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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **DOWNTOWNDALLAS, Mayor Tom Leppert and Council Member Angela Hunt Announce New Vision and Leadership for Arts District**

*Veletta Forsythe Lill Named Executive Director of The Dallas Arts District*

Dallas, Texas. Today, Dallas **Mayor Tom Leppert**, City Council Member **Angela Hunt** and **John F. Crawford**, President & CEO of **DOWNTOWNDALLAS**, announced a new vision for leadership and management of The Dallas Arts District with the hiring of **Veletta Forsythe Lill** as Executive Director, working within the framework of the **DOWNTOWNDALLAS** organization.

For almost three decades, members of Dallas' cultural, civic and real estate communities have envisioned a lively, livable Arts District in the center of our city. That vision is now emerging, and will be dramatically elevated with the opening of the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts in October. Today, the District not only features more than a billion dollars worth of private and public investment, but also boasts an unrivaled collection of visual and performing arts institutions, and is now home to permanent residents, retail, global headquarters and a thriving commercial environment.

In response to the changing environment, led by Council Member Angela Hunt, stakeholders of the Arts District have spent the last three years studying the future of the District, assessing its needs as a vibrant urban destination. Through this process, Fregonese Calthorpe Associates was hired to create a "Strategic Assessment and Action Plan" for the Arts District, which was completed in May 2007. In 2008, Webb Management Services was hired to build on that plan and "write a business plan for an entity to represent and advance their common interests."

Council Member Hunt described the process, "Our goal was to build a carefully thought-out collaborative model that would maintain a strong focus on the needs of the Arts District, while maximizing connectivity with its surroundings."

As a result, after incorporating the Plan's recommendations with feedback from existing Arts District organizations, the Governance Sub-Committee of the Arts District Strategic Planning Committee finalized a vision and management structure for the future. That model utilizes existing assets of the Arts District and partners those strengths with the resources and programs housed within **DOWNTOWN**DALLAS.

John F. Crawford, President & CEO of **DOWNTOWN**DALLAS elaborated, "**DOWNTOWN**DALLAS' existing programs run the spectrum of initiatives related to public safety, capital improvements, maintenance, marketing, special events, public policy, urban planning, economic development, transportation and parking – a perfect parallel to the needs identified in the Dallas Arts District – from the installation of 20 security cameras in the District last September, to promotion of the Arts District through our Web sites and newsletters. Through this newest partnership, we will be able to further leverage the organization's resources, providing enhanced services tailored specifically to the District's unique opportunities and challenges."

Mayor Tom Leppert said, "There is certainly no denying the significant role the Dallas Arts District has, and will continue to play in the development of our city, both in terms of culture and commerce. In fact, just this month the *New York Times* ranked Dallas as one of the top 44 destinations in the world because of our Arts District and the opening of the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts. It is imperative that we manage the growth of the area in such a way to ensure continued success."

At the helm of The Dallas Arts District and its new priorities and program will be Veletta Forsythe Lill, Executive Director. A familiar face to many in the Arts community, Lill is a long time civic leader and former member of the Dallas City Council. She has served the arts community in a variety of roles - as Arts District Coordinator, as the council's chair of the Arts, Education, and Libraries Committee, and as a board member for organizations from the Dallas Museum of Art to Shakespeare Dallas.

As a council member she played a role in many of the current developments in the Arts District. She was a champion of the expansion of the boundaries of the district to include the area now home to One Arts Plaza. Her work with the Nasher Sculpture Center enabled the city's contribution to the landscaped area surrounding the facility. During her tenure, the city also committed to making public investments in land acquisition and seed money for construction of the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts, as well as renovation costs for the Dallas Black Dance Theatre.

"With a new identity and a stakeholder provided list of priorities, The Dallas Arts District and **DOWNTOWN**DALLAS will move swiftly to shape the future of the District," said Lill of her new role. "We

sit at a magical moment in time with an opportunity to reposition how Dallas is perceived throughout the world, and to cultivate an unparalleled Arts community. I am thrilled and honored to execute this vision as we move into the next generation of our city.”

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**About DOWNTOWNDALLAS**

**DOWNTOWNDALLAS** is the principle advocate, champion and steward of Downtown, affecting change by developing strategies, setting targets and mobilizing resources that:

- Stimulate a vibrant and sustainable Downtown environment
- Improve infrastructure
- Enhance economic competitiveness
- Create a culturally inclusive urban center
- Position the area as a global destination

For more information visit [www.downtowndallas.org](http://www.downtowndallas.org) or [www.yourDspot.com](http://www.yourDspot.com).