

# The Dallas Morning News

Texas' Leading Newspaper

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## READY FOR KICKOFF?



**COLLEGE FOOTBALL PREVIEW:** SportsDay takes a closer look at local, national and regional college teams.

## SPORTSDAY HIGH SCHOOL

Our weekly high school section makes its 2006-07 debut today. **DALLASNEWS.COM:** We blog live from key area high school games, plus visit your school's home page at My High Schools.

Warmer



High: 94 Low: 69  
Metro, Back Page

### METRO

#### Trustee: Seminary censored him

A trustee of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth says he was unfairly censored by the school. **1B**

#### DISD creates post to end fraud, waste

Dallas school Superintendent Michael Hinojosa is creating a new post to root out fraud. **Section B**

### WORLD

#### Fox confronted by political crisis

Mexican President Vicente Fox faces a political crisis as he prepares to give his final State of the Union address on Friday. **16A**

#### Iran defiant in face of U.N. deadline

A defiant Iran kept on enriching uranium in advance of the U.N. Security Council's deadline today for Tehran to freeze such activity. **17A**

#### Iraq might be a year from taking charge

Iraqi security forces will need another year to 18 months before they can take over from American troops, the top U.S. commander in Iraq said. **18A**

### GUIDELIVE

#### Glenn Ford, film actor, dies at 90



Actor Glenn Ford, who played strong, thoughtful protagonists in

films such as *The Blackboard Jungle* and *The Big Heat*, has died at 90. **1G**

### BUSINESS

#### Restaurant industry looks to machines

As restaurants scramble to cope with a labor crunch, many are looking to machines to fill the bill. **1D**

### FAMILY

#### Picture perfect

See the winning entries from our young photographers' contest.

# IN A CRUNCH TO STAY COOL

## Rising power bills fanning resentment even among those who conserve

By DAVID FLICK  
Staff Writer

Devetta Miller had already heard that electricity rates had increased, so when it became obvious that summer 2006 would be particularly hot, the 40-year-old travel agent tried to conserve.

She set the thermostat in her 2,100-square-foot DeSoto home at 78 degrees. She put solar screens on the windows, wore shorts and used appliances sparingly.

But when she saw her electric bill, she was anything but cool. Her most recent statement, which included several weeks of August, came to \$551.

It's a chilling reality for most electricity customers this summer.

"I heard that electricity was going to be a little more expensive, but I guess I wasn't expecting this," Ms. Miller said. "Needless to say, this came as kind of a shock. I was taken aback."

When a carryover balance was included, she owed \$863 to TXU. To put that in painful perspective: A 30-year fixed mortgage on a \$150,000 house in Dallas would cost \$10 less a month, and a five-year loan on a BMW 325i would be \$678 a month.

See **RISING** Page 6A

### COMPARING COSTS

A person with an average credit rating would have monthly payments of:



**\$380** for a \$40,000 swimming pool at 7.9 percent interest for 15 years



**\$678** for a \$32,000 BMW 325i at 7 percent interest for five years



**\$853** for a \$150,000 house with 10 percent down and a 6.5 percent, 30-year fixed mortgage

SOURCES: Mastercraft Pools; Moritz BMW; Dallas Morning News research

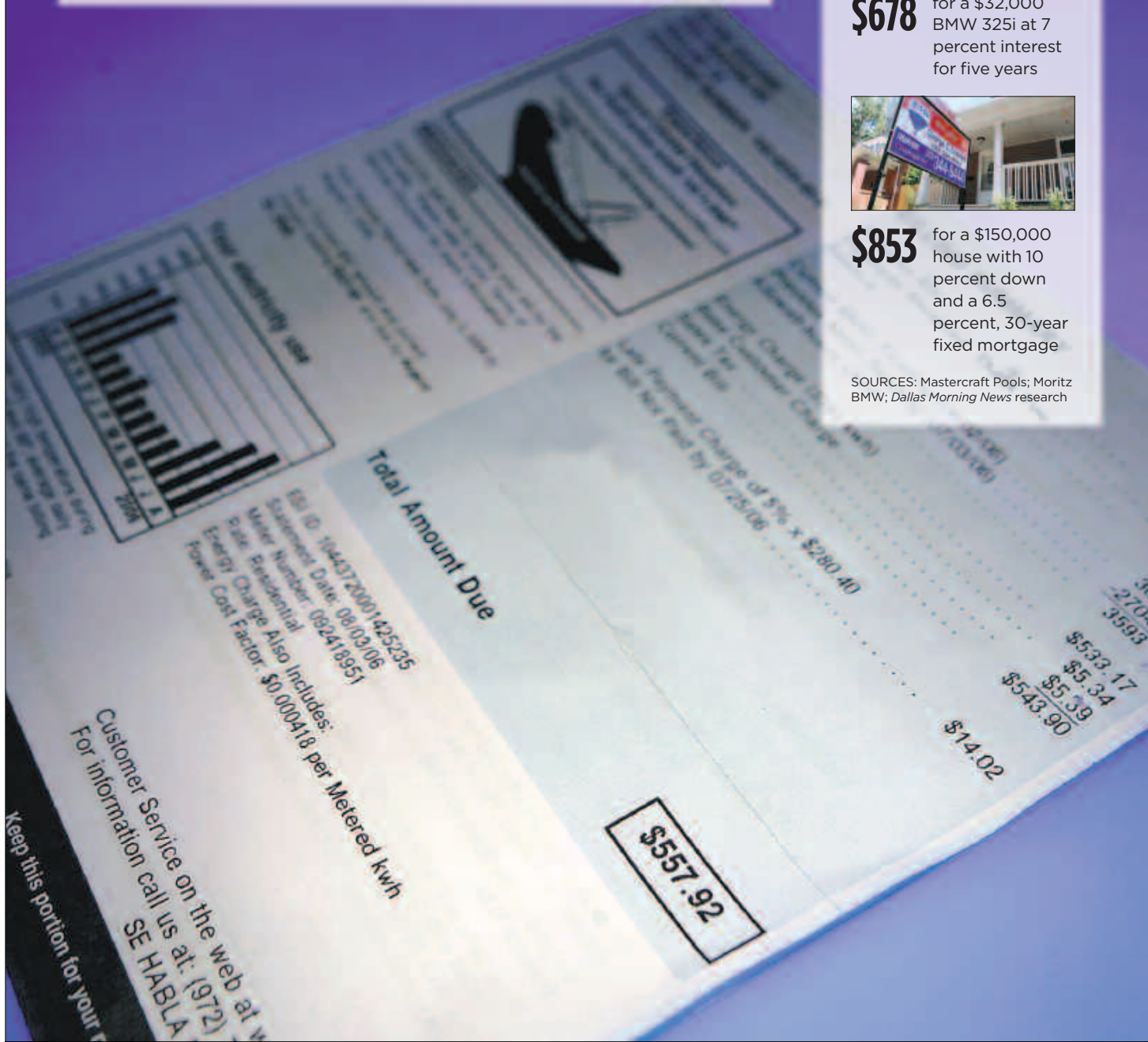


Photo illustration by BRAD LOPER/Staff Photographer

## Agency tightens day-care policies

Changes planned after News reveals regulatory failures in boy's death

By JENNIFER EMILY  
Staff Writer

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services will retrain employees and increase oversight of day-care directors in response to regulatory breakdowns that preceded a 4-year-old's day-care death, the state's head of child-care licensing said Wednesday.

Diana Spiser said the changes are meant to ensure that the problems at Dream House Learning Center in Dallas don't happen at another facility.

Ms. Spiser, assistant commissioner for child-care licensing, said that while there is no evidence of similar problems at other centers, "we want to do what we can right now to ensure every facility is as safe as it can possibly be and that there are no more oversights of this type."

State child-care licensing officials also said more changes could follow.

The regulatory failures, detailed in Sunday's *Dallas Morning News*, already led state Sen. Jane Nelson, who leads the Senate's Health and Human Services Committee, to announce she will seek reform in the next legislative session. She said concerned parents have been calling her office asking about what assurances they had that the places they take their children are safe.

See **AGENCY** Page 4A

## Shuffling classroom spending

**Update:** Schools say state's 65% rule sounds good but lacks bite

By TERENCE STUTZ  
Austin Bureau

AUSTIN — One year ago, Gov. Rick Perry ordered Texas school districts to start spending at least 65 percent of their money in the classroom — an unprecedented action that angered and alarmed superintendents across the state.

But when the mandate took effect with the start of school this month, it was viewed by many school officials as a "paperwork" tiger — thanks to the softening of its provisions by state and federal officials.

"It is affecting our financial reports to the state, but in terms of how we actually spend money, it's had no impact," said Ray Freeman, superintendent of the 700-pupil Itasca school district south of Fort Worth.

"Politically, it may sound like a neat thing. In reality, most districts are already spending everything they can on instruction. I've not talked to a single superintendent who believes this will improve instruction. Most see it as a nuisance."

The Itasca district was already spending 62 percent of its funding in the classroom under the

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## Gunman wounds officer, hostage at Dallas hotel

Shooter kills himself; he'd been out on bail on murder charge

By ROBERT THARP  
and JASON TRAHAN  
Staff Writers

A 29-year-old Dallas police officer responding to screams for help inside a Love Field-area hotel room before dawn Wednesday was shot by a man who already had a murder charge hanging over his head.

For more than a year, Ronald Robinson had been out on bail in the December 2004 shooting death of a 27-year-old man inside a Dallas strip club. He was free to



Ronald Robinson

walk the streets after posting bail while his trial was repeatedly delayed.

Officer Jeremy Borchardt was struck in the thigh by a bullet that went through a wall just before 5 a.m. as he and other officers prepared to enter a fourth-floor room at the Radisson hotel in the 1200 block of West Mockingbird Lane.

The officers were trying to rescue a 31-year-old woman whom Mr. Robinson had shot in the leg

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## Hurricane grows off Mexico's coast



EDUARDO VERDUGO/Associated Press

A resort worker in Acapulco raked beach debris Wednesday from Hurricane John's gusts as the storm intensified off Mexico's Pacific Coast. (Story, 19A)

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