

# City of Lancaster

## Community Information

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### **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

The first settlement made in the Lancaster community was in September 1844 by Roderick Rawlins. Mr. Rawlins and other members of his party had secured "headrights" from the Republic of Texas. A few years later, M. M. Miller, Sr., a son-in-law of Roderick Rawlins, established a trading post settlement about one mile north of Lancaster at Pleasant Run. It became a main trading center for south Dallas County.

In 1847, Mr. A Bledsoe arrived in the community and later purchased a tract of land where the present town of Lancaster is located. In the spring of 1852 Bledsoe laid out and surveyed the townsite of Lancaster, Texas. The site was plotted and planned after Lancaster, Kentucky, where Mr. A Bledsoe was born in 1801. Lancaster was first incorporated in 1853. This was the beginning of the present town of Lancaster which eventually absorbed Pleasant Run and other nearby settlements. A later incorporation was voted in 1882, to meet with changes in State laws.

### **LOCATION**

Located in the Southwest portion of Dallas County, the City of Lancaster is approximately 15 minutes south of Dallas and is well situated to access the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex, one of the largest and most diverse in the nation. Lancaster has excellent freeway access, with Interstates 20, 35 and 45 adjacent to or in the community. The City's 33 square miles is bordered by IH-35E to the west, Ellis County to the South, Dallas (Interstate IH20) to the north and Hutchins (Interstate IH45) to the east. Lancaster is in close proximity to DART light rail service to downtown Dallas and other locations. Dallas Love Field and Dallas/Ft. Worth International Airport are within a short driving distance.

The campuses of Cedar Valley College and Mountain View College of the Dallas County Community College District, the University of North Texas at Dallas, Dallas Baptist University and Northwood University are conveniently located to the area. The Lancaster Independent School District serves the public educational needs of the community at the elementary and secondary levels.

Through the years, Lancaster has been able to retain its own distinct identity while still being a valuable part of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex area. In 1988 Lancaster became a member of the Best Southwest Partnership, an organization including the Cities and Chambers of Commerce of Lancaster, Cedar Hill, DeSoto and Duncanville. The four Cities are all in close proximity to each other and they have cooperated on economic development, legislative issues, joint purchasing, public safety mutual aid and numerous other beneficial endeavors. The result has been improved working relationships among the four member Cities. In 2010 six associate member cities Ferris, Glenn Heights, Hutchins, Midlothian, Ovilla, and Wilmer joined the partnership and in 2011 Red Oak joined. The spirit of cooperation among eleven communities provides a competitive advantage when attracting attention to Southwest Dallas County and Northern Ellis County.

### **ECONOMY AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

Lancaster is much more than just another "Metroplex" bedroom community. Lancaster traces its economic roots to those of an agrarian market center. Later with the coming of the rail, Lancaster began to emerge as

a significant regional transportation hub. Today, with its own Regional Airport, freight rail service and other ground transportation related industries, Lancaster continues to grow and diversify its economic base. The light manufacturing, distribution and retail sectors all continue to grow along with the explosion in residential development.

**Housing Costs** – The average new housing costs in Lancaster range from the \$120,000-\$140,000's and up. The residential housing in the community consists of: single family 75%, multi-family 24% and other 1%. The median household income is \$57,542. The average family size is 3.47. The total amount of residential parcels is 12,610 with a total taxable value of \$941,779,870. Although, residential permit activity has declined, Lancaster remains an attractive place for young families. Source: North Central Council of Governments, U.S. 2010 Census and Dallas Central appraisal District.

**Health Facilities** – Alpha Medical Center opened its facility in 2003. The Center provides quality and comprehensive primary health care with compassion and convenience. Services include school physicals, urgent care, dentistry, work injuries, podiatry, physical therapy, pharmacy, X-ray, immunizations, internal medicine, and family medicine. There are a number of senior care facilities in the area to meet the needs of a diverse and active aging population. The health care industry remains on a steady course of growth. Within close proximity are Methodist Charlton Medical Center, Baylor Medical Center, and Methodist Dallas Medical Center.

**Recreational Opportunities** – Lancaster offers a \$17+ million leisure complex, which includes a 170-acre Community Park, 60,000 square foot Recreation Center and Indoor Water Park, and a 23,000 square foot Library. The Community Park features a 6-acre pond with a fishing pier, walking trails, grassy amphitheater with a performance stage by the water, lighted youth football and soccer fields, two picnic pavilions, a large multi-age level playground, and the Royce Clayton/Texas Rangers Youth Ballpark which is lighted, irrigated and has a covered grandstand for 500 spectators. The same architect who designed the Texas Rangers' Ballpark in Arlington designed the Ballpark.

The Recreation Center features an Indoor Water Park with a double loop water slide, lazy river, zero depth entry, vortex, 4-lane lap pool, and party area. The building also includes a youth room, double gym, elevated jogging track, 2,000 square foot fitness atrium with 27 stations of state-of-the-art fitness equipment, an aerobics dance room with a neo-shock floor, a multi-purpose classroom and a 3,300 square foot banquet room and catering kitchen for receptions, weddings and every type of social event and meeting. The banquet facility has a covered outdoor terrace and courtyard that overlooks the 6-acre pond.

In addition to Community Park, Lancaster is home to five (5) playgrounds at the Lancaster Independent School District elementary schools, three (3) additional playgrounds at City Park and Cedardale Athletic Complex, five (5) neighborhood parks (Meadow Creek, Dewberry, Rocky Crest, Verona, Stanford, and Kids Square).

Lancaster Community Park is also home to a new 11,500 square foot Senior "Life" Center. The Center features a dining hall with a capacity of 150 diners, a large arts and craft room, billiard room, card room and medical consultation room. The center offers internet access and classes for senior citizens. The dining room has a 100 square foot stage and a commercial kitchen. The center is located adjacent to the lake in Community Park providing opportunities for fishing and miles of walking trails.

**Bear Creek Nature Park** – The Park features equestrian and walking trails with interpretive signage, two ponds, and a fishing pier, campsites that include facilities for overnight camping, an outdoor classroom, a large pavilion for picnics, a butterfly garden, and outdoor education programs.

**Cultural Opportunities** – Lancaster has the charming Historic Town Square. In addition, a cultural advantage is the 15-minute drive to downtown Dallas for the Symphony and other artistic and historic endeavors that Dallas affords residents and newcomers to Texas.

**Lancaster Convention and Visitors Center** – The Visitors Center, formerly known as the Interurban building, has welcomed visitors and businesses to our City for over one hundred years. Built in 1911, the Interurban Building was home to the Texas Interurban Railway that ran from Waxahachie through Red Oak, Lancaster, and Dallas to Sherman-Denison until the 1950s. It was also the region's first electric-powered building and where area residents' electricity bills were paid for more than 50 years. The Lancaster Visitors Center and City of Lancaster State Auxiliary Museum continue in this rich tradition.

In keeping with the history of the City of Lancaster and the Interurban Building, the City of Lancaster State Auxiliary Museum was established by the Texas legislature in 2010 to showcase the history of the State of Texas and educate patrons on the historical artifacts represented within the exhibit. This premier attraction serves as a unique resource for residents, educators and visitors of Texas alike.

The Lancaster Visitors Center and City of Lancaster State Auxiliary Museum are open Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. On every second Saturday of the month the Visitors Center and State Auxiliary Museum are open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in support of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday on the Square. This community event attracts businesses, vendors and residents to the Historic Town Square to share in crafts, fellowship, and fun.

**Lancaster Regional Airport** – The Airport recently completed major construction that was part of a \$1.5 million Capital Improvement Project jointly funded by the Aviation Division of TxDOT and local City-LEDC resources. The Airport is currently completing a 24/7 self-service avgas facility funded by a joint program from Eastern Aviation Fuels (the airport's fuel provider) and LEDC resources. The next TxDOT-Aviation funded project for FY 12 is for the design/engineering of a new south ramp jet center, associated taxiways, and helicopter landing circles. The Runway Café has been open for business one year now and still operating successfully. The Airport is also home to a Confederate Air Force Museum housing planes and memorabilia.

**Colleges and Universities in the Area** – Cedar Valley College is located on the border of Lancaster and Dallas on North Dallas Avenue. This two-year accredited institution offers workforce training, continuing education and college preparatory programs to 2,560 students. It is affiliated with the Dallas County Community College District and has numerous resources available for residents and business to utilize.

In August 2010, UNT Dallas accepted its first freshman class, the Class of 2014. UNT Dallas offers 14 undergraduate and five graduate degrees in high-demand fields such as criminal justice, teacher education, business administration, and counseling. Operating under the regional accreditation of its parent institution, the University of North Texas, UNT Dallas will make application for separate regional accreditation in 2011.

**Public Schools** – The Lancaster Independent School District (LISD) educates over 4,700 students annually. The LISD operates on a \$32 million annual budget to provide numerous fundamental and extra-curricular educational opportunities for Lancaster children. LISD currently has seven elementary schools, one STEM Learning Center, one Middle School, one High School and one Alternative Learning Center.

**Public Library** – The Lancaster Veterans Memorial Library is a 23,000 square foot facility located in the Lancaster Community Park. The library offers free membership to residents which include materials check-out and public computer use. The staff assists patrons in locating resources on the shelf or within online resources. Genealogy resources are notable and services are extensive. Children’s programs include reading readiness activities; teens enjoy Manga writing and book club activities. Adults enjoy programs on a wide variety of topics as well as genealogy research topics. Classes are offered on computer basics. The library sponsors an annual Best Southwest Bookfest, a major cultural event, and it is a collaborative project with nearby libraries. Summer Reading Club hosts special event performances throughout the summer.

**Industrial/Warehouse Opportunities** – Logistics oriented sites are available through projects developed by many of the country’s leading industrial developers like ProLogis, IDI, Cousins Properties and KTR Capital Partners and a future 200 acre intermodal freight rail facility planned by BNSF Railroad. The Lancaster Regional Airport rounds out the logistic options of road, rail and air for the transport of goods. Lancaster is poised to meet the logistical needs of any company planning to expand or relocate.