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NBA ALL-STAR WEEKEND

Rising to the occasion

Stadium, stars dazzle a record 108,713 fans

By BRAD TOWNSEND Staff Writer

ARLINGTON — The glitzy NBA All-Star week that brought LeBron, Jay-Z and a foot of snow culminated Sunday night with a Texas-size exclamation point.

A basketball-record-shattering 108,713 fans filled Cowboys Stadium for the 59th NBA All-Star Game. The Eastern Conference defeated the Western Conference, 141-139, though the score won't be what is most remembered.

For perhaps the first time in All-Star history, the game's 24 marquee players shared billing with the surroundings, namely, Cowboys Stadium and the historic crowd.

"I thought it would be spectacular and amazing, but it was even more so than I imagined," Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban said. "Everybody's had a great time. You could just see people's eyes bugging out of their heads. It's crazy.

"I'm still trying to decompress."

With pregame entertainment from Usher and a half-time show by Alicia Keys and Shakira, this Valentine's extravaganza easily broke the basketball attendance mark of 78,129, set by college teams Kentucky and Michigan State at Detroit's Ford Field in 2003.

It also eclipsed the American professional sports record of 105,121. That one was set at last September's Cowboys-Giants game at Cowboys Stadium.

"Just to be in this game was an unreal experience," said

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VERNON BRYANT/Staff Photographer

LeBron James (right) of the Cleveland Cavaliers and Kevin Garnett of the Boston Celtics started showing their moves even before the game at Cowboys Stadium. The East won, 141-139.

INSIDE

STADIUM PASSES its biggest test yet, Jerry Jones says. 10A

A HOST OF STARS helped to pack the house as the four-day extravaganza hit a crescendo Sunday night. 11A

KEVIN SHERRINGTON: The All-Star Game was a good warm-up for the Super Bowl. 1C

TIM COWLISHAW: The night's real stars were LeBron James, Dwyane Wade, Shakira and Alicia Keys, not necessarily in that order. 1C

FOLLOW All-Star Weekend live at mavsblog.dallasnews.com/

ELECTIONS '10 | TEXAS VOTERS

Highways take hit in budget poll

Cutting road funds favored over spending less on education, health

By CHRISTY HOPPE Austin Bureau

AUSTIN — Highways would be by-ways if voters were in charge of cutting the state budget. With up to a \$16 billion budget shortfall facing the state next year, 41 percent of Texans said in a new poll they would make up some of the deficit by slicing highway spending.

One in five would favor raising taxes or fees, while relatively few said they would cut education or health care for the poor, according to The Dallas Morning News poll.

The answer could be a minor setback to Gov. Rick Perry, who has made transportation a high priority in his administration, and possibly a small boost to Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, who has made toll roads one of the biggest attacks in her campaign against him.

"It reinforces there are no easy choices," said Dale Craymer, president of the Texas Taxpayer and Research Association, a nonpartisan research group.

But in times of duress, projects that are concrete and steel, costly and take years to complete will be the first to go, he said.

"It's not so much an indicator that people are willing to tolerate the traffic as much as it is recognition about the cost of fixing it. You can throw billions at the problem and not make a dent," Craymer said.

Asked where to get money for roads, voters were even more ambivalent. Given five widely debated options, those polled ranked toll roads the highest but with only 21 percent.

"It tells me that 20 percent like toll roads, but 80 percent don't like them," Craymer said.

"But it's going to be some combination of all those items that will be considered" by the 2011 Legislature, he said.

Not far behind, 16 percent of Texans said they



SEE COMPLETE RESULTS from the poll on issues and campaign matchups.

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WAR ON TERROR

U.S. apologizes after errant strike kills 10 Afghan civilians

FROM WIRE REPORTS

MARJAH, Afghanistan — An errant American rocket strike Sunday hit a compound crowded with Afghan civilians in the last Taliban stronghold in Helmand province, killing at least 10 people, including five children, military officials said.

Avoiding such civilian deaths, which came on the second day of a major allied offensive around Marjah, has been a cornerstone of the war strategy by the top American commander, Gen. Stanley McChrystal. He apologized to Af-

ghan President Hamid Karzai, saying, "We deeply regret this tragic loss of life."

McChrystal said in a statement that he was suspending use of the weapon system "until a thorough review of this incident has been conducted."

The strike came after U.S. Marines and Afghan soldiers had been taking intense small-arms fire from a mud-walled compound in the area, American officers said. The answering ar-

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PIER PAOLO CITO/The Associated Press

A U.S. soldier returns fire as others run for cover during a firefight with insurgents in the Helmand province. (Story on 7A)

INTERNET

Who's sorry now? Confessions safe with online sites

Many sharing private shame in public domain to ease their guilt

By SELWYN CRAWFORD Staff Writer

The young man heading out of the convenience store wanted to do the right thing. He really did.

But Zagros Bigvand was in a hurry that day last summer and the elderly lady with the cane "was walking really, really, slow." So he let go of the door he had been holding open for the shuffling stranger just as she neared it.

"It felt like I held the door for that lady for five minutes," said Bigvand of Dallas. "But finally, I just felt like I had to go. So I let it go and she looked at me and I looked at her. I felt bad about it all day. And I said I wish I could apologize to that woman."

So he did. His online mea culpa became the genesis for apolo.gy, one of a growing number of so-called confession Web sites aimed at allowing people to anonymously admit — and apologize for — anything, from being a shopaholic to cheating on a partner to murder.

"Human beings have a need to confess," said Dr. James Campbell Quick, a distinguished professor in the Goolsby Leadership Academy at the

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Sunny weather forecast with WFAA logo and temperature H 46 L 27

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FLY YOUR FLAG

Today is Presidents Day. The third Monday in February is set aside to honor the birthdays of two of our nation's greatest presidents — George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

Some government offices and businesses will be closed today in observance of Presidents Day. 2B



Sliding to a gold medal

German luger Felix Koch celebrates his victory in the men's singles competition. Olympics coverage, 5C-7C

GUIDEDAILY

NEW

Arts reviews, Dallas deals

Find more local coverage every Monday in GuideDaily.

The Stage: Theater reviews of Boom and The Sisters Rosensweig, and our take on Saturday's DSO performance. 4E

Live Better Here: Resale stores guide. 8E

TEXAS

'Good Time Charlie' celebrated

A memorial service in Lufkin honored the late Rep. Charlie Wilson. 3A

METRO

Thousands still lack power

In snowstorm's aftermath, some still coping without electricity. 1B

