(Re)Discover Downtown Arlington

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f you haven’t been to downtown Arlington lately, you haven’t been to downtown Arlington at all. In just the last two years, the area has experienced nothing short of explosive revitalization.

During that time, popular North Texas restaurants including Fuzzy’s Tacos, Health and Harmony House, Babe’s Chicken, Flying Fish, Old School Pizza & Suds, Mavericks Sports Grill, Potager, and Grease Monkey have joined longtime favorites like J. Gallagher’s, J.R. Bentley’s, and Tin Cup downtown. Twisted Root and Mellow Mushroom are set to open this fall.

Why here? And why now?

“This is a very exciting time for downtown Arlington,” says Bolt Johnson, chairman of the Downtown Arlington Management Corporation board of directors. “The revitalization activity you see now has been a result of a vision and commitment made by many organizations and individuals over a long period of time. The City Council and staff of the City of Arlington, the leadership team at UT Arlington, and commitment made by many organizations and individuals...

In recent years, the City has made key investments such as the Engineering Research Building and College Park Center, which will open in early 2012. Coupled with Arlington’s other nearby attractions, like the Arlington Music Hall, Cowboys Stadium, and Rangers Ballpark, these new additions are helping make downtown the place to be for private investors. “All of these investments position downtown for dramatic growth and redevelopment,” Johnson says.

Ken Vaughan, director of operations for the new Flying Fish restaurant on Abram Street, provides ample proof of that. “We targeted Arlington because it is an established, yet growing community,” he explains. “We looked at a few different sites but ultimately chose downtown because of the solid business growth, the local government presence, UT Arlington, and the many sporting and cultural events the area has to offer. We also found what we think is going to be a great location as a resurgent downtown Arlington continues to grow.”

And grow it will, as more and more people—many of them students at UT Arlington—choose to make the downtown area their home. Today, more than 10,000 students live on or within five miles from campus, and close to 10,000 live within 10 miles. The significant enrollment growth experienced by UT Arlington over the last few years has led to the redevelopment of the campus edge by private developers who specialize in the financing, construction, and management of college student housing properties,” says John Hall, UT Arlington vice president for administration and campus operations.

Midtown Apartments, which opened just a couple of weeks ago, and Campus Edge, set to open in Fall 2012, are two examples of student living communities within walking distance of campus and downtown Arlington.

“This recent activity is important to the University, as students now have more attractive housing options available to them,” Hall says. “At the same time, private development preserves the University’s debt capacity for future construction of academic and research facilities on the Arlington campus.

“Going forward,” Hall continues, “it will be important to create pedestrian linkages within the university and downtown districts and to create a stronger sense of place.”

For more information on Arlington’s downtown revitalization, visit the Downtown Arlington Management Corporation website at www.downtownarlington.org.

When it enters the conference at the start of the 2012-2013 season, UT Arlington will become the 10th member of the WAC, joining Louisiana Tech University, New Mexico State University, and Utah State University, among others. WAC conference play will coincide with the first full basketball season in College Park Center, the University’s new 7,000-seat, split-bowl events arena opening in 2012.

“With the assets that UT Arlington brings to the conference—really made it a very easy decision and pretty much a slam dunk for us,” Pete Carlon, UT Arlington’s director of intercollegiate athletics, believes the conference move marks a pivotal moment for the University.

“Joining the WAC places UT Arlington in a new era of collegiate sports,” Carlon says, noting that the WAC is one of 11 elite conferences in NCAA Division I athletics. “The WAC gives our University instant recognition across the country and moves us from regional athletics competition to a truly national stage.”

UT Arlington sponsors 14 Division I intercollegiate sports: baseball, men’s and women’s basketball, men’s and women’s cross country, men’s golf, softball, men’s and women’s tennis, men’s and women’s indoor and outdoor track and field, and women’s volleyball. The University will be the WAC’s third non-football school, and UT Arlington’s membership in the WAC does not depend on a return of competitive football.

MOVIN’ ON UP

Maverick Athletics to join the WAC in 2012

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T Arlington announced in late July that it will soon join the Western Athletic Conference (WAC), a move that will elevate the University’s competitive sports programs and increase its national profile.

Root and Mellow Mushroom are set to open this fall.

visiT us on the web: www.uta.edu/collegetown
as well as a residence hall, student apartments, retail stores and restaurants, a new University welcome center, and an $180-million parking garage. The crown jewel of the district, College Park Center, will achieve substantial completion by January 2012, and the University’s basketball team will play part of its season there. The north sections of the parking garage were completed last month, in time for the fall 2011 semester. They are providing approximately 1,800 parking spaces for the University community. The south garage (700 spaces), retail areas, housing facility, and welcome center will be completed in July 2012.

To see a live Web-cam of the buildings in progress, head to www.uta.edu/collegepark. To get updates on the construction, visit blog.uta.edu/facilities.

COUNTDOWN TO LAUNCH

Progress continues on new College Park District

Construction on UT Arlington’s new College Park District is progressing steadily. When it opens, the complex will help usher in a new era for the University and the community. The $160 million development spans more than 20 acres on Center Street between UTA Boulevard and Mitchell Street, and includes a broad range of amenities, with College Park Center as its focal point. Also included in this massive mixed-use development are The Green at College Park—an urban oasis and green space for the University community—

The spring semester will include lectures by Soledad O’Brien in February and Robert Ballard and Jeb Bush in March. O’Brien is an anchor and special correspondent for CNN. Since joining the network in 2003, she has reported breaking news from around the globe and has produced award-winning, record-breaking, and critically acclaimed documentaries. Her speech on February 7 will focus on diversity in America.

Ballard, who is appearing at UT Arlington on March 6, is best known for discovering the wreck of the Titanic, but he’s also made some of the most startling underwater discoveries in recent years. He has led or participated in more than 65 underwater expeditions, some of them involving deep-diving submersibles that he has designed, is the pioneer of the JASON Project that allows schoolchildren to virtually explore the oceans; and has authored 16 books. Ballard’s appearance on campus coincides with the centennial of the Titanic disaster.

Jeb Bush, the former governor of Florida, brother of George W. Bush, and son George H.W. Bush, will speak on March 23 about reforming education in America. Bush, who is an alumnus of The University of Texas System, has been speculated to be a possible Republican candidate for president in 2012 or beyond. His appearance on campus is part of UT Arlington’s Annual Celebration of Excellence by Students and will be the first lecture to be held in the new College Park Center.

All Maverick Speakers Series lectures are free but require a ticket, which can be obtained at www.utaticket.com or by calling 817-272-9595. All lectures are scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m.

PREMIUM SEATING NOW OFFERED

While general seating for all lectures is free, the Maverick Speakers Series now offers guests the option of purchasing premium seating. This premium seating package includes venue access via a VIP entrance to avoid long lines; reserved seating near the front; reserved parking; and front-of-the-row access to book signings. Premium seating packages cost $25 per lecture and are available exclusively at www.utaticket.com as supplies last. Guests may purchase multiple packages. For questions or more information, visit www.uta.edu/maverickspeakers or call the box office at 817-272-9595.

HOT SEATS

College Park Center premium seating available

It’s time to grab the hottest ticket in town: courtyard and club seats at the new College Park Center. Seats for Maverick basketball games and volleyball matches are now on sale. In addition to the view, the premium seats include parking, exclusive access to two member-only clubs before and during games, and access to concerts and other events at the arena. Call Gregg Elkin at 817-272-7665 or email gkevin@uta.edu to reserve your premium seats today.

Fall Festival set for October

Ring in with a College Town party for the whole family. You’re invited to join students, faculty, staff, and their families for the UT Arlington Fall Festival on Saturday, October 22, from 7 to 9 p.m. The event will offer live music, family-friendly activities, carnival-style games, inflatables, food, and more. The Festival—which is held in conjunction with the University’s annual Parents and Family Weekend—will take place on campus between Arlington Hall and the University Center, close to the corner of First Street and Pecan Street. For more information about the Fall Festival and Parents and Family Weekend, visit www.uta.edu/parentsweekend.

From June through August, more than 8,500 children and young adults participated in a variety of summer camps at UT Arlington, including those for music, engineering, basketball, volleyball, science, and college prep.

Summer Camps

The Big Event

The 11th annual Big Event brought together 1,000 UT Arlington students, faculty, staff, and community members who lent a helping hand to 37 different community service project sites, including Mission Arlington, the American Cancer Society, Fossil Rim, the Salvation Army, the River Legacy Living Science Center, and Refugee Services of North Texas.

Graduation Celebration

The University celebrated its largest graduating class ever (3,733 students) this past May. See a video from the Graduation Celebration at Levitt Pavilion—including keynote speaker John Legend and a Texas-sized fireworks show—at www.uta.edu/commencement.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

VOLUME III • ISSUE 2

AROUND TOWN
Ready, Set, Grow
Community Garden has successful first harvest

The community got back to its roots—literally—this year with the opening of the Community Garden at UT Arlington. The garden, located on a half-acre lot at the corner of Summit and UTA Boulevard, is a joint project of the City of Arlington and the University, and is entirely overseen and maintained by members of the community.

Last March, volunteers constructed close to 80 elevated gardening beds, shoveled dirt, spread mulch, created a crushed granite pathway, and filled each bed with seedlings. Various corporate and private donors contributed a tool shed, picnic tables, benches, pavilion, and signage.

To some of the volunteers, the garden presents a great opportunity to do something interesting and different; to others, it’s a way to meet new people and get involved in the community. “I love seeing the number of UT Arlington students and employees who have plots,” says Ken Gooch, an experienced gardener who shares his plot with a first-time gardener. “The international mix of gardeners and what they contribute through their different styles is nice.”

Above all, the garden is a learning experience for all those involved. Julie Sullivan, a retiree of UT Arlington, says, “I have already learned about some things I will not plant again. Not to mention the weather this season, which has been a real challenge. First terrible winds, then 100-degree temperatures, then a drought.”

Despite the challenges, Julie and her fellow gardeners were pleasantly surprised with the amount of produce the Community Garden has yielded so far, enough even to donate a portion of this year’s harvest to Mission Arlington.

Challenges?

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“Platforms exposed at the base of the columns support the monumental gateway and create vertical elements that define the entrance to the north side of campus,” UT Arlington President James D. Spaniolo says. “It is a gateway signaling that students and visitors are welcome on our campus. We expect it to become a recognized icon for our world-class institution.”

The gateway is part of the larger Engineering Research Quadrangle and stands west of the Engineering Research Building, a 234,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art, collaborative research center that opened earlier this year. Schrickel, Rollins, and Associates also designed The Green at College Park, a new urban park located south of College Park Center that features sustainable materials and landscaping.

“The Green was dedicated this spring.”

Gateway tower welcomes visitors to UT Arlington

UT Arlington’s new gateway tower is complete and shining blue and orange lights over campus.

The 35-foot-tall brick and cast stone tower serves as a new University landmark. Located at the intersection of UTA Boulevard and South Cooper Street, the monument features specially treated glass that diffuses light, allowing it to glow at night with Maverick blue lighting.

The tower was designed by Schrickel, Rollins, and Associates Inc. of Arlington. It incorporates materials and architectural themes that will be reflected in key structures within the College Park District, currently under construction on the northeast side of campus.

“This lighted tower is a symbol of a University on the rise,” UT Arlington President James D. Spaniolo says. “It is a gateway signaling that students and visitors are welcome on our campus. We expect it to become a recognized icon for our world-class institution.”

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“It has been enjoyable, with some surprises, some entertainment, and a few disappointments,” says Gooch. “It’s rewarding to see the neighborly interaction in the garden, the teaching and learning that occurs, and the true enjoyment that people are getting out of being a part of the Community Garden at UT Arlington. This is the good life!”

Ready, Set, Grow
MAVERICK SPEAKERS SERIES

See Who’s at the Mic Tonight

Here at UT Arlington, mavericks are defined as people dedicated to making a difference. The University is proud to host the Maverick Speakers Series, an in-depth look at the people, ideas, actions, and solutions that leave a mark on the world. Please plan to join us for these upcoming lectures:

Emmitt Smith
Hall of Fame running back
Oct. 20, 2011
7:30 p.m., Texas Hall

Ben and Jerry
Founders of Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream
Nov. 17, 2011
7:30 p.m., Texas Hall

Soledad O’Brien
CNN anchor and special correspondent
Feb. 7, 2012
7:30 p.m., Texas Hall

Robert Ballard
Oceanic explorer
March 6, 2012
7:30 p.m., Texas Hall

Jeb Bush
Former governor of Florida
March 23, 2012
7:30 p.m., College Park Center

For more information, visit www.uta.edu/maverickspeakers.