



[Comments](#) 1 | [Recommend](#) 1

Cowboys Stadium a boon and a bane for nearby businesses in Arlington

12:00 AM CST on Saturday, January 2, 2010

By **JEFF MOSIER** / The Dallas Morning News
jmosier@dallasnews.com

ARLINGTON – The economy of Cowboys Stadium is filled with mega events, dollar signs and lots of zeros.

The building cost more than \$1 billion. Taxpayers chipped in hundreds of millions of dollars to help pay for it. Millions more will be pumped into the economy, thanks to the 2011 [Super Bowl](#) and other events that could bring more than 100,000 people to Arlington.

But the economics play out on a smaller scale for many nearby businesses, where the margin between success and failure can be thin.

The stadium, which has hosted more than two dozen events since opening in the summer, has been a godsend for some and a nightmare for others.

And while the proposed Glorypark mixed-use development and other ambitious projects have failed to get off the ground, there are dozens of businesses small and large in the stadium's orbit. Here's a look at how some of them – including one charity fundraiser – have fared and why.

Santa Claus

The Cowboys made the playoffs in December, but that isn't the only reason Santa Claus has been smiling.

[Jerry Miller](#), who has spent the last decade as Kriss Kringle at Santa Land in Lincoln Square shopping center, said Cowboys Stadium was a gift for the store, a few blocks north of the stadium on Collins Street.

Business was down last year by a quarter, he said, but the packed parking lots on event days last month made the numbers much jollier. Proceeds go to A Wish With Wings, a charity.

Miller said fans wearing [NFL](#) and college jerseys are common in his lines. The weekend the [Washington Redskins](#) played in Arlington, a big group of 'Skins fans waited to see Santa, he said.

"I don't see how it couldn't help," Miller said about the stadium.

Studio Nails



Photos by LARA SOLT/DMN
Bessie White of Airways Hamburgers says business sometimes doubles on days that the [Dallas Cowboys](#) play. On other days, sightseers contribute to a steady stream of diners.

Jeannie Boris used to start work early Sundays and stay hours past the posted closing time to accommodate all the business. Now, she said, the salon probably doesn't recoup its electricity costs when there's a Cowboys home game.

"We're at a standstill," she said. "There's no business at all."

Boris said customers have called her en route to the Collins Street nail salon to say they couldn't make it because of the traffic. She said her husband tried to scout alternate routes and couldn't find any good ones.

Now she encourages customers to arrive early on game day if they can't make it any other time. If they take her advice, "they're saying, 'Please hurry up. Please hurry up,'" Boris said, to beat the traffic.

Also, the demolition of several apartment complexes and a subdivision at the stadium site significantly reduced the salon's customer base. A major highway project along Interstate 30 cut off much of its clientele to the north.

Boris said there have been discussions about moving, but for now, the owner hopes to wait out the hard times and just survive.

Airways Hamburgers

Bessie White, an employee at Airways Hamburgers, said the restaurant loses much of its after-church crowd when there's a Sunday football game. But the extra business from Cowboys fans more than makes up for that.

She said the restaurant sometimes doubles its business on game day. Many fans come in before the game, and others drop by afterward. In between, there's another rush of police officers working traffic control who have their meal break during the game.

Airways Hamburgers, just north of the stadium on Collins, sometimes stays open until 1 a.m. to meet the demand.

"When people stop coming, we close," White said.

The stadium also provided steady business during construction, thanks to the thousands of workers at the site. Now the restaurant has sightseers from stadium tours, [Cotton Bowl](#) staff and other people who work at the stadium stopping by regularly on nonevent days.

"This [stadium] came at a great time," White said.

Afrika Fiesta Food Market

Manager Maxwell Gyimah, whose market is just across Collins, thought he could get some business from Cowboys fans wanting to buy beer before they tailgated at the stadium. Instead, he has found his business drying up during games and other events.

"I thought it was going to help everybody," he said.

Gyimah found that his customers – mostly immigrants he calls "my Africans" – went to competing stores to buy African DVDs, coconut oil, plantain chips and other specialty merchandise.

With another year left on his lease, Gyimah said, there's not much he can do but "hang on." Later, he expects to move the store somewhere outside the stadium's influence.

"I can't afford to stay here," he said. "The landlord wants your money even if you're not making any."

Olenjack's Grille

General manager Adam Jones said his restaurant has "embraced the stadium since Day One." He said Sundays and Mondays were traditionally slow, but now he sometimes doubles his business. The stadium is about three-quarters of a mile away.

Olenjack's is part of Lincoln Square, which devised a creative way to handle game-day parking. Fans spending \$40 the same day at any business at the shopping center can place the receipts on their dashboards and leave their cars there.

"It's been fantastic for us," Jones said.

The restaurant has aggressively pursued alumni associations connected to events at the stadium. Alumni groups from Texas A&M and the [University of Texas](#) hosted parties there when their football teams played at Cowboys Stadium.

Olenjack's also started its own shuttle service for customers and transported nearly 600 people to the [Big 12](#) Championship Game.

Mi Tierra Latin Fusion

The stadium's impact has been particularly surprising to restaurateur Damaris Torres. At a mile and a half from the stadium, she thought she might get a few extra customers to drop in for Cuban sandwiches and guava turnovers.

Instead, diners have stayed away, many of them worried about potential traffic jams, she said. That has driven down business an average of 40 percent when the Cowboys play at home.

"It's not that bad," she said about traffic.

Torres said she hopes her customers will eventually realize they don't need to avoid the area around Abram and Cooper streets. To combat the decline, she started advertising her menu of Cuban, Puerto Rican and South American cuisine at local hotels and is considering a shuttle service to the stadium.

That seems to have worked for other restaurants, Torres said.