

LOCAL PRODUCT COUNCILS PRESENT

# WHAT'S NEW WHAT'S NEXT?



## HEDC

Hospitality & Entertainment

MODERATOR



**Lynn Dowdle**  
Dowdle Real Estate



**Colin Fitzgibbons**  
Hunt Realty



**Garin Giacomarro**  
City of Grapevine



**Joe Hickman**  
Blue Star Land



**Mitch Whitten**  
Visit Fort Worth

## That's Entertainment: The Future of Hospitality in DFW

We live in an increasingly digital and on-demand world where our choices are becoming infinitely more available anywhere we want, whenever we want. Despite this autonomous streaming capability, we still yearn for live and in-person social experiences and value memories built on shared experiences. Consumer data has shown that people are spending less on “things” and more on travel, dining, events, and entertainment in the DFW area.

From creating job opportunities to attracting tourism and investment, the entertainment industry in Dallas and Fort Worth acts as a critical force in shaping the local economic landscape. The metroplex is a hub for technology and innovation, hosts major events and conventions, and has a thriving and vibrant music performing arts scene – all of which contribute to DFW becoming one of the fastest-growing entertainment hubs in the country and attracting enthusiasts from around the globe. *(Cont. on back)*



Continued from  
previous page

It is imperative we look at this trajectory and understand how our growth of entertainment venues will shape the future of our communities and the built environment. This includes the growth of jobs in our economy and the influx of new organizations and resources coming from around the U.S. and the world adding new venues for entertainment.

“How do WE create authentic placemaking, and how do we plan for resiliency,” are just some of the questions we plan to dive into at our session.

By studying the past and understanding the present of entertainment in North Central Texas, we intend to come away with a better vision of how we see the future of entertainment-based development, its impact not just on our city and state, and how it can impact our neighboring regional economy.

## BIOS

**Lynn Dowdle** Lynn is a recognized top producing real estate broker in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex with extensive experience in hospitality site selection and land sales, restaurant, ground lease, build-to-suit and development opportunities. Prior to forming Dowdle Real Estate, she held Senior Vice President positions with SRS Real Estate Partners (formerly Staubach), The John Bowles Company, Trammell Crow Company and the Tara Group. Lynn’s unique ability to foster long-lasting relationships, comprehensive background and astute business acumen has allowed her to become one of the most significant brokers in the Lone Star state. Lynn is a past long-term member of the North Texas Commercial Association of Realtors, Past President and Stemmons Service Award recipient 2023. Lynn sits on the Executive Board of Directors for TREC, is Past Chair of the TREC Leadership Committee, and is the 2023 Chair of Fight Night. She is a member of the NTCAR Hall of Fame Committee and Co-chaired the Hall of Fame Event in 2020. She is also an active member of the International Council of Shopping Centers.

Lynn sits on the Circle of Friends Board with New Friends New Life, an organization which restores and empowers formerly trafficked girls and sexually exploited women and their children. Lynn is a past member of the Board of Directors of Our Friends Place, a safe-haven for neglected, abused or abandoned girls ages 10-17. She has been involved with the Teen Outreach Program and participates regularly in counseling misguided teens. Aligned with World Vision, Lynn is a founder of the organization “If You Knew”, raising money for clean water in Africa ([www.ifyouknew.org](http://www.ifyouknew.org)). Lynn has a daughter, Kelly, who is a model, actress, entrepreneur and singer/song writer in NYC. Her son, Joe, serves as Managing Director of JLL Capital Markets in Austin, TX. He and his wife Jaclyn have 5-year old Griffin and 2- year old Goldie. Lynn’s family is everything to her.



## BIOS

**Colin Fitzgibbons** Colin Fitzgibbons is President of Hunt Realty Investments, LLC where he oversees the daily operations of the nearly 50-year-old diversified development and investment firm.

Although Colin was born in New York City, he has lived in Dallas since he was three. A product of DISD and proud graduate of Hillcrest High School, Colin left Dallas to attend Washington & Lee University in Lexington, VA where he played football and graduated with a BA in Economics. After a short stint in the newspaper business as a sports reporter for The Washington Post, Colin entered the commercial real estate industry as a tenant rep broker for The Staubach Company in New York City. Colin spent five years with Staubach (which was acquired by JLL) before returning to Dallas to seek his MBA at SMU Cox School of Business.

After graduating from business school, Colin joined KDC in 2010 just in time to experience one of the most prolific waves of development in North Texas' history. Colin was fortunate enough to be able to participate in numerous developments that have helped shaped the development landscape in North Texas, including CityLine in Richardson and Legacy West in Plano, among many.

Colin is married to his college sweetheart, and together they have three elementary-aged sons. Colin is on the board of the Oak Cliff YMCA, The Real Estate Council, NAIOP North Texas and SMU's Folsom Institute. He has no spare time, but Colin does enjoy the occasional round of golf.

**Garin Giacomarro** Garin is a homegrown Economic Developer, having spent his formative years growing up in Grapevine. He likes to say that he learned to drive on William D. Tate Avenue and now he works on his staff at City Hall, bringing his career full circle. He attended Harding University in Searcy, AR, where he earned his undergraduate degree in Public Administration. He moved back to North Texas and worked towards his MPA graduate degree from UNT while working full-time for the city of Murphy, TX. It was at this job that he fell in love with economic development as a career path. After earning his MPA, he lived in Birmingham, AL, and then moved to Nashville, TN, where he worked for the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce in the research department. When a chance to move back into Economic Development and return to his hometown presented itself, he didn't hesitate, and has been there ever since.

For the last 9 years, Garin has learned the ins-and-outs of economic development in Grapevine. He's been a part of headline-grabbing projects like Kubota, Paycom, and Meow Wolf, but finds just as much satisfaction in working with smaller businesses on Main Street and around town. He's very active in the Grapevine Chamber, particularly when it comes to the Grapevine Young Professionals. He was awarded the Rising Star award at the Chamber Awards for 2022, an award he displays proudly in his office. He's also a full member of Rotary and volunteers regularly in the City he loves.

He achieved a lifelong dream of his when Weinberger's Deli on Main Street named a sandwich after him in January of 2023 called "The 4G". He recommends you try it with bacon.

**Joe Hickman** Joe Hickman has been in the real estate development industry for over 30 years and has overseen construction of over \$1 billion worth of developments in North Texas. A graduate of the University of Arkansas, his years of experience on complex, high-profile projects have made him an expert in master planning, execution, and project management. Joe's hands on approach and attention to detail results in perfection on every project.



## BIOS

**Mitch Whitten** Mitch Whitten serves as Chief Operating Officer of Visit Fort Worth, where he supports teams dedicated to Convention Sales & Services, Sports and Marketing.

Since he joined the organization in 2013, the impact of tourism in jobs and spending has doubled. Fort Worth has been ranked twice among the Top 50 destinations to visit by Travel & Leisure Magazine, and the city was recently named the best city without a pro team for sports events.

Mitch helped form the Hear Fort Worth music initiative, the Hispanic Tourism Advisory Board and the Fort Worth Film Commission, which has had a \$750 million impact and recently added a workforce training program. Visit Fort Worth has been recognized for branding, events at SXSW and for community engagement including the campaign "Y'all Means All."

## NOTES

A grid of 20 columns and 20 rows of small grey dots, intended for taking notes. A dashed green line is visible in the bottom right corner, partially overlapping the grid.