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## Editorial: Hits and Misses

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Published: 22 February 2013 09:32 PM

### Rawlings uses his megaphone

There may be a new awareness of Texas' water needs in Austin, with the governor and others talking about the challenge. But the chatter doesn't necessarily mean legislators will fund the state's 50-year water plan. That's why Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings' voice was important in Austin this week, where he testified in favor of using \$2 billion from the state's rainy day fund to start financing the plan. Legislators need to feel pressure from the home front, especially Texas' big population centers. So, keep your voice strong, Mr. Mayor. It will be needed again once lawmakers start making final calls about the rainy day fund.

### Dewhurst and Straus send a clear signal to UT regents

University regents get to make their views known. No one quarrels with that. But they then need to step back and let presidents run their schools. Unfortunately, that point hasn't gotten through to some University of Texas regents, who continue to try to micromanage UT-Austin. Tired of that, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst rightly spoke out this week on behalf of UT president Bill Powers. Dewhurst, in so many words, told regents to provide advice but not run the school. He and House Speaker Joe Straus also appointed a panel to examine the work of regents at UT and other state schools. Their message to meddlers is clear: Back off.

### Big idea for big-ticket item: paying for roads

Credit state Sen. Kevin Eltife, R-Tyler, for answering the challenge of finding major money for state highways. Eltife said in Austin this week that he'd raise the motor fuels tax a dime a gallon and index it to inflation. And what happens when the tea party hears and tries to run him off? Bring 'em on, Eltife said. The tax is preferable to crumbling roads and bridges, he said, and far better than the mountain of debt Texas is under for road building. The Legislature needs more lawmakers willing to take this kind of risk.

### Graced by public art

The Nasher Sculpture Center is doing up its 10th birthday this year in a novel way — becoming the giver of gifts. Beginning in the fall, the Nasher will sponsor 10 public sculpture exhibits throughout the city, featuring the work of 10 artists of local, national and international renown. It's a marvelous way to reach out to inspire beyond the confines of the Nasher's very special enclave in the Arts District.

### A great start to a new Farmers Market

The city of Dallas got its first look at the plans for revitalizing the Farmers Market, and there's much in the proposal to stir excitement. Plans call for a private group to develop the market with restaurants, shopping, residences and other features. In addition, the Police Athletic League plans to move to the area, which should help allay worries some have had about safety. The Farmers Market now has a grand opportunity to live up to its promise as the centerpiece of a vibrant downtown neighborhood.

### Harold Simmons again invests in SMU

Billionaire investor Harold C. Simmons has said charitable giving is important to him and has regularly backed those words with extensive brick-and-mortar gifts to UT Southwestern Medical Center and Southern Methodist University. This week, Simmons and his wife, Annette, added to their charitable legacy with a \$25 million gift to SMU's school of education. The gift will fund a new building named after Simmons and support three endowed academic positions at the school of education, which already bears his wife's name. Their charitable giving will make a positive difference in Dallas for decades to come.

### Mexico's drug war shift

After an estimated 60,000 deaths resulted from former president Felipe Calderón's increased militarization of the drug war, recently elected Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto has shifted the focus — and budget — toward prevention. Peña Nieto's government has committed \$9.2 billion toward youth, education and social service programs. Attacking the root of the problem is a smart move and a good first step, but increasing park space and bringing more arts and culture into schools will do little if it's not accompanied by more fundamental change such as judicial reform, government transparency and increasing access to credit.

### Slap in the face to Bronze Star recipients

The Pentagon is correct to acknowledge the role drone pilots play in advancing U.S. counterinsurgency goals overseas. Many times, U.S. troops' lives depend on what these pilots do by remote control from half a world away. But their effort is nowhere near comparable to that of military personnel on the front lines, regularly exposed to severe danger. The Pentagon was wrong last week to create a new electronic warfare service award, the Distinguished Service Medal, and rank it higher in prestige than a Purple Heart or Bronze Star. It sends the wrong message that a soldier's sacrifice on the ground is worth less than the effort required to manipulate a joystick behind a console, thousands of miles from the action.

### Farmers Branch: 'The City in a Court'

After passing a 2006 ordinance barring illegal immigrants from rental housing, Farmers Branch racked up \$6 million in legal bills. The number got a bump when Hispanic residents sued, alleging the city's at-large election format denied them representation. Hispanics make up 45 percent of the city, but no Hispanic sits on the City Council. A federal judge ruled against Farmers Branch in that case, increasing the bill another \$730,000. (Soon, it could top \$1 million.) Tuesday, the

council unanimously, but reluctantly, agreed to single-member districts but did not rule out an appeal. The housing case is already in the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Farmers Branch should change its motto from "The City in a Park" to "The City in a Court."

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