

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Hyo Silver Downtown opens Thursday

One of the city's most historic buildings is now the new home of one of its most popular destination businesses. Hyo Silver Downtown will open its doors at 315 11th Street in Bandera on Thursday, May 28, following a nearly year-long renovation project. Hyo Silver, long known for its hand-crafted buckles and jewelry, especially custom class rings, is moving into Bandera's first bank.

"We believe that this move is going to be a win-win for our community and for our business," Joanne Symons, Hyo Silver founder and president, said. "We have visitors who come from all over Texas and neighboring states to shop at Hyo, and they never see the rest of Bandera and all that it has to offer. And I know that we were missing out on opportunities by not being part of the downtown community and its many visitors."

The newly renovated building, built in 1860, is located at the corner of Cedar and 11th streets. The two-story native limestone structure has been a bank, school, home, various retail stores and businesses, and housed the telephone switchboard for Bandera, according to Roy Dugosh, former president and long-time member of the Bandera County Historical Commission. In front of the building is a Texas historical marker proclaiming the site the center of the town of Bandera back in the early years.

Symons called the building restoration her passion project.

"I have a love of older things, and I really appreciate the historical importance of the building," she said. "Back then, things were built with what was available at the time. You have to respect that. We knew that restoring the building would take some time, but we saw it as an opportunity to give back to the community. It was in dire need of restoration, or the town could have risked losing the building."

The deep history of the building and the origins of Hyo Silver seemed to be a natural fit, said Josie Symons Krider, vice president of the company and Joanne's daughter.

"It's part of the local western heritage and Bandera's roots," she said. "Hyo Silver also has strong roots in the western cowboy heritage, so this is the perfect building to showcase our collection of old favorites and new designs."

Symons, who is originally from Australia, opened Hyo Silver in 1999. Her father was a roper who would take her on the Australian rodeo circuit when she was young. She ran barrels, tied goats, competed in some father-daughter events, and went on to become Miss Rodeo Australia in 1982. She and her father shared a passion for all things western, especially *The Lone Ranger* television show. When it was time for her to strike out on her own in a new world, the old slogan "Hi Yo, Silver, Away!" popped into her head and the name stuck.

"One of the reasons that I love this building is that it goes back to the Cowboy Era," Symons said, "back to when everything ran on horsepower. It was just the way of life. With my family and Hyo Silver's roots in rodeo, it is a wonderful fit. Rodeo is a continuation of the cowboy way of life, and we are proud to be part of that tradition." Tradition played a strong part in the restoration, Krider said, even though much work was needed. That included replacing the staircase and upper deck, all windows, and the mortar on the limestone. The foundation was secured, and a wheelchair-accessible entrance and bathroom were added. Fiber internet, new indoor and outdoor lighting, and gutters were installed. Historic doors were refinished and installed with brass fixtures and glass knobs. Every step was taken with consideration of the building's history in mind.

"We want to express our gratitude to officials on both the state and local level for their valuable insight and guidance in helping us keep the restoration historically accurate," Krider said. "The Texas Historical Commission was especially helpful with its recommendations. And Jimmy Allen, the Bandera's code enforcement officer, was very easy to

work with, generous with his time, and worked efficiently to get clean and concise answers to our questions. Bandera is lucky to have him.” Complementing the newly restored showroom is the early American cabinetry that aligns perfectly with the timeline of the building, Krider said. The J.D. Warren cabinets date from Oct. 9, 1913. They were purchased from Eva Lee with Country Accent Antiques, who custom restored them. “These amazing display cabinets were introduced in the Agriculture exhibit at the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis, Missouri,” Lee said. “They revolutionized how America bought and sold hardware at the turn of the century.”

Some of the building’s “history,” while interesting, cannot be substantiated. The building was used as a school between 1860 and 1879, Dugosh said. In the 1880s, it was known as the Bandera Institute, operated by a man known as Professor Ryan, thought by some to be the fugitive John Wilkes Booth. In 1906, the First Bank of Bandera opened in the building. In 1932, robbers hit the bank. By using a torch, they burned a hole in the top of the safe, making off with \$4,000 and leaving a single dollar bill, Dugosh said. They were never caught despite the best efforts of the Texas Rangers.

The Hyo Silver storefront had formerly been located at 1107 12th Street. That location will continue to be used as company headquarters and offices.