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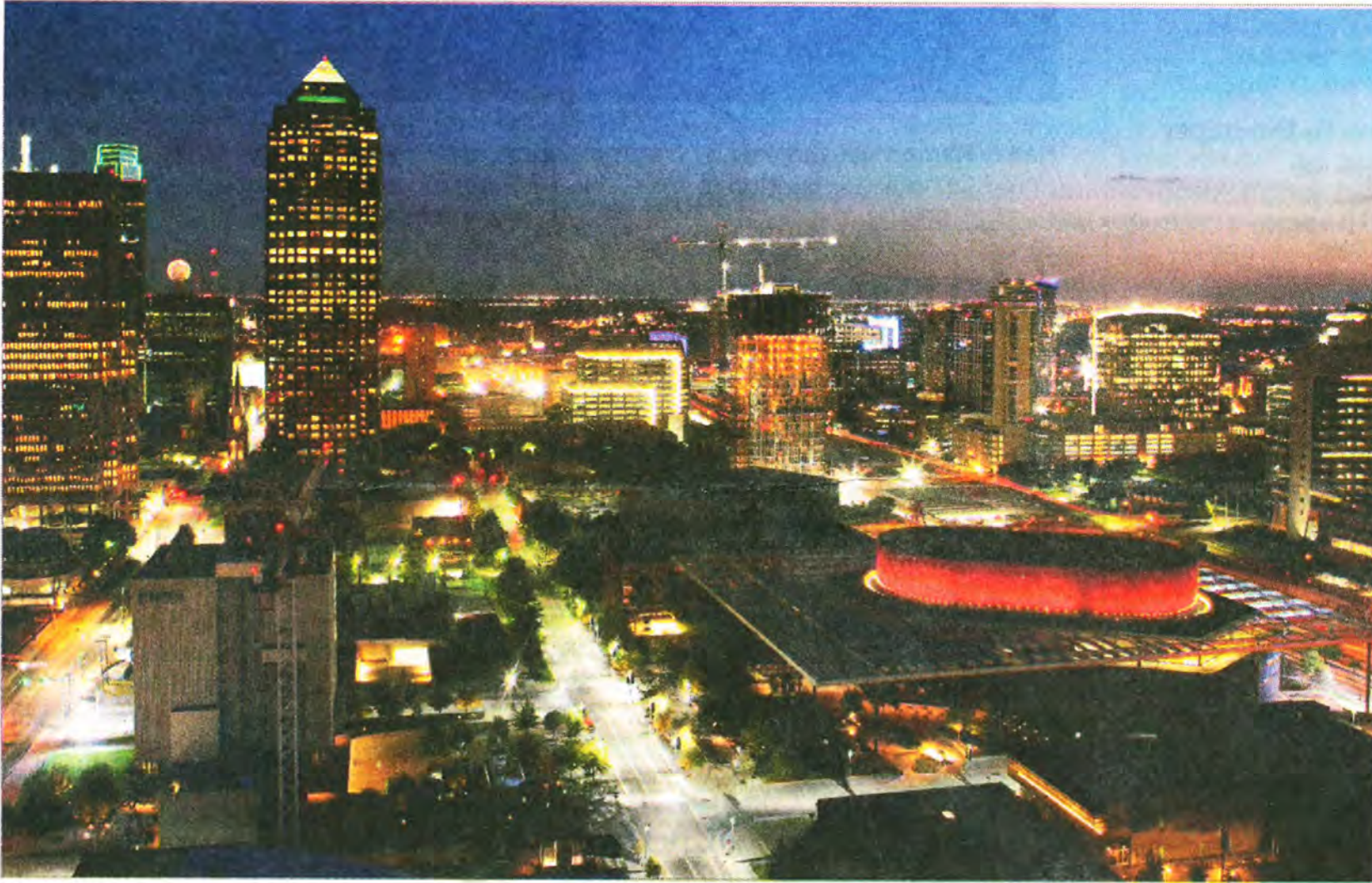
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DALLAS

A big boom for a better Big D



Lara Solt/Staff Photographer

The \$354 million AT&T Performing Arts Center opened in downtown Dallas' Arts District in October 2009, only one of more than a dozen quality-of-life city projects that have recently finished or are under construction.

\$1 billion in quality-of-life projects on track despite downturn

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In the teeth of the worst recession in eight decades, Dallas is undergoing a building boom.

Not in real estate, heaven knows, or in construction of high-rise office

buildings, but in an area in which the city has always been judged weak — in projects devoted to the quality of life.

The opening of the AT&T Performing Arts Center in 2009 brought international attention, but it was only one of more than a dozen high-profile, big-ticket amenities that have opened in

the past few years — or will come on line in a few years hence.

The projects include four downtown parks, a presidential library, a natural history museum, a nature center along the Trinity River and major

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Belo Garden Park
(under construction). The \$14.5 million, 1.6-acre facility is expected to open early next year. The bulk of its funding came from private sources and city bond money.