

SAEN Jan. 18, 2007 Thurs

# UTSA park a good investment

BY VICTOR RODRIGUEZ

## COMMENT

Each spring, the University of Texas at San Antonio and school districts in Bexar County collaborate to host the Region IV University Interscholastic Spring Meet.

The Spring Meet consists of literary events hosted by UTSA that bring more than 3,000 students to San Antonio. The track and field competitions are hosted by all the school districts in Bexar County at Alamo Stadium and attract more than 5,000 students to San Antonio.

The number of students participating continues to grow.

When you consider the tremendous exposure to UTSA and our community by this number of participants, you must also include the coaches, parents, relatives and friends who accompany them.

As tourists, these families and friends of 8,000 students enhance our community by spending their

hard-earned dollars at our hotels, eating establishments, shopping centers and entertainment venues.

Corpus Christi hosted the UIL Spring Meet for 15 years. Thanks to the partnership established between UTSA and the Bexar County school districts, in 1985 the state UIL approved San Antonio as the host community for the annual Region IV Spring Meet for all 4A and 5A schools.

Region IV brings schools from Austin to Brownsville. It also extends as far west as Kerrville and Fredericksburg and east to Seguin. San Antonio is fortunate because of its central location, but also because of the partnership between UTSA and the school districts.

We can greatly enhance our competitive edge in the visitor industry and in education by continuing to host these kinds of

events — both the literary events and the track and field events.

It is my hope that the city's Community Initiatives Bond Committee and the Parks Bond Committee consider and approve UTSA's request for bond support of \$10 million for the proposed UTSA Athletic Park. This project would include facilities for track and field, soccer, tennis, softball and baseball.

It would support many of our youth within this region and would certainly contribute to our overall visitor industry. More important, this project would create a greater connection for many of our youth and parents to higher education.

UTSA has the land and needs seed funding from the city to initiate this project.

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*Victor Rodriguez, retired San Antonio Independent School District superintendent, is former chairman of the state University Interscholastic League.*