

## EXCLUSIVE REPORTS

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# Capitalizing on politics

Fueled by 2003 legislative session, lobbying tab climbed to \$275M

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Business is good for Austin lobbyists such as Robert Miller of Houston-based law firm Locke Liddell & Sapp LLP. In fact, it's never been better.

Despite the fickle economy, businesses proved last year that they aren't afraid to shell out the big bucks to get what they want -- or stop what they don't want -- from Texas lawmakers.

"Those representing businesses are busier than ever," says Miller, whose 2003 income from lobbying ranged from \$1.2 million to \$2 million, according to state figures, putting him 10th on a list of top Texas lobbyists.

"Many businesses are realizing that you can't come to the political table at the last minute and be effective," says Miller, whose clients include Dynegy Inc. and the Houston Astros baseball team.

"Government has a greater role in businesses' lives. Businesses need to be at the table every day and have a constant presence" at the Capitol.

Businesses apparently are listening. Companies doled out as much as \$250 million for lobbying during the 2003 Texas legislative session, making it a record-breaking year for mixing money, business and politics.

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