



# A Profile of Fairfield County, Connecticut

## TALK OF THE TOWNS

### Some Fun Facts about Fairfield County

Some celebrated Fairfield County residents, past and present, include: Ron Howard; Diana Ross; Keith Richards; Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward; Benny Goodman; Dave Brubeck; Jackie Robinson; William F. Buckley; Harry Connick, Jr.; Gene Wilder; David Cone; Hulk Hogan, and Andy Rooney.

P.T. Barnum was once mayor of the city of Bridgeport.

The city of Stamford is home to the third-largest regional concentration of corporations in the United States.

At the Devil's Den Wildlife Preserve in the town of Weston, visitors can see fox, bobcat, coyote, eastern copperhead, wood duck, ruffed grouse and 140 other species of birds.

Igor Sikorsky, the father of the helicopter, perfected his invention and piloted the first successful helicopter prototype in the town of Stratford.



MBI's headquarters are located in Norwalk, Connecticut, a prosperous city of more than 80,000 people, situated in coastal Fairfield County. The city comprises a small downtown area surrounded by residential enclaves and a harbor. It is 41 miles from New York City, an hour from Manhattan.

Fairfield County is bordered on the west by New York's Westchester County and on the east by Long Island Sound. The region encompasses quaintly and modernly beautiful towns and small cities. Its topography includes unspoiled woodlands, inland wetlands, harbors, and beaches.

The cities and towns of Fairfield County represent a diversity of socio-economic levels. Statistically, the County was ranked the 13th most affluent county in the United States by the 2003 U.S. census, gauged by median household income. Several of its towns are among the nation's wealthiest. The area is home to tightly knit communities, corporations and businesses of all sizes, significant cultural institutions, and a host of leisure-time attractions.

Single professionals who enjoy nightlife will find it plentiful in Fairfield County, and there is a cosmopolitan atmosphere throughout the area. Those who like to join groups based on shared interests in the arts, athletics, nature, politics or religious faith can choose from among a rich assortment of organizations and activities.

For families, several of the area's towns boast some of America's top-ranked public school systems. Many locales offer practical convenience and environs that range from pleasant to scenically beautiful — with fine homes and apartments, excellent shopping and restaurants,

*(Fun Facts, continued...)*

The Quick Center for the Arts at Fairfield University hosts performances by world-famous stars of theater, film, music, and dance, as well as lectures by celebrated authors and luminaries in diverse fields.

Stew Leonard's, a supermarket in Norwalk, boasts an animatronic singing cow and other amusements alongside a large selection of groceries and gourmet foods. Shoppers have dubbed it "The Disneyland of Dairy Stores" (it now sells meats, seafood and produce as well).

*The Economist* of April 1-7, 2000 opined that "Connecticut has the highest educational standards in the country, thanks largely to stringent testing and higher salaries for teachers."

The state of Connecticut has a State Shellfish: it's the Eastern Oyster (adopted by an Act of the Legislature, 1989).

impressive libraries, houses of worship, nature preserves, cultural attractions, and expansive, child-friendly parks. Norwalk has a renowned aquarium and children's museum.

Facilities and trails for golf, tennis, sailing, boating, hiking, cycling and other athletic pursuits are close-at-hand throughout much of Fairfield County (the only thing missing is a major professional sports franchise; fans look to New York and Boston). Culturally, residents take full advantage of the region's close proximity to New York City — yet there is also a vibrant cultural scene in the County itself, featuring world-class attractions in all of the arts.

The cost of living in Fairfield County varies in accordance with different locales and lifestyles. Norwalk and Stamford, both predominantly affluent cities, have significantly lower costs of living than New York City's borough of Manhattan. The towns of Greenwich, Darien, New Canaan, and Westport are famously upper crust, yet, for renters, the cost of living in any of these towns can be marginally less than Manhattan. Danbury, Bethel, and similar towns are comfortable middle-class suburbs, offering substantially lower costs of living than Manhattan — for homeowners as well as renters.