly do not allow aberrant light to reach our night skies. Well done, Stripes!

The renovations are the culmination of several years of persistent efforts by a group of concerned Blanco citizens dedicated to

preserving our night skies. The group approached the original owner of the Exxon station that is now Stripes as it was being built in 2006, asking him to correct the design of the station's outdoor lighting. These efforts came to naught and our night skies suffered for it.

In March, 2011, encouraged that Stripes, LLC had purchased the station, the group renewed its efforts to influence the lighting at the facility. Stripes was under no legal obligation to do anything at all about the lighting. While the Blanco Unified Development Code (UDC) requires new outdoor lighting within the city to be night sky-friendly, the station was "grandfathered" in that when it was built in 2006 it was located in Blanco's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) and was, therefore, exempt from the UDC.

Nevertheless, Stripes listened to the pleas of the Blanco citizens' group that its outdoor lighting be modified to be more night sky-friendly. Motivated by its corporate commitment to be a good neighbor in the communities in which it operates, the Stripes President and CEO, Mr. Steven DeSutter, assured the group of the company's intention to install "directed lighting" at the station.

The company has made good on its promise. Go see for yourself. The Blanco Stripes is now a true, night sky-friendly business, one worthy of emulation. The company deserves the thanks of all Blanco citizens.