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## Of UFOs and aliens — when is enough, enough?

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Tim Korte THE ASSOCIATED PRESS | Telegram & Gazette

Sixty years after bigheaded, toothpick-limbed green aliens allegedly crashed in the New Mexico desert — leaving little but paranoia in their wake — Roswell embraces the extraterrestrial.

To a point.

A McDonald's mimics a UFO. A wall of Wal-Mart displays a large rendering of a green spaceman. Arby's restaurant is hospitable: "Aliens Welcome," reads the big sign out front. The city draws thousands of enthusiasts to its annual UFO festival, which runs this weekend.

But when it comes to support for space oddities, it seems that the sky is not the limit.

Gene Frazier and Thomas Armstrong have a dream: Earth Station Roswell, a \$67 million resort and conference center for UFO enthusiasts featuring a 1,000-seat concert center, an exhibit hall, fine-dining restaurant, cafe, deli, lounge, a 400-seat theater and lecture hall, an RV shop, lagoon-style swimming pool and a massive underground parking garage.

The anchor would be the "Mothership," a 75-foot high, 300-room hotel that Frazier calls "the world's largest replica of a flying saucer."

There had already been those, like Julie Shuster, director of the International UFO Museum and Research Center, who questioned whether UFO exploitation had gone too far. "Greed and ego are rampant among the UFO field and among everybody who is trying to capitalize on it," she says, shaking her head.

Now the resort proposal — and another by city officials to build a UFO-themed amusement park, complete with an indoor roller coaster that would take passengers on a simulated alien abduction — have fueled some talk: How much should Roswell exploit its little green men?

"Anytime you talk UFOs, aliens or the paranormal, you're going to get a divided room," says city planner Zach Montgomery.

Shuster grew up in Roswell. "I don't want to make it sound like Mayberry or 'The Donna Reed Show,' but we were never inside in the summer," she says. "You knew everybody. Good Lord forgive you if you ever got in trouble because your parents knew about it before you got home."

She describes Roswell residents as cautious people who "don't typically jump in unless you know the depth of the water, you know if there's rocks under there."

The economy relied upon petroleum exploration, banking, dairies, ranching and the military, at least until the Air Force base closed in 1967.

In earlier years, folks never talked about the UFO affair.

"People were told — people in the military, in particular — if you want a VA loan or any government assistance for you, for your kids or your grandkids, you won't say anything about it now or ever," she recalls.

Shuster's father, Walter Haut, played a small part in all that. As the public information lieutenant at Roswell Army Air Base, he was ordered by a colonel to issue the July 8, 1947, news release disclosing the recovery of "a flying disk" at a ranch near Roswell.

The next day, higher-ranking officers said the debris came from a weather balloon that crashed; authorities displayed some bits and pieces.

More than 30 years passed, and the incident was generally forgotten. But then, an Army officer who took part in the recovery of the debris came forward to assert that it had been from an alien spacecraft, and that the government had engaged in a cover-up.

International UFO Museum: [www.roswellufomuseum.com](http://www.roswellufomuseum.com) Earth Station Roswell: [www.earthstationroswell.com](http://www.earthstationroswell.com) City of Roswell site: [www.roswell-nm.gov](http://www.roswell-nm.gov)

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