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Minnesota State Legislature



House



Senate



**Legislation
and Bill Status**



**Statutes, Session
Laws, and Rules**



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General Information



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**Joint Departments
and Commissions**

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What's New

The 2001-2002 biennial legislative session has adjourned until January 29, 2002.

The Governor has called a Special Session for Monday, June 11, 2001.

2001 Special Session Bills

Redistricting

Hot Bills 2001

**Governor Ventura's
budget recommendations**

Please direct all comments concerning issues or legislation to your [House Member](#) or [Senator](#).

Send comments regarding this site to: www@library.leg.state.mn.us

Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - January 2004

Administration

- Running woefully short of space in the basement storage room, Elizabeth, Toshi, Lisa, and Leif examined the situation and took action. They cleared out all of the old "product," the shelves and panels to create workstations. A portion of it was sent to state surplus, but the rest was organized to preserve for future remodeling projects. Some shelving was moved upstairs to the crawl space back by Leif's area. One more shelving unit to hold boxes was purchased, and our space problems were shifted a bit into the future.
- Lisa prepared a detailed budget update for Robbie. Lisa and Robbie met to go over all of the categories with a fine-toothed comb, trying to anticipate any possible problems. And as Lisa said, "Found some savings in the fringes line - yay!!!"
- Lisa did a great job negotiating a new contract for our virus scanning software from MacAfee. We used to pay \$1400/year for the software, and with all the new viruses and patches needed all the time, we feared it might go up. But when our contract was examined carefully, it turned out our package had included more features than we used. Instead of going up, our bill was cut in half, from our budgeted \$1400 to \$700!
- Lisa scheduled interviews for the library aide position. Sent rejection letters to applicants and those who were not chosen from the ones who were interviewed.

Web

Development

- Randi spoke with a reporter from the Center for Digital Government who is writing about the Digital Legislatures award, and wanted to know more information about the structure of IT administration in the MN Legislature.
- Randi tweaked the library and legislature web sites in preparation for session: edited the FAQ, moved and fixed links, supervised editing of library pages to update information, worked with Linda Schmitt on Senate issues, worked with Mike Speiker on MyBills issues.
- Randi worked with Leif to move Senate media education files to proper directories. Unfortunately, she'll have to do this again, because it crashed before a new backup could be made. There were many extra files, which involved lots of discussion with Steve Senyk.
- More Web accolades! Karla Gedell and Anita Anderson, from the Minnesota Attorney General's Library, nominated the Minnesota Legislative Web Site for the 2004 Public Access to Government Information Award. It is granted by the American Association of Law Libraries.

Information

Systems

Activities

- Ruth created a report showing all library services patrons are receiving. (Inside Issues, Just In, Contents Pages).
- Ruth updated the House Addressbook Export File report adding the Department field for Steve Vetter (so at least some House members and staff have access to the addresses of staff in the joint agencies). He sent her the message "before it was perfect, now it's even more perfect. thanks a lot!"
- Ruth made many legislative staff changes in the patron mailing list database.
- Ruth sent out 545 January, 2004, issues of *Just In*. For the first time, we included a memo asking if they would like to receive an email notification instead of the printed version.
- Ruth added an email address field to Intern Registration card.
- Lisa updated all staff computers with the new Adobe Reader. Some

Collections
Activities

reference staff received the full version of Adobe so that they can create and edit PDF files.

- Lisa prepared backup DVD's of the mandated reports that we have on the Archive Server. This will be done quarterly from now on.
- A milestone was reached when we stopped producing on PALS, in preparation for migration to Aleph. Sarah stopped cataloging and Kelly stopped processing and barcoding added volumes using PALSTAC at 5:00 on January 22, 2004. In her message about how everyone should stop adding records, Sarah appropriately noted this event with the following comment: "Our catalog and faithful friend, PALS, is now frozen forever, a relic of bygone days. A search in PALS is now no more than a stroll through a museum. In practical terms, this means, DON'T MESS WITH IT!"
- Kelly did a lot of shelf reading in January – making access to our collections so dependable. She checked the Speech and Reference Collections, and the circulating collection from HJ2051 .A59 2000 – HT123.5 .M6 F57 1990 (a heavily used section). She processed 72 added volumes, withdrew 2 items from the collection, claimed 60 missing periodical issues, and weeded the 6 month Periodicals and the Federal Register.

Reference
activities

Ruth converted the Magazine Guide reports to R&R9 and created new version of the *Magazine Guide* and the *Subject Guide*.

- Each year we send memos to the users of our current awareness services, to see if they would like to change their profiles. Ruth printed out the Inside Issues (263) and Contents Pages (159) current users memos. This year we asked if patrons would like to receive their requests electronically. The response was surprisingly positive.

Reference
questions – a
sample

- Carol, Randi, and Elizabeth gave a Library and Web class to Staff from Senate Majority Research.
- Tracked down and retrieved a VHS copy of *Mankind's Next Giant Leap*, an obscure video from 1972. (rm)
- Lots of stadium finance questions.(rm)
- How many states fully fund full-day kindergarten?(rm)
- Caseload statistics for public defenders in other states.(rm)
- Articles from the mid-1980s on the Mall of America: was it going to be a white elephant?(rm)
- Information on efforts to increase the tuition reimbursement for the members of the National Guard. (pv)
- State-by-state child care licensing fees.(pv)
- Studies that link induced abortion to the increase of breast cancer.(pv)
- College textbook rental systems and how those costs compare to ordering books online or at a bookstore.(pv)
- Why does the legislature use committees?(pv)
- Can you find us information that states that smoking can counter the effectiveness of psychotropic drugs?(pv)
- What's the definition of smoke-free?(pv)
- Europe's experience with photo-cop to reduce red light running.(pv)
- Legislative history research topics included the 1993 common interest ownership act, 2003 DUI changes, 1993 nursing homes changes, 2003 email spam bill, 1998 head coach hiring bill, 2003 omnibus health & human services bill, 1983 workers compensation bill, & the 1986 telecommunications bill.
- Paul and Robbie edited and completed the "best practices" document for compiling useful committee records.
- Paul, Elizabeth, David, and Robbie attended the MNLINK User Group meeting at Bandana Square. Much of the day was spent suggesting enhancements to the Aleph software.

Legislative
History
Activities

Training and
meetings
attended by

staff

Training and tours given by staff

- Sarah and David both gave tours to members of Sen. Pappas' Metro State lobbying class. Randi gave a tour to a new House Research staff person. Carol gave a tour to a new intern.
- Elizabeth gave a library introduction to 25 Senate interns.
- Paul and Robbie gave tours to 16 new House staff, part of the House orientation program for new staff.
- Robbie spoke at a Continuing Legal Education seminar, "The Legislative process."

Staff news

- Dave Gatchell resigned to move to Japan with his wife – a huge loss for us! Lisa brought in pizza for his last pizza fix before he left for Japan.
- Staff anniversaries:
 - January 2, 2002 Nicole Brinkman 2 years at LRL!
 - January 2, 1985 Lisa Knoop 19 years at LRL!
 - January 3, 1989 Elizabeth Lincoln 15 years at LRL!

Fan Mail

- A very informal count of thank you messages and notes for January is 35 – many permutations of "Thank you for your help. It is appreciated," "Thank you so much for the speedy reply!" and "Thanks for the info. That's what I was looking for." On simple thank you message to Sarah had the subject line, 'Kudos!'
- David received the most effusive thank you note this month, even in all caps. "DAVID: THIS E-FILE TRANSFER WORKED SLICK...MY COUNTY WORKMATES THINK I'M A GENIUS...THANK-YOU THANK-YOU...AS THAT CALIFORNIA STATE OFFICIAL HAS BEEN QUOTED, "...I'LL BE BACK" TO THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY...Carol Morphew"
- Robbie gave a presentation on the Legislative Web Site at a continuing legal education seminar on the legislative process. As a result, she received this message from a library director in Duluth. "Hi, Robbie- My husband John attended a CLE event in Mpls yesterday and told me that the librarian from the Legislative Reference Library gave the best and most organized presentation of the day. That was you, I discovered. He told me that he was planning to look at the Web information you presented, so you also motivated the audience to follow up."
- In requesting a training class, a Senate staffer was complimentary. "The SMR staff is consistently impressed by the LRL's work. You are fast, accurate and thorough. We need to improve our own research skills and learn how to frame questions when seeking your help."
- Everybody feels the way one responder did when he thanked Carol, "Many thanks for your prompt and informative response! As with so many other things I've been wrong about lately, I was so sure I had it right!"
- A House staff person appreciated help from Ruth, writing, "just wanted to thank you for your continued updates. staff and members are very grateful. and they think i am smart, so that's good, too."

Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - February 2004

David had an amazing and generous offer with an e-mail thank you. "Thanks you're a life saver. I'm a police officer in Herndon VA, if you ever need anything let me know."

Administration

- Lisa conducted a new staff orientation for Bill Lindeke. She also set Toshi up as a salaried employee. She met with him to go over what various benefits available to him.
- Lisa met with members of the Service Award Committee and our representative from OC Tanner to update our Service Award Program. She updated some of the prizes that no one has selected over the past three years.
- Ruth updated inventory records regarding storage in basement and the crawl space. She added notes to records for items stored in crawl space.

Web Development

- Randi worked with Mike Speiker and Paul Battaglia to add MyBills to the legislature's web site. Many other tweaks were necessary at the beginning of session.
- Lisa copied the 2000 & 2003 House Video Files to CD for backup - 2 copies.
- Lisa caught up on all old web log files and entered the numbers into the statistics spreadsheet. A long and tedious job but now everything is up to date. She created new graphs to post on the LNET Web site.
- Leif worked with Intertech billing staff and LCC staff to straighten out the billing for the Intertech search engine. Beginning in June, the various legislative agencies will be billed for indexing their pages. We want to be sure we only pay for our pages!

Information Systems Activities

- The MyDoom virus didn't infect any of the Library's computers, but did cause reduced performance as our mail server strained to deal with the endless bounce-back messages and filtered out the virus-laden messages. That was during the day - even before we got there each day, thousands of the messages were eliminated from our mailboxes.
- This was a big month for Lisa fixing and upgrading workstations. Public PC #3 had a bad CD drive so she set up a new PC for that station and replaced the bad one with it. Public 1 quit turning on so she brought it to the back, cleaned it out, and replaced it out front. She patched all of the library's PC's with newest patch from Microsoft, changed the DNS settings to point at both revisor's servers and then Intertech, upgraded Aleph client on all Public Services Staff computers and Ref Desk, Circ Desk and Tape Room.
- Lisa worked on a problem with running contents page program on Windows 2000 so that we can move the library aides and Toshi to a Windows 2000 box. She set up a Windows 2000 box for the library aides and Toshi when the problem was worked out.
- Leif and Lisa continued to watch for tricky viruses, and warn staff. A particularly insidious virus came with the message from administration@mn.us about "Important notify about your e-mail account." Looks so innocent!
- Ruth met with Leif and Elizabeth about patrons receiving their Inside Issues requests electronically. She made changes to Inside Issues database, reports and request data entry screen. She created a report to create a Pegasus addressbook of Inside Issues patrons.
- Ruth continued to use our LegDB data to help public services staff with requests. She created a report from LegDb of all legislators and religion for Randi, and a report from LegDB of all legislators with city of residence and

Collections
Activities

Reference
activities

Reference
questions - a
sample

service for Paul. This was supposed to be a reprint of a report the patron had previously gotten from Betsy but she couldn't find it. She created a list from LegDB of legislators with occupation of Lutheran pastor for Elizabeth.

- Ruth printed out *Just In* memos to new users including samples, and Contents Page and Inside Issues memos to new users.
- Kelly processed 29 Added Volumes, withdrew 1 item from the collection, and claimed 52 missing Periodical issues. She started making copies of the barcode, the title page and the OCLC # for added volumes and original cataloging until we switch to Aleph.
- Sarah continued to work with Carol and Alissa on copy cataloging. She also began preparing procedures and protocols for the cataloging hiatus, which involved endless phone calls to PALS, MINETX, and OCLC.
- David and Sarah began data review of our converted PALS data.
- Users of our Inside Issues service were given the opportunity to receive the articles they request electronically, and the response to the offer was larger than expected! Elizabeth, Ruth, and Leif worked diligently to set up the procedures and the technical ability to do it. One issue that developed was smaller file size e-mail limits in the House than in the Senate and LCC. Leif worked to get the House to agree to larger files sizes. But the new service is appreciated. A House staff person wrote, "Thanks! It's great to be able to get some of these electronically!"
- In order to help identify legitimate requests among the spam messages at the reference desk, Randi switched the color of all messages coming in from our Web site form to a different color.
- Robbie wrote the "Just In" essay on resources on same-sex marriage.
- Randi and Robbie attended a terrific SLA-sponsored copyright workshop. As a result, we added a step to our article scanning processes, ensuring that a copyright statement label is affixed to each article before scanning.
- We received many turn-of-the-century *Journals* and *Session Laws* as gifts. We evaluated our collection and found that many would be welcome additions to our collection. However, they seemed allergy-raising dusty - perhaps moldy - and we worried about even having them around. So David and Robbie met with Bob Herskovitz, a conservator from the State Archives, for a consultation. He pronounced them only dusty, and prescribed a thorough cleaning with a hepa-filtered vacuum cleaner and cleaning the cloth covers with special sponges. Many conservation team volunteers will undertake the project in May - when it's nice enough to be outdoors. We were also happy to discover that the Law Library would take the bulk of the remaining volumes.
- We anticipate that our legislative users will contact us directly, but every once in a while we receive questions from them via the Legislative Web Site web form. This month a member used it to request several scholarly books.
- Carol worked with Lisa to set up a new "Just In" folder. That is where the current essay in progress can reside, and it includes two documents - one with essay topics done in the past, and one with essay ideas for the future.
- Leg. Staff: Who funded the MN Student Survey in the early 90's? (pv)
- Senator wanted information on the time the death penalty was on the ballot as a constitutional amendment. She was certain it had passed but then the legislators ignored the vote & stopped it from being implemented. (Never happened. There were actually hearings on the death penalty issue in 1992 & 1995 but the bills didn't pass.)(pv)
- Leg. Staff: When the Faribault Regional Treatment Center was being converted to a prison what promises were made to the community as far as limits on the total number of prisoners that would be housed there? (500 beds)
- Leg. Staff: Find me a quote that states that the primary function of government is to protect the public safety.(pv)
- Pub. MN: I read an article that said a doctor testified at the legislature

claiming he could treat people with gambling and other addictions. Do you know his name? (Incredibly, I found it: Dr. S. Won Kim)(pv)

- Senator wanted the article that appeared years ago in the City Pages or the Twin Cities Reader related to Rich Stanek pulling a guy from his vehicle & beating him. Found the citation quickly but being it was so late in the day, even with a team effort we were not able to get the article until the following morning.

- When did Walter Mondale announce Geraldine Ferraro as his vice-presidential running mate.(pv)

- Pub. MN: Found the 1970 populations of several western Twin Cities suburban cities. After I found the numbers the woman told me she was going to use them to show her Sunday school class how the area is constantly changing unlike Jesus who is the same yesterday, today & forever. (pv)

- Legislative staff (calling late in the day): Find me articles from outstate papers related to public opinion and editorials on the 0.08 BAC before tomorrow morning's hearings.(pv)

- Randi used ReferenceUSA from Minneapolis Public to create a list of churches with addresses for a legislative district.(rm)

- List of factors businesses consider when relocating.(rm)

- What are the rules for dual participation in high school sports in other states?(rm)

- What was the Scandia Report? (It was actually the Sandia Report.)(rm)

- Our staff in the Tape Room providing legislative history do a consistently thorough and great job. One user was appreciative when he wrote, "Mr. VanCura, Thank you for your thorough, prompt response. It's nice to know I have friendly resources (can't say the same about the History Center) just a click away."

- Legislative history research included efforts to ban underwater fishing cameras, 1994 & 1996 landfill cleanup act, 2002 county debt, 1993 homestead, and forged checks.

- The 1993-94 House & Senate tapes were transferred to MHS.

- Sarah gave tours to interns on two occasions, and a library introduction to a group of ten pages. About one page tour, Sarah reported, "A group of high school pages came in to ask if we had any resources on stadiums, and when I handed them the stadium folder, their faces lit up and one of them exclaimed, "You did that just for us!?! That's amazing!" They all thanked me profusely and are now holed up in the corner by the district clippings, quietly studying. A most unusual group."

- Robbie gave a presentation on the Legislative Web Site to a group of 48 students and parents from the MN Association of Christian Home Educators. She also gave a presentation to 18 students from Gustavus, from former Rep. Don Ostrom's State and Local Government class.

- Randi gave a library introduction to 15 new Senate pages, a Senate intern, and to a class of 9 St. Thomas graduate students.

- Paul gave a tour to Rep. Chaudary's intern.

- Carol gave two tours; to the head of a state board and an interested citizen.
- David gave a tour to two interns, and on another occasion, to Rep. Clark's intern.

- Randi, Robbie, and Leif attended an LNET meeting.

- Randi, Elizabeth, Leif, and Robbie attended a presentation on MinnesotaVotes.org, a new web site from the Center of the American Experiment, which will attempt to present legislator voting records in a non-partisan, timely fashion.

- Librarians from the State Law Library joined LRL staff for a lunchtime discussion of the promotion of library services.

Legislative
History
Activities

Training and
tours conducted
by staff

Training and
meetings
attended by
staff

Staff news

Toshi joined LRL as a permanent staff member. It meant just a few changes.

For instance, Leif reported, "Toshi has survived basic computer training and now

For instance, Leif reported, "Toshi has survived basic computer training and now has an electronic mailbox."

Anniversaries:

Randi Madisen February 3, 1992 12 years at LRL!!

Fan mail!

- We receive many thank you messages each month, many short and sweet. Here are a few messages, chosen from 66 forwarded thank yous. I didn't include the many "Thank You!" messages we received, sometimes with several exclamation points, and occasionally in caps for emphasis, "THANK YOU!" I also didn't include several "Thank you very much" messages. "Thank you, Elizabeth, for your time and help. Much appreciated." "Carol: Thank you for the assistance. It was perfect for my use for the time being." "Carol: Thank you so much for your help, much appreciated!" "Thank you very much, I believe I have what I need now to appeal the denial." "(to Sarah) That is exactly what I am looking for - thank you very much!" "THANKS SO MUCH! I am so impressed with your efficiency and professionalism. This information will help me immensely. Thank you also for the courtesy of such a rapid response to my query." "Hi Robbie: Thanks for direction to these links. Very helpful." "Thank you for your assistance - it is greatly appreciated..." "Thanks for your hard work!" "Great, thanks again!" "Thank-you for getting back to me so quick !!" "Thank you so much for your help!" "Thanks for your quick & helpful response!" "Paul, Thank you very, very much! I really appreciate your timely assistance." "Randi, This is exactly what I needed. Thanks so much for your help." "Thank you for your prompt attention." "Thank you Randi Madisen. Great Service." "(From a member) David: Many, many thanks for your help and thoughtfulness." "Thank you! This is great, Elizabeth!" "Thanks, this is great." "thank you very much. I have read the information and it was quite helpful." "Thank you for your rapid response. It helped." "Have a good night and thank you for staying "late!" "Thanks so much for your research on this. I hope your next question from a state agency proves a bit less complex." "(from a member) Thanks Robbie! I kinda thought you would know where to look!" "You are a lifesaver!!" "The language that you sent was just what I was looking for. Thank you very much!" "Hi Carol -Thanks much for the information. Very appropriate for the Minnesota legislature to adjourn at the latest on the biggest national holiday for Norwegians, Syttende Mai ! :)" "Randi, I appreciate your attention to the media stuff. Thanks again!" "(after Randi and Robbie did a tour for new House staff) We had another successful orientation for our new staff, thanks to your participation on Thursday, January 29. I really appreciated your willingness to share your knowledge and make the new folks feel welcomed." "Thanks for this - it worked perfectly and helped a lot. I appreciate it!" "Thank you for the information, I appreciate it." "Nicole: Thanks for your help. This is exactly what I was looking for." Great, Thanks for the quick response!" "Thank you so much for your assistance! You made my job much easier by providing the information in your message." "Wow! Thank you for your quick response. This is perfect! Thanks!" "thanks for your competent and quick help!" "Many many thanks, David - I have forwarded on the information you sent. I don't know if our constituent will require more information but the web site you sent seems to have tons of information!!" "Thank you very much, Dave. This IS helpful." "That's fabulous! I'll stop by in a bit..."
- We try to provide just the amount of information that people request. Carol met that need perfectly for a patron who wrote, "thank you so much for pulling together info on gaming for me. It was a manageable amount -- I read through it all this past weekend and feel much more confident on the subject!"
- Robbie helped a person referred from a member. The member sent a nice thank you ("Wonderful work. Thank you very much."), and the requestor was very happy, writing back in a big, bold font, "Mr. LaFleur, Thank you very much for the information re: Perrot on the ceiling. It was very much more than we had.

I used to teach US and MN history and had never before heard of Nicolas Perrot. After 20 years of family history research, I find his name on the Chamber ceiling, a statue of him in Green Bay Wisconsin, numerous sections of Minnesota history books written about him, plaques honoring him along the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi, and then to find that he is my 7th great grandfather. Your name sounds very French Canadian, too. Again, thank you very, very much.

Sincerely, Colonel Ronald E. Beauchane

▪ Robbie spoke to a group of home-schooled students and their parents as part of their Legislative Training Day. Kathy Lytle, the Training Day Coordinator, wrote, "I want to send you a very heartfelt thank you on behalf of MACHE, the parents and students who attended our Legislative Training Day last Thursday. The day was a great success and the information you brought was a wonderful contribution. We all learned so much about the Minnesota state Website. The next day, I made use of several things you pointed out and am grateful to have this expanded tool to use."

Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - March 2004

Sifting the spam from the legitimate messages going to the reference desk is an ongoing battle. It was noted at a staff meeting that, "We get questions about whether a teenage girl can date a 32-year-old via the Web form from someone with a name like 'NaughtyAngel,' and it's a real question. Then we get messages from senders with normal-sounding names, with a subject like 'About the report,' and they are viruses!"

Administration

- Lisa and Robbie met for their periodic poring over of the budget categories, checking for trends or potential problems. One interesting trend is in our postage budget - down, down, down! We used to spend \$2000-\$3000 per year on postage; this fiscal year we may only spend around \$300! E-mail has made a tremendous difference. For example, we used to mail print copies of our monthly "Just In" to many outside subscribers; now they get it electronically. When I recently sent a 48 page report to a librarian in Missouri, I sent an attached pdf scan. Quicker for the patron, and money-saving for us.
- Another interesting cost savings due to technology is our phone bill for the fax machine. Now that we take advantage of e-mailing scanned images, not only don't we pay for postage for U.S. mail, we also save on long-distance calls on the fax machine. Lisa reported that the fax machine used to take up three pages of the phone bill; now it is usually just half a page.
- The Department of Administration reported recycling rates for the state agencies. The benchmark to meet is 60%. We always exceed that and did so again this year, at 73%.
- Lisa checked out the cost of a copy machine add-on that would allow users to check the quality of a scanned image before finishing the scan. It's a great idea, but it costs \$6000! We passed.
- Robbie participated in the Coalition on Government Information's annual Freedom of Information Day and award ceremony. This year's recipient was Marvin Anderson, former head of the State Law Library.

Web

Development

- Migrating to a new online catalog requires all sorts of changes. Randi changed all of the links to PALS in our Minnesota Issues Guides and on the Web site to MNPALS. Leif installed Aleph client software on the computers of staff members who need more than the Web interface.
- Many Web sites link to our Library publications and Web pages. Interestingly, *Lawmoose.com* links to two of our resources, the Legislative Ethics issues guide, and the Legislator Voting Records and Ratings guide.
<http://www.lawmoose.com/index.cfm?Action=Library.&Topic=MN11>

Information

Systems

Activities

- Leif was plagued with the task of installing both Helix software (for RealAudio files) and Windows Media software on the same media server. Nothing seemed to work; tech support calls were endless. Finally, success came when he discovered it was a port conflict. (And this short description can hardly suffice to convey how frustrating the struggle was!)
- Ruth created a new Agency Mandate List report from Acquisitions database and added to reports screen. In the LegDB she created a data entry screen for LegDB to add committees to lookup table.
- Ruth began investigating a pdf e-burst software that would allow us to send out Inside Issues citations via e-mail.

Collections Activities

- Switch to Production! The new Aleph MNPALS catalog went live. In many ways, it was relatively painless. Our records seemed to migrate as we hoped, and Sarah is doing well organizing the new cataloging procedures. All is not perfect, however. A 'golem' plagued the system, bringing up unexpected - and incorrect - results. As David said, "A Dewey call number? I haven't seen a Dewey call number for twenty years!"
- Eagle-eyed Sarah posted a message to the ALEPH list regarding a huge issue (for us) with the display of corporate authors in MNPALS results lists. In part, "LRL has noticed an issue with the corporate author display in the brief author/title results list of the WebOPAC. Apparently only \$a of the 110 field is displayed. For LRL, this often means that we get pages of results where the author is only listed as "Minnesota" or "United States," with no indication as to department, division, committee, etc. This becomes especially problematic when searching for items with generic titles such as "Minutes" or "Report to the Legislature." Others agreed this is an issue, and PALS staff changed the indexing to add the display detail we need. Whew!
- Sarah is doing very well with the changes in cataloging procedures with the new system. She understands details that the rest of us couldn't possibly fathom. One question she posted to a list read, "Hello: I am wondering if any of the Beta or Gamma libraries who don't use the serials module have any advice or documentation in regards to the content Enum. Level 1 (A) (Vol.) and the Enum. Level 2 (B) fields of Tab 1 of serial item records. I have figured out that year information goes in Enum. Level 1 (A) (Vol.) and volume information (with no caption) goes in Enum. Level 2 (B), but am still curious for items with more than two levels of enumeration and/or chronology (e.g., year/volume/number; year/month/day)." We are so glad that Sarah is taking care of such things!
- While there are still bugs in the new MNPALS software, it appears that the system will offer great features for us, long-term. There is a transition underway. As Sarah noted, "Right now there is a PALSTAC mentality in an ALEPH environment."
- We streamlined and improved the document numbering process. Toshi now handles this task at the front end.

Reference activities

- With decreased staff, and no page help, keeping up with reference questions during this busy session month was quite challenging.
- As a result of our mailings to users and non-users of our custom services, we are slowly converting to more electronic delivery. (We had guessed there would be more response to our new electronic options.) 10 new *Inside Issues* users signed up. Of our total 271 users, nine opted to receive their requested articles in electronic format. 14 *Just In* users have converted to receiving it electronically. The *Contents Pages* service has the most users opting for electronic delivery, 42.
- We realized we needed to be diligent about adding to copyright notice to scanned articles as well as photocopied articles. Ruth created labels with copyright message to put on covers of journals before scanning for requests.

Reference questions - a sample

We often help members with materials to prepare for floor debate, but seldom is it so evident as it was on the day the House debated the Defense of Marriage constitutional amendment. Members from both sides of the aisle spoke on the issue, armed with statistics and background from the Library. This included articles, Biblical passages, statistics on previous constitutional amendments, information on the Utah constitution, and quotations from a decades-old lecture.. It was very rewarding.

- Toll roads and toll lanes in the US. Where? When? How Much? How financed? Who operates? (cb)
- Overtime laws: state and federal (cb)

Legislative

- Paul sent the 1993-1994 Minutes to the Historical Society. Charlie Rodgers wrote, "Thanks again for the excellent inventories and well-labeled boxes."

History Activities

It makes is much easier for us on this end.”

Training and tours conducted by staff

- Robbie gave a Legislative Web Site presentation to 48 students and parents from the Minnesota Association of Christian Home Educators.
- Carol gave a tour to a new member, Senator Scott Newman. Sarah gave tours to a Senate intern, two House interns, and an introduction to 15 House pages. David gave a tour to an intern with the Legislative Auditor's Office, and Robbie gave a tour to a student from the College of St. Catherine.

Training and meetings attended by staff

- Randi and Robbie attended an SLA-sponsored copyright workshop. As a result, we remembered that we have been remiss on adding copyright statements to scanned articles. Ruth printed labels, and we are now certain to add the statement to all articles that are sent both in print and electronically.
- Robbie attended an open house for the new State Librarian, hired by the Department of Education, Suzanne Miller.

Staff news

3/16/1984 Kelly Heffron 20 years at LRL!

3/3/1986 Robbie LaFleur 18 years at LRL!

Fan mail!

- The collective “Thank you” e-mail folder held 67 thank you messages for March. Many were impressed with speedy service, as in “Thank you so much Nicole! That was amazingly fast.” and to Carol, “Thank you very much for extremely expeditious response!” Robbie heard, “Thanks Robbie- Librarians are fast! Our staff attorney has become a believer in things librarian.”
 - Leif sent out some Senate videos on CD, and received the following note, “Leif, Thank you so much for sending me the ethanol videos on CD. You're a lifesaver! I really appreciate your responsiveness and excellent service.”
 - Robbie answered a request for information on outreach in legislative libraries for a librarian in the provincial library in Cape Town, South Africa. She wrote back, in part: “Thank you so much Robbie. This is very helpful information. I really appreciate the time that you took with this. Nothing beats getting specific examples.”
 - We sometimes have requestors asking for help with school projects. A grateful student wrote, “Dear Mr. David Schmidtke, I really appreciate your time in helping with my research on the railroad gate arms bill for school. All of the information was SOOO helpful!! Thank you so much! Andrea Shamp, Totino Grace High School”
 - We are always happy when we help a person who has been frustrated with other agencies. One person wrote to Sarah, “Thanks for all your help. I understand no “legal” help can be offered. I could not find anything outlining the specific operation limitations of such vehicle, so I've called the state patrol to see what they have to say. Public Safety offered no help at all, so thank you for doing what you did! It's not a full answer, but better direction than anyone in the state system has offered a person. Sad, isn't it? John”
 - It's interesting that requestors from far away often comment on Minnesota's weather. “Carol, Thank you once again for your help. I am a graduate from Carleton, and I miss Minnesota and how helpful people there (generally speaking) are. We are having a blizzard right now here in Boston, so that reminds me of Minnesota, to a certain degree. Best, Ben
 - A user from Minneapolis was very impressed with Elizabeth's work. “Wow. Thank you very much; you're truly amazing. I really appreciate you looking that up for me, I was about to drive over and do it myself, thanks for saving me the trip! I'm pretty sure that is indeed what I'm looking for, if not I think that I'll be able to dig something else up when I'm over a the Capitol on Monday. Thank you
-

very much for your help, hope that you have a good weekend! Karl”

- Leif sent out some Senate video on CD, and received the following note, “Leif, Thank you so much for sending me the ethanol videos on CD. You’re a lifesaver! I really appreciate your responsiveness and excellent service.”
- Robbie received a thank you note for giving presentations on the Legislative Web Site to home school kids and their parents at two training days for the Minnesota Association of Christian Home Educators. In part it read, “The information you provided was wonderful and it will help many home school families better utilize their internet access to state government.”
- This thank you to Sarah was notable for its screaming capitol letters: “THAT IS JUST WHAT I NEEDED. SO THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME, AND I HOPE YOU HAVE A GOOD DAY.”

We analyzed the results of our 2003 pilot project to keep mandated reports in electronic format. It was quite successful!

Mandated Reports Pilot Project Statistics

March, 2004

Of the 270 mandated documents received by the Legislative Reference Library in 2003, we were able to archive all but 7 documents.

55% of the mandated documents (149) were available in electronic format. This is fairly close to what we anticipated. This includes pdf documents (139), HTML documents (3), and WORD (7).

Saving electronic documents to our server in pdf format was not always straightforward.

- For one 3-volume document, volumes 1 and 3 could be downloaded from the Web, but Volume 2 needed to be downloaded from a CD-ROM.
- One electronic version of a document was provided in two formats: a WORD document (which we converted), and 3 pdf documents.

We scanned 114 documents. Scanning proved more challenging than we anticipated. If we were lucky, a print document could be easily detached, and fed through the high-speed copier/scanner. But there were complicating factors.

- Format. Some documents were in non-standard sizes, and could not be fed. Scanning a forty-page, squarish document means scanning each page separately, watching for tilted pages.
- If we only had one copy and it had a binding that could not be undone, it meant scanning each page, rather than feeding.
- Some documents included difficult-to-scan appendices, such as maps.

7 documents were not archived; they were too large, and would take too long to physically scan. For example, one “mandated report” turned out to be 8 reports from various consultants, filled with fold-out maps.

This project was undertaken for two reasons. The first was to expand access to the reports required by the Legislature. The second was to gain experience in saving electronic documents and scanning those that were not available electronically. The hope is to expand electronic archiving to all the state documents acquired by the Library.

Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - April 2004

Administration

- Robbie and Carol attended a session by Bob Herskovitz of the Minnesota Historical Society on drafting a disaster recovery plan. While we thought it would give us useful information to create a plan in the future, it turned out we launched on a process to complete one with Bob's help.

Web

Development

- Our annual Electronic Clean-up Day was held on April 23. Our server load was noticeably lightened, and everyone enjoyed the pizza that Lisa provided. Leif convened an LNET meeting on April 29; Randi and Robbie attended. We will be updating the look of the legislative web site this summer, and Brenda Van Dyck and Randi will be working on checking the usability of the current site structure.

Information

Systems

Activities

- Leif conducted an LSIG meeting on April 22. Shortly before the meeting, he focus changed to "How can LSIG function without Jana?" and "What should we do now?" Jana Bolmer resigned her position with the Revisor's Office, and she had been conducting most of the network security/firewall duties for the LCC and Senate. The managers of the affected offices attended as well.

- Ruth continued work on making PDF E-burst software to work, and with Lisa's help, succeeded!

- Ruth helped Linda Schmitt in the Senate with a tricky Access query problem.

- Ruth started converting the Periodicals section the Acquisitions database to Access 2000.

Collections

Activities

- We decided to no longer keep print copies of the Administrative Hearings decisions. We have kept them for one year in paper, but now the database-driven access from the Office of Administrative Hearings seems reliable and up-to-date. Save a tree! Save filing time!

- Kelly processed 48 Added Volumes, withdrew 2 items, and claimed 56 missing Periodicals issues: 16 were EBSCO, 24 were Free, 12 were Minnesota Periodicals and 4 were Order Direct. She shelfread in the HV to JK range.

Reference activities

- Prompted by the unusual amount of commissioner confirmation controversy this year, Elizabeth, Carol, & Paul created a new Senate Confirmations notebook.
- Elizabeth and Randi met with Michelle Kibiger about an intern for the summer to enter LegDB data from Toensing, but before any results could happen, Michelle left the legislature for the Department of Public Safety.
- The LRL librarians hosted a lunchtime meeting with the Librarians from the State Law Library on how to deal with information overload.
- Several staff worked on our latest new guide, "Senate Confirmations: Problematic Governor Appointments", lists of appointees who were rejected, resigned, or fired before Senate confirmation.
- Carol noted, "A few weeks ago in a Discuss Books meeting, someone made the comment that we don't have much immigration information on Links to the World. It was decided that the Demographics page would be a good place to add some. And so I have. The page is arranged: MN, Federal, Other. I thought it wouldn't match the page structure to add a separate section on immigration so I added 4 sites in the appropriate categories. (Also: the MN Demographic Center's A to Z subject guide links to a variety of MN immigration stats and reports.)"
- Sarah trained Alissa to import and edit records on MnPALS, and continued to review items cataloged by Alissa and Carol.

Reference questions - a sample

- Background on the Metropolitan Airports Commission vendor contracts. (pv)
- Information on user fee increases in the late 80s. Didn't find the massive increases that the Rep. expected but I did find that the sales tax was extended to numerous services in that time frame. (pv)
- Background on the expenditure by Commissioner Jax related to an expensive briefcase. (pv)
- Answered the ever popular questions related to the physician gift law, tenant's damage deposits, and whether or not the state regulates tattoo parlors. (pv)
- Information about states that have passed bills similar to the Taxpayers Protection Act. (rm)
- Information on regional sports channels owned by sports teams and the size of their cable markets. (rm)
- Average bet in casinos, by age. (sq)
- Phone companies authorized to provide service in Cass Lake, MN. (sq)

Legislative History Activities

- Tape Room research this month included the 1997 welfare reform bill, 2003 online learning, 2004 sex offender changes, 1995 tax bill, and 2003 eminent domain bill. Paul met with Barry LaGrave to work out the new House tape copying procedures.

Training and tours conducted by staff

- David gave a tour to a new House page, and an introduction to the Library to a college class of 20.
- Randi gave a page introduction to 10 new House pages.

Training and meetings attended by

- Randi attended a North Star Theme Managers meeting. They are going to use Links to the World pages for related links for many themes - certainly a compliment to our work!
- Randi spoke to the SLA Solo Librarians group on keeping up with technology.

staff

- Robbie attended a demonstration of the Xtend system being developed by the Revisor's Office.

Fan Mail

- It's nice to get occasional messages regarding the usability of the Legislative Web site. A state agency employee wrote, "Just wanted to say that this website is very user friendly. I was able to find most of what I needed without having to call people and ask for explanations or seek missing information. Thanks!"
The 55 thank-you e-mails I noted included some interesting comments. David scanned lists of legislators from the 1960s for someone who replied, "Wow!!!! Thank you so much. You can't imagine what a walk down memory lane that is. We really appreciate your assistance. I - and friends who used to hang around the Legislature back then - are trying to put together a reunion and rounding up names and addresses where possible." Or how about "Once again, YOU GUYS ROCK!" There are frequent responses about the speed of service, like "Thanks!! This is great and, as usual, very quick," and "Thanks!! This is great and, as usual, very quick." From the Illinois Department of Corrections, "I think you've gone far beyond the call of duty on this one." That researcher also noted something we like to hear - that we find what others can't! "Mr. Schmidtke, Thanks for the information. This is the best email I've received on this subject. Prior to emailing MN LLR, I've checked with the State of Minnesota, two professors at the U. of M., and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA). Someone at the State suggested the U. of M., and a criminal justice professor directed me to a kind sociology professor on sabbatical at Cambridge University who suggested the BCA, and the BCA sent me in your direction." We help lots of folks with research on family members who served in the Legislature. One wrote, "You are SO GOOD! THANK YOU...THAT'S HIM. Bless you!"

Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - May 2004

Administration

- Our annual Physical Clean-up Day meant many staff spaces and communal areas got much-needed attention! We celebrated at noon that day with another annual event, the sub sandwich potluck.
- The design company for the Tape Room/Reading Room remodeling project was chosen.
- Lisa prepared budget numbers for Robbie predicting what would be left for FY04 and what we might be spending in FY05. They met to pore over the categories and begin to plan for the second half of the biennium.

Web Development

- Randi attended a web site usability workshop and worked with Brenda Van Dyck from House Research on testing the usability of the legislature's web site. They will observe 5 volunteers attempting to find nine different pieces of information.

Information Systems Activities

- Ruth continued working on switching the Acquisitions database to Access 2000. She finished the Periodicals module and is almost done with Suppliers.
- Leif and Lisa worked long and diligently to move our file and print services to a new server – a long-awaited improvement! Despite the fact they found what they thought would be an efficient wizard to accomplish migrating all of the files and directories, nothing is ever as smooth as anticipated. A longer description of the server migration trials is at the end of this report. I thought the trickiness of dealing with change and improvement deserved to be documented!
- Ruth continued work with PDF Eburst. She discovered she can't put the patron ID number in the subject line. On the plus side she found out she can replace the header page with something of our own and not the page that came with PDF Eburst.
- Lisa updated all staff computers with the link to the time card system because the server that it resides on changed.
- Lisa installed the new version of Connexion (cataloging software from OCLC) on staff computers.
- The ongoing spyware wars. Lisa reported, "the Circdesk staff were having problems with their computer, IE, Realaudio, etc. I cleaned it all up and ran spyware on this computer and cleaned up many, many things this way. I ran spyware on everyone's computer once when I went around to do a round of computer updates."
- Lisa worked with Ruth; her workstation was having problems with Access wizards. It took many days of trying things and finally what worked was to bring back an old ghost of Ruth's computer configuration. Now it seems that everything is running fine.

Collections Activities

- Kelly processed 45 Added Volumes, withdrew 22 items, and claimed 40 missing Periodicals issues: 11 were EBSCO, 18 were Free and 11 were Minnesota Periodicals. She shelfread from JK6131 .G85 1998 c.2 to JS308 .C46. She weeded the 6 month periodicals.
- Sarah cracked the ALEPH enumeration code! As she wrote in an e-mail to David, "Following a diabolical series of clues and secrets whispered from unholy crypts located outside time and space, I have managed to make the items in the Governor's proposed budget sort in correct chronological order..."
- Sarah continued to send vast numbers of questions to PALS regarding

database indexing and display. She also wrote training materials on creating and editing MnPALS item and holdings records.

Reference activities

- Elizabeth served on the MINITEX Electronic Information Resources (MEIR) Task Force for the RFP on statewide licensing of electronic resources, earning the profuse appreciation of MINITEX staff for the *days* of work that it entailed. MINITEX announced the recommendations of the Task Force. In concert with University of Minnesota Purchasing, MINITEX will begin negotiating with (1) EBSCO Publishing for a suite of general and scholarly databases aimed primarily at academic, public, and government library users, (2) Gale Group for K-12 electronic resources, and (3) OCLC for WorldCat.

- Elizabeth and David hosted the new State Librarian, Suzanne Miller, for a tour and discussion of how our Library acquires state documents.

- We submitted an LSTA Letter of Intent for a grant to examine cataloging issues related to keeping electronic copies of state documents. It was a shot in the dark, and a creative proposal, since our needs did not mesh exactly with the priorities established for this round of grants.

- When was the effective date of August 1 for Minnesota Statutes enacted? (1971) (pv)

- Jim Ulland called to find out when he resigned from the legislature.(pv)

- Information on Minnesota's law allowing newborns to be dropped off at hospitals with no questions asked.(pv)

- Reporter needed data on past special sessions.(pv)

- Minnesota court case related to the Defense of Marriage.(pv)

- What are the laws related to stop payments of checks?(pv)

- Information on the MN milk price law. (MS 32.72)(pv)

- Information on trade agreements and agricultural subsidies in Brazil (rm)

- Workforce centers: everything and anything about them (rm)

- Same sex marriage in other countries (rm)

Reference questions - a sample

Legislative History Activities

- Legislative history research topics included taxes on laundry services, mechanics liens, & Con-Con lands.

Training and meetings attended by staff

- Randi attended the Special Libraries Association annual business meeting
- Randi attended a North Star meeting.
- Ruth attended SQL level 1 and 2 training. This will really help in creating Web-available databases.

- Sarah attended a CALCO meeting.

- Robbie participated in an NCSL Staff Section officers conference call.

- Carol and Robbie attended the second of a two-part seminar on preparing a Library Disaster Recovery Plan.

- Robbie presented two sessions at the annual government documents librarians' Spring Forum. One was a presentation on the future of state documents, and the other was on the Legislative Web Site, as part of a panel on "Government Web Sites I Can't Live Without."

- Randi and Elizabeth presented current library intranet research options to the Legislative Auditor program evaluation staff.

- David gave a tour to a new Senate intern.

- Sarah got married! The rest of the staff heard about it only a couple of days before it happened!

- Jess Hopeman 4/6/1998 6 years at LRL!

- It wasn't exactly a healthy month for library staff. Sarah got pneumonia,

Training given by staff

Staff news

Fan mail!

Robbie got shingles, and most devastating, Alissa broke her foot on the last day of the month.

- Steve Alger and Jake Hamlin from the House Sergeant's Office wrote in appreciation, "Reference Librarians, Thank you to each of you for taking the time to introduce the Legislative Library to the high school pages and for assisting them on research for mock committee debates. We look forward to working with you in the future with the return of high school pages in 2005.
- Paul received a note from a friend in graduate school who related, "Just had to send you a note to tell you that your website was shown as a shining example by Shane in our Internet Class. Several of us found it very helpful just to see how to start on that project."
- The 30 e-mail thank you notes included enthusiasm. "Wow...you're great! Thank you!" Some people even remember the service long after it takes place. "You scanned and sent me this report almost a month ago and I do not think I ever thanked. So now thank you very, very much! You saved me a lot of time and the report was very useful to my research." A creative thank you: "David, this is incredibly valuable. Thank you tons, amigo!"

Server Trials – or, Why Can't it Work the First Time?

May 3. Leif and Lisa made a valiant attempt to bring our new file server to life. Beginning after the rest of the staff members headed for home, they had high hopes that a server installation wizard would migrate the files and the directory structure from the old server to the new. To do so, they soon realized, meant more preparation than they had anticipated. Just like painting a room always requires more time patching and preparing than you anticipated, the server migration required patching and preparing too – of the technical kind. By about 10:30 they were ready to run the migration wizard, slated to take 5 hours. They returned at 6, hopeful they would be done before work time began, but - poof! - the migration failed on the last step. Time synching between the two servers was off, and to fix that they needed to restart the old server. That zapped the process. Back to square one, more knowledgeable, but discouraged. But at least they felt they learned the tricks that will lead to a successful migration on the next round.

The second attempt worked, but did not migrate all the rights to the various directories and folders. This meant a tedious prescribing of the rights once again. Also, automatic "features" like file compression caused bugs like preventing the Table of Contents script to run, the Harbor backup not to run, and folders of e-mail messages to disappear(!) Slowly but surely, the bugs were detected and the new system was in place within the week. A few bugs remained, like the fact that we couldn't back up the server to the Harbor LAN system at Intertech. Diligently, Lisa and Leif plugged away at assigning rights and backing up, and finally it was all in place. Now, on to the next server project!

Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - June 2004

June marked the beginning of the process of planning for library remodeling and incorporating the legislative history materials into our sixth floor space.

Administration

At the managers meeting on June 15, the managers began their quarterly review of library projects, assigning priorities to the most pressing summer projects.

Web

Development

- Randi conducted usability testing of the Legislature's web site with Brenda Van Dyck of House Research.
- Randi attended DreamWeaver MX training to learn about cascading style sheets, among other things.
- Randi and Leif attended an LNET meeting. An LNET subgroup, led by Randi, will be meeting in July to work on updating the look and navigation of the site.

Information Systems Activities

- Ruth created 566 issues of the June *Just In* listing of new and notable documents. She created the equivalent web page and sent the file to NCSL as well.
- Ruth continued converting the Acquisitions database to Access 2000, finishing the Consultant's section.
- Ruth created a Word table of number of Inside Issues and Contents Pages users over time for Robbie. It wasn't easy; we didn't attempt to keep that number over time. We probably should, however, since it reveals usage of the library's services.

Collections Activities

- An uncommon and remarkable story noted by Jess: "A finally GOOD story related to book costs...I called Micawbers initially to see if they could order this book for us. The price they listed was \$160, and since the Gale website listed it as \$140, I told them to hold off. I called Gale, and finally heard from them this morning. It seems this book has been discounted just through this month. To \$35."
- Jess finished entering all of the mandated reports from the 2004 legislative session into the Acquisitions database.
- David made a trip to the State Law Library to see how they use the Aleph online circulation system. To make matters difficult, the system is both non-intuitive in many ways, and has NO documentation.
- Another bar coding clean-up project. After the bar coding was completed, Robbie went through a cart of Minnesota documents that were candidates for "fiche only" retention. She replaced the print copies in some cases. Kelly then fixed the MNPALS records.
- Kelly processed 35 Added Volumes, and withdrew 11 items from our collection. She claimed 43 missing Periodicals issues. Shelfreading, such a useful task, ranged from JS308 .C46 1992 to KF9685.A8. She did her annual weeding of the periodicals we hold for 1,2,5, or 10 years, and started weeding the 4 year periodicals.
- During the bar coding process we identified many older Minnesota Documents that we decided to keep only in microfiche. In June, Kelly changed the records for 95 Minnesota documents to microfiche only.
- The librarians discussed the products offered by Serials Solutions, a company that offers a customized list of all periodicals accessible by a library, and an article linking service to lead users from a bibliographic citation to full text. The service is interesting, and has possibilities in the future, but for now

Reference activities

would not warrant its cost.

- All of the *Links to the World* editors madly worked on updating and editing their pages, in order to get the candy bars promised by Randi, and cake from Sarah. (Well, that and just a great work ethic, too!)
- Toshi and Bill did a great job of copying all of the Arne Carlson clippings that Robbie weeded. The Carlson administrations were weeded down to four binders of materials.
- Carol and Robbie vacuumed the donated old legislative books. Interestingly, the most fun book to vacuum was the one with dried mold. It came off so well. Bill used the HEPA-filtered vacuum cleaner on loan from the Historical Society to clean the Law collection in the Reading Room. Reportedly the dust was especially thick on the bottom shelves, nearer to foot traffic.
- Ona Keller began work as an intern, to enter Toensing data into the Legislative Database. She is a recent graduate of Minneapolis Southwest High School and she will be going to Wellesley College in the fall. Ona worked closely with Randi, Elizabeth, and Ruth.
- Alissa broke her foot! Bad for us, and worse for her, of course. Paul took over her ILL duties, and massaged the schedule to stretch our already-thin staff due to flexible scheduling and vacations.

Reference
questions - a
sample

- Assisted the Governor's office with several research projects related to Carlson's veto of the redistricting bill. (pv)
- Rep. wanted Dean Johnson quotes on DOMA & a special session. (pv)
- Determined the median household income in Minnesota for several years for an author. (pv)
- Assisted House Research in finding a joint resolution that called for a federal constitutional convention. (1965) (pv)
- Lots of information about Brazil for a legislator planning a trip. (rm)
- Information on faith-base initiatives (rm)
- Tape Room research included the 2004 liquor law changes, 1999 pay phone deregulation, 2000 intoxicated minors' provider liability, 1996 immigrants & notary public solicitation, 2003 refuse derived fuel, 2003 energy plant on the Iron Range, & 2003 feedlot changes.

Legislative
History
Activities

Training and
meetings
attended by
staff

- Robbie attended the METRONET Annual Meeting, held at the brand new Metropolitan State College Library.
- Robbie attended a METRONET-sponsored meeting to plan a Disaster Plan workshop for librarians statewide.

Training given
by staff

- David gave a tour to a new House Republican Research staff member.

Staff news

- Alissa broke her foot! Bad for us, and worse for her, of course.

Fan mail!

- Jim Cleary appended this note on an e-mail to David. "PS: Last Friday, four of my former professors and colleagues from the Sociology Department at the U of Mn stopped over for a rare visit and discussion of House Research's role in the Legislature. Wouldn't you know, they seemed most impressed by the LRL itself. Please let your colleagues there know that.

▪ From 42 e-mail thank you notes: Elizabeth heard, "Wow, that is a lot of information. Thank you so much for all of your help and research. I'm quite impressed with your speedy reply, and obviously you put some time into this." It's not unusual to hear from students with projects. "Dear Mr. David Schmidtke, I really appreciate your time in helping with my research on the railroad gate arms bill for school. All of the information was SOOO helpful!! Thank you so much!" One requestor appreciated Carol's expertise. "It is truly refreshing to hear from someone who understands that the picture of a document which has been scanned is different from a document put through ocr software." People like fast responses! "Thank you very much for extremely expeditious response!" Rather than send some documents on ILL far away, we scan them and send a copy electronically. This was appreciated by a University in New York. "What a great service! ! Thank you so much. I really appreciate your help." We don't know where this requestor was from, but probably not Minnesota. "Mr. Schmidtke, Thank you for your intelligent, quick, and very helpful response to my inquiry. It is reassuring to know that Minnesotans have your expertise." A librarian colleague wrote in response to a session law question, "Oh amazing one, Ye of incredible memory hath indeed identified the information I was looking for. Would that the rest of the world were as competent as thou...tee hee...thanks..." Reading these over time, the most common phrases in the thank you notes are variations of "This was EXACTLY what I needed" and "Thanks for the FAST response." This user is grateful just to know we are here when needed. "thank-you, I will refer to this in the future. I appreciate your reply in this matter. Just knowing you are there is a great help to me. THANK-YOU AGAIN!!"

Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - July 2004

- Administration*
- A modest note on saving money: We use EBSCO, a magazine subscription service, to handle our subscriptions. It helps tremendously, reducing time and paperwork on our end, and for most titles, getting us a modest discount. That doesn't always hold true for local titles for which EBSCO has only a few customers. Those titles can cost way more than a direct subscription. It's worth watching. We just discovered that we could order the local Indian newspaper, *The Circle*, from EBSCO for one year for \$40.00, yet get TWO years for \$36.00 is we order direct. Needless to say, we are opting to order it on our own.
 - Robbie planned a seminar for legislative commission managers, "Management Response to Staff Needs in the Face of Workplace Violence or Tragedy." Robbie, Elizabeth, David, and Randi attended.
- Web Development*
- Robbie created uniform graphics for the ZONA page buttons and eliminated several unused graphics files; Randi cleaned up the coding in the directory so all the pages worked! Randi made additional tweaks and corrections to the ZONA intranet page.
 - Our summer intern, Ona, leapt right in to adding records to the legislator database. While Ruth was looking at statistics in mid-July, she noted that Ona had already added records for 658 legislators!
- Information Systems Activities*
- Ruth created 561 issues of the July *Just In* listing of new and notable documents. She created the equivalent web page and sent the file to NCSL as well.
 - Ruth printed out April - June 2004 Inside Issues citations for the reference folder.
 - Ruth created stats report in Inside Issues comparing paper requests to electronic for Elizabeth.
 - Ruth finished documenting Assignments database.
 - Ruth continued converting the Acquisitions database to Access 2000. She finished the items section.
- Collections Activities*
- David and Sarah and figured out a way to use MNPALS to pull out a set of URLs to run through a link checker. This interim solution will serve us well until a new version of ALEPH has a built in capacity to do this.
 - We received a gift of many old Session Laws and Journals from Phyllis Kendig at St. Paul Public Library. Robbie went through all the volumes we have. Many were duplicates, and in many cases, one was way better than the other, and can be used without boxing. In all, we have sixteen books that need boxes.
 - Robbie wrote a letter to Greg Downing at the Environmental Quality Board, requesting that the Library receive Environmental Impact Statements, but not other environmental review documents (EAWs, Scoping documents, etc.). Those items receive almost no use, and we no longer have the space to house them, nor the staff to process and manage them.
 - We completed the rfp process for ongoing contract cataloging services. MINITEX was the chosen vendor, and the contract is good until June 30, 2007.
 - Kelly processed 63 Added Volumes, withdrew 7 items from our collection, and claimed 45 missing Periodicals issues: 10 were EBSCO, 20 were Free and 15 were Minnesota Periodicals. She shelfread from KF9685 .G66 - L903 .M6 M67 1980x.
 - Kelly finished weeding the 4 year periodicals and the Minnesota Periodicals

Reference activities

- David gave a tutorial to the public services staff on constructing 'common command language' (CCL) searches on MNPALS.
- Sarah and Robbie participated in an annual ritual – helping edit the Senate State Fair poll. Since the Senate Information Office solicits questions from various senators and staff, the questions are sometimes a bit slanted, and often in need of serious editing.
- The LINKS TO THE WORLD editors reviewed their pages, making additions and deletions.
- Elizabeth and Robbie attended a Virtual Reference meeting held at the MN Department of Education. It was useful to hear about the experiences of area libraries with the technology, but it did not seem like an avenue we should pursue.

Training and meetings attended by staff

- Robbie participated in her final NCSL Legislative Research Librarians officers conference call, finishing her tenure as the past president.
- Robbie attended a METRONET meeting for continued planning of a statewide Disaster Planning workshop.

Training and tours given by staff

- David gave short tours to two people interviewing for jobs with the House Research Department.

Staff News

- Really big news! Randi accepted a position as the Head of Public and Electronic Services at the Minnesota State Law Library. Great for her, but a loss for the Library, and the Legislature.

Fan mail!

- 29 e-mail notes of appreciation turned up this month for answering reference requests. Most were along the lines of, "Thank you. That did the trick!" and "Thank you for your assistance - very timely I might add - that's appreciated!"
- Carol received a thank you after assembling articles for a legislative staffer to use in an NCSL presentation. She wrote, "Just a note of feedback on those outsourcing articles: they were fabulous! I moderated the NCSL session last Thursday with 2 experts, one from the Cato Institute and one from Good Jobs First * and I was able to give background on Minnesota's concerns directly from those articles! As a result, the session went very well. Thanks bunches!"
- It's interesting to hear a bit of how the information we send is used. After sending a copy of a very old session law, David heard, "Thank you. Your response is a tremendous help in moving forward a meeting between the Dept. of Finance and the Dept. of Natural Resources."
- One of Sarah's patrons wrote, "Thank you very much for your assistance-- and for responding so quickly! Studying state legislative history is both wonderful and incredibly demanding, and your help was greatly appreciated."

Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - August 2004

Administration

- Technology can be so costly, in staff time and equipment. Just think of the ever-increasing demands of computer and network security. On the other hand, Lisa noted a remarkable fact. "Our long distance phone charges in August were only \$8.70. I think that has to be an all time low! That is amazing since about 4 or 5 years ago we would average around \$200 per month in long distance charges."

- Robbie, Carol, Lisa, and Sarah completed the Library's "Emergency Procedures and Disaster Recovery Manual." It will be an appendix to the Library's staff handbook.

Web

Development

Randi coordinated the revamp of the Legislative Web site with many offices in the LNET group. We're redoing the main page, the banner and a bit of the navigation, incorporating stylesheets for many of them.

Information

Systems

Activities

- Ruth made a terrific change to the SCAN program. Now staff members can use a button to quickly look up who has a particular topic, or conversely, which topics a particular user has. This is really helpful when working with a staff member or legislator, and knowing whether to suggest he or she add a topic for ongoing information on a topic.

- Ruth created 553 issues of the June *Just In* listing of new and notable documents. She created the equivalent web page and sent the file to NCSL as well.

- Ruth created a report for Elizabeth from LegDB of all Legislators who served Carver County. This started a discussion on how to get a complete list of counties served from both the blue card county field and the district field in term records. She created a query to get the county name from the district table. She will be adding this information to the blue card county field and working on the data entry form to add this information automatically.

- Ruth cleaned up tags on automatic web page reports from my databases. She did this to make the pages work with our new cascading style sheets.

- Ruth continued working on converting the Acquisitions database Access 2000. She worked on the Mandates section.

Collections

Activities

- Robbie and Sarah went to the Historical Society to learn how to make archival boxes; we will need to construct sixteen for old *House* and *Senate Journals*.

- Many of the CALCO libraries are migrating to Aleph in the next Delta group. David helped Pat Fenton from DEED with the mapping document needed to set up the tables on the new system.

- Kelly processed 44 Added Volumes, and claimed 55 missing Periodicals issues. She shelfread from L903.M6 P67 to LB2826 .M6 S82 1984/85. She continued work on converting MNPLAS records for older Minnesota documents to microfiche only.

Reference

activities

- Sarah and Robbie helped edit the Senate State Fair. In one way, it was quite successful. Fairgoers had no complaints about the questions, and didn't accuse us of slanting things. On the other hand, the poll wasn't so successful because Anoka County officials didn't supply the right card when replacing a malfunctioning machine, and half the results taken at the Fair were lost! Robbie volunteered at the Senate State Fair booth.

- Randi wrote the August *Just In* essay about the new EBSCO databases.

Legislative
History
Activities
Training and
meetings
attended by
staff

- Robbie convened a meeting of librarians to choose this year's notable state documents, to be featured at the GODORT booth at the Minnesota Library Association Meeting. The selection team was: Bill Wittenbreer (Augsburg College), Jeff Radford (Minneapolis Public Library), Kate Nelson (MN Department of Human Services), Laurel Steibler (MN State Law Library), Donna Davis (MN Department of Revenue), Anita Anderson (MN Attorney General Library), John Heinz (University of St. Thomas). Three librarians from the Legislative Reference Library participated: Carol Blackburn, Sarah Quimby, and Robbie LaFleur. The process always seems difficult going it, but the result is usually satisfying. Bill Wittenbreer wrote, "I really enjoyed the meeting yesterday - it was a marvelous process because the consensus just seemed to evolve naturally."
- Leif and Robbie met with Senate IS staff about their plans to purchase equipment to digitally record committee hearings.

Fan Mail

- 41 messages of appreciation came by e-mail in August.
- Led to a number of Websites by David, a legislator responded, "David, these are just great sites. Thanks so much."
 - We have helped home-schooling families a number of times. Paul heard, "wow. You are so awesome. I wish I knew about this before I started home schooling. Just another mistake I made before we started! I'm so much better educated now. Thank you thank you for your support. God Bless. This is the day the Lord hath made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalms 118:24. Blessed be, Lynda"
 - Elizabeth received this amusing thank you. "Thanks so much. The website went back up yesterday afternoon. Your kindness and professionalism are always appreciated by the observant. The unobservant do not matter."
 - We like thinking that helping people means fewer trips cars on the road. David heard, "This is perfect. I was anticipating a trip to the Capitol, not that that would have been a bad thing, but this makes everything much easier. Thank you for your help."
 - An enthusiastic person wrote to Sarah, "Thanks for the quick response...I am truly amazed and delighted with the response time....you are doing a great job and I will look into the information you have given me....thanks again..."
 - A state agency employee recognized the usefulness of our library, writing, "Thank you Randi - you people up there are always so helpful!"

Staff News

- We held a reception in honor of Randi on August 17.

Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - September 2004

Administration

- Robbie arranged for two informational seminars for LCC staff on records management. Bob Horton, State Archivist, conducted the sessions. Several library staff were able to attend one or both sessions; Robbie, Carol, David, Mike, Lisa, and Paul.

Information

Systems

Activities

- Robbie, Carol, Sarah, and Lisa finished the final edits on the *Library's Emergency & Disaster Planning Manual*.

- Leif dealt with a planned power outage in the State Office Building by the Department of Administration on September 21. He came in shortly before the outage was due to begin, to shut down the servers in an orderly fashion and avoid having them move to the back-up UPS system and then shut down after the ½ hour battery life. He waited until right before the outage to inconvenience Web site users as little as possible. The UPS batteries are similar to car batteries; the more times they cycle down, the more quickly they wear out. Leif then came in to turn on the servers when the outage is finished. This doesn't always help our users access all the Web Site pages, however, since other offices sometimes wait until the following morning to turn on their servers again.

- We purchased a new scanner to use at the reference desk. It was inexpensive, less than \$400, yet scans (and hence, copies, in color), and produces PDF files that have been OCR'd. New capabilities and not having to run back to the scanners on the copy machines will really help the public services staff. Shortly after it arrived, Robbie had Lisa scan an article that included color charts that would have been much less useful in black and white. Lisa also scanned and OCR'd a number of documents for the Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women. They wanted to get searchable full text up of some previously print-only statistics. The scanner can also double as a color copier. Paul mentioned that we supplied a color copy to a user who was then amazed at how great the library is.

- Mike began on September 9, and received his first spam message right at the end of September. This is interesting because the address is not posted anywhere, and Mike distributes the address very carefully. No one is immune!

- Ruth created 548 issues of the September *Just In* listing of new and notable documents. She created the equivalent web page and sent the file to NCSL as well.

- Ruth added buttons to the Inside Issues Scan database to look up a patron's topics and also which patrons are receiving a topic.

- Ruth created business cards in-house for Mike and then ordered some 'real' ones from Roger's Print Shop.

- Ruth met with Linda Schmitt from the Senate to help her with some Access database problems.

- Ruth put an icon on Toshi's computer to the LegDB so he can do some data entry in the future.

- Ruth updated the Public Services picture sheet. Printed and created PDF file. This time we are keeping it in color, so we can print out either color or black-and-white copies.

- Ruth continued working on moving the Acquisitions database to Access 2000. "Getting close!" she reported.

- A number of staff attended a meeting to discuss online circulation in the Library. (DS, SQ, RL, EL, PV, JS) The results were very interesting, because they truly reflected a wide-ranging discussion of the issues involved, and

Collections

Activities

resulted in completely different decisions than we thought *might* occur. We decided not to do a 'PLIF' load of all of our users on to the system, because some legislative staff may never use the library and may resent being automatically added to the database. We considered making custom, easy-to-remember bar codes, but decided that standardization within the system was wiser. Otherwise, LRL cardholders may find it difficult to use other libraries.

- Robbie and Sarah went to the History Center and after receiving instruction, made sixteen boxes for about the same materials cost as rebinding one volume. The decrepit volumes will be held snugly, and have a uniform look.

- David figured out a method to do link checking of the URLs we have on MNPALS records.

- Kelly processed 53 added volumes and withdrew 4 items from the circulating collection. She claimed 45 missing Periodical issues and shelfread from LC144.M6 M65x to PS92 .N37. As another part of bar coding clean-up she also looked for items that did not have a barcode on the shelf.

- Kelly searched for Minnesota document records on a list given run by David, using MNPALS to see if there was a URL for the Minn. Doc. No. or not.

- Kelly finished a project converting 1008 Minnesota Documents from 1980-1988 to "Microfiche only" using ALEPH, a total of 1008 records.

- Peggy Lahammer provided training on LEXIS-NEXIS at the Library for the reference librarians.

- Robbie revamped the bibliography that the Senate Information Office sends to their college interns each year. This year's bibliography was heavier on Web content than in the past, and changed it's title from "Suggested Readings on the Legislature" to "Background Readings on the Legislature."

- Mike took the revamped LINKS TO THE WORLD pages that had been turned in to Randi, and made the final few needed edits.

- Robbie was asked for advice on finding the CORE reports. When I pointed out that the full text of many and summaries of the remaining ones could be found on our Web site (we scanned them in), another person wrote and said she had found them on the Web. Of course she had found OUR site and scanned copies.

Reference
activities

Reference
questions - a
sample

Training and
meetings
attended by
staff

- Elizabeth attended a meeting of House members and staff to plan the orientation for new House members elected this fall.

- Robbie met with Lee Ann Schutz from House Research and Linda Falkman and Barbara Trebisovsky from the Minnesota Newspaper Association about ways to inform MNA association members about resources for covering the Legislature.

- Mike took over Randi's traditional role as a representative of the Legislature on the North Star editorial group.

- Robbie attended a PALS Deans/Directors Meeting on Sept. 9.

- Robbie attended the Minntrodocs meeting held at the Roseville Library.

The new state librarian, Suzanne Miller, spoke, and Robbie updated the group on our State Document plans.

- Ruth attended HTML level 2 training.

- We celebrated two significant anniversaries in September. It is Paul's 20th anniversary with LRL. Paul's anniversary date is 9/15/1984, he really started at the library 9/5/1983 as a library aide. Elizabeth's anniversary date is September 15, 1989. It is her 15th anniversary at LRL. She started as an hourly person on January 3, 1989 and became full-time on March 1, 1989.

- Robbie did a Google search on her name, and found an acknowledgement on a paper by a scholar from MIT, "Voting Cues and the Incumbency Advantage: A Critical Test."

http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/seminars/hirano_s04.pdf "We thank Robbie LaFleur at the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library for assistance

Staff news

Fan Mail

gathering data.”

- 37 e-mail messages of thanks appeared this month.
- Our patron’s appreciate the materials we send, evidenced by the Senate staffer who wrote, “Elizabeth, Thank you very much for that information! We could even get a little fresh air if we wanted to walk down there!”
- Often a simple request elicits the most effusive response. A link to a bill online led to this message to Robbie, “You are wonder woman! Thanks so much.”
- Many times reference questions are from people who just wanted to make sure they didn’t miss something. David heard, “Mr Schmidtke: Thank you very much for your prompt response and confirmation that I wasn't overlooking something. I'm writing a book on Freedom of Assembly an am included an Appendix with relevant portions of state constitutions.”
- Our patrons remember our great work. While talking with Elizabeth one day, a Senate staffer said, “Say hello to Sarah for me. She did a great job a couple of weeks ago for me. I appreciate you guys so much.”
- Sarah received a note showing how we deliver superior service. “Thanks for all your help. I understand no "legal" help can be offered. I could not find anything outlining the specific operation limitations of such vehicle, so I've called the state patrol to see what they have to say. Public Safety offered no help at all, so thank you for doing what you did! It's not a full answer, but better direction than anyone in the state system has offered a person. Sad, isn't it? John”

Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - October 2004

Administration

- Lisa participated in the Legislative staff group that organizes the annual combined charities campaign. This year the group also planned a used book drive to raise extra money for the campaign.
- Our digital camera received little use of late, since Robbie tended to use her own digital camera for documentation. So we offered it to the LCC, and it has been lent to the Revisor's Office – they were thrilled to get it.
- Lisa and Robbie attended a meeting at the Department of Education about how to handle the financial aspects of executing our LSTA grant. It was confusing!

Web

Development

- Mike and Leif spent a great deal of time troubleshooting the code for the Web site redesign. It was particularly tricky to get all of the sections of the page script to work together; tables to line up, the 'includes' sections to display properly.

Information

Systems

Activities

- Ruth created the Notable State Documents 2004 web page.
- Leif dealt with two more power outages, on the 25th and 27th. See the September Monthly Report for a detailed description of what that entails and why.
- The McAfee virus scanning software on the file and print server had not been working of late, a problem Leif solved by installing the newest version of the software. (Normally we don't upgrade the software until the license registration comes up for renewal.)
- Leif and Paul met with Senate staff about their new processes for recording committee hearings and floor session in digital format, onto flash cards.
- Lisa and Leif examined the possibility of using Ariel software for the Inside Issues service. It was not suited to the task.
- Ruth printed out July - Sept. 2004 Inside Issues cites for Reference folder.
- Ruth created new Groupwise email addressbook import file for the Senate.
- Ruth created 539 issues of the October *Just In* listing of new and notable documents. She created the equivalent web page and sent the file to NCSL as well.
- Ruth took care of a myriad of details in the process of updating our materials for newly-elected legislators and the upcoming new session. She reformatted the updated information for the Library brochure and sent it to the print shop, and updated the *Subject Guide to Magazines*. She updated the format of the Inside Issues topics list for the new members mailing and created new Inside Issues and Inside Issues Books and Reports samples.
- The Tape Room remodeling meant much inventory work for Ruth. She added a few new locations in the Inventory database: Ground Storage, Minutes Room, and Surplus. She started putting together a list for State Surplus, mostly of spare items from the Tape Room we were abandoning. Remarkably, Surplus took everything we offered. We thought they were going to be picky and we might even have to pay to have some items discarded.
- David, Carol, Elizabeth, and Robbie met and determined that we will no longer maintain paper files of agency minutes. We will transfer the Minutes we currently have in paper to the State Archives. We will maintain the PALS records for those collections because they are the entry point to the documents at the Archives. The most crucial steps in the process are the first, as we need to remove the cabinet holding the Minutes to make room for the pay copier. Toshi began boxing the Minutes right away.

Collections

Activities

Reference
activities

- We took advantage of an offer from the MNPALS office to customize the MNPALS display screens. Basically, we opted to remove many listed options that are not functional for our library – a great clean-up effort!
- We received three sets of *2002 Minnesota Statutes* as gifts. Our worry about having to send these volumes to the landfill were allayed when a man called the reference desk, and wanted all three sets, and would even come to pick them up! We also offered the duplicate statutes and *Session Laws* from the Tape Room, and the *Session Law* set found a home at Minnesota State University, Mankato.
- After the Secretary of State's office published the most recent edition of the Legislative Manual, copies were sent to public libraries around the state. State universities were overlooked. We were able to find copies of the current manual and sent them off to several state university libraries that requested them.
- We had an extra set of Session Laws and Statutes as a result of consolidating the Tape Room upstairs. We offered the volumes on the MINITEX list, and found a home for most of the volumes at Minnesota State University, Mankato.
- Alissa worked on a list of broken links on MNPALS records.
- Kelly processed 115 Added Volumes, withdrew 9 items from the Circulating Collection, and claimed 40 missing Periodical issues: 19 were EBSCO, 9 were Free, 11 were Minnesota Periodicals and 1 was an Order Direct.
- The librarians met for initial session planning. It was decided to revamp our brochure, just slightly. We also planned new forms for Inside Issues and the table of Contents Service – more informative and interesting-looking. Our initial deadline was to have packets for new members prepared by October 30.
- Elizabeth turned over the Legislative Ratings Minnesota Issues Guide to Nicole, who had been obtaining ratings for the print notebooks. She did a great job updating and revamping the page.
- Ruth revamped the public services staff picture sheet. This time she did a color version to use for special printings, with a black-and-white for mass duplication. Robbie wrote a letter offering our services during this busy time before session. Ruth printed many of the black-and-white pictures whets with the letter on the back, which Robbie distributed to offices in the House and Senate.
- We continue to encounter problems with sending scanned articles to some of our users – the file size ends up larger than their networks allow. Toshi discovered this month that readability really doesn't suffer if the scanning is done at 300 dpi rather than 600 dpi. That should help!
- Librarians like to remind users that not everything is on the Web – and sometimes it isn't even in print! A judge in Louisiana recently ruled that a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage and civil unions was unconstitutional; we were asked for a copy of the ruling. David called Arthur McEnany of the LA Senate Law Library, who explained that the judge issued a verbal judgment because he knew it would immediately be appealed. There is no written judgment but his verbal comments will eventually be transcribed. It will be 4-5 months before the verbal judgment is appealed.

Reference
questions – a
sample

Legislative
History
Activities

- Since we have so few reel-to-reel tapes remaining in our collection, we decided to donate three of our five listening machines. They were gratefully accepted and quickly picked up by the Historical Society.
- We received numerous inquiries related to the 1999 tapes on the conservation improvement program provision changes.

Training and
meetings

- Sarah, David, and Robbie attended the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Digital Coalition.

attended by
staff

Training and
tours given by
staff

Staff news

Fan Mail

- Robbie was part of a panel at the Minnesota Library Association Annual Conference, on "Government Web Sites I Can't Live Without." She spoke on the lesser-known gems on the Legislative Web site.
- Robbie was interviewed by a student from the library technician program at Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

Nicole and Robbie started up with the "Book Buddy" reading program at the local grade school. They are a 'tag team,' and will continue to read to the same little girl. Houachee is now in third grade.

- From Robbie: The other day I was talking with Julie Wallace at the U. She said that just that morning she had been helping a student, frantic about doing research on the conceal carry law. "Have I got the perfect thing for you!" Julie said, and led her to our Minnesota Issues Guide on the topic. The student was thrilled.
- From Robbie (10/5): Today I went to talk to a guy who appeared to be using Minutes - you know, the ones we want to get rid of in paper to make room for the pay copier? It turned out he was not using minutes; he was using Health Facilities complaints, and he said - many times - how great it is that we have them here. He turned out to be a Pioneer Press reporter. He told me over and over how much he appreciates the Library, since he discovered it earlier this year. "I'd give money," he said, "If you were like MPR, I'd subscribe."
- 48 thank you notes were collected in a folder this month. Glowing comments included, "Thanks for the links - a good education. YOU are truly a resource!" and "Many many thanks for all your hard work!" One legislative staff person said, "Working with you and your colleagues over there has all the benefits of a liberal arts college education, without the exams! Cool." And how about "You're my hero"? The prettiest thank you note was one that came on a lavender background with an image of a butterfly, from "Rev. Lisa of the Temple of the Eight Fold Path." She wrote, "thank you very much that is exactly what I was looking for!!!" A Senate staffer wrote, "Thanks for all the work you guys did. I know I can always count on you to find the stuff I can't!" From a lobbyist: "Thank you so much for your help. You guys are always there!" A legislative aide from Colorado wrote, "Dear David: On the contrary, the information you provided was very helpful. It is also says a great deal about you that you would go to the trouble to give me this information as I am from out of state. Thank you again for your information."

Preserving the Records of the E-Legislature

In April, 2005, the Revisor of Statutes, the Legislative Reference Library and the Minnesota Historical Society will launch a project to explore and test the technologies available to preserve the electronic records of the Minnesota legislature.

The project is funded by a grant of \$264,000 from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, an agency of the federal government. The partners will receive technological help and services from the Supercomputer Center at the University of California San Diego. Staff from the California State Archives, State Library and Legislative Counsel will evaluate the project for adoption in their state.

The goals of the project are to:

- appraise and preserve Minnesota's legislative electronic records from the Revisor's XML- based bill drafting system;
- develop a cost/benefit analysis and recommendations for enhancement to the legislative and archival systems
- evaluate and appraise additional and ancillary legislative records as the context to bills and laws;
- complete reports on the model developed in Minnesota, with evaluations from the California perspective; and
- provide reports on best practices, to help other states position themselves to learn from this model, covering systems, records, legislative and archival business functions, data formats, metadata, technological and organizational infrastructure.

The work plan includes five phases, with tasks related to education and reporting running continuously through all of them. The project will end in September 2007.

This project is the first collaborative effort to capture the electronic records of a state legislature. It will help to preserve the most historically valuable records of a key branch of government in the most technologically sophisticated and cost-effective manner available. It will secure access to these resources for future generations and it will provide a model for other states to follow.

Minnesota based company
Control Data's CDC 160 computer, c. 1965



Minnesota Historical Society Collections

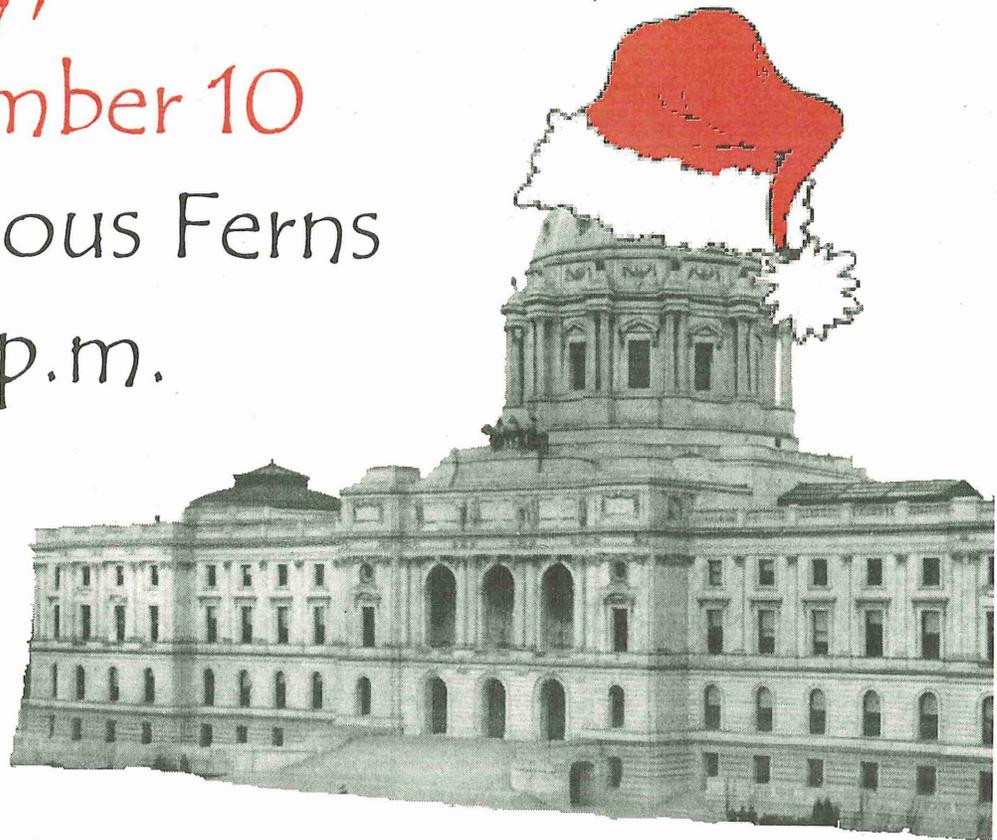
For more information on the project, please contact:

Michele Timmons, Revisor of Statutes
Robbie LaFleur, Director, Legislative Reference Library
Bob Horton, Minnesota Historical Society
robert.horton@mnhs.org
651 215 5866

Celebrate the
holiday season!

Join your colleagues for good
company, and darts, and white
elephant gifts.

Friday,
December 10
Fabulous Ferns
2:30 p.m.



Spouses and significant others welcome!

Stop by the

Legislative Reference Library

to enjoy our

Annual Holiday Cookie Day

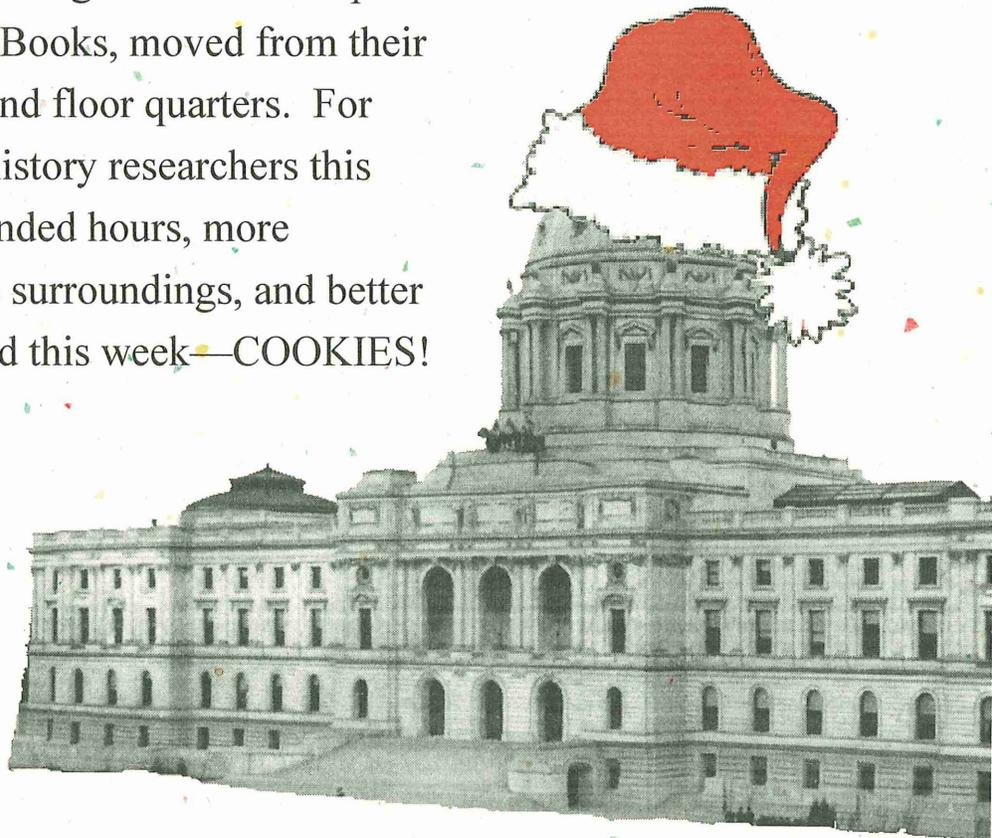
(and some **chaos***)

Thursday, December 16

9-4

645 State Office Building

Enjoy a cookie or two and see the new home for legislative audiotapes and Minute Books, moved from their former ground floor quarters. For legislative history researchers this means expanded hours, more comfortable surroundings, and better service. And this week—COOKIES!



Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - December 2004

Administration

- It might not look all that exciting, but the completion of the new Tape Room on the sixth floor was a fabulous accomplishment. It will be very helpful for our legislative history patrons, as they will have extended hours and more convenient service.

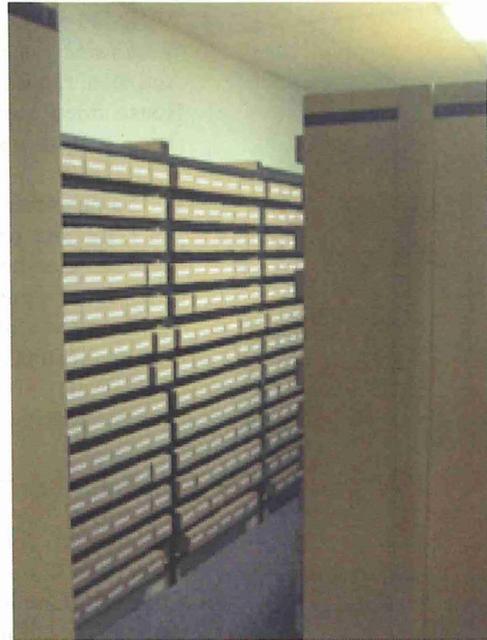
- Our annual staff holiday party was held on Friday, December 10 at Fabulous Fern's.

- We made a slight change in our session vacation policy, allowing three rather than two days off before March 1, only two of which may be consecutive.

- As the remodeling project came to the final stages, many staff participated in shifting materials and loading bookshelves on December 17. Paul, David, Jess, Sarah, and Robbie shifted

many Minutes books; Paul moved the remainder. Paul, Jess and David shifted the *Statutes, Laws* and *Journal*. The great result was clear aisles in the staff areas and the hallways as carts of Minute Books and old *Session Laws* and *Journals* moved to their final homes.

- Our annual holiday cookie day for our Library users was on December 16. We had enough to continue the next two days!



Web Development

- Mike trained staff from the LCC to edit their Web pages to conform with the Legislative Web site new layout and format.

- We decided to combine the pages seen by legislative users and the public – it streamlines our site and Web pages. This meant a careful review of our main pages, which previously had two versions. Mike made the programming changes to the pages, and made the final switch on December 20.

- Mike, Robbie, and Paul attended a meeting at the Revisor's Office Park Street office to see a prototype for the bill search and status pages. It quickly became clear that the search screens needed revisions for clarity and user-friendliness. The librarians met to come up with suggestions. Mike mocked up pages based on the group's suggestions, and met with Steve Segal and Tim Orr to discuss the changes.

West online products: --USCA online --Law reviews --all 50 states statutes annotated by paying only slightly more (\$12) per month than we were for just the print. We should easily save that amount by not searching Lexis for non-flat-rate-law-reviews.

- Robbie and Elizabeth greeted the newly-elected legislators as part of their training. We supposedly had a half hour to tell them about the library and the Legislative Web site. They came fifteen minutes late (as expected), so the training was really more of an extended greeting. The mood was very upbeat. When I mentioned that we were in a bit of chaos (because of the construction), one member piped up, "So are we!" Elizabeth had visual aids - magazines and reports and clippings. She chose well, because one new member came up afterwards and exclaimed over the fact we have *Health Affairs*. Rep. Kelliher gave a glowing review of our skills and described the library as the legislators' secret weapon. She did more that we possibly could have done to perk the new members' interest in our services.
- Carol gave the first "new legislator" tour. The representative she talked with was quite interested in the services we offer. He returned his *Table of Contents* sign-up sheet shortly thereafter, with more than thirty titles chosen.
- Peggy Lahammer from LEXIS-NEXIS gave a short training session, focusing on legislative materials, to Paul and Mike.
- Elizabeth and Robbie created a handout for new legislators, to lead them to password-based access to the magazine and newspaper databases. This is intended to help them out in this period before they have access to the legislative network when session starts.
- As it comes closer to the migration date for the next set of PALS libraries to Aleph, on December 20 our MNPALS OPAC switched to pointing to a test server that is a point in time snapshot of our data. As far as David could tell, the snapshot is about 2 months old. Staff needed to use the acq. database (or Worldcat) for newer items.
- Carol wrote the "Just In" essay on state budget documents.
- Sarah put together a chart to track prospective and completed Library tours.
- Robbie made pdf copies of print census reports for the Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women. They were part of a new online project to put up census information on their site regarding women.
- Elizabeth coordinated an ELM training session at MINITEX for CALCO librarians, including our own. David, Sarah, Carol, and Elizabeth attended.
- Elizabeth and David met with representatives from West Publishing, just checking out their offers of new products and pricing structures.
- We set up the Reference Desk as a member of the National Conference of State Legislatures Legislative Research Librarian electronic list. That way questions posed by librarians in other states can be answered by a variety of our librarians, and everyone can keep abreast of the topics being discussed on the national legislative librarian's list.

Legislative
History
Activities

Training and
meetings
attended by
staff

- Paul began sending detailed e-mail tutorials about various aspects of legislative history materials and research to all the librarians. Now that the legislative history materials have been consolidated into our Reading Room collections, all the public services staff will learn to help patrons with the materials.
- David, Sarah, and Robbie had lunch with Julie Wallace, Government Documents Librarian at the University. Julie had a lot of interesting information about the federal government documents program and about library initiatives at the University.
- David, Sarah, and Carol attended an EBSCO training seminar at MINITEX. Elizabeth arranged the seminar for CALCO librarians.

so much!! Great Job!! Thank you to Robbie and David as well!! It was exactly what I was looking for!!”

2004: A year of thank you notes gives a good sense of how well we do!

January:

- A very informal count of thank you messages and notes for January is 35 – many permutations of “Thank you for your help. It is appreciated,” “Thank you so much for the speedy reply!” and “Thanks for the info. That’s what I was looking for.” On simple thank you message to Sarah had the subject line, ‘Kudos!’
- David received the most effusive thank you note this month, even in all caps. “DAVID: THIS E-FILE TRANSFER WORKED SLICK...MY COUNTY WORKMATES THINK I'M A GENIUS...THANK-YOU THANK-YOU...AS THAT CALIFORNIA STATE OFFICIAL HAS BEEN QUOTED, "...I'LL BE BACK" TO THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY...Carol Morphew”
- Robbie gave a presentation on the Legislative Web Site at a continuing legal education seminar on the legislative process. As a result, she received this message from a library director in Duluth. “Hi, Robbie- My husband John attended a CLE event in Mpls yesterday and told me that the librarian from the Legislative Reference Library gave the best and most organized presentation of the day. That was you, I discovered. He told me that he was planning to look at the Web information you presented, so you also motivated the audience to follow up.”
- In requesting a training class, a Senate staffer was complimentary. “The SMR staff is consistently impressed by the LRL’s work. You are fast, accurate and thorough. We need to improve our own research skills and learn how to frame questions when seeking your help.”
- Everybody feels the way one responder did when he thanked Carol, “Many thanks for your prompt and informative response! As with so many other things I’ve been wrong about lately, I was so sure I had it right!”
- A House staff person appreciated help from Ruth, writing, “just wanted to thank you for your continued updates. staff and members are very grateful. and they think i am smart, so that’s good, too.”

February:

- *David had an amazing and generous offer with an e-mail thank you. “Thanks you’re a life*

saver. I’m a police officer in Herndon VA, if you ever need anything let me know.”

- We receive many thank you messages each month, many short and sweet. Here are a few messages, chosen from 66 forwarded thank yous. I didn’t include the many “Thank You!” messages we received, sometimes with several exclamation points, and occasionally in caps for emphasis, “THANK YOU!” I also didn’t include several “Thank you very much” messages. “Thank you, Elizabeth, for your time and help. Much appreciated.” “Carol: Thank you for the assistance. It was perfect for my use for the time being.” “Carol: Thank you so much for your help, much appreciated!” “Thank you very much, I believe I have what I need now to appeal the denial.” “(to Sarah) That is exactly what I am looking for - thank you very much!” “THANKS SO MUCH! I am so impressed with your efficiency and professionalism. This information will help me immensely. Thank you also for the courtesy of such a rapid response to my query.” “Hi Robbie: Thanks for direction to these links. Very helpful.” “Thank you for your assistance - it is greatly appreciated...” “Thanks for your hard work!” “Great, thanks again!” “Thank-you for getting back to me so quick !!!!” “Thank you so much for your help!!” “Thanks for your quick & helpful response!” “Paul, Thank you very, very much! I really appreciate your timely assistance.” “Randi, This is exactly what I needed. Thanks so much for your help.” “Thank you for your prompt attention.” “Thank you Randi Madisen. Great Service.” “(From a member) David: Many, many thanks for your help and thoughtfulness.” “Thank you! This is great, Elizabeth!” “Thanks, this is great.” “thank you very much. I have read the information and it was quite helpful.” “Thank you for your rapid response. It helped.” “Have a good night and thank you for staying “late!” “Thanks so much for your research on this. I hope your next question from a state agency proves a bit less complex.” “(from a member) Thanks Robbie! I kinda thought you would know where to look!” “You are a lifesaver!!” “The language that you sent was just what I was looking for. Thank you very much!” “Hi Carol ~Thanks much for the information. Very appropriate for the Minnesota legislature to adjourn at the latest on the biggest national holiday for Norwegians, Syttende Mai ! :)” “Randi, I appreciate your attention to the media stuff. Thanks again!” “(after Randi and Robbie did a tour for new House staff) We had another successful orientation for our new staff, thanks to

your participation on Thursday, January 29. I really appreciated your willingness to share your knowledge and make the new folks feel welcomed." "Thanks for this - it worked perfectly and helped a lot. I appreciate it!" "Thank you for the information, I appreciate it." "Nicole: Thanks for your help. This is exactly what I was looking for." Great, Thanks for the quick response!" "Thank you so much for your assistance! You made my job much easier by providing the information in your message." "Wow! Thank you for your quick response. This is perfect! Thanks!" "thanks for your competent and quick help!" "Many many thanks, David - I have forwarded on the information you sent. I don't know if our constituent will require more information but the web site you sent seems to have tons of information!!" "Thank you very much, Dave. This IS helpful." "That's fabulous! I'll stop by in a bit..."

- We try to provide just the amount of information that people request. Carol met that need perfectly for a patron who wrote, "thank you so much for pulling together info on gaming for me. It was a manageable amount -- I read through it all this past weekend and feel much more confident on the subject!"

- Robbie helped a person referred from a member. The member sent a nice thank you ("Wonderful work. Thank you very much."), and the requestor was very happy, writing back in a big, bold font, "Mr. LaFleur, Thank you very much for the information re: Perrot on the ceiling. It was very much more than we had. I used to teach US and MN history and had never before heard of Nicolas Perrot. After 20 years of family history research, I find his name on the Chamber ceiling, a statue of him in Green Bay Wisconsin, numerous sections of Minnesota history books written about him, plaques honoring him along the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi, and then to find that he is my 7th great grandfather. Your name sounds very French Canadian, too. Again, thank you very, very much. Sincerely, Colonel Ronald E. Beauchane

- Robbie spoke to a group of home-schooled students and their parents as part of their Legislative Training Day. Kathy Lytle, the Training Day Coordinator, wrote, "I want to send you a very heartfelt thank you on behalf of MACHE, the parents and students who attended our Legislative Training Day last Thursday. The day was a great success and the information you brought was a wonderful contribution. We all

learned so much about the Minnesota state Website. The next day, I made use of several things you pointed out and am grateful to have this expanded tool to use."

March:

- The collective "Thank you" e-mail folder held 67 thank you messages for March. Many were impressed with speedy service, as in "Thank you so much Nicole! That was amazingly fast." and to Carol, "Thank you very much for extremely expeditious response!" Robbie heard, "Thanks Robbie- Librarians are fast! Our staff attorney has become a believer in things librarian."

- Leif sent out some Senate videos on CD, and received the following note, "Leif, Thank you so much for sending me the ethanol videos on CD. You're a lifesaver! I really appreciate your responsiveness and excellent service."

- Robbie answered a request for information on outreach in legislative libraries for a librarian in the provincial library in Cape Town, South Africa. She wrote back, in part: "Thank you so much Robbie. This is very helpful information. I really appreciate the time that you took with this. Nothing beats getting specific examples."

- We sometimes have requestors asking for help with school projects. A grateful student wrote, "Dear Mr. David Schmidtke, I really appreciate your time in helping with my research on the railroad gate arms bill for school. All of the information was SOOO helpful!! Thank you so much! Andrea Shamp, Totino Grace High School"

- We are always happy when we help a person who has been frustrated with other agencies. One person wrote to Sarah, "Thanks for all your help. I understand no "legal" help can be offered. I could not find anything outlining the specific operation limitations of such vehicle, so I've called the state patrol to see what they have to say. Public Safety offered no help at all, so thank you for doing what you did! It's not a full answer, but better direction than anyone in the state system has offered a person. Sad, isn't it? John"

- It's interesting that requestors from far away often comment on Minnesota's weather. "Carol, Thank you once again for your help. I am a graduate from Carleton, and I miss Minnesota and how helpful people there (generally speaking) are. We are having a blizzard right now here in Boston, so that reminds me of Minnesota, to a certain degree. Best, Ben

- A user from Minneapolis was very impressed with Elizabeth's work. "Wow. Thank you very much; you're truly amazing. I really appreciate you looking that up for me, I was about to drive over and do it myself, thanks for saving me the trip! I'm pretty sure that is indeed what I'm looking for, if not I think that I'll be able to dig something else up when I'm over at the Capitol on Monday. Thank you very much for your help, hope that you have a good weekend! Karl"

- Robbie received a thank you note for giving a second presentation on the Legislative Web Site to home school kids and their parents at a training day for the Minnesota Association of Christian Home Educators. In part it read, "The information you provided was wonderful and it will help many home school families better utilize their internet access to state government."

- This thank you to Sarah was notable for its screaming capitol letters: "THAT IS JUST WHAT I NEEDED. SO THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME, AND I HOPE YOU HAVE A GOOD DAY."

April:

- It's nice to get occasional messages regarding the usability of the Legislative Web site. A state agency employee wrote, "Just wanted to say that this website is very user friendly. I was able to find most of what I needed without having to call people and ask for explanations or seek missing information. Thanks!"

- The 55 thank-you e-mails I noted included some interesting comments. David scanned lists of legislators from the 1960s for someone who replied, "Wow!!!! Thank you so much. You can't imagine what a walk down memory lane that is. We really appreciate your assistance. I and friends who used to hang around the Legislature back then - are trying to put together a reunion and rounding up names and addresses where possible." Or how about "Once again, YOU GUYS ROCK!" There are frequent responses about the speed of service, like "Thanks!! This is great and, as usual, very quick," and "Thanks!! This is great and, as usual, very quick." From the Illinois Department of Corrections, "I think you've gone far beyond the call of duty on this one." That researcher also noted something we like to hear - that we find what others can't! "Mr. Schmidtke,

- Thanks for the information. This is the best email I've received on this subject. Prior to

emailing MN LLR, I've checked with the State of Minnesota, two professors at the U. of M., and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA)."

- We help lots of folks with research on family members who served in the Legislature. One wrote, "You are SO GOOD! THANK YOU...THAT'S HIM. Bless you!"

May:

- Steve Alger and Jake Hamlin from the House Sergeant's Office wrote in appreciation, "Reference Librarians, Than you to each of you for taking the time to introduce the Legislative Library to the high school pages and for assisting them on research for mock committee debates. We look forward to working with you in the future with the return of high school pages in 2005."

- Paul received a note from a friend in graduate school who related, "Just had to send you a note to tell you that your website was shown as a shining example by Shane in our Internet Class. Several of us found it very helpful just to see how to start on that project."

- The 30 e-mail thank you notes included enthusiasm. "Wow...you're great! Thank you!" Some people even remember the service long after it takes place. "You scanned and sent me this report almost a month ago and I do not think I ever thanked. So now thank you very, very much! You saved me allot of time and the report was very useful to my research." A creative thank you: "David, this is incredibly valuable. Thank you tons, amigo!"

June:

- Jim Cleary appended this note on an e-mail to David. "PS: Last Friday, four of my former professors and colleagues from the Sociology Department at the U of Mn stopped over for a rare visit and discussion of House Research's role in the Legislature. Wouldn't you know, they seemed most impressed by the LRL itself. Please let your colleagues there know that."

- From 42 e-mail thank you notes: Elizabeth heard, "Wow, that is a lot of information. Thank you so much for all of your help and research. I'm quite impressed with your speedy reply, and obviously you put some time into this." It's not unusual to hear from students with projects. "Dear Mr. David Schmidtke, I really appreciate your time in helping with my research on the railroad gate arms bill for school. All of the information was SOOO helpful!! Thank you so much!" One requestor appreciated Carol's

expertise. "It is truly refreshing to hear from someone who understands that the picture of a document which has been scanned is different from a document put through ocr software." People like fast responses! "Thank you very much for extremely expeditious response!" Rather than send some documents on ILL far away, we scan them and send a copy electronically. This was appreciated by a University in New York. "What a great service! Thank you so much. I really appreciate your help." We don't know where this requestor was from, but probably not Minnesota. "Mr. Schmidtke, Thank you for your intelligent, quick, and very helpful response to my inquiry. It is reassuring to know that Minnesotans have your expertise." A librarian colleague wrote in response to a session law question, "Oh amazing one, Ye of incredible memory hath indeed identified the information I was looking for. Would that the rest of the world were as competent as thou...tee hee...thanks..."

- Reading these over time, the most common phrases in the thank you notes are variations of "This was EXACTLY what I needed" and "Thanks for the FAST response." This user is grateful just to know we are here when needed. "thank-you, I will refer to this in the future. I appreciate your reply in this matter. Just knowing you are there is a great help to me. THANK-YOU AGAIN!!"

July:

- 29 e-mail notes of appreciation turned up this month for answering reference requests. Most were along the lines of, "Thank you. That did the trick!," and "Thank you for your assistance - very timely I might add - that's appreciated!"
- Carol received a thank you after assembling articles for a legislative staffer to use in an NCSL presentation. She wrote, "Just a note of feedback on those outsourcing articles: they were fabulous! I moderated the NCSL session last Thursday with 2 experts, one from the Cato Institute and one from Good Jobs First * and I was able to give background on Minnesota's concerns directly from those articles! As a result, the session went very well. Thanks bunches!"
- It's interesting to hear a bit of how the information we send is used. After sending a copy of a very old session law, David heard, "Thank you. Your response is a tremendous help in moving forward a meeting between the

Dept. of Finance and the Dept. of Natural Resources."

- One of Sarah's patrons wrote, "Thank you very much for your assistance--and for responding so quickly! Studying state legislative history is both wonderful and incredibly demanding, and your help was greatly appreciated."

August:

41 messages of appreciation came by e-mail in August.

- Led to a number of Websites by David, a legislator responded, "David, these are just great sites. Thanks so much."
- We have helped home-schooling families a number of times. Paul heard, "wow. You are so awesome. I wish I knew about this before I started home schooling. Just another mistake I made before we started! I'm so much better educated now. Thank you thank you thank you for your support. God Bless. This is the day the Lord hath made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalms 118:24. Blessed be, Lynda"
- Elizabeth received this amusing thank you. "Thanks so much. The website went back up yesterday afternoon. Your kindness and professionalism are always appreciated by the observant. The unobservant do not matter."
- We like thinking that helping people means fewer trips cars on the road. David heard, "This is perfect. I was anticipating a trip to the Capitol, not that that would have been a bad thing, but this makes everything much easier. Thank you for your help."
- An enthusiastic person wrote to Sarah, "Thanks for the quick response...I am truly amazed and delighted with the response time....you are doing a great job and I will look into the information you have given me....thanks again..."
- A state agency employee recognized the usefulness of our library, writing, "Thank you Randi - you people up there are always so helpful!"

September:

- Robbie did a Google search on her name, and found an acknowledgement on a paper by a scholar from MIT, "Voting Cues and the Incumbency Advantage: A Critical Test." http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/seminars/hirano_s04.pdf "We thank Robbie LaFleur at the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library for assistance gathering data."

- 37 e-mail messages of thanks appeared this month.
- Our patrons appreciate the materials we send, evidenced by the Senate staffer who wrote, "Elizabeth, Thank you very much for that information! We could even get a little fresh air if we wanted to walk down there!"
- Often a simple request elicits the most effusive response. A link to a bill online led to this message to Robbie, "You are wonder woman! Thanks so much."
- Many times reference questions are from people who just wanted to make sure they didn't miss something. David heard, "Mr Schmidtke: Thank you very much for your prompt response and confirmation that I wasn't overlooking something. I'm writing a book on Freedom of Assembly and am included an Appendix with relevant portions of state constitutions."
- Our patrons remember our great work. While talking with Elizabeth one day, a Senate staffer said, "Say hello to Sarah for me. She did a great job a couple of weeks ago for me. I appreciate you guys so much." Sarah received a note showing how we deliver superior service. "Thanks for all your help. I understand no "legal" help can be offered. I could not find anything outlining the specific operation limitations of such vehicle, so I've called the state patrol to see what they have to say. Public Safety offered no help at all, so thank you for doing what you did! It's not a full answer, but better direction than anyone in the state system has offered a person. Sad, isn't it? John"

October:

- From Robbie: The other day I was talking with Julie Wallace at the U. She said that just that morning she had been helping a student, frantic about doing research on the conceal carry law. "Have I got the perfect thing for you!" Julie said, and led her to our Minnesota Issues Guide on the topic. The student was thrilled.
- From Robbie (10/5): Today I went to talk to a guy who appeared to be using Minutes - you know, the ones we want to get rid of in paper to make room for the pay copier? It turned out he was not using minutes; he was using Health Facilities complaints, and he said - many times - how great it is that we have them here. He turned out to be a Pioneer Press reporter. He told me over and over how much he appreciates the Library, since he discovered it earlier this

year. "I'd give money," he said, "If you were like MPR, I'd subscribe."

- 48 thank you notes were collected in a folder this month. Glowing comments included, "Thanks for the links - a good education. YOU are truly a resource!" and "Many many thanks for all your hard work!" One legislative staff person said, "Working with you and your colleagues over there has all the benefits of a liberal arts college education, without the exams! Cool." And how about "You're my hero"? The prettiest thank you note was one that came on a lavender background with an image of a butterfly, from "Rev. Lisa of the Temple of the Eight Fold Path." She wrote, "thank you very much that is exactly what I was looking for!!!" A Senate staffer wrote, "Thanks for all the work you guys did. I know I can always count on you to find the stuff I can't!" From a lobbyist: "Thank you so much for your help. You guys are always there!" A legislative aide from Colorado wrote, "Dear David: On the contrary, the information you provided was very helpful. It is also says a great deal about you that you would go to the trouble to give me this information as I am from out of state. Thank you again for your information."

November:

- 62 messages found their way to the forwarded thank you folder in November, including, "Thank you very much for your time and for the information. This will help us tremendously. Good luck with everything you do."
- A teacher responded to David, "Thank you SO much for your help in this matter. It was most helpful and appreciated. You found exactly what we needed and you were very timely as time in this instance was extremely important. Thank you."
- We often help users with questions about legislators from the past. One person started his long thank you note with, "Thank you very much for your quick and on-target response to my request about my grandfather."
- A newly-elected member had an appointment to meet with a prominent politician and wanted to review the politician's career in preparation for the interview. Paul supplied background, and the member began his thank you note with, "Paul, this stuff is just super."
- A CALCO librarian noticed the changes to the Legislative Web Site, and wrote, "This is looking GREAT! Is this the work of Mike

Schatz? Changes are subtle but very refreshing. Please forward to the guilty webmaster.”

- Many times people who seek information are in difficult situations, and their appreciation is not only for information given by a librarian, but also for the fact someone has cared to help. Sarah thoughtfully helped a woman facing a family death, and wrote a long letter of thanks, describing the whole, sad situation, and thanking Sarah not only for the information, but for Sarah’s expression of sympathy. Her letter began, “Thank you so much for looking into this for me... It now has turned out that my son’s company has decided to pay him for most of the time he had to take off and grant him any additional time w/o penalties!!! I am so happy...”
- Carol received a nomination.... “Perfect. This will be VERY helpful. You are my nomination for Librarian of the Year!”

December:

- Elizabeth created a true fan when helping a man solve his access problems. “It must be either my pc or my provider. A lot of people think State employees are all 9-5 ers. Anyone ever says that about you, in front of me, and ‘those be fight ‘un words mister’. I am very impressed with your efforts on my behalf. All I can say is thank you for your many efforts. I give up. I am going to call him.”
- The staff of the library at the STAR TRIBUNE appreciate our services, and wrote in a Christmas card to the Library staff, “Thank you for the graciousness and patience with which you respond to our on-deadline requests. We really appreciate your help.” “Thanks so much for all the help you are to us. You’re always so helpful – and it’s always on our deadline.”
- 67 messages were in the thank-you folder. A member-elect was happy with some articles he received. “Atta boy, David,” he wrote. Another: “This was perfect - the senator and I both appreciate your help!” Many notes included salutations for the holiday season. Some noted the upcoming session. From a Senator: “Sarah: This was just what I needed. Thank you. I hope you and your colleagues there have some good time off before session begins.” “Mike Schatz did a great job on that request I had for copies of anti-smoking ordinances around the state and around the country - very fast and thorough.” A reporter wrote, “Thanks again. This is very helpful. If ever an ink-stained wretch can help you Leg Ref folks, please let me know.” A repeat patron noted to Sarah, “Hello Sarah, You have

been immensely helpful throughout this process. I really can’t thank you enough for the extra effort.” David helped a governor’s aide, who wrote, in part, “Thanks, again, for your quick work. This is more than I expected in such a short time! Many thanks! You LRL staff are a great resource! The data is being used by the Governor in a speech tomorrow to a group of early education advocates...”

- One note was a thank you for cookies we provided, but the Senate staffer also noted our service. “Thanks the cookies were great! And the Library is so wonderfully organized! Thanks to you and your staff we get information practically instantaneously. Happy Holidays to you.”

Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - January 2005

Administration

- The Library held a joint open house with the Revisor's Office on January 26. It was very well-attended; the food vanished from the plates and bowls in record time. The Open House celebrated the opening of an exhibit of the photography of Tom Olmscheid, long-time House Photographer.



- We welcomed back members and staff and citizens with free cookies and coffee in the Library on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of the first week of session.
- Robbie and Lisa started the budget planning process for 2006-07.
- Robbie spoke about the Library to the Government Operations Committee on January 19. All the Legislative Commissions provided short overviews of their offices.
- Robbie held a meeting of the people involved in awarding the annual Freedom of Information Day award, to begin the planning process for this year's award.
- The audit of the LCC required an inventory list from us – happily, Ruth maintains it well, so it was a snap to produce.

Web Development

- Mike met with Tim Orr and Steve Segal to discuss suggestions for improving the search results pages on the new bill status system. Mike checked for ideas with LRL librarians. Mike and Robbie spoke with John Trombley and Rebecca from Senate Information for their opinions.
- In porting the data from the old BASIS system to the new bill status system, committee information from past sessions was lost. That meant that you couldn't search for bills by committee in previous biennia. Luckily, Ruth saved the day by providing lists of committees to Steve Segal, who wrote, "Great!! This is in the perfect format for me to use. I will work on getting the missing committees on the list for prior sessions."
- Leif finished implementing the new House and Senate video archive servers. We had to change the file names for the House files to reflect the new server. Mike Speiker did a global change to their access pages, so the Web links to old House video now work.
- Tweaking of the Legislative Web site continued, based on user comments. Mike added a link to the [pdf version](#) of the information on visiting the Capitol.

Information Systems Activities

- Ruth continued making many patron changes in the patron database. She added the new legislators and deleted the nonreturning members. Since the House and Senate also rely on Ruth's tracking of members and staff for their phone directories, Ruth's work is really appreciated.
- Leif worked with the LSIG group to identify needed expenditures in the new biennium, and then spoke with Greg about doing a special appropriation.
- Lisa added three public PCs; two new ones in the stand-up units, and another to join the four at the front of the Library. This brings the total to seven public workstations. There are many occasions when all seven are in use. She

also cleaned up the spyware on the other public PCs.

Collections Activities

- Jess has made friends with just the right people at the Department of Finance; when the Governors proposed budget was released, we actually received six print copies – delivered! We used to have to beg, and go personally to pick them up.
- Sarah encountered an interesting and strange situation when some of our records were duplicated in the SCS catalog. We were quick to suspect an ALEPH mix-up, but it turned out that the MINITEX cataloger inadvertently put them in the SCS catalog as well as ours. So many bugs in new systems create many opportunities for mix-ups!
- Alissa finished processing the list of missing URLs for archived state documents. The 03 and 04 document URLs that were missed should now be on the MNPALS records.
- Kelly processed 60 added volumes, and withdrew 27 items from the Collection. She claimed 50 missing Periodical issues: 29 were EBSCO, 12 were Free, 8 were Minnesota Periodicals and 1 was an Order Direct. She shelfread a portion of the Circulating Collection, and the Speech Collection.

Reference activities

- Elizabeth dealt with the myriad of details necessary when each session begins, including House and Senate page service. She arranged for delivery of enacted laws (1 copy), bills (none in print), and 12 copies of *Session Weekly*.
- David compiled lists of all of the Chief Clerks of the House and House Sergeant's-at-arms back to statehood and posted them to our Web site – a great addition to our historical legislative statistics online.
- Paul reminded staff of the session circulation policies, which basically boil down to reserving our most recent items for our primary clientele, and making sure we get very full contact information for interns, since they have been known to leave the legislature without returning materials.
- Elizabeth reported, "After some investigation into technical solutions to restricting printing at the public pcs, it seemed that all the solutions were either technically challenging or more costly than the amount of paper being used."
- By request, we added a new topic under the Children main heading - obesity.
- We decided to put up a weekly list of new reports in the news on the Friday Web page "Just In."
- Mike wrote an essay on the relocation of the legislative history materials for the monthly "Just In."
- The librarians and Jess met on 1/28 to discuss the mandate for 6 print copies of documents. We adjusted the mandate letter slightly, planned to revamp it for readability in the future, and discussed the ideal number of print documents to request when the mandate law is changed.
- We started our limited contract for online Westlaw products. We will pay \$282/month for access to: USCA – Although the USCA is free online, this version may be easier to use and more frequently updated. 50 State Statutes Annotated - This is a frequent need of ours, and nice to have the Statutes available in one place. Of course they are available on the Web for free, for the most part, but with so many differing formats. Law Journals and Law Reviews - This is a category that we do NOT have on our LEXIS/NEXIS contract, and is often needed. We would not have chosen to go out and purchase this access for \$282/month. However, if we also subscribed to online Westlaw products, we got a 50% discount on our print titles. The result is that we only pay \$12 more per month - which we consider a very good deal.

Reference

- Reference request topics included chemicals in the Oakdale drinking water; 3M; 1988 car costs; collateral consequences for prisoners; children's mental

questions - a sample

health; use of inflation factor in other states' budgets; DNR Safe Harbors program; Gambling/Casinos: negative effects; American Heritage Act (Education); recidivism of sex offenders, pertaining to levels of supervision; minimum wage; soft-air guns; and gift card policies.

Legislative History Activities

- Paul, Elizabeth, and Robbie met with Patty Janovic from House Information about the improvements in legislative history access. She wrote a short piece for *Session Weekly* about the changes.

Training and meetings attended by staff

- Leif, Robbie, Paul, and Mike attended the LNET meeting on January 13.

Training and tours given by staff

- Carol and Mike gave a training session to ten LAs.
- Robbie gave a tutorial on resources available on the Legislative Web Site to four new writers for House Information. LeAnn Schutz wrote in response, "Thank you for all your help with initiating our session writers to the world of the Web, legislatively that is!"
- Elizabeth gave a tour to three new Senate staff; a committee administrator, an LA, and a page (1/6).
- Paul gave a short library introduction to 30 Senate interns and a tour to 5 students from a public administration class (1/5), and a tour to Rep. Brod's intern on 1/20. He gave a tour to a Historical Society employee who does Capitol tours.
- Mike gave a tour to Rep. Matt Dean on 1/28.
- David gave a tour to a new Senate Counsel staff person on 1/28.
- Nicole talked with a researcher from the League of Minnesota Cities who wrote, in part, "Thank you for taking time this morning to show me around the Legislative Reference Library. You have so much great information, it was hard to tear myself away and get back to work. I have bookmarked your website and hope to visit that link and the "real" library often."

Staff news

- We celebrated Lisa's twenty-year anniversary at a staff meeting on January 7.
- Other anniversaries:
Nicole Brinkman 1/2/2002 - 3 years in 2005
Elizabeth Lincoln 1/3/1989 - 16 years in 2005
Bill Lindeke 1/28/2004 - 1 year in 2005
- We welcomed Marilyn Cathcart back as a session-only reference librarian.
- Paul, David, Lisa, Jess, Marilyn, and Robbie all helped with the reception to honor Ed Burdick's retirement.

Fan Mail

- 81 e-mail thank you notes came to the Library this month.
- A senator wrote to David, "Thank you so much for the timely work! I am impressed!"
- The Legislative Web site was praised by a non-Minnesota user: "I am researching statutory rape laws for every state in the U.S. I've been proceeding alphabetically through all the state legislative websites and I must say yours has been the easiest and most user friendly. I found the relevant statute on your site in record time. Thank you for doing such a great job!!"
- A House staff person wrote, "Sarah, Thanks for your assistance regarding

David, This memo was 100% dependent on your library research at a time & place (home on New Year's Day night) when no other info could have substituted! Thank you so much, Jim

the child protection numbers from DHS. Your information will prove very helpful." Saarah heard from another House staff member, "Thanks again Sarah. Always a prompt response. Strong work." David heard from another House staff person, "You are my hero today! Thanks." Jess said this message came from a person who was quite cranky with her on the phone. "Jessica, Thank you, thank you, thank you....I'm sorry if I was cross with you – I really appreciate this." Marilyn heard, "Yes, that does seem to have all the information I was looking for. Thank you very much for your assistance with these documents -- I never would have found them if you weren't there to help." A House staff person wrote to Mike, "That's it! You are amazing! Thank you so much, and I hope it didn't take too much time to track down." To Sarah: "Thanks a lot!! That was quick and informative!!"

- We often help Web requestors find information on former legislators, often for genealogy purposes. One woman wrote, "Thank you so much for the information re David Kinghorn... This information you gave me has been so helpful since I live outside of Boston and not exactly close to any source material. Thank God for the computer and the Internet!"
- A person Mike helped to identify a statute wrote, "Mike, With a name like Shatz, I believe you'll verstehen Danke Schoen."
- Especially during session, we try to get information to legislators and staf ASAP. One Senate staffer wrote to Robbie, "Wow. You're quick! Thanks so much!"
- Robbie received a thank you note from a House Research analyst for hiring Mike. It read, in part, "Whenever a reference librarian leaves (doesn't happen frequently * most recently, Randi), I'm always sad because the person leaving is so darn good! But, it seems that, when someone new comes along, the new person is darn good, too. We couldn't possibly do our jobs without the skilled and timely work your office does. Thank you very much!"
- We always say that contacting the Library can help our users save time. This was borne out in this thank you. "Marilyn, Those documents were exactly what I needed. I spent a while trying to dig up the NWA agreement on my own, but I should have called you folks from the get-go. Thank you – I very much appreciate the help that you and Elizabeth provided."

Legislative library's mission to provide essential resources

Tweaking, adjusting and gaining some space has allowed the Legislative Reference Library to offer customers one-stop researching.

"Those people who come to the Capitol for legislative history materials now can enjoy longer hours and a more convenient place to do research with photocopiers on hand," said Library Director Robbie LaFleur.

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The Legislative Reference Library collection includes:

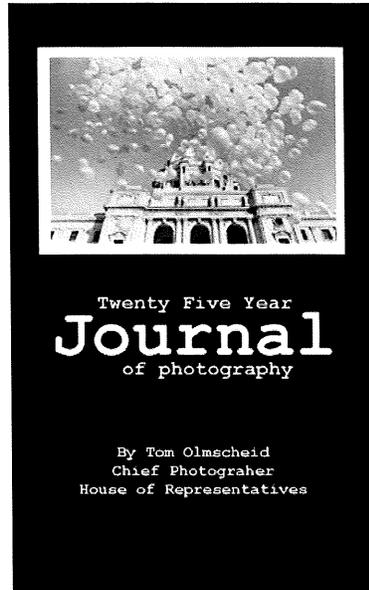
- more than 40,000 books and reports including many state documents and those mandated by the Legislature;

- reference materials that include state statistics and comparisons;
- news clippings files from the 1970s to today;
- nearly 700 magazine and newsletter subscriptions; and
- Minnesota session laws since the late 1800s.

For more information contact the library at 651-296-3398 or visit the library's Web site at: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/lrl.asp>

(P. JANOVEC)

Legislative Reference Library
645 State Office Building
Reference: (651) 296-8338 Circulation: (651) 296-3398
Hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday
Legislative Session Hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Monday - Thursday
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Friday or later as needed.



A Capitol Celebration

Tom Olmscheid, Chief Photographer for the Minnesota House of Representatives for more than a quarter of a century, has chronicled his observations of the Minnesota Capitol political scene in a series of black-and-white photographs.

This exhibit complements the centennial celebration of our Capitol building. We admire the architectural setting, but are reminded in Tom's photographs that it is the people who make our state capitol vital. Prominent political figures and visiting citizens are captured in the photographs of rallies, debates, formal events, and quiet moments of reflection.

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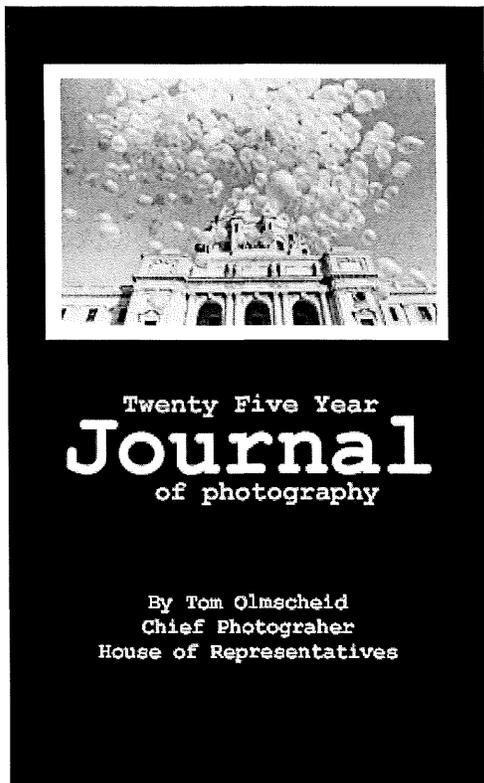
Minnesota Legislative Reference Library
January 24 - February 25, 2005
8-6, Monday-Thursday
8-5, Friday



Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

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Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - February 2005

Most interesting Interlibrary Loan transaction: We lent a report on gambling treatment programs in Minnesota to a researcher through the National Library of Norway in Oslo.

Administration

- Robbie met with Greg to go over our proposed budget, drawn up at flat funding, the same as the previous two years. This was in preparation for a meeting of the House State Government Finance Division meeting in which each of the LCC agencies gave an overview of their operations. (2/16)
- We note in a directory whether we have had personal contact with each legislator, and/or the member's legislative assistant. Last year, of the 67 senators, we had personal contacts with 19 (28%), and contacts with 49 of the LAs (73%). In the House (134 members) we had personal contacts with 57 members (43%), and 40 LAs (30%). Of course these are very bad, anecdotal statistics. It was interesting that in the House, with offices in the same building as the library, we had many more contacts (even proportionately) with members personally. I'm sure the LA number is way too low. Legislative assistants use us heavily, but we don't ask them which members they are working for. We only find out if they happen to mention it. We also serve members through partisan and nonpartisan research staff.
- Lisa figured out our photocopier usage and reduced the number of copies we will have on maintenance each month. This will save the library a lot of dollars in the coming years. The number of copies we make has gone down with the increase in the number of scans that we make and with our services being delivered electronically.
- Lisa worked on budget numbers and updated spreadsheets with new estimates for FY06 and FY07.

Web

Development

- Leif and Paul digitized a 1993 speech by Sen. Dean Johnson. While we did it for a specific request, we learned the process and will be able to digitize and save other important older speeches, and possible even link to them from the LegDB.

Information

Systems

Activities

- Lisa took care of many public workstation maintenance and improvement tasks. She added viewers for Excel, Powerpoint and WORD. If someone clicks on a link that contains one of these documents, they will now be able to view them. Also, the windows media player was coming up inside Internet Explorer on many of the machines out front, but she have reconfigured them to open up media items in separate windows. Finally, she checked the workstations for Spyware and cleaned them up for optimal performance.
- Ruth created 657 February Just In, sent 150 to new users. 85 patrons receive email notification of the publication. Created web page and sent file to NCSL.
- Ruth printed 515 Inside Issues new user memos and topic forms. We now have 14 new users for a total of 257. 32 users are receiving citations electronically and 72 are receiving their requests electronically.
- Ruth wrote up procedures for sending Inside Issues out with eBurst and showed Toshi how to use it.
- Lisa set up the new color printer driver and a short list of updates for all staff computers.

Collections
Activities

- Kelly transferred loose, and easy-to-lose, issues of *Senate Briefly* and *Politics in Minnesota* to notebooks, rather than have them spill out of boxes. She reported that there are 12 volumes now of *PIM* and 7 for *Senate Briefly*.
- Kelly processed 78 Added Volumes, and withdrew 4 items from the Collection. She claimed 59 missing Periodical issues: 17 were EBSCO, 25 were Free, 5 were Minnesota Periodicals and 2 were Order Directs.

Reference
activities

- Librarians have done a great deal of training and tours, inside and outside the Library. Out statistics noted that we reached 447 people in all of 2004; in just the first two months of 2005 we provided training or tours to 506 people.

Reference
questions - a
sample

- Jess spent a lot of time tracking down a picture of helmetless children riding bikes next to an article on safety. The article FOR SURE appeared in an ACSL publication, according to the member who asked, but turned out to be in the CSG *State News* magazine.
- Reference projects ran the gamut: Floating Equine/Horse Teeth Laws, adoption of ALEC's model legislation--private attorney retention sunshine act, Land Stewardship Project, Social security - Congressional committees involved, overview of Bush's Social Security plan, Governor's salary in '61-62, party designation bill (1973), teen drivers and cell phone use, flag patches on police uniforms, has there ever been a resolution in the leg honoring a dead US president, Technological innovations and general acceptance, Depo-Provera/Castration, legislator salaries/other states, involuntary surgical castration (limited to Supreme Court case), average increase in wages in private sector - 10 years, Connecticut transportation funding, Anoka County and methamphetamine, chemical dependency & the state of Minnesota, judge recall, DJIA/SP500 at time of Vikings purchase in 98 and sale in 05, Partners in Vikings ownership under McCombs, What happens next with Ayd Mill Road?, What cities have mandatory bike licensing?, sex offender treatment copayments, Religious Corporations Act, Joint custody, Drug paraphernalia: definition of in various states' statutes, student bus transportation, Voucher Programs, State agency head salaries--other states, Elected Metropolitan Council, Minneapolis Teachers Retirement Fund, criminal justice: recent innovation, statistics, trends, learning year reduction; area learning centers, student rep on school board - law?, minimum wage, and FOIA in Minnesota.

Legislative
History
Activities

- Paul provided a training session on creating effective committee minute records for 26 Senate LAs and seven other Senate staff members.
- We retrieved an old floor session tape from the Historical Society for a member. We provided the needed speech both on cassette, and as a link to listen to on the Web. (We hope to use the same process to preserve many old, important speeches that might otherwise be lost.)
- Jess helped a I helped a woman from the MADD chapter in Louisiana locate the bill and relevant statute on testing refusal for DWI stops. The researcher said "basically, I have heard that Minnesota has the best requirements in the country, and I WANT 'EM."

Training and
tours conducted
by staff

- Mike gave a tour to a Senate intern on 2/3.
- Jess gave a tour to a new Senate Fiscal Analyst on Feb. 18th, and wrote, "He was really thrilled with all the resources we could provide, and after I had stressed again and again that he should call us no matter how big or small the question, he remarked that when he had his orientation they didn't tell him anything about things that would make his job EASIER, and said he would be over here all the time."
- Robbie gave a tour to Rep. Scalze on 2/2, and Rep. Loeffler on 2/17, and

spoke to Professor David Schultz's graduate lobbying class on 2/17. She spoke to reporters on the Legislative Web Site as part of Capitol Media Day on 2/10.

- David gave a tour to a new Senate Intern, and a House member and his LA on 2/7.
- Sarah gave a tour to ten friendly pages on 2/21. Page tours were also held on 2/7, 2/14, and 2/28.
- Mike gave a tour to a House intern on 2/24.
- Elizabeth gave a tour to two House interns on 2/24.
- Carol and Mike gave a Legislative Assistant training session on 2/18.
- Robbie spoke to students and parents from the Minnesota Association of Christian Home Educators on 2/17. The coordinator, Kathy Lyttle, wrote a letter of thanks. In part: "Your willingness to teach the students (and parents!) about the State website is appreciated more than I can properly express. I know you have added an important dimension to many families' choices and I expect the site to be much more utilized."

Training and meetings attended by staff

- Robbie and Marilyn met with the informal Coalition on Government Information Group to plan the Freedom of Information Day festivities on March 16.

Staff news

- Nicole announced that she got a job as a children's librarian with the Ramsey County system. Happily, it is half-time at this point, so she will still stay on with us as well, half-time.

Fan mail!

- 73 messages of thanks came to staff e-mail boxes this month.
- Jess helped a legislator locate an elusive photo from a magazine. Although she was SURE it was in an NCSL magazine, it turned up in the magazine from CSG. The thank you note read, "Thanks. Great job. Apologize for all the mis-info."
- A Senate staff member kindly wrote to Nicole, "Thank you so much -- I don't know what I would do without the libraries great staff!!" A House LA wrote, "This is exactly what we needed. Thank you so much!" A lobbyist wrote, "It worked! Thanks for the help--you provide a wonderful service!"
- We helped convert some old LCESW documents to put up on the Web and they noted their thanks on the site. (See Below.)
- Regarding a presentation given: "Robbie - Thank you again so much for participating in Capitol Media Day. I have to admit that even though I have been here since 1994 I learned a lot from your presentation! I'm sure it was very helpful to the reporters. Sincerely, Ellen"

Historical Minnesota [Census Data](#) are now available on:

Note: Special thanks to the Legislative Reference Library for their assistance in making electronic versions of the following historical documents available.

- ♦ [Minority Women in Minnesota](#) provides a narrative description and statistical overview of minority women in Minnesota in 1980 (posted 2/07/05)

Legislative Reference Library

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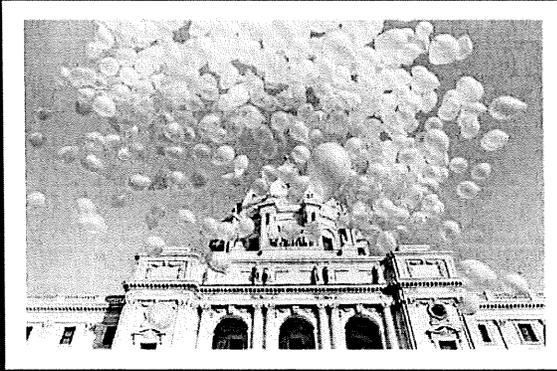
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Alissa LaChapelle
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Ask a Question!
Reference Desk (651) 296-8338
refdesk@lrl.leg.mn

Renew a book:
Circulation Desk (651) 296-3398
circdesk@lrl.leg.mn



Twenty Five Year
Journal
of photography

By Tom Olmscheid
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House of Representatives

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Join friends and colleagues for a:

Joint Open House



Wednesday
January 26
2:30 - 4:30

Legislative Reference Library

645 State Office Building

Appetizers! Punch!

Celebrate the grand opening of a month-long exhibit chronicling political events at the Minnesota Capitol:

“A Twenty Five Year Journal of Photography”

By Tom Olmscheid, Chief Photographer,
Minnesota House of Representatives

Office of the Revisor of Statutes

Desserts! Coffee!

View a special display:

“The Revisor’s Office through Time:

A Retrospective and Prospective Look”

Service, savings solutions

New initiative puts technology in the driver's seat

By **PATTY JANOVEC**

Want to bid on former Gov. Jesse Ventura's china or furniture, anyone? Just like eBay, the state of Minnesota is auctioning off state goods online.

The Department of Administration has raked in \$276,000 on goods from the governor's residence alone, Commissioner Dana Badgerow told House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee Jan. 12. The 68 auctions of state goods and services have resulted in \$1.9 million in savings so far in fiscal year 2005. A potential savings of \$4.6 million is projected with a total of 90 auctions scheduled, said Badgerow.

Technology is saving the state millions of dollars and Gov. Tim Pawlenty has announced "The Pawlenty-Molnau Plan: Minnesota's Drive to Excellence" which will integrate technology to offer better services to citizens.

"This is a shift in philosophy from agency centric to citizen centric," said Dennis Erno, deputy commissioner for the Department of Revenue, at the meeting. The Department has saved nearly 20,000-square feet of office space, just from tax returns being filed electronically versus paper form. For example, since 1998, the

number of business tax returns filed by paper has decreased from 92 percent to 1 percent. The total space saved so far is enough to accommodate another agency, emphasized Erno.

"Drive to Excellence" seeks to provide faster, more reliable and cost-effective services to citizens and businesses in the future, Badgerow said.

According to the governor's Web site, the measurable outcomes expected by the end of 2006 in initiatives include:

- creating more "one stop shop" opportunities for easy access to government services;
- reducing the cost of delivering government administrative services by 20 percent, while increasing the productivity of staff by 15 percent; and
- increasing the electronic delivery of government administrative services by 90 percent of citizen-to-government transactions, 70 percent of business-to-government transactions and 50 percent of government-to-government transactions.

Badgerow testified before the House State Government Finance Committee Jan. 19, and said a core team of 48 full-time employees from 18 state agencies has been working on

a "Transformational Roadmap" for the past four months as the initial step of the drive.

- Three phases of the "roadmap" include:
- taking a broad look at 72 agencies, commissions and boards, inventorying services and informational technology assets;
 - improving services, including deciding which opportunities meet the initiative goals; and
 - establishing a steering committee to make decisions on how implementation should take place and to develop recommendations on meeting the project goals.

The report, prepared by a consulting team at a cost of \$2.5 million, is due to be released soon.

"Do you feel we've got \$2.5 million out of this contracting?" asked Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall), chair of the House State Government Finance Committee. "It seems to be an enormous contract."

"It's a perfect and logical question...that the public is going to ask," responded Badgerow. "We have 25,000 vendors currently in state government...We are not leveraging the power of the state purchasing dollar." 

For more information on the Department of Administration auctions, visit: <http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/mn03001.htm>

There you can view the live auction schedule, results from recent auctions, and state surplus updates.

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Legislative Reference Library

Monthly Report - March 2005

While Leif was out front attending to a computer, two people approached to ask questions. The first was a legislative history question. He passed it on. The second, however, wasn't well suited to either Alissa or Elizabeth, who were out in the Reading Room with him. The young dressed-up intern approached, and pleaded, "Can you help me tie this tie?"

Administration

- Robbie testified with an overview of the Library and budget challenges at the Senate State Government Budget Division on 3/1. The Library Subcommittee meeting was held on March 30, at which the members approved the request for an additional \$63,000 over the biennium for technology needs.
- Robbie participated in a task force to draft a mission statement for MNPALS. The attendees at the MNPALS Annual Meeting on March changed only a couple of words. The final result was: "The MnPALS consortium of libraries facilitates reliable and cost-efficient access to shared library resources for the benefit of their user communities. The consortium supports an integrated automated system that addresses the needs of all participating libraries."

Web

Development

- Before Mike Speiker made the new MyBills e-mail notification feature live, Leif suggested a few changes. They were incorporated.
- Mike and Robbie met with Jim Greenwalt and Linda Schmitt about RSS, and our use of it on the Web site.

Information

Systems

Activities

- Leif added the ability to get to the N:/webcontent directory from the reference desk so that the reference librarians can take care of minor web editing while at the desk.
- Sarah, David, Leif, and Robbie met with Eric Celeste, Associate University Librarian for Information Technology, about dSpace, and our plans for a modest database to track our digital state documents. At the lunch at the History Center we were joined by Eileen Quam, Bob Horton, and Michael Fox.
- Ruth worked with Mike on the Agencies A to Z database. She reported, "I attended a couple of Agencies database meetings. Created a quick data dictionary and diagram. Set up the tables and imported the data from the Excel spreadsheets Mike created."
- Ruth worked on documentation of the Acquisitions 2000 database.

Collections

Activities

- Mike, Paul, Leif, Ruth, David, and Robbie met to discuss the various fields in the A-Z Agency database, and which could be eliminated now that it has been ported over from the old WORD document.
- David wrote, "It came to our attention that MHS Archives did not always retain periodicals that we sent over on an annual basis. They did keep most of them, but some went to U of M archives, some were put with the agency records, etc. Kelly and I did some work and our catalog should now be an accurate reflection of what MHS Archives retained under the P number system. If MHS Archives does not have them in the P number system, we took the record out of our catalog."
- David, Jess, Robbie, Elizabeth, and Ruth met to discuss changes to our mandate letters, to help streamline Jess's work in sending them out, and to get the best responses from the agencies. Ruth Edited letter and made a few samples.
- Kelly processed 72 added volumes, added 3 and revised 1 MULS record, withdrew one item, and claimed 50 missing periodical issues. She finished

shelfreading the reference collection, and started shelving books on Fridays, to help out since Nicole has reduced hours.

- Kelly punched and organized all of the issues of *Senate Briefly* into binders in the periodicals collection. This invaluable historical resource will be much easier to use!

Reference activities

- Mike converted information on Minnesota state agencies and organizations to a much more usable database format, already available from every staff workstation. Mike explained the process, "A to Z was a Microsoft Word document that contained information concerning the Library's "Agency Notebooks". The Word document did not contain all of the information that is in the Notebook record for an agency, rather the Word doc served as a pointer to the Agency Notebooks and contained some key fields of information about the agencies (Also Known As, Agency Heads, Authority, Successor to, Cross References, Subordinate to, Advisory to, Function, etc.) The Word doc format was set up as a sort of flat-file database, but was unwieldy to use and enter information into. We transferred the data from the Word document into a MS Access database (through the intermediate step of making it a spreadsheet). Some fields were dropped from the database, and a couple added. The database was then partially normalized (full normalization would have been more time consuming than the data warranted). A procedure is being developed for entering the backlog of information we have collected about agencies, and the ongoing entering of information. The data is now viewable via a Web interface."

- Paul and Elizabeth the Legislator Database clarification and cleanup. Toshi will begin to add data on legislators from *Toensing*.

- With Nicole moving to a half-time position, Elizabeth and Robbie planned how her duties would be covered. While she will continue to do shelving, she will be helped by Erin, and Kelly will shelve each Friday. Nicole will continue to do overdues, but get help in fulfilling Contents Pages requests.

- With fewer circulation staff hours, reference librarians will be taking some hours at the circulation desk. We decided to no longer log in at the circ desk as "circdesk," but to log in under individual accounts, allowing staff all the rights and access to materials they enjoy on their own workstations. It will still be easy to check the circdesk mailbox, once an hour or so, to see if messages are pending.

- Our Code Book for news clipping and vertical file materials reflects changes in public policy coverage in the news over the years. A sign of the times was a new subdivision added this month – "T19.5 Telecommunications - Internet - Blogs and Email."

- Marilyn finished revamping the Regents' notebooks. She prepared lists of regents from 1851 to the present, noting changes when known; selected and arranged important background materials (including House Research papers and a list of women who have been Regents over time); and selected and arranged articles about the Regents – controversies, election, individuals – from 1969 to the present.

- Sarah, Robbie, Leif, David, and Ruth met to discuss the electronic documents grant project. The public update of work to date is on the Web at: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/webcontent/lrl/mndocs/UPdatemarch.pdf>

Reference questions - a sample

- Reference topics in March included: collective bargaining questions, prison growth in Nebraska, collective bargaining laws for teachers, sick/bereavement leave bill that extended rights to domestic partners, research in "how long it takes to make someone believe something that isn't true", Origin of House Budget Resolutions: Hse Rule 4.03 (1985/Dave Jennings), Child joint-custody: 50/50 arrangements, state laws regarding politicians' use of web sites, capital punishment - religious perspective, tribal casino per capita member payments, statistics on multiple births, video lottery effects on casinos, Illegal

Immigrants/Aliens/CollegeTuition, Meth precursors/pseudoephedrine: any states proposing total bans?, sentencing guidelines in other states, state laws regarding peanuts in schools, crime data for north Mpls. Neighborhoods, MN teacher collective bargaining - contracts settled by deadline date, MN teacher strikes 1993-2005, PFOS/PFOA mammal/human studies, comparison of state welfare benefits, Moose Lake sex offender facility, MN citizens and federal education tax credits, Fingerprints/Constitutionality.

Legislative History Activities

- Elizabeth commented that having the Committee Minutes on the sixth floor have made them much more useful. She has found useful information in Minute Books while researching requests – in the past, going to the basement to find them would have made it less likely they were consulted.
- Jess reported some REALLY busy days for Legislative History, end of beginning of March. Heavy use of Special Session materials from 2003, both local users and someone from Wisconsin trying to track something that got sucked into an omnibus bill in regular session and morphed into a special session bill that eventually dropped her language relating to data privacy. It's somewhat tricky stuff to get at on the website, and people need a lot of help to find the right information.
- Paul shifted the minutes once again. The middle shelves are now in full compliance with the sprinkler clearance rules, at least in as far as they have been explained to us. The shelves Lisa ordered were a perfect fit. One positive aspect of this shifting resulted from a suggestion from Jess & Carol. They both stated that it would be nice to have a space to set the books on while you were paging through them. Paul was able to squeeze in a small space on the middle units expressly for this purpose. So the need to either squat on the floor or juggle the unwieldy books is now history.

Training and tours conducted by staff

- David gave a tour to an interested citizen from Faribault on 3/2.
- Carol gave a tour to a new attorney from the Revisor's Office on 3/2.
- Robbie lectured for Lynda McDonnell's "Advanced Reporting" class at the University of St. Thomas on sources of legislative information (3/17). She gave a tour to ten members of the Special Libraries Association Student Chapter on March 9.
- Elizabeth gave a tour to two groups of citizens. They called themselves "Senior Statesmen," but they weren't all men, nor did a lot of them look very 'senior.'
- High school page tours continued.

Training and meetings attended by staff

- Robbie attended a conference call meeting with Kathleen Ashe, Linda Richter, and Edward Swanson, as part of a task force to come up with a new MNPALS mission statement.
- Elizabeth, Paul, Marilyn, and Robbie attended the Freedom of Information Day activities at the Minnesota History Center on March 16. Robbie and Marilyn were responsible for much of the planning of the event.
- Ruth attended a Level 1 Dreamweaver class.
- Mike took and SQL class.

Staff news

- Nicole accepted a half-time position with Ramsey County Library, as a Children's Librarian at the Arden Hills branch. Happily, she will remain with us half-time as well.

Fan mail!

- 92 thank-you notes included many of the usual "Thanks - it's just what I was looking for," and "Perfect. Thanks for the assistance!." Two people chose to show enthusiasm with capital letters. One person with a question about the new child support reform bill was really happy, writing, "THANK YOU SOOOO VERY MUCH!!!" Another person wrote, "THANK YOU SO MUCH - I WILL LET YOU KNOW IF I NEED ANYTHING ELSE- YOU RESPONDED SO

QUICKLY! YOU ARE AWESOME- HAVE A GREAT DAY!" Another person wrote, "This is terrific! Thanks so much for your rapid response; this is a great help." A loyal House LA wrote, "Thanks, David. You're the best!" A Senate LA wrote to Paul, "THANK YOU!! I keep saying it, but I'll say it again....you guys are the BEST."

- Since we pride ourselves on helping people quickly, we appreciate notes like these: "Thanks--you guys do great work--and fast." "Paul, thanks very much for this. Indeed, it is exactly what I'm look for! I certainly do appreciate your VERY prompt reply to my request, a wonderful characteristic in a person in your position."

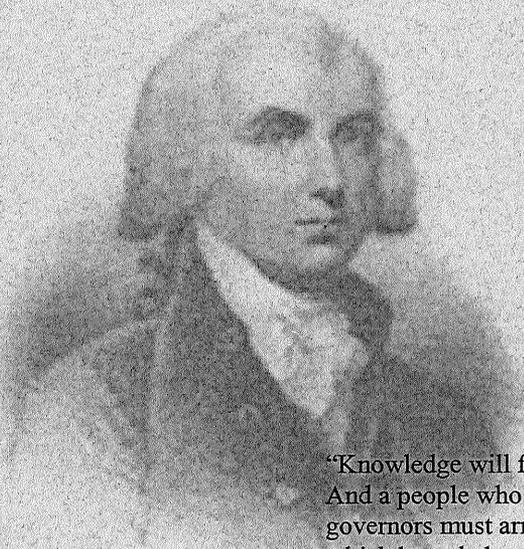
- One person doing legislative history was appreciative, saying of Marilyn, "You are definitely a librarian, I don't think like that!"

- Robbie sent Rep. Dorman a link to an article mentioning him from the Fairmount Sentinel. In it, Rep. Gunther is quoted as saying, "Dan Dorman is doing a phenomenal job, perhaps he is the best negotiator we have ever had in the House as the capital investment committee chairman." Rep. Dorman wrote back, saying, "No wonder I like that guy! Thanks for sending me this."

2004 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION DAY

March 16, 2004
Conference Room 230
Minnesota Judicial Center
12 p.m.

Freedom of Information Day is celebrated each year on the anniversary of the birth of James A. Madison, fourth president of the United States and principal author of the Bill of Rights.

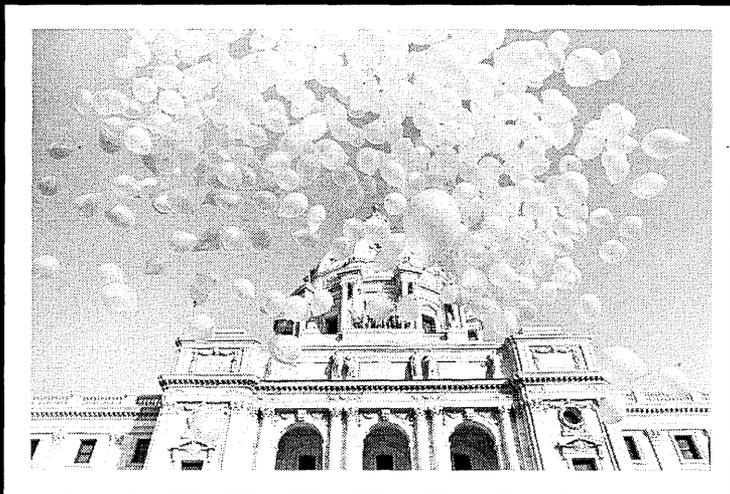


“Knowledge will forever govern ignorance. And a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives. A popular government without popular information or a means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or perhaps both.” *James Madison*

THE 15TH JOHN R. FINNEGAN FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AWARD

Each year on Freedom of Information Day, the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information presents the John R. Finnegan award—named in honor of the former editor of the St. Paul Pioneer Press for his lifelong commitment to openness in government and the public's right to know. The award honors a Minnesotan or Minnesota institution whose work demonstrates leadership and commitment to the power of information to effect change. Past recipients of the award have included:

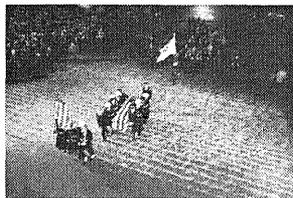
- 2003 Senator Mark Dayton
- 2001 Minnesota E-Democracy
- 2000 Marilyn Cathcart, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library
Bridges, Minnesota's Gateway to Environmental Information
- 1999 Mary Treacy, Metronet
- 1998 MIGIZI Communications
Government Access Producers Group
- 1997 Access Minnesota
Telecommunications Access Grants
- 1996 The North Star Project, State of Minnesota
- 1995 Legislative Gopher Design Group
- 1994 The Urban Coalition
- 1993 Julia Wallace, Head, Government Publications Library and
Regional Depository Librarian, University of Minnesota
- 1992 Alan Robinette (awarded posthumously), Director, Land
Management Information Center, State of Minnesota
- 1991 Peter S. Popovich, Chief Justice, Minnesota Supreme Court
- 1990 Sue Holbert, State Archivist, Minnesota Historical Society
- 1989 Mary Alice Harvey, Director, Grand Marais Public Library



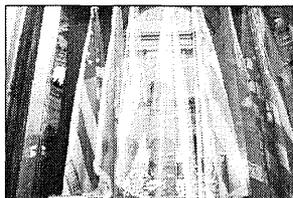
Twenty-five Year
Journal
of photography

Tom Olmscheid
Chief Photographer
Minnesota House
of Representatives

1978 A military color guard brings the flag draped casket of the late Hubert H. Humphrey up the steps of the Capitol. A flag bearer carries the Vice Presidential colors as he leads the family and dignitaries to the rotunda where the former Vice President will lay in state.



1978 Minnesotans are reflected in a rotunda flag case as they file past to pay a final tribute to the late Hubert H. Humphrey as he lays in state at the Capitol.



1978 Richard Nunn leads a rally up the steps of the Capitol to commemorate the birthday of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and to also call for a state holiday in his name.



1978 Speaker Martin Olav Sabo, right, becomes emotional after announcing his retirement from the House on the last day of the session. Minority Leader Henry Savelkoul, left, also announced it was his last day as a House member.



1979 Gloria Steinem, who helped found Ms. Magazine, the National Women's Political Conference and the Women's Action Alliance, attends a joint House/Senate hearing for the funding of Planned Parenthood.





1981 American Indian Movement leader Clyde Bellecourt came to Gov. Quie's Reception Room to protest an Indian land claims issue.



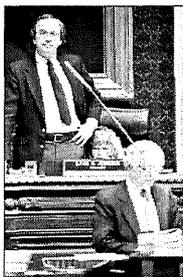
1981 Eighty-year-old Eleanor Krumholz brought her message to the state Capitol Rotunda along with several hundred other nursing home residents. They were protesting Gov. Quie's proposed budget cuts in medical assistance to the state's nursing home residents.



1982 "The gun was to your head. You finally have to decide what you're going to do," Gov. Al Quie said. Quie allowed a budget-balancing bill to become law without his signature, erasing a \$692 million budget deficit through tax increases and spending cuts.



1984 Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro acknowledged along with their families the applause of the audience in the House Chamber after Mondale named Ferraro to be his political partner for the White House. "I looked for the best vice president and I found her," Mondale said of the first woman ever selected for a national ticket.



1985 Nine-year-old J.T. Jennings has the best seat in the House as he got a first hand look at the House in action from behind the desk of his father, Speaker David Jennings.

1986 Pat Christianson, front, who farmed with her husband near Elbow Lake was among about 2,500 people that rallied at the Capitol for legislation to help indebted farmers.



1986 A Sauk Rapids family brought their small coffins for the unborn to a pro-life rally on the steps of the Capitol.



1986 A group of women confront a male protester during a rally in the rotunda seeking an increase in state funding for AFDC programs.

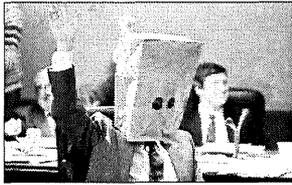


1986 Speaker David Jennings defends the Independent-Republican budget proposal as members of AFSCME crowd around him in the hall outside the House Chamber. The union members were at the Capitol to urge legislators to make fewer cuts in the state budget.



1987 Sen. Douglas Johnson listens from behind his gavel as a member of the tax conference committee explains the House position on a portion of the tax bill.





1988 Rep. Wayne Simoneau put a bag over his head to show his lack of enthusiasm for the environmental trust fund during a hearing of the Rules Committee. He did vote yes.



1989 Gov. Rudy Perpich beamed after being honored by the Swedish government for promoting trade and technology relations between Sweden and Minnesota. He was awarded the Royal Order of the Polar Star, Commander Grand Cross.



1989 Veterans shouted back when angered by comments of a legislator during a rally on the Capitol steps against an \$80 million increase in the charitable gambling tax. The legislator said the additional tax money is needed to increase aid for education.



1989 Rep. Mary Murphy, left, and Rep. Tom Pugh sit elbow to elbow at a senator's desk as they listen to debate on the tax bill during a September special session. The House had to meet in the Senate Chamber because their chamber was under renovation to bring it back to its original decor.



1990 Sara Jane Olson, also known as Kathleen Soliah, portrays Susan B. Anthony in the House Chamber prior to the day's session. Soliah, a fugitive for 23 years, was a member of the '70s radical group known as the Symbionese Liberation Army. In 1999 she was arrested as part of an SLA attempt to bomb several Los Angeles Police patrol cars in 1975.

1990 IR gubernatorial candidate Jon Grunseth meets the press on the steps of the Capitol. He would later withdraw as a candidate due to scandal.



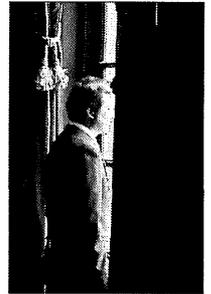
1990 State Auditor Arne Carlson reacts to a crowd of supporters carrying "Run Arne Run" signs outside his office near the Capitol. After losing the IR primary election to Jon Grunseth, Carlson was encouraged to run after Grunseth withdrew as the party's candidate. Carlson went on to defeat incumbent Gov. Rudy Perpich and became Minnesota's 36th governor.



1991 Speaker Robert Vanasek, right, and Sen. Majority Leader Roger Moe listen to Gov. Arne Carlson during a property tax reform summit between IR and DFL leaders in the Gov's Reception Room. The summit was billed as an opportunity to draft a mutually acceptable tax package, but ended with no agreement.

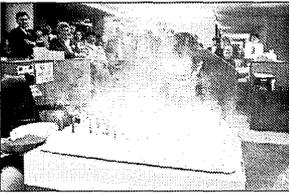


1991 Speaker Robert Vanasek looks out the window in the House Retiring Room prior to the day's session. During the floor session that day Speaker Vanasek held his caucus together as a controversial proposal to make cuts in the worker compensation system underwent its first test on the House floor.



1991 Rep. James Rice makes his way through a tax fairness rally outside the front doors of the Capitol and passes out dimes as John D. Rockefeller once did to the poor. His sign read: "The Reincarnation of John D. Rockefeller."





1993 Rep. Willard Munger, also known as "Mr. Environment," for his strong environmental legislation, pollutes the air as he's shrouded in smoke after blowing out the 82 candles on his birthday cake.



1994 Gov. Arne Carlson turned his reception room into the "Veto Command Center" where commissioners and heads of state agencies poured over stacks of bills to be considered for vetoes or line-item vetoes.



1995 Six-year-old Matthew Fink rests his head as his mother, Cheryl, testifies before the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee for continued funding of home based care for the disabled.



1996 Rep. Henry Kalis sleeps outside the door of Sec. of State Joan Growe at the State Capitol to be the first person to file for elective office. He was the first person to file for public office each election year since 1974.

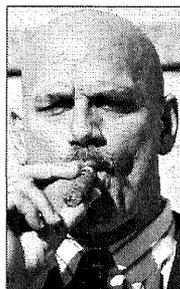


1997 Mother Goose greeted children in the Capitol Rotunda during a rally for the continued funding of children's programs.

1999 Rep. Bill Haas, left, hooks Rep. Chris Gerlach as the House meets in session on the fishing opener.



1999 Gov.-elect Jesse Ventura takes a cigar break on his first day at his State Capitol transition office.



2000 Trishalla Bell holds one-year-old Rosemary Abdul-Salam, right, as her sister, four-year-old Anna, waits while members of the Welfare Rights Committee meet House members outside the House chamber during debate on the state government appropriations bill.



2001 The Dalai Lama made his way through the halls of the State Capitol after addressing a joint session of the legislature and meeting with Gov. Jesse Ventura.

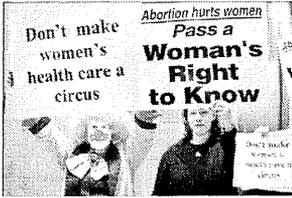


2001 Gretke Langeland Dillion holds her eight-year-old daughter, Samantha Martin, during the Minnesota Remembers Rally in front of the State Capitol in support of the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks on New York City, Wash. D.C. and the passengers on United Flight 93.





2003 Jim Caswell braves the snow and cold to sell American flags for car windows on Rice St. near the State Office Building parking ramp. "I support President Bush liberating Iraq from Saddam Hussein, he said. "It's worth it to be out here in bad weather."



2003 Kelly McGiven, left, and Sarah Lefor, right, stand with their signs outside the House Chamber prior to the day's session. During the floor session members reconsidered an out-dated circus bill that was amended to be a bill dealing with abortion.



2004 Ed Burdick retired after 38 years as the chief clerk of the House. Burdick came to the House as a page in 1941 and missed only one session, when he went into military service in 1951.



Tom Olmscheid, Chief Photographer for the Minnesota House of Representatives, began his career in 1976 as a page in the Sergeant-at-Arms office. The following year he became the House's first non-partisan full-time photographer working for both the Educational Services and Information offices. Olmscheid was named Chief Photographer to head the Photo Dept. when the House reorganized the caucus photographers into one non-partisan office. In 2001 he transitioned the office to digital photography.

Twenty-five Year Journal of photography highlights a small selection of photographs from his 29 year career with the House. Olmscheid's photos have appeared in various publications and newspapers. In 2002 one of his photographs, May Township Hall, was selected as one of Time magazine's, "Best Pictures of the Year".

Olmscheid was raised in Mankato, Minn., is a Navy Vietnam era veteran and received his AA degree in Fine Arts/History from Inver Hills Community College. He lives with his wife, Janine in Shoreview and has two adult sons Peter and A.J.

Cover photo 1987

Each of the balloons signifies either a death or injury caused by a drunken driver in the last ten years during a balloon release in front of the Capitol.

2004
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
AWARD

Marvin Roger Anderson

Marvin Anderson receives this award for his exceptional leadership as Minnesota State Law Librarian from 1980 to 2002, as well as for his local and national activities that promoted his commitment to access to legal information for all citizens. He saw the public law library as the *first rung on the ladder of justice*.

Program

Welcome

Reflections on Freedom of Information Day

John R. Finnegan, Sr.

*Presentation of the John R. Finnegan Freedom of
Information Award to Marvin Roger Anderson*

Remarks

The Honorable Paul Anderson, Associate Justice,
Minnesota Supreme Court

Congratulatory messages

Remarks

Marvin Anderson

♦ *Reception following the program* ♦

MINNESOTA COALITION ON GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

The Coalition is a network of individuals and organizations committed to open access to public information in print, electronic, and digital forms.

The Coalition's members include librarians, media representatives, lawyers, community activists, computer professionals, educators and others who care about openness in government, information access, and the public's right to know.

The Minnesota Coalition is based on a national coalition initiated in 1986 by the American Library Association.

Supporters include:

Friends of the Minneapolis Public Library
Friends of the St. Paul Public Library
Metronet
MN Association of Federal Depository Libraries
MN Legislative Reference Library
MN Library Association's Government Documents
Roundtable
MN Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee
MN State Law Library

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GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

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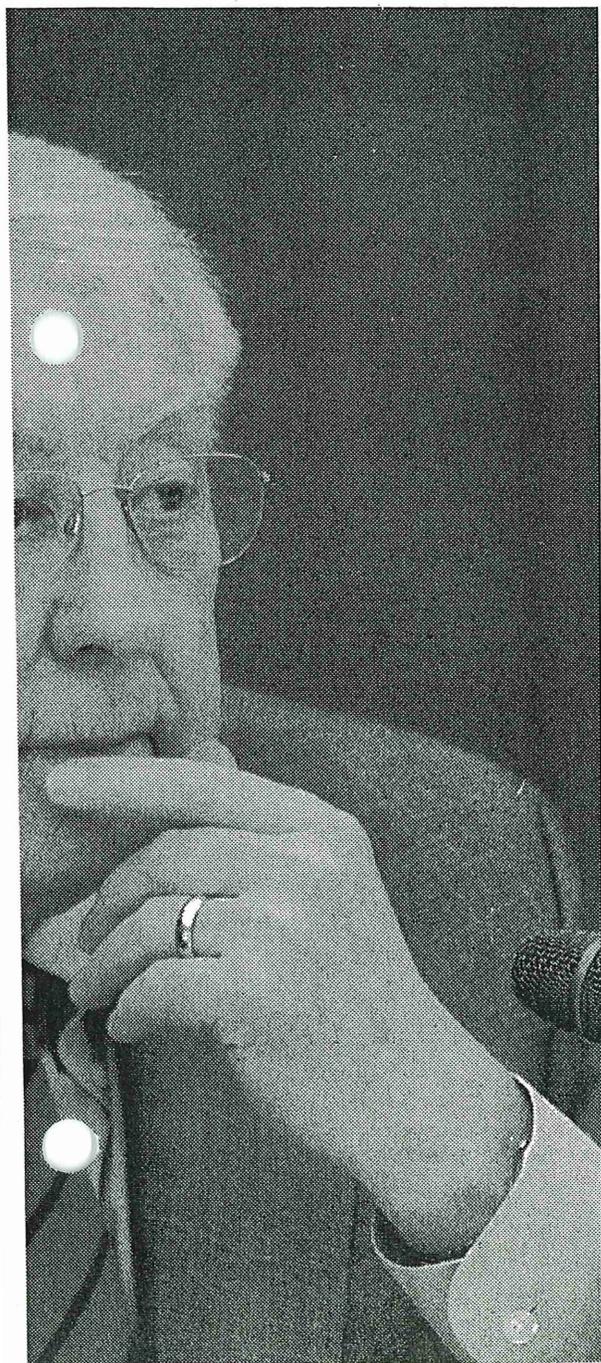
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vmaker, has had a hand
lives of Minnesotans.

erience



State parasite? It's possible

Quick, what's the Minnesota state tree? How about the mushroom? The muffin?

Ever since our state was founded, the Legislature has been designating state symbols, starting in 1861 with the Minnesota state seal (inspired by a Seth Eastman painting) and running all the way through the photo of the man saying grace with a loaf of bread before him (our state photo, adopted in 2002).

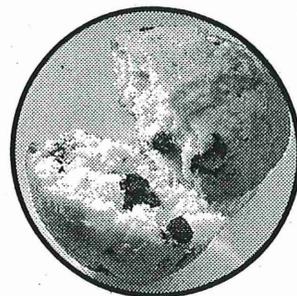
If you'd like to learn more about some of the official state symbols, you can view them online and read about how they gained that status at www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/Symbols.asp. There also are links to intriguing articles by the Minnesota Historical Society and other sources.

For a site that is more fun, read about symbols that have been rejected by the Legislature. Some were suggested in a serious manner, others with tongue more firmly in cheek. Go to www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/Unsym.asp, and you can learn about categories that have yet to receive the legislative stamp of approval, like state amphibian, folk dance, soil or parasite.

Sometimes, legislators rejected the entire concept as silly, while, at other times, the initiatives dissolved in disputes, as in the case of what should be the state beer. So, what do you think should be the state parasite?

— Rob Hubbard

*Pioneer Press
April 10, 2005*



The blueberry muffin is the official state muffin.



In 1987, competing bills proposed a state beer: Cold Spring vs. Schell's.



The Giant Beaver almost became the state fossil.



THIS WEEK IN POLITICS

Here's a look at events of
interest in state politics

starts at 11:25 a.m.

Like the leaders they are theoretically supposed to circumvent, legislative rump groups have been largely ineffective in this year's special session.

So far, rump groups don't 'Get It Done'

BY CHARLEY SHAW
Legal Ledger Staff Writer

If the special session is remembered for anything, it might be for the emergence of "rump groups."

Better in theory than reality, the rump groups were supposed to defy party leadership and find their own solutions to the budget impasse that has led to a partial government shutdown. So far, they've made little progress.

Rump groups, though, aren't a new phenomenon.

State Sen. Steve Kelley, a DFLer who was part of a bipartisan, bicameral rump group that put forth a "Get It Done" budget proposal hours before the shutdown took effect on July 1, said the rump group concept goes all the way back to the 17th century.

"I actually have asked the Legislative Reference Library to look it up," he said. "The historical usage (of the term rump group) was that during the English Civil War, because

of the effects of the war, there was a parliament that couldn't assemble all its members. It did a number of drastic things like abolish the House of Lords and the monarchy. I'm okay with the historical reference. I hope our group has a more positive effect than the Rump Parliament."



Sen. Steve Kelley, DFL-Hopkins, says modern legislative 'rump groups' face a host of challenges: "Building trust among members," for example, he says. "And also trying to reduce the number of controversial issues that want to creep into the conversation."

Rump Groups continued on page 16

July 11, 2009

St. Paul Legal Ledger

DAY

we get it done."

budget negotiations reconvened

Rump Groups

Continued from page 1

Kelley said there are a number of challenges to managing a 21st century Minnesota rump group.

"Building trust among members and trying to remind people that narrowing the issues is going to be a way to get out of here faster than broadening the issues. And also trying to reduce the number of controversial issues that want to creep into the conversation," Kelley said.

The group's proposal contained revenue numbers that landed between proposals by Gov. Tim Pawlenty and Senate DFLers. It also left out controversial topics like a racino and a new income tax tier.

Senate leaders have been "concerned" and want to stay informed about the group's stances, Kelley said.

Lack of progress by another rump group, consisting of a bipartisan group of mostly House members, has frustrated its organizer.

Rep. Dennis Ozment, R-Rosemount, met with a group of rank-and-file House members on the Fourth of July. He said the group has changed in response to political pressures. Ozment said the group's original complexion of younger members has changed to more senior legislators.

"It's becoming more and more difficult to do that. Even though there is a strong desire by what I believe is a majority in the House on both sides of the aisle to just get the job done, there are people that have decided what the outcome should be. And if they deviate from the perceived outcome, then they get talked to," Ozment said.

Rump groups have also been desirable among top lawmakers. In the heat of recent budget negotiations, Pawlenty suggested rump groups bypass legislative leaders to move forward one of his top priorities: casino gambling reform.

Pawlenty has advocated putting slot machines at Canterbury Park racetrack in Shakopee as a way to generate \$210 million to pay for state programs.

Support for a rump group approach on the racino issue was difficult to discern, however, and Pawlenty wound up pulling his racino proposal from the table on June 30. Racino discussion has popped up occasionally since then. But Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson, DFL-Willmar, has referred to the racino as a deal breaker.

Legislators noted some of the difficulties in pursuing the rump group approach.

Sen. David Kleis, R-St. Cloud, who supports the racino idea, said racino stood a better chance of passage as part of an overall deal.

"If there is an overall deal, certainly there would probably be even more people that might not have supported it on its own that would support it if both sides are giving something up," Kleis said.

One of the "Get It Done" rump group leaders, Sen. James Metzen, DFL-South St. Paul, said the racino was not a feasible part of a hoped-for budget solution.

"It's not in this proposal," he said. "Some of us personally are for it, but I learned a long time ago how to count, and I'm not sure we have the votes."

Sen. David Hann, R-Eden Prairie, who opposes casinos as a tool for financing government, digested the rump group idea by saying that, though unlikely, per-

haps enough DFL legislators could bolt from their established position and team up with Republicans who support the measure.

"It could happen. I'm skeptical. I think we elect leaders for a caucus — that doesn't mean that everybody in the caucus always supports what the leader does. But we do it for a purpose. The purpose is so we have some structure," he said.

Hann said Minnesota needs gaming reform.

"I think a lot of the frustration many Republicans have right now is that they are dissatisfied with the current structure of gaming in Minnesota. Because of that frustration, it has led many to look at competitive forces," Hann said.

Pawlenty had described his racino proposal as a reform of the gambling landscape.

On May 20, when Pawlenty proposed a 75-cent-per-pack fee on cigarettes, he included the racino along with three other conditions: initiative and referendum, school vouchers and a ban on teacher strikes while school is in session. That offer didn't take hold, and the special session ground on toward the partial shutdown.

The "Get It Done" budget plan set total spending at \$30.7 billion for the biennium. That number was less than the Senate's June 23 budget offer and more than Pawlenty's May 20 offer.

The group has changed its offer since late June. It has come down from \$1 per pack on cigarettes and has reduced its amount on foreign operating corporations. Part of those reductions were made possible when the agriculture, environment and economic development funding bill that recently passed closed at a lower level than originally predicted, Kelley said. ■

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8/26/2005

Legislative Scorecards



The [Minnesota Taxpayer's League](#) has released its latest [Legislative Scorecard](#), featuring 18 "Heroes of the Taxpayer." Legislative librarians have compiled legislative scorecards and voter ratings for many years;



online versions have been compiled into a guide, [Legislator Voting Records and Ratings](#). Contemporary descriptions of legislators in legislative scorecards aren't nearly so colorful as those in some old volumes by Lynn Haines. In *The Minnesota Legislature of 1911*, W.I. Nolan (pictured here courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society's [Visual Resources Database](#)) "was exceptionally well equipped for public service and made an enviable record ... aggressive, fearless and forceful in all his work." In contrast, George M. Nye was characterized as "of small caliber but perniciously active as a reactionary," and John P. Nash was "a reactionary politician who voted against the people, excepting when he was absent, which was a great deal of the time."

New Materials

Minnesota Issues

Legislative History

Historical Data

Legislature
State Government

State Documents

Services for the
Legislature

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8/25/2005

Cell Phone Use Legislation



According to a survey by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, [Driver Cell Phone Use in 2004](#), "During the typical daylight moment in 2004, 5% of drivers on the road were holding cellular phones to their ears, compared to 4% in 2002, and 3% in 2000." This is not a good idea, since a recently released study found that

drivers using cell phones are four times more likely to have a crash that will result in hospital attendance. See: [Role of mobile phones in motor vehicle crashes resulting in hospital attendance: a case-crossover study](#), in [BMJ.com](#) (British Medical Journal). Minnesota passed a [law](#) (see Sec. 64) in the 2005 legislative session prohibiting drivers under age 18 who have a provisional license or instruction permit from using a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle (with exceptions for emergency situations). Recent legislation in other states on distracted driving and other information on the issue can be found on the National Conference of State Legislatures's Web page, [Cell Phones and Highway Safety: 2005 Legislative Update](#).

House/Senate Audio &
Video

House Intranet

Senate Intranet

LCC Intranet

Library Home

8/22/2005

Who Will Own Minnesota's Information Highways?



the [New Rules Project](#) of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, David Morris and Becca Vargo Daggett argue that competitive broadband service and pricing is within reach of most Minnesotans if anti-competitive

polices and practices are removed and municipal governments build broadband infrastructure. Municipal broadband projects have become a state issue. According to an article in the July issue of [Governing Magazine](#), [Block that Broadband](#), "This year 14 states introduced bills to prevent or restrict municipalities from wearing their telecom hat." [FCW.com](#), an online technology news service, also discussed the issue on August 18, in [Battle over municipal Wi-Fi networks](#).

8/16/2005

Funding Justice Information Sharing



"Effective crime control relies not only on accurate, complete and current information, but also on systems that are capable of sharing information. Improvements in information technology can enhance public safety, but these improvements may be costly....This report identifies various sources for funding justice information technology and the legislative actions taken to enable justice information systems." So states the introduction to [Funding Justice Information Sharing](#), a May 2005 report published by the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#). [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the report. *

8/4/2005

States Act to Ease Troops' Sacrifice



Minnesota is one of thirty states with legislation to make up the difference between civilian and military pay for state employees called to active military duty, according to a [Stateline.com](#) article, "[States Act to Ease Troops' Sacrifice](#)." For updated information military and veterans legislation in Minnesota, see: [Military and Veterans Enactments by the 2005 Minnesota Legislature: New Benefits, Protections, and Other Laws](#) from the [House Research](#) office.

8/2/2005

The Impact of Terrorism on State Law Enforcement: Adjusting to New Roles and Changing Conditions



State law enforcement agencies are struggling to meet new terrorism-related demands. A new [Council of State Governments](#) report, [The Impact of Terrorism on State Law Enforcement: Adjusting to New Roles and Changing Conditions](#), seeks to inform state leaders about the new roles and responsibilities of state-level agencies and critical issues of their operation, including communication, governance, resources and training issues. Information about Minnesota agencies' anti-terrorism efforts can be found on the Web sites of the Minnesota Departments of [Public Safety](#), [Agriculture](#), and [Health](#). Additional resources on terrorism can be found on the Library's [Links to the World -- Terrorism](#) page. [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like a copy of the CSG report.*

7/28/2005

Power, Knowledge and Politics



, Professor of Political Science and Director of the [Center for Public Policy and Administration](#) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, has written a comprehensive



history and analysis of state legislative nonpartisan research organizations. He examined their effectiveness in [Power, Knowledge, and Politics](#), and concluded that nonpartisan policy analysis institutions can play an important role—as long as they remain scrupulously nonpartisan. [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the book. *

7/27/2005

Improving Senior Citizens' Computer Skills



Two articles in the summer issue of [State Tech Magazine](#) discuss efforts in Minnesota to improve senior citizens' access to health care and long-term care information on the Web. The "[Senior Surf Days](#)" computer training program coordinated by the [Minnesota Board on Aging](#) is highlighted. Free registration is required to access the full text of the *State Tech* articles, [Technology and the Digital Divide](#) and [Helping Seniors Help Themselves](#). [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like print copies of the articles. *

7/20/2005

Columbia Journalism Review Profiles Bill Hanna



The July/August issue of the [Columbia Journalism Review](#) includes a lengthy article on Bill Hanna, the editor of the Virginia, Minnesota, based [Mesaba Daily News](#). The author, Michael Shapiro, spent weeks scouring the country for a small newspaper that had a relationship with its readers. In the *Mesaba Daily News* he found a paper that he described as messy, loud, and prone to anger and outrage - but with "a quality that has become frighteningly rare in newspapers: a personality." It is noted that Hanna, who has shared his often contentious beliefs about the Range with readers for over twenty years, is a "pack sacker," meaning he came to the Iron Range from somewhere else (Northeast Minneapolis). [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like a copy of the article. *

7/19/2005

Grid and Utility Computing Projects



"[Witnessing an Evolution](#)," in the July issue of [Government Technology](#), begins, "The combination of grid computing and utility computing just might be the next big thing." Grid computing employs a colossal network of computers that allows individual machines to share computational capacity with others on the network -- in essence, creating one massive computer. Utility computing, also called on-demand computing, allows users to access more computational power while maintaining fewer local resources. Projects currently underway at the Minnesota Historical Society are highlighted in the article. In April 2005, the Minnesota Historical Society, the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, and the Legislative Reference Library launched a [project](#) to explore and test these technologies to preserve the electronic records of the Minnesota legislature.

*Available to legislators and legislative staff only. Please contact the

library if you would like copies of any of these reports, or further research on this or any topic.

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MINITEX

Reference NOTES

A Program of the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office (HESO) at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

November 2005

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Information Bits:

ELM hands-on and Webinar
training sessions are already
scheduled for January and
February 2006. For more
information or to register go
to <http://www.minitex.umn.edu/train-conf/>.

Minnesota Edocs: providing expanded access to Minnesota state documents through MnLINK

By Sarah Quimby, Information Analyst at the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

Minnesota Edocs had its inception in a 2003 Legislative Reference Library pilot project to archive scanned or downloaded copies of mandated electronic state documents on LRL's own server, and to link to those documents through the Library's catalog. While LRL had been linking directly to online state publications for over a decade, we soon realized that having an agency's URL on a bibliographic record in no way assured that a patron would be able to access it at any time in the future, as agencies changed their names, merged, transferred responsibilities, uploaded new documents over old, or administrations left office and took their web pages with them. Permanent statewide access to paper state documents was assured by the distribution of microfiche; by archiving these electronic documents on our own server, we were hoping to ensure a more permanent access to them as well.

This pilot project had just begun when the unforeseen happened: DocuComm, the agency responsible for creating microfiche copies of state documents, outsourced its operations, effectively ending the Minnesota State Document Depository system and casting the future of permanent statewide access to Minnesota government information into doubt. The end of DocuComm gave LRL the added impetus to expand the yet-unnamed pilot project to include all electronic state government documents received by the library.



In the meantime, however, online archiving was beginning to pose several problems for LRL. Our serial bibliographic records were rapidly becoming cluttered with multiple URLs for successive issues. Another problem was that there was frequently not a one-to-one relationship between a paper document and its electronic equivalent: the text might be identical, but the online version might be published broken up into numerous files in a variety of formats. On a grander scale, our digital files lacked any preservation or administrative metadata, and the static link on our

bibliographic records meant that we could never migrate those files to another server, unless we wanted to break every archive link in our catalog. It was becoming obvious that LRL needed a system to manage our digital files and the associated metadata.

In 2004, LRL applied for and received an LSTA grant to study and develop a solution to these issues. The conditions of the grant specified that access to our digital files had to be through MnLINK. Because of this stipulation and for philosophical reasons, we did not want to create a separate collection and a separate catalog from scratch: we wanted to be able to use the robust bibliographic metadata already in our catalog to access our digital files. Finally, our funds were extremely limited; we would have no additional budget for software, user fees, or staff time.

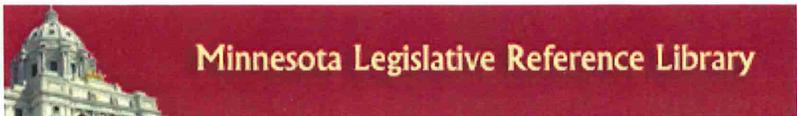
These strictures immediately ruled out many of the large, enterprise-class commercial and open-source products available, such as OCLC's CONTENTdm or MIT's DSpace. Our survey of the state libraries in the other forty-nine states uncovered many other interesting and effective solutions, but again, either the financial commitment was too great or LRL's software environment did not match. We were beginning to feel like Goldilocks: OCLC's Digital Archive was too expensive! ExLibris' ALEPH Digital Asset Module only worked for version 17! ePrints required an incompatible software environment!

We also consulted extensively with colleagues from the State Archives, the state Office of Technology, and the University of Minnesota. In doing so, we realized that building a comprehensive, statewide system to preserve and provide access to digital state documents was beyond the scope of LRL's mission. Such a system would require a significant financial investment as well as the support, input, and buy-in of all state agencies. With all of this in mind, we decided to build our own fast, streamlined, inexpensive database that could be linked to from the LRL catalog, store the preservation and administrative metadata, and create a framework of linkages between digital files that could one day be migrated to a larger, more comprehensive document management system.

The database—which we named “Minnesota Edocs”—is built on a structure of three linked tables. The highest level table is the base record, containing the OCLC number of the source bibliographic record, the title, the publisher, and any notes about the bibliographic item. Below the base record is the item record table, which can accommodate any number of item records. The item record contains the Minn. Doc. or Minnesota Publication number, the year/volume (for serials) and/or part title, and any notes about the item. Below the item record is the digital file record, which records information about the individual digital files that make up an item, the source URL, the LRL archive URL, the date archived, the original file format, and file conversion information. Under the covers the data fields are mapped to both MARC fields and Dublin Core elements.

Minnesota Edocs is accessed through a URL on the MnPALS bibliographic record that launches a query of the database using the OCLC number. The search results are output to an html window that displays a simple record (title and publisher) with links to the digital document(s). Most of the descriptive metadata remains in the MARC record and is searchable through MnPALS.

To see examples of Minnesota Edocs in action, search either the MnLINK Gateway <http://www.mnlinkgateway.org> or the Legislative Reference Library's catalog at <http://lrl.mnpals.net/> using the keyword search “edocs.asp”. Choose any record and click on the URL labeled “Library electronic version(s).” To date, we have archived nearly 1500 item records, in a variety of formats and configurations, linked to over 1000 bibliographic records. By building Minnesota Edocs, we have solved the problems of preservation and access and have built a foundation for permanent access to electronic state information. It is our hope that this system could be emulated and adapted by other libraries considering similar archives of electronic files. For more information, please see the Legislative Reference Library's Minnesota Edocs website at: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/mndocs/edocs/overview.asp>



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In case you missed it.....

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The 2005 edition of [Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents](#) is available from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Additional resources for Minnesota veterans can be found on the [Veterans and Military Affairs](#) page from the Minnesota House of Representative Research Department, including [Military and Veterans Enactments by the 2005 Legislature: New Benefits, Protections, and Other Law](#) by Jim Cleary. This information augments the rich resources from the [Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs](#) and the [Department of Employment and Economic Development](#).
12/2/2005

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Each year the U.S. Census Bureau creates new Web-based tools to easily retrieve statistics. As an example, the [Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates](#) (SAIPE) program provides more current estimates of selected income and poverty statistics than the most recent decennial census. An easy-to-use Web interface allows you to search for several years of poverty statistics by state, county, or school district. For example, it only takes a few clicks to discover the number of students aged 5-17 in families of poverty in the Blackduck school district (105 of 748 total), or the percent of people ages 0-17 in poverty in Aitkin County in 2003 (17.5%).
11/30/2005

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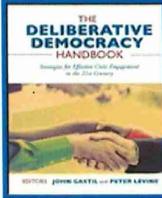
Members at a recent [interim hearing](#) of the North Dakota Assembly Judiciary Committee discussed a background memorandum prepared by their Legislative Counsel, "[Marriage License Fees by State](#)." Minnesota is one of two states with the highest fee, \$100, without premarital counseling. One other state lists a fee as high as \$100, Wisconsin at "\$50 to \$100 (varies by county)." The range is great; some cities in Utah charge no fee. In Minnesota the fee for couples who receive 12 hours of premarital education drops to \$30. Three other states list lower fees for couples who receive counseling or premarital education.
11/29/2005

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"[Involuntary Commitment of Sexually Violent Predators: Comparing State Laws](#)" is a 2005 report from the [Washington State](#)

 [Institute for Public Policy](#). The report summarizes key features of these laws in 17 states, which vary greatly in organizational structure and facility operations. Reported costs are difficult to compare, as service delivery models vary across states. In a table listing program costs reported by the states for the involuntary civil commitment of sexually violent predators, Minnesota reported the highest cost per day per client, at \$314.00.

11/21/2005

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[Deliberative-democracy.net](#) is the online home of the [Deliberative Democracy Consortium](#), composed of more than 20 organizations working to renew democracy through citizen participation and deliberation. The Library recently purchased [The Deliberative Democracy Handbook](#), which presents best practices for bringing citizens together to engage in thoughtful, respectful discussion of complex public issues.

11/17/2005

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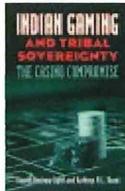
A recent consultants report for the [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency](#) describes research on northern Minnesota fish: "Bioaccumulation of Methylmercury in Aquatic Food Webs in Surface Waters of the Voyageurs National Park." From 2000-2005 researchers investigated ecosystem factors affecting methylmercury concentrations in fish in Park waters, responding to concerns about potential health and ecological risks of consuming those fish. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency features a wide range of documents on [mercury](#) and the environment. (The photo of the [Yellow Perch](#) is from the DNR Website.)

11/9/2005

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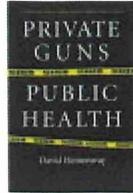
[PoliticsOnline](#) is a Web site that features a free e-politics [email newsletter](#). Short articles highlight news of politics and technology. For instance, "[E-stonian E-Vote a Success](#)" tells about the first country to allow voters nationwide to cast ballots over the Internet. "Fewer than 10,000 people, or 1 percent of registered voters, participated online in elections for mayors and city councils across the country, but officials hailed the experiment as a success." "[Reaching Voters Through Internet Cartoons](#)" includes links to animated ads from the upcoming California special election. The political toons are inexpensive to produce and aimed at an Internet audience.

11/4/2005

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Indian Gaming and Tribal Sovereignty: The Casino Compromise, a newly published book from the University Press of Kansas, analyzes options for policymakers as political pressure for tribes to concede to their state's interests increases. (For example, some Minnesota citizens and policymakers feel the state's

tribal-state compacts should be renegotiated so the state can share in the economic gain some of the tribes have experienced.) "Every state legislator, governor, and Congressman should read this book," urges LaDonna Harris, President, Americans for Indian Opportunity.
11/1/2005



- The *New England Journal of Medicine* reviewed *Private Guns, Public Health* by David Hemenway by saying "The public health community began researching gun violence about two decades ago, a late entrant in a field traditionally occupied by criminologists. David Hemenway, an economist at the Harvard School of Public Health and the director of the Injury Control Research Center there, has been a leader in this effort. His book is the first to synthesize the findings in this new field and to reference other literature as well. The book provides an account of the nature of the problem of gun violence and views about what can be done to mitigate it, engaging all the principal controversies...."
10/27/2005



- Many studies have set out to determine the safety implications of cell phone use while driving. *Effects of Washington, D.C. Law on Drivers' Hand-Held Cell Phone Use*, a study conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, examines drivers' compliance with a law that took effect on July 1, 2004.
10/24/2005



- As a depository of consultants reports from state-funded projects (MS [16C.08](#), Subd.6), the Library receives reports done pursuant to highway projects. Many of the reports provide interesting background about the regions through which the new or revamped highway projects pass. Such is the case with *Mesabi Iron Range Historic Contexts*, done as part of the Phase III Mitigation Study for Trunk Highway 169 in Itasca and St. Louis Counties. It gives extensive background on the geology of the area, mining development on the Iron Range from 1892-1954, and townsites and community development during the same period. (The photo of the Shenango Mine is from the Minnesota Historical Society's [Visual Resources Database](#).)
10/20/2005



- The photography is fabulous in a new book from the Minnesota Historical Society Press, *Twin Cities Album: A Visual History*. To whet your appetite, a [flash-based tour](#) of 150 years of events pictured in the book is available from [Minnesota Public Radio](#). Need more? See the author, Dave Kenney, talk about his favorite ten photos in the book on a [segment](#) of TPT's *Almanac* from August 26.
10/10/2005



- An article in the October 3 [Pioneer Press](#)



details three task forces appointed by Governor Pawlenty, "[Government by Task Force: Pawlenty Taps Citizens for Policy Advice, with Mixed Results](#)." The online versions of the reports on K-12 education, health care, and higher education, are: [Inve\\$ting in Our Future: Seeking a Fair, Understandable, and Accountable Twenty-first Century Education Finance System for Minnesota](#), [Listening to Minnesotans : Transforming Minnesota's Health Care System : Report of the Minnesota Citizens Forum on Health Care Costs](#), and [Trouble on the Horizon : Growing Demands and Competition, Limited Resources, & Changing Demographics in Higher Education : the 2004 Citizens League Report on Higher Education in Minnesota](#).

10/3/2005



- From the Executive Summary of [Driver Safety and the Role of Minnesota's Driver License Policy](#), published by [HACER](#), Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research: "By using factual information about traffic violations and incarcerations involving Hispanic/Latino and Non-Hispanic drivers, the report demonstrates to what extent Minnesota driver's license policy has exacerbated the number of unlicensed drivers, presumably by prohibiting undocumented immigrants from getting a license." The report quantifies the number of unlicensed drivers in Hennepin and Ramsey County.

9/25/2005



- In [Driven to Spend: Pumping Dollars out of our Households and Communities](#), the [Surface Transportation Policy Project](#) ranked selected metropolitan areas by household expenditures on transportation costs. Minneapolis-St. Paul ranked 18th of 28, at 17.5% of household income, or an average of \$9280. Combined spending on housing and transportation requires an average of 52% per household. Published in June, 2005, the report describes the uneven impact of rising gas prices on lower-income households, even before the latest surges in gas prices.

9/16/2005



- Environmental assessments on high-profile projects often contain valuable background information for researchers. Two recent Draft Environmental Assessments on airport projects describe plans for the *2015 Terminal Expansion Project, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport* and the *Perimeter Dike and Runway Safety Area Improvements Project, St. Paul Downtown Airport*.

9/1/2005



- The [Minnesota Taxpayer's League](#) has released its latest [Legislative Scorecard](#), featuring 18 "Heroes of the Taxpayer." Legislative librarians have compiled legislative scorecards and voter ratings for many years; online versions have been compiled into a guide, [Legislator Voting Records](#)

[and Ratings](#). Contemporary descriptions of legislators in legislative scorecards aren't nearly so colorful as those in some old volumes by Lynn Haines. In *The Minnesota Legislature of 1911*, W.I. Nolan (pictured here courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society's [Visual Resources Database](#)) "was exceptionally well equipped for public service and made an enviable record ... aggressive, fearless and forceful in all his work." In contrast, George M. Nye was characterized as "of small caliber but perniciously active as a reactionary," and John P. Nash was "a reactionary politician who voted against the people, excepting when he was absent, which was a great deal of the time."

8/26/2005

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According to a survey by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, [Driver Cell Phone Use in 2004](#), "During the typical daylight moment in 2004, 5% of drivers on the road were holding cellular phones to their ears, compared to 4% in 2002, and 3% in 2000." This is not a good idea, since a recently released study found that drivers using cell phones are four times more likely to have a crash that will result in hospital attendance. See: [Role of mobile phones in motor vehicle crashes resulting in hospital attendance: a case-crossover study](#), in [BMJ.com](#) (British Medical Journal). Minnesota passed a [law](#) (see Sec. 64) in the 2005 legislative session prohibiting drivers under age 18 who have a provisional license or instruction permit from using a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle (with exceptions for emergency situations). Recent legislation in other states on distracted driving and other information on the issue can be found on the National Conference of State Legislatures' Web page, [Cell Phones and Highway Safety: 2005 Legislative Update](#).

8/25/2005

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In [Who will own Minnesota's Information Highways?](#), from the [New Rules Project](#) of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, David Morris and Becca Vargo Daggett argue that competitive broadband service and pricing is within reach of most Minnesotans if anti-competitive policies and practices are removed and municipal governments build broadband infrastructure. Municipal broadband projects have become a state issue. According to an article in the July issue of [Governing](#) Magazine, [Block that Broadband](#), "This year 14 states introduced bills to prevent or restrict municipalities from wearing their telecom hat." [FCW.com](#), an online technology news service, also discussed the issue on August 18, in [Battle over municipal Wi-Fi networks](#).

8/22/2005

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"Effective crime control relies not only on accurate, complete and current information, but also on systems that are capable of sharing information. Improvements in information technology can enhance public safety, but these improvements may be costly....This report identifies various sources for funding justice information technology and the legislative actions taken to enable justice

information systems." So states the introduction to [Funding Justice Information Sharing](#), a May 2005 report published by the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#).
8/16/2005



- Minnesota is one of thirty states with legislation to make up the difference between civilian and military pay for state employees called to active military duty, according to a [Stateline.com](#) article, "[States Act to Ease Troops' Sacrifice](#)." For updated information military and veterans legislation in Minnesota, see: [Military and Veterans Enactments by the 2005 Minnesota Legislature: New Benefits, Protections, and Other Laws](#) from the [House Research](#) office.
8/4/2005



- State law enforcement agencies are struggling to meet new terrorism-related demands. A new [Council of State Governments](#) report, [The Impact of Terrorism on State Law Enforcement: Adjusting to New Roles and Changing Conditions](#), seeks to inform state leaders about the new roles and responsibilities of state-level agencies and critical issues of their operation, including communication, governance, resources and training issues. Information about Minnesota agencies' anti-terrorism efforts can be found on the Web sites of the Minnesota Departments of [Public Safety](#), [Agriculture](#), and [Health](#). Additional resources on terrorism can be found on the Library's [Links to the World -- Terrorism](#) page.
8/2/2005



- [John A. Hird](#), Professor of Political Science and Director of the [Center for Public Policy and Administration](#) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, has written a comprehensive history and analysis of state legislative nonpartisan research organizations. He examined their effectiveness in [Power, Knowledge, and Politics](#), and concluded that nonpartisan policy analysis institutions can play an important role—as long as they remain scrupulously nonpartisan.
7/28/2005



- Two articles in the summer issue of [State Tech Magazine](#) discuss efforts in Minnesota to improve senior citizens' access to health care and long-term care information on the Web. The "[Senior Surf Days](#)" computer training program coordinated by the [Minnesota Board on Aging](#) is highlighted. Free registration is required to access the full text of the *State Tech* articles, [Technology and the Digital Divide](#) and [Helping Seniors Help Themselves](#).
7/27/2005



- The July/August issue of the [Columbia Journalism Review](#) includes a lengthy article on Bill Hanna, the editor of the Virginia, Minnesota, based [Mesaba Daily News](#). The author, Michael



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7/20/2005



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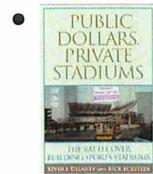
7/19/2005



"The New Congressional Demographic: Suburbs Rule," a special report in the July 27, 2005, issue of [CQ Weekly](#), analyzes the

demographics of all 435 U.S. congressional districts. CQ's analysis shows the pivotal role of the suburban voter, summarizing that the Republicans will control the U.S. House as long as they keep dominating the newer suburbs. "An even closer look at the political makeup of suburbia, as found in CQ's study, suggests an even more portentous dividing line-between the constituencies that lie mainly in the rapidly developing suburbs that are sprawling outward to enlarge most metropolitan areas, and the longer established and more slowly growing inner suburbs."

7/15/2005



The Library has received *Public Dollars, Private Stadiums: The Battle over Funding Sports Stadiums*, by Kevin J. Delaney and Rick Eckstein. The situation in Minnesota is described in a chapter comparing and contrasting Minneapolis and Hartford. The cities are alike because both have very weak local growth coalitions that used to be much stronger. About Minneapolis, "Our story focuses on how a once-strong local growth coalition, able to build the Metrodome in relatively short order, has evolved into a weak and fractured coalition that has failed in five attempts to build a new ballpark."

7/14/2005



The

Library recently subscribed to two new publications covering the ethanol industry. [Ethanol Producer Magazine](#), published in Grand Forks, N.D., is aimed at ethanol producers and future ethanol producers worldwide. [Ethanol Today: The Official Magazine of the American Coalition for Ethanol](#), focuses on community impacts, research, and profiles of ACE members. Both journals cover state and national legislation affecting ethanol issues. Contact the Library at 6-8338 or refdesk@lrl.leg.mn if you would like to receive the tables of contents for these journals as issues arrive.

7/13/2005

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Minnesota's partial state government shutdown generated a lot of ink - or pixels, for online readers. For a sense of the wide-ranging coverage of the shutdown, [Google News](#) provides a search engine for published news sources. Searching the words "Minnesota legislature shutdown" will bring up articles from the Minnesota press and around the country. Many bloggers have weighed in on the issue as well. Another search engine, [Technorati](#), searches over 12,000,000 weblogs.

7/12/2005

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The Library has received two [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) reports in the new series "States and Tribes: Building New Traditions," [Homeland Security and Indian Country](#) and [Piecing Together the State-Tribal Tax Puzzle](#). (Note: Specific information about taxation and Indian tribes in Minnesota can be found in the "Taxation in Indian Country" chapter of the House Research report, [Indians, Indian Tribes, and State Government](#).)

6/29/2005

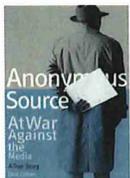
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Minnesota is highlighted in today's [Stateline.org](#) article, "[Budget deadline looms large in ten states](#)." Although there are ten states that have not yet adopted budgets for the fiscal year that begins July, the stakes are highest in Minnesota. "Of the 10 states that have July 1 fiscal-year start dates and no budgets, Minnesota is the only one where there is no mechanism to keep the government functioning."

6/27/2005

- In a study by the Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota, [Ramp Meter Delays, Freeway Congestions, and Driver Acceptance: Final Report](#), researchers conducted experiments using two methodologies. Do drivers prefer longer ramp waiting times and shorter driving times, or shorter ramp waiting times and longer driving times? Unfortunately, the methodologies

produced contradictory results, and the study suggested that more realistic experiments using real-world conditions are needed to corroborate or refute the results of the computer-based and driving simulator-based experiments.
6/23/2005



- *Anonymous Source: At War Against the Media, A True Story*, by Dan Cohen, chronicles the decade-long, landmark case involving the use of anonymous sources, [Cohen v Cowles Media](#). Cohen was the person who tipped reporters to a story about lieutenant governor candidate Marlene Johnson on the eve of the election in 1982. The *Star Tribune* and *Pioneer Press* broke their promises of confidentiality to Cohen, who eventually won his lawsuit against the newspapers. [Sarah Janacek](#), publisher of *Politics in Minnesota: The Weekly Report*, will host a [discussion](#) of the book by the author on June 28 at the [Magers and Quinn Bookstore](#) in Minneapolis.
6/20/2005

- The Minnesota Historical Society recently released the latest in their "[People of Minnesota](#)" series, *Mexicans in Minnesota*. Other ethnic groups profiled in the series include Poles, Chinese, Germans, Swedes, Jews, Norwegians, and African Americans.
6/15/2005

- Cancer is now the leading cause of death in Minnesota. Half of all Minnesotans will develop a potentially life-threatening cancer in their lifetime, and the number of people diagnosed with cancer is projected to increase by 22% between 2000 and 2010. To address the full spectrum of cancer control - from prevention and early detection to treatment, palliative care, and survivorship - the Minnesota Department of Health and the Midwest Division of the American Cancer Society facilitated the development of [Cancer Plan Minnesota 2005-2010 \(abstract\)](#).
6/10/2005

- *State of the Air 2005 (online version)*, from the American Lung Association, lists both the cleanest and the most polluted cities and counties in the country. State report cards list counties with at-risk populations, and the number of high ozone days and particle pollution days in those counties. Minnesota fared well in comparison to many Midwest states. "Minnesota's air quality remains good overall. Three counties improved their grades for short-term particle pollution, and although two counties' grades dropped slightly, the majority remained the same. There were no changes in grades in Minnesota for year-round particle pollution."
6/8/2005

- [Concentrating on Clean Water: The Challenge of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations](#) is published by the [Iowa Policy Project](#). The report summarizes current scientific literature and discusses water quality issues related to large livestock operations.
6/3/2005

- In [Expecting Better: A State-by-State Analysis of Parental Leave Programs](#) from the [National Partnership for Women and Families](#), Minnesota received a fairly high ranking, a B. Not a single state earned a grade of A. California received a grade of A-, a handful of states earned a B, and nineteen states received grades of F for failing to provide a single benefit or program to help support families before and after the birth of a child.

6/2/2005

- "[Does Parole Work? Analyzing the impact of Postprison Supervision on Rearrest Outcomes.](#)" from the [Urban Institute](#), used data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics recidivism study to compare prisoners released to parole supervision in 1994 with prisoners who completed their entire prison sentence and were released without supervision. From the research highlights: "Overall, parole supervision has little effect on rearrest rates of released prisoners. Mandatory parolees, who account for the largest share of released prisoners, fare no better than similar prisoners released without supervision."

5/23/2005

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12/2/2005

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In case you missed it.....

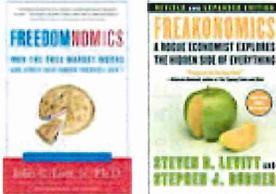
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Each year at the Annual Meeting of the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), the [Legislative Research Librarians](#) staff section recognizes valuable legislative reports written around the country. Sometimes the reports focus on only one state, but often the [Notable Document Award](#) winners cover issues in several states and are on topics that are very timely to our own Legislature. We've added a couple of these to our collection. The Department of Legislative Service's [Office of Policy Analysis](#) in Maryland wrote [An Overview of California's Low Emission Vehicle Program and Efforts to Implement it in Maryland and Other States](#) and [The Road to Privatization: Implications of Public-Private Partnerships for Transportation Projects](#).
10/2/2007
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On Monday MnDOT will ask the [Legislative Advisory Commission](#) (LAC) for authorization to spend \$195 million on the new I-35W bridge, funds that have been authorized but not yet appropriated by Congress. The bridge amendment is in a transportation bill that President Bush has threatened to veto. The possibility that other MNDOT projects may be delayed has angered some legislators; others question the legality and the wisdom of spending money not yet appropriated by Congress. Governor Pawlenty claims there are no legal issues, and that "If this were a basketball game, it's a layup. And in the context of a crisis in the state, with all of the trauma and drama that we've been through, we shouldn't even be fussing about this." (See the Minnesota Public Radio story, "[Pawlenty Downplays Transportation Funding Questions](#).") *A little background* -- The Legislative Advisory Commission [was created in 1943](#). The Legislative Library has reports on the [Actions Taken by the Legislative Advisory Commission](#) from 1977/79 to 2005/2007.
9/27/2007
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After each session we read through the newly-passed laws and identify reports requested by the legislature, either ongoing reports or one-time reports from task forces or working groups. Last year there were 72; in 2005 there were 148. The 2007 session totaled 226, many more than the previous

high of 164 in 2001. Most reports aren't due until the beginning of 2008, but a few reports have arrived already. The first report was due July 15, mandated by [Chap. 148](#), Art. 1, Sec. 31 of the *2007 Session Laws*. The short account of the [uses of carryforward money for technology](#) was from the Department of Finance. The second report, mandated by [Chap. 107](#), Sec. 1, from the Department of Economic Development, was the [Interim Report on Progress in Developing a Strategy to Obtain Maximum Economic Benefit for Minnesota from Renewable Energy Activities](#)
9/25/2007

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The Library owns the popular book by Stephen Levitt, [Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything](#), which has spent two years on the *N.Y. Times* best-seller list. More recently we added [John Lott's Freedomnomics: Why the Free Market Works and Other Half-Baked Theories Don't](#). As the cover text describes, Lott's book examines economics with a free market perspective, "bravely confronting the profound distrust of the market that the bestselling book *Freakonomics* has helped to popularize. Using clear and hard-hitting examples, Lott shows how free markets liberate the best, most creative, and most generous aspects of our society--while efforts to constrain economic liberty, no matter how well-intentioned, invariably lead to increased poverty and injustice." Minnesotans might also be interested in his recent opinion piece from the *New York Post*, ["Falling Bridges: The Nation Doesn't Face a Crisis."](#)
9/12/2007

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The Minnesota Legislature meets in special session today to pass a flood relief package. The Library maintains a page listing [Special Sessions of the Minnesota State Legislature and the Minnesota Territorial Legislature](#). The topics have been wide-ranging, from ratifying the proposed Woman Suffrage Amendment, to daylight savings time, to tax and budget issues. Special sessions can be difficult for members taking care of their jobs and lives away from the Capitol. On June 19, 1985, the *Star Tribune* reported that the opening of a special session that day would prevent Polka band leader Senator Florian Chmielewski from kicking off the International Polkafest in Duluth. (Photo used with permission of the *Star Tribune*)
9/11/2007

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A [Pioneer Press](#) article on August 10, ["Minnesota Faces Growing Need for Regional Parks](#) (Capitol complex access only)," highlights a new report funded by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (now the [Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources](#)). [Regional Parks for Minnesota's Outstate Urban Complexes](#) was written by George Orning and Michael Wieteck from the

Department of Forest Resources at the University of Minnesota. They estimate that Minnesota would have to invest \$250 million to acquire and develop a high-quality park system to adequately serve fast-growing regions outside the Twin Cities area. An editorial in today's [Mankato Free Press](#) endorses the attention to park expansion and urges attention to other broad issues, summed up with "The Twin Cities is a vibrant and vital hub in the state, but the rest of Minnesota is as important and shouldn't be neglected." See: "[Our View — Greater Minnesota growing, too.](#)"

8/14/2007

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The Legislative Reference Library has published a new guide in the "[Resources on Minnesota Issues](#)" series, [Minneapolis Interstate 35W Bridge Collapse](#). It will serve as a convenient base for access to reports, articles, and relevant Web sites. It contains the MNDOT bridge inspection reports, Federal Highway Administration documents and more. Librarians will be adding resources to the guide as the investigation continues and the issue unfolds.

8/2/2007

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An article in the June 18 issue of the [New York Times](#), "[Long Reviled, Merit Pay Gains Among Teachers](#)," highlights Minnesota's Q Comp program and features a Minneapolis science teacher, John Roper-Batker. "A major reason it is prospering, Gov. Tim Pawlenty said in an interview, is that union leaders helped develop it and sell it to teachers." For more information on the program, see the [Q Comp pages](#) on the [Minnesota Department of Education](#) Web site, and an article from [Education Minnesota](#), "[ATPPS: It's About More than Teacher Pay.](#)"

6/18/2007

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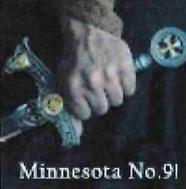
Recent news reports of Minnesota's anti-smoking efforts have centered on the new smoking ban, but other programs to end smoking are well-documented. The January 2007 issue of the journal [Nicotine and Tobacco Research](#) includes a separate [Supplement: Addressing Tobacco in Communities: Findings in Minnesota](#). Several papers describe findings from the [ClearWay Minnesota](#) program, the former Minnesota Partnership for Action against Tobacco (MPAAT). ClearWay Minnesota was created and is funded as part of a 1998 Consent Judgment settling a suit by the state and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota against cigarette manufacturers and their trade associations for harming and misleading Minnesota citizens. Clearway Minnesota has provided detailed annual reports to the Legislature and the Ramsey County District Court. The [2007 Report to the Court](#) is online, but the print version contains voluminous appendices which include detailed research papers and financial statements. The reports from 2002 and 2004-2007 in our Library, shown in the photo, stack up over a foot and a half high.

6/12/2007

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An article in Information Week, "[Stronger Credit Card Security Prevails In Minnesota, Fails In Texas](#)", describes [Chapter 108](#): "Minnesota becomes the first state to create a law that shifts the costs associated with data breaches from financial institutions to the retailers who mishandle consumers' private financial data. The law, which [passed by votes of 122-4 and 63-1 in the House and Senate](#), respectively, also gives retailers added incentive to protect consumers' information." A [Harris Poll](#) in November 2006 gives a sense of the problem being addressed by this law. "Just over one in five (22%) U.S. adults claim that in the past three years a business, government agency or other organization notified them that the organization had lost, had stolen or otherwise improperly disclosed their personal information. This translates into approximately 49 million adults." For more information on the issue see the [Security Breach Guide](#) and [FAQ on Security Breaches](#) from the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse. For laws across the country, see the [Breach of Information](#) page on the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) site.

5/25/2007

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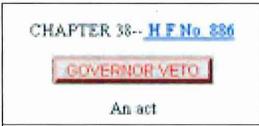
Hal Hovey, founding editor of [State Policy Reports](#), builds his annual "Camelot Index" by ranking states on six quality of life measures. In 2007, Minnesota ranks ninth overall. In the separate categories, Minnesota ranks second in the **Healthy People** and **Healthy Society** components, 10th in the **Educated Population Component**, 22nd in the **Crime-Free Component**, 23rd in the **Healthy Economy Component**, and 33rd in the **Prudent Government Component**.

5/9/2007

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The Library recent acquired [Same Sex Marriage: Pro and Con](#), a compilation of short essays on various aspects of the issue, by authors ranging from Plato to our current president. Sources are religious, political, literary, and judicial. The editor, Andrew Sullivan, is a senior editor at *The New Republic*.

5/7/2007

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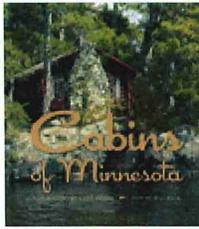
The Legislature passes bills, but the Governor can respond with a veto, a word with the Latin roots, "I forbid." The veto pen may be a significant tool in legislative negotiations this year, with many wondering whether some of Governor Pawlenty's vetoes will be overruled by the Legislature. According to [an entry](#) following the 2006 elections in the NCSL "[Thicket](#)" blog, Minnesota's percentage of Democratic legislators makes it the 12th most veto-proof state. The Legislative Library maintains extensive online historical statistics on [vetoes and veto override attempts](#) in Minnesota since 1939. In addition the

Library has notebooks of articles, veto messages, and other information on vetoes back to the late 1800s.

For more background on the veto process and the history of its uses in Minnesota, see:

- Busse, Nick. "Veto: The Stamp of Doom. [Session Weekly, April 27, 2007](#).
- Michael, Joel. [History of the Item Veto in Minnesota](#). Minnesota House Research Department, 1992.
- Wattson, Peter. [Veto Power of the Governor of Minnesota](#). Minnesota Senate Counsel and Research, 1995.

5/2/2007



- In our library collection, books and reports on lakes usually focus on public policy aspects, like [A 2005 Study of the Water Quality of 172 Metropolitan Area Lakes](#) or [Contribution of Fry Stocking to the Recovery of the Walleye Population in the Red Lakes](#). Two recent books donated by the Minnesota Historical Society Press address lakes in a more personal way. [Beneath the Surface: A Natural History of a Fisherman's Lake](#) combines the natural history and biology of a lake with fishing tips. The enticing photos in [Cabins of Minnesota](#), along with the essay by Minnesota author Bill Holm, will make everyone wish the legislative session will end soon, so they can head from the Capitol to "the pleasures of fishing, daydreaming, sunset watching, and star counting, the leisure to take stock of one's life without the surround-sound noise of the new wired century."

4/26/2007



- [Who's Counted? Who's Counting?](#), a 2006 report on high school graduation rates from the [Alliance for Excellent Education](#), discusses the need for common, accurate graduation rates across states. Recent research revealed that high school completion rates may be lower than previously reported. An interesting chart, "[A Comparison of State-Level Graduation Rate Statistics](#)," includes the state-reported rate for the No Child Left Behind Act (MN in 2003-2004 = 88.9%), the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate from the National Center for Education Statistics (MN in 2003-04 = 84.7%), and the Cumulative Promotion Index from the Urban Institute (MN in 2003-04 = 78.9%).

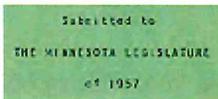
4/12/2007



- The library subscribes to [Postsecondary Education Opportunity: Public Policy Analysis of Opportunity for Postsecondary Opportunity](#). It looks plain, and is dense with graphs and black-and-white charts with long titles. What draws you in is not flashy layout, but the interesting statistics and analysis. In the current issue, the cover article discusses the increasing use of Pell grants to help low and lower-middle income students finance their higher educations. In FY2005 36% of undergraduate students received Pell grants, but the distribution is not equal

across institutions. Their analysis focused on public and private 4-year colleges and universities with the smallest percentages of students with Pell grants, calling them the gated communities of American higher education. The list of the 50 most exclusive public 4-year institutions in FY2005 (with an average of 15.8% Pell grant students) includes 3 Minnesota institutions: Southwest State University, ranked 42nd at 18% Pell Grant students; University of Minnesota - Crookston, 4th at 18.3%; and University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, 49th at 18.4%.

4/4/2007

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Lori Sturdevant wrote about the roots of special education funding in Minnesota in a recent *Star Tribune* article, "[State Policy Grew Out of a Spiritual Journey: Underfunding Puts Special Ed at Risk of Disfavor in the State of its Birth](#)." She interviewed former Governor Al Quie, the only surviving member of an eight-legislator interim study commission appointed in 1955. [The Report of the Legislative Interim Commission on Handicapped Children](#) was released in 1957, and their package of recommendations was adopted by the Legislature. The Legislative Library has [reports from many other legislative interim commissions](#) from the 1950s. As we did with the this report, we would be glad to digitize other older reports as needed.

3/29/2007

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Eric S. Janus, a professor at William Mitchell College of Law, often focuses on Minnesota in his new book, *Failure to Protect: America's Sexual Predator Laws and the Rise of the Preventive State*. ([more information](#) from Cornell Press) He argues that recently-passed sexual predator laws represent an approach to sexual violence that is out of balance. By focusing policy on protection from the most dangerous sexual predators we hurt larger efforts to fight sexual violence. From the introduction: "Our moral fervor to prevent the next rape-murder will blind us to the concrete steps we can take to increase safety for the tens of thousands of children and women whose sexual victimization falls outside that narrow spotlight."

3/26/2007

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The Road More Traveled: Why the Congestion Crisis Matters More Than You Think, and What We Can Do about It, by Ted Balaker and Sam Stanley, and published by the Reason Foundation, is a part of the Library's growing collection of regional and national reports on transportation issues. An article in the April issue of [Reason](#) magazine, "[How Traffic Jams are Made in City Hall](#)" is based on the book. It begins by discussing congestion in the Twin Cities area and criticizes the focus of the Metropolitan Council's planned expenditures on transit. "The region's primary transportation planning agency has decided to spend 25% of its budget on mass transit. But transit accounts for just 2.5% of all trips in the region, whether they're for pleasure, taking kids to school, going to the supermarket, or commuting to the office." The authors are critical of mass transit as a

solution to congestion, and feel that real solutions include creative construction, smarter management, market pricing for roads, market pricing for parking, and privatization of highways.

3/23/2007



This week's [Capitol Report](#) program from the Minnesota Senate focuses on veterans issues, and

includes highlights from the Senate hearing called to examine problems surrounding the recent deaths at the Veterans Home in Minneapolis. The 1987 headline pictured here, from the time of the Perpich administration, shows that concern about care at the Veterans Home is not new. Library staff digitize older Minnesota state documents of renewed interest, so three 1980s reports on the Veteran's Home issue are newly available online: [Management Study of the Minnesota Veterans Homes](#) (from the Department of Administration Management Analysis Division, February, 1987), [Report on the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis](#) (done by Sister Mary Madonna Ashton, Commissioner of Health, at the request of Governor Perpich in August, 1987), and [The Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on the Minnesota Veterans Homes Final Report](#) (February, 1988).

3/19/2007



The [Information Policy Analysis Division](#) of the Department of Administration covers the difficult subject of government data practices in an interesting quarterly newsletter, [FYi](#).

One feature, "From the IPAD Toolbox,"

highlights resources for citizens to use in exercising their rights to public data, and for government entities to use in improving compliance with Minnesota data practices laws. The [Winter 2007](#) toolbox feature includes detailed charts showing the various data classifications in Minnesota law, who has rights to access them, and the fees that may be charged for copying them. The issue also includes instructions for creating hard-to-crack personal computer passwords (which we all know we *should* be doing) in a "Data Practices tips" column. Other regular features include synopses of advisory opinions from the Commissioner of Administration and court cases involving data practices; legislative updates; and "Advice from the Swamp Fox," which explains aspects of data practices law in an advice-column format.

3/8/2007



[The 2007 State New Economy Index: Benchmarking Economic Transformation in the States](#), by Robert S. Atkinson and Daniel K. Correa, was released in February by the [Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation](#) and the [Information Technology and Innovation Foundation](#). The study uses 26 measures to

examine the degree to which states are knowledge-based, globalized, entrepreneurial, IT-driven, and innovation-based. [Minnesota](#) fares well, ranking 11th overall, and in the top five for a number of indicators: High-Wage Traded Services (4), Inventor Patents (5), and Online Population (4). The one

indicator in which Minnesota came in first was Package Exports, the number of UPS packages exported per worker, one indicator that measures the extent to which a state's firms have expanded global linkages.

3/2/2007

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This is the season when many reports required by the Legislature are due. Jess reported that the 14 reports she processed today may have been a record for reports showing up on one day. Many are recurring reports, like the Minnesota Department of Correction's [Minnesota Felony Driving While Impaired Report, 2007](#); [Juvenile Out-of-State Placement Reports](#) from the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission; [Ethanol Plants Receiving Producer Payments from the State of Minnesota](#) from the Department of Agriculture; and the [This Old House](#) report from the Department of Revenue, showing the total market value excluded from taxation under the "This Old House" program for each city and town. Others are one-time studies, like the report mandated in 2006, [Milk Volume Production Loan Program: A Study of Funding Possibilities](#), from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. If you would like to see longer lists of state agency reports the Library acquires, including mandated reports and consultants reports, see the [Newly Acquired Minnesota State Government Reports](#) page.

2/23/2007

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On Governor Pawlenty's [podcast](#) page, you can choose to listen to the entire "State of the State" speech, or choose to listen to a "Highlights" version, or one of four subject areas. For a cool variation, check out House Photographer Tom Olmscheid's [one-minute condensation](#) (and watch the paper come and go from the desks). We've been asked for various earlier "State of the State" speeches over the years, and created a [background page](#) linking to scanned copies of speeches in our collection since the time the Library was created. Our earliest is the 1969 speech of [Governor Levander](#).

2/20/2007

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Our Acquisitions Specialist, Jess Hopeman, spends a great deal of time tracking all of the reports mandated by the Legislature. It often involves several contacts with agencies before the reports are supplied (and some are never done). So last week it was interesting to see a new report from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, [Strategies for Reducing Students' Textbook Costs](#). The preface noted that legislation was proposed in 2006 to produce the report, but it was not included in the higher education omnibus bill. However, the Office still thought it was a good idea and completed the report. They mandated themselves!

2/19/2007

- The New York Times** The [New York Times](#) ran an article today featuring the Minnesota Legislature, "[In State Legislatures, Democrats are Pushing Toward Parity Between the Sexes.](#)" ([Proquest link](#) valid for legislators and staff) Three new Democratic female legislators, the "Woodbury Three," are mentioned: [Rep. Julie Bunn](#), [Sen. Kathy Saltzman](#), and [Rep. Marsha Swails](#). The NYT is running an occasional series on the Minnesota Legislature called "As St. Paul Goes;" the first article ran on December 29, "[In Minnesota Shift, Case Study For National Political Shake-Up](#)" ([Proquest link](#) valid for legislators and staff)

2/15/2007
-  Senate file [243](#) and House file [530](#) require mandatory immunizations against Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which causes virtually all cases of cervical cancer and genital warts. Similar legislation is being considered in many states; an [HPV Vaccine](#) background page from the National Conference of State Legislatures' includes a list of bills pending by state. A page from the Minnesota Department of Health, [Human Papillomavirus \(HPV\) Vaccine](#), links to extensive medical information. Interesting radio coverage focuses on the issue in Minnesota in, "[Should Minnesota Mandate Cancer Vaccine](#)" (Minnesota Public Radio), and nationally in "[States Consider Requiring HPV Vaccine for Girls](#)" (National Public Radio).

2/13/2007
- Compare Minnesota** The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) has improved the presentation of a myriad of Minnesota statistics with the new [Compare Minnesota](#) site, designed to highlight reasons for businesses to choose our state. Browsing the site reveals that Minnesota ranks third in the country both in 2005 high school graduation rates and 2006 health scores. It ranks 17th by crime rate, a rate that was 13% lower than the total U.S. rate in 2005. The site includes a link to the services available to businesses [by legislative district](#).

2/5/2007
-  The [Center for Ethics in Government](#) at the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) recently published a guide for training, *Reflections: Being Ethical in Today's Legislature*. The accompanying short DVD features legislators from many states, including former Minnesota Senator Steve Kelley. ([Clip](#) of the video.) A new NCSL podcast also focuses on the issue, [Ethics Reform Is on States' Agendas](#). The Council of State Governments has a new report, [Beyond the Law: Special Report on Legislative Ethics](#). For more materials on legislative ethics, including reports and links with a Minnesota focus, see the Library's Minnesota Issues Guide, [Legislative Ethics](#).

1/29/2007



*From 'There' to 'Here':
Refugee Resettlement in
Metropolitan America*, from

the Metropolitan Policy Program of the [Brookings Institution](#), is filled with interesting statistics. One of the findings was that in medium-sized and smaller metropolitan areas, refugees can have considerable impact on the local population, especially if the foreign-born population is small. Fargo is mentioned in this context; 76% of the recently-arrived foreign-born population are refugees. In contrast, only 17.1% of the recently-arrived foreign born in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area are refugees. In an analysis of the top five metropolitan areas of resettlement for the top ten countries of origin, Minneapolis-St. Paul was in the top five for three countries - first for refugees from Somalia, second for refugees from Ethiopia, and second for refugees from Laos.

1/3/2007

*Available to legislators and legislative staff only. Please contact the library if you would like copies of any of these reports, or further research on this or any topic.

Contact your [House Member](#) or [Senator](#).

[Ask a Legislative Librarian](#).

10/3/2007

Topical requirements

Mandated reports give members necessary information

By **BRENDA VAN DYCK**

Ever wonder how much property is seized by law enforcement in a year, or how much money cities collect in fees? Some legislators previously have enacted laws requiring state agencies to report back to the Legislature with the information.

The Legislature mandates a variety of reports every year; some are one-time studies and others are ongoing. The 2005 Legislature mandated 127 reports, wanting information about everything from tuition reciprocity to efforts to control beaver damage.

The reasons vary as to why a report might be requested. Many times it's to see how an agency or group followed up on issues. Other times the Legislature simply wants more information before making policy decisions. Sometimes ideas arise that don't have enough immediate support to become law, and a study is one way to gather more information and keep the idea alive. Other times, a study is a way of bringing opposing groups together to work on an issue and reach a compromise.

For example, during the 2005 session, one bill relating to adoption ran into some opposition. HF659 would have changed the laws regarding an adopted person's access to his or her birth certificate. The bill's sponsor, Rep. Kathy Tingelstad (R-Andover), worked out a compromise by asking the Department of Human Services to collect data regarding post-adoption searches and to develop best practice guidelines for conducting post-adoption searches.

The report resulted in legislation proposed this year that instructs the commissioner of human services to develop a curriculum to train department, county agency and social service agency staff how to perform post-adoption services with the best practices guidelines stemming from the 2006 report. HF3123 was included in the omnibus jobs and economic opportunity finance bill, which failed to pass the House.

Becoming legislation

Reports will often evolve into pieces of legislation. For example, a study mandated by the 1994 Legislature on the state's corporate farm law became the basis for a subsequent overhaul and recodification of the law.

Reports can also provide the basis for programs or operating procedures. In the mid-1970s, the state's sentencing practices were criticized as indeterminate, but the Legislature could not agree on how to reform the system. After three sessions of debate, the 1977 Legislature created the Sentencing Guidelines Commission and mandated that it develop guidelines for uniform sentencing standards and report them to the Legislature. The commission began annually reporting its guidelines to the House and Senate in 1980.

In 2001, the Legislature charged the University of Minnesota's Institute on Criminal Justice with developing a research plan to evaluate the implementation and impact of the felony drunken driving law, which went into effect in August 2001. In this case, the Legislature appropriated \$20,000 for the study, but usually money is not appropriated for mandated reports.

Tracking report costs and progress

The costs of mandated reports are difficult to quantify. Often they are absorbed into an

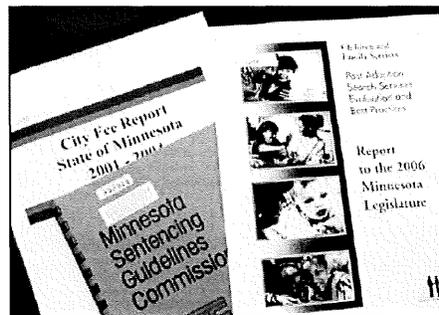


PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

The Legislative Reference Library tracks mandated reports and catalogues them into its collection.

Legislative reports

The Legislature mandated 127 reports in 2005, including:

- Comprehensive report on state agency and city fees due
- Implementing an electronic monitoring system for sex offenders
- Recommendations for reducing use of gasoline by the state vehicle fleet
- Feasibility of a statewide standard for certain fees for licensed family child care providers

(For a complete listing, go to <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/pubs/05reports.pdf>)

agency's budget. No one specifically tracks all of the costs.

A state law requires the entity submitting a report to include the cost of preparing it, but only a minority of reports include this information.

Report preparation costs vary widely. In 2006, they range from \$65 for the Minnesota Board of Pardons' annual report to the Legislature to \$145,000 for a report analyzing a business activities tax for the state. The Department of Human Services estimated it spent \$6,475 to prepare the report on post-adoption searches.

As the official government document repository, the Legislative Reference Library keeps track of reports and catalogues final reports into its collection. Minnesota is one of only a few states that actively tracks mandated reports and ensures that they are easily available to legislators and citizens, according to Library Director Robbie LaFleur. Since 2003, the library has kept archived electronic copies of all mandated reports.

Each year, library staff read session laws to identify new mandates, repealed mandates and changes to existing mandates. That information is put into a database to track the reports.

The library's database includes the publisher of the report, its title, date, preparation costs, the law mandating it and where the reporting requirement is codified in statute. (For additional information on identifying and obtaining mandated reports, see www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/mndocs/mandates.asp)

— **Brenda van Dyck** is the editor/publications manager in the nonpartisan House Research Department.

To Legislative Researchers

From Robbie LaFleur, Director
Minnesota Legislative Reference Library
6-8310, rlafleur@lrl.leg.mn

Re *Local Government Salary and Benefits Survey
County Salaries & Benefits Survey*

Date October 11, 2006

Since we are paying quite a bit of money these days for local government salary surveys, I just want to be sure that legislative researchers are fully aware we have the following resources on local government salary and benefits.

Cities

For years, the Library purchased a number of reference books with statistics on salaries in metropolitan area governments, and in Greater Minnesota, for cities with populations over 2500, and cities with populations under 2500. All of the previous surveys are now covered in one online database, the *Minnesota Local Government Salary & Benefits Survey*.

Hello, Guest

Welcome to the official site of the Minnesota Local Government Salary & Benefits Survey

Tuesday, October 10, 2006

Association of Metropolitan Municipalities LMC
League of Minnesota Cities
Other promising providers

Overview

The Waters Consulting Group, Inc. is pleased to present SurveyNavigator™ - the most accurate and reliable pay and benefits resource developed specifically for the League of Minnesota Cities.

With SurveyNavigator™, members can obtain salary and benefits data for more than 150 position titles in seconds. Subscribe today and analyze salary and benefits data without the time-intensive collection process of the past.

Because SurveyNavigator™ is a real-time Website, it will provide an up-to-date, state-of-the-art solution that will save LMC members time and effort and will take the guess work out of compensation decisions!

LMC is one of the first municipal associations to offer this kind of one-stop interactive compensation and benefits tool and we are proud to provide you with this tremendous resource.

To participate, contact us today at participate@watersconsulting.com.

Key Features

- ▶ 24 hour access to salary and benefits information.
- ▶ Instantly compare salaries to those of other Minnesota municipalities.
- ▶ Quickly obtain the percentage difference between a paid position in your organization in comparison to similar positions in other Minnesota municipalities.
- ▶ Forecast salaries for positions in your municipality based on the current market trend analysis by aging the results of average salary data to a specified effective date.
- ▶ Easily download data search results to Excel.
- ▶ Save search criteria for later analysis.

<http://www.surveynavigator.com/lmc/>

Counties

The Library purchases (in print) the annual survey published by the Association of Minnesota Counties. Currently the most recent edition is the *2006 County Salaries & Benefits Survey*.

Salaries & Benefits Survey

AMC annually produces the "County Salaries and Benefits Survey," which provides valuable data to personnel directors and others. Included are salaries for elected officials and appointed department heads, county benefit expenses (meal/mileage reimbursements, etc.), county benefit leaves, insurance, tax capacity and number of employees, collective bargaining unity and more.

Please contact a librarian for access to the *Minnesota Local Government Salary & Benefits Survey* database, or to use the print *2006 County Salaries & Benefits Survey*.

refdesk@lrl.leg.mn

651-296-8338

Many former sergeants-at-arms also served in the Legislature: x of x sergeants in the House, and x of x sergeants in the Senate.

The last Senator to also have served as a sergeant was [Fred Newton](#), Senate Sergeant-at-Arms in 1931 and 1933. He served in the Senate from 1939-1946.

Senate list: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/histleg/ssgt.asp>

The last Representative who was also a sergeant was [Harvey N. Paulson](#). He was the House Sergeant-at-Arms from 1963-1971, and served in the House from 1957-1962.

House List: <http://www.leg.mn./lrl/histleg/hsgt.asp>

I looked in our collection for House manuals that would give the duties of the sergeants office, to see how they have changed over time. I was able to find listings for 1976, 1980, 1984, 1986, and 1992. (We have a few more manuals, but the text remained the same.)

House Journals and *Senate Journals* note the election of the sergeants-at-arms at the beginning of each session. For example, the House Journal for January 5, 1875, noted that Washington Pierce was elected with 57 votes in his favor, 40 against.

There was an interesting note about salary in a small book we have in our collection, *The Minnesota Legislature of 1911*, "George H. Deans and B.F. Seiz, sergeants-at-arms, at \$5.00 each a day, with \$267.50 extra pay voted to each and \$131.40 for serving subpoenas."

Levi Nutting served as a sergeant in both the Senate (1859, 1860) and in the House (1862), and back in the Senate (1864). He went on to serve one term as a Senator, in 1865.



2007 *One Minnesota* Legislative Conference Web Page and Suggested Readings



<http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/minnesota/>

Suggested Readings from the *One Minnesota* conference:

Several speakers during the legislative conference gave suggested readings or noted things they recently read. For example, Peter Harkness mentioned a recent provocative editorial in the *New York Times*, "Middle School Girls Gone Wild." A list of those readings, many with direct links to the full text online, are found on the conference Web page, at <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/minnesota/>. Those that are not directly linked can be obtained from the Legislative Reference Library: 651-296-8338 or refdesk@lrl.leg.mn.

Wikis and Politics

During his afternoon talk at the 2007 Legislative Conference at the Humphrey Institute, Vance Opperman mentioned wikis, and thought that the Legislature should maintain a wiki for citizens to suggest legislation. He seemed incredulous that some in the audience were not familiar with wikis. "How can you not know about Coleman?" he exclaimed. So just in case you might have missed the Minnesota politician Wikipedia stories, here is a short description of a wiki and excerpts from two articles on politicians and wikis. (Full copies are not included for copyright reasons.)

A *wiki* is an application that enables users to collaboratively develop a web site with no design experience. The information can be added to and edited by members of the community. Some examples of wikis used to compile useful government and political information are found on the e-democracy.org web site, at: <http://www.e-democracy.org/>

Wikipedia is the most well-known wiki, with over 4.6 million entries in over 150 languages. As it has grown in scope, the editorial policies have been tightened, and community editing on some entries is blocked. A recent article in *Campaigns & Elections* about Wikipedia used a Minnesota example.

"The Wikipedia Dilemma," Campaigns & Elections; April 2006, Vol. 27 Issue 3, p50-50, 1p

Excerpt:

Is Wikipedia reliable? Is it fair? Yes, if you understand that it is not a finished encyclopedia so much as a conclave of approximately 30,000 encyclopedic entry writers and editors. Many are amateurs. Many are experts. And some are mischief-makers until the others discover them. As is often the case, Wikipedia's description of itself is increasingly fair and reliable; "Older articles tend to be more comprehensive and balanced, while newer articles may still contain significant misinformation, unencyclopedic content, or vandalism."

For instance, in late February, the crux of the Wikipedia entry for Mark Kennedy, the Republican congressman running for an open Senate seat in Minnesota, consisted of a three-paragraph biography. One paragraph characterized Kennedy as "an unquestioning supporter of American policy in Iraq" and noted that in 2003 he failed to fact-check an error-laden article comparing post-invasion Iraq with post-World War II Germany before reading it into the Congressional Record. No such biased paragraph (pro or con) appeared on the entry of Kennedy's leading opponent at the moment, DFLer Amy Klobuchar. And no warning box appeared at the top of Kennedy's entry, as may be found at the entry 'Minnesota U.S. Senate Election 2006,' which advises users that what follows is 'likely to contain information of a speculative nature.'

The paragraph attacking Kennedy is accurate and mild compared with some things that have surfaced on political entries. Some may interpret it as a sign of Wikipedia's liberal media bias. To me, it's a sign that the Kennedy campaign hasn't been as active on Wikipedia as it should be. The Kennedy entry ranked eighth on the Google search return page for his name, by the way.

The rule of thumb on using Wikipedia as a campaign research tool ought to be that you: get a second source to ascertain the accuracy of what you read. Wikipedia links you to a few sites where you can find that second source, but there are facts which need offline investigation too. Wikipedia does not post original research, and professional campaigners need to conduct that sometimes, especially regarding a client's bio and signature issues.

A *Star Tribune* article notes a couple of other Minnesota politicians' Wikipedia entry editing.

"Gutknecht Joins Wikipedia Tweakers" (He's the latest politician to try to edit his online biography, and he, too, was detected by a volunteer editor.) *Star Tribune*, August 17, 2006

Excerpt:

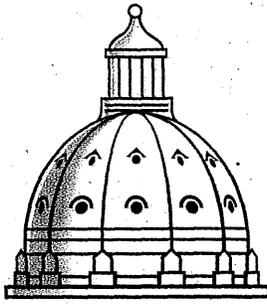
Rep. Gil Gutknecht, R-Minn., is the latest politician to be found editing his Wikipedia entry, extending a year-long trend that has snagged the likes of Republican Sen. Norm Coleman of Minnesota and Democratic Sen. Joe Biden of Delaware.

Last January, Coleman sought to soften his political past from "liberal" to "activist" in the entry for him in the online encyclopedia. Biden tried to tone down references to a past accusation of plagiarism.

Now Gutknecht, in effect, tried to expunge a reminder of a 12-year term-limit he imposed on himself in 1995.

Page histories available on Wikipedia show that Gutknecht's office tried twice - July 24 and Aug. 14 - to remove a 128-word entry on him and replace it with a more flattering 315-word entry taken from his official congressional biography.

In both cases, the original entry - including his term-limit promise - was restored within hours.



A unique searchable online database now available at the Minnesota Capitol will give you a wealth of information on state legislators past and present.

Web site captures Minnesota legislators

BY CHARLEY SHAW
Legal Ledger Staff Writer

Before, hunting for historical information about Minnesota legislators could be like trying to find a needle in a haystack.

But a new searchable database launched earlier this month on the state Legislature's Web site aims to simplify inquiries into Minnesota's political past.

Minnesota Legislators Past and Present, at <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/index.asp>, provides a list and details of all legislators who have served since territorial times. The online tool is believed to be the first of its kind in any



Minnesota Legislative Reference Library Director Robbie LaFleur, left, Deputy Director Elizabeth Lincoln and Reference Librarian Paul VanCura worked diligently on amassing the scattered details of legislators past and present. And on Nov. 17, the online tool Minnesota Legislators Past and Present launched on the Legislature's Web site. (Photo by Charley Shaw)

state legislature, said Legislative Reference Library Director Robbie LaFleur.

"We see this as a resource for legislators and legislative staff, lobbyists and genealogists and other sorts of researchers," LaFleur said.

At present, information on recent legislators in the database far exceeds the detail available for many of the legislators who served way back in the 19th century.

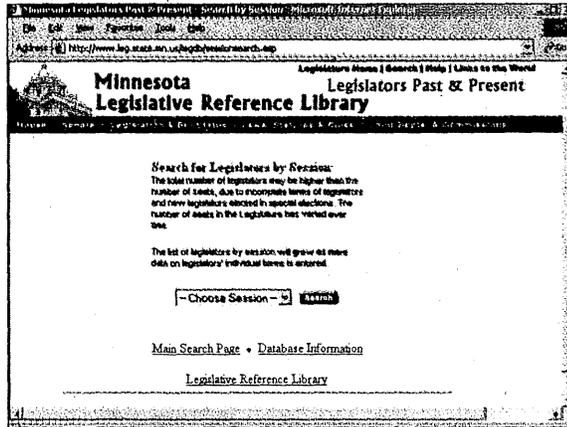
Librarians are working back in time to cull historical facts from a variety of paper sources, said reference librarian Paul VanCura. "It's a work in progress," he said.

Understanding history is serious business in politics. But the opportunity to discover interesting trivia also makes the site attractive for people interested in Minnesota history.

In working on the project, Deputy Library Director Elizabeth Lincoln said she was surprised to learn that Andrew McGill served as governor and then state senator. McGill served as governor from 1887 to 1889 and was a state senator from 1899 to 1905.

Legislators continued on page 6

Staff members at the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library have dreamed for 15 years of creating an electronic database of former Minnesota legislators. Finally, it's happened with the unveiling this month of this online search tool. Robbie LaFleur, the library director, hopes the information provided on the site will broaden over time. "Information is so fragmented and hopefully this is the place that it can all come together," LaFleur says.



I hoped you would like to read the coverage of the library's recently released database.

(and see the newest version of our brochure.)

The library staff look forward to working with you in

2007

session.

Robbie LaFleur

[Read the full Governing Management Letter](#)



THE B&G REPORT

[Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene](#)

Here's a riddle: Minneapolis recently opened a state-of-the art library equipped with more than 300 computers, a lecture hall, meeting rooms and, believe it or not, working fireplaces. So how is it possible that shortly after this monument to knowledge opened amidst showers of foil confetti, the city's Library Board is now planning on cutting hours in the new library and closing other branches? If things go as planned, Minneapolis' main library will be opened for fewer hours than worse-off Detroit.

The answer is simple: The new library was built with \$110 million in bond money, which the voters agreed to finance with their tax dollars, back in 2000. But the new library, and all the others, can't use that cash to pay for librarians, heat or custodians. No, they need operating revenues to do that. And when the state reduced funds that were heading in that direction a few years ago, cutbacks were pretty much inevitable, if painful. Meanwhile progress toward the opening of this remarkable - if not frequently available - library continued.

Last month, Hennepin County formed a panel to study the mess, according to the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, which quoted Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin as saying, "To have the urban core, one-third of the county, have the worst library hours of any major library system in America, that's not acceptable."

While Minneapolis leaders may not have been able to project such an unsightly snag back in 2000, it wasn't totally unpredictable. State money is rarely secure, as any city manager or mayor will tell you. The lesson here for public sector managers is this: Before you make an affordable capital investment, be very sure that the operating funds for it will be available far into the future. For some views of the new library (which, frankly, we think looks great) [click here](#).

(And further down in the letter, posted on December 5, 2006)

Website watch: Check out the Minnesota Legislative Library, which tracks a whole variety of reports — not only the locally grown ones. The librarians there take a step beyond what most of their peers do in listing reports. They pick out interesting data and information, often matching reports from different places that have similar themes, like the [rising cost of college tuition](#) and the [increasing value of a college education](#). Don't miss it — [click here](#).



USA Services Intergovernmental Newsletter

How E-Government is Changing Society and Strengthening Democracy

<http://www.gsa.gov/intergovnewsletter>

Issue 20 • Fall 2007

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New Opportunities for Involving Citizens in the Democratic Process

By Darlene Meskell
Director, USA Services Intergovernmental Solutions
GSA Office of Citizen Services and Communications
U.S. General Services Administration

Information and communication technology (ICT) has become a powerful tool for transforming the way governments interact with citizens. The Internet presents amazing new possibilities beyond the established model of democratic government. In that pre-Web world, government disseminated information and citizens could only express their views through the postal service, by town hall meeting, or in pre-scheduled elections. This time-consuming, iterative process, while critical to the exercise of democracy, didn't feel very participatory.

In the 21st century, as the true potential of the Internet is just starting to be tapped, we're seeing its impact on democratic processes in new and exciting ways. The Internet is providing opportunities for voting online; spreading awareness of lesser-known candidates for public office; permitting citizens to easily petition the government on important issues; helping police fight crime; allowing the public to weigh in on state budget priorities and government regulatory proposals; and making Congress and congressional campaigns more transparent. Online activism, like Moveon.org, can have a direct impact on the political process; videos deliver questions directly from citizens to televised presidential campaign debates; Brazil introduces electronic voting; and Minnesota allows citizens to participate in legislative debates in real-time. Governments now are beginning to post blogs and deliver crucial information in virtual space such as Second Life; national leaders can engage in two-way communications with online petitioners; and national conversations take place with point-counterpoint videos on YouTube.

Recognizing the sophistication of the public and the ways people now make their presence known online, government entities have increasingly begun to harness the potential of the Internet to meet their

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constituents online, because that's where people are making their voices heard and where decisions are being made. Electronic government provides citizens with quicker and easier access to information and services and facilitates decision-making that permits broad grass-roots engagement with the democratic process. Citizen input is not just a matter of convenience any more; it's become an essential for how democracies work.

In recent years, there has been much discussion about the public's lack of trust in government. Much of this distrust is attributed to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the inner workings of government, both in the legislative and civil service arenas. Failure to provide instant, accurate, copious government information on demand and not engaging citizens in the development of public policy feeds a growing cynicism and destroys trust.

This newsletter explores some of the many ways technology is making government processes more accessible and expanding citizen participation in public policy decision-making. It documents the first steps in what is certain to become a wave of remarkable technological applications that will continuously change the way citizens and the governments that represent them interact. The articles describe many of the ways electronic government is:

- Building Trust in Government
- Engaging Citizens
- Facilitating Public Comment
- Using Social Media, and
- Getting to Mature E-Democracy.

Building Trust in Government

Interactive Web-based programs and electronic tools dramatically increase the opportunities for citizens to actively participate in their government. E-Government systems offer maximum transparency and

enable participants to watch the players in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and to see the impact of their own interactivity. **E-Democracy in Minnesota** allows residents to watch legislative debate on television or the Web, read proposed amendments online, and send comments directly to their lawmakers as the debate unfolds. **MAPLight.org** is **Shining a Light on Money and Politics** by correlating campaign contributions with how legislators vote, thereby providing a window into the connections between money and politics. **Building Trust in Government in Brazil through Electronic Voting** describes the evolution of 100% electronic voting in the Republic of Brazil, where voting is compulsory.

Stimulating Citizen Engagement in Government in Hampton, Virginia is part of the city's strategy to enable and stimulate citizen involvement in the process of community governance. **Online Citizen Participation Service in Korea** is one of that country's efforts to enhance the transparency and credibility of public administration through citizen participation.

Engaging Citizens

E-Government allows citizens a level of engagement—without leaving their homes—never before made possible. For the Environmental Protection Agency, **Engaging Citizens Through E-Government** is near and dear to its mission, which calls for citizen participation in decisions about clean air, water, and the overall environmental quality of their neighborhoods. The **Gainesville Police Department Engages Citizens and Enhances Public Safety** by involving citizens in helping to make their communities safer places in which to live.

The Open House Project Helps Congress Define Transparency Reforms by offering recommendations to Congress on ways to more

effectively use technology to further transparency in its operations. The Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency redesigned its website to provide visitors with a user-friendly experience while telling the agency's stories directly to the public. **So you Want to Podcast**, the author asks, proudly offering suggestions based on his agency's experience. The city of Seattle is helping to close the digital divide and encourage a technology-healthy city with a **Technology Matching Fund that Helps Seattle's Residents Help Themselves**. The State of Maine's innovative Internet practices are creating **Generational E-Democracy in Maine**, bringing people closer to their government and enhancing democracy. Recognizing the need for a standardized approach to this new medium, the Australian Government's **Principles for ICT-enabled Citizen Engagement** provide guidelines for agencies wanting to enhance citizen participation in government through the use ICT.

Public Comment

Governments are collecting and using public opinion to improve the ways they deliver services to citizens. For example, in the United Kingdom, there is a long tradition of citizens presenting petitions at the door of Number 10 Downing Street, the home of the Prime Minister. Now, the door of Number 10 Downing Street is a virtual one, as current technology updates this practice with **E-Petitions and Two-Way Communications with the Prime Minister**. Sometimes, citizen concerns are sought to help the government improve its processes, when, for instance, **Citizen Communities Compel Change for E-Grant Process**. In the case of e-grants, citizen groups offering their opinions improved the initial, basic processes set out in the U.S. government's Grants.gov initiative.

Well-designed structures and processes can enable government

Continued on next page...

E-Democracy in Minnesota

I. Minnesota: On-Air Legislative Coverage Available Without a Subscription

By Steve Senyk
Director of Senate Media Services
Minnesota Senate

In 1996, Minnesota state lawmakers took a giant step towards transparency when they opened their chamber doors to Minnesota residents by over-the-air broadcasts of floor sessions and select committee hearings. Unlike nearly all other states with televised legislative proceedings, most Minnesota residents are able to watch their lawmakers at work without the need to subscribe to cable or the Internet.

Senate Majority Leader Larry Pogemiller led the efforts to televise Senate proceedings. "Having informed citizens is essential to a healthy democracy. Allowing more people to see and hear what we do in the state Senate is good for all of us," he said.

Through a partnership with Twin Cities Public Television, the Minnesota Legislature delivers daily programming to over one million homes in the Twin Cities and surrounding area. The programming airs on TPT 17, a UHF channel, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day of the legislative session. About 10 high-profile floor and committee debates are televised after 5:00 p.m. per year as well.

In past years, Nielsen ratings indicated that 4,000 to 6,000 Twin City households are tuned into proceedings throughout the day, with some high-profile debates and press conferences reaching up to 25,000 to 30,000 households. The programming is produced by Senate and House staff. Coverage consists of floor sessions and committee and press conferences, as well as public affairs programs and issue-oriented features and historical segments.

In addition to broadcasting proceedings directly to homes, the Minnesota Legislature's television services include providing a video feed to the Twin Cities broadcast news organizations. The service enables political reporters to incorporate floor and committee debate highlights into their evening newscasts.

As broadcast television moves from analog to digital transmission and the number of over-the-air broadcast channels expand, even greater opportunities will exist for producers of legislative coverage. The Minnesota

Legislature will be entering an agreement with the Minnesota Public Television Association for statewide, over-the-air digital broadcasts of its programming.

Through the use of technology, active participation in democratic institutions is greatly increased. In fact, Minnesota residents today can watch legislative debate via television or the web, read the proposed amendments online, and send comments directly to their lawmakers as the debate unfolds.

Pogemiller said, "We know people are watching. They call the Capitol to let us know when they agree or disagree with what lawmakers are doing. It's always good to hear directly from citizens, even when they're unhappy."

II. The Minnesota Legislature Online

By Robbie LaFleur
Director, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

At the Minnesota Legislature, e-democracy is an attitude, a daily activity, and a goal. The attitude dates back to 1994, when a legislator asked staff members to put legislative documents on the Internet. Why should legislative information just be available to people who manage to come to the Capitol? The Minnesota Legislature has a tradition of transparency and strong citizen outreach, and the Internet provided a new opportunity to continue that tradition. In the following years, the Legislature's website built citizen involvement into the legislative process by offering easy access to bills, statutes, guides, video and audio coverage of proceedings, and analytical reports supporting legislation.

The commitment to using technology to strengthen democracy and citizen involvement remains strong and leads to constant improvement and innovation. For example, bills were published on the web early on, followed by improvements in search capabilities, in how quickly bills were posted, and in presentation. Now you can subscribe to the "MyBills" personalized bill tracking system and choose to be notified of new bills and legislative actions via e-mail or an RSS feed.

Today's citizens expect and are able to watch the proceedings of the Legislature online at their convenience. It's only been a few years since the first audio and video of House and Senate floor debates were available on the web; now online audio coverage of all committee hearings

Continued on next page...

officials and citizens to hold well-informed and productive discussions online, as in. ***The Great Lakes Water Quality Web Dialogue. Engaging Your Public in Today's World*** demonstrates how different levels of government are using software to engage citizens and benefit from their collective ideas.

If you ***Think It's Easy to Balance a State Budget, Click Here*** when a non-partisan California group takes its Internet tool to schools and civic groups to allow Californians to tell their legislators what they want in policies, programs, and budget priorities. Budget trade-offs that were once handled in back-rooms of the state Capitol are now out in the open for everyone to view, and citizens can juggle the priorities themselves and see how their decisions compare to the Legislature's. At the heart of ***E-Democracy in Action: Locally-Driven Conservation*** is "greenprinting," a process used by the Trust for Public Land that uses Geographic Information System (GIS) models to map a community's priorities for its natural resources. Greenprinting can help galvanize public support for a particular use and encourage partners to work toward common conservation goals to guide growth management efforts.

Using Social Media

Government is on the edge of radical change in the way it communicates with its constituents. Increased interactivity is important for promoting not only online engagement of citizens and public servants, but also offline engagement. The IBM Center for the Business of Government finds ***Federal Blogging Is Poised to Take Off***, and discusses this new technology as a way to foster improved communications in the public sector, both with citizens and internally within organizations. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC) is taking advantage of as many technologies and media as feasible to get its health messages out to as many people as possible. Its presence on the 3-dimensional multi-user virtual environment "Second Life" is one component of CDC's comprehensive effort. ***CDC in Second Life*** has a first-hand look at the evolution of a new form of blended social and educational networking to take the message to the audience.

One of the most intriguing trends for government information dissemination is ***Government Information Outreach in Social Media and Virtual Worlds***. The National Library of Medicine is collaborating with others in the government health community to find more effective mechanism to deliver health information in an emergency. The Library of Congress is sponsoring ***Government Participation in Social Networks, Joining the Conversation*** using blogs and other social media to educate online communities and enhance citizen discovery of the content of their online collections.

Millions of viewers experienced ***Uploading Democracy watching Candidates Field YouTube Questions*** in a televised presidential debate in the United States on July 23, 2007. Viewer-created videos, later posted to YouTube, allowed ordinary citizens to pose questions directly to the candidates in real time. The ground-breaking format gave voice to ordinary citizens not normally able to participate in such a forum. The 37 video questions, selected from thousands submitted in advance, drove the debate and showed the candidates and the nation a new form of participatory democracy.

Getting to Mature E-Democracy

Click-Through Democracy poses questions about the positives and negatives of public comment through

mass e-mail campaigns that allow thousands of individuals to send duplicate e-mails by simply clicking a "take action" button. There is a need for simple guidelines for separating thoughtful comments from electronic form letters. Steven Cliff, Chair of E-Democracy.org, who believes that government should be leading the charge into an increasingly and fundamentally interactive society, offers ***Ten Practical Online Steps for Government Support of Democracy***. And lest we forget, online interaction between citizens and government will be unworkable unless the process and technology safeguards are in place to ensure that the information exchanged with individuals is protected. Teams are in place through the federal government to create and institutionalize the systems that will safeguard individual privacy and system security. One of these, the cross-agency e-government initiative ***E-Authentication, is Safeguarding Citizen Identity***. The E-Authentication Identity Federation creates an environment in which federal agencies can rely on electronic identity credentials issued and managed by other public and private organizations to verify/validate the identity of individuals accessing their online applications.

These articles document the many ways government—and citizens—are using new technologies to interact, communicate and strengthen democratic institutions.

Darlene Meskell is Director of USA Services Intergovernmental Solutions. For additional information contact lisa.nelson@gsa.gov.

and floor sessions is available, and many include video coverage as well.

Timely access to documents produced by legislative offices strengthens the Legislature's image as an open institution. Rich background on policy issues is available to citizens as well as legislators. For example, the House of Representatives Research Department recently produced over 100 "Short Subjects"—two-page explanations of legislative issues to help educate newly elected legislators. Those same great overviews are available to the public online. The House and Senate Fiscal Analysis Offices publish useful spreadsheets and piecharts to help explain the complexities of the state budget. Informative newsletters help citizens follow the Legislature throughout the session. The weekly issues of the House "Session Weekly" and Senate "Briefly" are augmented by daily online updates.

Opportunities to learn about and reach legislators become more extensive with each session. Web pages for House members can include biographies, links to bills authored, RSS feeds of press releases, district maps, video interviews, and podcasts. In the Senate, members have the opportunity to create secondary web pages, and several have added links to additional press releases, surveys, or video clips. Legislators note that they receive few "snail mail" letters any more, and they now struggle with huge volumes of e-mail.

Representative Gene Pelowski, Chair of the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee, notes a huge transformation since he was first elected in 1986. He feels that easy access to legislative documents, legislator e-mail addresses, and audio and video coverage of floor debates and committee hearings, makes the legislative process less intimidating. Citizens are more attuned to the process. "It's taken away the veil. The process is demystified; there's no magic here anymore." Rather than sending general comments, constituents now comment on particular sections or items in specific bills and cut and paste sections into e-mail correspondence.

Webcasts of legislative hearings and floor sessions allow citizens to follow legislation in real time or at their own convenience. Additions such as agendas, minutes, and daily online articles from the public information offices

enhance the ability of citizens to thoughtfully follow the process and contribute in a meaningful way. Representative Pelowski was impressed at the number of people who regularly watched his committee hearings on the web during the legislative session, particularly because the committee met from 8:00-10:00 in the morning. "They'll comment, and they are from all over the state."

E-democracy has become a daily activity. As access to legislative proceedings and documents has increased, Minnesota citizens have become more active participants in the legislative process on a daily basis. Even modest developments have had an important impact, such as web-based calendars and e-mail notification of committee hearing schedules. Once that information became available, time-constrained citizens could more efficiently plan to testify at hearings and know when to contact legislators about the issues they were following.

E-democracy exists, but enhancements continue. For example, the Office of the Revisor of Statutes implemented a new XML-based bill drafting system, and an important benefit to all citizens has been improved searching of bills, laws, and state agency rules. To reach more citizens, programmers in the office are now working to improve the search interface for citizens with visual limitations who use screen readers.

Many members of the Minnesota Legislature are eager to develop additional ways to contact citizens and encourage participation in the legislative process. They are interested in more robust opportunities to communicate with citizens, more online public discussions, more online surveys and polling, and more communication among members of a committee. Finding adequate funds to develop systems, purchase and customize software, and upgrade hardware is a continuing challenge, but the Minnesota Legislature website has a strong foundation on which to expand its e-democracy efforts in the future. ■

Steve Senyk is the Director of Senate Media Services, a nonpartisan department of the Minnesota Senate charged with producing and distributing television coverage of the Minnesota Senate and State Capitol events. For additional information contact Steve.Senyk@senate.mn. Robbie LaFleur is the Director of the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library. For additional information contact robbiel@lrl.leg.mn.

MAPLight.org: Shining a Light on Money and Politics

By Dan Newman
Executive Director and Co-Founder
MAPLight.org

Question:

- After being elected, does your Congressperson vote in line with your values?
- Does your Congressperson take money from tobacco companies? Labor unions? Oil companies?
- Does your Congressperson vote in accordance with your interests or with big-money special interests?

MAPLight.org is a groundbreaking public database that can provide answers to these and other questions. (The “MAP” in MAPLight.org stands for “Money And Politics.”) After more than a year of research and technical development, MAPLight.org launched its groundbreaking website in May 2007, tracking contributions to and votes by members of Congress.

This federal search engine doesn’t just track bills. It also provides a detailed analysis of the support and opposition these bills garner from interest groups and the campaign contributions given by those interest groups to members of Congress. Website visitors can track the impact of political contributions at the federal level, day-by-day and vote-by-vote.

MAPLight.org is non-profit and non-partisan. It combines campaign contribution information from the Center for Responsive Politics and the National Institute on Money in State Politics with public records of legislators’ votes. At the click of a mouse, citizens can now learn which special interests are donating to legislators—and how those legislators are voting on specific issues and bills. MAPLight.org aims to expand citizen

participation by “shining a light” on the power campaign contributions have on legislation, giving citizens timely and detailed information about their elected officials.

The correlation of money and votes that MAPLight.org exposes is information that previously would have taken days or weeks to compile. For example, on May 7, the U.S. Senate passed an amendment to prevent consumers from buying prescription drugs from abroad. Visitors to MAPLight.org can easily learn that the pharmaceutical industry, which supported this amendment, gave an average of \$70,181 to each Senator voting “Yes” on this amendment—more than 2.5 times as much as the \$25,914 average the industry gave to each Senator voting “No.” The industry-backed measure passed by a vote of 49 to 40. (Contribution amounts are from 2001-2006.)

Visitors to our website can drill down and see how their individual legislator voted, along with the amount the legislator received from each contributing industry. Visitors can view a timeline of contributions, showing which legislators received a contribution within a few days of the vote. Site visitors can also get a customized analysis of money and vote data that they can then easily share with others. Information available includes:

- Top 10 interests contributing to each legislator and how often each legislator voted with that interest.
- The amount donated by each contributing interest group and each group’s success rate at

passing and stopping legislation.

- Timeline of contributions and votes for each bill, graphically identifying when legislators received large donations before or after their vote.

In addition to covering the U.S. Congress, MAPLight.org also tracks the California Legislature, including the percent of times that legislators voted with each special interest. We will be expanding over time to track money and votes in all 50 states.

Issue-oriented non-profits can also use MAPLight.org to increase their effectiveness. For example, shortly after launching the California MAPLight.org database, Norman Block, President of the Santa Margarita River Foundation—a small non-profit organization—wrote an Op-Ed in the North County Times, the daily newspaper in his area. Mr. Block’s organization is trying to protect the Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve from a proposed quarry. He ended his article with a citation of MAPLight.org data:

It is no wonder that these three legislators are eager to support the development of Liberty Quarry. After all, they readily accepted major campaign contributions from builders associations. According to MAPLight.org, of all the Assembly members representing 36 million Californians, Msrs. Bogh and Benoit are in the Top 10 for campaign contributions from builders associations; and builders associations represent the fourth-highest campaign contributor to Mr. Haynes.

MAPLight.org makes it possible for organizations like the Santa Margarita

Continued on next page...

The Thicket at State Legislatures

June 02, 2008

LaFleur is Flourishing

by Meagan Dorsch, Pam Greenberg, Janna Goodwin



A big congrats to Robbie LaFleur, Director of the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, who has been named recipient of the 2008 Peter S. Popovich Award.

In case you are not familiar with this award, it is given each year by the Minnesota Professional Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists to “the person or organization that exemplifies the fight for First Amendment Rights.” SPJ will present the award to LaFleur on Thursday, June 12 in St. Paul.

A little bit of Minnesota background for everyone...this award is named for the late Peter S. Popovich. He is described as a champion of open government during his years in the Minnesota House of Representatives, as the chief judge of the Minnesota Court of Appeals and as the chief justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

The Minnesota Coalition on Government Information nominated LaFleur because “for nearly a decade Robbie has been Director of the Legislative Reference Library, the special library that serves members and staff of the Minnesota State Legislature. Though her primary clientele is the Legislature, Robbie has distinguished herself by always bearing in mind and addressing the needs of the public, including investigative journalists who are steady customers at the LRL.”

LaFleur also served as the committee chair of The National Conference of State Legislatures Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section from 2002 - 2003. In 2005, LaFleur also served as an at-large member on NCSL's Online Democracy Award Committee.

Congrats Robbie LaFleur!

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June 24, 2008

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Franken supporters – a Hollywood who’s who

When Al Franken asks for money, Hollywood coughs up. Big time.

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The challenge of tax changes for businesses

The anticipated billion-dollar-plus budget deficit facing Minnesota legislators in 2009 could spell trouble for Minnesota businesses.

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Minnesota putting more of its legislative history online

Minnesotans are hearing a lot from politicians this year about rising fuel prices.

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Disabled veteran says he has been ‘blacklisted’ by local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Profile: Sen. Betsy Wergin

Campaigns use Internet to rally troops and raise donations



LINKING TO THE PAST: Legislative Reference Library Director Robbie LaFleur, left, and Revisor of Statutes Michele Timmons stand by books of Minnesota session laws in the reference library on the sixth floor of the State Office Building. All session laws dating back to territorial legislative assemblies were unveiled online in May. The Legislature’s website earlier this month posted executive orders online back through Gov. Harold LeVander, who took office in 1967. (Staff photo: Charley Shaw)

Features:

ON THE MARKET
Office, industrial and retail real estate listings

When Al Franken asks for money, Hollywood coughs up. Big time.

Ever heard of a guy named George Clooney? Tom Hanks? How about Paul Newman?

That trio of actors – along with dozens of

Right to Life political action committee – has given \$2,000 to his campaign.

The Coleman-Franken race is getting national attention because of its potential for giving the Democrats another vote in a tight U.S. Senate that's basically split 51-49

for the Democrats (49 Democrats, 49 Republicans and two independents, both of whom most often vote Democratic).

But where most of Franken's campaign money is coming from – namely, out of state

– is slar war



Legislative Reference Library Director Robbie LaFleur, left, and Revisor of Statutes Michele Timmons stand by books of Minnesota session laws in the reference library on the sixth floor of the State Office Building. All session laws dating back to territorial legislative assemblies were unveiled online in May. The Legislature's website earlier this month posted executive orders online back through Gov. Harold LeVander, who took office in 1967. (Staff photo: Charley Shaw)

Linking to the past

Minnesota is putting more and more of its legislative history online

BY CHARLEY SHAW

Staff Writer

Minnesotans are hearing a lot from politicians this year about rising fuel prices.

But a quick search of a new online tool created by the Legislative Reference Library shows 2008 isn't the first time pols have tried to address the pain of rising energy costs.

In February 1977, Gov. Rudy Perpich issued an executive order to address the "energy supply emergency" that called for a four-day, 40-hour-per-week work schedule for

state employees. Gov. Wendell Anderson, in an executive order from March 1974, said speed limits should be reduced on highways to 55 mph in order to conserve fuel amid a "fuel shortage in this state."

These and 777 other executive orders from seven different governors were made available for the first time in an electronic, searchable form earlier this month by the Reference Library.

And last month, the Revisor of Statutes put all session laws online going back to territorial legislative assemblies.

Library | pg 8

The of t for l

BY CHARLEY SHAW
Staff Writer

The anti-fac
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Already, lawmakers can qualify for incorporation, the \$935 million

With an equation, a county is designed to coffer full-time business tax

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Haveman 21st Century State of the officially creative order.

The tax recommendation be the subject which begins

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Library

Continued from page 1

Previously, the laws had only been available online going back to 1994.

"They certainly were accessible before in book form, but it required a lot of effort," said Michele Timmons, the Revisor of Statutes for Minnesota.

Executive orders are kept in a limited number of places like law libraries and the shelves of the Legislative Reference Library.

"So far, there hasn't been a good way to go back to the websites of previous governors," Reference Library Director Robbie LaFleur said.

Links to the executive orders and session laws are available at www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/lrl.asp.

The executive orders are available from Gov. Tim Pawlenty's current term back through Gov. Harold LeVander's term, which began in 1967.

Pawlenty has 95 executive orders to date. Other governors issued varying numbers: Jesse Ventura (59), Arne Carlson (152), Al Quie (69), Perpich (202), Anderson (143), and LeVander (59).

One thing's for sure, the actual executive orders bust some historical myths.

LaFleur said the Reference Library occasionally gets calls from people wanting to see an executive order from Perpich demanding that state employees turn off coffee pots after hours. But, alas, no.

"There is no executive order that requires state agencies to unplug their coffee pots at night," LaFleur said.

Perpich did issue an executive order in 1978 to address the "elimination of waste and mismanagement" in state government.

Apparently, not all executive orders work.

Governors throughout the years have announced orders that create new task forces and advisory councils on an array of topics. Anderson created an advisory council in September 1972 to eradicate swine brucellosis. In April 1999, Ventura created a "Superboard On Y2K Preparedness" to address concerns that all computers in Minnesota (not to mention across the world) would break down when the clock struck midnight and 1999 became 2000.

Many executive orders address disasters or crises. Most recently, Pawlenty declared a state of emergency after tornadoes hit the northern Twin Cities suburbs during Memorial Day weekend. A crisis of a different sort occurred in May 1972 when Anderson issued an order offering assistance of the state adjutant general to the University of Minnesota to "quell disorder" brought on by student protests against the Vietnam War. The protests, which included a barricade across Washington Avenue on the Minneapolis campus, eventually resulted in the National Guard being called in.

One session law from 1949 is an early effort to prevent automobile drivers from getting distracted—an issue that's come up again in recent years with regard to cell phones. In 1949, lawmakers passed a bill that

forbids drivers from installing a television screen in a motor vehicle "at any point forward of the driver's seat." (In 2005, the Legislature passed an omnibus transportation bill that restricted cell phone use for drivers younger than 18, with an exception for emergency situations.)

Attorneys frequently consult session laws to understand the history of a statute. LaFleur said a broader audience beyond the legal community can now search the session laws to learn about the history of Minnesota and its public policy.

"There is a lot of social and cultural history you can glean from the laws that were passed by the Legislature," LaFleur said.

Both the session laws and the executive orders can be searched for key words. Some searches point to issues important at a specific point in time. For example, a search on the word "grasshopper" in the session laws section produced several laws from the 19th century when citizens were harmed by plagues of insects, according to Timmons.

The executive orders were put together this year by Reference Library staff.

The session laws project was a larger undertaking that took about a year-and-a-half. The Legislature appropriated \$45,000 for the session laws project, which amounts to about \$300 for each year of the laws, Timmons said.

The original book bindings were removed by staff at the University of Minnesota. The pages, some of which are crumbling, were scanned and subjected to optical scan character recognition (OCR) by a private technol-

ogy firm. Programmers then transferred the data onto the Web in more than 40,000 searchable PDF files. University of Minnesota staff rebound the books for archiving.

The session laws begin with the proceedings of the first legislative assembly of the Minnesota Territory in September 1849. Alexander Ramsey was the territorial governor. In some ways, lawmaking is different today, as the session laws show. For example, the Legislature once passed "private acts," Timmons said. In one case, the Legislature granted a divorce in 1849 to Louis Laramie and his wife, Wa-kan-ye-ke-win.

The Reference Library plans to make additional types of state documents available online.

For instance, the library has scanned copies of inaugural addresses delivered by Minnesota governors in its collection. Those speeches will be made available online soon, LaFleur said.

The Reference Library also plans to make available online documents called statements of need and reasonableness. These documents are prepared when agencies from the executive branch propose new rules. So far, LaFleur said the Reference Library keeps paper copies of statements of need for about a year-and-a-half. While some state agencies make such statements available on their websites, there isn't a systematic way to find them online.

"The goal of all of the offices at the Legislature is to continue to make all the information we can available electronically," LaFleur said.

Tax Changes

Continued from page 1

"Every one of them [exemptions] has a constituency," said Belanger, a Republican from Bloomington who served on the Senate Taxes Committee until 2006.

The commission's chairman, Michael Vekich, a St. Louis Park accountant, said he's determined the commission's final recommendations won't gather dust like previous tax studies

... that just sits in a library," Vekich said in an interview after Friday's meeting.

The commission will first consider which reform proposals are best, and will then look at the cost of the various proposals. Pawlenty's executive order stated that the combined impact of the commission's recommendations should be revenue neutral. For now, Vekich said, the commission is developing principles that should redefine Minnesota's tax system.

But some of the commission's recommendations might not be revenue neutral

development.

For example, so-called angel tax credits for start-up businesses would cost money. But the credits could lead to new economic development and tax revenue.

"This is a long-term approach where we're going to have to make potentially some tough decisions for some huge long-term gains," Vekich said.

At Friday's meeting, Haveman outlined four other tax principles in addition to the one about a tax structure that's resistant to politics. Other "outcomes" include

Haveman said, the program that provides tax breaks to businesses that locate or expand in greater Minnesota exposes flaws in the state's tax system.

"Really, it's kind of an implicit condemnation of Minnesota tax policy that we would have to resort to something like [JOBZ]," Haveman said.

Wendell Maddox, the CEO of Minnetonka-based ION aerospace and technology company and a member of the commission, said the state's tax policy can affect busi-



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7/3/2008

The Price We Pay: Economic and Social Consequences of Inadequate Education

A new book in the library from the Brookings Institution, [The Price We Pay: Economic and Social Consequences of Inadequate Education](#), tackles a complex issue in chapters written by a variety of researchers. Do high school graduates earn more than those who drop out? From the chapter on labor market consequences, "Over a lifetime, an 18-year-old who does not complete high school earns approximately \$260,000 less than someone with a high school diploma and contributes about \$60,000 less in lifetime federal and state income taxes."

Regarding health status and costs, "Each and every annual cohort of high school dropouts represents a cost of \$23 billion in public funds and \$110 billion in forfeited health and longevity." From the chapter on crime and criminal justice, "A 1 percent increase in the high school completion rate of all men ages 20-60 would save the United States as much as \$1.4 billion per year in reduced costs incurred by victims and by society at large." These statements are isolated from the larger context of the research presented, but serve as examples of the compelling way the authors quantify many aspects of the issue. In addition, the book includes chapters on interventions to raise high school graduation rates and early childhood education interventions.

[E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the book. *

7/1/2008

A Fish Virus to Worry About

A recent article from the *Minnesota Independent*, [Hemorrhaging Fish and Algae Blooms Predicted for Minnesota Waters](#), included a link to a Chicago Tribune [graphic](#) showing the entire Mississippi River as an "area of concern" for the fish virus *hemorrhagic septicemia*. Thank goodness legislators have already acted by passing a group of measures designed to prevent the spread of the deadly fish virus. They probably just had to

look at a couple of pictures of fish with viral hemorrhagic septicemia before voting to pass Chapter 307 ([Act, House Research Summary](#)). It passed the House 130-4, and the Senate 66-1. Also, in Sec. 71 of [Chapter 297](#) the commissioners of the Departments of Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Health are required to form a work group to develop a plan for detecting and responding to the fish virus. They will report to the Legislature by January 5, 2009. Learn more about the fish disease threat from a Department of Natural Resources [description](#) or [downloadable flyer](#).

House/Senate Audio & Video

House Intranet

Senate Intranet

LCC Intranet

6/26/2008

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) Observations

There have been several articles in the past few days regarding a lawsuit by the state against Excel Dairy near Thief River Falls. ([Here's one](#) from *MinnPost*.) Appropriate to that topic, the Library recently received a new book from the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) (NCSL), *Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations: A Survey of State Policies*, with a page describing each state and a number of tables comparing specific policies. (See the [table of contents](#).) That report is not free online in full text, but NCSL also has a great webpage with background on [Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations](#), including a link to recent studies from the [Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production](#). CAFO issues are likely to continue in Minnesota. The list of [Recent Environmental Reviews of Interest](#) from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency include many for feedlots and feedlot expansions. (As an aside, a few years ago there were fewer environmental assessment worksheets for feedlots and ethanol plants, and a lot more for residential housing developments with names like Kingsbury Hills, Grand View Estates, and Prairie Lake.) [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the NCSL report. *

6/23/2008

Placeography

The Minnesota Historical Society has a great new wiki-based site, [Placeography](#), where people share the history of and stories about houses, buildings, farmsteads, public land, and neighborhoods. I wonder how many people who work at the [Capitol](#) could name all of the [memorials](#) on the Capitol grounds. On these beautiful summer days you could visit all of the memorials or go for walks to check out sites featured in [St. Paul's Gangster History Tour](#).

6/16/2008

New Agency Names Can Be Confusing

It's a great thing that Minnesota state government keeps evolving to meet the needs of citizens, but it can be difficult to keep up with name changes! An article in today's *Star Tribune* notes, "[New Future, New Name for Minnesota Technology](#)," A 2008 law ([Chapter 290](#)) changed the name of "[Minnesota Technology, Inc.](#)" to **Enterprise Minnesota**. People who have been around state government might remember that Minnesota Technology was a name change in 1991 ([Chapter 322](#)) from the Greater Minnesota Corporation, which was created in in 1987 ([Chapter 386](#)). Originally chartered by the Legislature, Minnesota Technology Inc., soon to be Enterprise Minnesota, operates as a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

A colleague asked, "Is that the same as the [Office of Enterprise Technology](#) (OET)?" No, OET is a state agency formed in 2005, combining the Minnesota Office of Technology and the InterTechnologies Group. But I understand that the mix of the words 'enterprise' and 'technology' and 'Minnesota' might lead to confusion!

6/10/2008

New Governors Executive Order Database



In a continuing effort to make important documents available to a wider audience, the Library has a new [database of executive orders](#) from the past seven governors, 779 in all. The orders were scanned from our print notebooks and cover all of the governors since the Library began. (Although Governor Pawlenty's executive orders can be found on his [website](#), any other electronic orders disappeared after the governors left office.) Executive orders often deal with emergencies, like Governor Pawlenty's order declaring a state of emergency due to the winds in Hugo ([08-09](#)). There are 285 orders in this set with the word "emergency" in the title or description.

6/5/2008

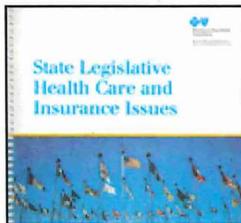
1923 Legislator Photos and Dying in Office



Courtesy of a [Minnesota Digital Library](#) grant, we added photos to the biographies of the [members of the 1923 Legislature](#) to our [Legislators Past & Present](#) database. While looking at a few of the records of the 1923 legislators, I noticed that [Senator George Henry Sullivan](#) (pictured here) died in office. It turns out that dying in office is not uncommon. We add that information to a legislator's record if we have it. So far we know of [96](#), and they include interesting stories. A tribute to [Senator Faye George Child](#) in the 1965 *Legislative Manual* stated, "His last moment was spent in a Senate committee, speaking on an issue of fundamental importance defining his position and taking his stand. He collapsed before his speech was completed and he was dead before he arrived at the hospital." [Representative Henry H. Emmons](#)' obituary stated, "Mr. Emmons had been gravely ill for several months, but regardless of his physical condition he went to St. Paul and took up his duties as a legislator. He had pledged his constituency to vote for a tonnage tax and when the bill came up disregarded the commands of his physicians, arose from bed, dressed and went to the capitol. Friends provided him with a couch in the lobby where he lay until the vote was called . . . he took his place at his desk and registered his vote when his name was called. He immediately left the capitol and this was his last official act."

5/29/2008

Health Insurance Mandates by State



It makes sense that a health insurance company would track legislative health insurance mandates across the states. Since 1995 our library has purchased editions of the Blue Cross Blue Shield report, *State Legislative Health Care and Insurance Issues*, mostly for the detailed state-by-state tables of mandated benefits. A *2007 Survey of Plans* was published this year. This [press release](#) gives details, but the full text does not appear to be online. Minnesota is one of [16 states with over 40 mandates](#). The report includes one-page descriptions of 2007 legislative activity for each state, followed by a number of [tables describing state health insurance laws](#). [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the report. *

5/21/2008

Investigative report to Joint Committee to Investigate the I-35W Bridge Collapse

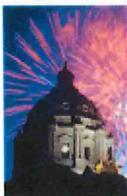


The *Investigative report to Joint Committee to Investigate the I-35W Bridge Collapse*, by the [Gray, Plant, Mooty](#) law firm, was released this morning at a hearing of the [Joint Committee to Investigate the Bridge Collapse](#). [Sen. Steve Murphy](#) noted the purpose of the report in a [press release](#) when the report was authorized, "The joint committee will investigate whether actions by the state's transportation department in any way contributed to this infrastructure failure, while the National Transportation

Safety Board investigation will determine what structurally caused the bridge to collapse." The main report, with its voluminous appendices, is available online on the [Gray, Plant, Mooty](#) site, on the [Joint Committee](#) site, and [archived for long-term retention](#) in the Legislative Reference Library's catalog. Print copies are available to review at the Legislative Reference Library. Additional links to bridge collapse information are found on the Library's [Minneapolis Interstate 35W Bridge Collapse](#) issue guide.

5/20/2008

Fireworks, Retirements, and an Honor



The Minnesota legislature has adjourned the 2008 session. It's not often that the last night of session is celebrated with such [fireworks!](#) This great photo is from Senate Photographer David Oakes. You can read end-of-session news in the final issue of [Senate Briefly](#).

Several House members have announced they will not be running for re-election this fall; [Rep. John Berns](#) (R-Wayzata), [Rep. Chris DeLaForest](#) (R-Andover), [Rep. Brad Finstad](#) (R-Comfrey), [Rep. Bud Heidgerken](#) (R-Freeport), [Rep. Scott Kranz](#) (DFL-Blaine), [Rep. Frank Moe](#) (DFL-Bemidji), [Rep. Dennis Ozment](#) (R-Rosemount), [Rep. Eric Paulsen](#) (R-Eden Prairie), [Rep. Aaron Peterson](#) (DFL-Appleton), [Rep. Connie Ruth](#) (R-Owatonna), [Rep. Kathy Tingelstad](#) (R-Andover), and [Rep. Neva Walker](#) (DFL-Mpls). During her last week, Representative Walker had the honor of being the first African-American woman to gavel the House into session. ([May 16 House Journal](#))

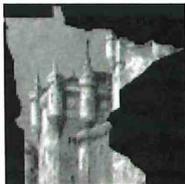
5/11/2008

Happy Birthday, Minnesota!



In honor of the sesquicentennial celebration, here is a list of the [members of the first Legislature](#), generated from the Library's [Legislators Past & Present](#) database. Thanks to the new Web access provided by the Revisor's Office, you can read about the serious business of setting up our state in the [1858 Session Laws](#). Laws were passed governing [townships](#) (Sec. 13. If any person chosen or appointed to the office of Overseers of Highways or Pound Master, shall refuse to serve, he shall forfeit to the town five dollars), [a day's work](#) (women and children were restricted to ten hour days), and [Surveyors General of Logs and Lumber](#). Skimming the [1858 session law index](#) gives you a good sense of the range of legislation. It is fun to note that appropriations for the Capitol ([Chapter 26](#)) included \$14.00 for candles and \$32.50 for spittoons.

5/6/2008

Minnesota Ranks Well on the Annual Camelot Index

Minnesota consistently ranks well in the annual Camelot Index, from the publishers of [State Policy Reports](#). The Camelot Index combines several categories: Healthy Economy (MN=#8), Healthy People (MN=#1!), Crime-Free Component (MN=#22), Educated Population (MN=#6), Healthy Society (MN=#3), and Prudently Managed Government (MN=#33). In the Camelot Index aggregate rankings, Minnesota ranks #5. From the issue: "Most other measures of state performance focus so heavily on economic criteria that a broader consideration of "quality of life" gets lost. But life is more than a job; it involves being part of a community, securing health care, paying for college and having stable and predictable tax costs." [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like a copy of the index. *

5/5/2008

Historic Session Laws Are Now Online

Minnesota
Office of the Revisor of Statutes

The [Office of the Revisor of Statutes](#) has added all the historic [Minnesota Session](#)

[Laws](#), from 1849 to 1993, to the Legislature's website. Even the oldest laws scanned well, and they can all be searched by key word. This new online access is great for lawyers, but the laws are also a window to the history of our state for researchers, historians, and genealogists. Perhaps your relative was granted a divorce by the Legislature, as were Louis Larammie and Wa-kan-ye-ke-win, his wife, in 1849 ([Chapter 28](#)). Or maybe your ancestor was a trustee of the Odd Fellows Lodge when it was incorporated in 1851 ([Chapter 12](#)). Did you know that a law forbidding installation of a television screen in a motor vehicle "at any point forward of the driver's seat" was passed as early as 1949 ([Chapter 78](#))? Searching with the key word "[grasshoppers](#)" brings up many 1800s laws helping citizens harmed by plagues of those insects. Read about the project details in a [press release](#) from the Revisor of Statutes, Michele Timmons.

4/29/2008

Educational Report Card Growth Model For Minnesota Public Schools

While we are mandated to receive documents the Legislature requires by law, we also try to obtain as many of the documents produced by less formal legislative working groups as possible. A new document, the [Educational Report Card Growth Model For Minnesota Public Schools, April, 2008](#), by David Heistad, provides information about the rationale and mechanics of a model developed as part of the school report card proposal in [HF3329 \(Rep. Kathy Brynaert\)/SF2882\(Sen. Sandy Rummel\)](#). The Minnesota Assessment Group (MAG), with assistance from University of MN faculty, developed the report card growth model as part of a joint House/Senate working group's efforts to expand the indicators used to report to parents and the public on school performance. The growth model is one of three indicators proposed in the legislation. These are intended to complement current state reports on public school performance based on adequate yearly progress (AYP) measures in reading and math as measured by the [MN Comprehensive Assessments](#) (MCA II). The MAG model is intended to add information to the state report card that shows the percentage of students who make typical and accelerated growth from one school year to the next. Using existing MCA II data, this growth model gives schools and school districts information about groups of students that are not making AYP

but demonstrate accelerated academic growth and groups that are already proficient in reading or math but may range from accelerated growth to very little growth. Such information allows educators to identify best practices and help both proficient and not proficient students work toward accelerated academic growth.

4/24/2008

Smoking Bans and Bingo Halls



An article in today's [New York Times](#) discusses the drop in charitable gambling profits in several states due to smoking bans, "[After the Smoke Cleared, Where Did All the Bingo Players Go?](#)" A similar article in the [Pioneer Press](#) ran on April 6, "Bingo's Number is Up - Bingo Halls are Closing or Witnessing a Big Decline in Business." ([full text](#) available to legislative users.) Representative Huntley was quoted in today's *NYT* article. "Around the country, whenever places have put in smoking bans, there is a six-month period where there is a drop in business in bars and restaurants, which is where this gambling takes place, and after that, it starts to rebound." A Minnesota Charitable Gambling Control Board study released last month came to a different conclusion. From page 15 of the [Minnesota Charitable Gambling Impact Study: A Brief Review of the Fiscal Impact of a Statewide Smoking ban on Lawful Gambling](#): "Conclusion: Smoking bans appear to cause a permanent drop in lawful gambling."

*Available to legislators and legislative staff only. Please contact the library if you would like copies of any of these reports, or further research on this or any topic.

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Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

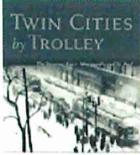


Library News Items

[Library News RSS feed](#)  [About RSS](#)

10/1/2008

Twin Cities by Trolley



Given the continuing interest in public transit, the Library recently purchased a book that looks back on a different era of local mass transit. [Twin Cities by Trolley](#) was published in 2007 by the University of Minnesota Press. The authors, John Diers and Aaron Isaacs, [talked about their book](#) and showed great film footage of Twin Cities trolleys on [Almanac: At the Capitol](#) in 2007. The book is dense with fabulous photos of streets and neighborhoods that are vastly changed. Completely treeless blocks of homes flank Lake Nokomis in 1933, webs of overhead wires cross at intersections, and crowds of shoppers and a crush of traffic and streetcars are on the streets of downtown St. Paul. The Twin City Rapid Transit Company history includes a description of women workers hired to replace soldiers off to fight in WWII - "motorettes" and "conductorettes." If you live in the Twin Cities now, you can find the nearest streetcar route to your home. [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the book. *

9/30/2008

Doorstep Democracy: Face-to-Face Politics in the Heartland



Appropriate for this campaign season, the Library recently purchased a book about the experience of running for the Legislature. James H. Read ran for the House seat in District 14A in 1992, losing after a recount. (Steve Dehler won.) In [Doorstep Democracy: Face-to-Face Politics in the Heartland](#), Read uncynically talks about the very personal experience of trying to engage voters in his district. As opposed to the drama and distance of a national presidential campaign, the size of a Minnesota House district allows "a democracy not of focus-group-tested attack ads but of genuine face-to-face conversation between candidate and voter, a form of democracy so ancient and ordinary we risk overlooking it all together." His book reads like a good friend talking about his experiences; as an example, read the excerpt about [parades and balloons](#). [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the book. *

9/29/2008

Middle Class Living (for now)



We provide a service to notify legislators and staff about articles in the Library on topics they request. When scanning the new magazines, we find almost everything in the [Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis' Fedgazette](#) worthy of note. The September issue has articles on the effect of the 2008 farm bill, an article about rising farmland rental rates, and a very interesting cover article about family economics, "[Say hello to the modest good life for me](#)." It includes an addendum addressing a question we have received in the Library numerous times over the years - what is the definition of middle class? In "[Just what is the middle class, and other stuff](#)," the authors cite a short 2007 report from the Congressional Research Service, [Who are the "Middle Class?"](#)

9/19/2008

Minnesota Winners



Minnesota shines again! Two Minnesota documents were among the winners of this year's Notable Documents Awards from the Legislative Research Librarians staff section of the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#). [Compensating Victims of Bridge Collapses Outside Minnesota](#), by Peter Wattson of the Minnesota Senate Counsel, Research and Fiscal Analysis Office, was noted by the NCSL judges as clear, direct, and of interest to policymakers in many states. The judges thought that [Criminal Records and Employment in Minnesota: Report and Recommendations of the 2007 Collateral Sanctions Committee](#) was an exemplary report to the Legislature, with thorough and well-organized information and recommendations.

9/5/2008

Wind Power



Wind power is quickly becoming a key component of the energy mix in many states. A short essay in the Library's [Just In: New & Notable Books](#) list for August highlights new reports in our collection on wind energy. One of the challenges facing increased energy from renewables is the shortage of transmission lines. There is an amusing line in a New York Times article on this problem nationally. From "[Wind Energy Bumps Into Power Grid's Limits](#)" (August 26, 2008): "Wind advocates say that just two of the windiest states, North Dakota and South Dakota, could in principle generate half the nation's electricity from turbines. But the way the national grid is configured, half the country would have to move to the Dakotas in order to use the power." In Minnesota, the first phase of the [Dispersed Renewable Generation Study](#), required by the Legislature as part of the Governor's [Next Generation Energy Initiative](#) in 2007, has been published by the Department of Commerce. The objective of the study was to assess the potential ability to install 600 MW of dispersed renewable generation throughout Minnesota with minimal impacts on the transmission system.

8/19/2008

No Modern Experiments with a Parliamentary System in the States



Last week [Rep. Phyllis Kahn](#) was mentioned in a blog posting from the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#). "[No Modern Experiments with a Parliamentary System in the States](#)" noted her [proposal](#) a few years ago to change Minnesota's government to a parliamentary system. Minnesota gets mentioned every now and then in the NCSL blog, [The Thicket](#). Minnesota-related postings include a charming description of "[The Minnesota Legislature Through Russian Eyes](#)," posted in 2007 by guest author Dmitry Polyakov, from St. Petersburg, Russia.

8/1/2008

New Population Notes



The [Minnesota State Demographic Center](#) has done a terrific job with their [Population Notes](#) publication over the years. Two new readable and interesting issues reflect a good news/bad news scenario. We learn from [Minnesota Per Capita Income Grows Modestly between 2006 and 2007](#) that between 2006 and 2007, Minnesota's per capita income grew 5.6%, slightly higher than the national average of 5.2%. Minnesota ranked twelfth among states and had the highest per capita income of any state in the Midwest. On the other hand, [Minnesota Housing Prices, 2006-2007](#) includes a number of simple and depressing statements, like, "The number of sales fell dramatically."

7/31/2008

The Environment's Greatest Legislative Session

The Legislative Reference Library has notebooks on past sessions of the Legislature with clippings, seating guides, articles, excerpts from books, and session overviews. For example, here is a [Legislative Summary 1973-74](#) from the House and Senate DFL Caucuses. A new addition to the 1973 notebook is an article by former House Research Analyst John Helland, "The Environment's Greatest Legislative Session," from the [Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy's](#) June, 2008, [Advocacy Update](#). (See page 8.) "Breakthrough legislation passed that year included the Environmental Policy Act, Critical Areas Act, State Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Mineland Reclamation Act, energy conservation policy, enhanced evaluation of pesticide use and its effects, and more." John noted that the biggest push came on Valentine's Day, 1973, when Governor Wendell Anderson gave the first ever environmental address to the Legislature, "[Securing a Quality Environment in Minnesota](#)." Here is a [list of members](#) of the 1973 session who likely heard that address and participated in that notable session.

7/11/2008

Twin Cities Security: Ready for Republicans

It's always interesting to see how our state is represented in national magazines. This month's [Homeland Security Today](#) includes an article about security at the upcoming Republican National Convention (RNC), "[Twin Cities Security: Ready for Republicans](#)." Our area handles larger events routinely; the RNC anticipates 45,000 visitors while the State Fair has 1.7 million visitors each year. However, this is the first time that St. Paul has faced the unique security challenges of a National Special Security Event (NSSE). The 2004 RNC was held in New York City, but that city is more used to such events and has a police force of approximately 40,000 officers compared to St. Paul's 600. The 2008 RNC

will benefit from additional resources from the Secret Service and from the seven-county metropolitan area and beyond. Secret Service Agent Darrin Blackford said, "It's been a bit of a learning curve with the partners in Minneapolis/St. Paul, but we couldn't be happier with them."

7/3/2008

The Price We Pay: Economic and Social Consequences of Inadequate Education

A new book in the library from the Brookings Institution, [The Price We Pay: Economic and Social Consequences of Inadequate Education](#), tackles a complex issue in chapters written by a variety of researchers. Do high school graduates earn more than those who drop out? From the chapter on labor market consequences, "Over a lifetime, an 18-year-old who does not complete high school earns approximately \$260,000 less than someone with a high school diploma and contributes about \$60,000 less in lifetime federal and state income taxes." Regarding health status and costs, "Each and every annual cohort of high school dropouts represents a cost of \$23 billion in public funds and \$110 billion in forfeited health and longevity." From the chapter on crime and criminal justice, "A 1 percent increase in the high school completion rate of all men ages 20-60 would save the United States as much as \$1.4 billion per year in reduced costs incurred by victims and by society at large." These statements are isolated from the larger context of the research presented, but serve as examples of the compelling way the authors quantify many aspects of the issue. In addition, the book includes chapters on interventions to raise high school graduation rates and early childhood education interventions.

E-mail or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the book. *

7/1/2008

A Fish Virus to Worry About

A recent article from the [Minnesota Independent](#), [Hemorrhaging Fish and Algae Blooms Predicted for Minnesota Waters](#), included a link to a Chicago Tribune graphic showing the entire Mississippi River as an "area of concern" for the fish virus hemorrhagic septicemia. Thank goodness legislators have already acted by passing a group of measures designed to prevent the spread of the deadly fish virus. They probably just had to look at a couple of pictures of fish with viral hemorrhagic septicemia before voting to pass Chapter 307 ([Act, House Research Summary](#)). It passed the House 130-4, and the Senate 66-1. Also, in Sec. 71 of [Chapter 297](#) the commissioners of the Departments of Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Health are required to form a work group to develop a plan for detecting and responding to the fish virus. They will report to the Legislature by January 5, 2009. Learn more about the fish disease threat from a Department of Natural Resources [description](#) or [downloadable flyer](#).

6/26/2008

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) Observations

There have been several articles in the past few days regarding a lawsuit by the state against Excel Dairy near Thief River Falls. ([Here's one](#) from MinnPost.) Appropriate to that topic, the Library recently received a new book from the [National Conference of State Legislatures \(NCSL\)](#), [Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations: A Survey of State Policies](#), with a page describing each state and a number of tables comparing specific policies. (See the [table of contents](#).) That report is not free online in full text, but NCSL also has a great webpage with background on [Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations](#), including a link to recent studies from the [Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production](#). CAFO issues are likely to continue in Minnesota. The list of [Recent Environmental Reviews of Interest](#) from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency include many for feedlots and feedlot expansions. (As an aside, a few years ago there were fewer environmental assessment worksheets for feedlots and ethanol plants, and a lot more for residential housing developments with names like Kingsbury Hills, Grand View Estates, and Prairie Lake.) E-mail or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the NCSL report. *

6/23/2008

Placeography

The Minnesota Historical Society has a great new wiki-based site, [Placeography](#), where people share the history of and stories about houses, buildings, farmsteads, public land, and neighborhoods. I wonder how many people who work at the [Capitol](#) could name all of the [memorials](#) on the Capitol grounds. On these beautiful summer days you could visit all of the memorials or go for walks to check out sites featured in [St. Paul's Gangster History Tour](#).

6/16/2008

New Agency Names Can Be Confusing

It's a great thing that Minnesota state government keeps evolving to meet the needs of citizens, but it can be difficult to keep up with name changes! An article in today's Star Tribune notes, "[New Future, New Name for Minnesota Technology](#)." A 2008 law ([Chapter 290](#)) changed the name of "[Minnesota Technology, Inc.](#)" to Enterprise Minnesota. People who have been around state government might remember that Minnesota Technology was a name change in 1991 ([Chapter 322](#)) from the Greater Minnesota Corporation, which was created in 1987 ([Chapter 386](#)). Originally chartered by the Legislature, Minnesota Technology Inc., soon to be Enterprise Minnesota, operates as a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

A colleague asked, "Is that the same as the [Office of Enterprise Technology \(OET\)](#)?" No, OET is a state agency formed in 2005, combining the Minnesota Office of Technology and the InterTechnologies Group. But I understand that the mix of the words 'enterprise' and 'technology' and 'Minnesota' might lead to confusion!

6/10/2008

New Governors Executive Order Database

In a continuing effort to make important documents available to a wider audience, the Library has a new [database of executive orders](#) from the past seven governors, 779 in all.



The orders were scanned from our print notebooks and cover all of the governors since the Library began. (Although Governor Pawlenty's executive orders can be found on his [website](#), any other electronic orders disappeared after the governors left office.) Executive orders often deal with emergencies, like Governor Pawlenty's order declaring a state of emergency due to the winds in Hugo ([08-09](#)). There are 285 orders in this set with the

word "emergency" in the title or description.

**Available to legislators and legislative staff only. Please contact the library if you would like copies of any of these reports, or further research on this or any topic.*

[Previous alerts](#)

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Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

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Minnesota Legislative Reference Library



Library News Items

Library News  

5/26/2009

New Department of Labor and Industry Website



The Department of Labor and Industry has a newly-revamped website, which thankfully still includes the same great information requested by so many citizens who contact our Legislative Library. Employment questions aren't our specialty, but we get a constant flow of concerns coming to us anyway - questions about being fired, permission to see personnel records, breaks, paychecks and commission checks, and more. The [Labor Standards](#) page is the entry point for answers to many questions.

And just a funny aside about the department - they actually had a newsletter at one time called "Hello DOLI."

5/22/2009

How Hockey Became Minnesota's State Sport



Sen. Gen Olson first introduced a bill to make ice hockey the state sport on May 18, 2007. (SF2313) In 2008, avid 6th graders came to the Capitol to testify. This photo is by David Oakes, the Senate Photographer. "Eleven-year-old Hannah Erhesmann, a sixth grader at Minnetonka East Middle School, explains to members of the State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee, Wed., Mar. 5, why ice hockey should be designated the state sport." (From the March 7, 2008, [Senate Briefly](#))

On March 26, 2008, Sen. Olson offered the language as an amendment to SF3001 in the E-12 Education Budget Division. "While the proposal has advanced to the floor in the Senate, the other body did not advance any bills designating official state symbols, Olson said." ([Senate Briefly](#), March 28, 2008) It was carried into the omnibus education policy bill that was [vetoed](#) by Governor Pawlenty on May 13.

Later Sen. Olson offered an amendment to add the provision to the State Government Finance bill (HF3493). From the [Senate Floor Session Notes](#), May 1, 2008: "Sen. Gen Olson (R-Minnetrissa) offered an amendment designating ice hockey as the state sport. Olson said she was wary of carrying a bill creating another state symbol, especially a state sport. But we are an active state with a tradition of connection to sports, she said, and ice hockey has a unique relationship to Minnesota. Minnesota is the home of the Hockey Hall of Fame and Sports Illustrated magazine's "Hockeytown, USA," Olson said, and is widely regarded as a state where hockey is grown from the ground up, beginning with vibrant youth leagues. The amendment was adopted."

The Senate amendment was taken out during the conference committee process, and did not pass.

Later last year, the [House reported on the State Fair Survey](#) question about whether ice hockey should be designated as the state sport. "35.2 percent of polltakers said ice hockey should be designated the state sport, 6.9 percent more than fishing. But many fairgoers commented that the Legislature should not waste time on such "trivial" matters. More than 600 people did not vote on the question."

This year, the provision was added to SF2081, the Economic Development and Housing Budget Division's omnibus budget bill, in the Senate Finance Committee on April 20, 2009. (It was not offered as a separate bill in the Senate or House.) From the April 24 [Senate E-Briefly](#), "Two additional amendments were offered, one appropriating an additional \$1.6 million to the film board and another designating hockey as the official state sport. The amendments were adopted by the committee." Sen. Wiger offered the amendment, noting that it had been passed twice by the Senate in 2008. The amendment was discussed at approximately one hour and 47 minutes into the hearing. (MP3). There was not a corresponding provision in the House bill as the conference committee began. The final version of the bill, repassed by the House on May 4 and the Senate on May 5, included the provision. Governor Pawlenty vetoed the bill on May 7. The bill was revised, became HF2088, with the state sport provision included. Governor Pawlenty vetoed some provisions in the law, but [Laws of Minnesota, Chapter 78](#) as passed included "Ice hockey is adopted as the official sport of the state of Minnesota."

5/21/2009

The Old Days of Printing are Gone



A short notice in the May [Drive to Excellence](#) May newsletter, "OET's Print Operation Successfully Transitions," is a reminder of how technology has changed how the Library operates. OET is no longer in the business of providing printing services to state agencies. "On April 9, the OET print room in the basement of the Centennial Building finished its final job" Back in the OLD days of the Library, in the late 1980's, we had a box that sat in Zona DeWitt's office, labeled "Printers Box." At that time, when the Department of Administration did nearly all of the printing for the various state agencies, they sent over an extra copy of everything they printed, so that we could identify the documents we needed for the Legislative Library's collection, just in case they had not been sent to us by the agencies. The Printers

Box disappeared in the era of desktop publishing, when document printing became easy for agencies to complete in-house.

5/20/2009

Vendor Evaluation Reports Online



Many times web access is a vast improvement over paper sitting on shelves - not only for sheer accessibility, but in terms of how the information can be used. The Department of Administration has just released one of those vast improvements to a report that was mandated by the Legislature several years ago. Minnesota Statutes 16C.08, subd. 4(c), requires that upon completion of a contract over \$50,000, agencies submit a one-page report, summarizing the purpose of the contract, stating the amount spent on the contract, and including a written performance evaluation of the work done under the contract. Previously, those reports were available only in print, in the Library, in the binders shown in the image to the left. Now it is possible to learn of agencies' experiences with various vendors by [searching online](#). Reports since March 1, 2009, have been posted, will be updated weekly, and can be searched by agency or vendor name. This is great progress.

5/18/2009

New Veto Tables



Just in time for the heavy veto season, the Library's website includes new and improved veto tables. [Bills Vetoed - 1939 to Present](#) is part of the Library's [Historical Information About the Minnesota Legislature](#). We've been adding more details about line item vetoes, which turned out to be a trickier job than we had guessed! Is that one veto? Is it six? We settled on a uniform guideline and added the following caveat after each table. "Unlike counting full vetoes, the counting of line item vetoes is inherently arbitrary. Library staff used these guidelines. If a lump-sum appropriation was broken down into several component items and the entire lump sum was vetoed, it was counted as one item. Appropriations divided into separate amounts for two fiscal years were also counted as one item."

5/13/2009

Measuring Up: What Educational Testing Really Tells Us



A review in the spring issue of [Issues in Science and Technology](#), "Truth in Testing," ([link for legislative users](#)), led us to purchase a new book, *Measuring Up: What Educational Testing Really Tells Us*, by Harvard University Professor Daniel Koretz ([Q & A with Professor Koretz](#)). The review said *Measuring Up* "gives a sustained and insightful explanation of testing practices" and "is a balanced, accurate, and jargon-free discussion of how to understand the major issues that arise in educational testing."

[E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the book. *

5/7/2009

Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy

Fund in Funding Formulas*		
FY 2008	FY 2009	
37,724.5	4,059,694.4	4.5
11,441.2	11,400.6	
59,590.8	62,278.8	
23,923.1	347,949.7	5
32,316.8	32,566.5	
8,396.5	8,499.4	
91,837.5	23,826.1	
50,633.8	60,760.2	
2,146.1	1,297.1	
62,895.2	73,247.7	

With the primary public focus on House and Senate activities, not everyone is aware of the variety of [Joint Departments and Commissions](#) that serve both bodies of the Legislature. This year one commission, the [Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy](#) (LCPFP), has gained a higher profile, starting with meetings among governors staff and House and Senate members to discuss the federal stimulus money. Meetings of the commission have become the vehicle for open discussion of the competing budget proposals. "To the extent possible, we want to do this in a public way, so we understand the choices that need to be made," Speaker Kelliher noted in a meeting on April 30. Read more about that meeting in a Session Daily brief, "[Commission begins work on budget comparisons.](#)" [MinnPost](#) wrote about the commission on May 6, "[Increased use of legislative commission aims at Capitol 'transparency and openness'](#)"

To make it easy to view the [documents](#) discussed at the meetings, they are posted to the [website](#) as soon as they are available. You can check the [Meeting Archives](#) link for all the available video. For more budget documents, use the [House Budget Tracking Documents](#) and the [Senate Budget](#)

[Tracking Documents.](#)

5/7/2009

A New Law Saves Paper



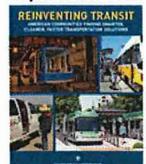
It's no surprise that leaps in technology and web access have changed the Library's operations over time. For years, when reports were only in print, agencies were required to send ten copies of all state documents, so that we would have extras to give to interested legislators and legislative staff. That number was later cut to six.

But in past few years the Legislative Reference Library and state agencies have done a great job of posting documents online. This year, in an effort to reduce paper waste, the Library initiated a bill to reduce the number of required state depository copies to the Legislative Library from six to two, plus one electronic copy. It also deletes the requirement to send copies to the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House. The governor signed [Chapter 32](#) (HF801/SF779) on May 4. (This [committee handout](#) describes the sections of the bill.)

All together, agencies will save paper and printing costs for hundreds of documents, and the Library will ensure that print copies and electronic copies they archive will be available to legislators now and 20 years from now. Many thanks go out to Rep. Pelowski and Senator Gimse for sponsoring the legislation!

5/6/2009

Reports on Traffic and Congestion



One of the case studies noted in [Reinventing Transit: American Communities Finding Smarter, Cleaner, Faster Transportation Solutions](#), from the Environmental Defense Fund, is from Minnesota. They suggest that other states could replicate the success of Minnesota's use of highway shoulders for buses. Case Study #5 is "[Building transit infrastructure without building new lanes: Metro Transit's bus-only shoulders.](#)" The *Star Tribune* had an amusing [article](#) about how Rep. Oberstar missed the press conference about the report - he was stuck in traffic.

The new MNDOT [Metropolitan Freeway System 2008 Congestion Report](#) includes some good news/bad news regarding congestion now and in the future. It's getting better, but will likely get much worse. "In 2008, the Twin Cities freeways saw a substantial drop in congestion, from 20.9% in 2007 to 17.3%. A significant part of this change was attributed to the completion of the Interstate 35W bridge over the Mississippi River. However, this drop was also large enough to improve upon the 2006 value of 18.3%, before the collapse of the Interstate 35W bridge. Excluding 2007, congestion has dropped each year since 2004. This short term trend is largely credited to the completion of large construction projects and, most recently, a decline in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). It is expected that, in the next few years, congestion will plateau or continue to decline as current and planned projects are completed. However, future plans include fewer capacity-adding projects. Mn/DOT expects this will lead to a long run trend of growing congestion."

5/5/2009

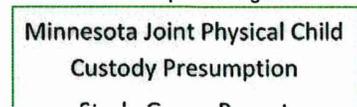
A New Pat Flahaven Profile



The collection of Pat Flahaven articles in our "Legislative Staff" notebook grew today with a nice profile published in the the [Spring 2009 issue](#) of Metropolitan State University's BUZZ magazine.

5/5/2009

A MN Mandated Report in England



Interest in documents [mandated by the Minnesota Legislature](#) go far beyond our state's boundaries. We have lent Minnesota reports to many libraries overseas, and of course it is much easier with web access in recent years. We recently had a request for help from a member of the law faculty at the University of the West of England who was interested in a document for his dissertation exploring the Family Justice System. He was having difficulty downloading the 2009 report, [Minnesota](#)

Study Group Report

Joint Physical Child Custody Presumption Study Group Report, mandated by Chap. 299, Sec. 25, Laws of Minnesota 2008.

We don't ever reveal who asks us questions, but in this case the requestor didn't mind us telling this story. He added, "The report itself was very useful to my dissertation and its always great to add an international dimension to your research."

5/4/2009

Henrik Shipstead and Party Switching

In light of the Arlen Specter's party change, the Smart Politics blog ran a piece on members of Congress who have switched parties and won reelection, "Will Arlen Specter Win in 2010?" Of the 13 U.S. Senators who switched party allegiances since the introduction of popular vote elections in 1914, all but three Senators were re-elected under their new party labels. The one Minnesota senator was Henrik Shipstead, who also served in the Minnesota House of Representatives. From the blog entry: "Minnesota Farmer-Laborite Henrik Shipstead became a Republican during his reelection run of 1940 and is one of only two Senators that have switched parties to increase their margin of victory from the previous election cycle. In 1934, Shipstead won by 20.7 points over Democrat Einar Hoidale, with only a plurality 49.9 percent of the vote. In 1940, Shipstead won by 27.3 points over Farmer-Laborite Elmer A. Benson by a 53.0 to 25.7 percent margin."

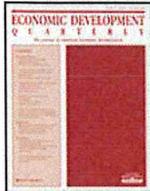
We have a small book in the Library about Shipstead. Shipstead of Minnesota by Larry Ross was published in 1940 (and cost 60 cents). That was the year Skipstead switched parties, but that story is not included. There is only one page (p. 35) devoted to his service in the Minnesota House (and to his cynical observations).

4/27/2009

Property Tax Subsidy Review from the Citizens League

The Citizens League has published a popular annual comparison of tax increment financing (TIF) districts in the Minnesota Journal for many years. In 2007 they added information on Job Opportunity Building Zones (JOBZ), to give a more complete picture of economic development subsidies granted by cities. This year's article, from the March-April issue, goes another step, adding information on locally-granted property tax abatements to their tables. The League's 2008 Property Tax Subsidy Review is a great primer on the various property tax subsidies, made more interesting by the comparative tables. (For further study, check reports from the House of Representatives Research Department in their "Property Taxes" category, or the JOBZ Program evaluation from the Office of the Legislative Auditor.)

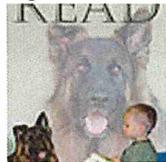
4/24/2009

A Brownfield Discussion in Economic Development Quarterly

An article in the May, 2009, issue of Economic Development Quarterly, "Assessing the Effect of Publicly Assisted Brownfield Redevelopment on Surrounding Property Values," measures and compares the impact of publicly assisted brownfield development on residential property values in Milwaukee and Minneapolis. (Through the Library's subscription, this article is available online to legislative users.) It's a scholarly article with sigmas and mathematical equations and discussions of hedonic modeling for those who understand them, but the very readable text provides interesting policy information for a wider audience. From the concluding remarks:

"This research reveals that brownfield projects not only generate desirable economic outcomes themselves but also have spillover effects on surrounding home values that are significant in both quantity and geographic scope. Although park and residential projects seem to provide the most significant benefit to adjacent property, there are also significant and positive net benefits associated with removing the negative impacts of brownfields that are converted to industrial and commercial use. As a result, public investment in brownfield redevelopment, regardless of type, does help erase the negative effect imposed by deindustrialization and helps cities restore and raise their property tax base on and around brownfield sites."

4/23/2009

Dogs Who Like a Good Story

Here at the Legislative Reference Library we have a deep appreciation for the services provided by Minitex. (All Minnesota citizens should be aware of the services available through the MnKnows program.) One of the newsletters from Minitex is Reference Notes, a great source of articles about technology for our library staff. It also has really interesting articles about public and academic library programs, library worlds which are so different in many ways from the specialized services and clientele of the Legislative Library. The February issue (on p.3) included "Dogs Who Like a Good Story," a tear-inducing short piece about library programs using dogs to listen to children read aloud. The non-judgemental listeners bring confidence to struggling young readers. In the March issue (p.6) several Minnesota libraries responded with information about their programs. I doubt that we will be introducing an LRL dog to listen to legislators read mandated reports or lobbyists read their bills, but learning about these programs is a reminder of the great work of Minnesota public libraries with young children.

***Available to legislators and legislative staff only. Please contact the library if you would like copies of any of these reports, or further research on this or any topic.**

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Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

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In case you missed it.....

4/21/2009

A Unicameral and Gender-Equal Legislature?



According to new statistics from the [NCSL Women's Legislative Network](#), women hold 24.3 percent of legislative seats in the 50 states, a ratio that has increased by less than 4 percentage points over the past fifteen years. Minnesota is above average, of course, at 34.8%. We might have been higher if a bill proposed in 1935 had passed, described in the very colorful book, *The Minnesota Merry-Go-Round or A Diary of the Legislature of the Age: The Best That Money Could Buy*.

"Sens. [Fay Cravens](#) of Milaca and [T.H. Johnson](#) of Fergus Falls believe in equal rights for women - equal social, legal and political rights. The artificial distinctions between the sexes, a survival of age-old superstition and ignorance, should be eliminated in no uncertain terms, they said, in introducing a bill today that would give Minnesota a novel one-house legislature, composed of 60 men and 60 women. It would be the first and only one of its kind in America. The State would be redivided into 60 legislative districts, and a man and woman would be chosen from each district - 120 in all - sitting as one body.

"Well, this is not a bad idea. Minnesota's novel legislature would probably accomplish more than the present large and unwieldy aggregation - not only on important legislation, but in a social way. Apples, home town newspapers and crossword puzzles would readily give way to afternoon teas and dances, a charming lady companion for every legislator. Such a legislature may sound fantastic now - but it may come to pass some day - just like women on juries became a reality."

The bill was heard in the Committee on Civil Administration and indefinitely postponed.

4/20/2009

Ticket Sales Unregulated and Regulated



An article in the Spring, 2009, issue of *Regulation* magazine, examines "[Lessons from a Scalper](#)." The author examined the secondary market for Ohio State football tickets and concluded that "free markets are often much better at handling greed in socially desirable ways than government regulations." Minnesota legislators largely agreed with this point of view when they repealed ticket scalping as a crime in 2007. ([This language](#) was repealed in [Chapter 54, 2007](#).) Legislative interest in ticket sales has continued. In 2008 a bill dubbed the "Hannah Montana bill" was passed, making it a gross misdemeanor to sell, distribute or use software to get around security and move to the front of an Internet ticket buyer line. And in 2009, a bill prohibiting early internet sales of event tickets is moving through the Legislature. [HF819](#), sponsored by Rep. Joe Atkins has [passed the full House](#). The companion bill ([SF759](#)) is sponsored by Sen. Ron Latz and is moving through the Senate with the [House language substituted](#).

4/6/2009

New Reports and Budget Woes



The [March issue](#) of the Library's list of new and notable documents, [Just In](#), will probably be the longest one this year. Most legislatively-mandated reports come in January and February, so there are lots of titles followed by "Mandated by...."

The reports from national organizations listed in the initial short essay, "States' Budget Woes," detail shortfalls across the states. Reports keep coming. The [March issue of Firstline Midwest](#), from the Midwestern Office of the Council of State Governments, focuses on budget issues facing our region's 11 states. And Ron Snell from the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) looks back at a time we hope won't be repeated, in [State Finance in the Great Depression](#).

4/3/2009

State Rankings 2009



You can dip into almost any page in *State Rankings 2009*, part of CQ Press's State Fact Finder series, and find interesting statistics. How does Minnesota rank?

- "Per Capita State Art Agencies' Legislative Appropriations in 2008" - 8th.
- "Average Price of Natural Gas Delivered to Commercial Customers in 2007" - 30th.
- "Percent of Households Headed by Married Couples in 2007" - 7th.
- "Percent of Population Enrolled in Medicaid in 2007" - 40th.
- "Average Student Costs at Public Institutions of Higher Education in 2007" - 15th.
- "Federal Tax Refunds in 2007" - 21st.

We use this book, and its companion titles [Crime State Rankings](#) and [Education State Rankings](#), all the time, often just to identify the original sources for the statistics for further research.

3/31/2009

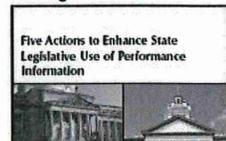
ARMER Reports



Three recent reports received by the Library describe the past, present, and future of the ARMER system, the Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response. The [ARMER System Biennial Report to the Legislature](#) (March 2009) includes a useful background, which began with planning for a Twin Cities metropolitan area radio communication system among emergency responders in the 1980s. The shared region-wide, two-way radio infrastructure was in place at the time of the I-35W bridge collapse, and it performed well according to another report, [Performance Review: ARMER Radio System at I-35W Bridge Collapse](#). The original plan to extend the metro system into a statewide system had six phases. Incredible detail on the final phases is found in the [Allied Matrix for Emergency response \(ARMER\) Phases 4-5-6 Cost Audit Report](#). The Department of Public Safety has additional information on ARMER on its [Statewide Radio Board](#) page.

3/26/2009

Writing an Effective Performance Report



A recent report from the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), [Five Actions to Enhance State Legislative Use of Performance Information](#), highlights effective reports from several states. The author, Judy Zelio, identifies five specific actions that state agencies can take to provide useful performance information to legislators. [Action 4](#) recommends that agency staff should collaborate with legislative staff to make sure that the performance reports are useful, accurate, brief, clear, and timely. This section would be useful for anyone writing a report for an audience of policymakers. For example, this is a sensible tip: "An ideal length for a program performance report is one or two pages, with six to 15 key measures. Multi-page spreadsheets have little appeal to most legislators."

3/25/2009

Updated Legislative History Guide

1928 INDEX.										
BILLS OF THE HOUSE—Continued.										
Number	Title	First Reading	Second Reading	Committee	Special Committee	Subcommittee	Referred	Final Action	Effective Date	
415	A bill for an act relating to pay- ments of claims in certain cases, amending Minn. Stat. Sec. 63A. March 1928, Section 415.	415	415	415	415	415	415	415	415	415

The Library's [Legislative History Guide](#) has been updated. It has streamlined formatting and useful images to help users research earlier laws and bills. The process is complex, and legislative history research is rarely easy, but hopefully the guide will be even more helpful.

3/23/2009

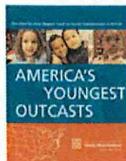
Nuclear Waste Storage in Minnesota



An informational hearing on nuclear power will be held on Wednesday, March 25, at 6:30 p.m. by the [Legislative Energy Commission](#), the [House Energy Finance & Policy Division](#), and the [Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities, Technology and Communications](#). The agenda includes an update on what other states are doing and testimony from supporters and opponents of nuclear power. The storage of nuclear waste has been a contentious state issue in past years. When that issue comes up again, the Library's recently updated issue guide to [Nuclear Waste Storage in Minnesota](#), with links to documents and legislation, may prove useful.

3/20/2009

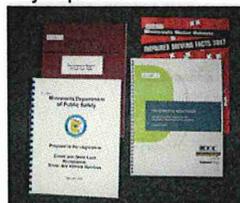
America's Youngest Outcasts



[America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness](#), from the [National Center on Family Homelessness](#), begins with a bald statement, "It is unacceptable for one child in the United States to be homeless for even one day." It is hard to celebrate the fact that Minnesota was ranked as the state with the least risk for child homelessness when many other charts depict distressing facts about those who are homeless. "Homeless children are eight times more likely to witness violent behavior by their parents as children in middle-income families (8% vs. 1%)." "More than three times as many children in homeless families in Minnesota (18%) were reported as having moderate or severe difficulties with emotions, concentration, behavior, and getting along with other people as compared to children from middle-income families." ([Minnesota state report](#)) E-mail or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like further research on homelessness. *

3/17/2009

Why Paper Documents?



[CBS Sunday Morning](#) ran an segment on the problems with saving valuable information in constantly changing formats, "[Bye, Tech: Dealing With Data Rot](#)." It's interesting in connection with a bill we are interested in, [HF801/SF779](#). The primary intent of the bill is environmental responsibility. Since the Legislative Library is promoting electronic copies of state documents and mandated reports so widely (for example, see last month's list of [Newly Acquired Minnesota State Government Reports](#)), we hope to reduce the number of mandated copies sent to the Library from six to two.

We've been asked - why not just get an electronic copy? Why do you need paper?

We archive electronic copies of all of the state documents, and we back them up. The archived electronic copies expand access and guarantee access to researchers long into the future. The reports will be available even if agencies change structure, disappear, or simply no longer post the documents. However, paper is a proven archival medium, and we don't feel completely safe eliminating the paper copies

in our collection. We store documents in pdf format. We assume that all of the electronic state document files will be easily convertible, in a batch mode, to other formats in the future. We can't guarantee that it will be easy or inexpensive. The risk of losing documents completely may be small, but it is real.

3/12/2009

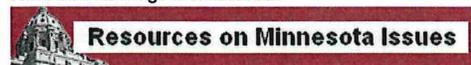
Some State Agency Magazines Cease; Some Get Better



We regularly hear of magazines and newsletters that switch to online-only or cease altogether. But some magazines from Minnesota state agencies have become more polished and interesting over the years. The new issue of [Minnesota Economic Trends](#) has several articles on [Minnesota's Green Economy](#). "[New Opportunities in the Green Economy](#)" includes a one-page article on the difficulty of defining a green job, "It's Not Easy Counting Green." [Minnesota Environment](#), from the Pollution Control Agency, is another high-quality, readable agency magazine. Their most recent issue covers green issues on a practical level, "[Living Green Goes Mainstream](#)."

3/9/2009

Same Sex Marriage in Minnesota



about the introduction of [SF1210](#) in the Senate.

Over the years our librarians have created guides to often-researched topics, [Resources on Minnesota Issues](#). They lead users to print and online materials and often include timelines and descriptions of past legislation. We just finished reviewing and updating the "[Same Sex Marriage in Minnesota](#)" guide last week, by chance on the same day the [Star Tribune](#) published the article "[Same-sex marriage back at the Legislature](#),"

3/6/2009

The Budget Crisis of the 1980s



We've had requests for background information on the budget crisis of the early 1980s, so we put together a notebook of materials and clippings, [Minnesota's Budget Crisis 1980-1983: Selected Background Materials](#). For copyright reasons, not everything can be posted, but several items are linked from the table of contents. Even a brief scan through the inch-and-a-half set of photocopied news clippings brings a sense of reality to the long-past events. The story is told with headlines like "Cut! Cut! Legislature, Quie disagree on budget scenarios" and "How did miracle turn to mess?", press releases, editorials, and editorial cartoons.

A Pioneer Press article from August 21, 1980, described meetings held by Governor Quie about how the just-announced \$195 million deficit would be handled. A smaller box was titled "Legislators find some laughs in deficit." It included a somewhat cryptic joke that seems amusing in light of our country's current crisis, when talk of billions and trillions is hard to fathom. "Sen. Roger Moe, DFL-Ada, called it a bad news-good news joke. 'The bad news is that the state faces a deficit of \$195 million,' he said. 'The good news is that's only \$24 in American money.'"

One of the last editorials in the compilation followed the budget-balancing special session of 1982, shortly before Governor Quie left office, "The Legislature did what it had to do." (Star Tribune, 12/12/1982) Hopefully after the 2009 budget-balancing bill is passed these words from that article will be true, "For now, however, Minnesota can breathe a little easier. The wolves aren't gone, but they've backed away from the door."

3/5/2009

The First Branch of Government: From Grass Roots to Law

A must-see film! The First Branch of Government: From Grass Roots to Law features former Representative Thomas Berg in his ultimately successful quest to pass The Metropolitan Land Planning Act in 1976.

Many of the scenes and sounds are anachronistic - typewriters clacking, people smoking in offices and committee rooms, and window air conditioners. Check out the plaid jackets! There are no cell phones or laptops in sight. But the human process of the Legislature that is portrayed is just as real today. Constituents have conflicting needs, priorities need balancing, and sometimes a legislator becomes irritated at roadblocks to the passage of a bill. Frustrating floor debates drag on and end in disappointment. It's difficult to balance the demands of office with home life. The film could be shown in a civics class today.

The film was produced for the National Conference of State Legislatures and is posted with permission. Thanks NCSL! Thanks also to former Rep. Ray Faricy, who gave a DVD copy of the film to the Library.

3/4/2009



The Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans recognized the Minnesota Legislative Networking Group (LNET) with its Website Access Award. According to Mary Hartnett, Commission Director, "The work [LNET has] done voluntarily to improve access on the web is impressive and shows a commitment to including all citizens in the legislative process. The work that you done has made a significant difference." A lot of work and programming was done behind the scenes in the past year to improve accessibility.

Three deserving LNET members accepted the award today. Isaac Holmlund from the Revisor's Office did a great job of coding the CSS style sheets that improved the accessibility of the Revisor's pages. From the Library, Mike Schatz revised programming code so that it would work for the legislative offices, and Julie Dinger coordinated the refinement process and user testing of the accessibility components.

Accessibility information for the Legislative Web Site is available from a link at the top of the legislative portal.

2/26/2009



A posting on the National Conference of State Legislature's Thicket blog, Black History Month: A Look at African American Legislators, led to more legislator demographics put together by NCSL staff. One table lists Legislators' Occupations in all States, 1976, 1986, 1993, 1995, 2007 (percentages). The broad occupational categories the Library uses in our Legislators Past & Present database are quite similar - not exactly the same, but close enough to make a comparison interesting. See Minnesota Legislators' Occupations for the same years as the NCSL table.

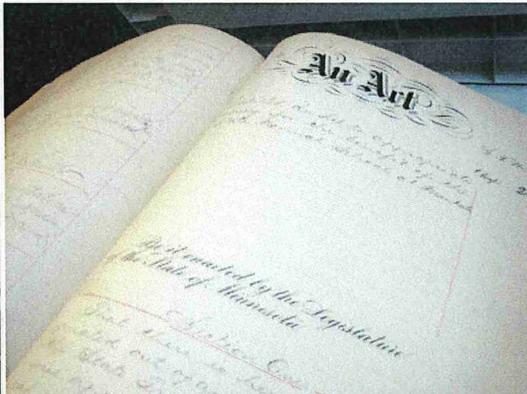
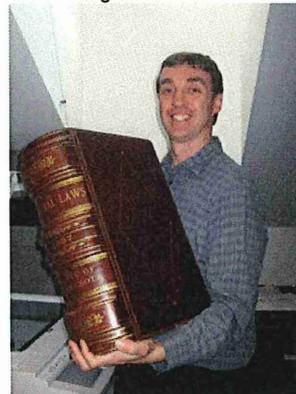
2/25/2009

SONARS online

Statements of Need and Reasonableness (SONARs) back to 2006 have been gathered in a new database by the Legislative Reference Library. As part of the rulemaking process, SONARs provide background on a proposed rule or amendment for decision makers and citizens. As an example, this SONAR from the Department of Agriculture explains proposed changes in rules regarding the use of the Minnesota Grown label.

For years, we compiled massive notebooks of SONARs in paper, and were only able to retain them for a couple of years. Currently, most new SONARs are on the agency websites (but not always easily found). On many occasions we were not able to help researchers who wanted older SONARs. This electronic archive will increase web access and ensure that these important rulemaking documents are available for future researchers. We didn't really anticipate great excitement over this new resource, but one law librarian wrote, "OMG - THANK YOU for archiving these things!!"

2/20/2009

Far from digital

Now that we have Minnesota Session Laws available on the web back to statehood, we might forget what the original laws looked like. Paul had occasion to copy an original law. The Secretary of State's office was kind enough to lend the Paul Bunyan-esque volume to us.

2/19/2009

How It Happens: The Legislative Library

David Gillette featured a segment on the Legislative Library on "Almanac at the Capitol" on February 18.



1/28/2009

Mandated Reports - the Busy Season

January 15 is a very popular mandate date; legislators often ask for reports to be submitted at the beginning of a legislative session. This is a photo of a stack of reports that arrived right around that date. If you look at the Library's [Newly Acquired Minnesota State Government Reports](#) page, you'll note that the list for this month is very long, and that many of the reports are mandated.

[E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to check on the status of any required reports. *

1/28/2009

Civic Blogging in Minnesota Gets Attention

Minnesota civic blogging activities are receiving national attention. The Minnesota Senate's [Budget Discussion Website](#) was noted in the National Conference of State Legislatures' [Thicket](#) blog last week. An article in the newly-arrived issue of the [National Civic Review](#), "Community Blogging: The New Wave of Citizen Journalism", highlights several Minnesota community blogs - in particular the very successful [Locally Grown](#) Northfield blog. In addition to content from active local bloggers, [Locally Grown](#) is participating in an innovative project in which local reporter Bonnie Obremski is paid for her articles through the [Representative Journalism](#) project. The sidebar on the Northfield blog links to several local bloggers who comment on civic issues, including local legislators [Sen. Kevin Dahle](#) and [Rep. David Bly](#).

The community blogging article also discusses the [Northwest Area Foundation's Horizons Project](#). One aspect of the community leadership program is active support of [community blogging in the participating communities](#); the [Eveleth](#) blog was noted as one of the best.

[E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like a copy of the [National Civic Review](#) article. *

1/23/2009

No Good Economic News at the One Minnesota Conference

Economic statistics and trends were described by several speakers at the "One Minnesota. Our State. Our Future" policy conference for legislators held on January 17. Steven Cochrane from [Moody's Economy](#) described economic conditions in Minnesota compared to the national economy and selected other states in "[The Fundamentals: How Minnesota Measures Up](#)." The conference wrapped up with a talk by Tom Stinson, the [State Economist](#), and Tom Gillaspey, the [State Demographer](#), "[The Minnesota Perspective](#)." The current economic downturn may seem sudden, but Tom Gillaspey noted

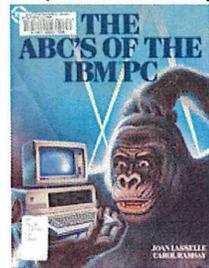
that long-term economic challenges to the state were described in a 1995 report from the State Planning Agency, [Within Our Means](#). "If there is a time to solve the state's fiscal problems, it is now. After 2010, solutions will be more difficult, as the percentage of Minnesotans of working age begins to decline." (p. 9) Their discussion of the effect of changing demographics on economic issues was sobering.

1/20/2009

Changing Technology – and Technology Costs

In the early days of online searching, the computer terminals held waxy thermal paper. The introduction of dot-matrix printers seemed like a great improvement, though it's hard to believe we spent time tearing apart the individual pages and stripping off the perforated edges of each sheet. With the wonders of this new technology we were able to get materials right away instead of waiting for days. In the summer of 1989, when the landmark Supreme Court abortion case, [Webster V. Reproductive health Services](#), was released, we printed off the text for an eagerly-waiting legislator. The print was so slow that he was finished reading each page before the next one could be pulled off the printer. It was costly as well as tedious – at a dollar a page, we paid about \$60 for that one decision.

1/20/2009

Computers in the Library - We've Come A Long Way

Don't forget to come to the reception on Wednesday, Jan. 21, from 3-5, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Legislative Reference Library. One of the displays includes technology facts about the introduction of computers in the Library and the Legislature. It's hard to imagine that for more than half the time since the Library started in 1969 it required a trip to the Capitol to get a copy of a bill.

In the mid-1980s our database administrator used an IBM PC just like the one described in the 1984 book pictured to the left, [The ABC's of the IBM PC](#). (An interesting observation from page 6: "However, because of word processing, typing is no longer just for secretaries. Many office professionals use word processors to compose reports or letters and to jot off memos and notes.") The program floppy drive held software like dBase or MultiMate (our word processing at that time), and the other drive held a floppy with her data. No hard drive. No email. No graphics. Remarkably, when this computer was purchased in 1983, it cost \$3800!

1/19/2009

Looking Forward, Looking Back

It's the Library's 40th anniversary! Don't forget to come to the reception on Wednesday, Jan. 21, from 3-5. Since we are constantly in the mode of change and adopting technology to provide better service, it's interesting to have an excuse to look back. For example, [Just In](#), our monthly list of new books and reports, is now almost exclusively online. Links to web versions of are included, and with a couple of clicks legislators and legislative staff can borrow the books they want to read in print. The reports that result from direct mandates from the Legislature are noted.

The long ago predecessor of [Just In](#) is [The Library Star](#), first published in December, 1972. Nine of the 75 items listed in the first issue are still in our collection. We scanned four state documents that may still be of interest: [Report of the Secretary of the Senate](#), October 12, 1972 (from the Introduction: "The last five years have been a period of dynamic modernization for the Minnesota Senate."), [Poverty in Minnesota - Who, Where, and Why](#), from the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, August 1972; [Minnesota State Land Use Planning in the Context of a Developing National Land Use Policy](#), State Planning Agency, May 1972; and [Report of the Joint Committee on Flexible Sessions](#), Minnesota State Legislature, 1972.

1/15/2009

Upcoming Reception for the Library's 40th Anniversary



The first photo above shows the Library's reading room on an average day; the second shows the same space during a reception held last fall for newly-elected legislators. Next week, when we welcome everyone to a reception celebrating the Library's 40th anniversary, it may be even more packed!

Please join us on Wednesday, January 21, from 3-5, to celebrate our 40 years of service to the Legislature. There will be cake, coffee, treats, photos, and exhibits. (Questions? Call Robbie LaFleur at 651-296-8310)

1/12/2009

Two Secretaries of the Senate, in 1971



Peter Wattson, one of the two current Secretaries of the Senate, began working for the Senate in 1971. That week there was another instance of two secretaries of the Senate, if only for a few days.

The party breakdown in the Senate was nearly tied at the beginning of the 1971 session; 34 senators caucused with the Conservatives and 33 with the DFL caucus. This was the last session of official nonpartisan designation in the Legislature. On the first day of session, then Lt. Governor Rudy Perpich ruled that Sen. Dick Palmer of Duluth could not be seated because of a pending election contest, and then proceeded to cast the tie-breaking vote to help the DFL elect its candidate for Senate Secretary, Pat Flahaven, over the conservative nominee. George Goodwin, the Conservatives' nominee, claimed he was elected. But Goodwin's election included the vote of Sen. Palmer, whom Perpich ruled could not vote.

For the next week two versions of the daily journals were kept; the DFL caucus version ignored Sen. Palmer. Steve Dornfeld reported on January 12 in the Minneapolis Tribune, "There are also two sets of Senate committees. Chairmen designated by the Conservatives have been hanging on to offices that go with the chairmanships. DFLers have been having some trouble getting quorums at committee meetings they have scheduled."

Arguments over control of the Senate went to the Supreme Court. On Wednesday, January 13, the Court sided with the Conservatives, ruling that DFL Lt. Governor Perpich could not break a tie vote in the Senate and could not exclude Sen. Richard Palmer. (The Senate deadlocked, 33-33, on the corrupt campaign practices election contest against Palmer, so he retained his seat, but only served one term in the Senate.)

George Goodwin served at Secretary of the Senate during the 1971-1972 session.

Patrick Flahaven became the Secretary of the Senate the following session, in 1973, and went on to a long and distinguished career, serving until his recent retirement in 2008.

The photos at the top, taken from the 1971 Legislative Manual, show George Goodwin on the left and Patrick Flahaven on the right. The Library has many articles on this event. They can't be posted due to copyright restrictions, but we would be glad to send copies to those who request them. (Send an email to: refdesk@lrl.leg.mn)

12/30/2008

Legislative Giants in the Earth



The Library has scanned and archived many [governors' speeches](#). Governor Karl Rolvaag didn't give his [inaugural address](#) until April of 1963. The state endured a long recount before Karl Rolvaag was announced the winner of his contest with former governor Elmer Andersen. Near the end of this gracious speech he remarked on how time passes so quickly - and this was in the pre-computer, pre-web days of the 1960s! Those remarks, and the following paragraphs about the difficulties facing state government, are inspirational and bear reading before the challenges of the upcoming legislative session.

Excerpted from "[The Inaugural Address of Governor Karl F. Rolvaag](#)," April 1, 1963:

Let us not forget that in these complicated and complex years, the world about us changes with almost frightening frequency.

In our society, we are a part of the total and the whole. We cannot isolate ourselves in a world in which it has been said that, "Time, the simple mathematical device by which men measure their days, has vanished."

Colonel John Glenn, the American astronaut, pin-pointed the problem when he remarked that in a space of time of less than five hours he had witnessed and experienced three sunsets, three dawns, three Wednesdays and four Tuesdays!

Time indeed, as a measurement of our days and years, has vanished! To compound our problems, all this has happened in a generation which is only once removed from the sod hut and the ox-drawn prairie schooner, from the hardy pioneer who cleared our forests and established out state.

In the discharge of our responsibilities, we must demonstrate the same raw courage of our pioneering grandfathers who settled the frontier, the same inventiveness, the same resolute determination to build.

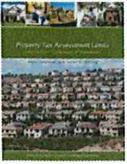
We surely cannot confess that we are less resolute, less capable of meeting our opportunities and our challenges.

Men who confess their fear of government should take the next logical step and confess themselves afraid to govern, confess themselves ill- equipped in the face of tough, difficult decisions grown men and women must make in the interests of society.

Our problems are real, but they reflect a health growth and change. Those afraid of change are not equipped to govern.

Let us resolve on this day and in this hour that we shall conduct ourselves in such a fashion that when future generations examine their heritage - their institutions of law and justice, their institutions of government, their institutions of aid, their institutions of learning - they will say of the men and women in 1963, "There were Giants in the Earth in those days."

12/29/2008

Property Tax Assessment Limits

A recent report from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, [Property Tax Assessment Limits](#), discusses the problems of using assessment limits to counter rising property taxes. Severing the link between tax property values and property taxes can cause widely differing tax obligations on owners of identical properties, reduce economic growth by distorting taxpayer decisions, and can cause unpredictable new shifts in tax liabilities. The report suggests better alternatives for aid to needy taxpayers, including circuit breaker programs, truth in taxation measures, deferral options, and partial exemptions on owner-occupied or homestead properties. There is a local connection to the report; one of the two authors is [Mark Haveman](#), Executive Director of the [Minnesota Taxpayers Association](#).

E-mail or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the report. *

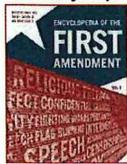
12/23/2008

Ready or Not? Protecting the Public's Health from Diseases, Disasters, and Bioterrorism

A new report from the Trust for America's Health assesses whether states are [Ready or Not?](#) to protect the public's health from diseases, disasters, and bioterrorism. ([full report](#), [website](#), [Minnesota overview](#)) Their preparedness scale tallies ten key indicators. Minnesota falls in the top half of states with 8 of ten possible points. One indicator is whether a state has a pandemic influenza plan; here is Minnesota's [Pandemic Influenza: 2007 Annual Progress Update](#) from the MN Department of Health. There were two indicators for which Minnesota did not get a point. Minnesota is one of 26 states that do not have statutes that extend some level of immunity to groups and/or organizations providing charitable, emergency, or disaster relief services. It is one of 6 states that do not use a surveillance system that is compatible with the Center for Disease Control's National Electronic Disease Surveillance System.

The report goes on to assess federal preparedness, and to address additional concerns as diverse as terror during times of political transition and children and preparedness. There are detailed recommendations, including strategies for surge capacity, the ability of the U.S. health care system to function in a mass-causality event.

12/15/2008

The Encyclopedia of the First Amendment

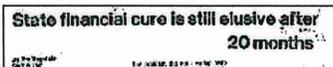
The Library recently purchased the two-volume [Encyclopedia of the First Amendment](#) ([description](#)), published by CQ Press and edited by John R. Vile, David L. Hudson Jr., and Hamline University Professor [David Schultz](#). It comprehensively examines all the freedoms in the First Amendment, including free speech, press, assembly, petition, and religion. Entries like "English-Only Laws," "Specialty License Plates," and "Ecstasy" (the first film to be blocked by the U.S. Customs Service from entering the U.S.), cover the political, historical, and cultural significance of the First Amendment. The entries tend to be a page or less, making it a great browsing book as well as a reference book. As an example, here is the entry for "[Near vs. Minnesota](#)," a 1931 Supreme Court decision that is considered one of the pillars of American press freedom.

12/9/2008

Shifting Budget Deficit Numbers

The new [State Budget Update](#) from the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) was posted on December 5th. The interactive mouseover map on the site is interesting, but maybe it is just indicative of state budgets as a moving target, as described in a [Stateline.org](#) article, "[Shifting Economy Keeps States Guessing](#)." Less than a month ago the numbers were smaller but the forecasts still dire, as in the New York Times article, "[Facing Deficits, States Get Out Sharper Knives](#)." That article also included an [interesting interactive map](#), based on statistics from the [Center for Budget and Policy Priorities](#).

Back when the shortfall number was estimated to be (only!) \$2 billion or more, Majority Leader Larry Pogemiller was quoted in the November issue of Stateline Midwest, "[States Brace for Budget Crunch](#)." "It will be quite a challenge. I remember the economic and fiscal conditions in our state in 1981 and '82, and we are hearing this could be of that significance. And that period was much more difficult than 2001."



Let's hope that solutions to the state's budget crisis don't take as long this time. An article by Jim Ragsdale from the Star Tribune on January 11, 1982, began, "More than twenty months after Minnesota felt the first twinges of financial ill health, the people who run the state are still looking for a cure. The disease has worsened as a decline in business activity took its toll. Cures that seemed appropriate a few months ago no longer work."

12/5/2008

Fish Pedicures

It's a day to be depressed about the budget deficit and an impending [invasion of Asian Carp](#). But they won't be the tiny carp used by salons for pedicures. Rebecca Gaspard, Program Administrator for the Minnesota Board of Barber and Cosmetologist Examiners, said that the board ruled at their December meeting that [fish pedicures](#) do not meet the standards required for sanitizing instruments, and prohibits fish pedicures in Minnesota until such time that evidence shows that fish pedicures meet current health and safety standards. If you had no idea this was an issue in any state, here is a short brief written by a legislative analyst in Nevada, [Fish Pedicure Regulation](#).

12/2/2008

Evaluation of State-Supported Pathological Gambling Treatment in Minnesota

Interesting tables and statistics appear in a recent gambling treatment report done for the Department of Human Services by the University of Minnesota. More than half of the 436 clients in the [Evaluation of State-Supported Pathological Gambling Treatment in Minnesota](#) were women, 52.5%. The game of choice for women, by an overwhelming 81%, is slots/video poker. Men are more varied; they split between slots/video poker and cards. Another table compares gambling frequency. The Minnesota Lottery surveyed a sample of 2,010 Minnesota adults in 2007 and found that about 1% of Minnesota adults visited casinos on a weekly or more frequency compared to 71% of gambling treatment clients. The report is very nuanced in its evaluation of outcomes following treatment, but many of the tables describe significant decreases in gambling frequency, depression, and days of conflict with others. E-mail or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the report. *

11/24/2008

The Senate Fiscal Review - Now Online Back to 1975

Looking forward, the current news focus is squarely on the upcoming budget forecast and how legislators will handle a dire shortfall when the Legislature convenes next month. Looking back, policymakers who review the annual budget actions of past legislatures turn to the [Fiscal Review](#) from the [Office of Senate Counsel, Research and Fiscal Analysis](#). The Library recently scanned older editions to add to the existing online archive [back to 1997](#); they are now available on the [Web back to the first edition in 1975](#). The 1980 edition cover shown here shows retiring Senate Majority Leader Nicholas Coleman stressing a point in debate. Senator Coleman initiated the Fiscal Review publication in 1975.

10/31/2008

A New Feature in the Online Minnesota Statutes

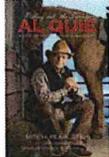
View a section of the online [Minnesota Statutes](#) and you'll notice a new topic search feature. This will be useful in several ways. It can help users find additional relevant statutes. For example, searching for the specific words pedestrian crossings brings up "MS 169.2151, "Pedestrian Safety Crossings." It is certainly a relevant statute, but the topics list links to "Pedestrian Crossings" as a topic, leading to many other statutes dealing with the issue. The new feature will also be helpful when someone does a keyword search with a word that isn't commonly used; for instance, handicapped. One of the few sections in the search results is MS 248.061. The topics list leads the user to "Disabled Persons" which brings up many more sections. This new feature is just one of many designed by programmers in the [Office of the Revisor of Statutes](#) to help users find the information they need, no matter where they begin their searches.

10/28/2008

Minnesota State Government Reorganization and Planning Efforts

Over the years many people have used the Legislative Library to research government reorganization efforts, and our collection of reports, clippings, and other ephemera on the programs keeps growing. We recently pulled together a single binder with references to materials on seventeen different programs. The Minnesota State Government Reorganization and Planning Efforts notebook (see the [table of contents](#)) includes references to reports and a variety of other materials, depending on the program. Many of the reports have been scanned and are available on the Web; for example, Governor Freeman's 1959 message to the Legislature on "[Administrative Efficiency and Governmental Reorganization](#)," and many of the reports about the Minnesota Milestones project ([list of archived reports](#)) and the [Commission on Reform and Efficiency](#) (CORE). Future efforts to streamline and improve state government are inevitable. When they happen, this compilation will help researchers investigate the earnest efforts of the past.

10/22/2008

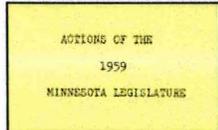
Riding into the Sunrise: Al Quie - A Life of Faith, Service and Civility

Mitch Pearlstein included a [nice acknowledgment](#) to the Legislative Library in his new book, [Riding into the Sunrise: Al Quie - A Life of Faith, Service and Civility](#).

The Library has many books and reports on or by the former governor from his time in office, like [Governor Al Quie's Budget Reduction Proposals](#), his response to a depressing November revenue forecast in 1981. Many of his speeches have been scanned; these include "State of the State" addresses from 1982, 1981, and 1980, and his [Farewell Address](#) in December, 1982 (which Pearlstein discusses in his book).

[E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the book. *

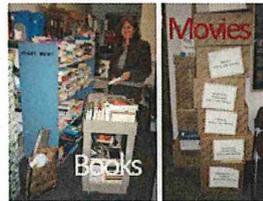
10/21/2008

Actions of the Minnesota Legislature

This summer the Library scanned an important historical set of legislative session summaries, [Actions of the Minnesota Legislature](#), from 1951-1982. It was published first by the Research Department of the Legislative Research Committee, then by House Research, then House Research and Senate Counsel, and in the end by the Revisors Office. They were published every two years until the Legislature began to meet annually beginning in 1973. (Details on this [catalog record](#).) The summaries include an overview of the session, synopses of the laws passed by subject, and tables listing appropriations. They were published within a month or two after each session ended. They must have been invaluable for legislators. Several include the caveat, "Although the report was compiled without benefit of the session laws or the bound permanent journals, the materials contained herein is believed to be accurate." The summaries were published months before printed session

laws were available, which seems remarkable now that legislators and citizens enjoy immediate access to bills and laws that are passed. For current users, even though we can look up all the [session laws](#) back to statehood, these summaries are interesting snapshots of legislative activities for particular years. [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the book. *

10/18/2008

Combined Charities Used Book Sale!

This year the Legislature's Combined Charities Annual Used Book Sale will be held in the Room 181 of the State Office Building on Wednesday, October 22, and Thursday, October 23, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome! ([Directions to the Capitol](#))

All books, videos, DVDs, and music CDs are great deals at a dollar each. The Library is one of the drop-off points for donations, and you can see that Lisa Knoop, our Business Manager, can barely move in her office because of the donations pouring in. One person donated over 600 movies in VHS format (see some of the boxes in the photo).

Come and browse for fiction, suspense novels, romance novels, self-help books, mysteries, biographies, political books, books for children, DVDs, and much more! All proceeds go to the 2008 Combined Charities Campaign.



Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

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1/15/2010

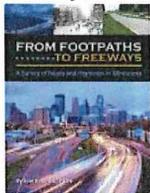
Focus on City Finances



According to a just released Minnesota State Auditor's [report](#), cities are relying more heavily on property tax revenue to fund their services. In the past decade (1999-2008) this revenue grew 102%. The report contains many other interesting facts such as "Over the ten-year period of 1999 to 2008, an examination of city finances shows that when adjusted for inflation, 2008 expenditure levels are below 1999 levels and decreased 7 percent over the ten-year period." [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the report. *

12/14/2009

A History of Roads and Highways in Minnesota



Snow emergencies giving you the winter driving blues? Be thankful for living in the modern era. In 1898, the "mechanization" of Minneapolis snow removal consisted of a draft horse pulled snow plow. A photograph of this horse team is just one of the many photographs included in the new CTS/MnDOT publication: "From Footpaths to Freeways: A Survey of Roads and Highways in Minnesota". This richly illustrated book gives a comprehensive history and overview of Minnesota transportation from the time of Native American footpaths to our modern highway system. [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the report. *

11/24/2009

A State Document Becomes High-Profile



The Legislative Reference Library is the depository library for state documents. We're up to 1104 documents now for 2009. (Examples of [Newly Acquired State Government Reports](#)) Back in May, when we cataloged and digitally archived the 568th document, the *Annual Report of the Metro Gang Strike Force*, we had no idea it would become so high-profile. As related by today's article by Randy Furst in the Star Tribune, "[Library is Pressed to Take Gang Force Report off Web](#)," the library was asked in August to alter and remove the annual report by outside requestors. This month, while researching papers related to the Metro Gang Strike Force, the reporter discovered documentation of a conversation with me, which led him to interview me and write the article.

The *2008 Annual Report of the Metro Gang Strike Force* is still available in the Library's catalog. It is one of [several reports we have on the Metro Gang Strike Force](#). Here is a [broader search](#) for all reports on gang strike forces.

11/19/2009

Management of Minnesota's Natural Resources



Following Norman Borlaug's recent death, Senator Satveer Chaudhary speculated that the next green revolution in Minnesota could be in the area of natural resources management. See the press release: "[Natural resources management reform is the next step](#)." "Are we spending new and old dollars for natural resources wisely? Does our money fund the mission, or the institution? Are state agencies meeting the needs of Minnesotans? And, how much of what we do should be for the long term?"

Current discussion can often be informed by earlier research. These older reports, mandated by the Legislature, are from investigation into the finances and administration of the Department of Natural Resources.

[Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources: Organization and Management Study of the Department of Natural Resources.](#)

Touche Ross, 1986.

- [Management Study of the Regional and Subregional Structure of the Department of Natural Resources.](#) Minnesota Department of Administration, Management Analysis Division, 1984.
- [Report to the Legislature: Recommendations for Consolidation of Administrative, Regional, and Support Functions.](#) Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 1996.

The Library has many other reports on various aspects of natural resource management in the state. Here's a narrow search of our catalog specifically on "[natural resources - Minnesota - management](#)." [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow any of the reports. *

11/16/2009

Football Stadiums and the Minnesota Vikings



Quick! In what year was the Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington demolished? Our newest [Minnesota Issue Guide](#), "[Football Stadiums and the Minnesota Vikings](#)," includes a great timeline, and the answer to that question - 1985. When we are asked about policy topics that have unfolded over decades, our first task is often figuring out when a specific event happened. We think the football guide will prove as useful as our other



sports stadium guides, "Baseball Stadiums," "NHL Hockey in Minnesota and the Xcel Energy Center," "Target Center Arena and the Minnesota Timberwolves," and "Financing Professional Sports Facilities."

11/4/2009

Copper Nickel Studies Take Up a Lot of Shelf Space



The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is [seeking comments](#) on the proposed [Polymet, Inc.](#) open pit copper, nickel, cobalt and precious metals mine in northeastern Minnesota. Here's a good overview story from Minnesota Public Radio on the proposed mine, "[PolyMet Takes Next Steps for Controversial Mine](#)".

We just received a print copy of the three-volume Environmental Impact Statement, [PolyMet Mining Inc./NorthMe Project EIS](#). It seems like an amazing amount of text, but the issues are wide-ranging and important. Sections in volume three, just found by opening to random pages, include "Effects on Groundwater at the Mine Site," "Projected Future Wetland Resources," "Cumulative Mercury Emissions," and "Potential Estimated Human Health Risk from the Plant and Mine Sites." The second volume of the print version is all maps. An interesting - and sobering - one that is pictured above shows "Mercury Impaired Waters in Minnesota" (Fig. 4.5-4 in [this online](#)

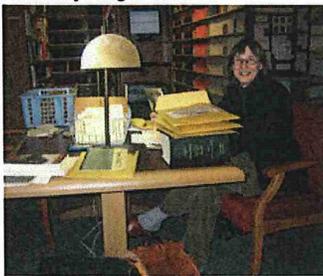
section)

Copper nickel mining in Minnesota has been studied extensively. A search of the Legislative Reference Library catalog for reports relating to copper-nickel mining brings up [210 reports](#). [32 reports](#) relate to the Minnesota Regional Copper-Nickel Study done in the late 1970s by the Environmental Quality Board, and funded by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources.

[E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the report. *

10/26/2009

Not Everything is Online?



We are consumed each day with digital media. Scan it! Put it online! Link it! Put more notebooks on the web! Still, our Library visitors often sit with tables full of print - old clippings, journals, reports, and books. In this case, Susan Damon (pictured) is working with Jay Krienitz on a forthcoming law review article on the origins of the Wild and Scenic River Act. Susan said they were finding many useful clippings.

10/23/2009

Professional/Technical Contracts (P/T Contracts)



Although tracking state professional and technical contracts is not a hot topic in the news this week, it's a good bet that an issue will arise in the future. Ensuring that money is spent wisely by state government for contractors has been a recurring concern of legislators and citizens. The Library has released a new "Resources on Minnesota Issues" guide, [Professional/Technical Contracts \(P/T Contracts\)](#). It lists all of the materials we have received over the years on professional/technical contracts. There are links to materials that are available on the web, including several older reports scanned by the Library. This list won't answer any questions, but will hopefully lead researchers to the information they need.

10/22/2009

Connecting Up



Librarians love to bring together information in useful ways. And all of the people who work on the Legislative Web Site are constantly improving the way our systems work together. Recently the Senate and Revisor's Office made small changes that add interesting links to Library information within the Legislative Web Site. On the Senate site each member page now links to the senator's service in previous sessions as detailed in the Library's [Legislators Past & Present](#) database. As an example, look at [Senator Ellen Anderson's record](#). There is a blue arrow beneath the picture leading to a lot more information on her activities and bills during earlier sessions.

Also, the Revisor's Office recently added links to the Library's collection of scanned veto messages. For example, if you scroll down the list of [2004 laws](#), you will see small pdf icons next to the vetoed laws, linking to veto messages from the governor. Library staff members scanned many messages when preparing the recently revamped "[Bills Vetoed - 1939 to Present](#)"

10/19/2009

Dimes and Quarters



Last week the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library hosted the [2009 Professional Development Seminar](#) for the [Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section](#) of the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#). Our speaker line-up made it a great conference. Read more about it on this [quickly-prepared blog](#). One of the benefits of hosting a seminar with speakers from your own state is hearing new stories and learning new things from people you've known a long time. During the session "[Lobbyists as Information Providers and Information Seekers](#)," Pt

Griffin noted that he has been around since the days when lobbyists lined up at banks of pay phones to keep in touch with their offices and clients. "We carried rolls of quarters," he said. Much later in the presentation Iris Freeman noted, "I just remembered. The phones were only a dime; the quarters were for parking."

10/1/2009

A Brief Berlin Byline



I see the [Minnesota Quadriga](#) most days, but soon I'll see the one atop the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. It's a privilege to be chosen to join the "[Library & Archives Tour of Reunified Germany 2009 for 11 American Colleagues from Parliamentary and Government/Law Libraries, including a Couple of Journalists](#)." The study



tour is funded by the [Checkpoint Charlie Foundation](#). I began a blog to follow the week's activities, [A Brief Ber Byline](#), if you'd like to follow along.

Out of jet lag fear I chose to travel one day ahead of time - a lucky choice! That turns out to be October 3, the [Day of German Unity](#), commemorating the 19th anniversary of German reunification and the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Let's hope the Northwest Airline flights - or Delta, I suppose - arrive on time, so I can see the [giant puppets](#) in the streets.

Robbie LaFleur

9/16/2009

Innovation in Action Award



Another feather in the LRL cap! The Library's [gubernatorial veto database](#) was recognized by the [Minnesota Chapter](#) of the Special Libraries Association with their annual [Innovation in Action Award](#). Betsy Haugen and Mike Schatz accepted the award at a ceremony on September 21.

Betsy spent many hours verifying data on vetoes, adding descriptions for each line item and figuring out how all of the inconsistencies or special situations should be represented. Mike provided the behind-the-scenes programming and table design. Library aides scanned vetoes and messages to add to the database. The result is a great online resource, available to all citizens, that will be useful for years to come. This database is part of an ongoing effort to take important government information out of notebooks and drawers and make it available online. We assume that governors will continue to use their veto pens and people will always want to compare those vetoes to the ones in years past!

8/19/2009

Learn More About Minnesota Statutes, Laws, and Rules



Each year the Office of the Revisor of Statutes sponsors a series of [educational seminars](#). As part of the first [2009 seminar](#), Sheree Speer, a drafting attorney in the Revisor's Office, gave some background on [Minnesota Statutes, Session Laws, and Rules](#) online. Her useful points were based largely on questions that come in to the Revisor's Office. If you missed this talk, or if you joined the many other audience members who arrived after the handouts were gone, [a copy is posted](#). What is the difference between the print and electronic publishing schedules for Minnesota agency rules? Are you aware of statutory notes? What if a law has a delayed or contingent effective date? What happens if a law is amended more than once in a legislative session? Sheree's [handout](#) has the answers.

And here's an answer to a popular question without even going to the handout -- when are the 2009 Statutes expected to be available online? This year, as early as September 15!

8/7/2009

Public Health Is People: A History of the Minnesota Department of Health from 1949 to 1999



The Barr Library at the Minnesota Department of Health has posted an extensive history of the agency, [Public Health Is People: A History of the Minnesota Department of Health from 1949 to 1999](#). It's an important historical reference tool, with details of divisions and department initiatives. But given the drama of human health, it's a wonderful story as well. Dipping into [Chapter 5](#), I learned that while the department didn't really take a public stand against smoking until the release of the Surgeon General's report in 1964, it responded within three days with a strongly worded resolution. Even so,

"Public support for no-smoking initiatives was not strong. A December 1963 poll conducted by the Minneapolis Star and Tribune found that 69 percent of the people believed cigarette smoking "had proved to be a health hazard." Half of the people interviewed did not want a national campaign to discourage people from smoking. Their objections were based on the grounds that "the individual should decide for himself whether he will smoke.""

Also from the chapter: "A 1966 survey discovered that 37 percent of the ambulance attendants in the state did not even have basic first aid training." We certainly depend on ambulance attendants to be skilled now! Finally, there has been a lot of attention this year on the transmission of disease between animals and humans. It was a concern in the 1950s and 1960s too. There is a cringe-worthy story in the [Chapter 5](#) section "Public Health Challenges: Animal-to-Human Diseases".

The great image, "Three Women Smoking," from the Minnesota Historical Society, is from their [Visual Resources Database](#).

8/3/2009

Photos of Long-Ago Legislators



Over time we are adding photos to as many records as possible in our [Legislators Past & Present](#) database. That's easy for the recent past, with digital photos from the House and Senate photographers, but more difficult for earlier years. Thanks to three separate grants from the [Minnesota Digital Library](#) (MDL) over the past few years, we have added scanned images from the Legislative Manuals for members from [1913](#), [1923](#), [1949](#), [1969](#), [1973](#), and [1981](#). In addition to our database, the portraits are available from the Minnesota Digital Library. So far in 2009 they have had 213,200 hits! The portraits link users to biographical information from our database. It's been a great partnership. At left is a photo of Victor Johnson, who served in 1913. He was one of four Johnsons during that [session](#); one of the 90 Johnsons who have ever served.

***Available to legislators and legislative staff only. Please contact the library if you would like copies of any of these reports, or further research on this or any topic.**

Previous alerts

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2/7/2011

A New Library Database: Executive Branch Reorganization Orders



The Library has added a new database to our set of "[Historical Information About Minnesota State Government](#)," [Executive Branch Reorganization Orders](#). These are sometimes referred to as [Governors Reorganization Orders](#).

Since executive branch reorganization authority was established in 1969, (Laws of Minnesota 1969, [Chapter 1129](#), Article IX) there have been 196 orders. Under the authority of Minnesota Statutes [16B.37](#) the Commissioner of the Department of Administration is authorized to transfer personnel, powers, or duties from a state

agency to another state agency. The very first order, effective July 1, 1970, transferred the employees, functions, and appropriations from the Track and Hopper Scale unit of the Grain Inspection Division to the Division of Weights and Measures.

Some reorganization orders deal with large transfers of agency powers, as when the Office of Strategic and Long-Range Planning was abolished, and its powers transferred to the Department of Administration. ([#188](#), 2003) Other orders are modest in scale. The most recent one transferred firewood labeling authority from the Department of Commerce to the Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources. ([#196](#), 2010)

Details on reorganization authority are outlined in a House Research Department *Information Brief*, "[Executive Branch Transfer Authority](#)."

2/3/2011

Selling Liquor on Sunday



Joe Kimball's February 2 article in MINNPOST, "[Bill Calls for End of Ban on Sunday Liquor Sales](#)," described the most recent bill to allow off-sale liquor sales on Sundays in MN in purely economic terms. ([Senate file 197](#)) Since Sunday-sales laws (blue laws) have been an issue during my whole tenure at the Legislative Library, and even before the Library began more than forty years ago, I couldn't resist looking back at some of the older clippings in the library's files. I remembered articles claiming that Sunday sales of liquor or even department stores items would destroy family life and the sanctity of the Sabbath.

Our files included a [set of articles from 1967](#), the year that the Legislature allowed communities to sell licenses for restaurants to sell liquor on Sundays, if approved by voters in a local referendum (Laws of Minnesota 1967, [Chapter 691](#)).

In the same year the Legislature also passed [Chapter 165](#). It restricted Sunday sales of a wide range of retail goods including paint, varnish, wallpaper, and hardware! That would put a crimp in weekend home improvement projects. That law was found unconstitutional and repealed in a Revisors bill in 1971. In 1974 the issue came up again, but not for moral or religious reasons. State Representative Bruce Vento proposed a bill that would close retail stores on Sundays and allow them to remain open only five hours per week beyond regular daytime hours in order to address the energy crisis. The *Catholic Bulletin* published a strongly supportive editorial, urging the Legislature to revise the Sunday closing laws.

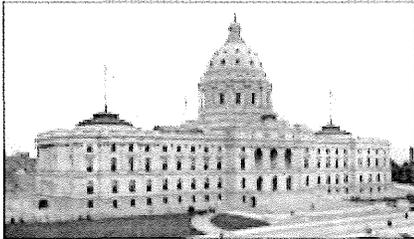
The blue law clipping files were not as large as I thought they would be. They included fewer articles in total about Minnesota than about North Dakota, which did not repeal its 100-year-old general Sunday closing law until 1991. Even the *New York Times* noted the repeal. "For North Dakota Shoppers, No More Minnesota Sundays" talked about the fiscal impact on Minnesota border towns, which had benefited from border-hopping Sunday shoppers. "David Gerszewski said that Sundays at his pawn shop and variety store in East Grand Forks, Minn., just across the Red River from Grand Forks, N.D., used to be his busiest days. But last Sunday, he said, "It's been kind of dead. It was just like a weekday today.""

This [set of a few interesting articles](#) from the Library's files doesn't even address one ongoing contentious Sunday issue - car sales. But when that issue comes up again, we have plenty of background.

Robbie LaFleur

1/24/2011

Capitol Security Reports Have Been Issued Several Times



Gov. Dayton and legislators will be meeting in a newly-formed committee about security at the Capitol. It's interesting to reflect that this is not a new issue. Here are several reports scanned from the Library's collection that preceded the frequently-cited program evaluation, [Capitol Complex Security](#), from the Office of the Legislative Auditor. ([2010 Update](#))

[A Report on Security in the Capitol Complex and at the Governor's Residence](#), February 1973. It was issued by the Ad Hoc Security Committee, which was formed and appointed by the Commissioner of Administration, Richard L. Brubacher.

[Laws of Minnesota 1981](#), Chapter 357, Section 3, required, "The Commissioner shall submit to the legislature by January 1, 1982, a plan for coordinating capitol and mansion security activities." The [Capitol Security Report](#) was done in January 1982 by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

In February 1990 a joint effort by the Department of Administration and the Department of Public Safety resulted in the [Report of the Interagency Security Task Force](#), published in April 1990. Governor Perpich responded to increasing crime in the areas surrounding state buildings by creating the interagency task force to address security issues in the Capitol Complex and at the state's major leased facilities.

As a result of [Laws of Minnesota 1999](#), [Chapter 250](#), Article 1, Section 12, the Department of Administration published [Security Improvements Capitol Complex](#) in January 2000. From the Executive Summary: "The 1999 Legislature appropriated \$520,000 to rebuild and upgrade electronic security systems in the Capitol Complex. This report outlines the types of security systems in use on the Capitol Complex, the history of how security system improvements have been undertaken, funding sources committed to the upgrade, and Plant Management's current status on security system upgrades."

Another 1999 law required a security report. [Laws of Minnesota 1999](#), [Chapter 216](#), Article 5, Section 13 resulted in [Capitol Complex Security Study: Executive Summary](#), January 14, 2000. It was prepared for the Legislature by Superintendent Nicholas V. O'Hara, Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

An ongoing group, the Capitol Complex Security Oversight Committee, was mandated by [Laws of Minnesota 2000](#), [Chapter 488](#), Article 6, Section 8. The [2001 Report of the Capitol Complex Security Oversight Committee](#), from the Office of the Chief, Minnesota State Patrol, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, was the only one received by the Library. The report meeting minutes and attachments, summarize the work of the committee during 2001.

1/20/2011

Constitutional Amendments: What Passed in the Past?

The Library has published an enhanced list of [State Constitutional Amendments Considered](#), with links to the original ballot language. The list can be sorted by year, and by whether the amendments were accepted or rejected. Librarians can provide additional background on any of the proposed amendments, enacted or not.

1/18/2011

More Ways to Keep Up: New Library RSS Feeds

Governor Dayton issued his [third executive order](#) on Friday, January 14, assigning emergency responsibilities to state agencies.

The Library tracks executive orders and adds them to [Minnesota Executive Orders, 1968-](#), a database covering orders back to Governor Levander's administration. For those who track executive orders on a regular basis, we've added an [RSS feed](#) of alerts to new orders. We receive a copy of each order within hours of issuance, so the time lag should be short.

We also added an [RSS feed](#) for the Library's collection of SONARs, [Statements of Need and Reasonableness](#). During the agency rulemaking process a SONAR is often required (Minn. Statute [14.131](#)) to provide background on the proposed rule for decision makers and citizens. For example, the most recent SONAR we received is by Minnesota Management & Budget (MMB), "[M.S. 14.131 Review of Proposed Rules 1515 Governing Wolf Predation of Livestock](#)." MMB was asked to address the fiscal impact of Department of Agriculture rules governing the process of compensating livestock producers for losses due to gray wolf predation.

SONARs are available via the websites of many agencies, but the [Library's electronic SONAR archive](#) is an agency-wide collection. It ensures that the documents are widely accessible via the Web and will be available for future researchers. The archive dates back to 2006.

Both databases are listed on the Library's page, [Historical Information about Minnesota State Government](#). A list of all the Library's RSS feeds are found on [Legislative Library RSS Feeds](#) page. Here's a list of all of the [Legislative Electronic Notification Services](#).

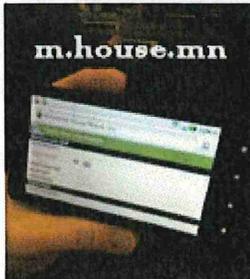
1/11/2011

Information on Earlier Special Elections

Representative Tony Sertich was appointed as the Commissioner of [Iron Range Resources](#), and will resign his House seat on Thursday, January 13. A special primary will be held on February 1, and the special election will be held Feb. 15.

Two Library resources give information on previous special elections. "[Results of Special Elections for the Minnesota Legislature, 1971-present](#)" is a table on the Library's [Historical Information about the Minnesota Legislature](#) page. Also, one of the "Other searches" on the main page of the [Legislators Past & Present](#) database allows you to search for special sessions. The [resulting list of special elections](#) can be sorted by name, date, or body.

1/5/2011

The Legislature Makes A Move Towards M-government

The newly-coded [mobile version of the Legislature's main page](#) had a soft, almost secret, release last week on December 28 - but word got out. Enthusiastic tweets followed. Already there have been 863 page views of the Legislature's home page on mobile devices. To put that in perspective, that's about 6% of the total views for that page. It will be interesting to see how the percentage grows as people depend more on their mobile devices.

An article in *American City and County*, "[The New Public Square](#)," talks about the increasing use of smartphones to access government services, which they term "m-government."

"Mobile device penetration has grown from 5 percent globally in 1998 to 55 percent 2008. It is predicted that by 2018 the penetration rate will be as high as 96 percent."

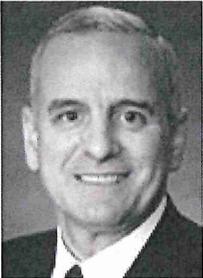
The Minnesota Legislature is on its way to join the m-government movement. The [Legislature's main page](#) and the

[combined schedules](#) are up. In the House, the [main page](#) has a mobile version. Many of the House pages people rely on for quick information have also been converted - sort of a mobile "red book," including member pages, *Session Daily* articles, and committee pages.

Do you have comments about mobile pages or a wish list for those that should be converted? [Send comments](#).

1/4/2011

Waiting for Governor Dayton's First Executive Order



An election, a new year, and a new session require many web page updates. If there is outdated information on our website, we hope that alert readers will point it out.

We just added Governor Mark Dayton to our [Executive Orders](#) database. His photo is in the gallery of governors whose orders are included. Gov. Dayton is expected to sign his first executive order tomorrow, moving Minnesota to a Medicaid expansion program. We're ready! (Update, 1/4/2011: The first two executive orders are up.)

Governor Dayton will post his orders on the Governor's website, of course, but the Library's [database](#) is the place to search for similar orders of the past as well.

1/3/2011

The Oldest Inaugural Address We Have Scanned (Samuel Medary)



Territorial newspaper writers could hold their own with the meanest bloggers of today.

A researcher recently forwarded [some articles](#) to us to verify an election date. (We are working on a list of election dates back to territorial times.) The screaming headlines show that post-election controversy is nothing new in Minnesota. From the Daily Minnesotan, December 18, 1857: "**The Rascality Consummated! FORGERY AND VILLAINY ENDORSED BY THE BOARD OF CANVASSERS! THE WILL OF THE PEOPLES DEFEATED BY THE SCOUNDRALISM OF SAM MEDARY AND JO. BROWN!**"

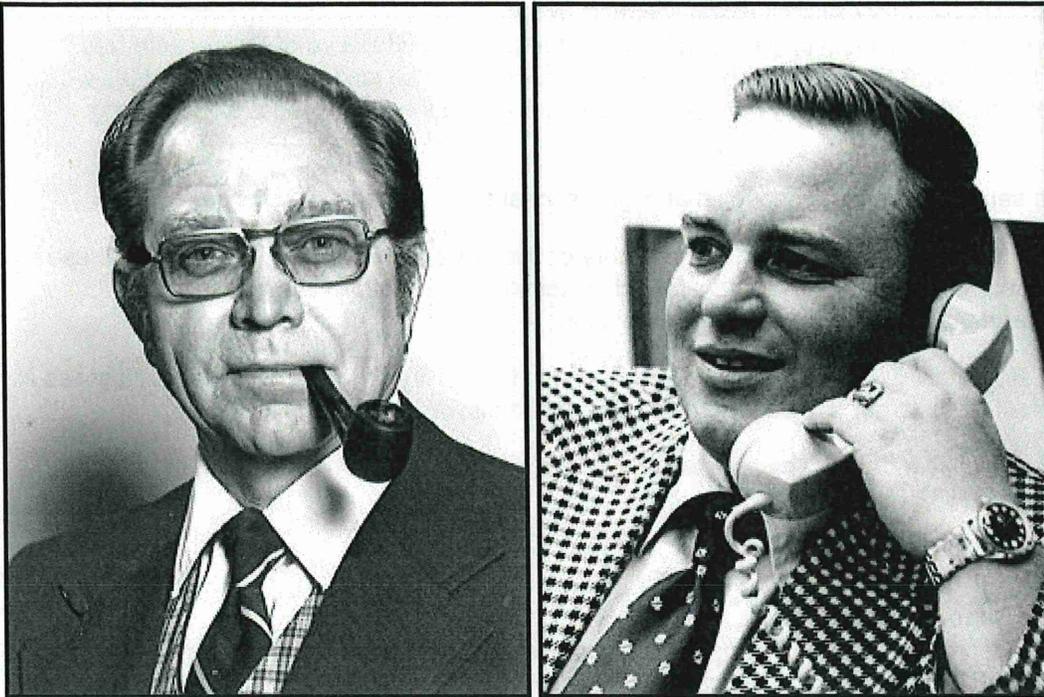
The writer didn't think much of Territorial Governor [Samuel Medary's](#) recently delivered message to the Legislature, questioning his authority to deliver it to "a body with which he has no more right to communicate than has James Buchanan - and the Democratic members, like a set of blundering asses or willing accomplices in usurpation and wrong-doing, even invited him to do so, and then insulted the people of the State by ordering one thousand copies of the document printed at the expense of the future state.

"The Douglas democrats may prate and howl about the newly discovered wrongs of Kansas; but we tell them there are just as unscrupulous, defiant, dare-devil politicians in our Capitol at St. Paul, as border ruffianism in Kansas can produce. But there is a day of political judgment coming, when the virtuous people will say to these men - 'depart from me, you accursed villains!'"

You can read [the inaugural address](#) that inspired such passion. You can read many more, too, linked from the Library's guide, "[Gubernatorial Addresses to the Minnesota Legislature: "State of the State" and Inaugural Addresses, 1857-present.](#)"

12/29/2010

Happy New Year! Unlikely Current Legislative Photo Poses



Over the years we've been adding photos to legislator records in our [Legislators Past & Present](#) database. Here are a couple of senator photos from the 1970s, culled from long-ignored drawers in the office of David Oakes, the Senate Photographer. There were several photos that fit into the category of "Unlikely Official Legislative Photo Shots for 2011." The unlabeled photo of the senator with a pipe is probably [Senator Roger Laufenburger](#). The other is [Senator Doug Johnson](#). With all the work being done lately with communication via mobile devices and smart phones, it's amusing to see the almost antique telephone - you wonder whether it had a rotary dial, too.

And speaking of communication via smartphones, check out the brand new [legislative main page for mobile devices!](#) (It looks great on a phone, but garish on a standard computer screen.)

12/17/2010

New Lists of Legislative Contested Elections, Including Recounts



Over the interim we started a long-term project to organize and eventually scan the materials in our loosely-organized collection of Session Notebooks. Since the Library began in 1969, we've kept steadily-growing files on each legislative session in loose-leaf binders. The notebooks have been invaluable to researchers. Materials include member lists, news clips, articles on events of a particular session, chapters of books, session summaries by interest groups or state agencies, and more.

As one of our first organization steps we pulled out all of the materials dealing with elections and compiled another set of notebooks. The election notebooks include rosters of candidates, voter guides, overviews, journal articles, and news clippings. The materials focus primarily on legislative races.

The notebooks included information on many contested elections, including recounts, that we used to augment legislator records in our [Legislators Past & Present](#) database. We added new searches for [contested elections](#) and [recounts](#) in the database. The resulting lists are not definitive. They are not complete! However, the lists are extensive and interesting, and as we can spare the time of our Aides, we will add to the lists with further research in the historical House and Senate *Journals*.

12/16/2010

An Inauguration A Century Ago



Governor-elect Mark Dayton will deliver his inaugural address soon. A century ago,



Swedish-born Governor Adolph Olson Eberhart delivered his speech to a different sort of membership, addressing only the "Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives." ([text of the speech](#)) Mark Dayton probably won't speak quite so long. Today's audiences would be fidgety and the journalists' Twitter-fingers would be tired if he delivered a 52-page long speech.

Here's a sentiment from the speech that might resonate with a modern audience.

"I believe that the time has arrived in the history of this state, when the public good, or, to use the language of the constitution, when "the security, benefit and protection of the people" demand a radical modification and reform in certain phases of our state administration."

But the following surprising statement won't be delivered! "At no time in the history of the state were the finances in better condition. The revenue fund is larger by nearly a million dollars than it was a year ago."

You can research many inaugural speeches of the past with links from the Library's compilation of "[State of the State and Inaugural Addresses, 1857-Present.](#)"

12/14/2010

Tom Berg and Martin Olav Sabo Visit the Library



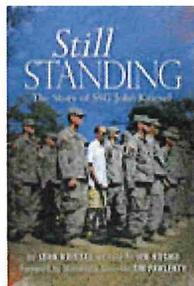
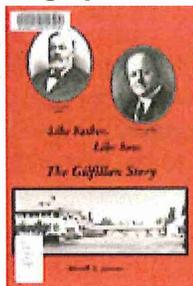
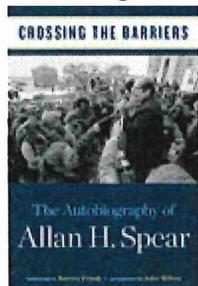
Former Representative Tom Berg has been writing a book about the Minnesota Legislature from about 1968-1978. Its working title, *Forming A More Perfect Union*, describes Minnesota during that era as a model of federalism, a state seeking an effective balance among local, state, and federal levels of government. For three years the book has been guided by a group of colleagues from that time, including former Speaker of the House (and long-time member of Congress) Martin Olav Sabo, former Representatives Ray Faricy and Bill Kelly, and Jim Pederson. The book may not be out for a year or more, but after it's released, watch for a reading at the Legislative Reference Library!

Representative Berg has been very appreciative of the resources he has been able to find at the Legislative Reference Library and of the help he has received from staff members during his research. Today he supplied us with wonderful baked goods and coffee, and the treat of hearing many stories about his research for the book. He brought along Martin Sabo, and they told stories of their tenure in office, both serious comments and funny anecdotes. Martin talked about when he started, in 1961. No computers, no staff, no desks other than their desks on the floor. House Research started in the mid-1960s with one employee. By 1970, when Tom Berg was in office, the members had desks in a bullpen in an alcove near the cafeteria in the Capitol. Tom thought that was completely inadequate - Martin quipped that it seemed pretty luxurious to him at the time!

Tom Olmscheid was invited up for treats too; he supplied many great photos for the book. Tom noted that he started work as a House page during Martin Sabo's tenure as Speaker, and was assigned the task of emptying Martin's ashtray on the Speaker's podium. Tom also noted that one photo he never captured - and now will never be able to capture - was of the dome of the rotunda, on the evening of a last long day of session, filled with cigarette smoke.

12/10/2010

Three Legislator Biographies



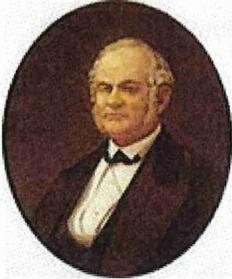
We routinely acquire books by and about legislators. In the last few weeks we added three biographies, two about former legislators, and one about a legislator yet to assume office. A substantial part of *Crossing the Barriers: The Autobiography of Allan H. Spear* deals with his service in the Minnesota Senate. A slim book describes the life of Charles O. Gilfillan, a long-ago Ramsey County legislator. *Like Father, Like Son: The Gilfillan Story*, from the Ramsey County Historical Society, showed up in a stack of donated books.

The challenges of the upcoming legislative session are substantial, but maybe they pale in contrast to the personal challenges recently faced by Rep.-elect John Kriesel. Still Standing describes his service in Iraq and recovery from life-threatening injuries.

As we learn of legislators as authors or as the subjects of biographies, we add that information to their records in the Legislators Past & Present database. If you discover any we've missed, please let us know! E-mail or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow any of the books. *

12/9/2010

Age of Minnesota Governors on Their First Day in Office

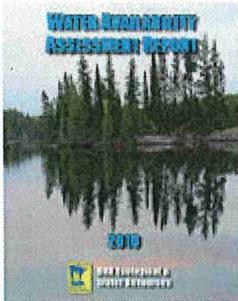


A reporter from the Star Tribune asked whether Mark Dayton was the oldest person to be elected governor. Yes, as he then reported in "Dayton: The Oldest and Newest Governor-elect."

When Eric Roper called, it was a surprise to discover we had a nice chart compiled already, "Age of Minnesota Governors on Their First Day in Office." We must have been asked the same question back in 1992 when Tim Pawlenty was elected. Our governor notebook had another interesting document, Gubernatorial Trivia. Everyone remembers that Jesse Ventura was our first Reform/Independence Party governor, but did you remember that Alexander Ramsey was a Whig?

11/30/2010

Great Graphics in a New State Document



Looking at state agency reports over time, you can see that government documents have followed the general publishing trend towards more color-filled, graphic presentation of statistics. An interesting recent document by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Ecological and Water Resources Division, the Water Availability Assessment Report, is filled with charts and maps. Spikes on a timeline show floods, colors on maps describe precipitation levels. In the "Minnesota Water use by Category" table it is easy to see that power generation uses much more water than public supply. A lot of information is pulled together in a way that few readers would absorb in words alone. As an interesting contrast, see the tables on the same subject from the 1994 Assessment of Water use and Ground Water Availability report.

11/29/2010

State Constitutional Amendments Considered



In the Library we take every opportunity to pull together online legislative information that was previously scattered. Using a table originally created by the Secretary of State, we have posted a revamped and updated list of all State Constitutional Amendments Considered. You can sort by date or whether they were accepted or rejected. Now that the all of the historical session laws are online, thanks to work by the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, we added links to the proposed language of each amendment.

The new table is linked from the several pages, including the Legislature's Statutes, Laws, and Rules page.

The 1964 image at left is of Representative Donald Fraser and Minnesota Attorney General Walter Mondale in front of a display supporting the passage of an amendment to the Minnesota state constitution intended to revitalize the taconite industry. You can learn from the amendment list that it was adopted by the voters. The photograph is from the Minnesota Historical Society's Visual Resources Database

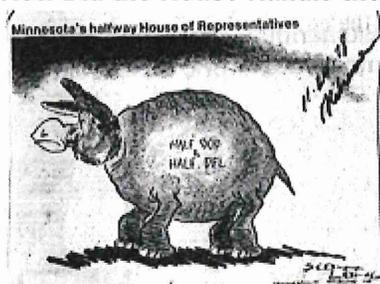
11/19/2010

New Leadership All Around

We recently compiled a [chart of legislative leaders](#), along with governors, to show how unusual it is to have new people in all the positions at one time. Historically, it's not so easy to draw direct comparisons between the House and Senate. While the Speaker of the House has always held the most powerful and influential leadership position in the House, influence and power among Senators has resided in different positions. For background, read the 1992 *Session Weekly* article, "[Politics Kindle Differences in Leader Positions](#)."

The photograph from the Minnesota Historical Society is of Speaker of the House [George W. Johnson](#) in 1936.

11/15/2010

How Did the House Handle the 67-67 Tie After the 1978 Election?

In the 1978 legislative election Republicans picked up 32 seats in the Minnesota House, creating a 67-67 tie and a leadership conundrum. "[How about some statesmanship?](#)" read a *Minneapolis Star* editorial about how the situation should be handled. The Library's legislative session notebooks for 1978 include many news articles about the situation and its resolution.

Recently we discovered some interesting documents related to the tied situation. We scanned them to add to the collection and make them available digitally; see [Materials Relating to the Organization of the 1979 Minnesota House of Representatives](#). The collection includes background materials and verbatim

transcripts of negotiating sessions as the House DFL and IR Caucus leaders negotiated the selection of the Speaker and committee chairs, composition of committees, and overall responsibilities for House duties and operations.

We are frequently asked for legislative hearing transcripts, which generally do not exist. That makes these documents remarkable just for their existence!

11/9/2010

Changes in Committee Structure Over Time

We were asked for a document comparing legislative committee structures over time, so we created two lists. One compilation shows the [House Committee Structures From 1989-2010](#), and one shows the [Senate Committee Structures From 1989-2010](#). The lists were drawn from the Library's [Legislators Past & Present](#) database. The database includes a "Committee Members and Chairs" search, which allows you to search for committees by key word for an individual year or range of years.

Access to the [Legislators Past & Present](#) database is as good as the stack of red books!

11/2/2010

Book Sale Success

The Seventh Annual Legislative Used Book Sale to benefit the Combined Charities campaign was a great success again this year. We earned \$2,125, just shy of our largest total two years ago, \$2,300. Thank you to the staff from legislative offices who helped, to all the people who donated books, and to everyone who visited the sale and now has winter reading materials at hand!



11/1/2010

Women's Legislative History Timeline Project



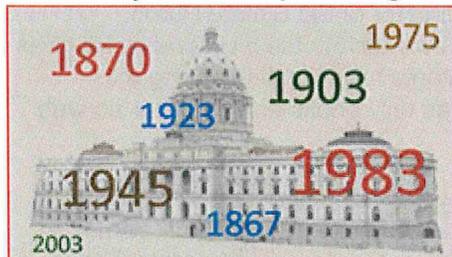
The Legislative Reference Library is pleased to be working with the Office on the Economic Status of Women (OESW) on a new endeavor, the "Women's Legislative Timeline Project," funded by an Arts and Cultural Heritage grant. The timeline will cover about 25 - 35 significant pieces of legislation affecting women passed in the past 90 years. The descriptions will be housed online and will include links to laws and statutes, accompanying news articles, profiles of bill authors, and other key pieces of information about laws passed. Library staff will be primarily involved in the programming and online presentation and linking to other legislative information.

The project will benefit from the memory banks and reflections of many people. If you have ideas about which pieces of legislation should be included, please let us know. You can fill out a very quick [online survey](#), which will be up through the month of November, or contact Amy Brenengan with the OESW at 651-296-8590 (long voice mail messages are fine) or at amy.brenengan@oesw.leg.mn.

The image at left is from the Minnesota Historical Society's [Visual Resources database](#), a photo of [League of Women Voters](#) swearing in new members or registering women to vote.

10/14/2010

The Library's Time Capsule Pages Win a Notable Document Award



Each year the [Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section](#) of the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) recognizes great documents and web resources nominated from across the states. This year three of the eight resources recommended from Minnesota for the [Notable Documents Award](#) were winners.

The Legislative Reference Library's [Time Capsule](#) pages, pulling together statistics and information on each legislative session back to territorial times, won in the "Notable Online Resource" category. The notification

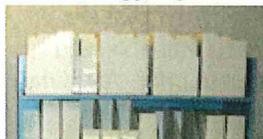
letter said, "The judges thought the site was really impressive and we noted we would all like to do the same!"

The title of this report from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is daunting, but the content is clear and well-presented. About [Contamination of Stormwater Pond Sediments by Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons \(PAHs\) in Minnesota: The Role of Coal Tar-based Sealcoat Products as a Source of PAHs](#), the judges wrote, "We commend your publication as innovative in providing substantive information on contemporary issues of interest to legislatures. The judges particularly liked the use of color in the report as well as the executive summary."

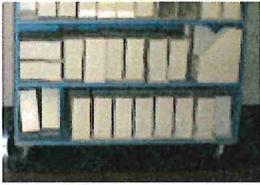
The third Minnesota award winner was [The Public Health Impacts of Wind Turbines](#) prepared by the Minnesota Department of Health Environmental Health Division. Again the judges praised the report as providing substantive information on a legislative issue, adding, "The judges particularly liked the use of graphics in the document as well as the tangible recommendations presented."

10/1/2010

Technology Leads to Recycling



These plastic magazine boxes can be yours! Many of them! It is our annual clean-up day at the Legislative Library, and we decided to deal with the dozens of extra magazine boxes piling up in our crawl space. Over the past decade our still-valuable collection of print periodicals has greatly shrunk in size. Some journals have ceased. Others are online only.



We choose to rely on electronic subscriptions for others. The boxes piled up. As we pulled them out to give away, our Business Manager, who won't waste one dime, looked skeptical. "Are you sure? I don't want to have to buy any of these in the future." No problem, we assured her, there are dozens stashed away.

Please come and take as many as you like! They are in the area by the elevator on the sixth floor of the State Office Building, outside the Library. Organize your home collection. Maybe you need them in the garage? Or you know an organization or church that could use them? There are three different styles and they will require some elbow grease to take off the old labels.

WOW. They all disappeared within the afternoon.

9/27/2010

Special Sessions Called for Flood Relief



Governor Pawlenty is calling a special session to deal with flood relief. There have been three special sessions called for that reason in recent times; in 1997, 2002, and 2007. ([list of special sessions](#)) Here are several laws passed in recent years dealing with flood relief (it may not be comprehensive): [Chapter 289, 2008](#); [Chapter 2, First Special Session, 2007](#); [Chapter 122, 2007](#); [Chapter 1, First Special Session, 2002](#); [Chapter 20, 2005](#); [Chapter 2, Second Special Session, 1997](#).

9/22/2010

Senate Interns - An Amazing Number When You Count Them Up!

SENATE INTERN APPLICATION

One of the sure signs of fall, election season or not, is a call from Scott Magnuson, Director of the Senate Public Information Office. Could we update the bibliography he gives to prospective Senate interns? We've been editing the

document, [Background Readings on the Legislature](#), since the days when it was only books and articles - no web links.

Scott has been managing the [intern program](#) since 1981(!), and John Trombley has been assisting since 1999. Scott estimates that he has managed about 1800 interns for the Senate. There are many distinguished alumni, including at least one hundred current or former Senate and House staff members. Here's a [list of well-known interns](#) sent by the Senate Information Office, with the caveat that it is only partial and it hasn't been updated for several years.

9/21/2010

Summer Projects In the Virtual World and the Physical World



This summer Library staff members worked on several digital development projects. It's our mantra - "Get it online!" In the Library, it's safe to say we are *always* working on new digital development projects. (Watch for an announcement soon about historical election results online.)

But our laser focus on the Web left us blind to some needed *physical* space updating. One day we looked at our collection of print journals and magazines. Online subscriptions have become an important component of our collection, but we still maintain a valuable and appreciated print collection. The boxes looked horrible, covered in layers of labels with tiny, illegible print. And why were some shelves so crowded? How could we not have noticed this? Work was in order. We weeded many

older, un-needed, issues of journals and designed a new label for the boxes.

A Boy Scout to the Rescue

Fortuitously, Ian McCormack, son of House Research Director Patrick McCormack, was in need of a Boy Scout service project in a library. Ian spent several hours in the Legislative Library last month. He diligently set to work on the shabby, label-covered boxes, scraping them to a pristine condition. He gave us just the jump-start we needed to get the project going. Thanks, Ian!

9/15/2010

Annual Legislative Used Book Sale for Combined Charities



Mark your calendars now for the annual Legislative Used Book Sale for Combined Charities. It will be held on October 27 & 28, 2010, in Room 181 of the State Office Building (the press room).

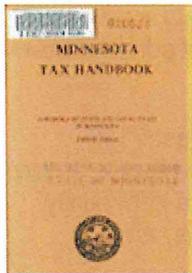
For now, we want your donations of used books, DVD or VHS movies, audiobooks, music CD's, and - new this year, puzzles. The picture at left shows Lisa Knoop, one of the organizers, with carts of books last year in her Library office. Let's fill up Lisa's office again this year! The result will be a great used book shopping experience and a generous donation to the Combined Charities Campaign.

You may drop off your items at any of these locations:
 Legislative Reference Library (645 State Office Building)
 Chief Clerk's Office (Room 211, Capitol)
 House Supply (Room G35, State Office Building)

This is an excellent way to get a tax deduction. Receipts for your donations will be available upon request. Please bring in your donations by Monday, October 25. Questions? Contact [Lisa Knoop](#).

9/14/2010

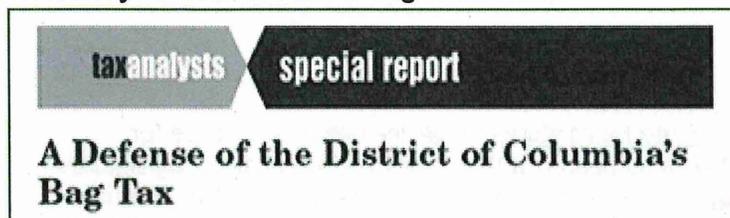
The Minnesota Tax Handbook - Online Back to 1981



Over time we are scanning back runs of important state publications. We just finished digitizing the *Minnesota Tax Handbook* from the Department of Revenue back to 1981. The 2000-2009 editions are also available on the Department of Revenue website. Each edition starts with a section on individual income taxes. Taxpayers might be startled if they picked up the 1981 edition by mistake, and read that the individual income tax rate for people making \$32,890 and over was 16%!

9/13/2010

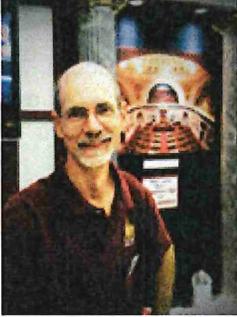
States Try to Control Plastic Bag Proliferation



This month's issue of the Library's Just In: New and Notable Books & Reports begins with an essay about taxing plastic checkout bags. Note especially the article from State Tax Notes, "A Defense of the District of Columbia's Bag Tax." (July 5, 2010). In the article, Nathan Page discusses sin taxes and tax policy more broadly. He analyzes how the District of Columbia bag tax

deals with the issues of tax transparency and minimizing regressivity. It's interesting background since the current fiscal crisis will likely prompt conversation about taxing additional goods and services. Special thanks goes to Tax Analysts, publishers of *State Tax Notes*, for permission to post the full text of the article.

9/8/2010

Fun at the State Fair

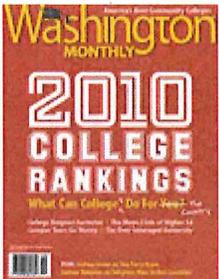
A few Library staff members volunteer each year to work at legislative State Fair booths. This year Jess Hopeman, Betsy Haugen, and Paul VanCura took shifts at the House of Representatives booth; I helped at the Senate booth. Scott Magnuson, Director of the Senate Information Office, is pictured here.

Both booths feature opinion polls; the results of the the House and Senate polls were posted the day after the Fair closed. Even though there are contentious political races underway and constant articles about angry voters, I was surprised at the relative lack of angry people, compared to previous years at the booth. As soon as the Education Building opened its doors on Sunday a steady stream of thoughtful people grabbed the clipboards and earnestly answered the poll questions. There were a few people ready to scrap. One woman became nearly apoplectic at the question about whether commercial dog and cat breeders should be licensed. "No!" she commented to me. "Pretty soon that Legislature will be telling us how to take a" Interestingly, 79% of the other people filling out the poll disagreed with her! The Senate booth features a pad of gold paper on which Fairgoers can leave messages for their senators, or all senators. A couple strode up together and asked for notepads. One wrote, "Listen to the voters!" and the other, "Stop trying to legislate everything!"

It's fun to work with the legislators who volunteer at the booth. Sen. Ken Kelash was at the booth during my shift this year. He was very outgoing and responsive to the many people who came up to find a legislator's ear to bend, and stayed longer than he was scheduled. I said it was so nice he came back. "I like to talk!" he explained, although he spent much more time listening.

Robbie LaFleur

8/30/2010

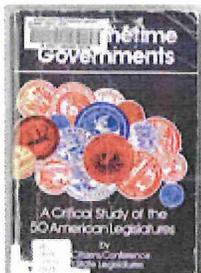
Minnesota Schools in the Washington Monthly College Guide

The newly arrived "College Guide" issue of the *Washington Monthly* features Minnesota colleges in several articles and rankings. "The Mayo Clinic of Higher Ed" is a detailed, glowing description of the undergraduate program beginning at the University of Minnesota Rochester. It praises the structured initial curriculum, the personalized learning, and the lean administrative structure.

St. Paul College, just up the street from the Minnesota Capitol, tops the list of best 2010 Community Colleges, and is featured in "Shakespeare with Power Tools: How a Humble Trade School Became the Best Community College in America." Three other Minnesota community colleges are in the top ten: Itasca Community College, Leech Lake Tribal College, and Alexandria Technical College.

The highest ranked Minnesota institution on the Liberal Arts Colleges list is Carleton, at 12. On the National Universities list, the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, comes in at 43. For Master's Universities, Hamline ranks fourth. Happily, no Minnesota institutions were noted in their list of schools with the worst failure rates, the 2010 Dropout Factories.

7/30/2010

Old Advice and New Advice for Legislatures

An article in the July/August issue of State Legislatures magazine describes advice for legislative improvements from the 1970s compared with advice for strengthening legislatures today. "What Legislatures Need Now" starts with a description of the influential 1973 study, *Sometime Governments: A Critical Study of 50 State Legislatures*, by the Citizens Conference on State Legislatures. It was a call to action for legislative reform in many states. Our copy of the small, yellowing paperback book has been borrowed from the Library many times over the years. Here are the specific recommendations for Minnesota, and another separate report from the Citizens Conference in 1974, "How Citizens Can Improve the Minnesota Legislature."



Many of the changes suggested in *Sometime Legislatures* have been made, but new challenges have emerged. The *State Legislatures* article lists many ailments facing contemporary state legislatures, taken from Alan Rosenthal's 2009 book, *Engines of Democracy: Politics and Policy in State Legislatures*. They include excessive partisanship, excessive public mistrust, and a lack of attention to the legislature as an institution. [E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow either of these books. *

7/26/2010

Does the End of Session Cause High Blood Pressure?



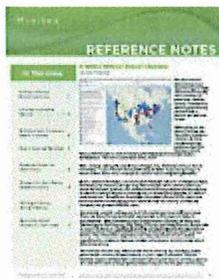
The Library has several projects underway to scan documents in our legislative files and historical notebooks. It's part of our long-term goal of making as much information as possible about the Minnesota Legislature and legislative issues over time available to everyone, everywhere, online.

We found an [amusing letter](#) from 1973 tucked in the "Legislative Profiles" notebook. Commissioner of Health Warren R. Lawson, M.D. wrote to Senator William Kirchner, "You will recall that during the closing days of the 1973 session, nurses of the Department of Health took the blood pressure of as many legislators as could be cornered." I picture nurses with blood pressure cuffs stalking the Capitol hallways, hailing "Senator! Representative!" and members darting into their offices. Charts attached to the letter show the results; of the 156 members tested, "one out of five of this group had an abnormally high reading." Being a legislator at the end of session might not be good for your health!

It's also interesting that the control group used to compare the legislators' readings was "U.S. white males."

7/15/2010

The Veto Database is Highlighted



The Library's [historical veto statistics](#) are highlighted in the [June issue](#) of *Reference Notes* from MINITEX. We are happy for the recognition! The article preceding "Minnesota's Veto History Available Online" is more fun; be sure to check out "Facebook Facts You Didn't Know." They are both on page six.

7/13/2010

A Practical Consultants Report



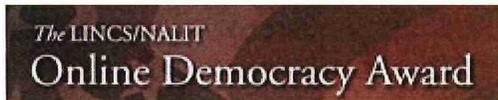
Have you wondered just how much electricity your computer printer is wasting at home? Should you bother to turn it off? A new consultants report for the Minnesota Department of Commerce summarizes a study of possible low-cost and no-cost electricity savings opportunities in homes. The study was done by the [Energy Center of Wisconsin](#), *Electricity Savings Opportunities for Home Electronics and Other Plug-In Devices in Minnesota Homes: A Technical and Behavioral Field Assessment*. It focuses on devices outside of major appliances and lighting, including computers, space heaters, and audio equipment. Is it

worthwhile to set up a computer power management system, or unplug them, turn them off when not in use, or use smart power strips? The authors of the study are practical; the focus is on what consumers could easily do to gain the best energy savings.

A very interesting table shows just how much energy is used by various household appliances and electronics (Appendix C, p. 52). I *should* remember to turn off the printer!

7/12/2010

A Contest We Did Not Win

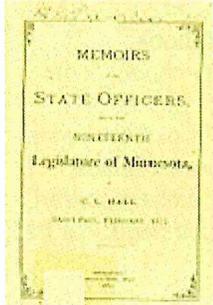


Though several legislative staff members made a valiant application-writing effort, the Minnesota Legislative Web Site did not win the 2010 LINCS/NALIT Online Democracy Award from the National Conference of State Legislatures. The application is a challenge to complete. It's

not easy to describe the depth of the site and all its features in a few 100-word boxes. Our disappointment shouldn't be too great in not winning this year; after all, we DID win already, in 2006. Here are the words from our contest application form this year, reminders of our constant improvements and great content.

7/9/2010

Colorful Legislative Biographies



C.L. Hall wrote *Biographical Sketches of the Officers of State Government of Minnesota and of the 19th Minnesota State Legislature* with lofty aims in 1877. "The subjects of the pen sketches are the servants of the people, and it is highly proper that the people should know something of the history of their servants."

He seemed to think the people needed to know the weight of many of the members. "There are four members whose aggregate weight is 907 lbs, and if they were strung out in a horizontal line, they would measure 24-1/2 feet. Hon. Anthony Huyck weighs 300 lbs and is 6 ft. 1/2" in height; Hon. Edmund Rice, 242 lbs, 6 ft 1-1/2" in height, Hon. L.A. Huntoon, 235 lbs. and 6 ft 2 in.; Hon. Hon. Frank Erickson, 200 lbs. and 6 ft.2 in.; and there are a score besides that measure well. It is very doubtful if any other legislature on earth, of equal number, embodies

such an amount of flesh and blood and bones as the Minnesota Legislature carries around every day of its life." (p. 28)

Each entry is fascinating. Many include dramatic accounts of military service, usually in the Civil War. Some biographies include comments would not be found in a modern account. For example, Rep. J. Zimmerman "served in the Indian campaign for a short while, and came back with a whole scalp." Rep. Lee Hensley was a believer in womens rights, "to the extent that they be encouraged in the art of self-cultivation, with a view to becoming good sweethearts, wives, mothers and sisters, possessed of all those delicate and refining influences that should cluster around the human heart, and blossom at the fireside and in the social circle, and make woman pure and lovely in the sight of God."

7/8/2010

Minnesota Rules Online Improvements: Great News! (Part Two)

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes was awarded a Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant to scan the full text of *Minnesota Rules* since 1982. The Minnesota Rules Archive includes all of the biennial compiled editions since 1983, and a scan of the 1982 volumes published separately by the agencies (the Minnesota Code of Agency Rules, or MCAR). This is an invaluable set of online documents for researchers delving back into rule changes over the years. Definitely great news! Details can be found in a press release from the Office of the Revisor of Statutes.

It's amazing to think how much technology has increased access to legislative documents. To get a sense of the old pre-technology days, check out part IV of the 1968 *Report of the Rules Subcommittee on Improvement of the Legislative Process*, beginning on page 11. The Subcommittee studied how electronic data processing might be applied to the legislative process. "This report does not recommend use of electronic data processing systems at this time, save one. We do feel that Minnesota Statutes should be placed on magnetic tape or disc at the earliest possible date." Electronic bill status was a possible future use.

But today, we are happy the Revisor's Office has added depth to the *Minnesota Rules* collection.

7/6/2010

Minnesota Rules Online Improvements: Great News! (Part One)



Minnesota Rules, the administrative rules promulgated by state agencies, have been online for a few years. With such easy access, researchers sometimes don't remember the old days - you



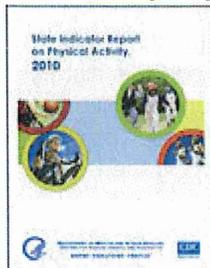
know, when state agency rules were really difficult to identify? When you weren't sure you had the right agency rule, or the most recent rule, or all the relevant rules?

A recent milestone makes finding the right rule even easier. The Revisor's Office has added the [topical index](#) online.

Searching the free text of rules with key words can often turn up a daunting number of hits. For example, if you search the rules with a word search for "disabled," you get [149 hits](#). Instead, try searching the "[Rules by Topic](#)" index listed under *Minnesota Rules* on the "[Statutes, Laws and Rules](#)" page. Choose topics under "D" and you will find topics listed for [Disabled Children](#), [Disabled Persons](#), and [Disabled Veterans](#). Each topic leads you to an alphabetical list of sections dealing with the topic.

7/2/2010

Not So Many Physically Active Adults in Minnesota?



How many Minnesota adults are physically active? How do we rank with other states? In a recent report, *State Indicator Report on Physical Activity, 2010*, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) identified physically active adults in each state as those "who achieve at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous- intensity aerobic activity." The CDC also measured adults who were highly active and those participated in no leisure-time physical activity at all.

The CDC report includes state-by-state tables, but did not rank the states. A comparative analysis was done in the April, 2010, issue of *State Policy Reports* (Vol, 28, Issue 8) in an article titled "Measuring State' Ability to Support Physical Activity."

Minnesota ranked 39th in the percentage of physically active adults! Oddly, Minnesota ranked best in the category of adults reporting no leisure-time physical activities, meaning the lowest percentage. Perhaps the statistics suggest that a lot of Minnesotans are somewhat active, but did not meet the threshold of "physically active" identified by the CDC.

The CDC report also includes twelve recommended policy and environmental variables for states to promote physical activity, and lists which variables are present in each state.

[E-mail](#) or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like a copy of the *State Policy Reports* article (not available online).

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7/1/2010

Steal These Ideas



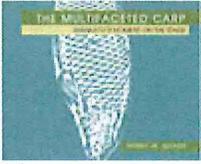
The Library's [Legislative Time Capsule](#) pages were mentioned in the June issue of *State Legislatures* magazine, in "[Steal These Ideas: 25 Legislative Website Ideas That May Surprise You](#)." Minnesota was listed twice! The Legislature's [MyBills](#) service, with the ability to add your own notes to your personal bill tracking, was also noted.

6/25/2010

Multifaceted Carp



We receive many books as gifts, passed on by legislators or staff or sent by publishers. An interesting book published by the Blue Earth Historical Society recently turned up, *Multifaceted Carp* by Henry M. Quade. Carp! That was eye-catching, given the current issues with Asian



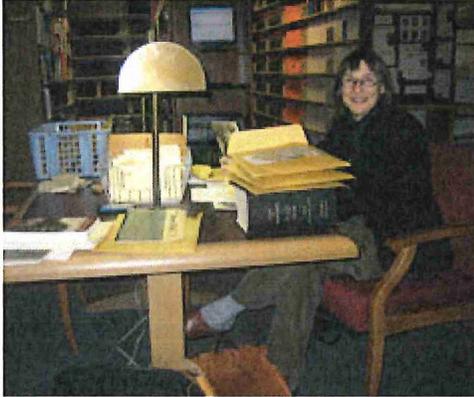
carp invading Minnesota waters. It turns out the book is more about an interesting period around WWII when carp were canned in Mankato. Still, we thought the natural history of the broader species included in the book would be relevant to our collection.

The book turned up in the news yesterday, when the author was quoted on KARE TV with a depressing statement, "No one has a crystal ball, but if you were to bet on the asian carp getting into the Great Lakes, the answer is yes. A single carp can lay a million eggs."

E-mail or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the book. *

6/17/2010

Wild and Scenic Rivers History

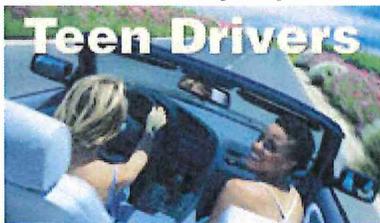


We are always pleased to see the fruits of research done in the Legislative Library. Back in October, 2009, Susan Damon and Jay Krienitz pored over old clippings and documents as part of their voluminous research on the origins of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The resulting article appeared in an issue of the William Mitchell Law Review devoted to environmental law. We are happy to add this history, "The Rivers Belong to the People" : The History and Future of Wild and Scenic River Protection in Minnesota, to our library collection. Their work provides valuable background for researchers studying the issue and the era.

Here are additional materials on wild and scenic rivers in our collection.

6/15/2010

Teen Driver Safety Report



A recent press release from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety described a program of "Celebrity Buckle-Up Reminders." Before school was out, participating schools played announcements on the public announcement system urging teens to use seat belts, by people like comedian Louie Anderson, Minnesota Twins player Nick Punto, Minnesota Lynx player Lindsay Whalen, Minnesota Vikings player Jim Kleinsasser and the 93x Morning Show crew.

The messages are important. As the press release noted, "Traffic crashes are the leading killer of Minnesota teens — the group with the lowest seat belt compliance rate. Statewide each year, motorists age 15–29 account for 45 percent of all unbelted deaths, yet this group represents only 25 percent of licensed drivers." The Department has many additional web resources on teen driver safety.

Every state is working to save teens' lives. A recent report from the United States Government Accountability Office, Teen Driver Safety: Additional Research Could Help States Strengthen Graduated Driver Licensing Systems, includes descriptions of state strategies to improve teen driver safety and a list of recommended graduated drivers license requirements. A comparison table shows the provisions of each state's current laws. (Interestingly, there are still a handful of states that allow 14-year-olds to hold a learner permit.)

Here's a non-celebrity reminder - buckle up!

5/28/2010

But Are They the First Twins to Run for the Legislature?



A reporter called the library today (they often do). He wanted to know if there



have ever been twins who have run for the Legislature. We don't know of any, but since people ran for the Legislature for more than a hundred years before our library was created in 1969, we certainly can't be sure! We track extensive historical information on the Legislature and legislators. All members since territorial times are in our *Legislators Past & Present* database, and their records are augmented all the time. For example, a granddaughter recently provided additional background and the Civil War service for [John Day Smith](#).

We have an extensive list of [Family Connections within the Minnesota Legislature](#). But no twins are mentioned.

Identical twins Jeff and Jay Backer [are running for the Senate and House](#), respectively. If they were both elected, it might lead to some confusion. At least they are both in the same party - that would be easy to remember! If anyone knows of any twins who have run for the Legislature in the past, be sure to let us know.

5/26/2010

Should the Drinking Age Be Lowered?



During the legislative session the House high school pages visit the library to research a policy issue. Some of the last students this session, a particularly enthusiastic group, were researching whether the drinking age should be lowered from 21. An article in the new issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* would have helped them out! It poses the question, "[Will Increasing Alcohol Availability By Lowering the Minimum Drinking Age Decrease Drinking and Related Consequences Among Youths?](#)" (This link will work on legislative computers.) Based on the authors' research, no.

"The evidence suggests that making alcohol more available by reducing the minimum legal drinking age to 18 years will lead to an increase in drinking and related harms. The evidence shows instead that strengthening enforcement and establishing policies to support the existing minimum legal drinking age are effective approaches to lower alcohol-related morbidity and mortality among youths. Public health professionals can play an important leadership role to prevent and reduce the impact alcohol has on health by advocating effective, empirically supported alcohol-control policy initiatives at the local, state, and national level."

The article provides evidence to refute common arguments for lowering the drinking age - that the higher drinking age is ineffective, foreign countries with lower ages have fewer problems, and that drinking at private parties and out of bars have contributed to higher rates of alcohol poisoning.

5/25/2010

Gifting



A New York Times [article](#) today described an Inspector General's [report](#) from the Minerals Management Service. Federal regulators responsible for oversight of drilling in the Gulf of Mexico had accepted meals, tickets to sporting events, and gifts from at least one oil company while they were overseeing the industry. That seems like clear-cut bad behavior. Today's news story brings to mind an article by local professor [David Schultz](#) in the Spring, 2010, issue of *Public Integrity*, "[Ethics Regulation Across Professions: The Problem of Gifting](#)." He reached three conclusions in his thoughtful essay:

"First, because gifting creates a sense of dependency, reciprocity, or indebtedness, its practice within a professional setting causes potential or real conflicts of interest, regardless of the size or type of the gift. Second, because of the problems that gifting poses, many professions have already recognized the need to address the practice. Finally, the field and practice of public administration needs to address the problem of gifting more directly and explicitly in its research, its training, and the professional development of model rules and codes of ethics."

5/20/2010

Angry About Government, But Happy Enough With the Library



Last week the Legislature was in gridlocked end-of-session negotiations. One discouraging



effect of rancorous debates in the news is that some citizens develop anti-government attitudes, even when they have little actual understanding of the work done by lawmakers and the challenges they face.

One of those angry people stopped in our library last week. He launched right in to his complaints about the Legislature and the court system.

He had scant understanding of the legislative process, yet held several stereotypical anti-government views. As I helped him research the changes to a law, his pronouncements were amazing. "You know they just sneaked that law in," he told me, even though we were looking at a stand-alone bill. "They always do that." I helped him further; we looked at earlier changes to the law. He pointed to some deleted language. "See that chicken-scratching there? They just scratch out anything they don't like."

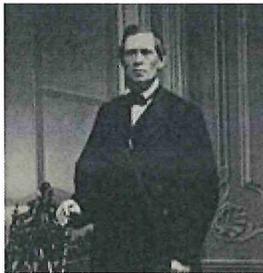
He wanted to have a law changed, and wanted to know the authors of the previous law. We looked them up. "Oh him, he's too old. He'd never agree with me. I don't think anyone should be in the government more than six years."

I mentioned that it might be difficult to meet with the legislators during this final week of session, and it was past the deadlines for new legislation. "Can't they just sneak it in?" he insisted.

When he left he was still angry about his issue, but happy with me and very happy with the [Legislative Web Site](#). He didn't realize so much could be done from home, and that he could do the research himself. I wonder if he realized I am a *government employee*. (Robbie LaFleur)

5/11/2010

Seven House Members Resigned on the Floor - in 1851



Happy Statehood Day, Minnesota!

It's the end-of-session impasse time, with heartfelt emotions and debate on both sides of the aisle. There was high drama on the floor of the Minnesota House even before Minnesota became a state.

Over the past few months, when he has had a spare moment, Paul VanCura has been adding information about the members of the Territorial Legislature to the Library's [Legislators Past & Present](#) database. The records of six legislators from 1851 have the same note. On [March 29, 1851](#), the Speaker announced a remarkable 'communication upon his table' - seven members resigned immediately after the vote on 'a bill for the Apportionment of Representation in the Territory.' You can read more in this excerpt from [The History of Minnesota: from the Earliest French Explorations to the Present Time](#) (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1873, p. 548-549). Pictured is one of the seven members, [John Wesley North](#).

5/7/2010

Steve Alger



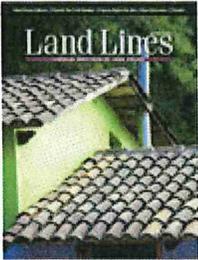
Steve Alger is one of the unsung heroes around the Capitol. Steve, a former high school teacher from Kenyon, Minnesota, was recruited about ten years ago by former Speaker Steve Sviggum to lead the high school page program. Steve packs the pages' schedule tight each week so the students learn about every aspect of the legislative process—they meet with their own legislators, learn about the legislative process, see lobbyists in action, attend committee hearings, meet the Secretary of State, and, of course, serve as pages on the House floor.

The high school pages usually spend a little time in the Library during their week at the Capitol researching a bill for a mock committee hearing. Most groups are very interested in the topics they are researching—a recent group included very enthusiastic researchers—they had a million questions for the librarians.

Articles about the [high school page program](#) and about [Steve](#) were published in *Session Weekly* a few years ago.

The 2010 high school page program ends today for this legislative session. See you next year, Steve!

4/20/2010

Property Tax Relief

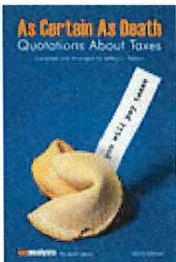
Federal stimulus money is helping state and local governments close significant budget gaps. There have been several references to a worrisome "stimulus cliff," the problems that governments will face once the stimulus money ebbs. One problem is addressed in "Property Tax Relief: The Case for Circuit Breakers," in the April issue of Land Lines from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (available free online after signing up). How can low-income homeowners be helped when governments need funds and property taxes rise? The authors offer recommendations for obtaining maximum benefit from a property tax circuit breaker program. Two-thirds of states offer circuit breaker programs already; Minnesota is one of six states that provides benefits to low-income homeowners of all ages, rather than only targeting the elderly.

Details on Minnesota's program is provided by the Minnesota House of Representatives Research Office, "[Minnesota's Property Tax Refund Program](#)."

Minnesota has an additional property tax refund, generally referred to as "targeting." It directs property tax relief to homeowners who have large property tax increases from one year to the next. See "[Targeting Property Tax Refund](#)."

E-mail or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like a copy of the article or report. *

4/15/2010

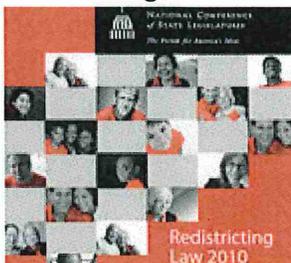
A Certain as Death: Quotations about Taxes

As Certain as Death: Quotations About Taxes, published by Tax Analysts, has quite a few funny quotations about the topic many of us think of on April 15th. Shaquille O'Neil is quoted as saying, "Last time I looked at a check, I said to myself, "Who the h*** is FICA? And when I meet him I'm going to punch him in the face." Charles Kettering said, "Thinking is one thing that no one has ever been able to tax."

Billy Hamilton may be able to come up with a way to do so. He wrote a facetious article in a recent issue of *State Tax Notes*, proposing taxing minor annoyances. "A ringing cellphone in a movie theater? Taxable. Outraged e-mails written in all capital letters? Taxable again."

E-mail or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the book or receive a copy of the article. *

4/6/2010

Redistricting 2010

The nearly daily stories on the U.S. Decennial Census remind us that it will soon be time for redistricting. Another reminder is a new book from the National Conference of State Legislatures, *Redistricting Law 2010*. Chapters on various aspects of redistricting issues were contributed by many authors. Peter Wattson from the Minnesota Senate Counsel, Research, and Fiscal Analysis was the general editor and was singled out for praise in the introduction. "NCSL owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to Peter Wattson, who contributed countless hours to this publication as general editor. His extraordinary knowledge of and expertise on redistricting law are invaluable to NCSL and to this project."

E-mail or call a librarian at 6-8338 if you would like to borrow the report. *

4/5/2010

Legislative Web Site Enhancements

This month the Library's listing of new books and reports, Just In, starts out with a list of recent enhancements to the Legislative Web Site. Improvements are incremental and



constant, and come from several offices, so it makes sense to make a list on occasion. Did you know about all of these changes?

Combined Calendar for Legislative Meetings – The new combined calendar displays meetings that are listed on the House and Senate calendar pages, with links to bills, committees and legislators.

Full Text Bill Searching and Links to Session Laws – Full text bill searching is now possible. Also, from a bill search results screen there are links to the session laws, giving quick information on which bills were passed into law and easy access to the law.

Links to Veto Messages from the Session Laws – When looking at the list of session laws for the year, it's possible to see which laws were vetoed and to link directly to the veto message.

Links to Committee Hearing Audio and Minutes – The House has added pop-up boxes on committee pages (mouse over a bill number) with links to hearing audio and minutes and other information such as fiscal notes and floor votes. The Senate has also enhanced access to committee hearing audio and minutes, with links available from bill status pages.

Legislative Time Capsules – Compiled by the Legislative Reference Library, the Legislative Time Capsules pull together information by session on members, bills, laws, vetoes, dates, special sessions, leadership, and more.

If you have comments or questions about the legislative website, or suggestions for information you would like to see included, email us at refdesk@lrl.leg.mn.

[*Available to legislators and legislative staff only. Please contact the library if you would like copies of any of these reports, or further research on this or any topic.](#)

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Reference: (651) 296-8338 Circulation: (651) 296-3398

Hours: 8AM to 4:30PM Mon. - Fri. (Legislative history service ends a half hour before closing.)

Legislative Session Hours: 8AM to 6PM Mon. - Thurs., 8AM - 5:00 PM Fri. or later as needed.

[Travel directions](#)