

THE TECH ISSUE

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WHY GREEN
IS GOOD
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MARCH/APRIL 2014

MEETINGS INTELLIGENCE



"THIS TOTALLY CHANGES THE WAY THAT WE LOOK AT MEETING SPACE. WE CAN HAVE A MEETING JUST ABOUT EVERYWHERE AND ANYWHERE."

—JESSICA LEVIN

THE NEW SOCIAL

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READY TO WEAR

How high-tech watches, glasses and more are changing events PAGE 40

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A vibrant nighttime photograph of the Dallas skyline. The city is illuminated with a variety of colors, including bright greens, blues, and purples. The lights from the buildings and streetlights are reflected in the water in the foreground, creating a shimmering effect. The sky is dark, making the city lights stand out prominently. The overall mood is energetic and modern.

TEXAS

By Leah Sekula

The Lone Star State is famous for its gargantuan size, measuring almost twice as large as Germany or Japan. But the state's fierce independence and spirit of adventure are as well-known as the famed "everything's bigger in Texas" remark. This state has big options for meetings, too: New JW Marriott and Westin hotels in Austin; a multiuse sports facility coming to Frisco in 2016; millions being invested in Dallas (shown), a 1,000-room Marriott Marquis debuting soon in Houston; and much more.



Austin

Known as the “Live Music Capital of the World,” Austin is certainly not bluffing about its bustling music scene. The area boasts more than 250 live-music venues and is home to some of the most popular festivals in the country, such as Fun Fun Fun Fest, South by Southwest and Austin City Limits.

And it’s not just big music festivals that are attracted to the city. ESPN recently announced that Austin’s Circuit of The Americas (shown), a 1,600-acre sports and entertainment venue, will be the host of the Summer X-Games from 2014-17.

Smaller meetings fit in effortlessly in Austin, too. Brooke Murphy, manager of planning and administration for the National Notary Association, held her 2013 conference in Austin. “We try to select locations in the heart of our host cities to give attendees an opportunity to take in the local sights and sounds, but it isn’t always possible to be in the center of the action on an association event budget,” she says. “Austin’s Arboretum area turned out to be a perfect compromise, as we were able to offer our attendees more affordable nightly room rates than were available downtown, without compromising on style or convenience.

“One of the biggest challenges association planners face is how to keep an annual event fresh and exciting for repeat attendees without breaking the budget. What ultimately drew us to Austin was the combination of the city’s geographically central location, vibrant culture and affordability,” Murphy says.

One such cultural district is Sixth Street, the celebrated entertainment hub of the city. This area attracts a diverse crowd with its art galleries,

casual cafes, upscale restaurants and boutique shopping. The Arboretum shopping area has more mainstream stores and is near Renaissance Austin Hotel, which has 65,000 square feet of total meeting space, including 24 meeting rooms and the 30,300-sq.-ft. Rio Grande exhibit hall.

The 900,000-sq.-ft. Austin Convention Center downtown has 54 meeting rooms and seven ballrooms that can combine into two larger ballrooms, measuring 43,000 and 23,000 square feet each. The convention center has a digital bandwidth of 1 billion bits per second. It is also centrally located and within walking distance of several hotels, including Hilton Austin, Hampton Inn & Suites, Courtyard Austin Convention Center, Omni Austin Hotel Downtown and Hyatt Place Austin Downtown. More hotels are on the way. JW Marriott Austin will be the city’s largest hotel with 110,500 square feet of meeting space; and the 17-story The Westin Austin Downtown will have 13,500 square feet of space. Both hotels are expected to open in 2015.

NOTEWORTHY: Austin-Bergstrom International Airport is a 15-minute trip from downtown and serves more than 70 direct destinations.

Quick Facts:

Area guest rooms: 30,000 | **Nearest airport:** Austin-Bergstrom International Airport
Convention center: Austin Convention Center | **Meeting rooms:** 54
Total meeting space: 370,967 square feet



Dallas

As home to 18 Fortune 500 companies, Dallas is familiar with big business. Its long history as an economic hub gives Dallas an atmosphere of progress and development, which makes it an optimal place to host meetings. The city recently completed multimillion-dollar renovations at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, which now has more than one million square feet of event space.

Jackie Spencer is the director of convention and systems administration for the Texas Association of School Boards, who, in partnership with the Texas Association of School Administrators, chose Dallas two years in a row for their annual conference. They took advantage of the 1,001 rooms of the Omni Dallas Hotel, which is directly connected to Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center via sky bridge. “The connection of the Omni and the convention center made it so much easier for our members to go back and forth,” Spencer says. “Our members like meeting in Dallas. It’s an easy travel destination for most, and there’s a lot to see and do outside convention activities. Overall attendance tends to be higher when we meet in Dallas.”

On the smaller side, the new \$100 million Klyde Warren Park (shown) is a 5.2-acre green space built on top of a recessed eight-lane highway. This engineering and design feat turned the former highway into an urban oasis, which now connects the lively uptown neighborhood with the Dallas Arts District and downtown. Meeting planners can rent the entire park or one of its numerous spaces, including the Ginsburg Family Great Lawn, which includes a performance pavilion.

The 19-block Dallas Arts District contains many of Dallas’ best museums and performing-arts venues, including Dallas Museum of Art, Crow Collection of Asian Art and Trammell Crow Center, and Morton H. Meyerson

Symphony Center. Nasher Sculpture Center has a 1.4-acre garden with sculptures by renowned artists Auguste Rodin and Paul Gauguin, among others. Dallas also has a host of science museums, the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, a vibrant culinary scene and some of the best shopping in Texas. The city is crazy about sports, playing home to five professional sports teams.

Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport has long enabled Dallas to be an important inland port and transportation hub. The city is striving to make it even easier to use this transport jewel in conjunction with the city itself. “In December 2014, the Dallas Area Rapid Transit light rail system will extend from Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport to downtown Dallas, providing added convenience for attendees to get to the heart of the city,” says Phillip Jones, president and CEO of the Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau. Jones also finds Dallas’ physical location to be a reason so many event planners eventually find their way to the city. It “appeals to a broad spectrum of visitors with it being a four-hour flight from either coast, along with more than 200 nonstop flights from destinations around the world.”

NOTEWORTHY: Catch a ride on D-LINK, a special DART bus service, to explore the neighborhoods of downtown Dallas and historic Oak Cliff for free.

Quick Facts:

Area guest rooms: 75,000 | **Convention center:** Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center | **Meeting rooms:** 96 | **Total meeting space:** 1 million square feet
Nearest airports: Dallas/Ft. Worth International Airport; Dallas Love Field



Frisco

A huge sports town, Frisco has a variety of venues hosting events for everything from NCAA Division I to the NHL. Its pedigree and heart for sports give Frisco a flexible, can-do attitude. "Our facilities, by design, are multipurpose, allowing for a variety of meeting setups, special events and sporting activities," says Marla Roe, executive director of the Frisco Convention and Visitors Bureau. "Toyota Stadium (formerly FC Dallas Stadium) hosts soccer, football and concerts, but is also a great place for teambuilding activities. The Dr Pepper Arena has hosted events from ice hockey and figure skating to basketball and gymnastics, to large convention sessions and galas. With its proximity to the Frisco Conference Center, groups have been able to utilize both facilities for their larger events."

The Dallas Cowboys plan on moving their corporate headquarters and training location to Frisco in 2016. With the move comes the approval of a \$115 million multiuse special events and sports facility. The 12,000-seat indoor stadium and two outdoor fields will provide facilities for the Cowboys' training sessions and will also be available to host athletic, academic, fine arts and entertainment events. Corporate offices, retail spaces, restaurants and a luxury hotel are also planned in the area.

Frisko also has an array of shopping and dining options. The area encompasses nearly 8 million square feet of retail space including the Stonebriar Centre mall, which is one of the largest malls in North Texas

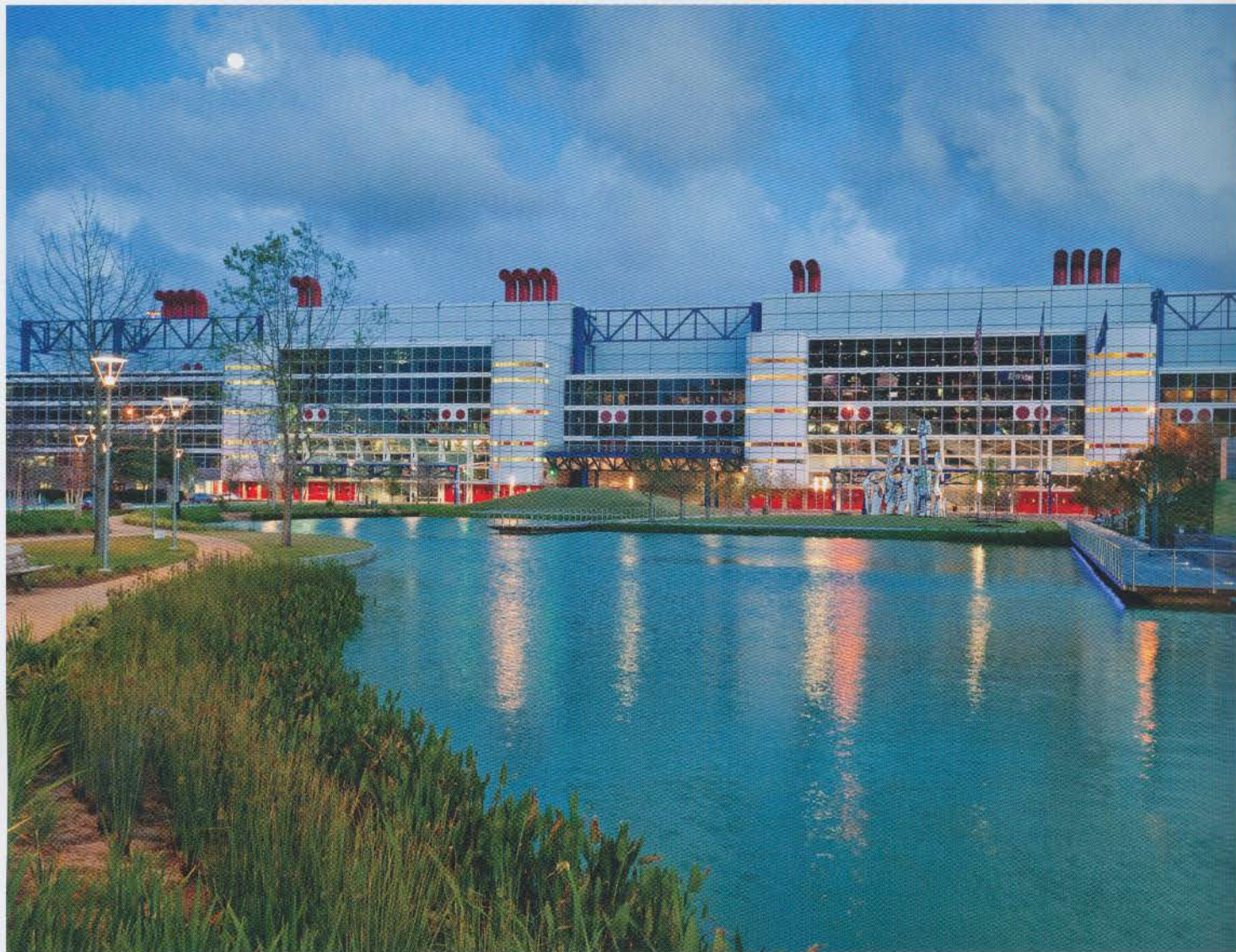
measuring just over 1.6 million square feet. These areas also have creative teambuilding activities. Consider booking the Four Diamond Chef's Challenge, an experience modeled after the "Top Chef" television series, at the Embassy Suites Dallas-Frisco/Hotel, Convention Center & Spa. Or, get the adrenaline pumping with go-karting at Pole Position Raceway.

In close proximity to Stonebriar Centre, Dr Pepper StarCenter, Dr Pepper Ballpark and Frisco Conference Center is the 122-room, all-suite Home2 Suites by Hilton. Additionally, a 5,000-sq.-ft. expansion project is underway at Sheraton Stonebriar Hotel. It will add 51 guest rooms, an outdoor pool and more meeting space, which will bring the total space to 6,500 square feet. It is expected to be complete by September.

NOTEWORTHY: Canyons of Frisco, a state-of-the-art rock climbing facility, has 10,000 square feet of climbing space with walls standing nearly 30 feet tall.

Quick Facts:

Area guest rooms: 1,720 | **Convention center:** Frisco Conference Center
Meeting rooms: 23 | **Total meeting space:** 90,000 square feet
Nearest airports: Dallas/Ft. Worth International Airport; Dallas Love Field



Houston

The fourth largest city in the nation, Houston is Texas' biggest, and has all the big city charm to go with it. The cosmopolitan city is bursting with culture, award-winning restaurants, hip nightlife and shopping.

Houston's two major airports and central location translate to convenience for attendees and visitors from inside and outside the 50 states. Yet one big surprise a lot of planners don't expect is the significant potential attendee base in the greater Houston area. Local attendees add both area knowledge and spirit to national events that can sometimes be heavy on lanyard-wearing outsiders. Nathan Tollett, director of sales for the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, says that's where Houston's success lies: "The people here are extremely friendly, particularly in the hospitality community. It's what keeps certain meetings and meeting planners coming back."

Construction is expected to begin this spring on the new Marriott Marquis, a 1,000-room convention center hotel that will be located next to the George R. Brown Convention Center (shown). It will be connected to the center via skywalk, and it is expected to complete by 2016. A JW Marriott is expected to open in August in time for the NCAA Final Four tournament. After the transformation from the 102-year-old Samuel F. Carter building to the hotel, it will have 328 guest rooms and more than 13,000 square feet of event space.

The former downtown Houston Pavilions is undergoing a transformation to become GreenStreet. The 570,000-sq.-ft. mixed-use center will have lots

of open green space, as well as ample dining, shopping and entertainment options, including Lucky Strike bowling, House of Blues Houston and McCormick & Schmick's steak house.

Houston is also home to a huge concentration of visual and performing arts organizations. "From ballet to graffiti, drama to multicultural folk art, we've got it all," says Tollett. Houston's humble Texas roots give it real folk art cred, and visitors love checking out sites like the Beer Can House, a residence-turned-folk-art gallery and workshop owned by the Orange Show Center for Visionary Art. The house is decorated with more than 50,000 beer cans, and the property is filled with folk art, mobiles and lawn art.

NOTEWORTHY: Serving up hearty portions of Southern-Cajun food since 1978, Treebeards on Market Square has been a long-standing local lunch favorite. The eatery has a private space for up to 200 guests that includes a balcony overlooking the square, as well as catering services.

Quick Facts:

Area guest rooms: 74,000 | **Nearest airport:** George Bush Intercontinental Airport
Convention center: George R. Brown Convention Center
Meeting rooms: 100 | **Total meeting space:** 1.2 million square feet



Lubbock

Lubbock is small-town Texas at its finest—a friendly and welcoming destination with a laid-back atmosphere and plenty to attract meetings. Known as “Hub City,” Lubbock is the economic, education and health care center of the South Plains region, and Texas Tech University (shown) brings to the city everything from multicultural events to NCAA Division I sports.

Amy Zientek, director of sales for Visit Lubbock, says, “All of our hotels and facilities provide free parking and complimentary Internet. The city

is easy to get around and has been designed so that traffic is not an issue.” A straightforward traffic pattern combined with Lubbock Preston Smith International Airport help both national and international visitors find the city easy to get to, and more importantly, easy to navigate. “You can get almost anywhere in about 15 minutes or less,” says Zientek.

Lubbock’s sports pedigree will be boosted in late 2014 when construction of the George H.W. Bush National College Baseball Hall of Fame begins. Combined with the great football and basketball teams at Texas Tech, visitors and residents alike are never far from high-level sports action. The facilities also have many opportunities to event planners. A favorite of meeting attendees, the 25,000-sq.-ft. Texas Tech Stadium Club has good food and views of the Red Raider’s football stadium and downtown Lubbock.

East of the Texas Tech campus is the AAA Four Diamond Overton Hotel & Conference Center, the largest hotel conference center in Lubbock. The 303-room property has 20,000 square feet of meeting space, including the 11,250-sq.-ft. column-free Sunset Ballroom, four meeting rooms and two boardrooms. Full banquet and catering services are on-site, and audiovisual equipment is available.

NOTEWORTHY Museum of Texas Tech University has more than 5 million items about science, arts, technology and more. The museum also has a 71-seat planetarium and the Natural Science Research Laboratory.

Quick Facts:

Area guest rooms: 4,800 | **Convention center:** Lubbock Memorial Civic Center

Exhibit space: 98,000 square feet | **Meeting rooms:** 15

Nearest airport: Lubbock Preston Smith International Airport



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MEETING FACILITIES

MEETING FACILITIES	SQ FT
Beaumont Civic Center	48,000
Ford Park Event Center	83,000
The Event Centre	16,000
MCM Elegante Hotel & Conference Center	20,000
Holiday Inn Beaumont Plaza & Suites	22,000
Total Sleeping Rooms Citywide	3,500

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TEXAS WITH A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA.

BEAUMONT



Plano

Known as the "Hot Air Balloon Capitol of Texas," Plano's blue skies and wide-open spaces are not only desirable for drifting high on the easy winds, but the economical, safe and booming town is great for meetings.

Event planners can find a number of unique venue opportunities in and around Plano. One of the more interesting locations is Southfork Ranch Event & Conference Center, which is best known as the filming location for the popular television series "Dallas." But the location has more than its Hollywood claim to fame: It has venue spaces of all sizes, giving groups the opportunity to experience the sprawling 300-acre ranch, and, as the ranch puts it, "mix boots with business."

Lately, Plano has been particularly attractive to sports groups. Rex Parcells, vice president of instruction at Hill College, has brought the

NJCAA Men's National Tennis Tournament to Plano for the last eight years. "Athletes from all over the U.S. enjoy coming to Plano because it's convenient for travel and has great hotels, restaurants and entertainment. Plano is a great city to host athletic events."

Plano's attractiveness as a meeting destination has only amplified its infrastructure development. The 299-room Hilton Dallas/Plano Granite Park plans to open this fall with 262,500 square feet of mixed event space, a full-service restaurant and bar area, a retail shop, a technology lounge, a fitness center, a pool and a spa area.

Plano's largest hotel is the 404-room Dallas/Plano Marriott at Legacy Town Center. It's also a top meeting facility with 32,000 square feet of flexible meeting space and 27 meeting rooms. Hyatt Place Dallas Plano is a good option for smaller meetings. It has 790 square feet of meeting space that can accommodate 50 people theater-style.

A 30-minute drive from both Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and Dallas Love Field airport makes transportation into Plano easy. It's also connected to the DART system, meaning attendees can get from Plano to attractions in downtown Dallas in only 40 minutes.

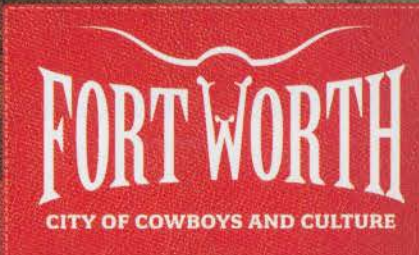
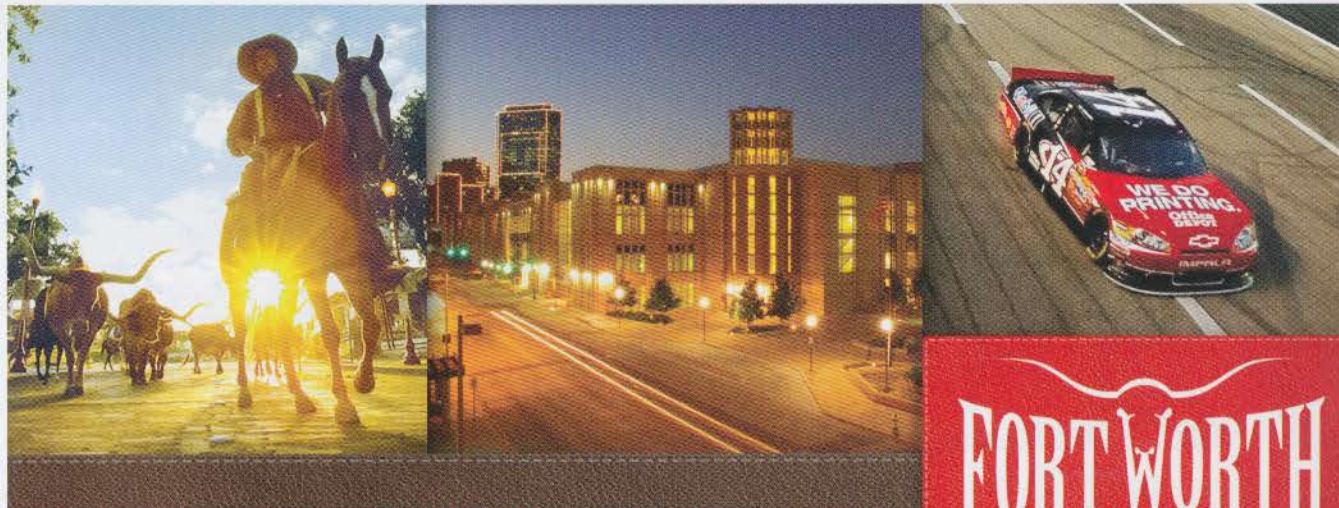
NOTEWORTHY Event1013 is a 110-year-old building in the Historic Downtown Plano filled with modern charm. The space has original hardwood floors, brick walls, carriage doors, exposed trusses and soaring ceilings.

Quick Facts:

Area guest rooms: 4,300 | **Convention center:** Plano Centre

Total meeting space: 122,500 square feet | **Meeting rooms:** 17

Nearest airport: Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport; Dallas Love Field



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Explore the true American West in the Stockyards National Historic District. Enjoy charming shopping, dining and nightlife in dazzling Sundance Square, and see world-renowned museums in the Cultural District. Just 17 miles from DFW International Airport, our dynamic downtown offers more than 2,300 hotel rooms within walking distance of the newly expanded, beautifully renovated 253,226-square-foot Fort Worth Convention Center. Fort Worth makes memorable meetings.

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