



Minor league baseball is officially returning to Roswell after a 50-plus year absence.

The Roswell Invaders, an independent minor league team in the Pecos League, finalized a two-year lease for the use of Joe Bauman Stadium on Nov. 11 when the Roswell City Council approved the lease at its regular board meeting.

League commissioner Andrew Dunn was happy that all the paperwork was finally completed and the team could move forward with preparing for the 2011 season.

“We haven’t had a lot of time to work here in Roswell, so I’m happy that we could get the lease signed and start moving forward with the franchise here,” he said. “I think it will work here and I’m excited to have a team here in Roswell.”

The Invaders are one of five New Mexico-based franchises in the first-year league, along with the Carlsbad Bats, Clovis Pioneers, Las Cruces Vaqueros and White Sands Pupfish (Alamogordo). Three Texas franchises — Alpine Cowboys, Del Rio Aviators and Odessa Dragons — complete the eight-team lineup for the inaugural season.

Each of the eight teams will play a 74-game regular season schedule. Roswell opens its inaugural campaign on May 11 by traveling to face Clovis and makes its debut at home on May 13 against Clovis.

Teams in the Pecos League operate on a yearly budget of approximately \$121,000, with players receiving \$100 per week during the season and the manager receiving \$10,000 per season.

Roswell will be managed by Chris Paterson, a former professional and collegiate player who currently coaches in the California Winter League alongside former MLB all-star and CWL commissioner Darrell Evans.

“Roswell has one of the best managers in the league in Chris Paterson,” Dunn said. “He’s signing some great players and he’s going to put together a good team.”

The most unique component of the league is the housing for players during the season.

Instead of housing players in hotels, Pecos League players will stay with local host families throughout the year.

“For this to work, we need these host families,” Dunn said. “The budget just can’t work without host families, so it’s important.

Season tickets cost \$200 each for the Invaders and individual game tickets start at \$6. Businesses interested in sponsoring the team and families interested in becoming a host family should visit the team’s website, www.roswellinvaders.com.

The Invaders are the first minor-league team to call Roswell home since the Joe Bauman-managed San Angelo/Roswell Pirates played at what was then-called Fair Park Stadium (now Joe Bauman Stadium) in 1959.

The Roswell Rockets played at the same stadium from 1949-56, including the 1954 season in which Bauman hit a then-professional record 72 home runs while leading the Rockets to an 87-51 record.

A team known as the Roswell Aliens was slated to play several years ago, but the team, and league, never played a game and folded before the start of the first season.

kjkeller@roswell-record.com