

Wow Town!



It's a Kansas City renaissance. From midtown to downtown, the city has reinvented itself.

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Like the barbecue for which it is famous, Kansas City has become one sizzling hot city. Its \$4 billion revitalization project has drawn it into the national spotlight *and* into an exciting era of leisure and living — downtown and beyond. And there's still more to come.

One of the city's first major unveilings was the **National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial**, the only American museum dedicated to World War I. It's an experience that takes you across a glass floor suspended above a field of poppies and into the trenches of war. Ride the elevator to the

top of the 217-foot Liberty Memorial Tower and take in a 360-degree view of the city and its renaissance.

Keeping it KC

One noteworthy aspect of the city's revitalization is that it both preserves and propagates the very characteristics that make Kansas City the alluring all-American city that it is.

The imaginative architecture incorporates classic KC elements of light, water and sculpture into fresh venues for the city's venerable legacy of jazz, sports, arts — and, yes, barbecue. Stirred into the mix: some

of today's most fashionable retail, restaurant and entertainment establishments.

From the iconic Power and Light Building to the quirky Sky Stations/Pylon Caps sculpture atop the Convention Center, an Art Deco spirit remains alive and well in Kansas City. The enduring elegance of this bygone era is perhaps most evident in the historic properties that retain their architectural integrity while incorporating amenities for today's savvy visitors.

After being closed for 25 years, the historic President Hotel is now the luxurious **Hilton President**. The lobby has been authentically



H&R Block's new World Headquarters



National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial

restored to its original grandeur; spacious guest rooms show off flat screen TVs and whirlpool tubs. The hotel's famous Drum Room restaurant, once a hot spot for jazz greats, is again 1940s cool. "Vintage hip" is also the decor of the new **Aladdin Hotel by Holiday Inn**, a boutique hotel that took a page from the past with unique room renovations and the reopening of the Zebra Room restaurant.

Taking Center Stage Once Again

Downtown historic theaters have reinvented themselves. The esteemed **Music Hall** retained its circa 1935 opulence amid seating enhancements and stage expansion. Mainstreet Theatre, a vaudeville and movie house of the '20s, is now **Main Street Theatre**, the high-tech showpiece of AMC Theatres. This flagship movie theater (most recently named Empire Theatre) has been hopped up with digital projection and sound on all screens, parlor seating, a bistro and coffee bar.

The new kid on the theater scene is the intimate and ultramodern **Copaken Stage**, the second venue for the Kansas City Repertory

Theatre. This delightful 320-seat theater is connected to the new **H&R Block World Headquarters**, 17 stories of office space and a waterfall-themed atrium wrapped in an impressive oval glass tower.

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Ballroom, Basketball and Big Glass Bowl

Yes, this city has glass! Even the new **Kansas City Convention Center Grand Ballroom**, one of the 10 largest convention center ballrooms in the United States, boasts novel floor-to-ceiling glass

walls (and a water-theme nod to this "City of Fountains"). Kansas City's glass buildings are attractions unto themselves, catching and reflecting natural light by day then transforming into glowing sculptures by night.

The most massive glass structure to rise thus far is the **Sprint Center**, the downtown venue for major sporting events and concerts. A bowl sheathed in various sizes, shapes and shades of glass pieced together like a puzzle, the 18,500-seat arena offers a city view and close-to-the-action seating. The Sprint Center is poised to host more than 100 events a year, including the Big 12 Conference men's and women's basketball championships in 2008.

Given Kansas City's love and long history of college basketball, it's only natural that new "hoops" attractions make their home here. Sharing a lobby with the Sprint arena is the **College Basketball Experience**, where basketball icons and high-energy interactive exhibits engage and entertain. The facility also houses the **National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame**.

A Happening Hub

Occupying nine square blocks between the Convention Center and Sprint Center is the **Power & Light District**. Grandly launched in early 2008, this lively area is packed with galleries, shops, restaurants, gourmet food markets, hotels and urban lofts — intermingled with landscaped grounds, brick-paved sidewalks, pocket parks and fountains. The district's entertainment venue, **Kansas City Live!**, features an outdoor plaza and live entertainment stage tucked under an illuminated, glasslike canopy.

If the Power & Light District sounds a bit like a city-within-a-city, it is. This urban zone was designed as a place for people to work, play and live. Here, you're close to the vibrant **Crossroads Arts District** and a quick **Metro Area Express (MAX)** ride away from the Liberty Memorial, the regal Union Station, Hallmark's Crown Center and other must-see attractions. In fact, MAX runs the length of Main Street, from the historic City Market on the riverfront to the swanky Country Club Plaza, where an expansion of the nearby Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art is grabbing the world's attention.

Art and Architecture: Intertwined and Illuminated

The new **Bloch Building** at “the Nelson” is widely heralded as a work of art itself. From the outside, it appears as five massive translucent glass cubes tumbling down The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art's lush lawn, glowing like lanterns each night. Inside these architectural nuggets — the work of world-renowned architect Steven Holl — lie interconnected galleries of stunning African, Asian

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and contemporary art, as well as a treasured collection of American photography. Three levels of light-infused space offer surprising angles and views at every turn. Glass walls and doors invite outdoor sculptures and fountains inside. Even the museum's underground parking garage communes with art and nature. Hidden beneath a reflecting-pool sculpture tiled with glass portals, the garage



Glass-enclosed, 18,500-seat Sprint Center

is filled with rippling pools of sunlight by day. Come nightfall, the light from the garage beams up through the portals, illuminating the pool and surrounding plaza.

This expansion of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art represents a 71 percent increase in size — and 360-degree turn in style — from the museum's long-standing and highly regarded 1930s stone neoclassic structure. It's a turn that, like Kansas City itself, celebrates a thrilling new era.

Left: Spanish architecture, statuary and fountains grace the Country Club Plaza.
Right: Bloch Building's glowing galleries, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art



Kansas City...

What will you discover?

