

## **Index: Cost of living lower here**

Denton's daily expenses rate below U.S. average in research group's data

**06:37 AM CDT on Monday, June 7, 2010**

**By Candace Carlisle / Staff Writer**

Denton is officially on the map, as far as costs of living are concerned.

For the first time, the city has been included in the ACCRA Cost of Living Index — one of the most widely recognized measures of living expenses in the U.S., according to a local economist.

The index is published by the Council for Community and Economic Research.

“This particular methodology that was employed in calculating the index is the most widely recognized for being reliable and accurate,” said Terry Clower, an economist with the University of North Texas' Institute of Applied Economics.

The index compiles data from 308 urban areas throughout the nation and measures regional differences in the costs of various economic goods and services, including food, entertainment, clothing, eating establishments, veterinary services and appliance repair.

For the first quarter of 2010, the city of Denton was included, joining area cities such as Dallas, Fort Worth and Plano.

Denton rated 89.7 in the index, which means Denton's cost of living is below average, or 90 percent of the national average, according to the research council.

Dallas' rating is 90.8 for the same time period, while Plano's is 96.5.

Denton's lower cost-of-living rate compared to other North Texas cities, along with other factors, could attract businesses and people thinking of moving to the area to Denton specifically, Clower said.

“They'll look at Denton and realize they will get a bigger bang for their buck living in Denton,” Clower said.

The index verifies what most Denton residents already know about their community — it's a great place to live at a comparably low cost, Mayor Mark Burroughs said.

“Denton is not only located in a great geographic area for access, but the cost of living here is comparably less than in many of the communities around us,” Burroughs said.

While Denton's population growth has already made it one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation in recent years, this data will likely help the city continue business and residential development, he said.

"A lot of people have already discovered this, but to have it [the cost of living] verified by a credible source can make a real difference," Burroughs said.

Clower and a team of UNT researchers gathered local prices for various goods and services listed by the Council for Community and Economic Research.

The data was then given to the organization to be validated and analyzed.

While the cost of living isn't the only thing businesses should consider when relocating, it's a good piece of information to have, Clower said.

"It helps tell a story — that Denton is not only an attractive place to live, but an affordable place to live," he said.

The UNT economic research group — which has worked with various city and chamber groups on projects in the past — volunteered to gather the data in exchange for a free subscription to the organization's data.

For more information on the ACCRA Cost of Living Index, visit [www.coli.org](http://www.coli.org).

*CANDACE CARLISLE can be reached at 940-566-6889. Her e-mail address is [ccarlisle@dentonrc.com](mailto:ccarlisle@dentonrc.com).*