



convention & visitors bureau

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**PLANO, “THE STAR IN TEXAS,” COMBINES QUAIN, HISTORIC BEGINNINGS WITH ITS MODERN, CUTTING EDGE TRANSFORMATION**

**Located about 30 minutes from the DFW Airport, Plano is one of the safest, easiest, cleanest, family-friendly and economical places for leisure and business travelers**

PLANO, Texas (April 2009) – Known as “The Star in Texas,” Plano is an All-American city that cherishes its quaint, historic beginnings yet embraces its modern, cutting-edge transformation that has made it one of the best places to live in the United States, according to *CNN Money Magazine*; the safest city to live in North Texas, according to a recent survey conducted by CQ Press and arguably, one of the best places to visit and do business.

Conveniently located about 30 minutes from the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and downtown Dallas, Plano is among the safest, easiest, cleanest, family-friendly and most economical cities in Texas, if not in the United States. And although the attractions, sporting, adventure and entertainment venues of Dallas/Forth Worth are nearby, visitors will find that Plano itself offers a surprising number of things to see, visit and do – a perennial favorite being the **Plano Hot Air Balloon Festival**. Held each September since 1979, the popular event has earned Plano the title of “Hot Air Balloon Capitol of Texas.”

When it comes to business, Plano's Legacy Park is home to a number of high profile companies, including EDS, an HP Company; JCPenney, The Frito-Lay Company; Dr Pepper Snapple Group, and many others. As such, the city regularly hosts business travelers from throughout the world. When NYLO Hotels decided to introduce a groundbreaking concept that redefines urban-style lodging, the company picked Plano as the site of its first hotel. To make the stay of corporate travelers easier and more productive, the Plano Convention and Visitors Bureau (Plano CVB) recently rolled out its **Plano Perks Card**, a complimentary cell-phone based concierge service. And for all travelers, **Hot Deals** and **Hot Rates** and **Hot Dates** are always available through the Plano CVB.

When it comes to leisure and business travel, there's no place like Plano.

### **Plano's Quaint, Charming Side**

The first settlers came to Plano in the 1840s and the city was officially incorporated in 1873. Today, Plano boasts a charming downtown area that is lined with authentic brick streets, creative restaurants and more than 50 specialty shops, including three quaint antique malls, art galleries, artist residences, Scandinavian cookware pottery, tea rooms, a wine shop and more. Visitors can visit more than a dozen restored historic homes and other properties that are designated as historic landmarks, most of which are within walking distance of the downtown area.

Located in downtown Plano's Haggard Park Historic District is the **Interurban Railway Museum ([www.planocvb.com/attractions](http://www.planocvb.com/attractions))**. The museum is housed in a building that served as a primary stop on the Texas Electric Railway that ran from Denison to Dallas from 1908 to 1948. It contains many artifacts associated with the

Interurban Line, as well as a colorful history of Plano. Next to the station is car 360, one of the original cars that carried mail and passengers.

Also located in the Haggard Park Historic District are two “Plano Stages” – the **Courtyard Theater** ([www.plano.gov/departments/arts](http://www.plano.gov/departments/arts)) and the **Cox Building Playhouse** ([www.plano.gov/departments/arts](http://www.plano.gov/departments/arts)). Referred to as “the hidden jewel of Plano,” the beautiful Courtyard Theater is a 1938 Works Progress Administration (WPA) project and is a significant building in Plano’s history. This state-of-the-art facility, which underwent a \$4.6 million restoration in 1999, has an historical perspective unlike any other in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Located next to the Courtyard Theater is the Cox Building Playhouse, a blackbox theater where various theater companies perform and events are held.

Housed in a renovated building that is located on the site of the first commercial establishment in Plano (Eli Murphy’s general store, which opened in 1854) is the **ArtCentre of Plano** ([www.artcentreofplano.org](http://www.artcentreofplano.org)). A “home for the arts in Plano,” the ArtCentre offers plays and vocal performances in the ArtCentre Theatre and art galleries for displays of local artists and national shows.

Not far from downtown is **Heritage Farmstead** ([www.heritagefarmstead.com](http://www.heritagefarmstead.com)), a four-acre museum that preserves a way of life during the height of prosperity in the early 1920s. The beautiful Victorian home was built in 1891 in a region of Blackland Prairie soil by Hunter Farrell for his wife Mary Alice and daughter Ammie. The house and its 12 outbuildings were the hub of a 360-acre farm that was later operated for several years by Ammie, who became a colorful local resident.

### **Plano’s Modern, Transformed Side**

Plano has grown steadily since incorporating in 1873, but its population exploded in the 1980s with the establishment of Legacy Park, a master-planned business, retail and residential community. Today, Legacy Park is home to such high-profile U.S. companies as EDS, an HP Company; The Frito-Lay Company; Dr Pepper Snapple Group and many others, including JCPenney, which moved its corporate headquarters from New York City to Plano in 1990.

Recently developed within Legacy Park is The Shops At Legacy, which has a “Main Street” style and feel to it. Brimming with boutiques, sidewalk cafes, some of the areas best chefs and restaurants and even local history, The Shops At Legacy is an example of Plano’s recent cutting-edge transformation.

Located in The Shops At Legacy are many notable national and Texas firsts. For example, the Angelinka Film Center ([www.angelinkafirmcenter.com](http://www.angelinkafirmcenter.com)) is part of the nation’s most successful cinemas dedicated to art and independent film. These film centers are located only in New York City and Texas. **Legacy Books** ([www.legacybooksonline.com](http://www.legacybooksonline.com)) is one of the largest independently-owned and operated bookstores in the United States. The Shops At Legacy’s popular brewery restaurant **Gordon Biersch** ([www.gordonbiersch.com](http://www.gordonbiersch.com)) is the only such establishment located in Texas. Most notable, perhaps, is that Super-chef Kent Rathbun chose this area of Plano as the first location of his highly acclaimed restaurant **Japser’s**. ([www.jaspersrestaurant.com](http://www.jaspersrestaurant.com)).

One of Plano’s premiere hotel properties is also located in this area – the **Dallas/Plano Marriott at Legacy Town Center** ([www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)). This upscale,

full-service and picturesque property is located within walking distance of more than 80 restaurants and numerous shops.

When it comes to accommodations, Plano is the home of another first. When NYLO Hotels ([www.nylohotels.com](http://www.nylohotels.com)) decided to introduce a groundbreaking new concept that redefines urban-style lodging, it picked Plano as its first location. The NYLO Hotel in Plano features guest lofts, two lifestyle suites with a 600-square-foot terrace and 45 allergy-free friendly rooms. In addition, Plano is home to one of the first **aloft Hotels** ([www.starwoodhotels.com/aloft-hotels/](http://www.starwoodhotels.com/aloft-hotels/)) in the country. aloft Hotel is a much-anticipated lifestyle brand from Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide that features loft-inspired design.

Started at about the same time as Plano's explosive growth – 1979, the **Plano Balloon Festival** ([www.planoballoonfest.org](http://www.planoballoonfest.org)) is another symbol of transformation that has put the city squarely on the Texas map, in this case as the “Hot Air Balloon Capitol of Texas.” Held the third weekend in September, approximately 75,000 people attend this popular event, which features anywhere from 75 to 100 balloons in all shapes and colors. This three-day event also features concerts, Kids Fun Zone, a Festival Marketplace, great food, sky divers, fireworks and the magnificent of hot air balloons traveling through the skies of Plano.

### **Highlights For Leisure & Corporate Travelers**

Despite its recent transformation, Plano still remains a clean, easy, safe, family-friendly, and perhaps most importantly, economical place to stay and visit for leisure and corporate travelers alike.

On the Plano Convention and Visitors Bureau's (Plano CVB) Web site ([www.planocvb.com](http://www.planocvb.com)), travelers can take advantage of "**Hot Deals.**" Included on the Web site are coupons for discounts on lodging, shuttle service, attractions and more. Available to corporate travelers through the Plano CVB is the complimentary **Plano Perks Card**. The size of a credit card, the **Plano Perks Card** is a cell phone-based concierge service designed to make the current and future stays of business travelers in Plano easier and more productive. The card gives travelers access to a live person who can assist them with just about anything ranging from restaurant reservations to finding directions to a new club.

As for accommodations, there are more than 4,100 rooms available in Plano. From the cutting-edge NYLO Hotel to the Holiday Inn, there are plenty of options for business travelers and families on a budget. The Plano CVB Web site includes an extensive list of where to stay while in Plano.

Dallas may be known nationally for its shopping, but within the Dallas/Fort Worth area, Plano is known as one of the best places for shopping. Plano has more than 70 shopping centers, as well as countless boutiques, specialty stores, one-of-a-kind shops, antique stores and galleries. In addition to downtown Plano and The Shops At Legacy, some of Plano's most notable shopping venues are **Lakeside Market** ([www.shoplakesidemarket.com](http://www.shoplakesidemarket.com)), which features more than 14 home furnishing stores; **Preston Park Village**, which includes more than 60 specialty shops and more than 15 restaurants within walking distance, and **The Shops at Willow Bend** ([www.shopwillowbend.com](http://www.shopwillowbend.com)), a delightful upscale shopping center that includes Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Macy's and various other stores.

Plano also features some of the best dining in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. In addition to **Bob's Steak and Chop House** ([www.bobs-steakandchop.com](http://www.bobs-steakandchop.com)) and **Jasper's** ([www.jaspers-restaurant.com](http://www.jaspers-restaurant.com) at The Shops At Legacy, downtown Plano features a variety of dining options – French, German/Austrian, tea rooms, tortilla factories, local pubs, cafes, upscale American dining and more.

Plano even has five wine shops that offer an impressive selection of wines and frequent wine tastings. One of these shops, **Vintners Cellar of North Texas** ([www.vintnerscellarsntx.com](http://www.vintnerscellarsntx.com)), houses a small, custom winery that offers more than 40 varieties of wine created from the juice of the finest grapes available from around the world.

Travelers looking for a few hours or a day of relaxation have seven beauty and day spas to choose from in Plano. For those who want to hit the links, there are three top-notch public golf courses in the Plano area – **Chase Oaks Golf Club** ([www.chaseoaks.com](http://www.chaseoaks.com)), **Pecan Hollow Golf Course** ([www.pecanhollowgc.com](http://www.pecanhollowgc.com)) and **Ridgeview Ranch** ([www.ridgeviewranch.com](http://www.ridgeviewranch.com)).

With its temperate, Sunbelt climate, Plano is the perfect place for other types of outdoor recreation activities. The city has 3,600 acres of public parks offering more than 40 miles of recreation trails. Worth a visit is the **Arbor Hills Nature Preserve** ([www.plano.gov/departments/parksandrecreation](http://www.plano.gov/departments/parksandrecreation)), a 200-acre park featuring vast areas of natural beauty for walking, jogging, orienteering and other outdoor activities. Amenities include a playground, restrooms, approximately 4.4 miles of paved recreational trails, approximately two miles designed as an off-road cycling trail, an observation tower and three pavilions.

Or venture over to the **Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary** ([www.heardmuseum.org](http://www.heardmuseum.org)). This is a 289-acre outdoor preserve and nature museum where guests can view various ecosystems and wildlife found in the Collin County area. The museum also features “The Living Lab,” an interactive hands-on science laboratory; the “Venomous Snakes of Texas” exhibit, and other rotating nature exhibits.

Another attraction children and their families won’t want to miss is **Eisenbergs Skatepark** ([www.eisenbergs.com](http://www.eisenbergs.com)). Built by the family of X Games Gold Medalist Arlo Eisenberg, Eisenbergs Skatepark was opened in July 1997 and started a skatepark revolution. It’s one of the first skateparks designed to be family-and spectator-friendly with such amenities as an arcade and skater memorabilia displayed throughout the park. There’s also **Amazing Jakes** ([www.amazingjakes.com/plano](http://www.amazingjakes.com/plano)). Located at the Collin Creek Mall, this new two-floor facility features go-karts, bumper cars, miniature golf, bowling, unlimited arcade games, laser tag, a rock wall, food and more.

Kids and parents won’t want to miss **Boomerrang’s Party & Play**, where they offer a variety of enormous inflatable bounce houses in almost every shape and size. Arcade games, obstacle courses and bounce houses provide hours of entertainment for every family. Additionally, **Planet Pizza** offers an indoor amusement park equipped with roller coasters, bumper cars, a miniature version of tea cups, arcade games and soft play in a tube and slide area. Planet Pizza also offers a large menu of foods including pizza, soft pretzels, funnel cakes, hot dogs and sub sandwiches.

Families will also enjoy a trip to Pizza Hut Park, the home of **FC Dallas** ([www.fcdallas.com](http://www.fcdallas.com)), a charter member club of Major League Soccer, and Dr. Pepper Park, the home of **Roughriders Baseball** ([www.ridersbaseball.com](http://www.ridersbaseball.com)), the double-A

affiliate of the major league Texas Rangers. Both parks and teams are based in nearby Frisco.

For more information on the “The Star in Texas” – Plano, contact Mark Thompson, director of the Plano Convention and Visitors Bureau, at **(972) 941-5844** or [markth@plano.gov](mailto:markth@plano.gov). Information is also available on the Plano Convention and Visitors Bureau Web site at [www.planocvb.com](http://www.planocvb.com). Or, contact Pam Tate of Tucker & Associates at (214) 252-0900, ext. 27, or at [pam@tuckerpr.com](mailto:pam@tuckerpr.com). Photography is also available at (214) 252-0900 or on the Plano Convention and Visitors Bureau Web site.

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