

SESSION WEEKLY



SNOW AND ICE BY THE NUMBERS

THE MANDATE OF 'GOOD'

LEAVING A LEGACY

HF261 - HF364

A NONPARTISAN PUBLICATION

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Flashback to 1991 - 2001

State banks not on the brink

Despite the recession, Minnesota banks are strong, Art Rolnick, director of research for the Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis, told the House Economic Development Committee.

In 1986, 20 percent of bank loans statewide were losing money, he said; now that figure is 7 percent. With the country at war with Iraq, Rolnick predicted a short-lived recession. "You don't see an economy go into a recession period and stay in one during wartime."

— Session Weekly Feb. 1, 1991

Islamic food standards protected

Legislators are considering a bill that would provide legal protection for foods prepared according to Islamic religious law.

HF149, sponsored by House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan), would prohibit the sale or serving of food falsely labeled "Halaal" or prepared according to Islamic religious law, called Sharia. The provisions are modeled on existing standards for Kosher foods prepared according to Jewish religious law.

— Session Weekly Feb. 1, 2001

Limiting imported steel

Seventy percent of steel companies could be filing Chapter 11 bankruptcy by the end of the year because of illegal dumping of steel, Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) told the House Commerce, Jobs and Economic Development Committee. HF219, sponsored by Rep. Tony Sertich (DFL-Chisholm), would send an official message in the form of a resolution to President George W. Bush requesting that his administration investigate illegal dumping of steel products in the U.S.

"This country has a very strong demand for steel and we need foreign imports, but the percentage of foreign sales is too great," said Rep. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook).

— Session Weekly Feb. 1, 2001

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SESSION WEEKLY

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On the cover: A Capitol visitor makes his way up the snow-covered front steps Jan. 31. The Capitol area is closing in on 60 inches of snow for the season after at least a trace of snow fell on 27 of 31 days in January. Forecasters have expressed concern about the potential for serious flooding around the state with a rapid snow melt in the spring.

— Photo by Tom Olmscheid

'Pitting the good against the good'

Proposed lift of safe schools mandate is a tough call

BY KRIS BERGGREN

The Westbrook-Walnut Grove school district had some boom years in the last decade. Now losing students and facing a \$400,000 deficit, it could lay off a half-time school counselor, but state law prevents the change.

Due to an influx of Hmong families in 2001, enrollment in the southwestern Minnesota district grew from 450 to 525 in two years, said Superintendent Loy Woelber, eventually topping out near 600.

In 2003, he hired a second counselor, bringing the student-to-counselor ratio to 275:1. That's close to the American School Counselors Association recommendation of 250:1. The district later arranged to share one counselor with a neighboring district, before a "maintenance of effort" mandate enacted in 2007 required districts to retain certain licensed student support personnel.

But the district's enrollment has dipped to 440 and continues to fall by 20 students a year, and as the students go, so goes the state revenue.

"My feeling is we could use that money in the classroom more than the counselor," said Gene Kronback, the school board's president for 24 years. But his hands are tied by the state mandate.

Allow for local control

A bill sponsored by Rep. Connie Doepke (R-Orono) would help Kronback put money where he feels it is most needed.

HF88 would remove a \$3 set-aside per pupil of the \$30 per pupil Safe Schools Levy, and the maintenance of effort provision. The set-aside generates a small amount of dedicated revenue that must be spent only on licensed counselors, nurses, social workers, psychologists and chemical dependency counselors. The maintenance of effort provision ensures a district's current level of those student support staff is retained

"I, in any way, am not against nurses, counselors or anyone who works with our students. Certainly in these times everyone's important and we need to pull together."

— Rep. Connie Doepke
R-Orono

from year to year, measured either by total funding for those positions or by the number of positions. Unlike teachers, they are exempt from seniority rules governing who may be laid

off if districts face budget reductions.

"Maintenance of effort creates a privileged group that cannot have cuts under any circumstances," Doepke said. "I am in any way not against nurses, counselors or anyone that works with our students. Certainly in these times everyone's important and we need to pull together." She simply wants school boards to have the flexibility to decide which employees will best serve their students.

The House Education Finance Committee approved the bill Feb. 1 and sent it to the

House Taxes Committee. It has no Senate companion.

Opponents of the measure say young people face greater need for support than ever and fear cuts to student support staff if it's implemented.

Passion on both sides of the issue

Kris Moe, a licensed counselor at Park High School in Cottage Grove and president of the Minnesota School Counselors Association, said high school counselors are typically spread thin; acting as student assessment coordinators; college guidance counselors; addressing individual students' mental health issues such as depression or family crises; and sometimes school-wide issues, such as the aftermath of tragic events.

A 2009 survey conducted by the MSCA and Minnesota 2020, a nonpartisan think tank, indicated 90 percent of counselors had helped students deal with interpersonal and family problems, depression, aggressive or disruptive behavior, anxiety and ADHD in the prior 12 months, and 76 percent said student mental health care needs had increased in the prior 24 months.

Walter Roberts Jr., a professor of Counselor Education and Professional Counseling Programs at Minnesota State University, Mankato, told members about results of his recent informal survey. Of 31 districts responding, counselors reported 157 suicide attempts and eight suicides during the past two-and-a-half school years, which might indicate a rising trend if the numbers play out across all districts.

Roberts said the maintenance of effort provision was designed to stop the "hemorrhaging" of student services personnel and that because it's only been in effect for a year, there is no evidence that it isn't working. Minnesota consistently ranks near



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First Reading continued from page 3

49th in the nation, with a student-to-counselor ratio of 759:1, according to 2008-2009 U.S. Department of Education statistics.

"There are times when government has to step up to the plate and do the right thing. This is one of those times," Roberts said.

Yet even \$167 million in federal "EduJobs" money intended to help Minnesota districts retain school staff didn't prompt hiring, said Scott Croonquist, executive director of the Association of Metropolitan School Districts.

He supports the bill not because he thinks Minnesota has enough counselors, but because the law creates a "disincentive" to hire counselors.

"I am not aware of one of those positions that was hired with that money, and the reason is simple," said Croonquist. "Because when the money went away they would have

to use their dwindling resources to fill that in."

Rep. Linda Slocum (DFL-Richfield), an eighth-grade teacher, said the issue is not about numbers, but about kids.

"Tim," she said, referring to a student, "I told him his father had been murdered."

"My favorite student took four bullets to the head," she continued. "My Hmong girls

"The counselor, the psychiatrist, psychologists, the school nurse does a whole lot of counseling. And a lot of kids spend a lot of time in the nurse's office because they've got a hangnail and they need to talk to somebody. But these are valuable resources."

— Rep. Linda Slocum
DFL-Richfield

were married at 14, and then came back to school — some. My Hmong boys were in gangs. The counselor, the psychiatrist, psychologists, the school nurse does a whole lot of counseling. And a lot of kids

spend a lot of time in the nurse's office because they've got a hangnail and they need to talk to somebody. But these are valuable resources."

"Please maintain the effort," she said.

Counselors develop another model

Moe understands the requirement is a burden on some school districts.

"It's a very good argument," he said. "It's unfortunate. ... It's like you're pitting the good against the good. You've got the school board who wants the best for kids, the administration, who wants the best, and so do the teachers and counselors."

Moe and other counselors are spearheading a new model of service delivery and peer support through the School Counseling Service Center at the Adler Graduate School in Richfield. Amy Wojciechowski, the center's coordinator, said one goal is to provide more preventive services earlier in students' lives. They're creating packages of contract counseling services they plan to market to schools, including charter, elementary and alternative learning centers traditionally underserved by counselors. The grant-funded project includes a pilot at Highland Park Elementary School in St. Paul that shows great promise, Wojciechowski said.

In the meantime, counselors continue to juggle students' personal, social and academic needs.

"It's about a triage situation," said Moe. "Maybe the philosophy about this should be, we don't want a mandate, but as a bare minimum, it's just a civil safety standard."



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HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY 27 - FEBRUARY 3, 2011

Editor's note: The following Highlights are coverage of select information heard in House committees and other House activities held Jan. 27- Feb. 3. Designations used in Highlight summaries: HF-House File; SF-Senate File; Ch-Chapter; and *- the bill version considered by the House or the bill language signed by the governor.

Bonding

Dayton's project list is too big

Gov. Mark Dayton's proposal to spend \$1 billion on capital investment projects received a less than lukewarm reception from House Capital Investment Committee leadership.

Rep. Larry Howes (R-Walker), the committee chairman, said the governor's list goes beyond what the state can afford; but he would not rule out a small bonding bill this year "for emergency purposes." Instead of bringing out the state's "credit card," he would like to divert financial commitments from previously bonded projects that have been delayed to others that can get going immediately.

"I think it is time to take a look at those and ask, 'Why haven't we done anything?' We've talked a lot about shovel-ready projects, but someone hasn't bought the shovel yet," he said.

Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul), the committee's DFL lead and former committee chairwoman, agrees with looking at the former project list. She would like to see projects that she championed get a go-ahead, and she is unhappy with some of the priorities Dayton proposes to fund.

"There was only a very small amount for transit in the state. There is no money for public housing at a time when we have a lot of homeless on the street, and a great need for affordable housing. He has the traditional flood mitigation, but as far as I can tell no money for flood prevention," she said.

Dayton laid out \$531 million in projects that are "shovel-ready, paint and repair projects" that would provide approximately 28,000 private sector jobs. He said that, "in keeping with a hand of cooperation," he has left nearly half of the bonding dollars for the legislative allocation.

Included in his proposal is:

- \$51.33 million for a new physics and

nanotechnology building at the University of Minnesota's Minneapolis campus;

- \$30 million for asset preservation and maintenance for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system;
- \$28 million for Department of Natural Resources designated flood mitigation;
- \$28 million to renovate and expand the Mayo Civic Center complex in Rochester; and
- \$20 million for a new St. Paul Saints stadium in downtown St. Paul.

By bonding standards, the bill's size is more typical for the second year of the biennium; however, Dayton said there is an immediate need to get people in the construction sector back to work.

"This is a bipartisan approach to putting people back to work. ... I would anticipate this would be the major bonding bill of the biennium," he said.

However, Howes said these projects are "candy" in a budget year, and said the House will begin looking at projects after the governor releases his plan to resolve the state's projected \$6.2 billion deficit on Feb. 15.

— L. SCHUTZ



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

At a Jan. 31 news conference, Gov. Mark Dayton, left, announces a \$1 billion bonding proposal for projects around the state. Others attending the news conference include, from left, Rochester Mayor Ardele Brede; Dr. Robert Hoerr, co-founder of Nanopoeia, Inc.; Kristin Hanson, Minnesota Management & Budget assistant commissioner for Debt Management and Treasury; and Jim Schowalter, MMB Commissioner.

Business & Commerce

Bank needs exemption to expand

An independently owned bank based in Winger wants to expand, but first its vice president had to come down to St. Paul to seek an exemption from a 40-year-old state law.

Ultima Bank Minnesota Senior Vice President Bruce Meade told the House Commerce and Regulatory Reform Committee Feb. 2 that the bank would like to expand its loan production office in Northern Township into a full-service bank branch.

However, state law prevents a bank from locating a branch in a township.

Rep. John Persell (DFL-Bemidji) sponsors HF305, which would allow the exemption.

Rep. Tim O'Driscoll (R-Sartell) asked whether the township, which is just outside Bemidji city limits, had considered annexation instead of "having to incur the time and expense of legislation for this."

Meade said the bank is in an area with an annexation plan that is 10 years away from implementation. The bank holds a lease, so it lacks the ability of a property owner to request annexation.

Citing a distant family relationship with Meade, Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston) recused himself from the vote to approve the bill. It goes next to the House Government Operations and Elections Committee.

A companion, SF125, sponsored by Sen. John Carlson (R-Bemidji), awaits action on the Senate floor.

— K. BERGGREN

Education

Data driving education policy

Should your preschooler's alphabet awareness be tracked by the state? How about whether you attend parent-teacher conferences or volunteer at your child's school? Should a fourth-grade teacher's student test scores be front page news?

Minnesota is very good at collecting educational data, two experts told the House Education Reform Committee Feb. 1, and the state's data collection capacity is growing all the time. No action was taken.

Data collection has great potential to drive education decisions, but it's important for policymakers to determine how information is used, by whom and for what purpose,

said Cathy Wagner, director of information technologies at the Education Department, and Aimee Rogstad Guidera, executive director of Data Quality Campaign, a national nonprofit based in Minnesota.

Wagner presented plans to use a \$12.4 million grant received July 1, 2010, from the Institute of Educational Sciences to increase the department's "interoperable" capacity to collect, analyze and report data from early childhood, P-20 Education Partnership and the departments of Labor and Industry, and Employment and Economic Development.

A 2006 grant from the institute funded the P-12 Longitudinal Data System, which stores a wealth of information about student, teacher and school performance, enrollment and demographics from preschool through secondary education.

"What is the overall goal of collecting all of this information?" said Rep. Bob Barrett (R-Shafer). Of all the factors that lead to a quality education, the two most critical are parent involvement and teacher quality, he said.

Wagner said lots of information about teacher effectiveness is being collected and new teacher assessments being designed.

Guidera said data should be used not as a "hammer," but as a "flashlight," to help policymakers and educators make best use of information, empower parents and help teachers improve their practice.

"For so long in education, we have collected so much information and it's been useless," Guidera said. She urged policymakers to "take the next step" and change the culture of how information is used to influence behavior and decisions. Otherwise, "it's just a bunch of data sitting in a data warehouse in files over there, and it doesn't make a difference."

— K. BERGGREN

Elections

Doing more with less

Secretary of State Mark Ritchie said his office has been doing more with less in recent years, but that making budget cuts could be tricky going forward.

"Learning how to maintain a very high level of customer service while knowing we're going to have fewer staff to do that is our focus," Ritchie said.

Ritchie told the House State Government

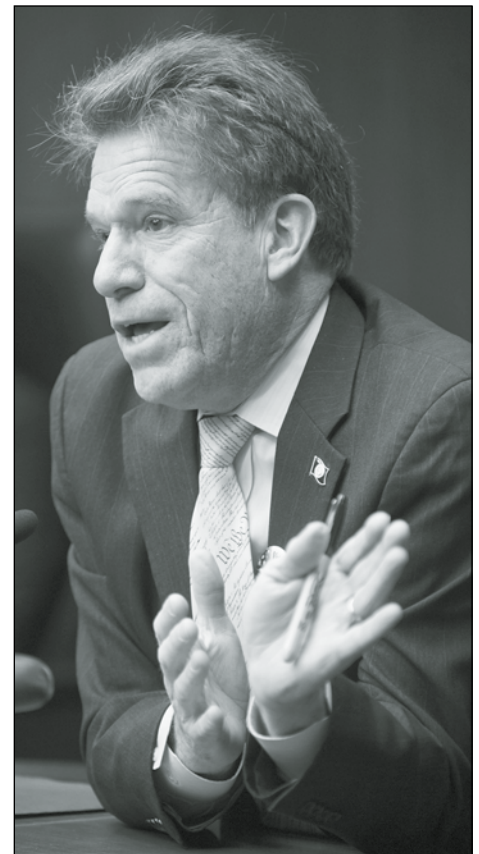


PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Secretary of State Mark Ritchie answers a question from a member of the House State Government Finance Committee Feb. 2 during a committee overview of the Office of the Secretary of State.

Finance Committee Feb. 2 that his office is using technology to ensure its quality of service is not diminished by several recent budget reductions. The problem, he said, is that the cuts tend to fall largely on the office's business services section.

The Office of the Secretary of State is perhaps best known for administering Minnesota's elections; however, it also registers all the state's business organizations and provides several other services. Ritchie said the federal Help America Vote Act prohibits the state from reducing its spending on elections.

Ritchie said 60 percent of the office's budget is devoted to business services, and that demand for those services is on the rise. He said making certain kinds of business filings electronic has eased pressures on the staff, but technology can't solve every issue.

"We will be able to automate a number of things, but the necessity of someone to be there on the phone to answer a question ... will remain," he said.

Moreover, Ritchie said a number of the office's approximately 69 employees

are nearing retirement age, and Ritchie wants to keep them around long enough to transfer some of their knowledge to younger employees.

"We need to organize our cutting and reduction and all of these with an eye toward the generational shift in our agencies," Ritchie said.

Committee members took no action.

— N. BUSSE

Testimony taken on voter ID bills

All Minnesotans would be required to show a government-issued photo ID card before voting, under a pair of bills laid over Feb. 3 by a House committee.

HF89, sponsored by Rep. Mike Benson (R-Rochester), and HF210, sponsored by Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer (R-Big Lake), would require voters to produce photo identification at their polling place before receiving a ballot. Kiffmeyer's bill also provides for electronic polling place rosters and would make various other changes to election statutes.

Members of the House Government Operations and Elections Committee took public testimony on the bills, but laid them over without acting on them. Chairwoman Joyce Peppin (R-Rogers) said a committee vote is planned for Feb. 8.

Both bills are modeled after an Indiana law requiring photo ID at the polls. They would eliminate the state's voucher system, where voters who cannot provide the appropriate

documentation can be vouched for to register to vote, and provide for a provisional balloting system for registered voters who cannot produce their photo IDs.

Supporters said the bills would improve the integrity of the state's elections, and cited polls that show broad public support for a requirement. Benson said requiring a photo ID would boost the public's confidence in election results.

"Letting people vote without a photo ID creates the ideal conditions for fraud," Benson said. "It is in fact very easy to impersonate someone if you don't have to prove who you are."

Opponents argued the bill would wrongfully discriminate against senior citizens, students, disabled voters and those who frequently change residences. They argued a provision to supply free photo ID cards to voters who can't afford another state-issued ID would not help those who have limited mobility and resources to obtain them.

"There's no question that these bills will disenfranchise thousands of senior citizens," said a 94-year-old Mary Lou Hill, a member of the League of Women Voters.

Rep. Ryan Winkler (DFL-Golden Valley) likened the bills' photo ID requirement to a "poll tax" that created obstacles to voting for specific groups of people.

Neither bill has a Senate companion.

— N. BUSSE

Employment

Interns exempted from unions

Under current law, public employees covered by collective bargaining agreements may be required to either join a union or pay a "fair share" fee. An exemption is made for full-time students under age 22 who are employed in temporary employment lasting 100 days or less — i.e. interns.

But more interns are older students and Rep. Mike Beard (R-Shakopee) sponsors HF212 that would remove the age limit for the exemption.

The House Government Operations and Elections Committee approved the bill Feb. 2 and sent it to the House floor.

Beard said the bill "recognizes that real-life work experience as internships are becoming an increasingly important component of all students' work history, not just the traditional students."

Rep. Mike Nelson (DFL-Brooklyn Park) expressed concern the bill could be used to replace union employees with interns who aren't covered by collective bargaining agreements. But Beard said the bill is not a ploy to get around union membership.

"It will have no significant effect on unions or collective bargaining," Beard said.

Minnesota Inter-County Association Executive Director Keith Carlson said he



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Interest in a bill that would require voters to show a photo identification before receiving a ballot created a lot of commotion and a standing-room only crowd in the hearing room where the House Government Operations and Elections Committee heard the bill Feb. 3.

supports the bill, and noted that many workers in their 30s, 40s and 50s are seeking internships nowadays.

"It's a long overdue update ... to acknowledge the realities of the current workplace," Carlson said.

Sen. Claire Robling (R-Jordan) sponsors the companion, SF134, which awaits action by the Senate State Government Innovation and Veterans Committee.

— N. BUSSE

Energy

Next Gen Act changes approved

A bipartisan law passed in 2007 that seeks to reduce carbon emissions is set on the path to being repealed.

The House Commerce and Regulatory Reform Committee is the next stop for a bill that would repeal a portion of the Next Generation Energy Act and allow Minnesota utilities to produce or purchase new coal-generated electricity.

Sponsored by Rep. Mike Beard (R-Shakopee), HF72 was approved 11-6 by the House Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Policy and Finance Committee Feb. 1.

Members debated the merits of reopening the door to coal-generated electricity.

"It seems that repeal is reform. Why not mend it rather than end it," asked Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul).

Rep. Andrew Falk (DFL-Murdock) said he didn't see the need to change current law because it allows the Public Utilities Commission to make exceptions. Beard said he regrettably voted for the Next Generation Energy Act because he was told there were such "off-ramps," but instead the law became nebulous as written.

"Were asking (the PUC) to make some really big calls on behalf of the state. I would submit to you that that is our job," Beard said.

Emissions of mercury from coal plants also rose to the surface.

Rep. Duane Quam (R-Byron) said new generation coal plants have reduced mercury emissions considerably. He compared regulated coal plants' mercury emissions to CFL light bulbs sold to consumers that may end up in landfills or harm the environment and people if the bulb accidentally breaks.

Sen. Julie Rosen (R-Fairmont) sponsors a companion, SF86. It awaits action by the Senate Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

BIKER DAY

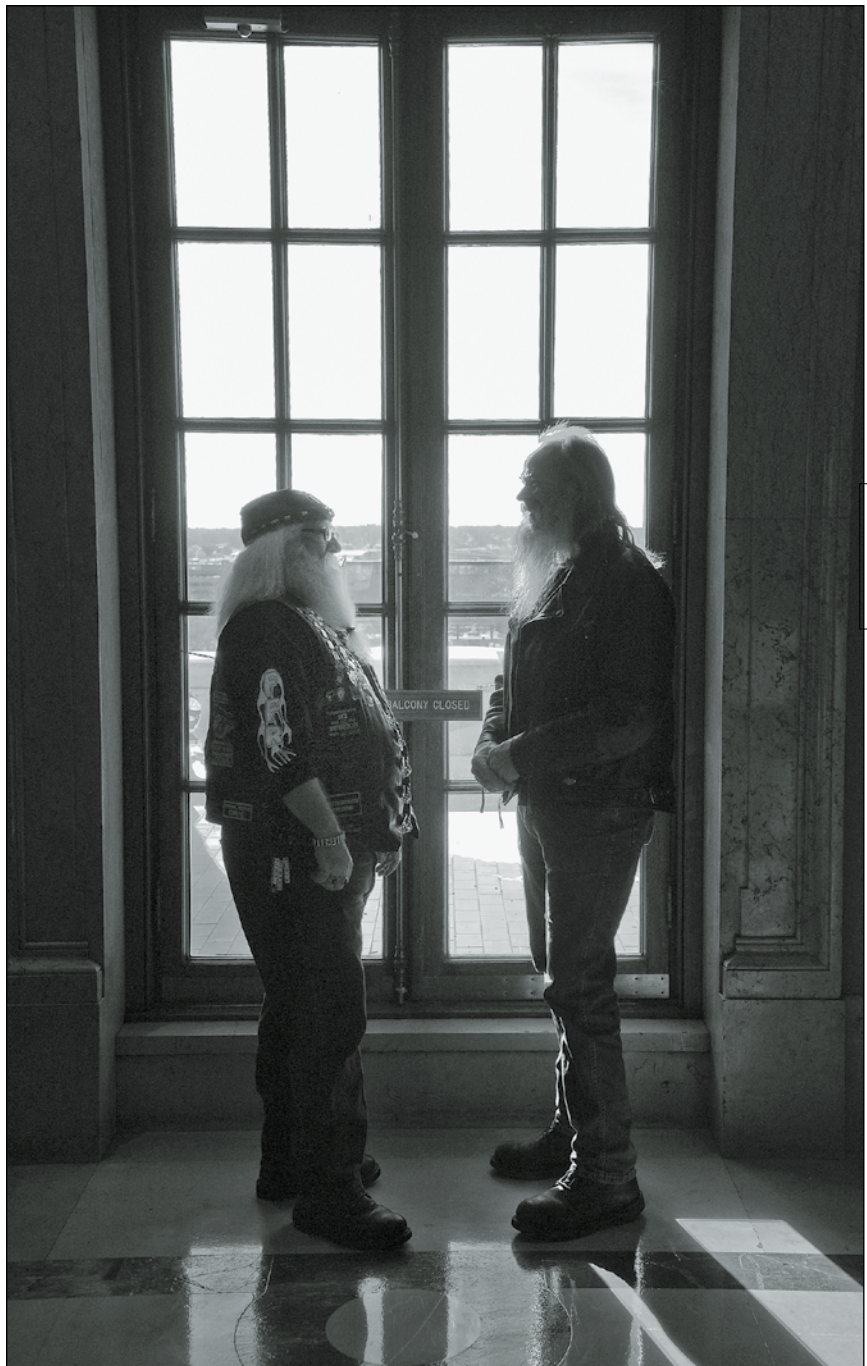


PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Howie "Santa" Ogaard, left, and Tom Gerard of the Freedom First Riders from Alexandria stop briefly in front of one of the French doors on the second floor of the Capitol Feb. 2 before moving on to meet with their senator. Earlier in the day, their group met with Rep. Torrey Westrom to show support for a bill that would increase the penalty for careless driving resulting in death. The bill was approved last week by the House Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy and Finance Committee and awaits action by the House Judiciary Policy and Finance Committee.

Env. & Natural Resources

Aquatic invasive species concerns

Legislation is being drafted within the Department of Natural Resources to more

effectively manage and prevent aquatic invasive species.

One recommendation being considered is to increase the \$5 surcharge that boaters pay every three years at registration. Non-residents currently pay \$2.

Luke Skinner, DNR invasive species supervisor, told the House Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Policy and Finance Committee Feb. 2 that 95 percent of aquatic invasive species are moved from place to place because of human interaction, such as not draining ballast water or failing to remove plants from boats and trailers. The committee took no action.

The number of tickets issued for transporting invasive species increased from 57 in 2009 to 159 in 2010. Skinner said 350 warnings were issued last year to 17 percent of boaters who didn't know a new law required them to pull the drain plug.

Zebra mussels are a key management priority, although Asian carp, curly-leaf pondweed and Eurasian milfoil also pose ecological threats to water bodies. Zebra mussels can attach to any hard surface, clogging intake valves and removing the base of the aquatic food chain. High-use lakes and rivers, such as Lake Minnetonka, Gull Lake, and the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers are infected, Skinner said.

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) suggested requiring people to vouch that they had read AIS prevention materials before receiving their registration. "People take things more seriously when they have to sign," she said.

Rep. Paul Torkelson (R-Nelson Township) asked Skinner about tiered pricing for licenses. Those who trailer boats from lake to lake would pay more than those who dock at the same lake all season, so the greater burden is on those most at risk of spreading an invasive species.

The sheer number of state water bodies makes solutions involving enforcement or monitoring extremely costly, Skinner said.

Rep. David Hancock (R-Bemidji) suggested a volunteer corps as a pilot project to educate others at boat ramps.

Surcharge funds currently are used for radio and television announcements, billboards, fishing and boating handbooks, and school curriculums.

— S. HEGARTY

Health & Human Services

A response to oncoming changes

Minnesota should begin now to protect consumers as the new federal health care law is implemented.

Stephen Parente, a professor of finance at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management, told the House

Health and Human Services Reform Committee Feb. 1 the state should build its own insurance exchange that would include elements required by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act for sharing certain personal data. Consumers could opt out of sharing information, but could pay a much higher premium. Minnesota could be a leader for other states to follow in creating the exchange by 2013, Parente said.

"We have a tradition of leading," said Rep. Erin Murphy (DFL-St. Paul). "Much of what is in the affordable care act looks a lot like what we've already been working on in Minnesota."

Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth) questioned Parente's suggestion of a high-deductible health plan for people with chronic diseases.

"The research that I've done looking at folks with chronic conditions that are in the insured population that are having high deductible health plans suggests that they are not being hurt by that design," Parente responded. If there are those in need who need to be fiscally covered, they could be put in a separate pool in a needs-based plan, he said.

Parente said the new law would add to the federal deficit by \$287 billion through various measures, including expanding Medicaid to certain adults.

He noted additional costs of the enactment could be passed onto consumers through individual and small group premiums that could increase at a minimum 8 percent per year. For instance, he projects that a health care package that currently costs \$11,770 could increase to \$21,639 by 2019.

— P. OSTBERG

A Mayo health perspective

Minnesota could create a single statewide health care exchange to help control increasing health care costs for all Minnesotans, according Dr. Douglas Wood, cardiologist and vice chairman of Mayo Clinic's health care policy and research.

Wood presented Feb. 2 to the House Health and Human Services Reform Committee the proposal for an exchange that could be publicly and privately shared, and would consist of individually owned insurance not dependent on an employer and that would handle all enrollment and eligibility for Medicaid and other public programs.

He said health care spending is growing faster than the economy can support and patients aren't getting value for what they spend on health care. "The costs of family

Watch the State of the State address online

House Speaker Kurt Zellers (R-Maple Grove) has appointed five members to escort Gov. Mark Dayton to the House Chamber to deliver his State of the State address.

The members are: Rep. Marion Greene (DFL-Mpls), Rep. Tara Mack (R-Apple Valley), Rep. Carolyn McElfrick (R-Deer River), Rep. Rich Murray (R-Albert Lea) and Rep. Kim Norton (DFL-Rochester).

Dayton's speech is scheduled to be delivered during a joint session of the Minnesota State Legislature, Wednesday, Feb. 9, at noon.

It can be watched live on the House website, www.house.mn and statewide on public television's MN Channel.

coverage have more than doubled since 2006."

Another issue is that government reimburses for certain procedures, rather than using a less costly method. Under current Medicaid reimbursement rates, Wood said, as a cardiologist, he is reimbursed a greater amount for bypass surgery rather than a regiment of prescription medication for a patient. The federal government "makes rationing decisions every day," but the key to reform is making rational health decisions instead, he said.

The advantages of an exchange could include affordable insurance for families, predictable costs for businesses and state government and plans could concentrate on developing long-range relationships and delivery systems that produce better results at a lower cost, Wood said. Additionally, provider reimbursement rates could be based on whether a physician shared medical options with a patient.

Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka) said the proposal is something that he could support.

The proposal has "principles we can all agree on," said Rep. Larry Hosch (DFL-St. Joseph). He hopes the committee can come up with a proposal before the end of session.

— P. OSTBERG

Military & Vet. Affairs

Vets camp seeks \$500,000 grant

A camp for disabled military veterans on Big Marine Lake in Washington County gained division approval Jan. 31 for a \$500,000 state grant to make needed upgrades.

Sponsored by Rep. Bob Dettmer (R-Forest

Lake), HF105 returns to the House State Government Finance Committee after its approval by the House Veterans Services Division.

Started in 1926, the Disabled Veterans Rest Camp was designed to aid in the recovery of shell-shocked and battle-fatigued World War I and World War II soldiers. It currently helps veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder reconnect with their families in a supportive camping environment. It is not open to the general public.

The money would be used to build a storm shelter to protect campers during severe weather; to improve access for the disabled; and to upgrade the cabins built in the 1930s, according to Al Mitchell, camp president and chairman.

The camp would be required to raise a minimum of \$100,000 to qualify for the matching grant. It received some state funding four years ago, but does not currently receive state money. "The main emphasis now is on safety. There's no place for these campers to get out of the way of a storm," Dettmer said.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) urged members to examine whether the camp would be eligible for Clean Water, Land and Legacy funding. Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston) agreed, saying it would be a terrible mistake to take General Fund dollars if the project were eligible for Legacy funding.

Dettmer said the camp's classification as a private camp likely prohibits its eligibility for Legacy money.

Sen. Ray Vandeveer (R-Forest Lake) sponsors the companion, SF128, which awaits action by the Senate State Government Innovation and Veterans Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

Public Safety

Level II offenders on web

The public could have better access to know if a predatory offender is living in their area.

Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Good Thunder) sponsors HF151, which would add Level II offenders to a Department of Corrections' website that lists Level III offenders.

Approved Jan. 27 by the House Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy and Finance Committee, the bill was sent to the House Civil Law Committee. It has no Senate companion.

"I consider Level II sex offenders to be pretty serious offending folk, and there's a pretty good chance they'll offend again," Cornish said.

According to the Corrections Department risk level assessment, Level III offenders are considered the most likely to reoffend, while Level II offenders are considered a moderate risk.

A full fiscal note has been requested, but according to nonpartisan House Fiscal Analysis, a preliminary fiscal note indicates a \$220,000 price tag for an additional four full-time equivalent positions to monitor offenders and some software upgrades.

Bill Donnay, director for the Corrections Department Risk Assessment/Community Notification Unit, said that as of Jan. 1, 2011, there were 6,941 individuals in the state assigned a risk level: 1,066 Level III; 1,780 Level II; and 4,095 Level I. He said only about 1,100 to 1,200 Level II offenders would go on a potential website because the rest are incarcerated and a few have been civilly committed.

Teresa Nelson, legal counsel for the ACLU of Minnesota, spoke against the bill. She said the bill could violate a constitutional right of being free from after-the-fact punishment. That happened in Alaska.

"Another factor that the court noted in deciding that Internet postings were unconstitutional punishment under Alaska's constitution is that it exposes registrants through aggressive notification of their crime to profound humiliation and community-wide ostracism, and that the practical effect of Internet dissemination is that it leaves open the possibility that the registrant will be denied employment and having opportunity," she said.

— M. COOK

Recreation & Tourism

Stadium debate begins

On Dec. 12, a severe winter storm caused the roof of the 28-year-old Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome to collapse.

Officials from the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission appeared before the House Government Operations and Elections Committee Feb. 2 to discuss the aging home to the Minnesota Vikings and a possible replacement facility. No action was taken.

Commission Chairman Ted Mondale said engineers are still trying to determine



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Ted Mondale, chairman of the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission, speaks to the House Government Operations and Elections Committee Feb. 2 about the Metrodome and the Minnesota Vikings need for a new facility.

whether the roof will have to be repaired or replaced.

"The top issue driving what we will do ... will be making sure that facility is a safe place," he said.

The Minnesota Vikings' lease with the Metrodome expires later this year. Mondale said he hopes a deal can be reached this year on public funding to build a new stadium.

"I think probably the largest change from a year ago is that we actually have a governor who ... said he would support the building of a new stadium," Mondale said.

In addition to hosting professional football games, the Metrodome hosts more than 300 "community events" annually, ranging from high school sports tournaments to monster truck rallies. Rep. Ryan Winkler (DFL-Golden Valley) said any new stadium design should allow for a similar public benefit. He said the facility needs to include a roof that would accommodate events year-round.

"It seems to me that if this is a public benefit to the state, it needs a roof," Winkler said.

Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL-Mpls) voiced concerns about what the public's share would be of the funding. He asked whether the Vikings could pay two-thirds or even three-

quarters of the total cost, rather than the state paying that much.

Mondale said it was unlikely that the team would agree to pay such a high percentage. He said private funding accounted for roughly one-third of the cost of building Target Field, and suggested that might be a good starting point for a new Vikings stadium, too.

— N. BUSSE

Taxes

Taxes and poor business climate

Not only is Minnesota's corporate tax rate among the highest in the nation, but it tops Japan, putting the state at a competitive disadvantage.

Scott Hodge, president of the Tax Foundation, gave the sobering news to the House Taxes Committee Feb. 1, and urged them to consider reducing both the state's income and corporate tax rates, and replacing them with a broader sales tax. No action was taken.

"Minnesota has adopted a Neiman Marcus corporate income tax when you need Walmart tax pricing," he said.

Not only does the current system make the state less attractive to new businesses, he said the burden of corporate taxes passes through as higher prices and lower worker wages. He encouraged lawmakers to "get to tax reform as soon as possible" and look at broadening the sales tax rate.

Rep. Ann Lenczewski (DFL-Bloomington) agreed that the state's corporate and income tax structures are out of line, particularly as other states move to make their systems more business friendly.

"A little less than half of all our revenue is from the corporate and income tax. How would a state throw out half of its revenue stream without converting to a much more regressive system? This would only leave consumption taxes," she said.

Hodge argued against raising income taxes because it would hit entrepreneurs. "You are essentially telling them to go someplace else."

From a purely economic perspective, income taxes are far more harmful for economic growth than consumption taxes, he said. "This becomes the trade-off, and at some point you have to pick and choose."

Rep. Keith Downey (R-Edina) wanted to know if businesses are more concerned about taxes than before.

SPECIAL TOUR



PHOTO BY KRISTIN SCHUE

Preschoolers from 4 Star Express got a special tour of the Capitol Feb. 2 with the guidance of House Speaker Kurt Zellers. The speaker's son, Will, second from right, who attends the school, is waiting with his classmates to meet Gov. Mark Dayton while wearing their State Capitol hats.

"The answer to that is a clear yes," Hodge said. "That's because capital is more mobile than it ever has been, while people aren't." He explained that it is easier for a company to open a factory where it will have lower costs than for people to move to the job.

Founded in 1937, the mission of the foundation is to educate taxpayers about sound tax policy.

— L. SCHUTZ

Division approves military tax relief

After 20 years of service, military personnel are eligible to retire.

A pair of bills approved by the House Veterans Services Division Jan. 31 would offer varying degrees of tax incentives aimed at attracting those military retirees, who often look for a place to start a second career, buy a home and spend their military retirement pay. The division approved both bills and referred them to the House Taxes Committee.

Minnesota is one of only six states that tax military pension incomes. Bill proponents said this deters many highly skilled, disciplined and entrepreneurial veterans from returning to the state or relocating here.

Sponsored by Rep. Lyle Koenen (DFL-Clara City), HF15 would allow veterans to subtract up to \$6,000 of their military retirement pay from their income taxes beginning with their 2011 taxes. To be eligible, the veteran must

have served honorably for 20 or more years. National Guard or reserve personnel who have earned credit for 20 or more years would become eligible for the tax relief when they retire, typically at age 60. Sen. Gary Kubby (DFL-Granite Falls) sponsors the companion, SF74, which awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

Rep. Bob Dettmer (R-Forest Lake) sponsors HF82, which takes a phased-in approach for reducing the income tax for military retirement pay. Beginning with the 2011 taxable year, retired veterans would see a 20 percent reduction in their military income taxes. That amount would increase to 35 percent in 2012 and 55 percent in 2013 taxable years.

In 2014, if the number of retired veterans claiming the tax break is at least 1,000 greater than the number claimed in 2011, the phase-in rate would increase each year until 75 percent of their military retirement pay is not taxable. Ultimately, if the number of veterans receiving the tax break reaches 2,000 more than those who claim it in 2011, then 100 percent of military retirement pay would not be subject to state income taxes.

A companion, SF41, sponsored by Sen. Ted Daley (R-Eagan), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

Former Rep. Dan Severson told members that, in a state-by-state comparison,

Minnesota should have about 32,000 retired military living here, but there are only an estimated 15,000.

"We should be bringing in half a million just from pensions," Severson said. Military retirees are highly mobile and do their research. One of the first things they are told when exiting military life is which states would tax their pension, Severson said.

— S. HEGARTY

VFW tax exemption moves forward

In many rural communities a VFW or American Legion post serves more than area veterans. Part of a community's social fabric, its building offers a place for wedding receptions, birthday parties and lawful gambling for local charities, according to Rep. Tom Anzelc (DFL-Balsam Township).

"I am really concerned about losing these facilities," said Anzelc, who sponsors HF99 that would exempt qualifying veterans' organizations from paying property taxes.

The House Veterans Services Division approved the bill Jan. 31 and referred it to the House State Government Finance Committee with a recommended referral to the House Taxes Committee. There is no Senate companion.

The economic downturn and the organizations' dwindling memberships contribute to declining receipts, and that leaves fewer charitable dollars for the community as well, Anzelc said.

Current law allows service organizations to take property tax deductions if their charitable donations are equal to their property taxes. If adopted, HF99 would supersede current law.

Rep. Tim O'Driscoll (R-Sartell) was reluctant to absolve the organizations of property taxes on larger tracts of unused land.

"I'm most concerned about the building, the post which includes the social portion of the veterans' organization. Excess property would definitely have to be addressed," Anzelc said.

— S. HEGARTY

Tax collectors too aggressive?

State tax collectors have become more aggressive about pursuing uncollected revenue from individuals and businesses, a state official said.

Acting Commissioner Dan Salomone said the Revenue Department has seen a "dramatic shift" in recent years toward

"compliance initiatives" that seek to return more revenue through audits and enforcement actions. He said the department has done so at the direction of the Legislature and the governor's office.

"By and large, the department has shifted to a more aggressive stance on auditing and collecting," Salomone said.

He and other revenue officials gave an overview of the department's operations to members of the House State Government Finance Committee Feb. 1. No action was taken.

Beginning in the 2002-2003 fiscal biennium, the department has undertaken a series of tax compliance initiatives to capture uncollected revenues by boosting the department's audit and collection staff. For example, the department spent \$9.7 million in fiscal years 2002-2003 and was able to return \$97.2 million in revenue — a 10:1 return on investment.

Over several years, however, the ratio has decreased. In the current fiscal biennium, a \$10.4 million compliance effort is projected to return only \$41.5 million. Moreover, Salomone said some taxpayers have complained that the department is now being too heavy-handed.

"As we get relatively more aggressive in our compliance activity, we run the risk of pitting revenue goals against customer service," he said.

Rep. King Banaian (R-St. Cloud) suggested the compliance initiatives might have "gone too far" in interfering with businesses ability to be productive. But Rep. Steve Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park) defended the practice, noting that many compliance actions are initiated by individuals and businesses claiming inappropriate deductions.

— N. BUSSE

Transportation

A bridge to honor Arianna

On June 16, 2006, 7-year-old Arianna Macnamara was on a bike ride with her family.

The pedestrian path they were riding on along one side of Highway 14 stopped, forcing riders to continue their trek on the other side of the highway.

Drivers in three of the four lanes stopped to let the bikers cross.

"Somebody who was not paying attention went through and collided with Arianna Macnamara, who was crossing there," said Rochester City Councilman Michael Wojcik. "She unfortunately passed away shortly thereafter."

Sponsored by Rep. Tina Liebling (DFL-Rochester), HF93 would designate the new pedestrian bridge over Highway 14 the "Arianna Celeste Macnamara Memorial Bridge." The bill was held over Feb. 2 by the House Transportation Policy and Finance Committee for possible omnibus bill inclusion. However, Committee Chairman Michael Beard (R-Shakopee) said if no omnibus bill is put together, he'd seek to move the bill forward on its own.

A companion, SF188, sponsored by Sen. David Senjem (R-Rochester), awaits action by the Senate Transportation Committee.

Already open, the three-quarter-mile pedestrian bridge will eventually connect the Douglas State Trail, one the most heavily used bicycle trails in the state, to downtown Rochester. "As a city council, we discussed this and unanimously decided it would be appropriate to name this bridge in honor of this young girl," Wojcik said. He said the family was on board with the idea, and her little brother cut the ribbon on the bridge dedication.

However, Wojcik said state approval is needed to put some state-approved, privately funded signage along the highway, and it needs to be officially dedicated by both the state and the city.

— M. COOK

Websites To Note

House of Representatives: www.house.mn

Senate: www.senate.mn

Legislative home page: www.leg.mn

Governor's office: mn.gov/governor/

State Government: www.state.mn.us

Find out who represents you:

www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/Districtfinder.asp

Legislative meeting schedule:

www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/hinfosched.asp

Frequently called numbers

Area code 651

House Public Information Services 296-2146

Toll-free 800-657-3550

Chief Clerk of the House 296-2314

House Index 296-6646

Senate Information 296-0504

Toll-free 888-234-1112

Secretary of the Senate 296-2344

Voice mail/order bills 296-2343

Senate Index 296-5560

Repeal of Green Acres

The issue: 'A farm is a farm is a farm'

By SUE HEGARTY

Farmers in Chisago County are clear-cutting their land to avoid paying higher tax rates as a result of 2008 changes to the Green Acres tax laws.

Green Acres is financially benefitting land speculators who buy farmland, only to resell it to developers for a profit; meanwhile, the rest of the taxpayers in the district must assume the tax debt the investor avoided.

These are some of the issues prompting legislators to again retool the Green Acres law. The House Agriculture and Rural Development Policy and Finance Committee is expected to hear testimony Feb. 8

before they consider amendments and vote on HF12, sponsored by Rep. Mike LeMieur (R-Little Falls). The bill was laid over Feb. 3.

"We do not want to slam this thing through. We want to get it in the best shape that we can," said Committee Chairman Rod Hamilton (R-Mountain Lake).

Green Acres is a tax equalization program. Its original intent was to allow farmers to

continue farming and not be taxed off their land. Isanti County farmer Ron Drude remembers helping craft the initial law in the 1960s when utilities cut through Wright

County farms. The development increased land assessments, which became payable when they sold the land.

A 2008 report by the Office of the Legislative Auditor found several problems with the program. In some instances, the tax benefit was applied to wetlands and hunting and recreation land, and the program had morphed into unintended consequences. So legislators that year created a

rural preserve program whereby non-productive land, or untilled farmland, would be classified as rural vacant land. They applied a 10-year covenant and required a conservation plan. Three years of back taxes were due at the time the land was sold.

Hence, the reason farmers are cutting down tree stands and converting them to tillable soil.

Farmers voluntarily enroll

and once enrolled, the program cuts property taxes in half, or three-fold in some instances.

Now legislators want to remove the covenant restrictions and the need to do

a conservation plan. But that leaves the three-year tax payback, which may not deter land speculators from gobbling up prime farmland for development, according to Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul). He'd like to see the tax penalty raised to five years for any new program enrollees. Previous participants would be grandfathered in at the three-year requirement.

"With removing the covenant one of the concerns we have is there could be unintended consequences in terms of what happens," Hansen said. "People could be getting into the land business whose intent is not to be protecting the farmland, but for banking that land."

But Rep. Paul Anderson (R-Starbuck) opposed raising it to five years.

"The average age of farmers is 58-60. He may want to retire and sell. I think five years is too long," Anderson said.

Realtors and assessors agree with Anderson, but for a different reason. They'd rather keep the law simple by having one uniform payback period for everyone, regardless of when they entered the program.

When the two-tiered classification system was created, determination of what is farmland was left to county assessors; therefore, there are discrepancies statewide. Farmers who use conservation methods on their land, such as wetlands or tree stands feel penalized by the two-tiered tax rate. Drude would like to see the program return to just one classification.

"A farm is a farm is a farm and trying to chop it up into pieces of a, b, c and d isn't necessarily helpful to the farmer," he said.

Absent from the two days of testimony were property owners whose taxes were raised as a result of their neighbors enrollment in the Green Acres program. In 2009, Green Acres shifted an estimated \$55 million to taxpayers who live near land enrolled in the program.

The Senate Taxes Committee has not taken action on the companion bill, SF37, sponsored by Sen. Paul Gazelka (R-Brainerd).



"The average age of farmers is 58-60. He may want to retire and sell. I think five years is too long."

— Rep. Paul Anderson
R-Starbuck



"People could be getting into the land business whose intent is not to be protecting the farmland, but for banking that land."

— Rep. Rick Hansen
DFL-South St. Paul

A healthier Minnesota

Long-term savings the goal of statewide improvement plan

BY PATTY OSTBERG

Minnesota House and Senate members and staff are entering into a voluntary weight-loss competition they hope will encourage all Minnesotans to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Encouraging statewide lifestyle changes falls in the footsteps of Minnesota's Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) that was signed into law in 2008.

Health Commissioner Dr. Edward Ehlinger told the House Health and Human Services Reform Committee Jan. 25 the \$47 million initiative is based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Steps Program. From 2003 to 2009, 40 community programs were implemented to reduce obesity, diabetes, asthma and other health risks.

"(The CDC's program) has shown to be effective in ways of addressing chronic illnesses and changing behaviors. Minnesota is the only model in the country doing the program, and has an economic model that shows you can save money," Ehlinger said.

Assistant Health Commissioner Craig Acomb said the state was looking at "9 to 10 percent annual increases in health

care costs" before SHIP launched last year.

Grants have been awarded to 53 community health boards that cover all 87 counties and eight tribal governments. Local control and decision making has proven to be a successful part of the program, said Acomb.

Even though \$47 million sounds like a significant investment, it's only \$3.83 per person that we're investing in the health of individuals here in Minnesota, Acomb said. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. ... We believe that this investment, based on the research and data, is going to produce significant savings and a healthier population."

Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth) said the initiative came from the governor's 2008 Health Care Transformation Task Force. If the Legislature had implemented all task force recommendations it "would have saved eventually 20 percent in health care costs, and half of that due to public health activities," he said.

"Big business really understands the importance of healthy behavior of their employees, and they put a lot of money into it. If they're putting money into it you can bet that they know it pays off in the long run," Huntley added.

Rep. Glenn Gruenhagen (R-Glencoe) said while the goals of the initiative are "laudable," he questioned the government's role. "Government tends to be the most expensive and inefficient way to deliver any product or service," he said, adding that sometimes results don't grow as fast as costs.

"A big part of that program is the measurement of the results," Huntley responded. "We're not just giving them money, they have to show what they are doing works."

Rep. Steve Gottwalt (R-St. Cloud) said one of the unique and strong aspects of the SHIP program is the partnering with community-based initiatives and businesses. "This is not just a state program — that was very intentional." Grassroots efforts tend to be more sustainable and have better participation rates, he added.


"We rank as one of the healthiest states, and I hope that we can continue to maintain that healthy status and improve it," Ehlinger said. "Public health is one of the best investments we could ever make." 



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

House and Senate legislators and staff are competing in a "Biggest Loser" challenge. Some exercisers use the underground Capitol Complex tunnel system to get in their daily dose of activity.

No access for all

Report says more oversight needed of state-funded non-emergency transportation

BY PATTY OSTBERG

The Department of Human Services uses contractors to help transport about 253,000 Medicaid recipients to and from health care providers as required under federal law at the cost of \$38 million in fiscal year 2010. The majority of the recipients covered tend to have more disabilities and are harder to serve than those in managed health care plans.

“Decisions about health and human service programs are some of the most important and challenging decisions being made ... human lives, families and communities are directly affected,” Legislative Auditor James Nobles told the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee Feb. 1. These programs are costly and with many government layers it becomes necessary to examine how they operate, he said.

An evaluation report released Feb. 1 shows several areas where the department is failing, including: a duplicative and confusing administrative structure; very few formal and written policies regarding how the program should be administered and how decisions are made; poor program monitoring and oversight; and hiring an outside contractor to determine program eligibility has reduced some costs, but due to data limitations, it couldn’t be determined whether the total savings outweighed the costs of hiring a contractor.

“The department welcomes this recommendation wholeheartedly,”

said Christine Reisdorf, a benefits and policy manager at the Human Services Department. “We know that the current system is confusing and inconsistent.” She said a proposal should be presented to the 2012 Legislature to address the issues.

The two major types of non-emergency transportation the state funds include access

The two major types of non-emergency transportation the state funds include access transportation and special transportation. Both get “people to and from medical appointments using the least expensive type of appropriate transportation,” but qualification depends on the level of need.

transportation and special transportation. Both get “people to and from medical appointments using the least expensive type of appropriate transportation,” but people qualify for one or the other depending on their level of need, said Jo Vos, a program

evaluation manager with the legislative auditor’s office. Some recipients flip-flop between the two types because needs change within a day, for example if they can wheel themselves into a clinic for surgery but need additional assistance after the appointment.

This can be a particular problem for Greater Minnesota.

“Outstate counties often have problems finding appropriate access transportation


providers who can transport people in motorized wheelchairs,” Vos said. But the recipient isn’t eligible for special transportation because they don’t need the assistance of a driver, which would be required, and thus denied service. When Medical Assistance recipients have appealed the service denial, judges have sometimes ruled in favor of the recipient and sometimes for the department, Vos said. Additionally, if guidelines or policies change, the department didn’t notify previously denied recipients that they may now be eligible.

Rep. Patti Fritz (DFL-Faribault) said the report “certainly does tell the story that many of us in Greater Minnesota were trying to relay. I’ve heard so many times from my drivers that would travel great distances to drop a person off, but they are not compensated when a recipient isn’t in the vehicle.”

Vos said Medical Assistance rules don’t allow payment for time a recipient isn’t in the vehicle. “That doesn’t prevent the state or the county from using money from other pots to reimburse for those ‘no load’ miles.” It’s the No. 1 problem Greater Minnesota counties have in finding people willing to drive those unpaid miles, she added.

The report recommends the department develop alternative reimbursement methods to help compensate those in Greater Minnesota where the problem is great.

While contracting has reduced certain transportation costs, the total savings are unclear, Vos said. For example, 11 counties in the Twin Cities metropolitan area took over a contract in 2009 for basically the same services the department was contracting for, resulting in about \$2 million less in administrative fees.

“Every dollar is precious when we are trying to deliver these services to people who need them and I just hope we see some real changes,” said Rep. Steve Gottwalt (R-St. Cloud). 

Leaving a legacy

Recipients report outcomes of dedicated tax appropriations

BY SUE HEGARTY

The Clean Water, Land and Legacy Act collected more than \$229.9 million in sales tax receipts during 2010, its first fiscal year.

Approved by voters in 2008, the constitutional amendment allows for a three-eighths of one percent increase in the sales tax to be appropriated annually until 2034, divided into four pots: Outdoor Heritage Fund, Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, Clean Water Fund, and the Parks and Trails Fund.

So what did Minnesotans get for their Legacy tax dollars?

Outdoor Heritage Fund

The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council and other fund administrators developed a 25-year framework for using the Legacy funds.

"So the concept is if you find a program that is achieving the objectives that you have as a council, invest in that over and over and over again so that you achieve those objectives after 25 years," said LSOHC Executive Director Bill Becker to the House Legacy Funding Division Jan. 25.

So far, 42 Outdoor Heritage projects received appropriations, including acquiring new land for conservation.

Among the outcomes, \$34 million was added to \$9 million in private funds to purchase a permanent conservation easement on 187,876 acres of the Blandin industrial forest land near Grand Rapids.

"That property probably would never have been acquired, but for the Legacy dollars," Conservation Minnesota government relations associate John Tuma said. "When we look at that effort, it will be akin to the Vermilion State Park or the Boundary Waters. It's that significant."

Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund

Projects funded by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund will be showcased during community events in several cities during Legacy Destination Weekends. Alexandria and Glenwood will be showcased Feb 11-13, offering a Polar Plunge, minnow-eating contest, a wine and chocolate tasting, candlelight skiing, guided tours of the Ann Bickle Heritage House and live theater. Future showcases include: St. Paul, Crookston, Bemidji, Lanesboro, Winona, Rochester, Park Rapids, Fergus Falls and Cook County.

"Great things in both the outdoors and the arts are happening in every corner of the state because of the Legacy Amendment and we want Minnesotans to know how they can participate," said Sheila Smith, executive director of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts.

The Minnesota History Coalition was formed after passage of the Legacy Amendment. The coalition held town hall meetings and presented its recommendations to the Legislature for appropriating 19.75 percent of the overall Legacy funds.

The Minnesota Historical Society received \$22 million, which it divided into grants, programs, projects, exhibits, archaeological surveys and a digital library. MHS awarded 474 grants to 343 organizations and all 87 counties benefitted from the ACHF funds.

The money helped train more than 5,000 history and social studies teachers. And more than 100,000 students directly benefitted from offerings funded in part by the Legacy funds, said MHS Director Michael Fox.

Another funded project is helping to preserve the Dakota language, indigenous to Minnesota. Only eight people are believed to know the nearly extinct oral language, according to Annamarie Hill-Kleinhan, executive director of the Indian Affairs Council.

When Mark Ranum, a professional library and non-profit consultant, told members about a Legacy-funded program that paid a Minnesota book author \$45,000 to speak at an Author Expo attended by 500 people, some members expressed their dissatisfaction.

Rep. Joyce Peppin (R-Rogers) said she finds the fee paid "utterly offensive." Rep. Denny McNamara (R-Hastings) and Division Chairman Dean Urdahl (R-Grove City) asked for an accounting of the amount the seven authors were paid.

Clean Water Fund

The Pollution Control Agency monitors water bodies, while the Board of Water and Soil Resources takes the PCA assessments and implements on-the-ground projects. More than \$18 million in Legacy funds was added to clean up Minnesota's streams, lakes, watersheds and groundwater.

Flood control is another mission. Water impoundment structures are being installed for the Zumbro River in Minneola Township and Goodhue County. Previous floods caused loss of life and damage to private and public property. Eight impoundment structures are expected to reduce flooding and to prevent soil erosion, according to BWSR.

Parks and Trails Fund

One strategy of the 25-year Parks and Trails Fund plan is to connect more residents with nature. Some of the ways included hiring 34 naturalists, providing camping workshops, and offering free use of equipment, such as fishing poles, binoculars and GPS units for geocaching.

The DNR also restored native plants on nearly 1,400 acres of state park land at an accelerated rate of 71 percent, fulfilling another strategy to better manage natural resources at a faster rate than in the past.



From volunteer advocate to member

Anderson now has an office in building she used to roam as activist

By **MIKE COOK**

As a family law volunteer advocate, Rep. Diane Anderson (R-Eagan) spent more than two decades in the hallways of the State Capitol and offices of elected officials.



Rep. Diane Anderson

Now, paid and unpaid lobbyists come to see Anderson.

"This is like a dream job," she said. "It's like I can't believe I'm really here. When you're trying to get legislation through, and now you can actually help. You get to have more contacts, more influence as a legislator. I can meet with judges more. I can meet with people more."

Anderson, who served two years on a Supreme Court child support and visitation task force, also served on a Department of Human Services' child support guidelines

task force. "I know what it's like to testify and line up testimony and try to work with the House and Senate to get a bill passed.

"Those experiences were really good for me because I'm not just a freshman. I know how the process works down here and it's really important to have those relationships with both sides. I feel I'll be a really good asset to my citizens because they want people who can work with the other side so we're not fighting down here."

Anderson beat former Rep. Sandra Masin by 5.4 percent to take over the seat that represents about one-third of Eagan and about one-fifth of Burnsville. Masin beat Anderson by 5.1 percent in 2008.

A mediator by trade, Anderson ran on the platform of "Common Sense Leadership for Common Sense Reform!"

"We want to reform the way government is providing services as much as we can. I

DISTRICT 38A

Population (2009 est.): 37,688

Largest City: Eagan

County: Dakota

Top Concern: Helping businesses thrive in Minnesota

think we need to look more at the outcomes of programs. Are they working?" Anderson said. "We need to try and get government out of things and move things more to the private sector."

She serves on the House Commerce and Regulatory Reform, House Health and Human Services Finance and House Judiciary Policy and Finance committees.

"Our goal is to provide great, quality service but at a lower price," she said.

Cutting through the red tape

Benson hopes to reduce bureaucracy, empower people

By **NICK BUSSE**

When Rep. Mike Benson (R-Rochester) says too many rules and regulations can get in the way of efficiency, he speaks from experience. He spent 31 years in the U.S. Postal Service, working his way up from a clerk to a district manager in Pennsylvania.



Rep. Mike Benson

"In the postal service, we had a manual for everything, and it tied both managers and employees down to not being creative in terms of getting the job done," he said.

Benson believes his experience gives him some unique insights into the inner workings of government. As a legislator, he hopes to apply that experience to help Minnesotans to innovate and be more productive.

"We need to empower folks, and the more government you have, the more restrictions you pile on them, the less empowered they are to get the job done," he said.

Benson, who now teaches business courses at Crossroads College in Rochester, has been a Republican since his first vote, which was for Gerald Ford in 1976. He finds inspiration in famous Republicans from Abraham Lincoln to Ronald Reagan. He ran for office because he believes the current crop of political leaders, both nationally and in the state, have been moving things in the wrong direction. He worries what life will look like for future generations.

"I have four grandchildren, and I want to pass on to them a quality of life that I think is better than mine, and I felt that was in jeopardy," he said.

Benson's district includes part of Rochester, but also many rural areas. He said many of his

DISTRICT 30B

Population (2009 est.): 38,014

Largest City: Rochester

Counties: Olmsted, Wabasha

Top Concerns: Fixing the budget deficit, easing regulatory burdens, increasing jobs

constituents are anxious about the economy, and he hopes the Legislature will encourage business growth that will bring more jobs to the state. He also hopes getting spending under control will lead to a more vibrant private sector.

"We are a great country still, and we'll become greater as long as we allow people to be as creative and productive as they can," he said.

Following Willard Munger's trail

Gauthier strives to give voice to working class

By KRIS BERGGREN

As one of just three new House members from the DFL party, Rep. Kerry Gauthier (DFL-Duluth) is the lone male, but he finds



Rep. Kerry Gauthier

solidarity by checking in with Rep. Rena Moran (DFL-St. Paul), whose office is next to his, and Rep. Marion Greene (DFL-Mpls) whom he sees a bit less frequently.

"It was odd during retreat time," he said, referring to new member orientation activities. "A lot of people assumed I was a Republican." It's also different from his term on the Duluth City Council, which he said was "high profile," including a clash with the mayor over public utilities commission regulation.

Gauthier said he's felt welcome by majority members and is already working with Rep.

Steve Smith (R-Mound) on a bill that would address human trafficking issues, including a proposal to arrest "Johns" as well as offenders in prostitution cases.

Gauthier calls District 7B "a working man's district" where 47 percent of his constituent households earn less than \$25,000 a year. He said it reveals traditional DFL values: protecting the role of unions; putting the brakes on local government aid cuts that could prompt property tax increases; and preserving access to higher education through financial aid and avoiding tuition hikes.

"We only expect you to stand up and tell the truth," is how he characterizes his constituents' expectations. "And that's what they'll get."

Gauthier is on leave from his job as rehabilitation director for a private chemical dependency treatment facility.

To relax, Gauthier likes to walk with his three dogs along the waterfront near his home, and pursue his hobby of photography.

DISTRICT 7B

Population (2009 est.): 38,183

Largest City: Duluth

County: St. Louis

Top Concern: Giving voice to working people's issues

His office walls are adorned with photos of Duluth area landscapes, urban scenes and nature, many his own work.

One image is of a wooden bridge on the Western Waterfront Trail along the St. Louis River, which starts just below The Willard Munger Inn and links with the Willard Munger State Trail, a bike path named for the former representative, social activist and environmental champion who served the same West Duluth district Gauthier now represents.

"I am proud to be able to follow him," Gauthier said.

Charting her own course

Kieffer focuses on better schools and business climate

By PATTY OSTBERG

Rep. Andrea Kieffer (R-Woodbury) can be described as her own legislative navigator.



Rep. Andrea Kieffer

She admits to being inexperienced about the political process, and when she initiated her run for office, she didn't know the role of a convention delegate.

While some legislators have held local government positions before state election, she said that being a representative doesn't mean you first have to have a resumé of government jobs. "I think it needs to be a resumé of showing that you are willing to take leadership roles, follow through, do the work and get it done," she said.

Kieffer, her husband John, and their two children have moved in and out of Minnesota over the years, including a stint working overseas in Singapore and Budapest. In Budapest, she helped charter a new educational direction on issues facing the American International School, such as academic standards and proper supervision in the school. She's always gotten involved in whatever community she is living, and said it has given her a broad view of handling different situations and problem solving.

Kieffer saw a need for someone to challenge the DFL incumbent in her district because that party seemed to be saying, "The only solution was to increase taxes or borrow more money. ... Nobody was stepping up the plate, so I said, 'I'll do it.'"

Education reform and helping small

DISTRICT 56B

Population (2009 est.): 47,493

Largest City: Woodbury

County: Washington

Top Concerns: Education reform and commerce reform

businesses grow are issues that are most important to her district. "I think it's going to be private sector business development and growth that's going to take us out of this recession," she said.

She supports alternative teacher licensure. "I don't believe throwing more money into a bad system is the answer."

She also supports changes to teacher tenure. "There's no other job that I can think of that there's an absolute guarantee that you're gonna keep your job."

Kieffer's overarching motivation is her children's future. "When they have a good future, everyone else does too. I want to raise the level for everybody."

The 'beet' goes on

Kiel brings agricultural, educational experience to Capitol

By SUE HEGARTY

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Sugar beet farmer Lonn Kiel ran three unsuccessful campaigns against longtime



Rep. Debra Kiel

Rep. Bernie Lieder. No surprise there, since Lieder was a respected leader and Lonn was forced to choose between door-knocking or getting his sugar beets out of the field. He chose the latter, his livelihood.

Then the Kiel's changed their strategy. Debra Kiel, Lonn's wife, a member of the Crookston School Board, filed for state office instead. "I normally do work in the field, but this year I didn't," she said. Their son, Christian, also works in the family business.

She thinks political sentiment played a role

in her successful bid. "While (Lieder) was well-liked on both sides of the fence, I think the feeling was it was time for a change," she said. Lieder served 13 terms.

Longtime Republican Party activists, the Kiels started dating when they both worked on former U.S. Congressman Arlan Stangeland's campaign.

Debra's experience in agriculture and education landed her seats on the House Agriculture and Rural Development Policy and Finance and the House Education Reform committees.

She supports alternative pathways to licensure for teachers.

"I found it really frustrating that there were mandates, control over what we ourselves can work on as the local school board or township," she said. "We actually have an instructor in our school that we let go every May. She resigns and we hire her back

DISTRICT 1B
Population (2009 est.): 35,915
Largest City: Crookston
Counties: Marshall, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake
Top Concern: To have the freedoms to be productive in Northwest Minnesota

every August because she has a licensure to fill an early childhood spot within her social work license, but not the education portion of it. We advertise for that instructor every year and she's the only one to apply."

Kiel also serves on the House Transportation Policy and Finance Committee and is vice-chairwoman of the House Legacy Funding Division.

In addition to Christian, the Kiel's have three other children; their ninth grandchild is due very soon. Both she and Lonn are Crookston natives. Her great-great-grandfather, John Perry, served in the House from 1921-1922. He also was a Polk County farmer.

A soldier on a new mission

Kriesel hopes to bring civility to the Capitol

By NICK BUSSE

For being a self-proclaimed ordinary "working class guy," Rep. John Kriesel (R-Cottage Grove) has an extraordinary story to tell. Even a mere reciting of the facts is astonishing.



Rep. John Kriesel

A decorated veteran of the Minnesota National Guard, Kriesel lost both of his legs to a 2006 roadside bomb attack that also claimed the lives of two

of his friends in Fallujah, Iraq. He died three times on an operating table, underwent 35 surgeries at four different hospitals, and spent nine months in rehabilitation at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Painful though the experience was, Kriesel

said it made him a better man. He learned to prioritize the things that matter to him — his wife and two sons — and ignore the little things that people let themselves get worked up about.

"It completely changes your life and changes your mindset — in a good way. I'm much happier than I've ever been in my entire life," he said.

At Walter Reed, Kriesel also met then-U.S. Sen. Norm Coleman, who gave him an internship. After his stint at the Capitol, Kriesel, who said his reverence for the political process can be traced to a high school class he took on American government, got infected with the political bug.

As a state representative, he hopes to bring a sense of civility and bipartisanship to a sometimes "toxic" political environment that he said turns off many people. He said he's

DISTRICT 57A
Population (2009 est.): 39,513
Largest City: Cottage Grove
Counties: Dakota, Washington
Top Concerns: Balancing the budget, creating jobs

been encouraged by what he's seen so far at the House.

"Sometimes the view you get on TV is that they all hate each other, and they don't," he said.

Like most of his colleagues, Kriesel's focus this year will be on balancing the budget and on trying to grow jobs in the state. He hopes to show that lawmakers can work together, regardless of their differences, toward common goals.

"When I was in the military, it didn't matter what the mission was. We worked together to get the job done," Kriesel said.

Standing up to Goliath

Schomacker's district on the frontline of keeping business

By **LEE ANN SCHUTZ**

Sioux Falls, S.D. stands like a Goliath over the southwest Minnesota district of Rep. Joe Schomacker (R-Luverne). He's up for the fight to streamline regulations and improve the business climate so more businesses will not jump over the state line.



Rep. Joe Schomacker

Take for instance in his hometown. The public relations consultant said there are businesses that retain the Luverne name but have moved to South Dakota because of the tax and regulatory climate.

Born and raised in Rock County, Schomacker is also well aware of the important role that agriculture plays in

that part of the state. He is concerned that regulations are putting farmers and processors at a competitive disadvantage, something he hopes to fix as member of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Policy and Finance Committee.

He cited an example of a farmer in his district who told him the Rock River is considered contaminated on the Minnesota side, and a few miles down, where it crosses into Iowa, it is not. "They rate it at such a different level. He wants to know how there can be different standards for what is considered contaminated," Schomacker said.

The state's trucking regulations are harming livestock producers and also need to be addressed, he said. "It is more cost-effective for producers to ship their livestock across the state line for processing then to keep it in the state."

But it is the issues faced by rural nursing

DISTRICT 22A
Population (2009 est.): 34,465
Largest City: Luverne
Counties: Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Rock
Top Concerns: Agriculture, water, regulatory issues

homes that top his priority list. Once again, Sioux Falls comes into the picture.

"Our nursing homes need to be staffed adequately, and employees need to be paid a decent wage," he said. "They can get \$3 to \$4 more an hour in Sioux Falls, so are we getting second-best?"

At 24 years old, Schomacker is the youngest House member, and for him there are a lot of firsts. This was his first run for public office; he purchased his first house last week; and he just completed his masters degree program.

He also serves on the House Health and Human Services Finance, and the House Judiciary Policy and Finance committees.

Politics with his pancakes

Woodard goes from breakfast with his buddies to the House

By **MIKE COOK**

In the corner of many cafes and coffee shops across the state is a group of local folks discussing current events.



Rep. Kelby Woodard

Rep. Kelby Woodard (R-Belle Plaine) is one of them. Now, his friends can talk about his performance representing them.

"There were 15 of us and most of the time we talk about high school basketball or football or St. Thomas football. Sometimes, we'd talk politics. Out of that group it became, 'You oughta run,' and I said, 'I think I will.' I went home after that breakfast and told my wife, 'Let's put up a website.' She wasn't surprised because she knew someday I might do that, but the

timing was a bit of a surprise. ... I'm glad I did it."

Woodard, who had never run for public office, brings a global perspective to his seat.

With his criminal justice degree, Woodard began his career working for U.S. Customs Services before moving to the Target Corporation. There, he started by catching shoplifters and progressed to director of global security where he handled all the overseas operations from a security standpoint. About six years ago, he and another security director began Trade Innovations, a global security consulting company. "We handle everything from executive protection overseas to issues related to supply-chain security and, really, about everything in-between," Woodard said.

That background helped him land the vice-chairman position on the House Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy and Finance Committee.

DISTRICT 25B
Population (2009 est.): 45,545
Largest City: Northfield
Counties: Rice, Scott
Top Concern: Balancing the budget without new taxes

A father of four school-aged children, Woodard also serves on the House Education Finance and Reform committees. He gets an earful about the issues at the dinner table.

His oldest child is a ninth-grader at St. Thomas Academy, the second-oldest attends Belle Plaine Junior High and the two youngest are in a Catholic elementary school.

Among the issues he'd like to address are alternative pathways to teacher licensure and funding inequities between districts. "Education is a big issue for me, and a large issue for our district," he said. "There's a lot of emotion and interesting innovate ideas surrounding it."

BILL INTRODUCTIONS

JANUARY 31 - FEBRUARY 3, 2011

HOUSE FILES 261 - 364

Monday, January 31

HF261-Benson, J. (DFL)

**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources
Policy & Finance**

Narrow-leaved cattail mechanical control allowed without an aquatic plant management permit.

HF262-Mack (R)

Health & Human Services Reform

Community paramedics added to the list of community health workers.

HF263-Bear (R)

**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources
Policy & Finance**

Baytown groundwater contamination Superfund site; Pollution Control Agency erroneous assessments, costs and payments refund required.

HF264-Urdahl (R)

Civil Law

Personal Responsibility in Food Consumption Act; Certain persons immune from civil liability for weight gain as a result of food or nonalcoholic beverage consumption.

HF265-Benson, M. (R)

**Public Safety & Crime Prevention
Policy & Finance**

Olmsted County; Southeastern Minnesota Regional Public Safety Training Center previous appropriation modified.

HF266-Morrow (DFL)

Transportation Policy & Finance

Rail service improvement program funding provided.

HF267-Morrow (DFL)

Transportation Policy & Finance

Local road improvement program funding provided.

HF268-Morrow (DFL)

Transportation Policy & Finance

Local bridge replacement and rehabilitation funding provided.

HF269-Downey (R)

Education Reform

Teacher contract qualified economic offer provided.

HF270-Erickson (R)

Government Operations & Elections

Department of Natural Resources, Ojibwe bands and Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission meetings regarding 1837 treaty rights subject to open meeting law.

HF271-Liebling (DFL)

Government Operations & Elections

Tax Expenditure Advisory Commission created, and review and sunset of tax expenditures provided.

HF272-Nornes (R)

Health & Human Services Finance

Otter Tail County; two nursing facilities' operating payment rate increase provided.

HF273-Woodard (R)

Education Reform

Students at low-performing schools enrollment options established.

HF274-Davids (R)

Taxes

Qualified farm and business property tax exemption provided.

HF275-Davids (R)

Taxes

Estate taxation changes in federal exemption conformed.

HF276-LeMieur (R)

**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources
Policy & Finance**

Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail acquisition and development funding provided.

HF277-Hansen (DFL)

Jobs & Economic Development Finance

South St. Paul; floodwall pumping station replacement grant funding provided.

HF278-Hayden (DFL)

Health & Human Services Reform

Children with autism spectrum disorders medical homes created.

HF279-Hayden (DFL)

Health & Human Services Reform

Council on East African Minnesotans and ombudsperson for East African Minnesotans created, and appointment of members and funding provided.

HF280-Hayden (DFL)

Government Operations & Elections

Postretirement option eligibility provisions modified.

HF281-Carlson (DFL)

Government Operations & Elections

State primary election returns canvassing time increased.

HF282-McFarlane (R)

Government Operations & Elections

Group insurance contract requirements clarified for changing benefits for employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

HF283-Fritz (DFL)

Education Finance

Minnesota state academies asset preservation funding provided.

HF284-Fritz (DFL)

Higher Education Policy & Finance

Faribault; South Central College classroom renovation and addition funding provided.

HF285-Fritz (DFL)

Health & Human Services Finance

Grave marker and memorial funding provided for deceased residents of state hospitals and regional treatment centers.

HF286-LeMieur (R)

Transportation Policy & Finance

Mini-truck registration and operation as all-terrain vehicle authorized.

HF287-Hamilton (R)

Government Operations & Elections

Mitochondrial Disease Awareness Week proposed.

HF288-Downey (R)

Commerce & Regulatory Reform

Tax credit provided for investment in start-up and emerging Minnesota businesses, and money appropriated.

HF289-Lenczewski (DFL)

Taxes

Property tax exemptions eliminated, preferences eliminated, foreign royalty subtraction repealed, subsidies taxed, definitions expanded, JOBZ and related industries modified, development zones repealed, tax rates reduced, research credit repealed, foreign operating corporations repealed and apportionment formula repealed for mail order businesses.

HF290-Lenczewski (DFL)

Taxes

Individual income, corporate franchise and property tax refund conformed to provisions of federal law; corporate franchise tax rate reduced; foreign source income preferences eliminated; foreign royalty subtraction repealed; and foreign operating corporations repealed.

HF291-McFarlane (R)

Health & Human Services Finance

Maplewood; grant funding provided to design, renovate and equip Harriet Tubman Center East as a regional service center and learning institute.

HF292-Anderson, D. (R)

Civil Law

Child custody; parenting plans required by both parents.

HF293-Urdahl (R)

**Public Safety & Crime Prevention
Policy & Finance**

Annandale Tactical Training Center funding provided.

HF294-Kahn (DFL)

Commerce & Regulatory Reform

State lottery director authorized to operate slot machines at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

HF295-Kahn (DFL)

**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources
Policy & Finance**

Brian Coyle Center renovation and expansion funding provided.

HF296-Kahn (DFL)

Government Operations & Elections

Lieutenant governor office abolished and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF297-Kahn (DFL)**Government Operations & Elections**

State agency information technology system and service consolidated, and duties transferred to the Office of Enterprise Technology.

HF298-Kahn (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Department of Employment and Economic Development and Department of Labor and Industry abolished, Department of Commerce downsized, task force established, employee participation committee establishment required before agency restructuring and reports required.

HF299-Quam (R)**Government Operations & Elections**

Executive branch agency retained savings program established.

HF300-Erickson (R)**Education Reform**

Comprehensive eye exams recommended for early childhood development screening.

HF301-Fabian (R)**Education Finance**

Operating capital revenue use expanded to include leasing vehicles, including school buses.

HF302-Kiffmeyer (R)**Government Operations & Elections**

Picture identification required before voter receives a ballot, identification cards provided at no expense, provisional balloting procedure established, election administration procedures specified, electronic polling place roster use required, procedures related to recounts enacted and money appropriated.

HF303-Peppin (R)**Government Operations & Elections**

Joint legislative office services required.

HF304-Peppin (R)**Health & Human Services Reform**

Department of Human Services required to issue a request for proposals for a Medicaid fraud detection and business intelligence contract.

HF305-Persell (DFL)**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Northern Township detached facility authorized.

HF306-Westrom (R)**Public Safety & Crime Prevention Policy & Finance**

Emily's Law established, age lowered for adult certification and extended jurisdiction juvenile prosecution for juveniles, and violent juvenile offense defined.

HF307-Clark (DFL)**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Minneapolis; Phillips Community Center swimming pool renovation funding provided.

HF308-Garofalo (R)**Education Finance**

Taconite distribution general education aid reduction restored.

HF309-Anderson, S. (R)**Transportation Policy & Finance**

Interstate Highway 494 additional lane funding provided.

Wednesday, February 2**HF310-Beard (R)****Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Sales representative termination amended.

HF311-Hayden (DFL)**Health & Human Services Reform**

Supplemental contracts authorized.

HF312-Peterson, S. (DFL)**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Health insurers required to honor the patient's assignment of benefits.

HF313-Peterson, S. (DFL)**Education Finance**

Alternative school year calendars encouraged and grants authorized.

HF314-Dittrich (DFL)**Transportation Policy & Finance**

Highway 610 completion trunk highway bonds issued.

HF315-Fritz (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Long-term care provider rate increases provided.

HF316-Nelson (DFL)**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Watercraft titling requirements modified.

HF317-Abeler (R)**Taxes**

City of Ramsey; tax increment district special rules provided.

HF318-Slawik (DFL)**Education Finance**

Special education percentage eligibility requirement adjusted for a charter school to receive the accelerated aid payment shift.

HF319-Slawik (DFL)**Education Reform**

Minnesota children assigned a unique identification number at the time of birth, and parental opt-out allowed.

HF320-Poppe (DFL)**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Long-term care insurance premiums increases prohibited without advance notice to policyholders and approval of the commissioner.

HF321-Poppe (DFL)**Taxes**

Class 4c property classification requirements modified.

HF322-Scott (R)**Civil Law**

Joint physical custody presumption established, Children's Equal and Shared Parenting Act created and parenting plans required.

HF323-Hoppe (R)**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Residential real estate broker price opinion provisions regulated.

HF324-Carlson (DFL)**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

National U.S. Junior Olympic and Disabled American Ski Center funding provided.

HF325-Hilty (DFL)**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Carlton County; public sale authorized for tax-forfeited land that borders public water.

HF326-Hilty (DFL)**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Pine County; private sale of tax-forfeited land authorized.

HF327-Hamilton (R)**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Microdistilleries authorized.

HF328-Westrom (R)**Transportation Policy & Finance**

Elbow Lake Municipal-Pride of the Prairie Airport public seaplane base license issued.

HF329-Holberg (R)**Education Reform**

Public school employees prohibited from using public funds and resources to advocate to pass, elect or defeat a political candidate, ballot question or pending legislation.

HF330-Crawford (R)**Higher Education Policy & Finance**

Pine Technical College entrepreneurship and technology business incubator funding provided.

HF331-Drazkowski (R)**Health & Human Services Reform**

MFIP drug screening eligibility required.

HF332-Drazkowski (R)**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

State-owned land acreage net increase prohibited.

HF333-Moran (DFL)**Education Finance**

Extended time program funding restored.

HF334-Westrom (R)**Legacy Funding Division**

Kensington Area Historical Society grant funding provided for development of a museum and heritage center.

HF335-Brynaert (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Mankato; expansion and remodeling funding provided for the Mankato Civic Center auditorium and Mankato Civic Center and All Seasons arenas.

HF336-Lenczewski (DFL)**Taxes**

Cities allowed to impose local sales and use tax, and aid offset provided.

HF337-Lenczewski (DFL)**Taxes**

County levies excluded in computing tax increment and making conforming changes.

HF338-Lenczewski (DFL)**Taxes**

Tax increment financing districts or plans establishment and expansion prohibited.

HF339-Kelly (R)**Education Reform**

Teacher employment contracts negotiation process identified.

HF340-Holberg (R)**Civil Law**

Negligent conduct liability waivers prohibited.

HF341-Greiling (DFL)**Education Finance**

Minnesota Management & Budget school district state-aid payment reduction requirement repealed.

HF342-Murdock (R)**Civil Law**

Manufactured homes inspections provided and alternative design plans and reinstallation requirements modified.

Thursday, February 3

HF343-Atkins (DFL)**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Identity theft and fraudulent activities conducted electronically enforcement capability enhanced.

HF344-Lanning (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Public housing rehabilitation funding provided.

HF345-Greiling (DFL)**Education Finance**

School finance system modified, new education funding framework created and income tax schedule changes made.

HF346-McFarlane (R)**Education Finance**

School district account transfer authorized.

HF347-Howes (R)**Transportation Policy & Finance**

Motor vehicle and driver's license transaction fees modified.

HF348-Hackbarth (R)**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Decoy restrictions modified.

HF349-Lillie (DFL)**Public Safety & Crime Prevention****Policy & Finance**

Maplewood; regional public safety training facility funding provided.

HF350-Lillie (DFL)**Veterans Services Division**

Surviving spouses of disabled veterans' homestead tax exemption duration limitation removed.

HF351-Lillie (DFL)**Veterans Services Division**

Honor and Remember Flag designated as the State of Minnesota's emblem of the service and sacrifice by those in the U.S. armed forces who have given their lives in the line of duty; Congress urged to pass a House Resolution to designate the Honor and Remember Flag for the same purpose.

HF352-Eken (DFL)**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Flood damage reduction projects implementation funding provided.

HF353-Loon (R)**Judiciary Policy & Finance**

Commissioner of revenue official orders notice of appeal clarified.

HF354-Slocum (DFL)**Transportation Policy & Finance**

Lindau Lane corridor funding provided.

HF355-Kiffmeyer (R)**Education Reform**

Home school mandates reduced, and superintendents relieved of reporting requirements.

HF356-Hilstrom (DFL)**Civil Law**

International interference cause of action established for the expectation of inheritance.

HF357-Lenczewski (DFL)**Taxes**

Metropolitan fiscal disparities program repealed.

HF358-Barrett (R)**Public Safety & Crime Prevention Policy & Finance**

Immigration law enforcement non-cooperation ordinances and policies prohibited, and immigration-related data use provided.

HF359-Dill (DFL)**Taxes**

Motor vehicle paint and supplies imposition of sales tax clarified.

HF360-Peterson, S. (DFL)**Education Reform**

School district requirement clarified that a school district is not required to provide educational services to students without disabilities from other states.

HF361-Kriesel (R)**Public Safety & Crime Prevention Policy & Finance**

Fleeing a police officer crime modified.

HF362-Kahn (DFL)**Civil Law**

Common interest community unit owners allowed to obtain copies of association records.

HF363-Lenczewski (DFL)**Government Operations & Elections**

Former legislators, constitutional officers, agency heads and legislative employees prohibited from lobbying for legislative or administrative action for one year after leaving office.

HF364-Lanning (R)**Health & Human Services Reform**

Detoxification services interstate contracts provided.

Minnesota State Agencies

Administration	651-201-2555
Agriculture	651-201-6000
	800-967-2474
Commerce	651-296-4026
Corrections	651-361-7200
Education	651-582-8200
Employment and	
Economic Development	651-259-7114
	800-657-3858
Enterprise Technology	651-296-8888
Explore Minnesota Tourism	651-757-1845
	800-657-3535
Travel Info.....	888-868-7476
Health	651-201-5000
	888-345-0823
Higher Education Services.....	651-642-0567
	800-657-3866

Housing Finance Agency	651-296-7608
	800-657-3769
Human Rights	651-296-5663
	800-657-3704
Human Services	651-431-2000
Iron Range Resources	651-602-3000
	800-765-5043
Labor and Industry.....	651-284-5005
	800-342-5354
Management and Budget	651-201-8000
Mediation Services	651-649-5421
Metropolitan Council.....	651-602-1000
Military Affairs	651-268-8919
Natural Resources	651-296-6157
	888-646-6367
Pollution Control Agency.....	651-296-6300
	800-657-3864

Public Safety General Information	651-201-7000
State Patrol.....	651-201-7100
Revenue	
General Information	651-296-3403
Collections.....	651-556-3003
	800-657-3909
Sales and Use Tax Line	651-296-6181
	800-657-3777
Taxpayer Helpline	651-296-3781
	800-652-9094
Taxpayer self-service	651-296-4444
	800-657-3676
Withholding	651-282-9999
	800-657-3594
Transportation	651-296-3000
	800-657-3774
Veterans Affairs.....	651-296-2562

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MINNESOTA INDEX

Driving in snow and ice

Miles of streets and highways in Minnesota	135,000
Lane miles that state Department of Transportation is responsible for	
in winter 2010-11, as approximate	31,000
Lane miles in 2007-08 winter	30,317
Lane miles in the Twin Cities metropolitan area in winter 2010-11, as approximate	5,000
Lane miles in 2007-08 winter	4,925
Inches of snow received in Twin Cities metropolitan area in 2009-10	40.7
Inches in 2008-09	56.8
Inches in 2005-06	44.4
Inches of snow received in southwestern part of the state in 2009-10	53.4
Inches of snow received in northwestern part of the state in 2009-10	37.2
Inches in 2008-09	73.2
Inches in 2005-06	89.1
Number of Priority I snowplow drivers that MnDOT now has	1,482
Number of Priority II, or backup, drivers	300
Number of Priority I snowplow drivers that MnDOT had in winter 2007-08	1,468
Number of Priority II, or backup, drivers	172
Trucks MnDOT now has for snow removal	780
Trucks in the winter of 2007-08	767
Reserve trucks in the two winters	46, 63
Current cost of a single-axle (one set of wheels in back) truck	\$170,000
Cost of a tandem axle (two sets of wheels in the back) truck	\$210,000
Costs three years earlier	\$153,000, \$172,000
Seconds behind a snowplow that a vehicle following should maintain, at minimum	8
Times heavier a fully equipped truck weighs compared to an average car	15
Crashes statewide between Oct. 1, 2009 and April 30, 2010, involving	
public property or vehicles during plowing and sanding operations	84
Number of crashes in the Twin Cities metropolitan area	38
Crashes statewide in previous one-year period	103
Crashes statewide between Oct. 1, 2006 and April 30, 2007	54
Road and weather information system sites across the state, that include	
weather sensors and sensors embedded in the roadway	93
Tons of salt MnDOT used in the winter of 2009-10	180,252
Tons in winter of 2006-07	182,386
Tons of sand MnDOT used in the winter of 2009-10	41,811
Tons in winter of 2006-07	51,716
Gallons of brine MnDOT used in the winter of 2009-10, in millions	1.8
Gallons in winter of 2006-07, in millions	2.5
Number people can call to get current information on road conditions	511

— M. Cook

Sources: Department of Transportation, including Snow and Ice fact sheets for 2007-08 and 2010-11 winters.