

Viewpoint

OUR VIEW

Selling sex

The Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau has gotten some national publicity of late for its efforts to woo the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered market.

The tax-funded agency runs a special Web site for that purpose, www.glbtdallas.com.

In an interview with The Associated Press, DCVB Chief Phillip Jones said the marketing push was motivated by the fact that gays travel more than other folks — four to six trips a year — and spend up to \$100 a day more than an average traveler.

Battling against Big D's traditional reputation as a stuffy Bible-belt town, the convention bureau's alternative Web site brags that "Dallas truly is the most liberal city in Texas!" (We wonder if the CVB uses the same spiel when shilling convention dates to religious organizations.)

The site also points visitors to hotels that meet strict gay-friendly policies, including the promise to hire "gay and lesbian employees in all levels of employment." (Do companies really ask sexual-preference questions during interviews? We thought that was discriminatory.)

The DCVB site also points visitors to "Texas' largest gay nightclub," among other places, and promises a city of "sassy drag queens" and "strapping gay rodeo champs."

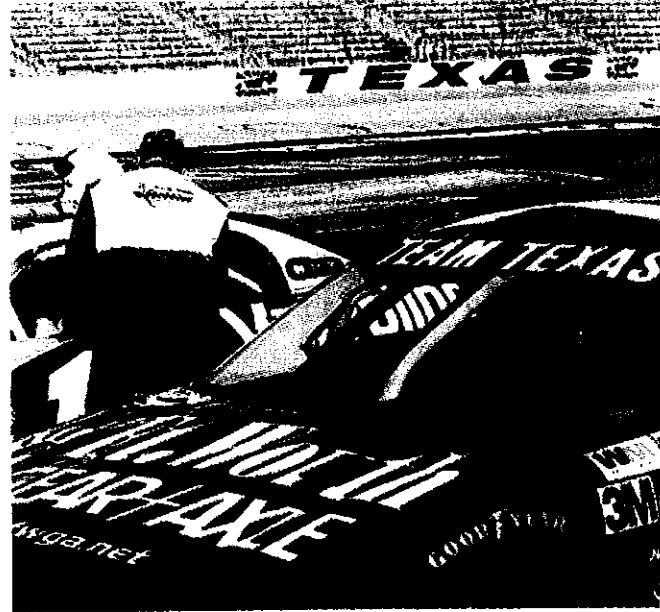
That gays and lesbians represent a large, affluent market is well-documented, and just about every major corporation in the country is going out of its way to capture a part of that upscale market.

But if you have any doubt that the quasi-salacious teasing of the convention bureau's alternative site is an inappropriate use of public money, just ponder whether you would have a problem with a taxpayer-funded site that bragged about how many Hooters' restaurants and "gentlemen's clubs" there were in Dallas, promising "hot babes" and "wild beauties."

A few years ago, the DCVB endured public embarrassment because some employees were taking clients to strip clubs and expensing it. The lesson, evidently not learned, is that the DCVB shouldn't be in the business of selling sex, whatever its variety.

Democrats' day

Business groups are scrambling to understand what it means for them now that the Democrat party has won back control of Congress.



TRACK 1

An average Joe's virtual dream be

I can do this for real!" That's what I thought after another three-hour session playing NASCAR 06 on my X-Box. I must have driven at least 1,000 laps around a virtual Texas Motor Speedway by now. I knew the track; the rest was just physical. Six weeks and \$425 later, my thoughts became a reality.

I started by discovering Team Texas High Performance Driving School via the TMS Web site. Team Texas was started in 1992 by Mike Starr. To my delight, Team Texas



NOTEBOOK

Troy Ross

has purchased real NASCAR Nextel Cup stock cars directly from NASCAR Nextel Cup and Busch Grand National teams.

The cars are fully equipped with real 650-horsepower Chevy SB2 race engines and all of the familiar corporate sponsorships such as NAPA, Interstate Batteries, Snap-on, Quaker State and yes, Tony Stewart fans, Home Depot. Local businesses also purchased sponsorships, which were displayed proudly on some of the cars as well.

The first step was to choose an experience that was right for me. I chose to drive 10 laps with an instructor and then ride four laps with an expe-

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