SUSTAINABILITY: HOW NORTH TEXAS WILL CONTINUE TO THRIVE

- SUSTAINING THE BOOMING NORTH TEXAS ECONOMY
- NORTH TEXAS INNOVATION PAVES WAY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH
- GROWTH THROUGH ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION
- BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE REQUIRES COLLABORATION
- HEALTHY COMMUNITIES CRITICAL TO SUSTAINABILITY
- MOBILITY MATTERS: KEEPING NORTH TEXAS MOVING
Travel. Transformed.
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Welcome to the latest issue of NTX Magazine!

North Texas continues to shine and outperform most regions in the country in population growth, job growth, and other economic indicators.

Our world-class airport – DFW International Airport – is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and is the world’s third-busiest airport by passenger volume.

To meet growing demand, the airport is undertaking a major expansion by adding a new terminal that will open in 2026.

The exodus of businesses from other states to our business-friendly Lone Star State has continued: of the 19 major companies relocating to the Dallas-Fort Worth region in 2023, 11 of them came from California.

Some of 2023’s notable business relocations included McAfee, Ruiz Foods, West Shore Homes, Frontier Communications, and Arcadia Biosciences. That list alone underscores the power of our North Texas region in attracting businesses across diverse industries, which has served our economy well and protected it against the ebbs and flows that other regions have seen.

So, the big question going forward is: how do we sustain this level of economic growth and development?

This issue of NTX takes a deep dive into economic sustainability and the factors that play into safeguarding the economic health and competitiveness of the North Texas region. We look at the role of innovation and biotechnology in not only driving our economy but also positioning North Texas as a leader in the development of everything from smart transportation hubs and autonomous vehicles to groundbreaking medical breakthroughs.

Knowing that we are a region powered by diverse industries, we also look at how education is evolving and how our workforce development model needs to adapt to ensure the businesses that call North Texas home will have the workers they need to thrive.

Finally, we will check in on some of our regional cities that are not always in the limelight yet are doing big things when it comes to economic and social sustainability. The interdependence between smaller communities and the regional economy is a mutually beneficial and symbiotic relationship that fosters balanced and sustainable economic development across the region.

Here at the North Texas Commission, we are excited to see what is in store for our region. I hope that you will put North Texas at the top of your list as you look to relocate or expand your business.

Chris E. Wallace
North Texas Commission
President and CEO
The Greenest Spot in the Metroplex

Cedar Hill State Park
Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center
Joe Pool Lake
Over 36 miles of trails

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**NTX FAST FACTS**

- **23** Fortune 500 Companies
- **30+% of Texas GDP**
  - $534.8 Billion
- **8.1% Job Growth Rate**
  - vs. 4.02% for U.S.

- **#1 Fastest Growing Region in the U.S.**
  - +1 person every 3.3 minutes
- **$61.9 Billion**
  - Manufacturing GDP for North Texas
- **900 Companies**
  - in Aerospace & Defense
  - Highest Concentration Worldwide
- **3rd Busiest Airport**
  - in U.S.
  - Estimated 81+ million passengers in 2023

- **$22 Billion**
  - in Transportation & Warehousing GDP
- **$19.6 Billion**
  - Total Merchandise Exports
- **3000+ High Tech Firms**
  - Highest concentration worldwide

- **4th Largest Metro Area in U.S.**
- **48.9 Million visitors annually**
- **33 Colleges and Universities**
  - 8 with enrollment > 10,000
- **29% of the State's Non-profits**
  - The most in the state
PICKING THE IDEAL LOCATION YIELDS A FRUITFUL FUTURE.

The classic real estate mantra “location, location, location” is right on the money when it comes to starting, relocating or expanding your business. Just like a seed in nature, your business can thrive when you put down roots in the right environment. Situated in the heart of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, Coppell is just minutes away from two major airports and transportation corridors for easy access to regional, national and global markets. You have your pick of a well-qualified and talented workforce so you get the right people in the ideal location. Even more, our vibrant community has high-performing schools, parks with an extensive trail system and bushels of recreational and cultural amenities. Grow with companies like The Container Store, IBM, Amazon, McClaren North America and Samsung Electronics, who all picked Coppell. Find out how sunny your future can be. Call 972-304-3677 and visit coppelltx.gov.
Increasing Populations Create Opportunities, Challenges

Census data highlights our region is expanding faster than any other in the nation. The North Texas region is significantly more populous – and more diverse – than a decade ago. This brings a broad range of opportunities, and some challenges, for cities, counties, neighborhoods, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2020 Population</th>
<th>2010 Population</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dallas County</td>
<td>2,613,539</td>
<td>2,368,139</td>
<td>10.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarrant County</td>
<td>2,110,640</td>
<td>1,809,034</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collin County</td>
<td>1,064,465</td>
<td>782,341</td>
<td>36.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denton County</td>
<td>906,422</td>
<td>662,614</td>
<td>36.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis County</td>
<td>192,455</td>
<td>149,610</td>
<td>28.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson County</td>
<td>179,927</td>
<td>150,934</td>
<td>19.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parker County</td>
<td>148,222</td>
<td>116,927</td>
<td>26.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaufman County</td>
<td>145,310</td>
<td>103,350</td>
<td>40.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockwall County</td>
<td>107,819</td>
<td>78,337</td>
<td>37.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt County</td>
<td>99,956</td>
<td>86,129</td>
<td>16.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wise County</td>
<td>68,632</td>
<td>59,127</td>
<td>16.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hood County</td>
<td>61,598</td>
<td>51,182</td>
<td>20.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somervell County</td>
<td>9,205</td>
<td>8,490</td>
<td>8.42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Grand Prairie is minutes from both DFW International and Dallas Love Airports – and is already home to headquarters like Lockheed Martin’s Missiles & Fire Control division and Airbus Helicopter’s North American base.

And Grand Prairie is doing all it can for companies approaching DFW. Frontage roads along IH-30 and IH-20. New lanes and prime property on SH 161/President George Bush Turnpike. Plans for corporate office, multi-family, entertainment and retail projects that are already taking off.

**#3 BEST CITY FOR JOBS IN TEXAS**
(WALLETHUB.COM)

**#4 SAFEST CITY IN TEXAS**
(WALLETHUB.COM)

**#4 FASTEST GROWING REAL ESTATE MARKET IN TEXAS**
(ACEABLEAGENT.COM)

**#5 BEST PLACE TO MOVE IN USA**
(NEW YORK TIMES)
North Texas continues to shine from an economic standpoint. Despite the pandemic, inflation, and fears of a recession, the Lone Star State – and the North Texas region, in particular – have flourished when it comes to job growth, population growth, and other economic indicators.

The challenge lies in charting the perfect roadmap for sustaining this momentum, achieving long-term economic growth and stability, while minimizing negative impacts on the environment and society.

Several factors drive economic sustainability and impact the long-term viability of a region like North Texas. Technological advancements and innovation play a significant role in driving economic sustainability (see article on North Texas innovation on page 20). In a rapidly changing world, businesses that embrace technology and innovation are more likely to adapt and thrive. New technologies can streamline processes, increase productivity, and improve efficiency, leading to cost savings and competitive advantages. Moreover, innovation can drive the development of new industries and job opportunities, contributing to economic growth and sustainability.

Globalization and international trade also influence economic sustainability. Our region is home to the third-busiest airport in the world by passenger volume. Our central location means people and goods are only four hours away from either coast and can fly direct to hundreds of locations here and abroad. This creates opportunities for companies to access new markets and resources, as well as achieve time and cost efficiencies as their businesses expand.

Government policies and regulations can have a significant impact on economic sustainability, which underscores the importance of North

Millions more people will call Texas home by our bicentennial year of 2036. All those new Texans will bring their talents, but they will not be bringing roads, water, energy, or broadband with them. We need to create a big picture awareness around the 'meat and potato' issues that are universally valued, such as education, water, energy, and transportation. These are the issues that move the needle for all Texans.

A.J. Rodriguez
Executive Vice President
Texas 2036
Texas maintaining its “business friendly” reputation. From lower regulations and taxes to policies that enhance and protect our transportation and energy infrastructure, water, and even broadband services, Texas – and by extension, North Texas – wants the “Open for Business” sign to be front and center for companies looking to expand or relocate and families looking for a new place to call home. The North Texas Commission is actively engaged with our elected officials, ensuring they understand and prioritize policies and legislation that will allow us to capture those on the “great exodus” from other states and countries.

Another force in economic sustainability is how we as businesses and residents take care of the world around us. With the finite nature of natural resources, there is a growing recognition that economic growth must be balanced with responsible resource management and environmental protection. Industries and businesses that adopt sustainable practices, such as reducing carbon emissions, minimizing waste, and conserving resources, are more likely to thrive in the long run, as they align with the values and demands of consumers and regulators.

By recognizing and addressing these forces, businesses and governments can build a sustainable economic framework that balances economic growth with social and environmental well-being. It involves investing in research and development to stimulate innovation, attracting new industries and businesses that will create jobs, and fostering economic resilience through diversification and investment in our workforce pipeline.

Flying High

One of the strongest economic drivers in North Texas is our aviation and aerospace industry. We are home to the highest concentration worldwide of aerospace and defense companies (900+), the largest global airline (American Airlines), the largest domestic airline (Southwest Airlines), and the world’s first industrial airport, Perot Field Fort Worth Alliance Airport.

To understand some of the forces that factor into long-term sustainability for our North Texas economy, we visited with three players in aviation and aerospace to gain their perspectives on what’s ahead for our region.

American Airlines

Sustainability at American covers a lot of ground – including human capital, safety, and customer satisfaction – but at the center is addressing the impact of the global leader’s operations on the climate.

Until fairly recently, the best way for airlines to reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
from their operations was to buy newer aircraft, which are typically 15-20 percent more efficient than the previous generation. What’s changed in the last few years is the idea that the industry could one day have an alternative to petroleum jet fuel.

American is aiming to reach net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. The company thinks about decarbonizing in two buckets – the first, things they can control directly and the second, things that need to happen that they don’t control. In the first bucket is the purchase of more fuel-efficient aircraft, which American has done extensively over the last few years and continues to do. Additional fuel consumption reduction can also be achieved through smart gating and other new technologies.

But the areas where American expects to see more significant decarbonization are those they don’t control directly, like producing the next generation of aircraft and engines, potentially hydrogen propulsion, modernizing the airspace with new technologies that will help airplanes fly more efficiently, and increasing reliance on sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

Getting to net zero will require partnerships and collaboration both within the private sector and between the public and private sectors. To help boost these efforts, American became an anchor partner in Breakthrough Energy Catalyst, which is focusing on scaling new clean energy technologies, like SAF.

American is also contracting to buy SAF in the future from new producers, which need contracts with airline companies to raise capital. And American advocates with governments at all levels to develop policies that will help make SAF economically viable. Since North Texas is a major region for American’s operations, their effort to decarbonize and increase sustainability will in turn help North Texas thrive.

When it comes to human capital at American, the quality and dedication of its workforce are the most important driver of its success. To meet its goals of reliability and profitability, American acknowledges it must take care of its more than 130,000 team members working around the world. One of its priorities is to provide awareness, accessibility, and opportunity to careers in aviation for all.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics

Lockheed Martin’s sustainability program is built around fostering innovation, integrity and security across its platforms and services to ultimately strengthen communities, steward the environment, and grow responsibly.
LET’S RODEO!

Saddle up with industry giants.

Mesquite isn’t just the birthplace of professional rodeo, we are the seat of logistics and manufacturing, and some real giants of industry are riding into town. We have 10 million square feet of ready-to-build industrial space, over 1.5 million skilled workers nearby, a vibrant community, 10,000 new homes in the making, and 4 major highways strategically connecting us all.

CANADIAN SOLAR

One of the largest solar companies in the world is investing $250 million into their first U.S. manufacturing plant in Mesquite.

GENERAL DYNAMICS

Will occupy almost 500,000 square feet of manufacturing and logistics facilities in the Mesquite 635 Business Park.

Join Canadian Solar and General Dynamics in North Texas’ hottest seat of manufacturing. Saddle up with us! MesquiteEcoDev.com
People are a critical business asset, and therefore Lockheed Martin’s people strategy is fundamental to sustaining the company. They understand their performance depends on identifying, attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining a highly skilled and diverse workforce.

Lockheed Martin takes an active role in the North Texas community to help grow local talent, with an emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). In 2014, the company began a high school internship program with the goal of high school interns continuing as college interns and, upon graduation, joining Lockheed Martin as full-time employees. The program has achieved great success with about two-thirds of its high school interns still with the company. Other key partnerships focused on growing tomorrow’s leaders include work with Girls Inc., Tarrant County College’s Latinas in STEM, and Tarrant To & Through (T3 Partnership).

Lockheed Martin, like many companies, has recognized that its workforce consistently evolves. It evolves with technology advancements that are most evident in the transformation of its factory from the rivet guns on the F-16 Fighting Falcon line to the subdued quiet of artisans working with composites and robotics on today’s F-35 Lightning II line.

Lockheed Martin is also witnessing a generational shift where millennials recently replaced baby boomers as the largest generational group of employees. “Our experience in the pandemic accelerated our agility in defining how we work: About half of our workforce performs work that can only be done in our facilities, whether that is production, laboratory, or classified work. In the pandemic, we learned that the other half of our employees can effectively telework at least a portion of each work week,” said Bill Brotherton, Vice President & General Manager. Another change is increasing the types of work schedules employees can work to include a four-day work week.

From an environmental perspective, Lockheed Martin established a “Go Green” initiative nearly 25 years ago. This past year, they focused targets on reducing waste generated and reducing carbon emissions through energy efficiency projects and renewable energy. They’ve reported significant progress in the Fort Worth facility, with energy consumption down 23 percent and waste generated down 23 percent. During the same period, the business grew from about 12,000 employees to more than 18,000, and Lockheed Martin expanded its facilities by more than 500,000 square feet.

Lockheed Martin began “building freedom one plane at a time” when the first B-24 Liberator rolled out of the factory in 1942. They now build the world’s most advanced fighter aircraft. But they also have engineers focused on envisioning, designing, developing, producing, and sustaining future generations of aircraft and associated technologies.

At the end of the day, Lockheed Martin has an unwavering commitment to sustainable and responsible engineering practices. As they continue this work and as the work evolves, they will develop the next generation of artisans, engineers, and scientists. “We will continue to seek to improve global society in a way that respects and ultimately benefits people, communities, and the planet, advances technological and economic development, and fosters physical security,” said Brotherton.
DFW International Airport

DFW takes a broad view of sustainability, and its strategy addresses the connections between the environment, economy, and people. The airport mapped its corporate objectives to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and distilled its strategies into six distinct focus areas: Climate Action; Energy Performance, Water & Biodiversity; Circular Economy; Equity; and Health, Safety, & Wellness.

Sustainability is not only a mission for DFW or just an objective for its future; it is embedded in the airport’s daily approach to how they operate as a business, as an employer, and as a member of the North Texas community. “We are committed to ongoing sustainability leadership within the aviation sector and beyond. As a hub for global travel and a major economic engine in the State of Texas, we recognize that our impact reaches far beyond the boundaries of the DFW Airport campus,” said Robert Horton, Vice President, Environmental Affairs, DFW International Airport.

Airports have a unique opportunity to serve as living laboratories for emerging technologies in the transportation and energy sectors. Due to their size, visibility, and complexity of infrastructure, airports are a captivating place to test new equipment and models of operation. And given their links to both the public sector and commercial aviation, they are a natural fit for helping researchers to build relationships with both government and business. DFW has long been a national showcase for emerging technologies, and the lessons learned from those major projects have had a transformative impact on the aviation industry.

As infrastructure mega-hubs, major airports in particular have a key role to play in transforming global energy systems. DFW has emerged as a leading voice on the topics of sustainability and energy management alongside partners in the U.S. Department of Energy.

Projects undertaken with this partner, such as the Morpheus Project (focused on dynamic energy management), the Athena Project (focused on onsite energy generation and storage), and the EV Blueprint (focused on transitioning polluting airport vehicles to zero-emission alternatives), are already yielding energy savings locally and vital lessons for peer airports globally.

Maintaining energy resilience will be critical, according to Horton. “The Texas grid is already challenged to meet demand during hot summer days, and additional loads will be added in the coming years, such as electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft and electrified vehicle fleets. As a component of the nation’s critical

“As a hub for global travel and a major economic engine in the State of Texas, we recognize that our impact reaches far beyond the boundaries of the DFW Airport campus.”

Robert Horton
Vice President, Environmental Affairs
DFW International Airport
transportation infrastructure and significant energy user, DFW must take a leading role in addressing this challenge.”

To increase energy resilience, DFW is evaluating how batteries can be leveraged during periods of peak demand when the grid is under strain and to reduce demand charges associated with electricity consumption during peak times. For many years, DFW has successfully used thermal energy storage at its Central Utility Plant (CUP) to reduce electric demand during peak periods. Now, DFW is exploring additional ways to leverage energy storage (i.e., batteries), flexible building loads, advanced controls, and digital twin technology to further improve energy resilience and performance.

The airport has led the industry when it comes to measuring and reducing carbon emissions generated through airport operations. In 2016, DFW became the first airport in North America to achieve carbon neutrality.

More recently, it became the first airport in the world certified at the highest level of Airports Council International’s (ACI) Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) program, Level 4+ Transition. DFW’s goal to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 builds upon its climate action achievements to date, positioning DFW among the global leaders committing to eliminating their carbon footprint.

“The airport drives economic vitality, creates business and employment opportunities, and makes significant contributions to environmental impact reduction initiatives in Texas and specifically within the North Texas region.”

Robert Horton
Vice President, Environmental Affairs
DFW International Airport

North Texas is home to Bank of America’s second-largest employee footprint outside of its headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina. As a company, Bank of America has set strong sustainability goals and targets, including announcing a goal of mobilizing and deploying $1.5 trillion in sustainable finance by 2030. Of the $1.5 trillion, $1 trillion is dedicated to the environmental transition to support a low-carbon economy.

In 2022, Bank of America announced it will support the production and use of one billion gallons of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) by 2030 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to air travel. According to Jennifer Chandler, President of Bank of America Dallas, the bank is the first global institution to set an SAF usage and capital deployment goal, which comprises:

1. Catalyzing the market through the mobilization of $2 billion in sustainable finance for the production of SAF and other low-carbon aviation solutions.

2. Utilizing SAF for at least 20% of Bank of America’s total annual corporate and commercial jet fuel usage, equating to approximately three million gallons of SAF each year. This includes 100% of corporate jet fuel and a significant percentage of fuel associated with Bank of America employee travel on commercial airlines.
SHAPING NORTH TEXAS

As a top-tier research university, The University of Texas at Arlington is a potent force for economic development in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex and beyond.

BY THE NUMBERS

**FUELING THE WORKFORCE OF TOMORROW**
- 46,000+ students enrolled
- 13,000+ degrees awarded each year

**UTA’S ANNUAL COMBINED ECONOMIC IMPACT IN NORTH TEXAS**
- $22.7 billion in gross product
- 197,445 jobs

**ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OUR ALUMNI IN NORTH TEXAS**
- $21 billion in gross product
- 175,605 jobs

**ANNUAL IMPACT OF RESEARCH OPERATIONS IN NORTH TEXAS**
- $50 million in gross product

POWERING LOCAL BUSINESSES

The Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center helps accelerate the profitable growth and competitiveness of Texas manufacturers by developing and improving products, processes, technologies, and people.

The Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Innovation provides our students, scholars, and researchers opportunities to innovate, commercialize new technologies, and pioneer companies that will impact our North Texas communities and economy for decades into the future.
From a workforce perspective, DFW partners with North Texas Leaders and Executives Advocating Diversity (LEAD) to attract diverse talent in the region. The Airport hosts networking events to share job opportunities with LEAD candidates and assist with exposure to DFW leaders. In 2023, DFW was recognized as one of the “Healthiest Employers in Texas.” This recognition highlights the success of the airport’s wellness incentive program and several other mental and physical health initiatives.

Proficiency with digital technologies will continue to be vital, as will awareness of emerging trends in safety, marketing, and international aviation. But DFW’s most critical need, according to Horton, “will always be for employees eager to serve the traveling public, our teammates, and our mission of ‘Travel. Transformed.’ “
DFW AIRPORT REACHES HALF-CENTURY MARK

Just over 50 years ago, DFW Airport welcomed its first commercial flight, marking the start of economic growth that would continue to sustain and power the region today.

The airport supports an annual payroll of $38 billion and adds $5 billion to state and local tax revenues every year. The estimated economic impact of the airport between operations, visitor spending, and cargo activity totals $119 billion according to The Perryman Group, underscoring the airport’s vital role in economic sustainability and connecting people and businesses to the world.

Here are ways in which DFW Airport contributes to the local and regional economy:

- **Job Creation:** DFW Airport is a major employer in the region, directly and indirectly supporting tens of thousands of jobs. These jobs span a wide range of sectors, including aviation, hospitality, retail, logistics, and more.

- **Business Development:** The airport’s presence attracts businesses and corporations to the area.

- **Tourism and Hospitality:** DFW serves as a gateway for both domestic and international travelers, bringing in tourists and business travelers.

- **Cargo and Logistics:** DFW is a significant cargo hub, handling a substantial volume of air cargo shipments. This plays a crucial role in facilitating trade and the movement of goods, which is essential for the regional economy.

- **Real Estate Development:** The presence of DFW Airport has led to the development of commercial, industrial, and residential developments on airport property and in the surrounding areas.

- **Revenue Generation:** DFW generates revenue for the local government through taxes and fees. This revenue can be used to fund public services and infrastructure projects, further contributing to the local economy.

- **Innovation and Technology:** The airport collaborates with local universities, research institutions, and businesses to promote innovation in aviation and related industries, as well as pursue green initiatives that reduce its environmental footprint.

**Key Dates**

1965 Six-person interim board formed to plan and develop airport

1971 North Texas Commission formed to support development and marketing of DFW Airport

1974 First commercial flight lands in January 1974. Airport opens with four terminals, three runways and 66 gates. Airport averaging 18,000 passengers a day, with 12 airlines operating.

1977 DFW Airport ranked as world’s third busiest

1979 American Airlines moves HQ to Fort Worth

1983 Airport opens fourth and fifth runways

1985 Airport renamed from DFW Regional Airport to DFW International Airport

1986 Sixth runway opens

1992 Airport issues first environmental impact statement

1996 Seventh runway opens

2000 Consolidated rental car facility opens

2005 Terminal D opens, along with Skylink train, and Grand Hyatt hotel

2023 New lease approved, including preapproving rebuilding Terminal C (opening in 2028) and constructing new Terminal F, which will provide airport the room to grow up to 100 million passengers

**Some of DFW Airport’s Accolades**


ACI, “Best New Passenger Experience,” 2022

The Moodie Davitt Report Food and Beverage Awards, “Innovation Award (Americas): Terminal D Extension,” 2021

U.N. Global Climate Action Award, 2020

Air Transport World “Airport of the Year,” 2019

ACI, “Best Retail Program for Large Hubs,” 2018
DFW in the News

DFW named No. 2 US metro for women-owned businesses
Dallas Business Journal, March 2024

DFW surpasses 8M residents, adds more people than any other metro, Census Bureau reports
Dallas Business Journal, March 2024

Dallas-Fort Worth added more jobs than any other U.S. metro in the last year
Dallas Innovates, January 2024

Texas named Business Facilities’ 2023 State of the Year
Business Facilities, January 2024

California’s loss is DFW’s gain in 2023 business exodus
Dallas Morning News, December 2023

Plano named best U.S. city for small businesses
Forbes Advisor, October 2023

Texas is winning the U.S. economy
Business Insider, December 2023
Looking to attract, upskill, and retain talent in North Central Texas? Let’s partner to build your talent pipeline! WSNCT will:

- Convene industry and education partners to create sustainable, long-term talent development strategies
- Connect industry and education to funding opportunities designed specifically for workforce development
- Collaborate with our ecosystem of partners to identify untapped candidate pools and increase access to workforce development opportunities
- Join forces with you to recruit and pre-screen high-quality candidates

With 12 workforce centers across our 14 counties in and around the Dallas-Fort Worth area, building your workforce is our priority, allowing you to focus on building your business. Contact us today to get started!

Get started by emailing our Industry & Workforce Engagement Team at employers@dfwjobs.com

www.dfwjobs.com
NORTH TEXAS
INNOVATION PAVES WAY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

From package-delivering drones to cancer therapeutics, we are a region of pioneers, inventors, creators, and makers.

Innovation plays a crucial role in driving economic growth and development, particularly in a region like North Texas.

It brings about new ideas, technologies, and processes that lead to improvements in productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness.

By fostering innovation, economies can adapt to changing market conditions, seize new opportunities, and stay ahead in a rapidly evolving global marketplace.

Innovation also stimulates job creation, as it creates demand for skilled workers in emerging industries.

Moreover, it enhances the quality of products and services, leading to increased customer satisfaction and market demand. Additionally, innovation can address pressing societal challenges, such as climate change, healthcare, and poverty, by introducing sustainable and impactful solutions.
Overall, innovation is a catalyst for economic progress, driving prosperity, and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Here in North Texas, we are a region made up of “pioneers and wildcatters,” according to Jen Sanders, CEO of North Texas Innovation Alliance. She adds that the spirit of innovation and exploration is alive and well in North Texas. “There are so many opportunities for prosperity alongside an incredible wealth of innovation, entrepreneurial activity and really talented thinkers across sectors.”

“Creativity is seeing what others see and thinking what no one else ever thought.”

*Albert Einstein*

Sanders oversees NTXIA, which was created in part to look for connection points between industry and innovation and keep up with what’s happening nationally and globally to see how it fits into the North Texas region. She cites mobility innovations as one area where North Texas has excelled (see related article on Mobility Innovation Zone on page 50).

“It’s a matter of combining what current needs are with a clear vision and the infrastructure to bring ideas to life, creating an ecosystem that supports ‘what is’ with ‘what can be,’ whether that’s autonomous trucking, electric vehicles, or robots in the transportation and logistics space, for example.”

Sanders credits the North Texas talent pipeline for making our region ripe for innovation. Key to that success is the ability of community colleges, universities, and even post-doctoral programs to pivot quickly to teach new trades and skills that represent the jobs of the future.

Securing major investors is also an important part of the equation, citing the recent grant from the government to establish a regional hub for an Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) at Pegasus Park in Dallas. “Dallas is increasingly seen as ground zero for biotech and life sciences,” she adds, because the region has successfully established a formula that
USPTO RESOURCES

The USPTO relies on a network of 8,500 patent examiners and 700 trademark and family attorneys across the country to review applications, including those coming from Dallas. An important role that the agency provides, in addition, is providing resources for inventors and entrepreneurs to help them navigate the process. TXRO has a partnership with Texas Accountants and Lawyers for the Arts to provide pro bono consulting to applicants. The regional office also works with a number of different law schools, including the SMU Dedman School of Law, to offer free legal clinics to assist with patent and trademark applications.

First-time patent filers have opportunities for expedited review and examination through a USPTO pilot program. According to Shimabukuro, “we receive about 40,000 patent applications every year involving a new inventor who has never filed with our office before.” These first-time applicants can have their case reviewed in about half the time as a normal patent application. “Time is money, especially if you’re an entrepreneur. You want to capitalize on the benefit of having a patent and getting it early on, and this helps them get there.”

www.uspto.gov

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The Role of Patents in Driving Innovation

Dallas is home to one of five regional offices of the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office (USPTO), which provides inventors, entrepreneurs, and small businesses ready access to the federal agency that grants U.S. patents and registering trademarks.

A robust patent system can contribute to economic growth by stimulating innovation, fostering entrepreneurship, and creating new industries. As companies develop and commercialize patented technologies, they often generate employment opportunities and contribute to economic development.

While the Texas Regional Office (TXRO) opened in 2015 and serves eight states in the Southwest region of the United States, Texas is by far the star when
it comes to patents and trademarks. “Texas receives the second-highest number of patent grants across the entire country. We have always been the number one exporter of IP (intellectual property) goods. We’ve recently been named as the best state for female entrepreneurs. And The University of Texas has always historically been, from a university standpoint, the number four recipient of patent grants in the world,” said Hope Shimabuku, Regional Director of the TXRO.

Shimabuku likens Texas’ enviable position to the phenomenon of “if you build it, they will come.” Technology companies and the innovation ecosystem have always been prominent in Texas, but especially so in North Texas. “As large innovation companies move in, there are dozens if not hundreds of small companies and sole practitioners that will begin to innovate and come up with new ideas to support those large companies.”

As a result, the North Texas region consistently ranks in the top ten of number of patents issued weekly, along with Houston and Austin. “That makes us a huge powerhouse across the entire country,” Shimabuku said.

What helps drive success in this area are several factors, according to Shimabuku. At the top of the list is the collaboration she sees among universities, companies, and inventors. She also credits state leaders and business groups for actively promoting the state and the potential return on investment for companies looking to expand in or relocate to Texas. “We’ve been able to attract a lot of companies, and that’s not by accident,” she said. Cost of living and tax structure are among two major differentiators for the state, along with robust opportunities for growth and sizable investments in R&D (research and development).

PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

There’s a symbiotic relationship between the economy and technology, or intellectual property (IP):

- 650,000 patent applications received annually; 360,000 patents granted
- Patent process takes approximately 24 months from start to finish
- 790,000 trademark applications received annually; 450,000 trademarks granted
- Trademark process takes approximately 14 months from start to finish
- In 2019, 41% of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was attributed to IP-intensive industries, contributing indirectly to about 63 million jobs
- Those working in IP-intensive industries earn 60% more in wages, on average
- Companies receiving a patent are 55% more likely to see employment growth, and sales are likely to be 80% higher as a result of getting just one patent
A UNIQUE LOOK AT NORTH TEXAS INVENTORS

1919: Samuel Bert, aka “King Sammie,” debuts the first ice-cold snow cone at the State Fair of Texas.

1923: Henry Garrett invents the automatic control of traffic lights, the first system in the country.

1931: The world’s first drive-thru window debuts at Kirby’s Pig Stand. The first-ever drive-thru window at a bank would debut at Hillcrest State Bank in 1938.

1951: Betty Claire Graham invents Liquid Paper, first called “Mistake Out.”

1958: Texas Instruments electrical engineer Jack Kilby successfully demonstrates the integrated circuit, aka the microchip, for the first time. He went on to develop the world’s first hand-held calculator in 1967.

1966: The name “Super Bowl” is coined by Lamar Hunt, noted Dallas resident and founder of the American Football League. Also, in 1966, Doritos were introduced!

1968: Donald Wetzel designs the Docuteller, a machine that used plastic cards to trigger the dispensation of money, soon to become the Automated Teller Machine (or ATM).

1971: Restaurateur Mariano Martinez develops the first frozen margarita machine.

The first week of 2024, Dallas was ranked number nine in patent production out of 250 metro areas in the U.S. Among the patents granted included:

- Additive-manufactured hybrid rocket fuel grain
- System for creating and sharing bots
- Unmanned vehicle security guard
- Ultrasonic cutting system
- Network-based work assignment platform
- Compact radiation-hardened integrated circuits

Shimabuku reports that historically our region and Texas have capitalized on semiconductors, telecommunications, and technologies associated with drilling and oil and gas to drive up patents and trademarks granted. In the last five to ten years, there has been a growing trend in industries that have exploded in this space, namely biomedical and pharmaceutical companies, and computer hardware and software, particularly related to the financial sector.

Looking ahead, she sees cybersecurity and innovations related to the protection of data as a huge area of opportunity, along with “anything associated with artificial intelligence.” She cites SMU as a leader in AI-related research and development: “they’re looking at different ways to measure environmental changes using AI tools, as well as deploying AI across the board in medical and drug development.”

It is clear North Texas is at the epicenter of much of the innovation economy, which bodes well for the region’s long-term economic sustainability. Patents and trademarks drive American innovation, create employment opportunities for millions of Americans, and allow a multitude of industries to flourish in our country.
The North Texas region is a hub for numerous industries and manufacturing. Here are some of our top industries responsible for globally recognized, “Made in Texas” products, equipment and more.

★ **Aircraft and Aerospace:** The DFW area is home to several major aerospace and defense companies, including Lockheed Martin, Bell Textron, Boeing, and Triumph Group. These companies play a crucial role in the region’s economy by providing jobs, driving innovation, and contributing to economic growth, in addition to manufacturing state-of-the-art aircraft, helicopters, and aerospace equipment.

★ **Computer and Electronic Products:** Texas Instruments, Dell Technologies, and NEC Corporation are among a long list of high-tech companies manufacturing products in our region.

★ **Food and Beverage Products:** Our region has a thriving food and beverage manufacturing industry, including newcomers Cacique Foods and Ruiz Foods and brand leaders Dr Pepper Snapple Group, Dean Foods, and Frito-Lay.

★ **Automotive Parts and Equipment:** General Motors, which builds GM’s entire portfolio of full-size SUVs for the Chevrolet, GMC, and Cadillac brands in Arlington, has committed to a $500-million investment in its Arlington assembly plant for new tooling and equipment to accommodate future growth. In Denton, Peterbilt Trucks recently celebrated the production of its 750,000th truck at its manufacturing facility, which opened in 1980.

★ **Medical Equipment and Pharmaceuticals:** As healthcare and biotechnology industries expand in North Texas, so does the growth in manufacturing of medical equipment and pharmaceuticals. Among the industry leaders in our region are Galderma, Alcon, Medtronic, and McKesson Corporation.

★ **Chemicals and Plastics:** North Texas has a significant presence in the chemicals and plastics manufacturing sector. From Ecolab and Celanese to NCH and Chevron Phillips Chemical, these companies produce chemicals, plastics, and polymers that are a part of our everyday lives, as well as supply essential materials to other business sectors.

★ **Energy:** The energy sector continues to be strong in North Texas, a nod to our role as an important hub for oil and gas production and transmission. Companies like Flowserve Corporation and Trinity Industries manufacture pumps, valves, and other energy-related equipment.
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WHERE INNOVATION BEGINS

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

CITY OF FORT WORTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Cities and towns – large and small – look to broaden economic diversity to build stability

One of the prevailing strengths of the North Texas economy has been its economic diversification, a focused effort by city leaders and economic development professionals to expand and broaden the economic base of the region.

Economic diversification can create a more resilient and stable economy by spreading risk and promoting growth in multiple sectors, reducing vulnerability to economic shocks or downturns in specific industries and attracting new investors, inventors, creators, and makers.

North Texas has been successful at this diversification in large part because it supports entrepreneurship and small businesses, invests in education and workforce development, and offers a favorable business environment, particularly for out-of-state companies.

We also capitalize on our collaborative regionalism: Governments, businesses, and communities are working together to promote economic diversification as a long-term strategy for economic prosperity and stability.

While we often focus these discussions on the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth proper, we wanted to understand the initiatives and steps that other North Texas cities are taking today to foster growth and stability tomorrow.

The following interviews have been edited for length.

**Frisco | Collin County**

*Population: 232,104*

**Defining Sustainability**

Frisco leadership has built a sustainable economic development model that focuses on three pillars: First, all economic development agreements are performance-based and our portfolio of EDC
incentives generates a strong positive financial return on investment to our city and taxpayers. Secondly, Frisco’s economy is also fueled by tourism generated through strong public-private partnerships with top sports teams and hospitality brands. Visitors will continue generating new sales tax dollars for our city long after Frisco’s rapid growth has slowed down. Third, sustainability in construction and building materials is important. Our building standards in Frisco are high so that commercial and non-commercial structures have a long lifecycle.

Pathways to Sustainability

We need diversity. Economic diversity of tourism projects from sports to theme parks to vibrant mixed-use centers like downtown all contribute to economic diversity. Frisco has been referred to as “recession-resistant” in recent years. In large part, this is due to our economic base of industries, North Texas’s growth in jobs and population, and its centralized location and pro-business environment.

The Role of Innovation

The city is addressing growth through technology and innovation. The city uses emerging technologies to make its employees more productive and efficient, and to offer higher-quality services to our citizens. Frisco is unique in that it treats the entire city as an innovation lab to test new technologies. We have conducted more than 10 Smart City pilot projects across numerous industries, and we are one of the first municipalities to launch autonomous drone delivery in partnership with Wing.

The city also has found success with a pilot project involving AI and self-driving cars. With nearly 350 startups in Frisco, one of the city’s goals is to be the Venture Capital Capitol of the Central U.S. by 2040. This will support local entrepreneurs through access to capital and foster Frisco’s vibrant innovation ecosystem. By leaning into innovation, we are creating jobs of the future and addressing the challenges of a growing city through new technologies.

“Sustaining growth is only possible if we maintain our vibrant and talented workforce, diverse population, job opportunities and affordability for those who live, work, invest in, and visit North Texas.”

Jason Ford, President, Frisco Economic Development Corporation

Rockwall | Rockwall County
Population: 49,669

Interviewed: Matt Wavering, Vice President, Rockwall Economic Development Corporation

Pathways to Sustainability

Rockwall is not a “company town” where a single company dominates the labor market. Rather, Rockwall’s industry mix consists of companies operating in wire & cable, plastic & packaging, aerospace & defense, sheet metal product fabrication, oil & gas, and food production. These companies are considered primary employers, as the vast majority of their products and services are ultimately exported out of Rockwall. That in turn
injects new dollars into the economy that can then circulate to benefit suppliers, service providers, retailers, restaurants, etc.

**Opportunities for Growth**

Rockwall has done a great job of attracting manufacturers. But its greatest opportunity lies in attracting corporate headquarters, back office support, and professional services. The average Rockwall resident is well-educated and highly experienced in professional occupations. But many of those residents commute out of Rockwall for their employment. Companies that realize this disconnect and choose to relocate their offices to Rockwall will have immense success hiring a dedicated workforce that can choose to both live and work locally.

**A Look into the Future**

The City of Rockwall is the largest city within the smallest geographic county in the state of Texas. Rockwall has seen some of the rapid growth felt by other North Texas communities, but the growth has occurred in a controlled fashion. That has enabled Rockwall to maintain its hometown feel, even though it is no longer a small town. Rockwall is just 23 miles from Dallas, yet it has the amenities and services that residents require so that they do not have to leave the community to satisfy most of their needs and wants.

“Should there be a dip in economic activity impacting one or even industries, there are companies operating in other industries to help keep our economy strong. This economic diversity helps insulate Rockwall against downturns that could devastate a less diverse economy.”

Matt Wavering, Vice President, Rockwall Economic Development Corporation

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**Red Oak | Ellis County**

**Population: 17,396**

**Interviewed:** Lee McCleary, Director of Economic Development, City of Red Oak

**Editor’s Note:** In September 2023, Google announced an expansion in North Texas, including $600 million to be invested over multiple years to build out a new data center in Red Oak. Google has already invested $1.1 billion in the state of Texas.

**Pathways to Sustainability**

We have been successful on multiple fronts. We obviously have the Google Data Center, and another one immediately adjacent to it. There is the Compass Data Center with five buildings. To the south of Google and Compass is a large aerospace development that includes Bombardier, which manufactures Learjet components and employs about 800 people. Qarbon Aerospace is next door and manufactures aerospace products specifically for the U.S. military, including parts for the Black Hawk helicopter. They have also partnered with Boeing Corporation to manufacture the APT (advanced pilot trainer), the fifth-generation fighter jet that all the military services, particularly the Air Force, use for training pilots. Recently, they started a partnership with Sir Richard Branson to manufacture a six-person outer space and re-entry vehicle.

**Advantageous Assets**

Red Oak is extremely business friendly in every one of our industries. There is a lot of cross-pollination and cross-communication among city council, economic development, and industrial corporations. We also have an availability of land at a reasonable price, as well as a very robust electric infrastructure.
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and an abundance of water and natural gas. Plus, most of the fiber needed for the data centers we already have in place here at Red Oak. It’s all of the elements you really need to be successful.

Opportunities for Growth

[In addition to strong presence in data centers and aerospace manufacturing], retail is an important sector for Red Oak. We have 24 different sites that are virtually shovel-ready for retail development. With all the business and people coming to Red Oak, we need to have the services to support them. We’re trying to not only meet the needs now, but project ahead to what they will need in the future.

It’s a three-part equation: industries bring in people job. People drive retail. Retail drives quality of life, which causes more industries to come here.

“We have to understand that we’re all one team or we all lose.”

Lee McCleary, Director of Economic Development,
City of Red Oak

Weatherford | Parker County
Population: 36,251

Interviewed: Mayor Paul Paschall, City of Weatherford

Pathways to Long-Term Sustainability

Economic diversity is a fundamental aspect of our city’s long-term sustainability plan. By fostering a range of industries, we ensure resilience, innovation, and job opportunities. This approach buffers against economic downturns, generates stable revenue, attracts talent, and supports sustainable practices. Economic diversity is integral to our commitment to creating a prosperous, adaptable, and balanced city for the future.

Opportunities for Growth

Weatherford is focused on several areas to maximize growth:

- Small Business Support: Cultivating a nurturing environment for small businesses and startups in Weatherford can fuel local entrepreneurship, fostering a vibrant economic landscape that resonates with our community’s dynamic spirit.

- Agriculture and Local Produce: Promoting local agriculture and supporting farmers’ markets can enhance food security, boost the local economy, and provide residents with fresh, locally sourced produce.

- Cultural and Arts Initiatives: Organizing popular cultural events like the annual Peach Festival, Frontier Days PRCA Rodeo, Heritage Park Concert Series, Food Truck Lounge Nights, 4th of July Spark in the Park, Christmas Tree Lighting, and other city-sponsored events has not only fostered creativity but also played a pivotal role in attracting visitors, enhancing tourism, and contributing to the overall vibrancy of our community.

A Look into the Future

Weatherford envisions sustained population growth and economic diversification. It aims to become a center for innovation while preserving its historical charm. Investments in infrastructure, transportation, and education are expected to enhance residents’ quality of life and workforce readiness. With a
focus on sustainability, collaborative initiatives, and balanced development, Weatherford strives to establish itself as a thriving, well-rounded city with a resilient economy and a forward-thinking identity.

“As the 9th largest economy in the world, Texas is where liberty lives. With no corporate or personal income tax, a reasonable regulatory environment, and easy access to global markets, North Texas’ robust economy is attributed to strategic strengths.”

Mayor Paul Paschall, City of Weatherford

Defining Sustainability

In terms of sustainability, we find that it is a comprehensive plan driving major activity. And that plan recognizes the need for the efficient use of resources to foster acceptable growth socially, environmentally, and economically. Then you have to look at our community historically, and our elected and professional city leadership make this a priority.

Pathways to Sustainability

We have cottage industries that are fantastic, and we have some well-known furniture manufacturing companies. The airport has also driven some retail businesses and other businesses to our community. Finally, as our population is skewed more towards a retirement community, it brings a lot of other opportunities for economic diversity, especially in arts and culture. We have world-renowned and nationally known authors and historians that live in and around Granbury. They not only create and enhance culture, but they also create little industries as they go.

Opportunities for Growth

One of our planning goals is that we are an active part of the regional community; we see that as a way to accomplish our short- and long-term goals. Transportation is a big part of that: our main artery is Highway 377 coming in from Fort Worth, and it’s going to be expanded, which will be transformational.

We have also set up our own citywide economic development program, and there is movement here in the community. We have a $200-million, 43-acre lakeview, mixed-use development coming to Granbury.

“Much of the culture and the future of Granbury relies on our elder states people that step in and speak up. They understand Granbury. But we also have to look at how to grow and how to maintain the feel of wonderful Granbury that it is.”

Mayor Jim Jarrett, City of Granbury

Pathways to Sustainability

Really, it starts with our planning process. I am out in the community regularly talking to developers and bringing challenges up, soliciting that information now. “Tell me what you’re seeing, what you’re doing.
Let me carry that back to council.” This allows us to deliver on expectations and create a great business environment that makes people want to invest here, makes people want to bring jobs and is sustainable.

**Opportunities for Growth**

The biggest gaps I hope to fill are more corporate jobs so that you can graduate from the University of North Texas or community college and get a corporate job right here. I’ve also been pushing hard for a fieldhouse that has basketball and volleyball tournaments. I’d like an environment where we have youth sports in a multigenerational facility, so that the grandparents are going to a pickle ball tournament in the same building as their grandkids, who are playing in a basketball tournament. We’re seeing equal growth in the senior population and the younger population, so we need to make sure we have a balance of serving everyone well.

**Future for Denton**

We want to be a strong regional partner, a strong regional catalyst. We are an educational hub with UNT, and you have to look at the value coming back from that and just how much the university brings to the city. It’s where you go to learn and to hone your skills, so you can take the next step. People have launched from here and done amazing things. I think people are our “it” factor.

“Our best calling card is the people, the experiences. There are some really unique opportunities and people and stories to tell about our city. That’s a draw for people. That’s our secret sauce.”

Mayor Gerard Hudspeth
City of Denton

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**Fortune 500 Companies in North Texas**

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BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE REQUIRES COLLABORATION

One-size-fits-all approach to workforce development and education is a thing of the past

North Texas continues to lead the way in job growth, adding the most jobs in the country in the first 11 months of 2023. Sustaining that growth requires attracting new companies to the region and supporting the growth of existing companies. It also means making sure our native workforce – from career workers down to students at the school district level – is trained to excel in the jobs that are here today and those that are coming tomorrow.

Prioritizing workforce development is essential for North Texas to thrive and requires finding new ways to connect employers with workers that go beyond the traditional paradigms of the past. It requires an integrated approach among industry, education, and workers.

“Workforce and education are giant issues,” said Dr. Cullum Clark, Director of the Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative at the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas. “Employers need to get smarter. If people and workers are in short supply, employers are going to have to get a lot more in the game. They’re going to have to work closely with post-secondary institutions and high schools to help design programs that efficiently produce skills rather than waiting and hoping the education system does it for them.”

Phedra Redifer, the executive director of Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas (WSNCT), reaffirms the need for collaboration. “It’s no longer just a one-sided game. Everybody has to be on the
playing field, because everyone has to be looking at it collectively and do their part.”

WSNCT represents a 14-county area in North Texas, which spans urban to rural, big city to small town. While the needs of one county or community may differ from another, the approach is the same: “We’ve got to be agile, we’ve got to be flexible, and we have to be responsive,” said Redifer.

The pandemic led to a reset among many workers, some of whom left longtime positions to pursue new career paths and many of whom realized they have a choice and a say in the type of work experience they want. That requires a response on the part of employers.

“The environment we’re in is causing industry to look creatively at how to go about their business to be sustainable. It’s increasingly difficult, because people have choices, because the cost of goods to make products or provide services are so much higher because we’ve had wage escalation, and because people want different experiences from their workplaces,” said Redifer.

Workforce boards play a vital role in closing the loop among workers, industry, and education, relying on economic, business, and demographic data trends that forecast where industry needs and skills are headed. Keeping an eye on what’s coming down the road is key: “The groundwork has to be laid today for the occupations of tomorrow,” said Redifer. “The workforce system must accelerate the pace of providing emerging technology training opportunities in areas like automation and generative AI (artificial intelligence).”

Research indicates that by 2030, job tasks that account for up to 30 percent of the hours currently worked by employees could be automated. That means a concerted focus is necessary to prepare career seekers for this shift, as well as reskilling or upskilling existing workers to be ready to move from declining occupations to those that are growing.

“Our partnerships with the community colleges to industry to the independent school districts are critical, especially as we collectively try to solve workforce issues. We were working in isolation before; now, everybody’s coming together and recognizing the impact we have if we attack a problem together.”

Phedra Redifer, Executive Director, WSNCT

“We recognize that AI is coming and in a tidal wave. Companies are going to take on AI in big swings, but they need a workforce that can support that. What jobs will come out of that? What training will workers need? How will that affect their business model? We can’t train and develop a workforce overnight, so we have to look at what’s coming down the pike and set ourselves up for the next 5, 10, 15 years,” said Redifer.

The strategic connections between people, education, and industry need to start early for maximum impact. Forging relationships between school districts and industry is a critical first step in building a more robust workforce pipeline. WSNCT
has had tremendous success with registered apprenticeship programs and with its educator externship program, which places high school teachers with area businesses and nonprofit organizations for a week over the summer, allowing them to gain knowledge, skills, insight, and inspiration that they can then take back into the classroom.

“We have teachers who may have never stepped foot in a specific industry, let alone know the skills required to be successful,” said Redifer. “Through this eye-opening experience, they see how they can be more effective in teaching students the skills they need to be better prepared for these jobs.”

At the post-secondary level, understanding and responding to the evolution in both business and education is equally important, according to Dr. James Hurley, President of Tarleton State University. “Today’s universities must be different by design; they need to meet students at their point of need,” he said. Fifty percent of Tarleton students are the first in their families to attend college, and while Tarleton has seen significant growth in enrollment, with the largest incoming freshman class in its history, not all its students enroll straight out of high school. “Some transfer from two-year colleges or other universities; some are full-time working professionals who want to advance their careers. One size does not fit all any longer,” said Hurley.

How students learn has also shifted with advancements in technology, requiring new instructional paradigms. Every student learns differently, so post-secondary institutions need to implement “self-paced, adaptable, interactive, immersive and personalized solutions” to foster success and advancement, according to Hurley.
Aligning with the business community is a key part of Tarleton's educational model. “We are connecting with regional communities, developing businesses, educational groups, and research centers throughout North Texas,” sharing ideas and empowering a future-focused workforce that will advance the North Texas economy.

As an example, Tarleton has formed a partnership with TechFW, a leading technology accelerator, matching Tarleton students with start-up companies for 100-hour internships. This not only creates opportunities for real-world experience, but it also fosters an entrepreneurial mindset that can lead to the development of new businesses and further job creation.

The Texas Legislature has steadily made reforms to support workforce issues, including in 2023, with the passage of HB 8, which aims to align coursework with the skills demanded by the workforce of the future through outcomes-based incentives for those colleges and universities. “This will have the effect of increasing funds and in a thoughtful, outcomes-oriented way for community colleges, which perform such an essential function,” said Clark. “And now, they will have both the better incentives and more dollars potentially coming to expand and modernize their operations. It’s an example of state and local working well together,” he added.

Texas 2036, a nonpartisan public policy think tank, has closely followed policy and legislative developments in Austin and will do so again in 2025. “We will work to further build out the education-to-workforce pipeline with a focus on increasing the value of a high school education in preparing young Texans for life after graduation,

To grow a vibrant economy, a region must have solid financial footing, quality healthcare, and access to a top-tier secondary and post-secondary education. North Texas has all three.”

Dr. James Hurley, President, Tarleton State University

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New Initiatives of WSNCT:

• Launched a mobile workforce unit that travels job fairs to help people sign up for income eligible services, provides training, and allows clients to apply for jobs. It also travels to public libraries in partnership with Goodwill to teach digital skills literacy.

• WSNCT’s Second Chance initiative works with those touched by the justice system. They identify incarcerated individuals who are within six months of being released, and then work with them in the prison, training them in high-demand industry sectors. “We want them to leave with a certificate in hand, ready to step into a job,” said Redifer.

“We are at a unique place right now in workforce development. We are needed in ways that we’ve not been needed before.”

Phedra Redifer, Executive Director, WSNCT
whether it’s to move on to higher education, military service, or a career with a family-sustaining wage,” said A.J. Rodriguez, Executive Vice President for Texas 2036.

The organization has a stated vision that “Texas is the best place to live and work.” Rodriguez has optimism that, collectively, that is achievable: “From Spindletop to space exploration, and from flying cars to AI, Texas has always taken and will always take pride in being independent, in being curious and being innovative.”

To extend the “Texas Miracle” will require a multi-faceted, collaborative approach among workforce boards, employers, workers, and our education system that is already well on its way in North Texas, according to Redifer. It will require a constant “pedal to the metal” when it comes to meeting the workforce needs of North Texas employers.

“A lot of us are working in the future,” said Redifer. “From Spindletop to space exploration, and from flying cars to AI, Texas has always taken and will always take pride in being independent, in being curious and being innovative.”

Clark sees good reason for optimism: “I’m very bullish on the region’s future. All in all, the North Texas region is, in almost every important respect, headed in the direction that big, economically vibrant regions should be headed as they look into the distant future.”

A Look at Tarleton State University

Founded: 1896

Enrollment: Nearly 18,000, the highest on record

Number of Counties Represented by Student Body: 233

Percent of In-state Students: 96%

Percent of Pell Grant-eligible students: 40%

Percent of Students Receiving Financial Aid: 85%

Notable Accomplishments:

• Earned the elevated Carnegie designation of “Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity” in 2021, putting the university among only 132, or 4 percent, of schools across the country with same recognition

• Invitation to join Association of Public and Land-grant Universities in 2022, placing Tarleton among top schools in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico

• Transitioned to NCAA Division 1 athletics in 2019, extending university’s geographic reach, supporting enrollment growth, elevating the value of a degree, and expanding partnership opportunities

• Construction of $110-million Event Center underway, with opening set for 2025
There’s no denying that sports are king – and a huge part of the booming economy – in North Texas. From hosting a Super Bowl and World Series games, to NCAA championships, major golf events and, now, World Cup fever in 2026, the Metroplex offers every sports enthusiast an outlet. Here are some of the major players:

**Dallas Cowboys**
National Football League

**Dallas Stars**
National Hockey League

**Dallas Mavericks**
National Basketball League

**FC Dallas**
Major League Soccer

**Texas Rangers**
Major League Baseball

**Allen Americans**
ECHL

**Dallas Jackals**
Major League Rugby

**Dallas Legion**
American Ultimate Disc League

**Dallas Rattlers**
Professional Lacrosse League

**Arlington Renegades**
UFL

**Dallas Sidekicks**
Major Arena Soccer League

**Dallas Skyline**
The Basketball League

**Dallas Wings**
Women’s National Basketball League

**Fort Worth Vaqueros**
National Premier Soccer League

**Frisco Roughriders**
Minor League Baseball

**Lone Star Brahmas**
North American Hockey League

**Mesquite Outlaws F.C.**
Major Arena Soccer League

**Texas Legends**
NBA Development League

**Panther City Lacrosse Club**
National Lacrosse League

**PGA of America**
Professional Golf Association Headquarters

**Collegiate Conferences and Associations:**
- Big 12 Conference (NCAA Division I)
- Conference USA (NCAA Division I)
- Southwestern Athletic Conference (NCAA Division I)
- American Southwest Conference (NCAA Division III)
- Lone Star Conference (NCAA Division II)
- Red River Athletic Conference (NAIA)

Source: North Texas Commission’s North Texas Profile
Nine Matches for North Texas

The North Texas Commission is grateful for all the hard work by leaders across our region in securing a record nine matches for the 2026 FIFA World Cup! We will be cheering on Team USA alongside you in 2026.
The role of healthcare and good health in the economic health of a community or region cannot be overstated. A healthy population is typically a productive population, one that is more likely to participate in the workforce, contribute to economic activities, and earn higher incomes.

North Texas is in an enviable position when it comes to healthcare: our healthcare system capacity has kept pace with the growth in population, and it has increasingly been seen as a hub of innovation and research. It also has a significant economic impact on our region, according to Steve Love, President/CEO of the DFW Hospital Council: “Most people don’t realize that, in some areas, hospitals are the largest employer in that community. Our many member hospitals contribute $38 billion a year annually to the health and economy of North Texas.” The hospitals also give back in innumerable ways, through community grant programs, volunteerism and more, further contributing to the vitality and health of the region.

Love signals that collaboration is at the heart of the region’s success; Dallas-Fort Worth is one of the few metropolitan areas in the country that has a regional hospital council, which currently has 90 hospitals that are members. “We’re all in this together. When you look at driving up health equity, we really need to bring all the people together and work in a collaborative way so that we address the social drivers that will improve health care,” including housing, transportation, food, jobs, and education.

Healthcare access is one of the key drivers in developing healthy, sustainable communities, according to Texas Health Resources, a faith-based, nonprofit healthcare system that annually serves over two million people in 16 counties. Texas Health recently expanded its Community Health Needs Assessment to include 20 counties; the resulting report helps identify those zip codes with the highest needs and those disproportionately experienced health challenges. This helps direct work of both Texas Health and other providers, particularly in underserved and under-resourced communities.
Texas Health’s Wellness for Life mobile health program works to prevent chronic disease, manage behavioral health issues, and improve health literacy by taking education and resources directly to those who need it. Since its inception, Wellness for Life has completed over 111,000 mammograms and over 18,000 wellness exams, helping to detect 143 breast cancers and over 1,200 people with pre-diabetes.

Looking to the future, the healthcare system is focused on continuing to explore and use automation and technology, enabling Texas Health to interact with patients in innovative ways that work best and are most convenient for them. This includes pharmacy kiosks at its Texas Health Breeze Urgent Care centers, where patients can get most prescriptions filled on-site, and Texas Health Care at Home, a program that allows certain patients to be cared for in the comfort of their own home while monitored remotely by a care team.

Future-focused describes the work of UT Southwestern Medical Center, which ranks fourth in the nation and No. 1 in Texas for commercializing

“The social and environmental factors that impact health weren’t created in a day, nor can they be fixed in a day. We are working with community leaders to really understand ZIP code by ZIP code – neighborhood by neighborhood – the major health issues that our communities are facing. And because we know we can achieve more together; we’re teaming up with community organizations at the grassroots level to work to bring about positive, sustainable change.”

David Tesmer, Chief Community and Public Policy Officer, Texas Health
new biomedical technologies, considered a critical step in bringing its laboratory discoveries into clinical practice. Some of the companies launched off of UTSW technologies include Taysha Gene Therapies, ReCode Therapeutics, OncoNano Medicine, Exonics Therapeutics, Rodeo Therapeutics, and Peloton Therapeutics.

In addition to its work on the front end of new innovations, UTSW has a decades-long history of bringing lab discoveries full circle, including successes with cholesterol-lowering drugs known as statins, and three FDA-approved orphan drugs for kidney stones and a multi-test kit for individuals at risk for forming kidney stones.

UTSW is participating in a joint biomedical engineering collaboration with UT Dallas and Texas Instruments, which it hopes will further fuel a sustained culture of innovation. It also collaborates with Texas Health Resources through the Southwestern Health Resources network. The patient-centered, clinically integrated network of 31 hospitals – including four of the top-ranked hospitals in the region – and more than 7,000 physicians and other providers care for more than 750,000 people across 16 counties.

Similar to the business community, UTSW has its eye on artificial intelligence (AI) and its various derivatives. One important application is the use of machines to automate processes and manage data. For example, technology tools could allow patients to self-schedule (and reschedule) appointments, helping address staff shortages while improving the patient experience. Another key subset of AI is augmented intelligence: the use of technology to support and enhance the work of clinicians,
faculty, and staff. This may include advanced imaging equipment, virtual health monitoring, and telehealth in clinical settings; novel learning options like virtual reality in the education space; and directed analysis of data sets in the research environment that help identify patterns and inform scientific inquiry.

The second emerging trend is the significant growth of cell and gene therapy as it continues to advance from lab-based investigation into clinical application for a myriad of challenging health issues. UTSW’s preparations include an educational path to this area through a new genetic counseling program. It also is making strategic investments in a program focused on RNA biology and therapy. Research focused on the regulation and function of RNA is increasingly demonstrating its important role in infectious disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease, neurodegenerative disease, and many other areas.

Its role as a leading research institution has led to UTSW’s recognition as the top-rated public institution and No. 3 among global healthcare institutions in the 2023 Nature Index, which identifies the leading institutions in natural sciences and Health Sciences research, according to their output in selected journals.

North Texas’ commitment to excellence in healthcare and its pioneering spirit in research and development (R&D) has elevated the region’s prominence and reputation as an innovation hub. CBRE designated Dallas-Fort Worth as an emerging market for life sciences, based on an increasing labor pool and the region’s third-place ranking in growth in R&D. UTSW and the University of North Texas Health Sciences Center in Fort Worth received a combined $406 million in National Institute of Health funding and helped produce the country’s 10th-highest number of graduates in the biological and biomedical sciences in 2022. The region also ranked 8th on total investments in life sciences through venture capital.

It should be no surprise, then, that Dallas was selected last September as one of three regional hubs for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), a new federal agency established to accelerate health outcomes by developing and fast-tracking high-impact solutions to challenging health issues. Dallas will serve as the Customer Experience Hub for the $2.5-billion independent agency, which will be housed in Pegasus Park and will include testing of self-administered diagnostics, simulated patient care scenarios, development of health-tech equipment and more.

Pegasus Park is a natural fit for the biotech hub. Located on a 26-acre campus within the Dallas medical district nearby world-class hospitals and researchers dedicated to advancing science and technology, Pegasus Park opened in 2022 after

“To be an ideal site for BioLabs’ only central U.S. location, you have to have the companies, you have to have the capital, and you have to have the talent. You need those three components. And that’s something that North Texas has in spades.”

Gabby Everett, Director of Business Operations & Strategy and Site Head for BioLabs Pegasus Park
extensive renovations and is home to biotech accelerator BioLabs’ only location not on the East or West coasts.

The 750,000-square-foot campus features shared lab and office, serving as an incubator where biotech and life sciences companies can safely grow and learn how to become their own operators and learn about business, according to Gabby Everett, Director of Business Operations & Strategy for BioLabs Pegasus Park. Over 20 companies are housed at BioLabs, from those working on cancer therapeutics to wearable medical devices and everything in between. “We’ve got neurodegenerative diseases, we’ve got stem cells, and we are ‘de-extincting’ animal series here in the lab. So, we really run the gamut of science,” added Everett.

BioLabs provides “no strings attached,” flexible operational support to companies, including lab support and equipment support for start-ups, most of which can’t afford the cost of a brick-and-mortar lab or the exorbitant cost of medical equipment. “We offer flexibility that is founder-friendly and investor-friendly,” said Everett. “Investors love places like BioLabs because their capital isn’t going towards infrastructure. Instead, it’s going towards the science, the researchers, and the consumables.”

As companies grow, they have the option of moving into Bridge Labs, which is an additional 135,000 square feet of lab space next door to BioLabs. “We have a revolving door, literally a pipeline of companies that are coming from the major universities that will come in here once they get funding. You will be able to see an entire life cycle of a company here on campus.”

What shouldn’t be lost in this discussion is the contributions of the biotech industry to the economy in terms of job creation. Biotech companies require a highly skilled workforce, including scientists, researchers, engineers, and technicians. As these companies grow, they create new employment opportunities, attracting talent and stimulating economic activity. These jobs tend to be high-paying and knowledge-intensive, leading to increased income levels and a higher standard of living for individuals in the industry.

It also paves the way for broadening and strengthening sectors in the region, such as drug manufacturing. “These companies are going to have to manufacture their drugs for clinical trials, so we are working with all different areas of the region to bring biomanufacturing and bioprocessing here as well, which will help grow the workforce,” added Everett. Working with area community colleges, BioLabs is collaborating on a workforce development program that will allow high school students to pursue a certificate program that funnels them directly into jobs in the biomanufacturing space, creating a pipeline of future workers.

Ultimately, the biotech industry and the region’s increasing leadership role in the overall healthcare ecosystem have delivered for North Texas and will for decades to come. A hotbed of innovation and technological advancements, the region is developing new drugs and therapies, as well as applications and technologies, that have the potential to dramatically improve healthcare outcomes by discovering novel solutions to complex problems. These advancements not only drive economic growth but also improve the quality of life for individuals and address societal challenges.
Most experts will agree that with the growth already experienced in North Texas – and that which is coming down the pike – we cannot build enough highways, fast enough, to keep pace and keep people, goods, and services moving.

That’s why advancements in technology, sustainability, and efficiency – elements of “smart transportation” – are so vital to this region.

Here’s a look at some of the transportation and infrastructure advances in our region:

**Autonomous Vehicles (AVs)**

Texas has become a self-driving testing ground in recent years, following a 2017 law allowing vehicles with automated driving systems to operate without a “human operator.” DFW Airport tested driverless shuttles in 2020, and the City of Frisco launched a pilot program of autonomous vans in 2018.

One of the opportunities for significant growth in this space is freight transport, with nearly half of all truck freight in Texas moving along the I-45 corridor between Dallas and Houston. Autonomous truck developers have tested their rigs with real customers, using safety drivers until the technology is ready to operate solo.

Aurora Innovation plans to launch fully driverless trucks by the end of 2024, also along the Dallas-Houston corridor. Aurora opened its first terminal in South Dallas; a new terminal in Houston, located in a logistics hub near customers like FedEx, opened in late 2023. The commercial-ready terminals allow the company to service, support, and monitor driverless trucks 24/7/365. The company has also partnered with auto supplier Continental to scale up and expand the technology to thousands of trucks by 2027.

Kodiak Robotics unveiled a driverless-ready semi-truck at the 2024 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. Kodiak plans to launch its first driverless route between Dallas and Houston in the second half of 2024. The company already has a hub in Lancaster and contracts with companies such as IKEA and Tyson to move their freight. Command centers in Lancaster and Mountain View, California monitor the trucks and can take over the driving functions remotely if needed.
Robot Courier

Clevon is expanding its self-driving, robot-piloted couriers in the coming months; the on-demand electric vehicles have been delivering packages in Northlake since July 2023. The Estonian company established its U.S. headquarters at Hillwood’s AllianceTexas in 2022. The company has plans to expand into Denton, and the City of Arlington has piloted a program to use Clevon vehicles for food bank deliveries. The vehicles, which can operate fully autonomous, partially autonomous with some remote human support, or fully driven by a remote human operator, help address last-mile delivery challenges that can be highly disruptive to the supply chain.

“Innovation should be shaped in ways that help America win the 21st century—prioritized with a view to the competitive nature of the world we’re in—with transportation systems and infrastructure that make communities more adaptable and resilient in the face of that global competition.”

Secretary Pete Buttigieg, U.S. Department of Transportation

Drones

Coming to a front porch near you, drones will no longer be a futuristic pipedream, according to recent reports. Big box giant, Walmart, plans to make drone deliveries with its partners Wing and Zipline to three-quarters of the North Texas region by the end of 2024.

An estimated 1.8 million households will be eligible for deliveries within a 30-minute window, with over 120,000 household items in a typical Walmart Supercenter meeting size and weight requirements for drone deliveries.

Frisco and Lewisville stores served as initial launch pads for Walmart drone deliveries last summer, in addition to nearly a dozen other stores reaching areas of Dallas County and Collin County. Walmart has tested drone deliveries in the region since 2021, along with Wing, which is owned by Google’s parent company Alphabet.

Customers are taking note, with the average customer ordering items twice weekly on average. On Sundays, with big football games, the numbers go up with items like chicken, sour cream, avocados, and limes in high demand.
Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs)

While not a new concept in North Texas, TODs have gained steam in the region. Cities are redesigning their infrastructure and approaching urban planning and development with an eye towards prioritizing pedestrians, cyclists, and public transportation and reducing the reliance on private vehicles.

In December, EVIVA Trinity Mills broke ground on Dallas-Fort Worth’s largest transit-oriented development in Carrollton. The first phase comprises a 436-unit residential/mixed-use development within Trinity Mills Station, part of a multi-phased, master-planned 25-acre project that will include residential, retail, lifestyle offerings, office, and hotel developments. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) and Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) are partners in the project, which has an anticipated completion date of November 2025.

To the north, apartment developer Trinsic Residential Group recently announced a 325-unit rental community near DART’s CityLine/Bush Station in Richardson and the upcoming Silver Line connection in Plano. The 26-mile Silver Line will extend from Shiloh Road in Plano to DFW Airport, with multiple stops in neighboring cities. This project is located on the site of a former lumber yard south of downtown Plano; city officials expect the redevelopment project to serve as a gateway to downtown.

Other Trends and Technologies

Mobility as a Service (MaaS) integrates various forms of transportation services into a single, accessible platform. Users can plan and pay for an entire trip using a single app, incorporating public transit, ride-sharing, bike-sharing and more.

The global market for this “journey planning,” which uses a combination of real-time, predictive, and scheduled data, is anticipated to grow from over $5.7 billion in 2023 to over $40 billion in 2030, according to a February 2024 report from Research and Markets. Increasing smart city initiatives, growing adoption of on-demand mobility services, and the need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions are key factors in driving this market.

The integration of smart technologies into transportation infrastructure is essential for optimizing traffic flow, improving safety, and reducing congestion. This includes traffic management systems, smart traffic lights, and vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) communication.
AllianceTexas, Hillwood’s 27,000-acre master-planned, mixed-use development in north Fort Worth recently reported out an economic impact of $120 billion over the last 35 years since development began in 1989.

While it is well-known for its impressive list of Fortune 500 companies, higher education centers, healthcare institutions, and amenity-rich residential developments, AllianceTexas has distinguished itself as a convener of “visionaries in logistics innovations” at its AllianceTexas Mobility Innovation Zone (MIZ).

The MIZ offers a world-class ecosystem experience that helps foster public-private partnerships, birth and test innovations, and engage policymakers on regulations that support emerging mobility solutions. Some of the companies capitalizing on this ecosystem, which is “turning opportunity into outcome and explorers into experts,” include:

- **Manna**: an Irish drone delivery leader, the company is making deliveries to Hillwood residential communities within the MIZ

- **Gatik**: its facility at the MIZ serves as its hub for autonomous middle-mile delivery

- **Phantom Auto**: deploying remote trucking operations for forklifts, yard trucks and more

- **MP Materials**: located its first U.S. manufacturing facility here, reshoring the rare earth magnetics supply chain and producing alloys and magnetics for electric vehicles (EVs) and drones

- **Waabi**: launched a strategic partnership with Uber Freight, committing billions of miles of driverless capacity to the freight network and pioneering the Driver-as-a-Service model

Overall, the future of “smart” transportation will involve a holistic approach that combines technological innovation, sustainability, and urban planning to create more efficient, convenient, and environmentally friendly transportation systems. These changes have the potential to reshape how people and goods move around in cities and regions worldwide.
HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE.

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF NORTH TEXAS.

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PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE WATER NEEDS
A Look at the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center

Most people don’t think about water as it relates to economic growth, but that is the very business of the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD), a wholesale water provider that serves approximately two million people through its water system, mostly north and east of Dallas.

The district is growing by 55,000 people each year, which is driving demand – and the need for long-term solutions. “The rising cost of water poses significant challenges to economic growth,” said R.J. Muraski, Assistant Deputy Director-Capital Improvement Program for NTMWD. “As water becomes more scarce and more expensive, we need to find ways that not only prioritize water conservation measures, but also invest in efficient water management strategies to mitigate some of the impact of the cost as well as the demand."

NTMWD was an early adopter and innovator in reuse, according to Galen Roberts, Assistant Deputy Director-Water Resources: “The growth in our region and the need for additional water supplies and to make efficient use of our existing supplies led to the concept of reuse and ultimately the wetlands project.”

A partnership with Rosewood Corporation and John Bunker Sands led to the development of the East Fork Water Reuse Project and the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center, the nonprofit education component of the project located 30 minutes southeast of downtown Dallas. Sands was passionate about the environment and that property and was already looking at it for wetland development in the context of mitigation, water banking, and environmental benefit, according to Roberts.

From NTMWD’s perspective, the location was ideal: adjacent to the Trinity River, allowing NTMWD to draw water out; plenty of acreage to allow nature to clean the water; and the right grade and topography to both hold the water and allow it to flow from top to bottom. Soil was also critical; NTMWD was able to construct wetland cells with the existing soil in place.

Construction began in 2004 and was completed in 2009 at a cost of $280 million, a cost-effective alternative to building a new reservoir. The wetland functions as a large-scale recycling project, diverting treated wastewater flows from the Trinity River and filtering it naturally before it is returned to blend with other water supplies for future treatment and use.

Sunlight and the range of plants found in the wetland naturally filter the water, removing pollutants. Afterwards, the water is pumped through a 42-mile pipeline back to Lavon Lake, where it is blended and stored, then treated as drinking water, and ultimately distributed to homes and businesses in 10 North Texas counties.

What came out of that partnership was a 2,000-acre resource for North Texas, the largest manmade wetland system in the country. It is also an invaluable educational destination.
and nature center that is home to some 300 species of birds, along with dozens of native mammals, insects, amphibians, and reptiles. The center provides an ideal platform from which to educate the public about water, wetlands, and wildlife and the need the conserve water resources.

In addition to schoolchildren, scouting programs, and nature lovers taking advantage of all the wetland center offers, it has also drawn the interest – and in-person visits – from engineers and policymakers from around the globe, as well as from other investors and water authorities around the country.

Effective public-private partnerships and collaboration with other water utility districts are key to developing and extending water resources to meet future needs, according to Muraski, and the project’s success in these areas are what surprises industry visitors the most. “The Metroplex water agencies are willing to work together. People want to know what our secret sauce is, and it is Texas hospitality and ‘get her done’ philosophy,” said Muraski.
Museums play a significant role in fostering a strong economy, by driving tourism and visitor spending that generates hotel taxes, sales taxes, and revenue for local businesses. They also create jobs, enhance educational experiences for young people, and add a cultural and creative dimension to our economy.

Some of the notable museums in North Texas include:

**Dallas Museum of Art**  Known as one of the largest art museums in the country, the DMA features an extensive collection of more than 24,000 works from various periods and cultures. It showcases art forms ranging from ancient to modern, including paintings, sculptures, decorative arts, and more.

[www.dma.org](http://www.dma.org)

**KIMBELL ART MUSEUM**  Located in Fort Worth, the Kimbell is renowned for its collection of art spanning thousands of years. It houses a diverse range of masterpieces, including works by artists like Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Monet, Picasso, and Rembrandt. The museum is also recognized for its architectural design.

[www.kimbellart.org](http://www.kimbellart.org)

**PEROT MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE**  A popular destination for families and science enthusiasts, the Perot Museum offers interactive exhibits and hands-on learning experiences. The museum covers various fields such as geology, paleontology, physics, biology, and more, providing an engaging and educational experience for visitors.

[www.perotmuseum.org](http://www.perotmuseum.org)

The Cowboy Culture Goes Cosmopolitan
The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza  Located in the former Texas School Book Depository building, this museum explores the life, assassination, and legacy of President John F. Kennedy. Visitors can learn about the events surrounding the assassination through multimedia exhibits, photographs, artifacts, and historical information.

www.jfk.org

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth  Situated in a striking building designed by renowned architect Tadao Ando, the museum features an impressive collection of modern and contemporary art. It showcases works by artists like Andy Warhol, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Yayoi Kusama, among others.

www.themodern.org

Crow Museum of Asian Art  Established by Trammel and Margaret Crow in 1998, the museum provides opportunities for the public to learn and discuss the art, history, and cultures of Asia. The collection features pieces from China, Japan, India, Korea and Southeastern Asia, and has an expansive permanent collection, which is open to the public for free.

www.crowmuseum.org

Nasher Sculpture Center  Located in the heart of downtown Dallas, the Nasher specializes in contemporary sculpture, displaying a stunning collection by renowned artists and hosting rotating exhibitions, educational programs, and outdoor sculpture gardens.

www.nashersculpturecenter.org

Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum  Opened in 2019, this museum provides a comprehensive and powerful exploration of the Holocaust, human rights, and genocide. Through exhibits, survivor testimonies, and interactive displays, the museum strives to educate visitors about the importance of promoting human rights and combating hatred.

www.dhhrm.org

Frontiers of Flight Museum  Located next to Dallas Love Field Airport, the museum’s mission is to educate, motivate and inspire visitors by presenting aviation and space flight history and innovation through comprehensive exhibits, collections, programming and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) curriculum.

www.flightmuseum.com

Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary  Founded in 1967, the campus includes a 289-acre wildlife sanctuary, five miles of hiking trails, 50 acres of wetlands, a two-acre native plant garden, a butterfly house, live animals, and indoor and outdoor exhibits. Visitors can explore trails, participate in educational programs, and provide hands-on assistance with conservation projects.

www.heardmuseum.org
The North Texas region is home to nearly 30 percent of Texas’ nonprofit organizations, the largest concentration in the state.

From housing the homeless, feeding the hungry, and caring for the sick, to protecting natural resources, revitalizing neighborhoods, and training skilled workers, the nonprofit community plays a crucial role in growing and sustaining our robust economy.

Here’s a look at three organizations and the groundbreaking work they are doing to support the needs of our community and advance the health and wellbeing of North Texans.

**Metrocare**

Metrocare is the largest provider of mental health, developmental disability, and permanent supportive housing services in Dallas County, annually serving over 50,000 children, teens, and adults. The organization has over 2,700 clinical encounters daily with patients ranging from the elderly down to babies and toddlers they serve in their early childhood programs.

“We serve everyone who shows up, but we have to reach those who haven’t shown up yet,” said John Burress, CEO of Metrocare. “We are there as a safety net to catch those who fall through the cracks; we work to fill the gaps where care doesn’t exist.”

The work they do is intricately interrelated with challenges faced by North Texans every day – a widening income gap, housing insecurity, hunger, education, childcare, transportation, and healthcare to name a few. They operate out of 10+ locations in the greater Dallas area, relying on in-person
care because they have seen the power of engagement and connection in helping people with chronic, persistent mental illness.

Space limitations, access, and aging infrastructure have presented an opportunity for Metrocare as it looks to its future. The organization is building a new campus, the Behavioral Health Innovation Center at Hillside, overlooking I-30 in Dallas and on a DART bus route. This three-building campus will replace a psychiatric hospital built in the 1940s, out of which Metrocare had operated since the 1970s.

The $90-million innovation center will be supported by donations and public money from Metrocare, Dallas County, and Parkland Hospital, which is a Metrocare partner. Metrocare was named a beneficiary of the Crystal Charity Ball in 2023 and will receive a three-year grant totaling over $900,000 to help fund the innovation center and a new children’s mental health clinic.

www.metrocareservices.org

Societal efforts to reduce the stigma around mental health are critical. The more stigma we can reduce, the more people are going to show up for care. And we have to be ready for that.

Dr. John Burruss, CEO
Since 1992, the organization has provided intensive case management on school campuses, assessing each child’s unique needs and ensuring children and their families have access to the community resources they need. Their goal is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

In addition, 12 mental health counselors provide clinical services to over 300 students across five school districts. Weekly sessions take place in the school, eliminating transportation barriers and providing services in a place that is familiar to each student. In the 2021-22 school year, clinicians provided over 4,700 hours of one-on-one counseling to students in need.

Mental health is a common theme and growing need when working in schools, according to Lindsey Garner, president and CEO of Communities in Schools of Greater Tarrant County. “There’s been a startling increase in suicide attempts and suicidal ideation, along with youth that are making threats either to harm themselves or someone else,” Garner said.

The pandemic was, in part, a contributing factor. “I think we can use the word ‘trauma’ to describe what COVID presented to the community at large,” said Garner. Students, especially younger children, struggled to cope with all the trauma that COVID brought to them and their families and their friends. “Without well-developed coping skills and emotional regulation, they needed extra support to be able to come back and be expected to be fully functional and successful in the classroom.”

www.cistarrant.org

If kids don’t make it across the graduation stage, if they fall through the cracks because of some lack of intervention, then we are losing out on the ability to strengthen our future workforce and to give every child the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

Lindsey Garner, President and CEO

Scottish Rite for Children

A healthcare institution turning 100 is cause for celebration, but don’t let that fool you into thinking it’s business as usual or that they’re resting on their laurels.

Scottish Rite for Children is a world-renowned leader in the treatment of orthopedic conditions, sports injuries, and fractures, as well as certain related arthritic and neurological disorders and learning disorders, such as dyslexia. The hospital was founded in 1921 to treat children with polio, but interventions broadened over the years to treat scoliosis, clubfoot, and limb-length differences.

While long known as a Dallas institution, the hospital has opened a new campus, the Scottish Rite for Children Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Center, in Frisco. With the population growth north of Dallas and the need for sports medicine – the fastest-growing sub-specialty for pediatric orthopedics – on the rise, expansion to “Sports City USA” was a natural fit.

Innovation is found at every turn in the north campus. A state-of-the-art Movement Science Lab rivals those found in Hollywood. Motion-capture cameras analyze children as they run, jump, kick, and throw. An underwater
treadmill provides restorative water therapy to patients recovering from injuries. And the prosthetics clinic has collaborated with fashion brand, By Way of Dallas, to outfit children with custom devices featuring exclusive designs by artists, athletes, and local influencers such as Dak Prescott, Dude Perfect, and others.

www.scottishriteforchildren.org

**Children and teenagers have more opportunities than ever to train and excel at high levels in a wider variety of sports.** These activities can lead to particular challenges as a result of repetitive stress on small and immature bones, cartilage, and ligaments, leading to injuries and conditions that are often unique to children and very different than those seen in adults.

Dr. Philip Wilson, Assistant Chief of Staff and Director of the Center for Excellence in Sports Medicine
NORTH TEXAS
Map

MAJOR COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES

1 Collin College*
2 Dallas Baptist University
3 Dallas College*
4 Southern Methodist University
5 Tarleton State University
6 Tarrant County College*
7 Texas A&M University-Commerce
8 Texas Christian University
9 Texas Wesleyan University
10 Texas Woman’s University
11 The University of Texas at Arlington
12 The University of Texas at Dallas
13 The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
14 University of Dallas
15 University of North Texas
16 University of North Texas at Dallas
17 University of North Texas Health Science Center
*Denotes main campus

FORTUNE 500
HEADQUARTERS*

1 AECOM
2 American Airlines Group
3 AT&T
4 Builders FirstSource
5 Caterpillar
6 CBRE Group
7 Celanese
8 Charles Schwab
9 Commercial Metals
10 D.R. Horton
11 Energy Transfer
12 EnLink Midstream
13 ExxonMobil
14 Flour
15 HF Sinclair
16 Jacobs Engineering
17 Kimberly-Clark
18 McKesson
19 Pioneer Natural Resources
20 Southwest Airlines
21 Tenet Healthcare
22 Texas Instruments
23 Vistra Energy
24 Yum China Holdings

*Source: 2023 Fortune 500 List. Listed in alphabetical order.

The Fortune 500 List is released in May. As of July 2023, Exxon Mobil officially relocated their headquarters to Houston, TX. This change will be reflected in the 2024 Fortune 500 List.
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285 Uptown Blvd., Bldg. #100
Cedar Hill, Texas 75104
cedarhilltx.com
972-291-5100

Mayor: Stephen Mason
City Manager: Greg Porter
EDC President: Shawn Quildon
Economic Development contact:
Henry Florsheim, IOM
henry.florsheim@cedarhilltx.com
www.cedarhilledc.com

CITY OF COPPELL

255 Parkway Boulevard
Coppell, Texas 75019
coppelltx.com
972-452-0022

Mayor: Wes Mays
City Manager: Mike Land
Director of Economic Development:
Mindi Hurley
mhurley@coppelltx.gov

CITY OF DALLAS

1500 Marilla Street
Dallas, Texas 75201
dallascityhall.com
214-670-3111

Mayor: Eric Johnson
City Manager: Kimberly Tolbert (interim)
Visit Dallas contact:
Craig Davis
craig@visitdallas.com
Economic Development contact:
Robin Bentley
robin.bentley@dallas.gov

CITY OF FORT WORTH

200 Texas Street
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fortworthtexas.gov
817-392-1234

Mayor: Mattie Parker
City Manager: David Cooke
Visit Fort Worth contact:
Robert Jameson
bobjameson@fortworth.com
Economic Development contact:
Robert Sturns
robert.sturns@fortworthtexas.gov

CITY OF GRAND PRAIRIE

300 West Main Street
Grand Prairie, Texas 75050
gptx.org
972-237-8000

Mayor: Ron Jensen
City Manager: Steve Dye
Economic Development contact:
Marty Wieder
mwieder@gptx.org

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Richardson, Texas 75082
cor.net
972-744-4100

Mayor: Bob Dubey
City Manager: Don Magner
Economic Development contact:
Chris Shacklett
chris.shacklett@cor.gov
**City of Lancaster**

Lancaster
211 North Henry Street
Lancaster, Texas 75146
lancaster-tx.com
972-218-1300

**Mayor:** Clyde Hairston  
**City Manager:** Opal Mauldin-Jones  
**Director of Economic Development:** Shane Shepard  
mshepard@lancaster-tx.com

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**City of Mesquite**

1515 North Galloway
Mesquite, Texas 75149
cityofmesquite.com
972-288-7711

**Mayor:** Daniel Alemán Jr.  
**City Manager:** Cliff Keheley, ICMA-CM  
ckeheley@cityofmesquite.com  
**Director of Economic Development:** Kim Buttram, CEcD  
kbdtram@cityofmesquite.com

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4301 City Point Drive
North Richland Hills, Texas 76180
nrhtx.com
817-427-6090

**Mayor:** Oscar Trevino  
**City Manager:** Mark Hindman  
**Economic Development contact:** Craig Hulse, CEcD  
chulse@nrhtx.com

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**Senior Policy Advisor**  
Jim Keffer

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Chris Lamond

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### Economic Development Contacts

| City of Haslet | Thad Chambers, Economic Development thchambers@haslet.org |
| City of Heath | Aretha Adams, City Manager aadams@heathtx.com |
| City of Highland Village | Paul Stevens, City Manager psstevens@highlandvillage.org |
| City of Kaufman | Mike Holder, City Manager Mholder@kaufmantx.org |
| City of Keller | Mary Meier, Director of Economic Development mmeier@cityofkeller.com |
| City of Lancaster | Shane Shepard, Director of Economic Development msshepard@lancaster-tx.com |
| City of Lewisville | Maricelle Samples, Director of Economic Development msamples@cityoflewisville.com |
| City of Mesquite | Kim Buttram, Director of Economic Development kbuttram@cityofmesquite.com |
| City of North Richland Hills | Craig Hulse, Director of Economic Development chulse@nrhtx.com |
| City of Plano | Doug McDonald, Director of Economic Development dougm@ plano.gov |
| City of Richardson | Beth Kolman Economic Development Director Beth@telecomcorridor.com |
| City of Rowlett | Libby Tucker, Director of Economic Development ltucker@rowlett.com |
| City of Sachse | Jerod Potts, Economic Development Manager jpotts@cityofsachse.com |
| City of Southlake | Daniel Cortez, Director of Economic Development & Tourism ddcortez@ci.southlake.tx.us |
| City of Terrell | Mike Sirs, City Manager mksirs@cityofterrell.org |
| City of Weatherford | James Hotopp, City Manager jhotopp@weatherfordtx.gov |
| City of Willow Park | Bryan Grimes, City Manager bgrimes@willowpark.org |

| City of Wylie | Brent Parker, City Manager citymgr@wylie.texas.gov |
| Dallas Regional Chamber | Mike Rosa, Senior Vice President Economic Development mrosa@dallaschamber.org |
| Denton Economic Development Partnership | Wayne Emmerson, Economic Development Director Wayne.Emerson@cityofdenton.com |
| Duncanville Community and Economic Development Corp. | Robert Brown, Interim City Manager robert.brown@duncanvilletx.gov |
| Fort Worth Economic Development Partnership | Rober Allen, President & CEO robert.fortworthedp.com |
| Frisco Economic Development Corporation | Jason Ford, President JFord@friscoedc.com |
| Greenville Economic Development | Greg Sims, President /CEO gsims@ci.greenville.tx.us |
| Irving Economic Development Partnership | Beth A. Bowman, President & CEO bbowman@irvingchamber.com |
| Mansfield Economic Development Corp. | Jason Moore, Executive Director Jason.moore@mansfield-texas.com |
| McKinney Economic Development Corp. | Abby Liu, Executive Vice President liu@mckinneyedc.com |
| Midlothian Economic Development | Kyle Kinateder, CEO kyle@midlothian-tx.org |
| The Colony Economic Development Corporation | Keri Samford, Executive Director of Development edc@thecolonytx.org |
| Town of Addison | Lauren Williams, Economic Development Manager lwilliams@addisontx.gov |
| Town of Flower Mound | JP Walton, Interim Director of Economic Development jp.walton@flower-mound.com |
| Town of Little Elm | Jennette Espinosa, Executive Director jke@littleelm.org |
| Town of Westlake | Amanda DeGan, Town Manager adegan@westlake-tx.org |
| Trophy Club Economic Development Corporation | Wade Carroll, Town Manager wcarroll@trophyclub.org |

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| Allen Economic Development Corporation | Dan Bowman, Executive Director/CEO dbowman@allednedc.com |
| Cedar Hill Economic Development Corporation | Henry Fosheim, Director Henry.Fosheim@cedarhilltexas.com |
| City of Aledo | Noah A. Simon, City Manager citymanager@aledotx.gov |
| City of Arlington | Marty Wieder, Economic Development Director marty.wieder@arlingtontx.gov |
| City of Balch Springs | Chris Dyser, Community Development Director cdyser@cityofbalchsprings.com |
| City of Carrollton | Robert Winningham, Director of Economic Development rwinningham@cityofcarrollton.com |
| City of Celina | Alexis Jackson, Director of Economic Development ajackson@celinaedc.com |
| City of Colleyville | Mark Wood, Assistant City Manager/Economic Development mwood@colleyville.com |
| City of Coppell | Mundi Hurley, Director of Community Development mhurley@coppelltx.gov |
| City of Corinth | Elise Back, Director of Economic Development Elise.back@cityofcorinth.com |
| City of Dallas | Robin Bentley, Director, Office of Economic Development robin.bentley@dallas.gov |
| City of Farmers Branch | Allison Cook, Director of Economic Development & Tourism allison.cook@farmersbranchtx.gov |
| City of Fate | Michael Kovacs, City Manager mkovacs@fatebx.gov |
| City of Fort Worth | Robert Sturms, Economic Development Director robert.sturms@fortworthtexas.gov |
| City of Granbury | Lance LaCour, Economic Development Director llacour@granbury.org |
| City of Grand Prairie | Terry Jones, Business Manager Economic Development tjones@gptx.org |
| City of Grapevine | Garin Giacomarro, Economic Development Director ggiacomarro@grapevinetexas.gov |
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Atmos Energy is committed to safely delivering natural gas that helps lower carbon emissions while providing sustainable and affordable energy solutions for generations to come.

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Our hometown, your destination.

DFW is chock-full of Texas-sized attractions. View breathtaking works of art at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth or take a trip to the Dallas World Aquarium. Head out to the Stockyards to catch a rodeo and grab some BBQ while you’re in town. With the most daily flights to DFW it’s easy to get to our hometown.