

The Dallas Charter Review Commission tentatively signed off on a nearly 20 percent pay hike for the mayor and a 32 percent increase for council members.

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Playing field is uneven for black and Latino students

In the midst of the furor about who best can lead Dallas' maligned public school system, a telling study was released.

We can all learn from it. Within its pages lie the hard-core reasons so many kids of color are lagging behind their white classmates, not just in Texas, but across the nation.

In every corner of the country, but particularly here in the South, white and Asian children are in much better positions to succeed than

RACE & CULTURE



JAMES RAGLAND
jragland@dallasnews.com

Latino, black and American Indian kids, according to the recent study, "Race for Results: Building a Path to Opportunity for All Children."

The deep-seated problem goes way beyond who sits on

the school board or who's calling the shots. In short, way too many minority kids are not playing on a level field.

The report, from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, looked at a dozen development indicators that measure a child's success from infancy to adulthood, from birth weights to poverty to kids who live in two-parent households.

This is good stuff, because it gets to the heart of the

See **PLAYING** Page 10B

DALLAS

New Parkland could face delay

Construction worker shortage worrisome to hospital officials

By **SHERRY JACOBSON**
Staff Writer
sjacobson@dallasnews.com

An apparent shortage of local construction workers could

cause a delay in completing the new Parkland Memorial Hospital.

At a meeting Tuesday of a hospital committee, a top Parkland official complained that Dallas laborers were leaving for better jobs in other parts of the state.

"Houston and West Texas

are taking labor away from many of our projects," said Lou Saksen, senior vice president over Parkland construction. "It's a very difficult market out there."

The county hospital also is struggling to attract bids to

See **LABOR** Page 10B



Employees of CA Technologies in Plano spent part of Earth Day on Tuesday removing young cedar elm trees from a field at the Connemara Conservancy Meadow Preserve on the border of Allen and Plano.

Photos by Stewart F. House/Special Contributor

Giving back to nature on Earth Day



Georgianne Benjamin of Allen and Robert Loureiro of Plano teamed up during their company's Earth Day volunteer activities at the preserve.

DALLAS CITY HALL

Is it time to save tapes of meetings?

Council's recordings archived, but not those of commissions, boards

By **SCOTT GOLDSTEIN**
Staff Writer
sgoldstein@dallasnews.com

Dallas is doing a disservice to history, its image and its residents by not preserving video and audio tapes of all public meetings, said a member of the city's Charter Review Commission.

"Years and years of recordings of boards and commissions have gone bye-bye," said Mike Northrup, a shareholder in the downtown law firm of Cowles & Thompson.

"If the city allows for recordings of these meetings to be destroyed, it causes people to wonder why."

He said the city charter ought to require permanent retention of the recordings.

Northrup made the comments at a Monday night meeting of the Charter Review Commission.

City officials said the 90-day retention policy meets state requirements.

Audio and video recordings of City Council meetings are preserved, with the archive dating to 1967.

But that's not the case with recordings of meetings of many city boards and commissions, including the Plan Commission, the Park and Recreation Board, and the Landmark Commission.

Even his own panel is not exempt, Northrup noted.

See **SHOULD** Page 7B

INSIDE

Testimony in murder trial begins

Testimony begins in the capital murder trial of a man accused of kidnapping and killing another man with the help of his brothers and a woman. **7B**

Cornyn seeks to ease rape kit backlog

Sen. John Cornyn calls for Congress to renew a federal program that gives grant money to local law enforcement agencies to help with a backlog of untested rape kit exams. **11B**

INSIDE

County roundup	2-3
Norma Adams-Wade	10
Obituaries	8-10
Weather	12

UPDATE | SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY VOTE

MONDAY
Transportation

TUESDAY
Education

WEDNESDAY
Update

THURSDAY
Public safety

FRIDAY
The Watchdog

SATURDAY
Hot Topic

SUNDAY
Neighborhoods

LGBT students get second shot at representation

By **ANDREW SCOGGIN**
Staff Writer
ascoggin@dallasnews.com

Southern Methodist University students will vote again Wednesday and Thursday on whether lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students should have a special government seat after a referendum

earlier this month failed to get enough votes.

The measure easily passed SMU's Student Senate, 34-3, in late March, the first time the body has approved adding a senator for LGBT students.

Students supporting the measure say the referendum wasn't met

with organized opposition. But it required two-thirds approval in a student election, and only 59 percent voted for it.

SMU isn't encouraging students to vote one way or the other, according to spokesman Kent Best. The university, in an emailed statement, says it's "committed to the

free exchange of ideas and equal opportunity," and the nondiscrimination policy for employees includes sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

"The administration has been very accommodating of LGBT peo-

See **LGBT** Page 4B

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