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*David Snell of Starlight Flight  
photo provided by David Snell*

## See Dallas From Santa's Perspective this Christmas

By Emily Foshee

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED what it would be like to ride in Santa's sleigh as he flies over Dallas, admiring the Christmas lights on Christmas Eve?

Wonder no more! Starlight Flight, Dallas/Fort Worth's oldest and most recognized airplane touring company, will whisk you away for an unforgettable aerial tour of the most beautiful holiday light displays in the area. Your "sleigh," a Cessna 172 single engine, four-seat airplane, has wings located above the cabin, providing a nearly unobstructed viewing area. Instead of creeping along in the family SUV looking at Christmas lights, passengers literally rise above the crowd, enjoying spectacular views of the Galleria, Highland Park, Texas Stadium, Love Field, Las Colinas, American Airlines Center, Reunion Tower, Fair Park, the Cotton Bowl, White Rock Lake and downtown Dallas. "Passengers have always enjoyed flying over downtown Dallas," said Starlight

Flight owner David Snell, "because we fly about 1000 feet from the ground and our passengers get the sensation they're flying right above the skyscrapers!"

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Since its inception in 1991, Starlight Flight has flown almost every weekend and during the week as well, averaging approximately 150 to 200 flights annually.

Each flight is affordably priced at under \$200 per couple and departs from a

private corporate terminal at Addison Airport. Flights are scheduled year round from dusk to midnight, weather permitting, with the majority of tours occurring at night.

"We'll fly wherever our customers want us to within the DFW area," said Mr. Snell. "If there are specific neighborhoods with unusual Christmas lights in Frisco, Allen, or McKinney for example, our passengers want to see, we include those areas in our tour." Annual favorites include Highland Park, Interlochen in Arlington and Deerfield in Plano. A private home located off of Hillcrest and SH121 in Frisco is a "must see" Christmas display, added Mr. Snell. The entire home is illuminated with Christmas lights that flash to music broadcast from a local radio station.

In addition to the popular Christmas tours, Starlight Flight offers romantic date, Valentine's Day, birthday, prom dates, and marriage proposal tours.



*Starlight Flight Cessna 172  
photo provided by David Snell*

Aerial tours of Southfork Ranch, made famous on the popular television series, “Dallas,” are also available. The in-air needs of passengers are always a priority at Starlight Flight. Previous passengers have requested a dozen roses, a mixed flower bouquet, or chocolates to celebrate a special occasion.

“I’m constantly amazed at how creative some folks can be,” said Snell, “when it comes to scheduling us for a marriage proposal tour. More than 150 proposals have taken place on our airplanes and each one has been outstanding!” The most memorable proposals include one gentleman who reserved a Starlight Flight and asked the pilot to fly adjacent to another plane over the Texas State Fair that had a banner flying behind it that read, “Will you marry me?” The bride-to-be had no idea the proposal was coming and, of course, said “Yes.” Snell also remembers a gentleman who chartered a plane and asked the pilot to fly over a specific building in Fort Worth where he had placed hundreds of lights spelling out “Will you marry me?” on the roof. “We see lots of fun, unique things on our flights which is one of the things that make this job so rewarding,” Snell said.

If an individual is interested in learning

how to fly a plane, Starlight Flight encourages its passengers to sit next to the pilot and operate the dual controls allowing the front seat passenger to actually fly the plane. Starlight Flight is able to provide flight instruction for those desiring to learn to fly or will refer interested parties to an FAA certified flight instructor.

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Starlight Flight offers numerous services in addition to aerial tours. Snell has conducted private and corporate based aerial photography assignments for area businesses and local newspapers. The company’s services include photographing commercial property, photographing land for residential land surveys and commercial construction.

Starlight Flight offers some additional unique aerial tours. Anyone wondering what it would be like to watch the busy morning or afternoon DFW rush hour traffic from above can fly along with Snell, a former traffic watch airplane pilot.

“Flying has always been a passion of mine,” said Snell. “Between my freshman and sophomore year in college, I conducted aerial sightseeing tours to increase my flying hours so I could get my pilot’s license as quickly as possible. Then, I started promoting the tours and, before I knew it, my business was born!”

In his early 30s, Mr. Snell is a citizen in which Frisco can be very proud. Snell also owns Cajun Crawfish and Company, a Frisco-based company specializing in custom catered on-site crawfish boils for corporate parties and private gatherings. His entrepreneurial spirit has propelled him to create two unique businesses that are growing day by day. For an unforgettable holiday experience, you could have a down-home, Cajun crawfish boil after your Starlight Flight aerial tour!

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*Emily Foshee is a freelance writer living in Frisco.*