



GAZETTE

Imagining the Future with Minnesota Planning

November 10
2025

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The Not Yet Gazette is a fictional newspaper showing one possible future. The stories in the paper reflect major demographic trends projected for Minnesota.

Top Stories

- **Life on the Inside: Are ElderDorms Homes or Prisons for Old People?** *Not Yet Gazette's* investigative team goes inside the Wood Lake ElderDorm. (Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)
- **State's Delegates Split over Tax Boost:** Minnesota's U.S. House delegation is divided over a proposal to boost payroll taxes to cope with rising rates of poverty among the elderly. (Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)
- **Three Northwest Counties to Merge:** Minnesota counties are now down to 42. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **Is Minnesota an Economic Slug?** State economist paints a gloomy picture of stagnating economy in the state and the nation. (Trends: aging, increasing diversity, slower growth)
- **Election Shows Voters Divided, Muhammed's Coalition on Thin Ice:** Taxes, pensions and the environment divide voters in recent elections. (Trends: aging, concentration in metropolitan regions, slower growth, rising dependency ratio)

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Life on the Inside: Are ElderDorms Homes or Prisons for Old People?

Top Stories

Condemned by some as inhumane, ElderDorms are praised by others as the most cost-effective way of dealing with the growing number of old people living in poverty.

The Not Yet Gazette's investigative team spent three weeks at the Wood Lake ElderDorm in Richfield to learn firsthand what life is like for residents in these increasingly popular institutions.

"Sure, I'd rather have my own place. Who wouldn't?" said Linda Rodman, age 82, a three-year resident at the Wood Lake dorm. "But this is better than living on the street or in a shelter with young people. A lot of those kids are really violent."

Kevin Peterson, age 78, who moved to Wood Lake 18 months ago after being evicted from his apartment, agreed with Rodman. "It's noisy and the food is lousy, and people steal your stuff," he said. "But I'm too old to live outdoors."

The Wood Lake dorm consists of two large barracks, one for men and one for women. Each barrack has beds for 60 elderly people. Though older women outnumber older men, men are more likely to end up in the dorms because they are less likely to be taken in by family members, according to dorm manager, Tory Hoffman. The dorms are segregated by sex. Three private rooms are available for married couples on a first-come, first-served basis.

Each dorm resident has a bed, a small bedside table, and a locker for personal possessions. Residents are required to do chores such as laundry, making beds, cleaning, washing dishes and cooking, with those with physical ailments assigned to lighter duties. Hoffman defends the work requirement by saying it is good for morale, reduces resident misbehavior and saves money. "It isn't punitive," he said. "It's the only way we can afford to keep these places going."

Meals are heavy on carbohydrates. Breakfast is invariably

oatmeal and toast, and meat is served only on Sundays and holidays. Hoffman defended the diet. "Many of our residents ate too much meat and other fatty foods when they were on the outside," he said. "The diet they get in here is really better for them."

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Wood Lake provides no recreational activities. Some residents take the bus to the library or go for walks, and local churches provide transportation to services. Recreation for most appears to be watching television. Fights over what program to watch on the single screen in the dining hall are the major disciplinary problem at the dorm.

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To prevent old people from begging on the street and at shopping malls, some neighbors say dorm residents should not be allowed to leave the facility.

"It's really irritating when they hang around and beg," said Minnie Halbbach, age 26, assistant manager of a nearby convenience store. "You know they just use the money to buy booze. And there's a lot of shoplifting, too."

Despite the feelings of people like Halbbach, the federal ElderDorm authorizing legislation specifies that residents are free to come and go as they wish.

"The dorm is a home, not a prison," said Hoffman.
(Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)

Related articles:

- **Broke Pension Funds Alarm Retirees**
- **From the Desk of the Marketplace Editor: Why Savings Are Going Up**
- **Should Society Bail Out Elderly Grasshoppers?**

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State's Delegates Split Over Tax Boost

Top Stories

Minnesota's U.S. House delegation is divided over boosting payroll taxes to pay for a raise in the minimum Social Security benefit. The split is along party lines, with the state's three Democratic-Independent representatives supporting the increase and its three Independent Patriots opposing.

"Poverty levels for older people have risen for nine straight years, and we have to raise the minimum benefit to reverse this trend," said Rep. Adam Olson (DI-Eden Prairie).

Opponents, including Rep. Aleesha Logan (IP-Minneapolis), say the proposed new tax falls too heavily on younger workers.

"We need a more cost-effective way of dealing with our poor elderly," said Logan. "Young people can't keep paying these high taxes to support people who should have done more to save for retirement." As an alternative, Logan supports increasing allocations for the ElderDorms housing program for the impoverished elderly. ([Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio](#))

Related articles:

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■ [From the Desk of the Marketplace Editor: Why Savings Are Going Up](#)

■ [Should Society Bail Out Elderly Grasshoppers?](#)

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Three Northwest Counties to Merge

Top Stories

Roswoods, Kittmar, and Pennrel counties will merge into a single county, called Northstar, on January 1.

The agreement to merge was reached by the three county commissions Tuesday night; voters approved the merger in a referendum in the recent election. The merger will reduce the number of Minnesota counties to 42.

Thief River Falls will be the seat of Northstar County, but Pennrel County Commissioner Dave Johnson said county services will be available throughout the formerly separate counties in satellite centers and via electronic hookups.

"The merger will save a lot of money on overhead," said Johnson. "People resisted it for a long time, but other counties have done it and the results don't seem that bad." (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)

Related articles:

- [Governor Takes Aim at Wildlife](#)
- [Rural Communities Find Original Ways to Cope with Fewer People and Higher Costs](#)
- [Bad Roads Block Rural Growth, Expert Claims](#)

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Is Minnesota an Economic Slug?

Top Stories

By Peter Kidder, Business Editor

"Our work force is not prepared for the increasingly competitive international economy," said State Economist Chester Bureau last night in a speech at the Carlson School for Advanced Budget Analysis. "The world's economy is evolving at an unprecedented rate, structural change is rife, and we aren't keeping up. The Minnesota economy just isn't growing as fast as we would like."

Bureau cites three primary reasons for the slow growth in Minnesota and the nation: a lack of growth in the labor force, stagnant worker productivity and inadequate investment in equipment and technology.

"There are only two ways to grow an economy: increase the number of workers or increase the amount that each worker produces," he said. "Right now, we aren't doing either very well. We didn't have enough babies 20 to 25 years ago. That, coupled with increasing restrictions on immigration since the turn of the century, has resulted in little growth in the labor force."

Poor educational preparation of young people and the continued aging of the majority of the work force are also major culprits, Bureau said. "Gone are the golden days of the '90s and the early years of this century. Mature workers, those in their 70s and older, upon whom much of the economy depends for leadership, just don't have the drive to learn new skills the way they did 20 years ago."

New graduates are not as well prepared as they were 20 or 30 years ago, he maintained. "Math skills are no longer internationally competitive, scores on standardized geography and science tests are declining, and many people don't have such basic skills as resumé writing," the economist complained. "The kids graduating today just are not as well prepared as the graduates of the late '90s."

Few can argue with Bureau's critique. Worker productivity across the nation has increased little in more than five

years, causing businesses to look to other countries for productive workers. Noristar Incorporated's announcement yesterday that it is outsourcing most of its data entry work to India underscores these concerns. Like many other companies, Noristar could not find entry-level workers with the necessary skills at a competitive wage in Minnesota.

The low savings rate, which has long been a national disgrace, is likely to fall even more as older workers leave the labor force and begin spending their lifetime savings. Younger people in their 30s are saving at a higher rate than in the past, which offers some hope, but the rapidly expanding number of pensioners withdrawing their accumulated savings overwhelms the higher savings rate among the much smaller millennial generation. According to Bureau, the rate of saving is still too low to encourage substantial expansion of investments and strengthen economic growth.

The rapidly increasing number of pensioners is also causing concerns in the markets. Many analysts are predicting a major selloff precipitated by older individuals converting stocks to annuities. Not all the experts are worried, though. While the prevailing view is for a 10 to 20 percent correction, others are expressing doubts this will happen. "Since so many of the investments are held in international securities, the effect will be averaged over the world," said Paul Malouf, a securities analyst with the Toro y Oso investment firm.

The real estate market is affected by similar concerns over falling prices. Some observers fear that the housing market will experience a meltdown as people remodel their existing houses rather than buy new. Of particular concern are the markets for starter houses and for the large, upscale homes so popular in the '90s. The lack of young families looking for starter homes is depressing that market, while the large, upscale houses have lost appeal because of their substantial upkeep costs. "With smaller, older families and more singles, there just isn't the market for these postindustrial dinosaurs," Bureau said. He added that a state commission is being formed to explore alternative uses for abandoned homes.

Now for some good news: not all Minnesota companies have fallen prey to the sluggish economy. My next column will feature an interview with Ravi McDonald, marketing vice president of Tai Chi, Inc., the Woodbury-based fitness club for "young minds in old bodies." The company is planning to expand its franchise system worldwide, starting

with a new club in Beijing. (Trends: aging, increasing diversity, slower growth)

Related articles:

- **Noristar Jobs Go to India**
 - **Minnesotans Take Tai Chi Honors**
 - **Two More Companies Join Education Consortium**
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Election Shows Voters Divided, Muhammed's Coalition on Thin Ice

Top Stories

Results of last week's elections demonstrate that Minnesota voters are just as confused and fickle as ever, most political analysts agree. Pensions, taxes and environmental issues continue to divide the electorate.

The shaky political coalition of Governor Sherif Abdul Muhammed held up just enough for him to be re-elected by a margin of a mere 0.1 percent. Strong support from residents of Metroplex inner cities and inner suburbs, as well as rural areas; poor pensioners; and environmental conservatives carried Muhammed to his razor-thin victory. He was also supported by business backers of his proposals for closer economic integration with Manitoba. Political analysts say that his success may also be attributed to the newly reduced terms of office for governors and city officials. Voters may feel that three years, instead of four, are not long enough.

Low turnout by ElderDorm residents narrowed the margin between Muhammed and his challenger, Tracy Wagner, who was strongly favored by the more affluent elderly.

Meanwhile, in one of the most hotly contested municipal races in recent years, Jeff Vue defeated two rivals to be elected mayor of Roseville. Deer control was the major issue in the election. Vue, who supported collaboration with animal control agencies in neighboring communities, received 39 percent of the vote. Tyler Wahlberg, an advocate of letting armed citizen militias shoot deer on sight, got 34 percent of the vote. Animal Rights Party activist Traci Lynn Carpenter proposed a ban on harming deer and suggested installing feeding stations so the deer would not eat residents' shrubs and garden plants. She won 26 percent of the vote. (Trends: aging, concentration in metropolitan regions, slower growth, rising dependency ratio)

Related articles:

■ [Velma Voters Reject Sewer Bond Issue](#)

■ [Governor Takes Aim at Wildlife](#)

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National News

- **Disability Abuse Crackdown Urged:** Sen. Matt Stevenson (Democratic Independent-Ohio) claims healthy older people are abusing disability programs. (Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)
- **Gallup Poll Finds People Still Prefer Girls:** Daughters are seen as more likely to support parents when they get old. (Trend: aging)
- **Military Increases Enlistment Terms and Benefits:** Changes are intended to combat personnel shortages and improve the quality of recruits. (Trends: slower growth, rising dependency ratio)
- **Elderly with Chronic Illnesses Spur Health Care Costs to Rise:** Health care costs continue to go up faster than the overall inflation rate. (Trend: aging)
- **Broke Pension Funds Alarm Retirees:** Fund defaults move pensioners to pressure cautious Congress to take action. (Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)
- **General Says Soldiers Lack Mechanical Skills:** Schools should teach students more about mechanical repairs, says Army Gen. Nancy Sampson. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **Demonstrators Demand More Money for Arthritis Research:** An estimated 100,000 people sought action by taking to the streets in Washington, D.C. (Trends: aging, slower growth)

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Disability Abuse Crackdown Urged

National News

Sen. Matt Stevenson (Democratic-Independent-Ohio) wants to crack down on abuse of disability payments by people in their 60s and early 70s. Stevenson says raising the retirement age to 72 has spurred massive layoffs of older employees, who are viewed by some employers as too costly. Many of these workers apply for disability benefits, he said, even though they are healthy enough to work.

"A lot of these older people could get a job at McBurger, but they would rather live off taxpayers, so they come up with some vague complaint about back trouble or arthritis," Stevenson said. He wants to tighten eligibility standards and require more proof of disability. (Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)

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Gallup Poll Finds People Still Prefer Girls

National News

The latest Gallup Poll shows a continued trend of preferring female children. In the latest survey, 60 percent of married and 75 percent of single women said they would prefer to have a girl. Among all men, 52 percent preferred a girl.

University of Minnesota professor Amber Baldwin-Rodchenko attributed the preference for female children to high rates of divorce and single parenthood.

"People have learned that they are likely to have closer ties with female children when the children are grown," she explained. Since women usually retain custody of children when couples split up, older people often have little contact with the children of their adult sons. They are more likely to receive emotional and financial support from their daughters and their daughters' children.

Baldwin-Rodchenko added that the improved economic position of women is another reason for the growing preference for girls. As their earnings have risen relative to those of men, women are better able to help their parents financially. (Trend: aging)

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Military Increases Enlistment Terms and Benefits

National News

Most military volunteers will now sign up for a six-year term, according to regulations that become effective today. The new rules are designed to combat personnel shortages and improve the quality of recruits.

Educational requirements for enlistees have been increased, except in the Marines. To compensate for the longer enrollment requirement, pay scales have been raised considerably, as have college tuition allowances. The armed forces also are offering free child care and expanding other fringe benefits.

"The higher pay and benefits will help us attract qualified individuals," said Army Lt.-Gen. Phil Fogg, "and the longer enlistment period will allow us to keep our personpower level up where we need it." (Trends: slower growth, rising dependency ratio)

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Elderly with Chronic Illnesses Spur Health Care Costs to Rise

National News

Health care costs continue to rise faster than the overall inflation rate, according to the latest government survey. Driving the increase is the growing number of older people with chronic diseases.

"We've made health care more efficient, and we are rationing some of the more expensive treatments, but we're at the mercy of the demographics," said Minnesota Health Department Commissioner R. Melissa Compton. As the baby boom generation has aged, the incidences of costly illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and arthritis have rocketed, along with the average length of a hospital stay. (Trend: aging)

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Broke Pension Funds Alarm Retirees

National News

When Bob Gardner retired from his machinist job after 34 years with Megabucks Corporation, he counted on his generous company pension, supplemented by Social Security and some modest savings, to support a comfortable lifestyle.

But last month, 10 years after he retired, Gardner was notified that he would no longer receive a pension check. Megabucks Corporation's pension fund ran out of money.

Megabucks declined to take responsibility for the inadequately financed pension fund, saying it was a separate operation. "We can't afford to pay these pensions," said company spokeswoman Jessica Quigley-Backstrom. "If we are required to pay for them, we will have to declare bankruptcy and put all our current employees out of work."

Megabucks is the largest and most prominent of a long string of corporations that recently have defaulted on their pension obligations. Pensioners who have lost benefits are pressuring Congress to take action, but politicians fear the political and financial costs of a pension bailout.

"We haven't had enough money to increase Social Security payments for years," said Rep. Cindy Keller (Independent Patriot-California). "Under the circumstances, it's pretty hard to justify picking up the tab for privately funded pensions." (Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)

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General Says Soldiers Lack Mechanical Skills

National News

American schools need to do more to improve the mechanical aptitude of students, Army Gen. Nancy Sampson told a teachers' convention in Bloomington Tuesday. While the computer skills of recent military enlistees are generally adequate, she said, many lack basic mechanical skills.

"A lot of them have never held a pair of pliers or done even simple car repairs," Sampson said.

The general is particularly concerned because many soldiers have trouble improvising solutions to mechanical problems. During the recent UN mission to Greece, U.S. troops had to abandon several tanks that broke down because they were unable to repair them. Members of the Blue Party guerilla forces fixed the tanks and used them in a counterassault against UN troops, resulting in heavy American casualties.

Sampson said she is not sure why Americans' mechanical ability has declined but believes increased urbanization may be partly responsible. Few people now grow up on farms, where by necessity they had to learn to fix things, she said. In addition, many products are now cheaper to replace than to repair, removing the incentive for tinkering. The increased number of single parent families headed by women also may have played a part, she speculated, since handyperson skills have traditionally been handed down from father to son. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Demonstrators Demand More Money for Arthritis Research

National News

A crowd estimated at 100,000, many in wheelchairs, demonstrated Sunday at the Capitol in Washington, D.C., in support of greater funding for arthritis research. After the demonstration, Health Secretary Aleisha Washington met with delegates from the Gray Rights Movement but did not give them much encouragement.

Fiscal constraints caused by slow economic growth and resistance to tax increases have greatly reduced allocations for medical research grants in recent years, Washington told the delegates. "Unfortunately, in our current political climate, funding for health research is limited," she said to reporters after the meeting. "We have to devote our limited resources to diseases that are more immediately life-threatening."

"We will continue our struggle," said GRM spokesperson Kim Roberts after meeting with Washington. "The response we got from the secretary was not satisfactory." (Trends: aging, slower growth)

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State and Local News

- **Murder Suspected in Bluff Bike - Tractor Crash**: A farmer is suspected of deliberately running over bicycling neighbor. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **Burbclave Officials Charged in Tax Case**: State accuses walled-community developers of violating tax and education regulations. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **Prairie Blaze Doused, but Dispute Still Smolders**: Fire on St. Paul prairie revives debate over whether to redevelop the area or keep it as a nature preserve. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **Sewage Spills When Truck Jackknifes**: Accident near Montevideo injures driver. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **Governor Takes Aim at Wildlife**: Rural residents demand action to help control encroaching wildlife. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **Loan Payoffs Lure Doctors into Geriatrics**: Government subsidies are being used to entice more doctors into taking care of the elderly. (Trends: aging, increasing diversity)
- **Bad Roads Block Rural Growth, Expert Claims**: Money to maintain roads is not available due to fiscal conservatism and loss of rural political clout, says transportation expert. (Trends: concentration in metropolitan regions, slower growth)
- **Velma Voters Reject Sewer Bond Issue**: City is latest to say no to taxes to upgrade sewer systems. (Trends: concentration in metropolitan regions, rising dependency ratio)
- **More Offenders Receiving Intermediate Sanctions**: Supporters say intermediate sanctions save money and help integrate offenders into the community. (Trend: slower growth)
- **Rural Communities Find Original Ways to Cope with Fewer People and Higher Costs**: Innovative programs succeed in rural areas. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **State Alleges Fraud in Suit Against Gene Therapy**: Marketer of "gene therapy in a can" to older patients runs into trouble. (Trends: aging, slower growth)
- **Weather**: Sunshine, light winds from the west and a high of 14 C are expected.

areas, increased diversity, slower growth and a rising dependency ratio.

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Murder Suspected in Bluff Bike - Tractor Crash

State and Local News

A bicycle-tractor collision in rural Bluff County, initially believed to be accidental, is being investigated as a possible homicide, according to Bluff County Sheriff Robert Shields.

Larry Weber, age 38, was killed last Wednesday as he rode his mountain bike down a road several kilometers from his home. Authorities said he was hit from behind by a tractor driven by David Buchholz, age 52.

At first the death was thought to be accidental, but then law enforcement authorities began receiving reports of an ongoing feud between Weber and Buchholz.

According to friends, Weber, a salesman, had recently moved to Bluff County from the Metroplex because he wanted a peaceful rural lifestyle and feared urban crime. "Larry loved being out in the country," said his long-time companion, Maria Santiago. "This was heaven to him."

Soon after moving to his dream home in Bluff County, however, Weber started having problems with Buchholz, his neighbor across the road.

Buchholz, a financially strapped farmer described by an acquaintance, Harvey Weaver, as "a good guy but kind of a loner," resented Weber's attempts to prevent him from expanding his hog feed lot and believed Weber had reported him to state pollution authorities for spilling hog manure into a creek that ran through both men's properties.

Several days before Weber's death, Buchholz was heard in a local bar threatening to "get rid of those yuppies." People who heard Buchholz's threats said he blamed the influx of urban refugees into the countryside for rising property taxes, road congestion and ruining country life. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Burbclave Officials Charged in Tax Case

State and Local News

Luke Clark, president of the Green Haven burbclave development conglomerate, and five associates were indicted yesterday on multiple charges of conspiracy to avoid state income taxes and evade state educational and law enforcement requirements.

Disputes between the state and burbclave operators have been common ever since burbclaves or walled-in security suburbs became popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The Legislature exempted these developments from property taxes in 2002. Independent from city and county governments, burbclaves assess annual fees instead of collecting property taxes to cover expenses for schools, garbage pickup, security and other services. They are not incorporated as municipalities and do not have elected officials. State authorities have long argued that because burbclaves provide government services, they should be more accountable to residents and the state.

"Green Haven, like other burbclave corporations, has used its status as a private company to avoid the obligations of elected governments, even though it is performing all the functions of local government," said Minnesota Attorney General Luis Fields.

Fields believes that legislation passed in 2024 gives the state substantially more control over what goes on behind the closed gates of Minnesota burbclaves. His position is strongly disputed by Green Haven attorney Celia McNeal of St. Paul, who says the indictments are part of a longtime persecution of Green Haven and other burbclave developers by the government.

"They just want to get their hands on money that legitimately belongs to private citizens," said McNeal.

The indictments state that Green Haven organized computerized exchanges of goods and services among residents, enabling them to bypass using their money cards and thus avoid paying taxes. The indictments also charge

that the Green Haven school curriculum does not meet state guidelines and many security guards do not have state-required training. Green Haven has long argued it is exempt from state requirements because it is not a government body.

The indictments are the latest in a series of legal problems for Green Haven. Two months ago, the corporation was accused of violating the civil rights of teenagers who were attempting to leave the Green Haven North burbclave for a party in a neighboring ungated suburb. Several teens allege they were beaten by security guards and are suing the company. Rampaging by bored teenagers has become a major problem in burbclave developments. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Prairie Blaze Put Out, but Dispute Still Smolders

State and Local News

Firefighters from three cities yesterday put out a fire that threatened the large prairie reserve covering one-fifth of St. Paul and extending into adjacent suburbs. The cause of the fire is under investigation, but officials blamed recent dry weather and high winds for its rapid spread.

The fire is likely to revive the debate over the fate of the prairie that has pitted environmentalists against developers. Developer Jason LePage argues that the prairie is not worth preserving.

"It's not a real natural area," LePage said. "It's just a bunch of weeds and grass that grew up after people abandoned parts of the old central city. Given the close-in location, it's silly not to redevelop the area and add to the tax base."

Visitors to the prairie can still see the ruins of old houses and businesses that were deserted when central city property values fell, leaving owners better off walking away from their aging buildings than repairing them. Large parts of the area are off limits to the public because of danger from crumbling structures, but other parts are used as community gardens or natural recreation areas.

Mark Lewis, president of the St. Paul Prairie Preservation League, said the prairie should be preserved because it provides valuable wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities for city dwellers. He pointed out that homes near the preserve have risen in value because the location is seen as desirable. ([Trend](#): concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Sewage Spills When Truck Jackknifes

State and Local News

Traffic was halted for four hours yesterday on Highway 7 near Montevideo after a tanker truck carrying sewage jackknifed on the rain-slick road, spilling the wastes over the road and adjacent farmland.

The driver, George Guzman, 33, of Clara City, suffered a broken arm and was reported in satisfactory condition at Montevideo Hospital.

State Patrol officer Kyle Nelson said Guzman's truck was part of a convoy carrying sewage from several small towns in western Minnesota to be disposed of in Willmar's waste treatment plant. Nelson pointed out that the number of sewage trucks on the road has exploded as small towns have found it is cheaper to pay better-equipped towns to treat their sewage than to upgrade their own treatment facilities. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Governor Takes Aim at Wildlife

State and Local News

Governor Sherif Abdul Muhammed vowed yesterday to help rural residents combat encroaching wildlife.

"We need to begin taking back the wilderness in rural Minnesota," Muhammed told a Prairieland County citizens' group yesterday.

The group, Citizens for People, wants the state to help it cope with the increasing number of bison, caribou, wolves and cougars that are moving into parts of north-central, western and southwestern Minnesota. Group members say the bison damage roads and crops, trample fences and cause traffic accidents, while the wolves and cougars destroy livestock and have begun to venture into towns and eat pets.

Duffy Porter, the governor's aide for environmental affairs, said the exploding wildlife population is the result of fewer people living in rural areas and less land being used for crops. The decline in agricultural land use - a result of genetic improvements in crops - has led to the return of thousands of hectares to prairie and forest.

"The governor is behind the Citizens for People," said Porter. "We support wilderness, but it has to be balanced with human concerns."

Porter added that the encroaching wilderness issue has spread to the Metroplex. Bears have been sighted in central-city Chanhassen, and beavers living in sewer systems have caused backups in suburban developments ranging from Princeton to Faribault. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Loan Payoffs Lure Doctors into Geriatrics

State and Local News

Melvina Stokes planned to specialize in pediatric endocrinology when she entered medical school. But instead, she now treats geriatric patients at a clinic in Apple Valley. Stokes changed her career path for a simple reason: money to pay off her medical school tuition loans.

Faced with a shortage of geriatric physicians, the National Health Plan three years ago began offering to pay the medical school loans of doctors who agreed to spend at least six years working in geriatric clinics. Stokes was one of the first Minnesota doctors to sign up for the program.

"Since the nationalization of health care," she said, "doctors' earnings have gone down so much it would have taken me decades to pay off those loans. The loan forgiveness program looked really attractive."

Geriatric medicine proved to be a stimulating challenge for Stokes. "We're more concerned with quality of life than with curing the disease," she said. "Patients usually have several different problems, and you have to stay aware of how their different conditions and medications interact with each other."

Though she originally planned to return to pediatric endocrinology after she fulfilled the six-year obligation, she is considering remaining in geriatrics.

Stokes, who is African American, said some of her mostly white patients were initially reluctant to be treated by a nonwhite doctor. Over time, though, they have come to accept her, and she feels she has developed a good rapport with them. (Trends: aging; increasing diversity)

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Bad Roads Block Rural Growth, Expert Claims

State and Local News

Minnesota's deteriorating rural roads are undermining economic development efforts in the western part of the state, according to Nathan Webster, a nationally recognized transportation expert.

Speaking at the Rural Transportation Symposium yesterday in Marshall, Webster said state aids for rural transportation have been steadily reduced because of the climate of fiscal conservatism and the loss of rural political clout in the Legislature. Few roads have actually been abandoned, because they are needed to transport crops to market, he said, but many are in poor condition because township and county governments do not have the funds to maintain them properly. (Trends: concentration in metropolitan regions, slower growth)

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Velma Voters Reject Sewer Bond Issue

State and Local News

Velma voters have turned down a bond issue for a new sewer system. The action makes the western Minnesota town of 852 people the 10th consecutive city to vote down a sewer bond issue.

The inability of small towns like Velma to pay for sewer upgrades is creating concern about polluted water in rural Minnesota. State law requires small cities to upgrade their sewer systems, but with declining population and tax revenues, many have been unable to finance these expensive improvements.

State Sewer Coordinator Van Turner says the new sewer systems are badly needed, and state officials are threatening to withhold state aids if Velma and the other cities do not show progress toward resolving their waste problems.

The need for change is not universally accepted in Velma. "Our sewage system is just fine," said Velma resident Dennis McBride, 68. "I'm on a pension and I can't afford the extra taxes." (Trends: concentration in metropolitan regions, slower growth)

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More Offenders Receiving Intermediate Sanctions

State and Local News

Recent legislative changes have led to an estimated 85 percent of nonviolent offenders being sentenced to some form of intermediate sanctions program, such as day fines, intensive probation services, electronic in-home monitoring or shock incarceration.

Randy Brown, a 28-year-old south Minneapolis man convicted of selling cocaine and heroin, is one of the thousands of offenders required to participate in an intermediate sanctions program by the courts. Instead of sitting in prison, Brown is living at home and working in an auto body shop. As part of his sentence, Brown must see his probation officer three times a week, pay a weekly fine to the court and wear an electronic monitoring device between 6 p.m. and 7 a.m. to make sure he is at home. Like many other offenders, he also is required to participate in a drug treatment program and be tested regularly for drug use.

"More convicted criminals are receiving intermediate sanctions today than ever before," said Minnesota Corrections Commissioner William Nichols.

Public resistance to government spending is behind the increased acceptance of alternative sentencing. In the past, keeping criminals locked up for long periods was a priority for most voters and they were willing to foot the bill, but in recent years, the desire to reduce taxes has become more of a priority. Tax rates have risen because of slow economic growth and the need to spend more government resources on the elderly.

Longer sentences and prison overcrowding led to a boom in building new jails and prisons in the '90, but about 10 years ago, fueled by the high costs of incarceration, a backlash developed against long prison sentences for nonviolent offenders. As public opinion began to change, more legislators were able to support alternative sentencing without fear of being labeled "soft on crime."

Representative Erak Davis (Independent Patriot, Minneapolis) said, "We no longer hold the outdated notion that we should 'lock (offenders) up and throw away the key.' It's just not good for the community as a whole."

Nichols estimated that the use of alternative sanctions costs between one-fifth and one-tenth as much as traditional methods of incarceration. In addition, offenders can contribute to and better reintegrate into society by working, paying taxes and learning a skill or trade that will support them once their sentence is up.

Brown admits he was relieved when he did not receive a prison sentence. "This is a good chance for me to change my way of life, and I'm going to made the most of it," he said. He also is taking GED classes and hopes to enter an auto mechanics course after graduation.

One of Brown's neighbors still has mixed feelings about having a convicted felon next door. "As long as they watch him morning, noon and night things might be okay, but what happens when they don't?" said the neighbor, who declined to be identified.

Public opinion polls, however, say that 83 percent of Minnesotans support this type of sanction for nonviolent offenders and have less fear today about having such an offender in their neighborhood than five years ago, when the program was still fairly new. Commissioner Nichols said the monitoring system is quite efficient and offenders selected for alternative sentencing usually pose little risk to the community.

Recent studies by the Minnesota Corrections Department show that offenders involved in intermediate sanctions programs are less likely to end up back in the criminal justice system than those who are sent to prison for similar offenses. (Trend: slower growth)

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Rural Communities Find Original Ways to Cope with Fewer People and Higher Costs

State and Local News

Rural communities are finding innovative ways to meet the double whammy of declining populations and increased infrastructure costs while maintaining their independence.

Since the 1990s, consolidation and consortiums have become the norm for rural Minnesota cities. But consolidation can mean the loss of community identity. The challenge for many cities is to find ways to meet their budgets and maintain their independence at the same time. Some have done this with marked success.

Wheat City in far western Minnesota, for example, has become a sewage mecca. In the late 1980s, the city expanded its wastewater treatment plant under a directive from the nowdefunct Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, one of the predecessors of the Department of the Environment. It then saw its population begin a precipitous decline as young people left for education and jobs in the large urban areas, and many older folks moved to the retirement home in nearby Alexandria. Between 1985 and 2000, Wheat City's population declined by 45 percent.

But the bill for the wastewater treatment plant still had to be paid. Mayor Jorge de Silva asked his council to find a solution. Since the Legislature does not allow cities to default on their loans, Council Member Alicia OlsonTaranosky suggested that Wheat City sell excess wastewater treatment capacity to Fargo, North Dakota. Fargo's plant was unable to keep up with that city's rapid growth since 1990.

Hauling Fargo's sewage to Wheat City has allowed both cities to solve serious problems. Wheat City is meeting its budget without increasing taxes and is now seeking citizen input on how to spend the excess revenue. Fargo has solved its wastewater problem at a cost far less than other alternatives would have required.

Tiny Edge Lake in north-central Minnesota two years ago had an average daily census of only 0.86 at its municipal hospital. It looked as if the facility would have to close, leaving the surrounding area without a local hospital. Hospital administrator Nelly Singh suggested that by making one of the two wings a clinic specializing in the treatment of osteoporosis, the hospital might realize sufficient revenues to keep the other wing open. The hospital board agreed to try this approach, and the new Nora B. Johnson Clinic now treats 50 patients each day, some of whom come from as far away as Grand Marais and Luverne.

"We found a niche, " Singh said. "We offer specialized services not found in rural Minnesota and even in the Twin Cities."

Because of the success of this venture, the clinic has to expanded into research. Dr. Honey Dew says that concentrating on treating osteoporosis has led to the discovery of morel extract, one of the most promising drugs for restoring bone strength.

Other cities finding innovative solutions to local problems of budget and infrastructure are Belle Prairie with its natural mud baths, Purple Clover with its anger treatment clinic and Corn Crib with its wind-power generating facility. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)

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State Alleges Fraud in Suit Against GeneTherapy

State and Local News

Minnesota Attorney General Luis Fields filed fraud charges Monday against GeneTher over its "gene therapy in a can."

The GeneTher product, which is widely advertised on television and sells for \$99 a can, is "absolutely useless," Fields said. "Essentially all it is, is vegetable oil spray and a few vitamins."

Since the National Health Service began limiting medically accepted - but expensive - gene therapy to people under age 70, many older cancer patients have turned to alternative treatments, including "gene therapy in a can."

In other action, the attorney general also moved this week to revoke the home health care license of Plymouth-based Hearts and Hands, Inc. Hearts and Hands is accused of hiring convicted felons to work as home health care aides.

Hearts and Hands attorney Sabrina Gernbacher denied that the company knowingly hired ex-convicts. "It's hard to find good workers, and my client may have unwittingly hired one or two people with criminal records," she said last week, "but Hearts and Hands does not deserve to have its license revoked.

"As usual," she added, "Fields is grandstanding in an attempt to appeal to older voters." (Trends: aging, slower growth)

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Business and Economic News

- **Bemidji to Get Composting Toilet Factory:** Swedish firm attracted by growing market, lower labor costs. (Trends: Aging, Concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **Home Repair Businesses Booming:** Older homeowners are a growing market for repair and maintenance services. (Trend: Aging)
- **Two More Companies Join Education Consortium:** Corporations are taking active role in education as they seek to upgrade worker skills. (Trends: Slower Growth, Rising Dependency Ratio)
- **From the Desk of the Marketplace Editor: Why Savings Are Going Up:** Having learned from the mistakes of their parents and grandparents, young people are saving more. (Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)
- **Noristar Jobs Go to India:** Data entry work is being moved to India because workers cannot be found locally. (Trend: slower growth)
- **Dairy Prices Hit 10-Year High:** Rising foreign sales offset decline in domestic demand. (Trends: aging, increasing diversity)
- **Crime Pays for Prison Labor Broker:** Melby Enterprises posts record profits. (Trend: Slower growth)
- **Trade Office Opens in Shanghai:** A consortium representing Minnesota, Manitoba, North Dakota and South Dakota opens a trade office in Shanghai. (Trend: increasing diversity)
- **Lor Receives Award:** Entrepreneur is recognized by Asian Business Council for his development of a popular large-screen video display terminal. (Trends: aging, increasing diversity)
- **Not Yet Gazette's Entrepreneur of the Week:** Tyrone McGlynn operates a successful van service in the suburbs. (Trends: aging, concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **Bank Opens Rural Offices:** DeSmet Bank cites low labor costs as major factor in choice of location for back offices. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **Blarney People Adds Older Worker Subsidiary:** Blarney People, the nation's third-largest temporary employment agency, has a new division specializing in older workers. (Trends: aging, slower growth)
- **Hobby Farm Prices Soar:** Retiring baby boomers have driven up prices of hobby farms. (Trends: aging, concentration in metropolitan regions)

■ **Dayton's Shrinks Oval Room to Expand "Gorditos"**: High fashion gives way to a popular large-size apparel line. (Trend: aging)

■ **Business Briefs**: Good news about some thriving local businesses. (Trend: aging)

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Bemidji to Get Composting Toilet Factory

Business and Economic News

A Swedish manufacturer of composting toilets yesterday announced plans to build a 250-employee manufacturing plant in Bemidji.

"Opening a new plant here will help us a couple of ways," Svenwaste Vice President Ursula Bergman said. "We will be closer to a growing market, so we will save on transportation costs. And of course, labor costs are a lot lower in Bemidji than they are in Sweden."

Bergman expects most of the toilets to be sold in the Upper Midwest, Ontario and Manitoba.

Demand for dry composting toilets has grown in rural Minnesota as requirements for septic systems have become more rigid. The population boom in popular resort areas in the early 2000s led to several well-publicized instances of septic tank pollution. In response, the Legislature ordered counties to improve standards and inspection of the tanks. The more stringent requirements have raised the cost of septic systems, making composting toilets an attractive alternative for many homeowners.

Composting toilets are also popular with developers of lakeshore property. Since more housing units per hectare can be built with the composting system than with septic tanks, developers can build more houses that have lake access. ([Trends](#): aging, concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Home Repair Businesses Booming

Business and Economic News

Home repair and maintenance businesses are flourishing, according to the Minnesota Building Contractors Association.

With the population growing older and housing values stagnating, more and more houses are occupied by older residents who struggle with heavy maintenance.

Association President Derek Williams said that repair and maintenance contractors have seen an overall 30 percent increase in business over the past 10 years.

"Seventy percent of my regular customers are single women," said Williams, whose firm is based in Chanhassen. "Most association members have almost more work than they can handle doing repairs and maintenance, mostly for elderly homeowners." (Trend: aging)

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Two More Companies Join Education Consortium

Business and Economic News

Two more large Minnesota corporations, REKE Inc. and Tobias Enterprises, are joining the new Business Education Consortium to Improve Education.

"REKE and Tobias Enterprises are proud to be partners in this innovative project," said a statement issued jointly by the two companies. "The consortium is a terrific opportunity to help ensure that Minnesotans are prepared to participate in the workplace of today and the future."

The consortium involves businesspeople in hands-on efforts to improve educational outcomes for preschool through college students. BECIE was formed because employers have had trouble finding skilled workers.

Though businesses have long been involved in education, BECIE marks a new level of financial and personal investment, said the consortium's managing director, Shelby Krueger. Through the consortium, businesses purchase equipment for schools, assist in the classroom and provide management consulting. One-on-one mentoring of students by corporate employees is a key component of the BECIE strategy. ([Trends](#): slower growth, rising dependency ratio)

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From the Desk of the Marketplace Editor: Why Savings Are Going Up

Business and Economic News

Who says people do not learn from the experiences of others? The high savings rate we have seen for the past 15 years shows that young people have learned from the dismal experiences of their parents and grandparents. High poverty rates among people in their 70s and 80s, many of whom are short of money because they did not save enough or did not receive a high enough rate of return on their investments, have provided a sobering example for younger adults.

Back in the 1980s, financial advisors told people they would need to save about \$600,000 per single person or \$1 million per couple to supplement standard retirement plans. This meant they needed to start saving in their 30s, investing \$300 to \$500 per month in funds returning 15 percent or more. Many never did this. This is why we see so many old people working at menial jobs or living in ElderDorms.

The younger generation is doing a lot better. They are far more conscious of the need to build ample savings. There is a down side to all this, of course. Slow growth in the retailing sector has been traced to the higher rate of savings. Many people have had to forego having a second or third child to make sure they save enough for retirement. And the high savings rate means less money is available for supporting parents and other needy relatives.

Not all younger adults have responded by saving more, of course. Some have taken the opposite direction, adopting a hedonistic, "grasshopper" strategy, based on an assumption that since they will never be able to save as much as they need, why should they bother? The grasshopper label derives from a folk tale about frittering grasshoppers and hard-working ants; the grasshoppers of today are the people hanging out at the clubs, drinking and smoking and spending every last dollar. These are the same people who will be living in ElderDorms and on the street in the future. (Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)

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Noristar Jobs Go to India

Business and Economic News

Noristar Inc. announced yesterday that it is moving most of its data entry work to a company in Poona, India. Noristar spokesperson Jennifer Potter said Noristar has had increasing difficulty finding entry-level workers with the necessary skills in Minnesota.

"By moving these operations to India, we will be able to find capable workers who can do the job at a lower price," she said.

Noristar's stock rose dramatically after the announcement, jumping from \$18 dollars a share at noon to over \$20 by market's close. (Trend: slower growth)

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Dairy Prices Hit 10-Year High

Business and Economic News

Wholesale milk prices reached a 10-year high last week, largely because of higher foreign demand. The stronger foreign market, fueled by growing populations in Asia, Africa and South America, has countered the lagging domestic market for dairy products. In the United States, concerns over health effects of dairy products have been exacerbated by the aging of the population and the growth of the nonwhite population. Nonwhites and older people consume below-average amounts of milk and cheese. (Trends: aging, increasing diversity)

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Crime Pays for Prison Labor Broker

Business and Economic News

Melby Enterprises, a provider of temporary prison labor, posted record profits during the past quarter, according to the stockholders' report. Melby acts as the middleperson between employers who need workers and prison officials seeking work opportunities for inmates.

"Melby's prison labor efforts have helped address the growing labor shortage statewide and provided inmates with work skills that will be useful when they are released," said James Hughes, Melby's human resources director. Slow labor force growth in recent years has forced employers to become more creative in their search for workers, Hughes said. While Melby Enterprises has turned to prison labor, other companies have hired more older workers, relied more on technology, or have shipped work overseas.

Stock analyst Nicole Palmer said Melby Enterprises gained an edge on competing firms because it was the first to enter the prison labor field in a major way. Melby's biggest business is a turkey processing plant in central Minnesota, where minimum-security inmates are employed to make "Hoosegow Nuggets" and other specialized poultry products.

Melby recently expanded into the recycling business, taking advantage of new government regulations requiring a higher recyclable component in products and packaging. Inmates sort wastes for recycling at a Melby facility in Washington County.

By law, Melby must pay the state a commission on the wages paid to inmates. The company also must reimburse the state for the salaries of the state correctional officers who guard the prisoner employees. After the state gets its cut and deductions are made for court-ordered fines, restitution and child support, most inmates receive less than a minimum wage, but James Hughes says the company has no trouble recruiting workers.

"With all the crowding in prisons and the cutbacks in

recreational and educational programs," he said, "a lot of these guys are really bored and appreciate the chance to earn some money for their personal needs or their families." (Trend: slower growth)

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Trade Office Opens in Shanghai

Business and Economic News

A consortium representing Minnesota, Manitoba, North Dakota and South Dakota has opened a trade office in Shanghai. Paul Wang, who will staff the Shanghai office, said the consortium will represent all regional trade interests but focus especially on selling hard wheat and other agricultural commodities to the Chinese market.
([Trend](#): increasing diversity)

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Lor Receives Award

Business and Economic News

Visivice Corporation President Larry Lor received the Life Achievement Award at the Asian Business Council's annual business fair on Monday. Lor is the inventor of the Visivice, the large-screen video display terminal that has become the industry standard. In his remarks to the group, Lor attributed the success of his device to its ability to meet the needs of the aging work force for larger print. (Trends: aging, increasing diversity)

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The Not Yet Gazette's Entrepreneur of the Week: Tyrone McGlynn

Business and Economic News

The cold hours he spent as a boy waiting for almost-empty buses in subzero weather gave Tyrone McGlynn the idea that there must be a better way to operate public transportation. That better way has made his firm, McGlynn VanTran, the leading provider of transit in the northern suburbs. McGlynn has just added 10 vans to his fleet and expects to hire another 12 drivers.

McGlynn says his computer system, which automatically figures the best routes for the vans, has been one key to his success.

"Given the spread-out development in the suburbs, organizing the schedule so you can pick up and drop off a couple more passengers makes the difference between success and failure," he said.

With door-to-door service, McGlynn's vans carry an average of 4.1 passengers per trip, compared to the industry average of 3.6.

McGlynn believes customer service is another key to his success. Regular customers receive discounts and are given small gifts on their birthdays.

Many of his drivers are licensed security guards and will escort passengers to the door on request. He offers his employees scholarships to attend security guard licensing and karate classes.

"Since many of our passengers are elderly, security is one of their big concerns," said McGlynn. (Trends: aging, concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Bank Opens Rural Offices

Business and Economic News

DeSmet Bank of Minneapolis will open three small back offices in Kennicott, Babbitt Lake and Sinclair in February, said bank vice president Jason Smiley.

Each office will employ between 15 and 25 people. Smiley said low labor force costs were a major factor in choosing the rural southwestern Minnesota locations.

"We can get qualified people there for a lot less than in the Metroplex," he said. Smiley added, however, that the small size of the rural labor pool did restrict somewhat the size of the facilities. DeSmet's expansion is in keeping with an industrywide trend to concentrate personnel in back offices since the near-universal use of electronic banking has virtually eliminated the need for on-site customer services. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Blarney People Adds Older Worker Subsidiary


Business and Economic News

Blarney People, the nation's third-largest temporary employment agency, is adding a division specializing in older workers.

The new division, called Gray Jay Services, is designed to compete with Personpower's successful Phoenix Resources subsidiary, said Brittney Allred, Blarney People spokesperson.

Slow labor force growth has enhanced the demand for workers, and many companies like the reliability of older employees, Allred said. At the same time, many older workers have been forced to seek employment either because they were laid off or they retired and found they needed extra money to make ends meet. (Trends: aging, slower growth)

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Hobby Farm Prices Soar

Business and Economic News

Prices of hobby farms in high-demand areas have risen so sharply over the past 10 years that these properties are now beyond the reach of many middle-income buyers, according to a new Minnesota Realtors Association report.

After demand for - and the price of - lakeshore property escalated when baby boomers began retiring in the early 2000s, interest grew in other rural properties, especially hobby farms.

Recent retiree Dennis Furlong and his wife, Sharon, had hoped to find a cozy country place, but now they are resigned to staying in their five-bedroom, three-bath Eden Prairie home.

"The prices have gotten ridiculous," Furlong said. "I don't want to spend my retirement worrying about a big mortgage payment."

The Furlongs say they will satisfy their need to "get away from it all" with occasional vacations. Staying put will also allow Sharon to continue her part-time job with a local temporary job agency. (Trends: aging, concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Dayton's Shrinks Oval Room to Expand "Gorditos"

Business and Economic News

High fashion is giving way to a popular large-size apparel line at Dayton's. The retailer announced yesterday that it will reduce its Oval Room to devote more space to its expanding "Gorditos" apparel line, described by Vice President Amy Springborn as "fun separates for fun, large-size men and women." (Trend: aging)

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Business Briefs

Business and Economic News

Good news this week from several thriving Metroplex businesses.... Mott's Funeral Planning, the cut-rate funeral chain, will open a new office and visitation parlor in Woodbury. Mott's well-known "pay before you go" plan offers a package deal including cremation, a nondenominational service and use of the visitation parlor for \$2,025.... Coleman Builders announced plans for the second phase of the Pinewood townhomes development in Hastings. Demand for the one-level, high-security townhomes has been high.... Natural Joints is refurbishing a former Musclebound Health Club in Golden Valley to use for its alternative arthritis treatments. The treatment uses mild exercises and meditation as an alternative to drugs. (Trend: aging)

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Lifestyle and Entertainment

- **Crème de Menthe Nightclub: Where the Grasshoppers Go After Dark:** Newest in-spot helps hedonistic young people "forget about the future." (Trend: rising dependency ratio)
- **Now Playing: At the Movies with Debbie Franz:** Debbie likes the new Johnny Depp movie but pans *Two-Car Garage*. (Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)
- **Restaurant Reviews by Cyndi Fressen:** The good, the bad and the yummy. (Trend: aging)
- **Modern Circuit Rider Replaces Pony with Pickup:** Rural pastor serves several small congregations. (Trends: aging, concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **Matchmaking Is for the Birds:** Birdwatchers' groups bring older singles together. (Trend: aging)
- **Under One Roof: A New Family for the '30s?:** Three generations of one family sharing a suburban home may represent a wave of the future. (Trends: aging, concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **Dear Ebby:** Woman wants advice on whether to take in her long-absent father or let him go into an ElderDorm. (Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)
- **Oldies Station Leads the Pack:** Music of the '90s and '00s earns loyal audience. (Trend: aging)
- **Is TV Getting Too Gloomy?:** Younger viewers complain there is too much discussion of death and illness on TV. (Trend: aging)

The Not Yet Gazette is a fictional newspaper showing one possible future. The stories in the paper reflect major demographic trends projected for Minnesota. These trends include aging, concentration of the population in metropolitan areas, increased diversity, slower growth and a rising dependency ratio.

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Crème de Menthe Nightclub: Where the Grasshoppers Go After Dark

Lifestyle and Entertainment

The hour is late, the music is pounding, and the chemicals are most likely illegal at the Crème de Menthe Nightclub, the latest gathering spot for Metroplex "grasshoppers."

The action usually starts sometime after midnight in the club, located in a cavernous former shopping mall in Edina. "This is the only place to be if you're a real Hopper," said Edwina Lamprey, 25. "I love it. I just party all night and forget how boring my life is."

The grasshopper lifestyle has been under attack by the industrious "ants" who may have to support grasshoppers' retirement because the grasshoppers are not saving for old age.

Lamprey and *homme du soir* Barney Maxwell defended the grasshopper philosophy. "Why work and strive and save?" asked Maxwell. "Most of what you earn goes to taxes anyway. Who knows what the future will hold? I just want to have fun now. I'm tired of being criticized by all these old people. It's their fault the world is so messed up, so who are they to judge?" (Trend: rising dependency ratio)

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Now Playing: At the Movies with Debbie Franz

Lifestyle and Entertainment

Serpent's Teeth Strikes a Nerve

Number one again at the box office last week (including both theater and home-based receipts) was *Serpent's Teeth*, starring Johnny Depp and Keanu Reeves as elderly divorced men struggling to rekindle relationships with their estranged children. The film also features Drew Barrymore as one of Depp's ex-wives.

The effectively sudsy *Serpent's Teeth* obviously hits a nerve with its depiction of the alienation of children of the "divorce generation" from their long-gone and usually absent fathers. ([Trend](#): aging)

Two-Car Garage Collapses

Two-Car Garage, a nostalgic story of a boy growing up in the Chicago suburbs in the 1950s, rips off last year's *TV Dinner* and takes yet another tiresome trip into baby boom sentimentality. All the worn-out clichés - Chevys with big fins, stay-at-home moms, Davy Crockett coonskin caps, discovering the neighbor's girdle hanging on the clothesline - are trotted out once again. Not for anyone under 70. ([Trend](#): aging)

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Restaurant Reviews by Cyndi Fressen

Lifestyle and Entertainment

Bistro de la Mère Mature diners with a yen for the comfort food of their childhoods will be satisfied at owner-chef Tanya Powell's new restaurant, Bistro de la Mère, located at I-494 and France. For her mostly gray-haired patrons, Powell offers a daily special at \$34 for a full portion and \$17 for a half. The Monday meatloaf special, tender and mildly seasoned, is especially popular. Other Bistro specials are pot roast on Tuesday, lasagna on Thursday, and tuna hot dish on Friday. (Trend: aging)

Eduardo's SuperMarket Eduardo's SuperMarkets have expanded the selection of low-fat carry-out meals in their delis, but if my experiences in the Shoreview store are any guide, diners would be better off eating a bowl of Shredded Wheat. The special of the day, for \$15, featured a low-fat rice-lentil salad with mixed fruit compote and a fat-free bran muffin. The muffin was dry and had the texture of sawdust, the fruit was straight out of the can, and the salad looked drab and had no detectable flavor. Eduardo's offers free delivery on all purchases over \$50. (Trend: aging)

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Modern Circuit Rider Replaces Pony with Pickup

Lifestyle and Entertainment

As she drives in her pickup from Dovray to Avoca in west-central Minnesota, Methodist minister Debbie Parker says she feels like one of the circuit riders who helped establish Methodism in its early days.

Parker serves four congregations in four small towns, giving sermons in two of the towns on alternate Sundays. With their membership shrinking due to declining population, the four churches decided to band together and share a minister. Only one of the churches is Methodist; two are Lutheran and one is Congregational.

"Those denominational divisions don't seem as important as they used to," said Karin Olson, a member of Dovray Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

Parker said she relies heavily on laypeople like Olson, who do much of the pastoral visiting and organize services on the Sundays when Parker is at another church. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Matchmaking Is for the Birds

Lifestyle and Entertainment

Years ago, shopping at grocery stores used to be the popular way for singles to find a mate, but now, bird watching has taken its place. Glenn Olson, age 72, and his wife, Linda Watkins, age 69, first realized their mutual attraction during an outing of the Southwest Metro Audubon Senior Birdwatchers.

"We were watching some yellow warblers during the mating season and I guess it gave us ideas," Watkins said with a wink.

Birdwatching clubs are now a major meeting place for over-60 singles. Recent surveys show birdwatching is the only recreational activity where the number of participants is growing faster than the population, and many of the new participants are aging baby boomers.

"It's fun, it's cheap, and it's easy," said Kelly Johnson, president of the club. "All you need is a bird book and a pair of binoculars." Although Audubon Senior Birdwatchers is not a singles' club, several romances have evolved in the quiet of local wetlands, Johnson reported. (Trend: aging)

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Under One Roof: A New Family for the '30s?

Lifestyle and Entertainment

Pavel and Marlena Rubloff built their 400-square-meter home in West Lakeland in 1999 to accommodate their two teenage children and Pavel's investment business. Though more than 25 years have passed since they first moved in, there still are no empty rooms in the Rubloff house. Their daughter, Anna, and her two children now share the house with the elderly couple, and none of them would do a thing to change the arrangement.

When Marlena and Pavel retired in 2012, Anna took over the family business, Rubloff Investment Company and, at their urging, moved in with them in West Lakeland. The arrangement allowed Anna to school the children in the mornings, when business was slow, and her parents to be with them in the afternoon. After Pavel had a stroke in 2017, Anna was there to help her mother care for him through his recovery.

The Rubloffs may be riding the wave of the future. The market for very large homes is dwindling rapidly, housing costs are burdensome for many families, and adequate and affordable child-care arrangements are difficult to make. Will these forces lead Minnesotans' to overcome their aversion to living in multigenerational households?

Only time will tell, but the Rubloffs are enthusiastic about their experience. Anna said being in a multigenerational home has given her children love, education and time to pursue arts.

"It's not because we are Russians," she said. "It's because we are family and we love each other and our children. That's why it works."

The Rubloffs' next-door neighbors, Dick and Loren Schmidt, have a different view. They say they will move to Belize before they invite their children and grandchildren to live in their equally spacious home. (Trend: aging)

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Dear Ebby

Lifestyle and Entertainment

Dear Ebby: I am getting all stressed out trying to figure out what to do about my biological dad. Dad's girlfriend for the past 20 years just left him after they quarreled about money. She saved for retirement, he didn't, and she refused to support him. Now he wants to move in with me. I've only seen Dad about a dozen times in the last 25 years. He left my mother back in 1994, when I was 8 years old, so I don't feel really close to him. But if I don't take him in, he'll be a bum on the street, or worse, he'll have to go into one of those awful ElderDorms. What should I do?

Worried Daughter in Terre Haute

Dear Worried Daughter: You are not alone. I get a dozen letters like yours every week. You will have to look deep in your heart to make your decision. Just remember, if you don't really want your dad, it's better to say so now. It will save unpleasantness and ugly scenes later on. Lots of old people like living in the ElderDorms, and you can visit your dad regularly and invite him over for holidays. (Trend: aging, rising dependency ratio)

Dear Ebby: I am so depressed, I don't know what to do. You might think I have it all. I have a good job as a robotics technician, live in a nice suburban house and have a wonderful 5-year old son. But it seems like all I do is work, come home, do housework, go to bed and then repeat the same routine the next day. My husband, "Greg," is adamantly opposed to spending any money on "frivolities" such as going out, traveling, entertaining or buying new clothes. I would love to have another child, but he says we can't afford it because we need to save money for retirement. Greg is really sensitive on money issues because he comes from a financially dysfunctional family. I know it is important to save, but sometimes I wonder what the point of living is if you never get to have any fun. We don't even get to go to McBurger because he says it's money down the drain. Now that winter is coming, I am even more depressed than usual. I know I will be spending the next six months huddled in the cold because Greg insists on keeping the thermostat at 11 degrees C.

I would hate to divorce Greg. He is really a good man except that he is such a tightwad. Ebby, do you see any way out of my dilemma?

Joyless in Wauwautosa

Dear Joyless: Don't give up, there is hope for you and your marriage. First, you must insist that Greg join Saveaholics Anonymous. This group is invaluable for those who need to find a more balanced approach to managing their finances. Your next step should be a visit to the doctor to get a prescription for one of the powerful new antidepressants. This medication really works, Joyless. After a few doses, you will barely notice your husband's miserly ways. It's obvious you need some other outlet, too. Why not volunteer at a hospital, school, ElderDorm, or some other group that needs your help? Volunteering is a low-cost way for you to get out of the house and meet new friends. The places you volunteer at will probably be heated, too! (Trend: rising dependency ratio)

Dear Ebby: I met my wife, "Jenny," in a computer chat room. She was everything I wanted in a life partner-attractive, hard-working, and with a great sense of humor. This is my third marriage and her second, so we both want things to work out. We married two years ago, and I moved to Jenny's 1,000-hectare hog farm out in a remote rural area. Jenny operates the farm, with a little help from her semiretired father, and I have a home telemarketing business. My problem is that I can't deal with the isolation. Other than Jenny and her father, I don't have anybody to talk to. About a kilometer down the road are the remains of a little town that was abandoned 15 or 20 years ago. Sometimes I go for a walk past this place and it feels really creepy, like it is haunted by ghosts. The nearest inhabited town is 30 kilometers away, and we only go there once or twice a month. Sure, there is computer conversation, but that's not the same as having real flesh-and-blood people around. Now winter is coming, and I am facing six months of swirling snow and howling coyotes. I hate to give up my dream woman, but I just don't think I can stand it anymore.

Lonely on the Prairie

Dear Lonely: Your marital history suggests you tend to give up too quickly. It's time to quit feeling sorry for yourself and take some constructive steps. Maybe you should start helping your wife in the hog barns. Working together will strengthen your relationship. Do you and

Jenny plan to have children? A child will keep you busy and provide another companion. Tell Jenny how you feel; maybe she will agree to go to town more often and get involved in some community activities. (Trends: concentration in metropolitan regions; increasing diversity)

Dear Ebby: I am hosting a bridal shower for my sister in a couple of months and have invited all my siblings, half-siblings and stepsiblings, as well as numerous other relatives and friends. Since Dad has been married four times and Mom three times, we have quite a large family. I'm close to some of my stepsiblings, but there are others I haven't seen for years and scarcely know. How do I introduce all these people to each other? For example, what is the correct term for my stepsister's half-sister? Do I make a distinction between stepsiblings from Dad's current marriage and those from a previous marriage or relationship? I don't want to make a social faux pas or hurt anybody's feelings.

Anxious Hostess in Denver

Dear Anxious Hostess: I recommend you buy a copy of *Blended Family Etiquette* by Lillian Politesse. This book is a godsend for anyone in your situation. (Trend: aging)

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Oldies Station Leads the Pack

Lifestyle and Entertainment

WXYZ, the popular "oldies" station, once again leads the latest Arbitron ratings among 25- to 54-year-olds. The station's steady diet of Nirvana, Beastie Boys, Boyz II Men and other '90s and '00s groups has brought it a loyal audience. ([Trend: aging](#))

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Is TV Getting Too Gloomy?

Lifestyle and Entertainment


Is there too much discussion of death and illness on TV?

"You can hardly turn on a talk show or an entertainment program without having some stuff about death or funeral planning," complained 24-year-old Lemuel Johnson of Shoreview. "It's morbid. When they're not talking about death, they're talking about cancer treatments."

Johnson blames the trend on the large number of older viewers. "My grandmother is always watching that stuff and talking to her friends about cancer and low-fat diets," he said. "It's a real drag."

TV executive Mark Evans denies there is too much illness and death on TV. "There's probably a little more than there used to be, but that's because there's more interest in those subjects." With 184 channels, Evans pointed out, viewers can always switch to another program. (Trend: rising dependency ratio)

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- **[Eagan Man Dies in Hunting Mishap](#)**: Bullet from mother's gun kills bison hunter. ([Trend](#): concentration in metropolitan regions)
- **[Minnesotans Take Tai Chi Honors](#)**: Metroplex residents triumph in masters division at Des Moines tournament. ([Trends](#): aging, increasing diversity)
- **[Sports Chat with Danielle Sydney](#)**: News and gossip from Minnesota sports. ([Trends](#): aging, concentration in metropolitan regions, increasing diversity)
- **[Loons Advance to Playoff Finals](#)**: Loons triumph over Guadalajara Palomas. ([Trend](#): concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Eagan Man Dies in Hunting Mishap

Sports

A hunting accident in Pennrel County claimed the life of an Eagan man on Saturday. Albert Johnson, 23, was hunting bison with his mother, Ardell Simpson, and a brother when he was struck by a bullet fired from his mother's gun. Johnson died instantly, according to Pennrel County Sheriff Heather Alvarez. The incident is under investigation. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Minnesotans Take Tai Chi Honors

Sports

Todd Tibbetts of Chaska won the men's masters division and Vicki Sellner of Minneapolis placed first in the women's masters division at the second Midwest Regional Tai Chi Competition yesterday in Des Moines. Tibbetts was awarded 155 points by the judges, while Sellner set a new record with a near-perfect 169 points.

Both winners have trained with Arthur Wong, the founder of the successful Green Dragon chain of tai chi clubs and a renowned instructor. Wong attributes much of the popularity of the Chinese exercise system to the growing elderly population.

"Tai chi is suitable for all ages," he said, "but older people find the stretching beneficial and they like the spiritual element."

Wong admits he is ambivalent about the trend to turn tai chi into a competitive sport, even though many of his pupils have done well in tournaments. "The purpose of tai chi is to improve your health and make you mentally stronger," he said after watching Tibbetts and Sellner win their divisions. "Why do we need winners and losers? But, after all, this is America. Everything is competitive."
(Trends: aging, increasing diversity)

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Sports Chat with Danielle Sydney

Sports

Is that riverfront golf course back on the front burner? Yesterday's fire on the St. Paul Prairie may have rekindled developer Brian Paddock's hopes of building a nine-hole golf course on the banks of the Mississippi. Only hours after the fire, Paddock was spotted entering the office of St. Paul Mayor Eloise Emerson for a hastily scheduled meeting. Paddock's earlier proposal was backed by Emerson and was popular with the region's many golfers but ran into financing problems and objections from environmentalists. Now, with Mother Nature's help, Paddock may be ready to try again. The price of the burned-over land will be right, and the brush has already been cleared for free.... Insiders say Grass Lake is this year's best spot to watch for migrating wood ducks.... Laughing Loons star Mehmet Akcap has abandoned plans to stay in Minnesota after the soccer playoffs to do a promotional tour. He is said to be homesick for his family in Ankara.... Organizers expect a good turnout for this weekend's 10th annual Intergenerational Rollerblade Race at Elm Creek Park Reserve. The event features competition between teams consisting of grandparents and grandchildren. Insiders say last year's winners, Jim and Linda Lorentz and grandchildren Amos and Frieda Rose-Gallagher, are favored to repeat. (Trends: aging, concentration in metropolitan regions, increasing diversity)

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Loons Advance to Playoff Finals

Sports

Mehmet Akcap's goal with 0:25 remaining in the third period lifted the Minnesota Laughing Loons to a 1 to 0 victory over the Guadalajara Palomas yesterday. The dramatic victory, played before a sellout crowd of 43,567 at Loon Stadium, means Minnesota will face the Vancouver Raindrops next Tuesday in the first round of the North American Soccer League playoffs finals. This is the first time the Loons have made it to the finals. The playoffs are in jeopardy, however, because the players' union is threatening a strike. (Trend: concentration in metropolitan regions)

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Editorials

■ **Should Elderly Prisoners Be Released Early?** The costs of caring for elderly prison inmates have soared, but not everyone favors letting these offenders out early. (Trends: aging, slower growth)

■ **Should Society Bail Out Elderly Grasshoppers?** Poor elderly who failed to save for retirement generate contentious debate. (Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)

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Should Elderly Prisoners Be Released Early?

Editorials

Should more elderly prisoners be released before they have served their full sentences? This question is being debated across Minnesota and the nation. Costs for caring for older prison inmates have soared. Exacerbating the problem, prisoners often develop serious health problems at an early age. Many are heavy smokers or have abused drugs or alcohol.

The central argument for releasing elderly inmates is that society cannot afford the medical and personal care they require. If they are physically impaired, they are not a threat to society and should be released to a less costly type of care. Many could be cared for in nursing homes or halfway houses.

Opponents of early release counter that it does not matter how old and feeble they are; these prisoners were given long sentences and they should serve them. "They have to pay their debt to society," says Sherry Cashman of Stop Coddling, a group opposed to recent movements toward more lenient treatment of convicted criminals. "With the ready availability of guns, even a person in a wheelchair can be a killer. Society can save money by not coddling these old prisoners so much."

Cashman's concerns have merit, but so does the need to save taxpayer money. Careful screening could ensure that prisoners sent to nursing homes or other facilities are not a danger to others. (Trends: aging, slower growth)

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Should Society Bail Out Elderly Grasshoppers?

Editorials

One of the most difficult and contentious issues of the day is what to do about the rising poverty levels among older Americans. This debate has been stirred up again in the wake of new congressional proposals to raise taxes in order to increase Social Security payments for low-income retirees.

The plight of elderly grasshoppers, named after the "live-for-today" insects despised by hard-working ants in the famous folk tale, has aroused both sympathy and scorn. Opinions often cross generational lines; elderly ants who put away enough for a comfortable retirement are often unsympathetic toward their poverty-stricken peers. Like many younger people, they feel we should not raise taxes to bail out older people who failed to save for their retirement. In their view, if old people are poor, it is their own fault. They should have saved more. Private charity and family members can help the needy elderly, say critics of the tax increase. As a last resort, they suggest, expand the ElderDorm program.

Those favoring more aid for poor elderly people feel this is a cruel view more worthy of the 19th century than the 21st. Brooke Kaiser of the Minnesota Gray Rights Movement points out, "Many older people were unable to save money because their wages were too low. In addition, people of that generation expected Social Security would be kept at the same levels their parents and grandparents had. How were they to know the average monthly benefit would be slashed to 10 percent of its 1995 value, in real dollars?"

So far, voters have demonstrated they will not stand for the tax increases needed to keep all older people above the poverty line. Nobody can be happy with the ElderDorm system, but it may be the best we can hope for with our current lopsided age distribution. (Trends: aging, rising dependency ratio)

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What is *The Not Yet Gazette*?

The Not Yet Gazette is an imaginary newspaper with articles that show how future population trends may affect Minnesota and the nation. The stories in *The Not Yet Gazette* represent only one of many possible views of what life will be like in the year 2025.

Unlike many attempts to look into the future, *The Not Yet Gazette* for the most part does not deal with technological change. Instead, it tries to reflect the possible consequences of demographic changes, such as the aging of the baby boom generation and the continued expansion of metropolitan areas.

The Not Yet Gazette is a fictional newspaper showing one possible future. The stories in the paper reflect major demographic trends projected for Minnesota.

The Not Yet Gazette is a byproduct of the projections of population, households and labor force published by the Office of State Demographer at Minnesota Planning in 1993 and 1994. People who use these reports often ask about the implications of these changes. How will they affect government, business and individuals? While no definite answers to these questions exist, the *The Not Yet Gazette* attempts to pull together current thinking about the implications of population change, to give one view of a possible future.

Ideas about possible consequences of population changes come from a variety of sources, including books; magazine, newspaper and journal articles; and discussions with experts in a variety of fields, as well as individuals in and outside state government. While *The Not Yet Gazette* articles are, of course, completely fictional, they are based on some of these ideas and in part on one or more major projected demographic trends.

Readers are invited to submit ideas about the implications of population change that might make good articles for *The Not Yet Gazette* as news tips or letters to the editor. News tips, comments or letters to the editor can be submitted through *The Not Yet Gazette* [Comments Page](#).

Users of population projections need to be aware that the projections can (and do) turn out to be wrong for many reasons, especially if they extend 25 or 30 years into the

future. The potential sources of error are many. For example, the Minnesota Planning projections assume women will have on average slightly less than two children. If they instead have only one child or, conversely, three or four, projections of the number of children will be wrong by a large margin. Technological or lifestyle changes that allow more people to live outside cities could lead to greater-than-expected growth in rural areas. Economic trends could cause more, or fewer, people to move to Minnesota from other states and other countries. Natural disasters or infectious disease epidemics could push the number of deaths higher than expected.

Generally, projections involving people who are already alive when the projections are made will be more accurate than projections of people who have not been born yet. Projections five or 10 years into the future are usually more reliable than those going out 20 or 30 years. Projections of large, slow-growing populations, such as that of Hennepin County or white Minnesotans, will probably be more accurate than those of small, fast-growing populations, such as Asian Minnesotans.

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Projected Minnesota Population Trends

The five major projected population trends that underlie the speculations in *The Not Yet Gazette* are summarized below:

■ Aging

■ Concentration in Metropolitan Regions

■ Increasing Diversity

■ Slower Growth

■ Rising Dependency Ratio

These trends were reported in four Minnesota Planning publications, which include discussions of the methodologies and assumptions behind the projections: *A Changing Population: The Next 30 Years*, August 1993, *Minnesota's Changing Counties: The Next 30 Years*, October 1993, *Tomorrow's Households: The Next 30 Years*, February 1994 and *Tomorrow's Labor Force: The Next 30 Years*, July 1994.

These projection publications are available from Minnesota's Bookstore at 117 University Ave., St. Paul, MN, 55155

Telephone: (612) 297-3000 or (800) 657-3757

E-mail: mnbook.list@state.mn.us

Aging

Members of the large baby boom generation (those born between 1947 and 1964) will move into late middle age and early old age during the next 30 years. In 1990, baby boomers were approximately 26 to 43 years old. In the year 2000, they will be 36 to 53; by 2025, they will be 61 to 78.

Between 1990 and 2020, the population over age 45 will increase substantially, while the under-45 population will decline. After 2010, the number of people over age 65 will grow dramatically as baby boomers reach this age bracket. The very old population, those age 85 and older, will rise rapidly until 2010, after which its growth will slow,

reflecting the low birth rates during the Depression of the 1930s.

From 1990 to 2020, the households that will grow the most will be married-couple families without children, mostly "empty nesters." One-person households will also go up substantially, while married-couple families with children will decline. All of these trends reflect the aging of the baby boom. Older people are much more likely to be empty nesters or to live alone.

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Concentration in Metropolitan Regions

The fastest population growth is projected for the Twin Cities region, particularly suburban and semirural exurban areas beyond the suburbs but still within the Twin Cities commuting area. Strong increases are also projected for the Rochester and St. Cloud areas. By 2020, 68 percent of Minnesota's population will live in one of these three metropolitan areas, including their suburban and exurban areas.

Most of the state's counties are projected to lose population between now and 2020, with losses of 15 percent or more in southwestern and western Minnesota. At the same time, moderate growth is projected for the lakes region of north-central Minnesota. Counties containing regional centers such as Mankato or Willmar are projected to hold their own or grow moderately, while northeastern Minnesota is projected to continue to lose population.

Rural areas will continue to be older on average than growing metropolitan areas. However, the greatest growth in the elderly population will occur in suburban areas that have been growing rapidly and now have many middle-aged residents.

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Increasing Diversity

Populations of color and Hispanic origin will increase much faster than the white population, from 6 percent of the total population in 1990 to about 15 percent in 2020. Especially rapid growth is projected for African Americans, Asians and Latinos.

Part of the growth will stem from foreign migration. Immigration and the globalization of the economy will increase Minnesotans' exposure to a variety of cultural influences.

The projections do not show where populations of color will live, but suburban areas and many smaller cities and towns, as well as in Minneapolis and St. Paul, are likely to see substantial increases in these communities.

Populations of color will be younger on average than the white population. By 2020, it is projected that 22 percent of children ages birth to age 14 will be nonwhite, compared to only 5 percent of people 65 or older.

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Slower Growth

Minnesota's population will not grow as fast in the future as it has in the past. For the decades 1990-2000, 2000-2010, and 2010-2020, growth is projected to be 6.3 percent, 4.6 percent, and 4 percent, respectively. The aging of the population, which will reduce the number of births and increase the number of deaths, is a major reason for the slower growth.

Similarly, the labor force will expand much more slowly than in previous decades. It is projected to increase 10 percent in the 1990s, 8 percent from 2000 to 2010, and 2 percent from 2010 to 2020. The modest growth after 2010 will come solely from higher rates of participation. The number of working-age people ages 15 to 64 will rise until about 2010, when it will begin to fall.

Like population and the labor force, household growth also will be considerably less than in the past. Increases are projected to be 9.4 percent from 1990 to 2000, 9.3 percent from 2000 to 2010, and 7.7 percent between 2010 and 2020.

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Rising Dependency Ratio

Elderly people not only will increase in number rapidly after 2010, but they also will account for a larger proportion of the total population. By 2020, 18 percent of

Minnesotans are projected to be more than age 65, compared to 12.5 percent in 1990. As this rise in elderly people occurs, the dependency ratio - the ratio of the number of children and elderly to the number of working-age people - also will begin to go up. A relatively small number of workers will have to support a large number of retirees and children, increasing the potential for intergenerational conflict.

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Comments

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First name:

Last name :

E-mail address:

Your comments or suggestions:

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