



# MODISETT BALL PARK

Rushville, NE



CONCEPT DESIGN BY HDR ARCHITECTURE

## HONORING A LEGACY

The history of the park began in 1935 when Sheridan County ranchers Albert and Mayre Modisett established an endowment (enhanced in 1944), which ultimately left a lasting mark on their neighbors. These wealthy cattlemen gave back to their community by designating funds for the purpose of ultimately building several new structures.

Honoring the brothers' love of baseball, the most notable gift was a small, yet state-of-the-art baseball field. It would become known as Modisett Ball Park.

"If you build it they will come"...and 2,500 ringed the field on opening day. Later, with some help from O'Neill native and Rushville resident Gene Leahy (brother to football coach and legend Frank Leahy) was instrumental in bringing the Milwaukee Braves' baseball school and tryout camp to Rushville in 1954. Would-be big league players from all over Nebraska and many surrounding states were put through their paces and instructed by baseball greats like Hall of Fame player and batting instructor Paul Waner, along with other Braves coaches. The boys brought with them a spirit that still exists today for the 200 or so young boys from Gordon and Rushville who play in three Summer programs.

## A FORGOTTEN BIT OF HISTORY

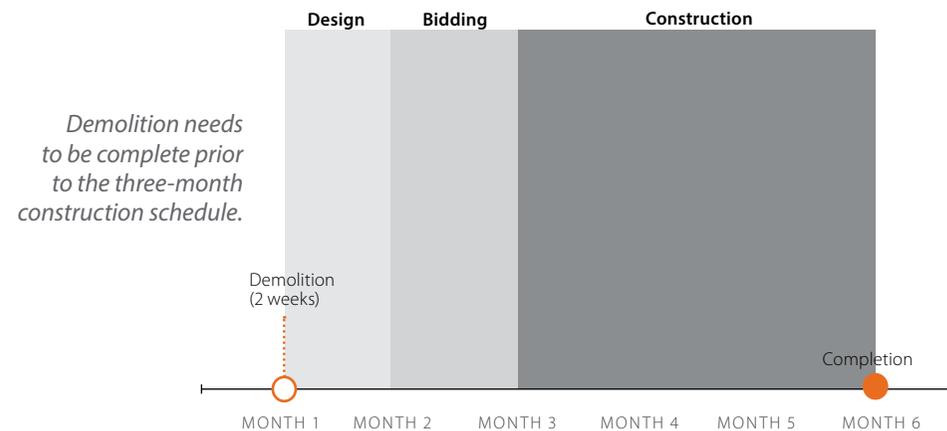
As the 80th anniversary of the Modisett's endowment approaches, the aging facilities have deteriorated. Recently, the community has discussed trying to fix-up the facility. Chris Heiser, now mayor of Rushville, agreed that action was needed and sought funds to repaint the grandstand. Some, but not nearly adequate, donations were made.

Aware of the special Rushville community energy and hometown pride, another local son, John Gottschalk, was asked by Mayor Heiser in June 2013 if he could help with the fix-up efforts. The Modisett Ball Park face-lift was discussed—John immediately asked the mayor to stop whatever the town had planned until he could get there. He flew out to Rushville a few days later with an architect and engineer accompanying him. The three men, including the Mayor and park superintendent, spent a couple of hours ascertaining the condition of the facilities. By the time John returned to Omaha later

that day, the list of needed improvements numbered 42. The original grandstand foundation was a significant problem. Over the summer, John's vision evolved to fully renovate and reconstruct the Ball Park Complex.

## REVITALIZING A DREAM Moving forward...the proposed plan

To preserve this extraordinary piece of local history and infuse it with a new vitality to last well into the future, a comprehensive plan was developed. The first step involved reviewing current conditions. John retained HDR, the firm that designed the TD Ameritrade Park for the College World Series in Omaha, to perform a study and provide recommendations for renovation. Results determined that given the age of wood and the condition of the existing grandstand, the most appropriate, economical, and long-term approach would be to rebuild the grandstand, matching the original structure as closely as possible.



Based on the study, the key improvements will include:

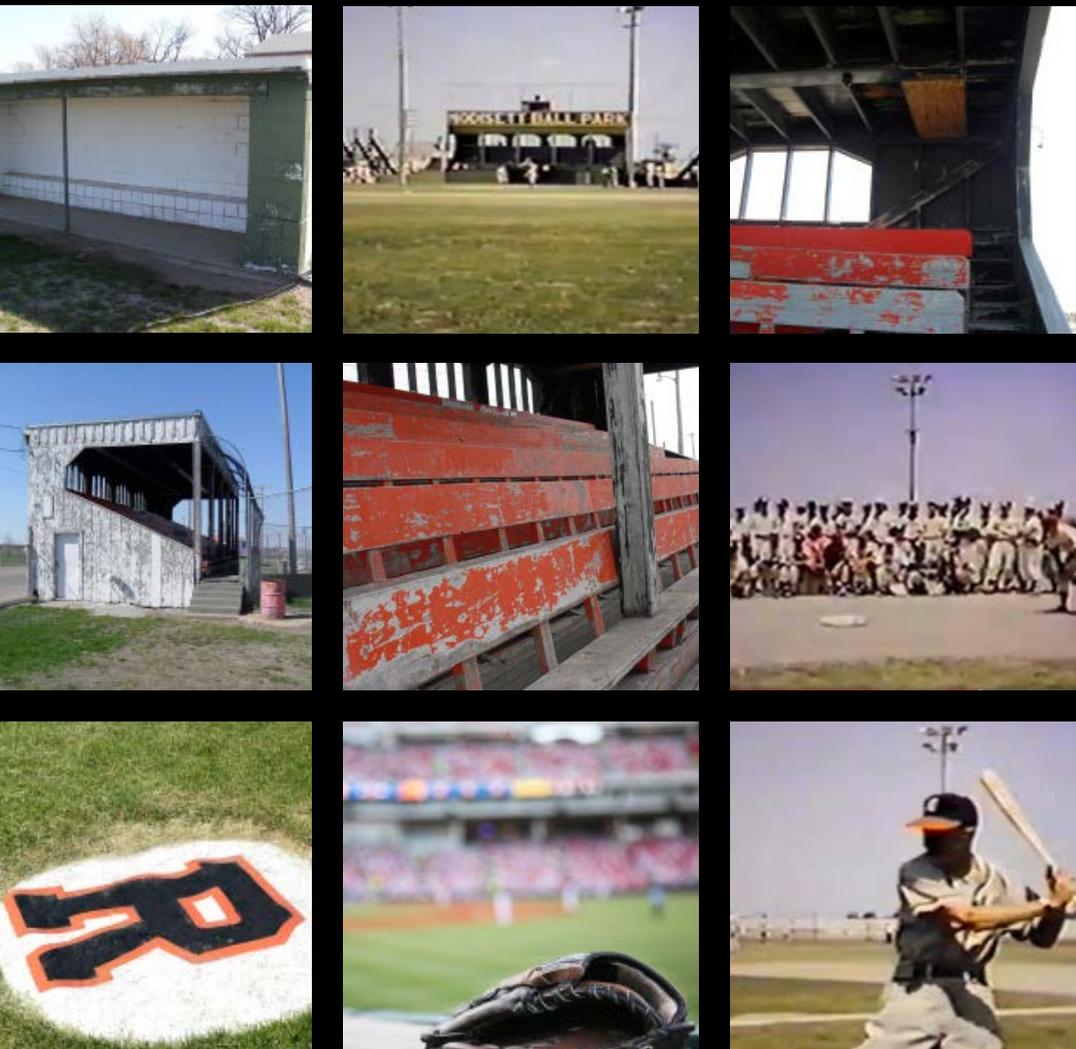
- » A new grandstand with weatherproof bleachers, ADA access and a seating capacity of 450. Optional bleacher extensions would raise capacity to 1,000
- » New announcer's press box atop the Grandstand similar to the original
- » A new scoreboard
- » New below-grade dugouts and bullpens on each side of the field, similar to the originals
- » Concession space and storage area under the grandstand
- » All new men's and women's restrooms

- » New batting cage
- » A completely new infield rebuilt for proper drainage
- » A new sprinkler system and new lighting are also in the long-term plans, dependent on the success of the fundraising effort

The renovation is expected to be complete by summer 2014, the 75th anniversary of the beginning of construction on the original Modisett Ball Park, which was dedicated a year later in 1940 with over 2,500 people in attendance for a game between the town champions of Nebraska and Colorado.



TIMES HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE BALLPARK'S OPENING BUT **THE GREAT BASEBALL LEGACY REMAINS.** SOME OF BASEBALL'S LEGENDARY TEAMS—THE BRAVES, YANKEES, AND DODGERS—ATTENDED CAMPS AND HELD TRYOUTS IN THIS SANDHILLS' JEWEL OF A BALLPARK. THE CITY'S LARGEST HISTORICAL EVENTS HAVE BEEN STAGED HERE AND YOUNG BOYS ARE STILL EAGER TO "PLAY BALL." THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.



## HOW CAN I HELP?

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Inspired by the Modisetts' generous spirit and underscoring the success of the grassroots effort to-date, this joint project of the City of Rushville and the Carmen and John Gottschalk Foundation, a qualified tax exempt 501c3 organization, is designed to replicate and enhance the original ball park. The goal is to complete the entire project in time for summer 2014 play. With that in mind, financial support of \$100,000 by March 1, 2014 is critical to launch the project and ultimately recreate what news accounts reported at its opening as "credited by visitors as being the finest in western Nebraska."

**Your support of Rushville and this project is requested. Please either deliver or send your gift (with check payable to Modisett Park Project Fund) to:**

**Modisett Park Project Fund**  
Security First Bank  
Rushville, NE 69360

**Modisett Park Project Fund**  
City of Rushville  
Box 99  
Rushville, NE 69360

Please include your name and address so a receipt can be issued for your tax-deductible gift from the Carmen and John Gottschalk Foundation, Modisett Park Project Fund 533 North 86th St., Omaha, NE 68114.

## PROJECT GOALS AND TIMELINE

- » The Gottschalks' launched the campaign with an initial \$250,000 commitment.
- » If Rushville citizens raise \$100,000 before the March 1, 2014 deadline, construction will begin.
- » The remaining primary and optional project improvement costs (yet to be determined) must be raised by July 1, 2014 to complete the renovations and any other optional improvements.

# HDR

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