Oklahoma City, the capital of Oklahoma, was founded on April 22, 1889 when over 50,000 people participated in the Land Run and 10,000 settled in what is now downtown. The oil field that was discovered in 1928 in the city became one of the world’s major oil producing fields. Oklahoma City has a wealth of museums. The Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum and the Outdoor Symbolic Memorial honor those who were affected by the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. The Adventure District includes the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, ASA National Softball Hall of Fame Stadium & Museum, Oklahoma City Zoo & Botanical Gardens, Oklahoma State Firefighters Museum & Memorial, and Remington Park Racing Casino. The Museum of Osteology contains more than 300 skeletons of different species. Other museums include the Ham Homestead Museum, Oklahoma City Museum of Art, Ninety-Nines Museum of Women Pilots, Oklahoma History Center, 45th Infantry Museum, Oklahoma Museum of Telephone History, American Banjo Museum, The Oklahoma Railway Museum, Science Museum Oklahoma, American Pigeon Museum and Library & World of Wings Pigeon Center, World Organization of China Painters Museum, Henry Overholser Mansion, and Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum. Other attractions are the Oklahoma State Capitol, Oklahoma Veterans Memorial, and Oklahoma Governor’s Mansion. The American Indian Cultural Center & Museum and the Centennial Land Run Monument are under construction.

The Red Earth Museum has a permanent collection of Native American arts. The annual Red Earth Native American Cultural Festival attracts more than 1,200 American Indian artists and dancers. Oklahoma City offers many opportunities for performing arts. The Canterbury Choral Society, Lyric Theatre, Oklahoma City Ballet, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, CityRep, and Oklahoma City Theatre Company are located in the Civic Center Music Hall. The Centennial Rodeo Opry, Black Liberated Arts Center, and Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park present shows throughout the year. Other performances are held at the Carpenter Square Theatre, Jewel Box Theatre, Oklahoma Children’s Theatre, Prairie Dance Theatre Kirkpatrick Center, and Chesapeake Energy Arena, which also holds sporting events.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Downtown neighborhoods, such as the Deep Deuce, which is adjacent to the Bricktown entertainment district, offer new condominiums and apartments and newly-renovated rental units and lofts. The Crown Heights Historic Districts was once known as “Pill Hill” due to the high percentage of physicians in the neighborhood. Homes in Crown Heights date from the 1930s and were built in Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, Mission-Spanish, Monterey, French Eclectic, Minimal Traditional and Art Deco styles. Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, and Spanish Eclectic styles dominate the Edgemere Park Historic District, which surrounds a park. Mesta Park and Heritage Hills are other historic neighborhoods and feature houses built in Georgian “Oil Mansions,” Prairie School/American Foursquare, and Craftsman styles.

Many suburban-style neighborhoods can be found within Oklahoma City. Housing styles and sizes vary and include mansions from the 1930s, 1950s ranch-style homes, and 1970s subdivisions with larger floor plans. New construction is occurring in many areas of the city. Some communities are gated, built around a lake, or built around a golf course.

In addition to its many neighborhoods, Oklahoma City surrounds several smaller towns, such as Nichols Hills and The Village.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Oklahoma City has 154 parks; 5 municipal golf courses; 6 pools; 15 spraygrounds; 2 outdoor tennis centers; 3 disc golf courses; 76 miles of trails; an off-leash dog park; and a park for skateboarding, in-line skating, and BMX freestyle biking. In addition to the annual state fair, Oklahoma State Fair Park is the center of Oklahoma City’s status as “Horse Show Capital of the World” and annually hosts championship horse shows and rodeos. The Will Rogers Horticultural Gardens are home to a conservatory, rose garden, arboretum and an exhibition center. Lake Hefner, Lake Stanley Draper, and Lake Overholser offer many water recreation activities. Martin Park Nature Center is an educational facility, a recreational area, and a wildlife sanctuary. The Myriad Botanical Gardens is a nationally recognized garden that features the Crystal Bridge Tropical Conservatory.

Oklahoma City is also home to the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame and the Jim Thorpe Museum & Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame. Professional sports teams include the Oklahoma City Thunder (basketball), the Oklahoma City Barons (hockey), the Oklahoma City RedHawks (baseball), and Tornado Alley RollerGirls (roller derby).

Amusement parks include Frontier City Theme Park, White Water Bay, which is a water park, and Orr Family Farm, which is an “agritainment” experience.

EDUCATION

Oklahoma City Independent Public Schools District serves about 43,000 students in 55 neighborhood elementary schools, 17 secondary schools, 4 special centers, and 13 charter schools. Five high schools have specialized career academies. Portions of Oklahoma City are served by 23 other school districts.

Oklahoma City University, Mid-America Christian University, and Oklahoma Christian University are private, religiously-affiliated, coeducational liberal arts universities. OKC Downtown College is a consortium of 5 universities and colleges that offers credit and non-credit courses. Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City and Oklahoma City Community College offer associate degrees and certificate programs. Oklahoma Heritage Campus in Oklahoma City, ITT Technical Institute, Platt College, Metro Technology Centers, and Wright Career College offer career training in selected fields.

Seven health-related colleges comprise the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center: Medicine, Public Health, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing, Allied Health, and Graduate.

HEALTH CARE

Seven hospital systems serve the city with about 2,700 licensed beds. The Oklahoma City VA Medical Center and two long-term acute care facilities are also located in the city.

CITY STATS 2009

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