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Big D's Big Dreams

All things are possible in the city of entrepreneurial spirit and youthful energy. By Ron Bernthal



PHOTO: DALLAS CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS

BILL LIVELY, PRESIDENT AND CEO of the new Dallas Center for the Performing Arts, stood in front of a large office window high above downtown Dallas and gazed proudly at the \$338 million construction project below. The center, to be completed in fall 2009, is one of the most significant performing arts centers to be built since New York City's Philharmonic Hall (now Avery Fisher Hall) opened in 1962.

The new DCPA will include the

The revitalization of downtown and nearby neighborhoods is important to Dallas' large meeting and convention industry.

Winspear Opera House, designed by Norman Foster; the innovative, 12-level Wylie Theatre, co-designed by Rem Koolhaas; a 10-acre public park created by Parisian architect Michel Desvigne and several other venues — expanding what is already

the country's largest urban Arts District. Raising private funds in Dallas, America's ninth largest city, takes plenty of networking and social skills, but Dallas is a city of deep pockets and big hearts, and Lively has raised more than \$300 million

BIG PRODUCTION:

Artist's rendering of the future Dallas Center for the Performing Arts



for the project through private and corporate donations — with 115 Dallas residents contributing over \$1 million each.

Dallas experienced downturns when its economy was narrowly focused on finance and oil, but today the city is much more diverse, and local economic indicators have held steady even as other parts of the country are mired in plunging real estate values, urban stagnation and rising unemployment. Housing

INFO TO GO

Located mid-way between Dallas and Fort Worth, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) is the seventh busiest in the world. Two hotels, the Hyatt Grand DFW and Hyatt Regency DFW, are located within the airport. Taxis charge a \$40 flat rate to downtown; shared ride shuttle service is \$14–\$17 to Dallas-area hotels. Major car rental firms share a facility just outside the airport, accessed by free shuttle bus. Travel time to downtown Dallas is 20 to 40 minutes, depending on traffic. Free shuttle buses also connect DFW to the Trinity Railway Express CentrePort train station south of the airport. One-way fare to downtown Dallas' Union Station via train is \$1.50. Love Field (DAL) has been Dallas' "in-town" airport since the 1920s and is only five miles from downtown but provides fewer non-stop flights.

prices in Dallas have declined only 0.8 percent from last year, one of the lowest averages of 30 major metropolitan areas. The Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex unemployment rate in June was 4.8 percent, lower than New York (5.1 percent), Denver (5.5 percent) or Los Angeles (6.6 percent). The region keeps adding people as well, with a growth rate of 29 percent (1990–2000), bringing its total population to 6.1 million, with Dallas itself accounting for 1.2 million residents.

Currently, 135,000 people work in Dallas' Central Business District at major employers like JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Belo, Neiman Marcus and PricewaterhouseCoopers, as well as at smaller companies, hotels, restaurants and shops. New arrivals to the district, attracted by lower costs for commercial real estate, transportation and taxes, include AT&T, Comerica Bank, Corgan Architects, Hunt Consolidated and 7-Eleven, which moved more than 900 employees into One Arts Plaza, a modern glass building that anchors one end of the Arts District. By 2025, the downtown work force is expected to increase to 156,000. Other major employers in the region include American Airlines/AMR, Texas Instruments, JCPenney, Southwest Airlines, Blockbuster, EDS, Kimberly-Clark and Fluor Corporation.

The residential population of downtown Dallas is also increasing as new housing units create large live/work loft spaces and condominium

apartments within walking distance of celebrity-chef restaurants, entertainment venues and the modern DART light-rail system. So far, demand for new housing in downtown Dallas and its suburbs is keeping up with supply. There are 30,000 people living in downtown Dallas now, a 142 percent increase since 1990, and an additional 18,000 are expected to move in by 2010. Between 2000 and 2007 the northern suburb of McKinney was the fastest-growing city in the country, with a 112.5 percent increase in population.

The revitalization of downtown and nearby neighborhoods is important to Dallas' large meeting and convention industry. The city is determined to finalize plans for a convention center hotel, the lack of which has kept some large associations from booking meetings here. Leisure travelers, too, are being courted. Several years ago only 11 percent of Dallas' hotel guests were vacationers, but that figure is increasing with the opening of new arts and entertainment venues and high-end hotels including Ritz-Carlton, W Dallas and Joule, in addition to a planned Mandarin Oriental and Le Méridien. Other properties — Rosewood Crescent, Mansion on Turtle Creek and the historic **Stoneleigh Hotel** — have renovated to attract younger business travelers and couples on romantic getaways.

The city's most ambitious public works and private development project, however, is taking place just south of downtown, along the Trin-



TOUCHDOWN: Like A Bird sculpture by Richard Deacon at the Nasher Sculpture Center and, below, an artist's rendering of the Dallas Cowboys Stadium

DIVERSIONS

The **Dallas Center for the Performing Arts** (www.dallasperformingarts.org) will be completed in 2009, but other established venues in the Arts District include the **Nasher Sculpture Center** (2001 Flora St., tel 214 242 5100, www.nashersculpturecenter.org), the **Meyerson Symphony Center** (2301 Flora St., tel 214 670 3600, www.meyersonsymphonycenter.com) and the **Crow Collection of Asian Art** (2010 Flora St., tel 214 979 6430, www.crowcollection.org).

The **Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza** (411 Elm St., tel 214 747 6660, www.jfk.org) is on the top floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building from which Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated JFK in November 1963. Photographs, audio and visual exhibits and historic artifacts are tastefully presented. **Fair Park** (1300 Robert Cullum Blvd., tel 214 670 8400, www.fairpark.org), a 277-acre national historic landmark, has the largest collection of 1930s exposition-style Art Deco architecture in the United States, with eight museums and six performance facilities.

Enjoy cocktails under the stars at **Ghostbar** on the roof of the W Dallas-Victory Hotel (2440 Victory Park Lane, tel 214 720 9909, www.n9negroup.com) and the chic **Urban Oasis** poolside bar at Hotel ZaZa (2332 Leonard St., tel 214 468 8399, www.hotelzaza.com).

For Western dancing and country music head to **Gilley's**

(1135 South Lamar, tel 214 421 2021, www.gilleysdallas.com) or **Cowboys Red River** (10310 Technology Blvd. West, tel 214 352 1796, www.cowboysdancehall.com).

Super Bowl XLV, in 2011, will take place in Arlington, 15 miles west of Dallas, in the new 80,000-seat **Dallas Cowboys Stadium** (<http://stadium.dallascowboys.com/>), the largest domed structure in the world. The stadium will open for the Cowboys' first game in September 2009.



ity River, where the 20-mile Trinity River Corridor Project will encompass every type of urban and rural amenity, including man-made lakes, parks, wetlands, biking and horseback trails, a whitewater course, an Audubon center, light rail stations, new parkways and three car and pedestrian bridges designed by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava.

The 710-mile Trinity River flows from North Texas to Galveston Bay and was named by Spanish explorer Alonso de Leon in 1690, who called the stream *La Santísima Trinidad* (the Most Holy Trinity). It wasn't until the early 1840s that John Neely Bryan settled in the region and helped develop what would become the city of Dallas. By 1850 about 430 people lived in the area, although numerous floods forced future generations to construct town buildings on higher ground. By 2015, the Trinity River Corridor Project will transform the waterway and surrounding flood plain

into one of Dallas' most vibrant recreational and commercial districts.

LODGING **THE RITZ-CARLTON**

Opened in August 2007 in the fashionable Uptown neighborhood, the Ritz-Carlton is close to the Arts District, Victory Park and American Airlines Center. All 218 rooms and suites include oversized bathrooms with Bulgari bath amenities, flat-panel HD TVs, Frette linens and WiFi/iPod/DVD capability. Club Level rooms offer personal concierge and private food and beverage service. The hotel is home to Fearing's restaurant and a 12,000-square-foot spa with state-of-the-art fitness facilities and exclusive Prada Beauty skin care. Don't miss the complimentary fresh guacamole and margaritas in the lobby every evening at 6 p.m. 2121 McKinney Ave., tel 214 922 0200, www.ritzcarlton.com \$\$\$\$

THE JOULE, DALLAS

This gem in Starwood's Luxury Collection

opened in June 2008 in the former 1929 Dallas National Bank building. The 16-story structure has been renovated into a deluxe boutique hotel, with a new 10-story tower alongside. The 129 rooms and suites include a 2,500-square-foot penthouse suite. Rooms offer 42-inch plasma TVs and a touch-screen integrated control system for room temperature, recessed lighting and curtains. The cantilevered pool on the 10th floor of the new building provides swimmers with a unique view through its Plexiglas wall. Acclaimed chef Charlie Palmer's first Texas restaurant is on the ground floor. 1530 Main St., tel 214 748 1300, www.luxurycollection.com \$\$\$\$

RENAISSANCE DALLAS HOTEL

You can't miss this 4-star property, part of the Marriott chain, with its pink 30-story oval shape, nicknamed the "Lipstick Hotel." There are 488 large rooms and 30 suites — many with superb views of the Dallas skyline — and 17 meeting rooms. Amenities include HD TVs, heated rooftop swimming pool, fitness center and free

DIAMOND IN THE SKY:

The Dallas skyline at night



At Home with Mark Cuban

Owner of the Dallas Mavericks and Owner/Chairman of HDNet

Global Traveler: *Aside from owning the Mavericks, you are involved in many other business ventures all over the country. Why do you choose to live in Dallas?*

Mark Cuban: I stay here because Dallas has a great energy. People of all ages have a youthful, excited attitude about life. Plus it is a city that encourages and rewards entrepreneurship. I never saw any reason to leave.

GT: *Dallas supports many different types of business ventures, through patronage and private and public funding. Is the city almost immune from economic downturns that seem to hit other big cities?*

MC: No city is immune from the real world. It is a risk all of our businesses face. What is unique about Dallas is its ability to continuously evolve. From an oil and gas community, to a telecom and technology city, it's an entrepreneur's dream. And being in the center of the country, with such a vibrant workforce, it is a good place for corporations on the move. I like the fact that companies find ways to support entertainment and culture of all types. There is



always a museum expanding, a resource center being built. My favorite is the "Little Heroes" program, building facilities for kids' after-school programs in the city.

GT: *An article in the Dallas Morning News said the top players from the Cow-*

boys and Mavs can go to restaurants and not be mobbed by autograph seekers and photographers. Do Dallas fans give their celebrities some privacy in public places?

MC: Not always, but people are respectful. Dallas is such a friendly city — people will always come up and just say, "Hi Mark," like we have been friends forever, and we might chit chat for a few minutes. It's always positive, even when the fantasy general managers want to tell me what trades the Mavs should make.

GT: *You've had great success with the Mavericks. What are some of your current business and entertainment projects?*

MC: My biggest projects are HDNet and HDNet Movies, two new TV networks with more than 10 million subscribers; Landmark Theaters, the largest independent art house chain in the country; Magnolia Pictures and 2929 Entertainment, which makes and distributes movies. Everything is related to entertainment and leveraging technology and, knock on wood, they are all doing well.

parking. T-Bones restaurant serves grilled Angus beef. It's a short drive to the Dallas Trade Mart, World Trade Center and Convention Center. 2222 Stemmons Freeway, tel 214 631 2222, www.renaissancehotels.com/DALBR \$\$\$

DINING FEARING'S

Dean Fearing earned his reputation at the Mansion on Turtle Creek before opening his own place in the Ritz-Carlton, one of the most highly rated new restaurants in the country. With five separate seating areas — from the glassed-in garden room to the outdoor patio to the Rattlesnake Bar — it is entertaining and brash and packed with local VIPs, sports celebrities and food mavens. Favorites include tortilla soup, Oklahoma buffalo tenderloin marinated

in maple syrup and served with jalapeño grits and a butternut squash taquito, and butterscotch custard with apple fritters and pecan toffee ice cream. 2121 McKinney Ave., tel 214 922 4848, www.fearingsrestaurant.com \$\$\$\$

STEPHAN PYLES RESTAURANT

Chef Stephan Pyles, along with Dean Fearing, was part of the "Gang of Five" credited with putting Southwestern cuisine on the menus of fine restaurants, but this menu goes well beyond Tex-Mex. Try the Honduran tuna with coconut and ginger at the tapas bar or the signature Chilean sea bass and tamale. A ceviche bar faces the open kitchen, and a 20-seat community table is great for single diners. 1807 Ross Ave., tel 214 580 7000, www.stephanpyles.com \$\$\$

CHARLIE PALMER AT THE JOULE

Using the hotel's theme of "energy" (a "joule" is a unit of energy, named for 19th-century British physicist James Prescott Joule), designer Adam Tihany installed ceiling turbines and whimsical photographs of wind in everyday life. Décor is earthy colors with limestone flooring, and diners use hand-held computerized tablets for searching the extensive wine list. Menu items include crisp black sea bass with melted Vidalia onion, tagine braised pheasant with truffle-smoked bacon ragout, fresh citrus-braised asparagus and outrageously thin and crispy French fries. For dessert try the chocolate opera cake with ice cream and chocolate pearls. 1530 Main St., tel 214 261 4600, www.charliepalmer.com/dallas/home.html \$\$\$ ■■■