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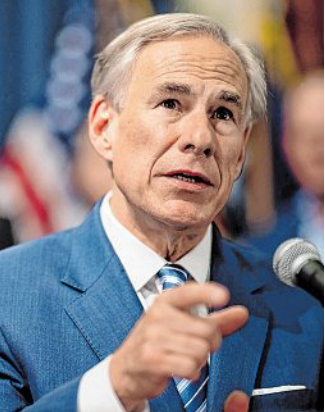
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ELECTIONS '26

Abbott versus Newsom

It's a red-blue grudge match



GREG ABBOTT

From the Texas oil patch to the beaches of California, two governors have become symbols of the nation's political extremes. Greg Abbott and Gavin Newsom form a red-blue split screen, selling competing visions for the country. Their influence extends far beyond state lines. On abortion, guns, education, immigration, environmental regulation and transgender rights, laws passed in Austin and Sacramento have

become templates for others. Each governor presents his state as the way forward and the other as a warning. Their policy clashes have grown increasingly personal, and the rivalry could follow both into the 2028 presidential campaign. On Pages 4A and 5A, The Dallas Morning News and San Francisco Chronicle look at how Abbott and Newsom are turning the Texas — California divide into a fight for America's future.



GAVIN NEWSOM

Access to convention has been unusual

With no nominee to select or party business to conduct, there's no traditional delegation

By Lilly Kersh
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Tim Bates wanted to be part of history at the Republican Party's first midterm convention in Dallas. He just wasn't willing to spend thousands of dollars to do it.

"I was not going to pay \$5,000," said Bates, 65, a longtime Collin County Republican precinct chair.

Turns out, he didn't have to. Bates said he received information from the state Republican Party about signing up for a free ticket to President Donald Trump's convention-style rally kicking off Wednesday at American Airlines Center. He passed it along to other precinct chairs.

His path into the arena reveals something unusual about an already unusual political gathering: There is no conventional Texas delegation and no single way to become part of the crowd.

The Texas GOP offered packages costing \$10,000 for "honorary delegate" credentials and other perks, half the \$20,000 price first advertised. Other Republicans were invited or given tickets. Some received registration links. Still others entered a free lottery.

Unlike a presidential convention, there is no nominee to select. That has left the meaning of who counts as a "delegate" — and who gets through the doors — considerably looser. Delegates at traditional conventions generally are selected through presidential primaries and caucuses, with the rules varying by state.

For Bates, the ticket registration link opened the convention to more local Republicans.

"More local people will be able to go to fill the venue," he said.

Bates said his ticket has a disclaimer, though. Entry is not guaranteed if the arena reaches capacity.

The state GOP chair said in August she had given away 300 tickets to Texans with plans to distribute more. Organizers have said they expect more than 20,000 attendees.

All that maneuvering is for an event built around rallying Republicans for the Novem-

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Delay of game



Smiley N. Pool/Staff Photographer

SMU safety Jarvis Lee (l) looked out from the bench as players and fans waited out a power outage before an NCAA college football game at Florida State at Doak Campbell Stadium on Monday in Tallahassee, Fla. (Coverage, SportsDay)

WILDFIRE

'Landmark' Ross fire ranks 15th largest in Texas history

At 57% containment, the inferno has been extreme in other ways

By Mel Fronczek
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The Ross fire has scorched tens of thousands of acres in North Texas since it began Aug. 24, becoming one of the largest wildfires in the region.

But size is just one way to measure the severity of a wildfire. There's also the human cost, damage to property, damage to the landscape and difficulty suppressing the fire,

said Adam Turner, a public information officer for the Texas A&M Forest Service.

The Dallas Morning News has compiled data and built visualizations to compare how the Ross fire stacks up to notable blazes in decades past. Primarily, we are using comparisons of fire behavior, size, deadliness and amount of damage.

Note: Historical statistics and figures in this story are based on records from the Texas A&M Forest Service, which has a database of all wildfires across the state starting in 2005. The agency's records

predating that year only represent fires that the forest service responded to.

Challenges

Turner said the duration of the Ross fire — 14 days and counting — is unusual.

"This fire is a little bit of a landmark," he said.

It displayed extreme behavior in the first few days, he said, including towering flames and wide-reaching spotfires.

"It was not within our

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TRANSPORTATION

DART faces ridership issue as region continues to grow

Transit leaders push for a more connected regional system

By Willborn P. Nobles III
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DART, North Texas' largest public transportation agency, expects ridership to fall by more than 5% next year, even as other North Texas transit agencies report gains.

David Leininger, interim president and CEO of Dallas Area Rapid Transit, said DART's projection calls for ridership to fall from about 55



million trips this year to 52 million next year if the agency does not change course.

Leininger did not identify a single cause for DART's decline. He pointed to rising car ownership and the loss of riders since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The warning came Tues-

day during a panel at the Infrastructure Summit in Irving, where leaders from DART, the Denton County Transportation Authority, Trinity Metro and the North Central Texas Council of Governments discussed the future of public transportation in a region that continues to add people, jobs and congestion. A recurring theme was that the agencies need to work together more closely to create a more cohesive regional system that is easier for riders to navigate.

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Mostly sunny and hot
Metro, back page

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NATION & WORLD
Maternal deaths

Health officials delay a report on maternal health, looking at pregnancy-related deaths since the state's abortion ban took effect. 10A

METRO
More OB-GYNs

The number of obstetricians and gynecologists licensed to practice in North Texas has risen in the last five years, according to state data. 1B

BUSINESS
Expansion at Love Field

Berkshire Hathaway-owned NetJets is planning a major new campus at Dallas Love Field, according to city permit filings. 3B