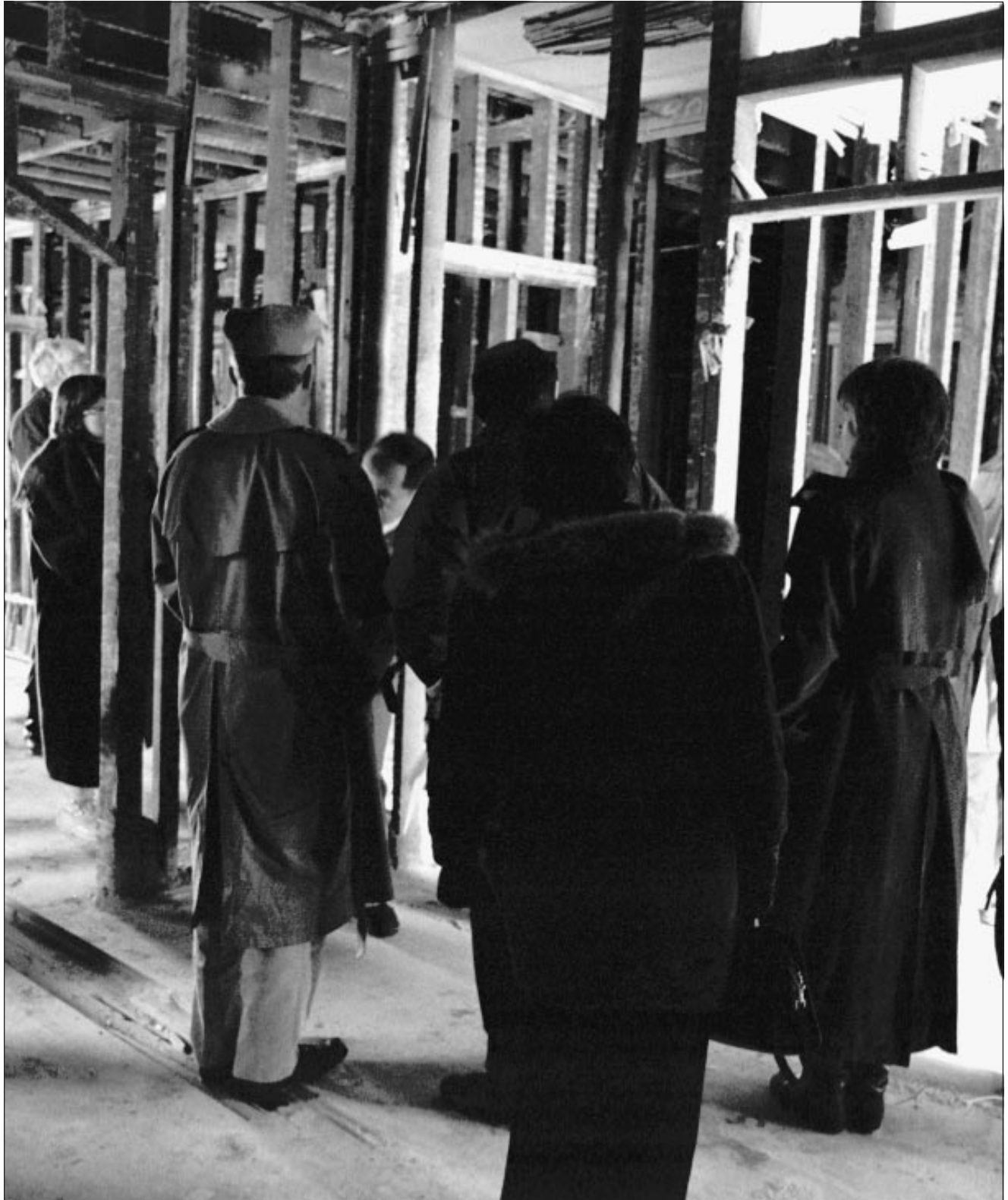


SESSION WEEKLY

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Protecting kids in carts — Small children accompanying mom or dad to the grocery store would be less likely to become a casualty under legislation approved by a House committee. The bill would require retailers to equip their shopping carts with child-protective devices. Page 9

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On the cover: Members of the Housing and Housing Finance Division Feb. 11 toured a community housing rehabilitation project located on St. Paul's West Side.

—Photo by Laura Phillips

Highlights

Snowmobile tragedies . . .

Lawmakers aim to make snowmobiles, trails safer

In the wake of recent tragedies involving high speeds, snowmobiles, and innocent children, state lawmakers are exploring possible solutions to an increasing winter problem.

Stacy Schlosser, 15, and Joshua Renken, 10, are among the record-tying 26 Minnesotans killed in snowmobile-related accidents this season. Their parents brought the heart-wrenching stories of their children's deaths to the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Feb. 12, where the panel approved two bills to further regulate snowmobiling.

"Do you know what it is like to have to look at an empty chair at the supper table every night?" Jan Schlosser tearfully asked committee members. Schlosser's daughter, Stacy, was killed while walking with her twin sister, Sonia, and some friends on Dec. 22 near East Bethel, Minn.

Schlosser said that a lot of people say that the problem is mostly with younger snowmobilers. "But the man who hit Stacy was 42 years old, had been in a bar, and was going down 183rd Ave. at 80 miles per hour.

"The fact that the state does not require licensing, training [for adults], or insurance is just incredible," she said. "I'm not trying



The rising number of deaths in Minnesota from snowmobile accidents has prompted lawmakers to introduce a bill that would require snowmobilers to take a state-approved safety course and carry liability insurance. Snowmobilers under 18 would be required to wear a helmet. The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee approved the bill Feb. 12.

was 20 years old and also had been drinking before the accident. The man had a previous conviction for driving under the influence. "Not every road leads to a bar. But if you pick up a snowmobile map, you will see that many of the trails lead to bars," she said.

Both mothers urged legislators to enact tougher laws regulating snowmobiling. Schlosser called for the nighttime speed limit

ters. The bill also would require all snowmobile owners to carry a minimum level of liability insurance coverage and mandate that riders under 18 wear a protective helmet.

And nighttime speeds would be curtailed. Current law has a maximum speed limit of 50 miles per hour on public lands or waters. **HF406** would lower that to 40 miles per hour between sunset and sunrise. The bill has the support of the Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association.

Most of the committee's discussion focused on those who consume alcohol and ride. About 50 percent of snowmobile accidents are alcohol-related, Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul) said. The current proposals would not change the state's DWI laws.

Under current law, first time DWI offenders face up to 90 days in jail and a \$700 fine. Repeat offenders face up to a year in jail and a \$3,000 fine. Both penalties are the same as those for driving under the influence on Minnesota roads. The penalties accumulate with the offenses regardless of whether they are committed on a snowmobile or in a car. Drunk drivers in cars face tougher penalties if they have a previous conviction for DWI on a snowmobile, and the reverse is true as well.

"The fact that the state does not require licensing, training [for adults], or insurance is just incredible. . . . I'm not trying to say 'let's ban snowmobiles.' But there are a few snowmobilers who must be stopped."

—Jan Schlosser

to say 'let's ban snowmobiles.' But there are a few snowmobilers who must be stopped."

Lori Renken of Big Lake, Minn., was sobbing as she described the death of her 10-year-old son, Joshua, who was killed last month while crossing the street in front of his home. "It's only been three weeks and I'm in a lot of anger right now," Renken began. "I don't know how to shop for groceries anymore. I went shopping yesterday and I'm still buying the things Josh liked."

Renken said that the man who hit her son

to be lowered from 50 to 30 miles per hour. "Please, please pay attention," Renken pleaded.

HF406, sponsored by Rep. Doug Peterson (DFL-Madison), addresses many of the concerns of both mothers.

The proposal, unanimously approved by the committee, would mandate that all snowmobilers take a state-approved safety course before they can ride. Current law only requires those under 18 to take the course before riding on state trails and wa-

Aside from criminal penalties, snowmobilers convicted of riding drunk will have their operating privileges revoked for a year. Those convicted of a DWI while driving a car, however, do not have their snowmobile privileges suspended.

Snowmobilers Michael and Eugene Krueger urged lawmakers not to blame all snowmobilers for the problems created by a few. "I've been a snowmobiler all my life and I don't drink and ride and I never will," said Michael Krueger.

His father, Eugene, told the panel the law needs to come down harder on those who ride while intoxicated. "The problem has to be stopped at the bars."

The elder Krueger said he opposed raising operator fees. "I'm all for training and insurance," he said. "But if you are going to require it you need to regulate the insurance companies so they don't take advantage of us."

HF406 also calls for doubling the current snowmobile registration fee — to \$60 from \$30 every three years — for machines with engine displacements over 335 cubic centimeters. Those fees go into a state account to maintain state snowmobile trails. Many look to an overburdened, underfunded, and out-of-date trail system as part of the problem as well.

"Snowmobiling is a sport that took off in the 1970s and has continued to grow," Peterson said. "Now we have a \$1 billion-a-year sport operating on 1970s trails, 1970s laws, and 1970s enforcement. We need to catch up to the 1990s."

Peterson's bill also calls for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to adopt rules for safety standards on state-supported trails.

The committee also passed a bill (**HF410**) to increase the penalty for operators of snowmobiles and other off-the-road vehicles who flee from law enforcement officers.

Sponsored by Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), the bill would make it a gross misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$3,000 fine. Causing the death of someone while fleeing could result in 10 years imprisonment and a \$20,000 fine. Under current law, fleeing an officer is a misdemeanor, carrying a penalty of up to 90 days in jail and a \$700 fine.

Some snowmobilers would rather flee and face a misdemeanor charge later when they have sobered up than stop for a law enforcement officer and get the stiffer drunken driving penalty, Skoglund told the panel. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that DNR conservation officers are riding older and



Jan Schlosser of Wyoming, Minn., stopped her testimony to recompose herself before continuing to tell the Environment and Natural Resources Committee Feb. 12 of how her daughter, Stacy, was killed by a snowmobiler.

slower snowmobiles and many riders know they can get away, he added.

HF406 now moves to the House Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee. **HF410** was sent to the House Judiciary Committee.

—Steve Compton



CHILDREN

Special-needs adoptions

A bill to better reimburse licensed private adoption agencies who help place children, often from abusive homes, with new adoptive families is on its way to the House floor.

Currently, the Minnesota Department of Human Services reimburses licensed private adoption agencies a maximum of \$4,000 per case and the cap hasn't increased since 1986. Today, it costs agencies from \$8,000 to \$13,000 to place a single child with special needs, said Bob DeNardo, a supervisor in the department's family and children services division.

Under the bill (**HF374**), sponsored by Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud), there would be

no cap on the reimbursement as long as the adoption services for the child were deemed to be "reasonable and appropriate." The Department of Human Services would review each reimbursement request.

The bill won approval from the House Health and Human Services Committee Feb. 11.

The adoption reimbursement helps compensate the private agency for recruiting families, matching them with the right special needs child, and preparing the family for the child through education, counseling, and home visits.

Special-needs children are part of the Adoption Assistance Program and in many cases, have been severely neglected or abused and their parents have relinquished their parental rights to the state. The child may not only suffer from physical problems but from behavioral, mental, and emotional ones as well. Children who do not come from abusive homes, but who are severely disabled or have chronic health problems, can also be considered special-needs children if their parents have relinquished their parental rights.

These children often wait in foster care until someone wants them, DeNardo said.

Currently, there are 813 children in Minnesota who are considered wards of the state. Each year, about 275 to 330 are placed in permanent adoptive homes, DeNardo said.

Last year, more money was set aside for reimbursement for private adoption agencies, but steps to remove the cap have been tied up by a departmental rulemaking procedure. The longer state officials wait to make the change, the greater the risk that fewer children with special needs will be placed.

The current \$4,000 cap discourages private agencies, especially the small ones, from actively seeking families for special-needs kids, DeNardo said, because they cannot recoup their costs.

The bill is designed to speed things up. It now moves to the House floor where it could be placed on the Consent Calendar, which lists non-controversial bills.

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CONSUMERS

Stop the slamming

It's still happening: A long-distance telephone company switches a customer's service without the customer's knowledge or approval.

It's called "slamming" and the methods employed include a check, a sweepstakes form, or a survey. But what the unknowing individual or business doesn't realize is that by participating or signing, they've authorized a switch in their long-distance company.

Members of the House Regulated Industries and Energy Committee discussed the problem Feb. 11.

The 1996 Legislature passed a law to deal with slamming. It states that a customer can have his or her original service reinstated at no charge and be re-billed if the original charges would have been lower. Further, a long-distance company may be liable for civil penalties if it fails to take appropriate actions, according to Eric Swanson of the Office of the Attorney General.

Because most of the provisions took effect on Jan. 1, 1997, it's too soon to assess the law's impact.

Swanson said the best defense is still to be careful. Also, local companies will "freeze" a customer's long-distance service upon request, making it immune to slamming. That, however, prevents customers from taking advantage of offers for lower rates, he said.

Law or no law on the books, "the problem is likely to become even bigger as competition increases," Swanson added.



DEVELOPMENT

Statewide development

Rural Minnesotans might get a boost in their business community, and homeowners could get state-backed loans to fix any damage done by winter storms under legislation approved by the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee Feb. 12.

HF50, sponsored by Rep. Mike Jaros (DFL-Duluth), allows Minnesota's commissioner of trade and economic development to establish at least three trade and economic development officers in non-metropolitan areas. The trade officials will most likely work in outstate tourism offices with local governments to increase economic development.



Jean Herron, a Head Start teacher in South Minneapolis, holds 16-month-old Ebony Hearst of Minneapolis as she enjoys a cookie at the end of the "Head Start on the Hill" rally in the Capitol rotunda Feb. 12.

"I think it would be really good for the department to have a presence in northern Minnesota, central Minnesota, and southern Minnesota," Jaros said, testifying for the bill. "It won't cost any more and . . . it might even save money."

Economic development officers, he said, would be able to cut down on travel if they were stationed closer to the communities with which they work.

The committee also approved legislation sponsored by Rep. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls) that authorizes the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency to make emergency loans to homeowners.

Under **HF343**, loans of up to \$10,000 would be made to low-income homeowners and could be used only for repairs that would prevent damage to the property from severe weather conditions, such as winter storms or spring floods. The legislation, which would become effective immediately after passage and expire July 1, 1997, would allow low-income homeowners to borrow at no interest and to defer repayment. Borrowers with slightly higher incomes would pay an interest rate of 3 percent.

The loan would be forgiven if the borrower lives in the home for 10 years after receiving the money, and it comes due only if the building is sold during that 10-year period.

Both bills now head to the House floor.



EDUCATION

Solution on caps, testing

A bill that would remove statutory caps on education spending and require uniform statewide testing of public school students is headed to Gov. Arne Carlson's desk.

The bill (**HF1*/SF3**) won final passage in the House Feb. 12 on a 129-2 vote. The Senate passed the bill Feb. 13 on a 62-0 vote.

Action on the bill came quickly on the heels of an agreement among legislative leaders to speed its passage. The bill would lift spending caps that, if left in place, would require school districts to absorb a \$337 million cut in funding for the next biennium.

The bill also repeals a current law prohibiting statewide testing, and includes a provision to require statewide testing to begin during the 1997-1998 school year, said Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park). Johnson and Sen. Keith Langseth (DFL-Glyndon) sponsored the bills.

The specifics on how the statewide assessment system would work will be included in separate legislation to be constructed during this session, Johnson said.

Rep. LeRoy Koppendray (R-Princeton) urged support of the bill during debate on the House floor.

"If there are two things the public wants, they want us to fund education adequately, and they want education to have accountability," Koppendray said.

School district officials from around the

state have urged lawmakers to move quickly this session to repeal the education spending caps. Many districts are already forming their budgets for the next school year, and with the caps in place, must plan for program cutbacks and layoffs.

The House passed a bill to repeal the caps Jan. 30 on a 133-0 vote. The Senate passed the bill Feb. 3, but added an amendment that would require statewide standardized testing of Minnesota students. The move temporarily stalled further action on the bill.

Statewide testing has been trumpeted by supporters as a way to increase accountability in public schools by providing a reliable measurement of student and school performance that can be compared to results from other districts and states.

House Speaker Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) said at a Feb. 10 press conference that he and other legislative leaders worked together to avoid a prolonged debate on statewide testing, which would further delay the passage of **HF1*/SF3**.

The agreement, struck by majority and minority caucus leaders from both chambers, eventually led to the bill that won final passage in the House and Senate.

The agreement also calls for the creation of a joint House-Senate committee to devise separate legislation prescribing exactly how statewide testing would be implemented.

"It's a win-win situation," said House Minority Leader Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon). "It's certainly a win for the [school] systems, as they will get the funding that they need. And it's a win for students and parents, as they will get the accountability that they deserve."

The special statewide testing committee will be chaired by Rep. Becky Kelso (DFL-Shakopee), who this year took over as chair of the K-12 Education Finance Division of the House Education Committee, and Sen. Larry Pogemiller (DFL-Mpls), who chairs the Senate Education Committee.

Carruthers said the committee will ensure "an open process" that allows for input from the public, local school officials, the governor's administration, and legislators.

"We've moved the debate off of whether or not we're going to have testing onto what kind of testing we're going to have," said Senate Majority Leader Roger Moe (DFL-Erskine). "The process is under way now. It's not going to stop."

More education options

Parents and students would have new educational choices available to them under a bill considered by the House Education Committee during a Feb. 6 hearing.

HF33, sponsored by Rep. LeRoy Koppendrayner (R-Princeton), incorporates Gov. Arne Carlson's education funding proposals for the next biennium.

Chief among Carlson's proposals is his plan to provide tax relief to parents who send their children to private schools.

The proposal would increase the amount parents can claim as an income tax deduction for education expenses from \$650 to \$1,950 for each dependent in grades K-6 and from \$1,000 to \$3,000 for each child in grades 7-12. The bill also would give a separate credit of \$1,000 per child or a maximum \$2,000 per family to taxpayers with an income of less than \$39,000.

Carlson's plan promises even more in the area of choice.

The bill aims to increase the number of charter schools in the state and would eliminate provisions in current law that limit the total number of charter schools and the number that can be sponsored by public colleges or universities. The bill also would provide grant funding for the so-called "laboratory schools" at select public and private universities in Minnesota and would bolster the state's open enrollment system for public schools.

John Brandl, a University of Minnesota professor and former legislator, praised the governor's effort to give parents and students more financial capacity to choose through tax credits and expanded deductions, and more choices, through more charter schools and college-sponsored lab schools.

"We haven't done well enough. We need better education," Brandl said. "Minnesotans have put their money where their mouths are, but we're still not doing well enough."

Brandl was one of about two dozen people to testify on Koppendrayner's bill during the hearing.

The Education Committee took no action on the bill. Decisions on the governor's proposals will come when the House compiles its omnibus K-12 funding bill later in the session.

HF33 drew support from Mark Myles, Duluth School District superintendent, who said the bill would bring forces of competition to the "protected monopoly" of public education.

Specifically, Myles urged lawmakers to

support provisions in the bill that would provide financial rewards to individual schools for meeting performance goals created on the local level.

"In education, there's too little reward for excellence and too few penalties for mediocrity," Myles said.

Some of the changes proposed in Koppendrayner's bill drew criticism from Therese Van Blarcom, a member of the Elk River School Board.

Van Blarcom called the tax credit and tax deduction proposals in the bill "vouchers of another kind." And she was concerned the bill would drain much-needed resources from public schools.

"Choice has always been available and will always be available," Van Blarcom said. "For those of us who choose public schools, please do not tie the hands of our school boards."



ENVIRONMENT

Future of the white pine

The oldest, tallest, and most majestic trees in Minnesota's forests are the white pine. But with only 2 percent of the state's original white pine population still standing, conservationists, the timber industry, and state officials are all concerned about the tree's future.

A Department of Natural Resources (DNR) work group on regenerating the white pine told the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Feb. 10 that the state should set aside money to help regrow the white pine in Minnesota.

The group recommended that the state set a number of goals for its white pine population that include:

- doubling the number of white pines and the number of acres of young white pines within the next seven years and identifying land suitable for white pine growth;
- adjusting the harvesting of white pines to help increase the trees' chances for a comeback;
- conducting research on genetic improvements to the white pine, not only to help its regrowth, but to help the trees better withstand their natural predators — white-tailed deer and blister rust disease; and
- distributing white pine management information.

Rep. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook) has introduced a bill (**HF693**) that would set aside \$1.5 million over the next two years to help regrow the white pine.

By all measures, the white pine population in Minnesota has declined precipitously over

the last 100 years due mostly to logging and land clearing for farming, according to the DNR work group.

Information recorded during the Public Land Survey of Minnesota (1850-1905) indicated that white pines were then a common occurrence on four million acres of land, mostly in the central and northeastern part of the state. A 1990 Minnesota forest inventory conducted by the U.S. Forest Service showed white pines occurring on only about 63,700 acres. Another study, by the Minnesota Forest Resource Partnership in 1996, put the white pine acreage at 82,000.

The DNR's workgroup recommendations may not go far enough to satisfy some conservationists. In testimony before the committee, Lynn Rogers of the White Pine Society criticized the group's decision-making process. "The timber industry had the power to veto anything they didn't like," Rogers said.

"No one had veto power," said Bruce Zumbahlen, manager of the DNR's Forest Resource Management Division. "We used a consensus-building approach. Recommendations were included in the report only if all members agreed."

"That boils down to a veto," Rogers said.

Rogers' group offered its own recommendations including that the state stop selling its white pines until a sustainable harvest plan is developed for each section of Minnesota. Harvest plans should take into account ecological and aesthetic values and long-term values, he said. Rogers also said that all white pines older than 120 years should be exempt from harvesting.



GOVERNMENT

Ghosts in the machine

The stroke of midnight on Jan. 1, 2000, could mark more than a new millennium — it could signal the start of a massive failure in Minnesota's computer systems, a state official said Feb. 10.

"Some programs may not run at all, or some may sort records in the wrong order," said Bev Schuft, assistant commissioner of the Department of Administration's Information Policy Office. She presented a plan for addressing the problem to members of the Governmental Operations Committee's State Government Finance Division. "Security could be compromised," she warned.

Schuft said that the information office needed \$25 million in new appropriations to implement the Year 2000 Project and head off the disaster. She also said the total cost of

the project can't be estimated because many state agencies have spent money on the problem out of their regular operating funds and will continue to do so. The \$25 million, she said, represented the total amount requested by state agencies to ensure that various "mission-critical applications" would not fail.

The problem, from which private sector businesses are not immune, began in the 1970s when those designing computer systems decided to store years as two digits instead of four. For example, the year 1997 is represented by the numbers nine and seven. As a result, Schuft explained, nearly every computer in the state will interpret the year 2000, represented by a double zero, as the year 1900, throwing whole systems — most notably payroll, pension, and tax collection programs — into disarray.

Jim Close, the information office's Year 2000 Project director, said nearly 84 million lines of computer code and more than 34 billion database records need to be reviewed and corrected. At this point, Close said, the Year 2000 Project team has completed the first three phases of the endeavor — includ-



Minnesota Zoo volunteer Don Merein showed Rep. Howard Swenson and the members of the House Environment and Natural Resource Finance Committee a North American opossum during their hearing Feb. 10. The zoo hopes for a budget increase this year.

ing an impact analysis — and now needs to define the methods, develop a staffing plan, and do the work.

"Finding all the date occurrences is the hardest part," Close said. "Fixing them should be easy."

The entire process should be completed by June 1999.



HIGHER EDUCATION

College bonds

A bill to help families save for their children's college education won approval from a House panel Feb. 12.

HF130 would allow the sale of state and federal bonds in increments as low as \$500. Normally, the tax-exempt bonds are available in denominations of \$5,000 or more.

"We're essentially allowing middle-income families to participate in these purchases," said Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Crystal), the bill's sponsor.

While the bonds will be available for purchase to anyone, the bill has several provisions designed to encourage their purchase for college savings. The first \$25,000 in purchased bonds will not be used in calculating a student's state grant eligibility. And employees will be allowed to pay for the bonds using a payroll deduction plan, which lowers the employee's taxable income.

"Not only will families get a tax break, they get a break in their needs assessment when a student applies for aid," Carlson said.

Similar programs operate in 24 other states, Carlson said. "This is the first step in a larger financial aid package," he added.

The Gopher State savings bonds program will apply to all higher education programs.

A similar bill was passed unanimously by the full House in 1996, but the proposal did not become law.

HF130, approved by the House Education Committee's Higher Education Finance Division, now moves to the full Education Committee.



HOUSING

Helping the homeless

A bill to provide up to \$15 million in grants to aid the homeless won approval from a House panel Feb. 13.

As the Minnesota Legislature grapples with its response to federal welfare reform, housing advocates are asking the state to provide

new funds to prepare for an anticipated increase in homelessness. At the Feb. 13 hearing before the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee's Housing and Housing Finance Division, Sue Watlov-Phillips of the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless said that "In Wisconsin, when they instituted welfare reform, they saw a 60 percent increase in emergency shelter use."

HF99, sponsored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), would establish a \$2 million state emergency services grant program to be administered by the Department of Economic Security (DES). The bill also would add \$3 million to the state's existing \$2.77 million transitional housing program for the biennium. Finally, the bill would create a \$10 million backup fund to be used for either emergency services or transitional housing should the need arise.

Any increased need for current programs for the homeless would strain an already overburdened support system. The number of people using emergency shelters and transitional housing in the state has tripled over the past 11 years, according to DES figures. A total of 4,981 Minnesotans needed services in 1996; 44 percent of those were children.

The emergency services grants under **HF99** could be used by local units of government and nonprofit organizations to provide emergency shelter or assist homeless persons in obtaining other services such as medical and psychological help, employment counseling, substance abuse treatment, emergency child care or transportation.

The DES commissioner could require grant recipients to provide \$1 in nonstate funds for every \$2 received in grant funds.

The transitional housing program targets those in a temporary housing crisis in an attempt to stabilize their lives and prevent them from slipping into homelessness. "The transitional housing program is a welfare reform program that we have pioneered in Minnesota," Watlov-Phillips said Jan. 30 when the bill was first brought to the committee.

Use of the \$10 million contingency fund would depend on the governor's determination that homeless persons are being turned away from emergency shelters due to a lack of available space.

Also testifying at the Jan. 30 meeting was Bonnie McCarty, who had her own crisis when, after 25 years of marriage, she experienced a contentious divorce followed by a health crisis. She lost her home and, after going through back surgery, turned to the Mankato Coalition for the Homeless for help.

"Now I have moved to St. Paul," she said.

"I have finished my degree and am now working full time and paying full rent."

HF99 now goes to the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee.



LABOR

Helping dislocated workers

A plan by Gov. Arne Carlson to slash the budget of Minnesota's Dislocated Worker Program received no endorsement from the person he appointed to oversee it.

"This is a very good program," said R. Jane Brown, commissioner of the Department of Economic Security. "It is ranked near the top in the nation."

Carlson's budget would cut the Dislocated Worker Program by \$14.5 million per year — nearly half its annual budget.

The state program, (which also receives dollars from the federal government), was created in 1991 to help those who have lost their jobs due to obsolete job skills, company downsizing, or plant closings.

In fiscal year 1995, the program helped 14,781 people return to the workforce at an average hourly wage of \$12.15.

Jim Korkki, director of the Dislocated Worker Program, told the House Labor-Management Relations Committee on Feb. 10 that three types of people are helped by the Dislocated Worker Program.

"Some just need assistance writing their resume and getting back in the job market," he said. "Others have skills that need upgrading with a class or two. A third group has

obsolete skills that are no longer marketable. They need to be retrained for a new career path."

The program is currently funded by a 0.1 percent payroll tax paid by all Minnesota employers. On average, the program costs about \$30 million per year, Brown said. Of the \$14.5 million per year Carlson wants to cut from the existing program, about \$6.5 million would go to the state's general fund. The remaining \$8 million would cover deficits at the Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association (MCHA).

MCHA is the state's high risk insurance pool for people who are uninsurable or with chronic health conditions. There are approximately 32,000 enrollees in MCHA, according to Minnesota Commissioner of Commerce David Gruenes. He explained to the panel that Carlson believes the move is a legitimate use of dislocated worker funds, since the statutes that set up the fund include a provision for support services which may include health care. Some dislocated workers are assisted by MCHA when they are laid off and lose their health care benefits, Gruenes said.

Rep. Ken Wolf (R-Burnsville) asked if Carlson's recommendation might be based on a declining need for the program. Brown answered that even though unemployment is low, many people are in job transition.

The trend is for larger layoffs, Korkki told the committee. "And that trend is continuing."

"There is a great deal of churning in both Minnesota and the country as a whole," Brown said. "And people who are laid off are needing greater skills to get reemployed."



Sylvia Herndon, an assistant administrator for Catholic Charities in St. Paul, led members of the Housing and Housing Finance Division through Mary Hall, a transitional housing and emergency shelter facility, Feb. 11. The room pictured is an emergency shelter area.



OUTSTATE

Snow cleanup costs

A second House panel has approved a proposal to mark \$20 million to help cities and counties recoup some of their weather-related costs.

Sponsored by Rep. Stephen Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls), **HF100** would authorize the commissioner of public safety, the governor, and the Legislature to appropriate grant money to cities, counties, and towns for recent severe weather-related matters. Most of the appropriations would be matched by federal emergency funds.

How bad has this winter been? The average December snowfall in Duluth, Minn., is 16.1 inches. But this December, 41.7 inches fell.

Similar statistics can be reported for most of the towns and counties throughout Minnesota during the winter of 1996-97. By just about every measure, including low temperatures and wind, it has been the century's most severe winter. Forty-nine counties in western Minnesota have been declared federal disaster areas.

The result? The majority of Minnesota counties are staring at empty emergency-management coffers. Funds for snow removal have long since dried up.

Even with the infusion of \$20 million, the shortfall in counties throughout the state is almost \$60 million, according to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS).

"This money won't begin to cover actual costs," said James Franklin of the DPS. "It provides a percentage of budget overruns."

And the worst may not be over. The National Weather Service is preparing its first forecast for spring flooding.

Another big concern: "What if this winter isn't an aberration?" asked Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul). "What if, for the next 20 years, we keep having 'historic' snowfalls?"

Franklin said the DPS has developed a plan to track problem areas throughout the state and apply preventive measures. A major element will be to build "living snow fences" of trees that would block wind, and thus, prevent the huge drifts that have plagued counties this year. "We can't prevent snow, but we can prevent how it blows," Franklin said. The plan is currently in search of funding.

Franklin said counties that intend to seek funding should prepare by reviewing and updating their emergency response plans, identifying problem areas, and exploring

partnerships and other innovative ways to deal with emergencies.

HF100, approved by the House Judiciary Committee's Judiciary Finance Division, now moves to the full Judiciary Committee.



TECHNOLOGY

I want my HDTV

Minnesota's largest public television station plans to construct a digital broadcast facility in anticipation of shifting industry standards, a public television executive told members of the House Governmental Operations Committee's State Government Finance Division Feb. 11.

"The Digital Age is upon us," said Jim Kutzner, vice president at Twin Cities Public Television, which runs KTCA (Channel 2) and KTCI (Channel 17). "This is not going to be simply analog television stuffed into a new system."

What it will be, Kutzner said, is the application of a technology that is fundamentally different from anything that has come before it. Digital television stations will be able to provide a High-Definition TV signal comparable in quality to a 35 mm Hollywood film. In place of the HDTV signal, the station could choose to broadcast four signals of lesser quality through the same digital cable, allowing for a much broader range of programming.

Twin Cities Public Television, Kutzner said, plans to build the digital station, at a total cost of \$2.25 million, and have it on line by August 1998. It would be one of the first such stations in the world. The station plans to provide \$1.5 million of the total, and hopes the state will provide the other \$750,000. (Gov. Arne Carlson has called for the appropriation in his budget recommendations.)

Public television's share of the funds, Kutzner said, will come, in part, from partnering with the private sector, although the details of that arrangement have yet to be finalized.

"We recognize that in order for us to survive in the new world," Kutzner said, "there's going to have to be a healthy marriage of mission and revenue."

Television and computer manufacturers have argued for years over the industry's digital broadcast specifications. In December 1996, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) finally adopted standards (defined by the Advanced Television Systems Committee, a group formed specifically to develop a solution to the problem).

Those standards decreed that all broadcasters must phase in the new digital technology immediately. The FCC is expected to assign digital TV frequencies to broadcasters in the near future.

"When this occurs," Kutzner said, "the gates will be thrown open" to rapid product development, and Minnesota, with its new station, could quickly become an industry leader.



SAFETY

Protecting kids in carts

Small children accompanying mom or dad to the grocery store would be less likely to become a casualty under legislation approved by the House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee Feb. 13

HF10, sponsored by Rep. Mike Jaros (DFL-Duluth), would require retailers to equip their shopping carts with child-protective devices. Children, Jaros said, have a propensity to fall out of shopping carts, often sustaining potentially lethal head injuries as a result.

"There are kids dying out there," because of shopping cart accidents, Jaros said in support of the bill. "This is probably the best pro-life legislation you'll see this session."

Yet **HF10**, which was approved by an 11-9 vote, also drew some objections. Children riding in shopping carts often suffer facial injuries, too, noted Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina). "Should we not mandate helmets if children are going to ride in these kinds of vehicles?" he asked.

The bill now goes to the House floor.



TRANSPORTATION

Minors must buckle up

Police would have the authority to stop cars if passengers under 18 years old are not using seat belts, under a bill on the way to the House floor.

HF221, sponsored by Rep. Jim Rhodes (R-St. Louis Park), was approved Feb. 12 by the House Transportation and Transit Committee.

"We feel it's a safety issue, a children's issue, and a health issue," Rhodes said. "We think this will save lives. It's that simple."

Rhodes' bill would make two significant changes in state law regarding the use of seat belts.

First, it would extend existing law requiring all occupants between the ages of 3 and

11, regardless of where they are seated in the vehicle, to wear seat belts to include anyone between the ages of 3 and 18.

(Current law requires passengers aged 3 and under to be secured in child car seats. Passengers aged 11 and up currently are required to wear seat belts only when riding in the front seat. Under the bill, passengers aged 18 and up still would be required to wear a seat belt only when in the front seat.)

Second, the bill would make it a primary offense not to have all occupants between 3 and 18-years-old buckled up.

Currently, violation of seat belt require-

ments for occupants older than 3 is a secondary offense. That means police can issue a citation only after a vehicle is stopped for a moving violation or another violation involving vehicle equipment.

The bill would allow police to stop any vehicle in which any passenger between 3 and 18 years old, whether in the front seat or back, is not using a seat belt.

Rhodes supported his bill with a Department of Health report showing the majority of minors who suffered serious neurological injuries in motor vehicle crashes were not wearing seat belts.

According to the report, crashes in the years 1993-1996 caused brain and spinal cord injuries to 407 children under 18 who were not wearing seat belts. Only 198 children in that age group suffered similar injuries despite wearing seat belts.

The report also showed that a disproportionate number of neurological injuries were suffered by children 15 to 17 years old. The injury totals for that age group include 265 people not wearing seat belts and 87 wearing seat belts.

Rhodes' bill passed on a voice vote.

New members . . .

Sekhon focuses on education, environment issues

After two years of watching from the sideline, Rep. Kathleen Sekhon (DFL-Burns Township) has returned to the House with idealism tempered by realism.



Rep. Kathleen Sekhon

Sekhon, who served one term in the House before a 1994 election defeat, still has many of the same concerns as during her first term. However, she acknowledges that she has a different outlook from when she arrived at the Capitol to begin her first term.

"Certainly, I come with a more realistic picture of what can happen and what I can accomplish," Sekhon said. "You could easily work around the clock for six months and still not do everything worthwhile. My goal is to try to streamline the process, based on what I learned three and four years ago, so that I can make the best use of my time."

After losing her seat to Republican Tom Hackbarth, of Cedar, Minn., in 1994, Sekhon returned to her career as a teacher, working as a substitute mainly at the middle school level, and remained involved in several community groups.

As the 1996 election approached, there was little doubt about Sekhon's intentions.

"The issues that were of top concern to me are continuing issues," she said. "We need to have committed people who are willing to work hard if we are going to accomplish the things that we need to accomplish. It was clear to me that I was going to run again."

Sekhon regained her House seat in a closely fought rematch with Hackbarth. It was her second victory in four consecutive campaigns for the House.

The oldest of seven children, Sekhon grew up in Pipestone, Minn., and received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Minnesota-Duluth. She is married and has three children, all in college.

Sekhon's political life began in 1980, when she attended her first precinct caucus. She wound up being a delegate to the state DFL convention that year, which led her to further involvement in the party and in other political organizations. She served as co-chair of the DFL Platform and Issues Commission from 1984 to 1990, when she launched her first campaign for office.

Issues such as education funding, environmental protection, and workplace safety make up the core of Sekhon's legislative agenda.

This year, she has been named vice chair of the Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee, and she also is a member of a separate environment policy committee.

From those positions, Sekhon plans to be a voice for groundwater protection, waste reduction, and improved waste management. Her take on environmental issues focuses on the long-term implications of current policies and practices.

"We need to consider the future costs of what we are doing today," she said. "I want to look to the future when we're making our policy decisions."

Education funding and property tax reform are two issues that go hand-in-hand, according to Sekhon. She would like to see significant changes to address both problem areas.

"We need to change the way we fund our schools," she said. "I'd love to see 100 percent state funding and no dependence on residential property taxes."

"I don't know that we're going to be able to get to that point, but I think more and more legislators are realizing that the property tax is not the best way for us to be funding schools."

The forecast \$1.4 billion surplus in state coffers provides a rare chance to make significant changes, Sekhon said, and that provides her additional reason for optimism as returns to the House.

"When I was here last time, it was during the shortfall period," she said. "It's going to be very exciting working at a time when we do have a good economic forecast, when it looks like we have some money we can use for critical investments like education."

Sekhon heads into her second term with a clear message from her constituents, a group she believes to include an unusually large number of independent voters with little interest in partisan politics.

"They want work done. They don't want bickering and partisan attacks," Sekhon said. "That's very counterproductive, and I don't think it will be tolerated by the people in my district."

—Nick Healy

District 50A

1996 population: 37,063

Largest city: East Bethel

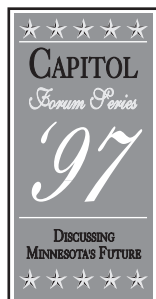
County: Anoka

Location: northern metropolitan area

Top concern: "People in my district are concerned about a whole range of issues. I think they want government that is efficient and effective. For the most part, I think people in the district realize that we do have shared responsibilities and that government is the way that we can get the things done that are best done together, like educating our children."

—Rep. Kathleen Sekhon

Mighty morphin' lawmakers must respond to change



Forty years ago, an entire generation thrilled to the adventures of the Lone Ranger and his faithful companion, Tonto. Today, kids like to pretend they're the Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers, while their parents wonder whatever happened to "Hiyo, Silver — away!"

And that, said cultural anthropologist and author Jennifer James, is precisely the problem.

James has authored the book, *Thinking in the Future Tense*, which explores the skills Americans will need to survive in our rapidly changing culture. She spoke to a group of legislators Feb. 11 at the Minnesota History Center's 3M Auditorium as the second of five speakers in the Capitol Forum Series, sponsored by Minnesota Technology Inc. and the McKnight Foundation.

"Look at them," James said of the animated characters who combat intergalactic evil. "Half of the time they're dinosaurs and half the time they use technology... and they transform back and forth. When they can't deal with a problem, they pull everybody together — all genders, all races — and morph into a new entity."

The power rangers, James said, have become one of the new American myths, deftly illustrating all of the qualities employers seek in workers today: flexibility, an appreciation for diversity and teamwork, and a willingness to embrace new technologies. And most of us just don't get it.

Our culture, James said, has experienced profound change during the last two decades. Moreover, the pace of that change will not slow anytime soon. Indeed, it will accelerate. As it does, the weaknesses inherent in many of our institutions, which James referred to as "lodges," will become even more pronounced than they are now.

For example, she said, a degree from the Citadel, that Southern bastion of male military tradition, once guaranteed a commission in the army or a position on the fast track in a Southern corporation. Today, the times have changed and the military has changed with them. Women and minorities have positions of power in the armed services and the Army is often held up as a model of affirmative action that has worked.

And the Citadel? James asked. They're too busy hazing each other to notice, she said.

"Now those companies," that used to hire Citadel grads, James said, "are working on a diverse, team concept and they don't want a bully."

But the cracks in the "lodge" walls extend far beyond the Citadel, she said. Pick an institution — the legal or medical professions, academia, politics, even that cornerstone of American values, the nuclear family. All of these "lodges," she said, have become inadequate, at best — perhaps even destructive — as people evolve out of the hunter-gatherer mentality and into the future.

James framed this evolution in a structure of four interlocking areas: technology, economics, culture, and demography. Each, she said, provides a bit of context that, when taken as a whole, will define the new mindset.

Technology, she said, will also dramatically change the way we work, much more than it has already, as greater numbers of

people work out of "technology cottages" in their homes. Correspondingly, she said, workers can enjoy more family time and closer relationships because they choose when they want to work, rather than having it defined by the company.

"Everything the Industrial Revolution took away," James said, "we can get back... [but] when technology shifts, so do the means of production. We're developing a new character and a new worker."

And as corporations have begun to seek out workers who can thrive in the new high-tech environment, she said, the old class structure is falling away. A new one, based on different definitions of mental health and intelligence, has begun to develop. For example, technology has brought about something that has never existed before; today, a five-year-old can routinely beat an adult at a video game and that kid is potentially a more valuable worker than the adult.

Corollary of the new worker, she said, is a new demography. Of course, if you change the demography, you change the culture, which is where the power rangers come in.

The kids watching the power rangers will create our new lodges, our new institutions, for the good of the community, James said, and legislators need to let that happen.

"You need... to set the model," James said to legislators. "This is an extraordinary time in history. You are the examples."

Many of the legislators who heard James said they came away with a remarkably changed view of their role as policymakers — particularly with regard to the legacy of their decisions.

"Some of the things she said ruffled my edges a bit, but they made me think I've got to change," said Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township), adding that James seemed to raise hackles in both the DFLers and Republicans. "For my kids... we've got to change."

Other lawmakers said James provided some valuable insight and allowed them to think outside of the box traditionally the domain of the representative.

"It's important for us to hear," said Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park), the day after the lecture, adding that she thought of James' remarks in a committee hearing. "It's forced me to think 10 years down the road instead of one."

— F.J. Gallagher



Jennifer James, a cultural anthropologist and author of the book, *Thinking in the Future Tense*, lectured lawmakers on the dynamics of change, Feb. 11, at the Minnesota History Center. The lecture was part of the Capitol Forum Series '97.

Committee Scopes & Agendas

1997-98 Minnesota House of Representatives

The Minnesota Legislature — the House of Representatives and the Senate — is divided into many committees, divisions, and sub-committees. Since thousands of bills are introduced during each two-year legislative session, it is impossible for any one legislator to become an expert in all areas. Therefore, each legislator serves on three to five committees and divisions, which allows him/her to focus on just a few areas of policy or finance.

In a sense, the committee structure forms the heart of the Legislature. Although many people believe that most of the legislative process occurs on the House and Senate floors, it's in committee where most substantive action occurs. It is there where each bill is pored over and dissected, where key amendments are added and sections are deleted, and where recommendations for approval are given or withheld.

In an effort to provide people with a general outline of House activities this session, as well as an indication of where to go with various issues of concern, the Session Weekly asked House committee administrators and chairs for brief, general descriptions of the functions of their committees and divisions. More specifically, they were asked what topics were likely to be considered this session.

Here are the results of the survey — a list of all committees and divisions, the boundaries of their concerns, and in most cases, some specific areas they expect to address during the 1997 session.

Agriculture

Scope

Reviews farm policies and programs to assist Minnesota family farmers; promotes interstate and international trade; develops strategies for marketing agricultural commodities; reviews and enacts legislation covering regulations and inspections of farm pesticides, food, and dairy products; and develops programs to encourage soil conservation.

Agenda '97

- Ethanol funding programs
- Large scale agriculture issues (corporate farming)
- Various fee proposals from the Department of Agriculture
- Dairy pricing issues

Capital Investment

Scope

Recommends objectives and goals in undertaking state debt; reviews the governor's capital budget proposals for state buildings and infrastructure; recommends debt management practices to maintain the state's credit rating; reviews every bill where the good faith and credit of the state is being obligated; and sets overall debt finance limits.

Agenda '97

- Emergency capital improvement projects
- ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) projects in prisons
- HEAPRA/CAPRA (Higher Education Asset Preservation and Renewal Account/Capital Asset Preservation and Renewal Account) overview
- Cancellations of old bond authorizations

Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs

Scope

Considers legislation in the areas of consumer affairs, professional licensing, tourism, small business issues, and liquor regulations; examines administrative rules and rulemaking and how to limit the impact of regulation on Minnesota's small and main street businesses.

Agenda '97

- Consumer protection
- Tourism
- Professional licensing

Economic Development & International Trade

Scope

Examines Minnesota's economic and job needs, emphasizing world competitiveness; makes recommendations to enhance the state's economic strength; and provides funding to various state agencies through its two finance divisions.

Agenda '97

- Set policy and funding requests for the various state agencies that are dealt with by the committee and its two finance divisions.

Economic Development Finance Division

Scope

Reviews and recommends funding for the Minnesota State Arts Board, Department of Commerce, Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, Council on Black Minnesotans Chicano and Latino Affairs Council, Department of Economic Security, Minnesota Historical Society, Minnesota Humanities Commission, Indian Affairs Council, Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, Department of Labor and Industry, Labor Interpretive Center, Mediation Services, Minnesota Municipal Board, Minnesota Technology Inc., Non-health boards, Public Utilities Commission, Department of Trade and Economic Development, Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals, World Trade Center.

Agenda '97

- Working with agencies to make sure they have the tools and support they need to prepare for the onslaught of people entering the workforce because of welfare reform
- Looking at new initiatives for future economic development in the metro and greater Minnesota areas
- Arts funding
- Reviewing, considering, and administering funding to existing programs as well as possible new initiatives

Housing & Housing Finance Division

Scope

Examines all aspects of housing programs and policy; focuses on preventing homelessness and preserving existing affordable housing; and targets community-based revitalization and rehabilitation.

Agenda '97

- Impact of federal welfare reform
- Homelessness prevention funding
- Low-income home ownership
- Rural and inner city housing and economic development
- Landlord and tenant issues

Education

Scope

Handles family and early childhood, K-12, and postsecondary educational policy, state-wide school and higher education funding, and the structure of public education.

Agenda '97

- Education/higher education funding
- School standards and accountability
- Vocational education (K-12 and higher)
- Education planning and transition (school to work, school to college)
- Technology at all levels

Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Division

Scope

Works to increase the well-being of children and families by integrating the importance of education into every program under its jurisdiction; includes three approaches — prevention, early childhood and family/community support, and self sufficiency/lifelong learning.

Agenda '97

- Strengthening child care in the wake of welfare reform
- Enhancing Adult Basic Education
- Supporting collaboration among community action programs

Higher Education Finance Division

Scope

Determines operating and capital budgets for the University of Minnesota; the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU); the Higher Education Services Office, including financial aid and programs for students at both public and private institutions; selected programs at the Mayo Medical School; and the Higher Education Facilities Authority.

Agenda '97

- Higher education budget — base funding increase
- Financial aid and tuition policy
- Technology — addressing needs of students, faculty, and staff
- Cooperation of systems — coordination of service
- Master academic plan for metro region

K-12 Education Finance Division

Scope

Provides policy direction and funding for the state's K-12 education system, which includes all public school districts, academies, the Department of Children, Families and Learning, education finance (school aids), Minnesota Center for Arts Education, the Faribault academies for people who are blind and for those who are deaf, public libraries, and the Permanent School Fund.

Agenda '97

- Discussion and adoption of the 1998-99 biennial budget
- Student/school accountability measures
- Site-based decision making
- School-to-work/school-to-career
- Technology in schools

Environment & Natural Resources

Scope

Examines issues relating to air and water quality; pollution and its prevention; land use and preservation; ground and surface water resources; solid, hazardous, and radioactive waste management and reduction; forestry, mining, and agricultural practices; wildlife protection; hunting, fishing, and other outdoor public recreational activities; environmental education; and sustainable development initiatives.

Agenda '97

- Constitutional amendment to extend time for lottery proceeds to be dedicated to the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.
- Land use
- Forest management

- Chemical contamination; impacts on humans and wildlife (frogs, etc.)
- Water and air quality (feedlots, indoor air, septic systems, etc.)
- Nuclear waste storage

Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Scope

Oversees the budgets of state agencies: Academy of Science, Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Utilization Research Institute, Board of Animal Health, Ethanol Development, Environmental Assistance Office, Horticulture Society, Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources, Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Commission, Minnesota Zoo, Department of Natural Resources, Pollution Control Agency, Science Museum, Board of Water and Soil Resources, and Voyageurs National Park.

Agenda '97

- Agency budgets for 1998-99
- Snowmobile trail funding and safety issues
- Rededication of the trust fund
- Increase in game and fish licenses
- Ethanol subsidies

Financial Institutions & Insurance

Scope

Reviews laws pertaining to banks, savings and loans, and credit unions; examines consumer rights in insurance and availability of insurance for individuals and companies and all other aspects of the insurance industry.

Agenda '97

(unavailable)



In a sense, the committee structure forms the heart of the Legislature. Although many people believe that most of the legislative process occurs on the House and Senate floors, it's in committee where most substantive action occurs.

General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Scope

Reviews election concerns and matters involving the Minnesota Ethical Practices Board, veterans and military affairs issues, and legislation unrelated to other House standing committees, such as laws governing cemeteries.

Agenda '97

- Gulf War bonus
- Military affairs/elections housekeeping
- Elections issues, such as absentee balloting and Grove Commission recommendations
- Ethics
- Size of the Legislature
- Veterans Homes Board issues

Governmental Operations

Scope

Reviews any bill that substantially changes or creates a new state department, agency, commission, board, or bureau; deals with public employee pension plans, state workers' employment and salary issues, and administrative rules. It also votes on appropriation recommendations of the State Government Finance Division.

Agenda '97

- Sunsetting rules
- Creation of an office of technology
- Pension issues
- Salary increases for state agency heads

State Government Finance Division

Scope

Reviews and recommends appropriations for state departments, commissions, agencies, and other accounts, including: Administrative Hearings Office, Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, contingent accounts, Department of Administration, Department of Employee Relations, Department of Finance, Department of Military Affairs, Department of Revenue, Department of Veterans Affairs, Disabled American Veterans, Ethical Practices Board, joint legislative commissions, Gambling Control Board, Legislature, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission, Minnesota Planning Office, Minnesota Racing Commission, Minnesota State Retirement System, Office of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Office of the Attorney General, Office of the

Secretary of State, Office of the State Auditor, Office of the Treasurer, Public Employees Retirement Association, Salary Supplement, State Board of Investment, tort claims, and Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Agenda '97

- Omnibus State Government Finance Bill
 - Technology initiatives and funding
 - Funding of the Persian Gulf War veterans' bonuses

Health & Human Services

Scope

Receives all bills relating to health issues and various social services in the state; reviews issues relating to health maintenance organizations; deals with the licensing of health care providers and social workers; reviews and recommends welfare programs, policies, goals, objectives, and reforms.

Agenda '97

(unavailable)

Health & Human Services Finance Division

Scope

Reviews administrative and legislative funding proposals administered by the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, the Council on Disabilities, the Veterans Homes Board, all health-related licensing boards and ombudsman offices. The recommendations of the Health and Human Services Finance Division are forwarded to the House Health and Human Services Committee.

Agenda '97

- Funding \$5 billion budget
- Funding federal welfare reform mandates
- Restoring MinnesotaCare eligibility for adults without children

Judiciary

Scope

Reviews all areas of Minnesota's *criminal* justice system, including sentencing practices, corrections policies, law enforcement issues, prosecution and public defender services, probation services, and the operation of the courts. Also reviews all areas of *civil* law, including family law and civil liability. Responsible for data practices policies, including the classification of government data as public or private.

Agenda '97

- Anti-gang initiatives
- Crackdown on criminals with guns
- Open up juvenile court proceedings
- Focus on chronic misdemeanants
- Stronger laws to deal with nuisance properties, such as crack and drug houses

Civil & Family Law Division

Scope

Reviews all areas of Minnesota's civil laws, including family law, business law, personal injury law, probate, landlord-tenant, and nuisance law; places an emphasis on system reform and affecting positive change.

Agenda '97

- Equal access to justice for all Minnesotans
- Alternative dispute resolution
- Parenting plans for divorcing parents (instead of custody, visitation, and support disputes)
- Nuisance laws as a way to do "community policing" and "community prosecuting"

Judiciary Finance Division

Scope

Oversees the budgets of state agencies related to corrections, courts, law enforcement, and violence prevention, including those of the Board of Judicial Standards, Board of Public Defense, Court of Appeals, Department of Corrections, District Court, Ombudsman for Corrections, Crime Victims Ombudsman, Department of Human Rights, Private Detectives Board, Department of Public Safety (criminal justice sections), Peace Officers Standards and Training Board, Sentencing Guidelines Commission, Supreme Court, Tax Court, and the Uniform Laws Commission.

Agenda '97

- Juvenile issues
- Crime prevention
- Funding Judiciary, Corrections, and Public Safety without creating a negative impact on property taxes
- Probation officer workload reduction
- Criminal justice technology

Labor-Management Relations

Scope

Considers reemployment insurance, workers' compensation, public and private labor relations, occupational health and safety, wage and hour requirements, as well as regulating employment practices, such as discrimination and leaves of absence.

Agenda '97

- Minimum wage and tip credit
- Employment development regarding welfare reform
- Public employment labor relations
- Reemployment taxes and benefits
- WCRA (Workers Compensation Reinsurance Association) surplus premium

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Scope

Examines local government and makes recommendations concerning the relationship between state and local governments; examines local governments jurisdiction, control, and bonding authority; reviews metropolitan agencies' structures, goals, and programs; and considers changes to the transportation system, sewers, roads, bridges, parks, and airports, and other improvements that enhance the livability of the metropolitan area.

Agenda '97

- Statewide land use planning
- Contaminated lands
- Sports facility financing

Regulated Industries & Energy

Scope

Examines controls on state regulated industries, such as telephone, utilities, weights and measures, and commercial soliciting; reviews the state's energy policy and conservation issues; reviews legislation concerning gambling policies; oversees various agencies responsible for gambling oversight, including the Minnesota State Lottery, Gambling Control Board, and the Minnesota Racing Commission.

Agenda '97

(unavailable)

Rules & Legislative Administration

Scope

Establishes the budget for the House; approves personnel matters; recommends House rules and joint rules of the House and Senate; designates bills for consideration as Special Orders; and acts on bills and resolutions referred to the committee, including all constitutional amendments.

Agenda '97

(not applicable)

Taxes

Scope

Discusses policy matters affecting Minnesota taxpayers and reviews bills affecting state income, sales and use, excise, and property taxes. The committee also hears bills regarding state aid to municipalities and counties. The Taxes Committee has two divisions that share in the full committee's workload — the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Division and the Sales and Income Tax Division.

Agenda '97

- Achieving comprehensive tax reform
- Providing taxpayer relief
- Analyzing public subsidies
- Analyzing the effects of tax policies on land use and other state policies

Property Tax & Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Division

Scope

Reviews property tax-related issues; and prepares property tax provision for the omnibus tax bill.

Agenda '97

(unavailable)

Sales & Income Tax Division

Scope

Reviews legislation that involves state taxes; and prepares state tax provisions for the omnibus tax bill.

Agenda '97

- Expansion of sales tax
- Sales Tax Advisory Council's final report/recommendations
- Examination of telecommunications
- Stadium/cigarette tax

Transportation & Transit

Scope

Addresses policy matters concerning highways, trucking, transit systems, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Public Safety.

Agenda '97

(unavailable)

Transportation & Transit Finance Division

Scope

Reviews and recommends funding for all transportation- and transit-related areas, including the Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Council Transit Operations, the Department of Public Safety (transportation areas), and the Transportation Regulation Board.

Agenda '97

- Transportation and transit funding package

Ways & Means

Scope

Sets House spending and revenue limits and budget reserve amount by adopting a budget resolution; and holds hearings on all money bills passed by the House finance and tax divisions/committees and ensures that they are within limits set forth in the budget resolution.

Agenda '97

- Budget resolution
- Spending and revenue bills

For a complete listing of House finance committee/division accounts, see Feb. 7, 1997, Session Weekly, page 14.

Need to know the House File number or the chief author of a bill?
Call the House Index Office at
(612) 296-6646

Bill Introductions

HF543-HF741

Monday, Feb. 10

HF543—Entenza (DFL)

Education

Child and family program outcome accountability mechanism established and working group established, report required, and money appropriated.

HF544—Kahn (DFL) Economic Development & International Trade

University of Minnesota steam plant relocation away from the Mississippi River funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF545—Haas (R) Taxes

Political subdivision sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF546—Daggett (R) Health & Human Services

Employers required to report access to employer-subsidized insurance on W-2 forms for purposes of MinnesotaCare eligibility determination.

HF547—Solberg (DFL) Judiciary

Close-custody corrections facility construction appropriation and construction bid provisions modified.

HF548—Westrom (R) General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Initiative and referendum implementation act adopted, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF549—Mulder (R) Taxes

Used farm machinery sales tax exemption extended permanently.

HF550—Rukavina (DFL) Transportation & Transit

Embarrass; signs erected to inform motorists of the route and distance to the town of Embarrass.

**HF551—Sekhon (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources**
State land boundary line and trust sale provisions modified, property tax payment by natural resources commissioner provided, and public land sales authorized.

HF552—Entenza (DFL) Judiciary

Rental housing discrimination studied by human rights commission, and money appropriated.

HF553—Mulder (R) General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Term limits imposed on legislative and executive offices and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF554—Vickerman (R) Regulated Industries & Energy

Ground voltage study science advisor civil action immunity provided.

HF555—Goodno (R) Health & Human Services

Tuberculosis health threat act adopted, isolation and detention of persons with active tuberculosis provided, standards and procedures established, and health professional reporting required.

HF556—Greenfield (DFL) Health & Human Services

Health care provider unique identifier implementation and identification provisions modified.

HF557—Tuma (R) Education

School districts authorized to hire nonlicensed teachers without board of teaching approval, and nonlicensed teacher background checks provided.

HF558—Weaver (R) Health & Human Services

Partial-birth abortions prohibited and criminal penalties provided.

HF559—Workman (R) Environment & Natural Resources

Hunting and fishing rights affirmed and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF560—Tuma (R) Labor-Management Relations

Workers' compensation benefit payment dispute arbitration provided.

HF561—McElroy (R) General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Legislature reduced in size to 57 senators and 114 representatives in 2003, 47 senators and 94 representatives in 2013, and 37 senators and 74 representatives in 2023.

HF562—Abrams (R) Education

Education fiscal year levy adjustment state aid payment provided related to the repeal of K-12 education appropriation caps, and money appropriated.

HF563—Bradley (R) Health & Human Services

MinnesotaCare hospital and health care provider gross revenue tax rate reduced.

HF564—Olson, E. (DFL) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Becker County economic development authority established.

HF565—Luther (DFL) Health & Human Services

Patient and health care facility resident transportation service provider criminal background check requirement established.

HF566—Solberg (DFL) Governmental Operations

Itasca County government innovation and cooperation board law exemption duration extended.

HF567—Milbert (DFL) Taxes

Materials used in providing taxable services exempted from sales and use taxes.

HF568—Delmont (DFL) Governmental Operations

Volunteer firefighter maximum pension amounts increased.

HF569—Juhnke (DFL) Agriculture

Grain bank license requirements modified, and interstate compact on agricultural grain marketing repealed.

HF570—Skare (DFL) Taxes

Used farm machinery sales and use tax exemption extended permanently.

HF571—Kalis (DFL) Financial Institutions & Insurance

Long-term care insurance policy sales regulated.

HF572—Luther (DFL) Education

Low-income concentration school grant aid formula provided, and money appropriated.

HF573—Luther (DFL) Education

Low-income concentration school grants funded, and money appropriated.

HF574—Luther (DFL) Education

Independent School District No. 279, Osseo; levy authorized to fund instructional services for at risk children.

HF575—Weaver (R) Education

Pornography-blocking computer software required for schools.

HF576—Greiling (DFL) Education

School district learning and development revenue use flexibility provided.

HF577—Solberg (DFL) Transportation & Transit

MIA; special license plates designed and issued for veterans formerly missing in action.

HF578—Kubly (DFL) Agriculture

Animal feedlot and manure management advisory committee expiration date designated, and food safety advisory committee membership provisions modified.

HF579—Tunheim (DFL) Education

Independent School District No. 169, Badger, general education revenue reduction exemption extended.

HF580—Tunheim (DFL) Environment & Natural Resources

Snowmobile registration fees increased, snowmobile trail grants-in-aid funded, unrefunded snowmobile gasoline tax revenue increased, and money appropriated.

HF581—Hausman (DFL) General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Unicameral legislature provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF582—Hausman (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade
Humanities Commission teacher training institute building rental permitted.

HF583—McGuire (DFL)
Judiciary
Unwed mother government data access provisions modified.

HF584—Greiling (DFL)
Education
Charter school law modified providing expanded interdistrict open enrollment, and money appropriated.

HF585—Stang (R)
Judiciary
Same-sex marriages not recognized or allowed.

HF586—Stang (R)
Environment & Natural Resources
Hunting and fishing rights affirmed and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF587—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services
Medical Assistance and General Assistance Medical Care eligibility requirements modified.

HF588—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services
MinnesotaCare ineligibility required for enrollees who exceed income guidelines.

HF589—Goodno (R)
Regulated Industries & Energy
Moorhead telephone exchange construction vote required.

HF590—Osskopp (R)
Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs
Gasoline retail sales permitted below cost.

HF591—Boudreau (R)
Transportation & Transit
Faribault highway easement transfer required from transportation department.

HF592—McElroy (R)
Economic Development & International Trade
Affordable neighborhood design and development initiative funded, and money appropriated.

HF593—Milbert (DFL)
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections
Campaign conduit fund ethical practices board registration required.

HF594—Rhodes (R)
Transportation & Transit
Metropolitan freeway ramp meter study conducted by University of Minnesota center for transportation studies, and money appropriated.

HF595—Rhodes (R)
Taxes
Senior citizens provided property tax rate freeze.

HF596—Rhodes (R)
Transportation & Transit
Radio and stereo use restricted in motor vehicles, and penalties prescribed.

HF597—Tomassoni (DFL)
Education
Education supplemental revenue reduction provisions modified.

HF598—Jaros (DFL)
Education
Education debt service equalization program enhanced.

HF599—Skare (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade
Bemidji railroad depot purchase and conversion to historical museum provided, and money appropriated.

HF600—Dempsey (R)
Health & Human Services
Goodhue and Wabasha public health service board joint purchaser demonstration project established, and money appropriated.

HF601—Wenzel (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Municipal boundary commissions established.

HF602—Trimble (DFL)
Transportation & Transit
Mississippi River parkway commission duration extended.

HF603—Lieder (DFL)
Transportation & Transit
State road operations appropriations provided.

HF604—Lieder (DFL)
Education
Education debt service aid sparsity determination provisions modified.

HF605—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services
Intermediate care facilities for persons with mental retardation or related conditions alternative payment demonstration project established.

HF606—Stanek (R)
Judiciary
Law enforcement agencies required to perform background investigations on applicants for employment as peace officers.

HF607—Davids (R)
Education
Homework helpline funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF608—Goodno (R)
Governmental Operations
Omnibus state departments appropriations bill.

HF609—Erhardt (R)
Transportation & Transit
Motor vehicle buyers to notify registrar of transfer within ten days of purchase, and fees and penalties imposed.

HF610—Macklin (R)
Governmental Operations
Legislative Audit Commission membership provisions modified.

HF611—Tompkins (R)
Health & Human Services
Maternal and child health advisory task force and state community health advisory committee expiration exemption provided.

HF612—Pugh (DFL)
Judiciary
Uniform correction or clarification of defamation act adopted.

HF613—Pugh (DFL)
Regulated Industries & Energy
Cribbage; card game tournaments permitted and maximum prize amount designated.

HF614—Skoglund (DFL)
Judiciary
Firearm silencer or muffler possession restricted and regulated.

HF615—Kinkel (DFL)
Education
Teacher multi-year contracts offered, and public post-secondary education waivers provided as an alternative to continuing employment.

HF616—Skoglund (DFL)
Judiciary
HIV/Hepatitis B; corrections guards provided testing for HIV and hepatitis B when experiencing significant exposure to infected persons while engaged in official duties, inmate assault sentencing modified, fourth-degree assault expanded.

HF617—Weaver (R)
Judiciary
Juvenile crime victim data disclosure provisions modified.

HF618—Ness (R)
Governmental Operations
Administrative rules periodic repeal provided.

HF619—Weaver (R)
Judiciary
Court-ordered restitution payment required prior to fine payment upon conviction.

HF620—Solberg (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Human rights department duties specified, data privacy provisions modified, cost reimbursement authorized, and press releases required.

HF621—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources
Deer-hunting special season first weekend reserved for hunters under age 16 accompanied by a nonhunting adult.

HF622—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services
Omnibus health and human services appropriations bill.

HF623—Solberg (DFL)
Taxes
Property tax relief area revenue distribution repealed.

HF624—Solberg (DFL)
Taxes
Property tax relief area revenue distribution delayed.

HF625—Solberg (DFL)
Taxes
Taconite tax relief area fiscal disparities program modified.

HF626—Luther (DFL)
Transportation & Transit
Designated parent agreement execution and consent requirements modified.

HF627—Rest (DFL)
Taxes

Low-income housing property tax class uniform rules established, apartment and nonhomestead residential property tax class rates reduced, penalties imposed, rulemaking authorized, and money appropriated.

HF628—McElroy (R)
Regulated Industries & Energy
Municipalities authorized to purchase electricity from any electric utility providing service within the applicable area.

HF629—Erhardt (R)
Taxes
Replacement capital equipment sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF630—Rukavina (DFL)
Financial Institutions & Insurance
Self-insured employee benefit plan dissolution notification required.

HF631—Folliard (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade
Hopkins Performing Arts Center previous appropriation terms modified.

HF632—Solberg (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Environmental learning centers previous appropriation provisions modified.

HF633—Murphy (DFL)
Taxes
Senior citizens' property tax deferral program adopted, and money appropriated.

HF634—Larsen (R)
Governmental Operations
Electricity board membership provisions modified.

HF635—Entenza (DFL)
Governmental Operations
North Star government on-line service and information initiative provided, information and telecommunications technology community resource development initiative established, MNcard projects implemented, and money appropriated.

HF636—Pugh (DFL)
Taxes
Residential rental property tax class rate reduced.

HF637—Abrams (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Minnetonka housing development account established and expenditures authorized.

HF638—Abrams (R)
Financial Institutions & Insurance
Health maintenance organization regulatory authority transferred from health department to commerce department.

HF639—Rest (DFL)
Taxes
Property tax reform provided, K-12 education financing modified, property tax class rates modified, truth-in-budgeting program established, state property tax aid programs modified, and money appropriated.

HF640—Solberg (DFL)
Regulated Industries & Energy
Nashwauk authorized to own and operate a gas utility.

Wednesday, Feb. 12

HF641—Wejcman (DFL)
Judiciary
Minneapolis authorized to regulate possession and carrying of pistols within city limits.

HF642—Skoglund (DFL)
Judiciary
State court action created for relief for damages caused by federal court action affecting public participation by the plaintiff.

HF643—Olson, E. (DFL)
Education
Pine Point School provided permanent status.

HF644—Skoglund (DFL)
Judiciary
Court defendant guilt adjudication refusal provisions clarified.

HF645—Tomassoni (DFL)
Financial Institutions & Insurance
Health plan mental health coverage minimum standards provided for determining medically necessary care.

HF646—Kinkel (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Crappie noncontinuous fishing season established.

HF647—Jefferson (DFL)
Governmental Operations
Public pension benefit accrual rates increased, defined contribution early retirement options authorized, homestead and agricultural credit aid modified, and money appropriated.

HF648—Johnson, R. (DFL)
Education
Law school loan repayment assistance program established, and money appropriated.

HF649—Jennings (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Intermediate care facility rate and reimbursement provisions modified.

HF650—Hasskamp (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Glendalough State Park and Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area appropriated money for development and operation.

HF651—Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Intermediate care facility county geographic designation modifications provided for reimbursement purposes.

HF652—Johnson, A. (DFL)
Education
Targeted breakfast grant program established to analyze the nutritional components of school meals, and money appropriated.

HF653—Pugh (DFL)
Financial Institutions & Insurance
Diabetes outpatient self-management training and education health insurance coverage required.

HF654—Van Dellen (R)
Health & Human Services
MinnesotaCare hospital and health care provider gross revenue tax rate reduced.

HF655—Opatz (DFL)
Education
Firefighter Relief Association trustee training video production authorized, and money appropriated.

HF656—Holsten (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Washington County property taxpayer personal information use restricted.

HF657—Larsen (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Washington County board of commissioners plat approval required prior to building permit issuance.

HF658—Marko (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Washington County recorder and auditor/treasurer appointment permitted.

HF659—Pugh (DFL)
Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs
Outdoor power and sport equipment dealerships regulated.

HF660—Kelso (DFL)
Taxes
Proposed property tax notice provisions modified.

HF661—Biernat (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade
Landlord and tenant law recodified, clarified, and relocated.

HF662—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Local government unit apportionment permitted between two or more contiguous government units.

HF663—Rukavina (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Mineral coordinating committee membership expanded, aggregate resources task force established, and money appropriated.

HF664—McCollum (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Water and soil resources board granted authority to administer federal grants, donations, gifts, and other contributions.

HF665—Skare (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Heartland trail improvements provided, and money appropriated.

HF666—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Financial Institutions & Insurance
Insurance company fraud, misrepresentation, or deceptive practice relief provided.

HF667—Macklin (R)
Regulated Industries & Energy
Lawful gambling separate tax refund and credit account requirement eliminated.

HF668—Seagren (R)
Health & Human Services
Industrial hygienist and safety professional title protection act adopted.

HF669—Rhodes (R)
Health & Human Services
Licensed professional counseling board established, and money appropriated.

HF670—Erhardt (R)
Environment & Natural Resources
State lottery proceed dedication to environment and natural resources trust fund duration extended until 2020, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF671—Entenza (DFL)
Education
Higher education state grant student share reduced, living and miscellaneous allowance increased, work-study provided for grant recipients, and money appropriated.

HF672—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services
Human services elderly and disabled health care provisions modified, nursing facility conversion demonstration project established, regional treatment center provisions modified, and demonstration project for disabled persons established.

HF673—Vickerman (R)
Health & Human Services
Nursing facility authorized to qualify for interim and settle up payment rates.

HF674—Kraus (R)
Judiciary
Government entities included as victims for the purpose of restitution orders, and criminal penalties provided.

HF675—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Home care provider and elderly housing with services provider licensure requirement provided.

HF676—Rifenberg (R)
Education
School district debt service equalization eligibility provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF677—Stanek (R)
Transportation & Transit
Novice drivers' license advisory committee established.

HF678—Stanek (R)
Transportation & Transit
Drivers' license applicants under age 18 required to be certified by parent or guardian as having had at least 50 hours of driving prior to license eligibility.

HF679—Gunther (R)
Economic Development & International Trade
Omnibus economic development appropriations bill.

HF680—McElroy (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan Council service redesign and employee incentives provided, and pilot project established to improve council efficiency.

HF681—Erhardt (R)
Health & Human Services
MinnesotaCare hospital and health care provider gross revenue tax rate reduced.

HF682—Opatz (DFL)
Education
State colleges and universities board trustees exempted from the administrative procedures act.

HF683—Lieder (DFL)
Judiciary
Civil action judgement creditor affidavit information requirements expanded.

HF684—Milbert (DFL)
Taxes
Replacement capital equipment sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF685—Rest (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Local government innovation and efficiency program established, and money appropriated.

HF686—Paymar (DFL)
Judiciary
Tenants provided right to seek police and emergency assistance, and penalties provided.

HF687—Marko (DFL)
Transportation & Transit
Motorcycle helmet use admissibility into evidence prohibited.

HF688—Paymar (DFL)
Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs
Cigarette advertising restricted and regulated, and penalties provided.

Thursday, Feb. 13

HF689—Kubly (DFL)
Agriculture
Alfalfa processing facility construction material sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF690—Rhodes (R)
Transportation & Transit
Motor vehicle compulsory insurance law violation minimum fine imposed.

HF691—Wagenius (DFL)
Transportation & Transit
Impounded junk vehicle sales by local units of government authorized.

HF692—Tingelstad (R)
Economic Development & International Trade
Andover contaminated land cleanup funded, and money appropriated.

HF693—Bakk (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
White pine forest restoration and regeneration provided, white pine blister rust research program funded, and money appropriated.

HF694—Koppendrayner (R)
Governmental Operations
Employee relations department technical and administrative changes provided, and state employment provisions modified.

HF695—Entenza (DFL)
Judiciary
Child support enforcement provisions modified, financial institution data match system established, and civil penalties provided.

HF696—Rukavina (DFL)
Governmental Operations
State agency professional and technical service contract provisions modified.

HF697—Bettermann (R)
Judiciary
Tort claim state immunity provisions clarified.

HF698—Rukavina (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
St. Louis County division vote provided.

HF699—Dawkins (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade
St. Paul rental tax equity pilot project reinstated, property tax refunds provided, and money appropriated.

HF700—Delmont (DFL)
Regulated Industries & Energy
Lawful gambling gross profit expenditure provisions modified, gambling control board rules modified, and paddleticket and bingo limits and restrictions modified.

HF701—Dawkins (DFL)
Judiciary
Employee benefit exemptions provided judicial interpretation conformance.

HF702—Pugh (DFL)
Judiciary
Unauthorized animal release penalties increased, and stalking and harassment crime scope expanded to include unlawful interference with activities of an entity that sells or provides services for animals or animal products.

HF703—Dawkins (DFL)
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections
Minors authorized to be elected precinct caucus delegates or officers.

HF704—Ozment (R)
Regulated Industries & Energy
Electric power generating plant certificate of need proceeding exemption provided.

HF705—Rifenberg (R)
Taxes
Three-fifths legislative majority vote required for sales or income tax increases, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF706—Juhnke (DFL)
Transportation & Transit
Fertilizer and agricultural chemical transporter quarterly registration allowed.

HF707—Rukavina (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Toxics in products requirements and enforcement provisions modified.

HF708—Skare (DFL)
Financial Institutions & Insurance
Mastectomies; health plan inpatient mastectomy coverage requirement established.

HF709—Rest (DFL)**Taxes**

Seasonal recreational residential property tax class rate reduced.

HF710—Kalis (DFL)**Capital Investment**

Cambridge state bank claim settlement payment provided, revenue bonds discharged, and money appropriated.

HF711—Munger (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Soil and water conservation districts provided annual funding allocation.

HF712—Lieder (DFL)**Taxes**

Aggregate material production tax increase provided.

HF713—Molnau (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Wastewater treatment facility privatization ownership restrictions modified.

HF714—Bakk (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Solid waste transfer station grant program repealed.

HF715—Bakk (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

State snowmobile trail use permit requirement established.

HF716—Sviggum (R)**Education**

Job training franchise tax credit provided, education investment fund established, corporate alternative minimum tax abolished, unfair cigarette sales act abolished, capital equipment sales and use tax exemption, and money appropriated.

HF717—Greenfield (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Nursing facility reimbursement provisions modified.

HF718—Folliard (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Conservation corps youth corps advisory committee provisions modified.

HF719—Rhodes (R)**Transportation & Transit**

Motor vehicle registration suspension authorized in certain circumstances, and registration provisions modified.

HF720—Westfall (R)**Education**

Independent School District Nos. 21, Audubon, and 24, Lake Park authorized to begin the school year prior to Labor Day.

HF721—Paulsen (R)**Regulated Industries & Energy**

Municipalities allowed to authorize on-sale of 3.2 percent malt liquor at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays.

HF722—Dawkins (DFL)**Taxes**

Relocated residence improvements provided valuation exclusion.

HF723—Marko (DFL)**Transportation & Transit**

Trunk highway revolving loan account and transportation revolving loan fund created, and money appropriated.

HF724—Molnau (R)**Education**

Minnesota River Valley special education cooperative computerized transportation routing system established, and money appropriated.

HF725—Wagenius (DFL)**Education**

Early childhood technology grant program established, and money appropriated.

HF726—Rhodes (R)**Transportation & Transit**

Temporary motor vehicle registration certificate requirements prescribed.

HF727—McGuire (DFL)**Judiciary**

Birth information released to adopted persons, and money appropriated.

HF728—Juhnke (DFL)**Agriculture**

Farmers exempted from tax on gasoline and special fuel received in on-farm bulk storage tanks.

HF729—Finseth (R)**Agriculture**

University of Minnesota appropriated money for wheat and barley scab research.

HF730—Mulder (R)**Judiciary**

Firearms; right to keep and bear arms for certain purposes not abridged, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF731—Mulder (R)**General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections**

Initiative and referendum implementation act adopted, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF732—Rifenberg (R)**Taxes**

Senior citizens' property tax deferral program adopted, and money appropriated.

HF733—Swenson, H. (R)**Agriculture**

Dairy development program established, grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF734—Stanek (R)**Judiciary**

Private detective and protective agent board director appointment authority modified.

HF735—Entenza (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Civil Commitment Act provisions modified related to voluntary treatment of certain incompetent persons, neuroleptic medication administration standards and procedures modified, and provisional discharge procedures modified.

HF736—Orfield (DFL)**Education**

Public post-secondary institution tuition reduced, and money appropriated.

HF737—Orfield (DFL)**Labor-Management Relations**

Union organization rights and duties established, unfair labor practice provisions modified, and penalties provided.

HF738—Wagenius (DFL)**Local Government****& Metropolitan Affairs**

Metropolitan Council urban service area extension moratorium imposed.

HF739—Mulder (R)**Financial Institutions & Insurance**

Long-term health care insurance premium income tax credit provided.

HF740—Juhnke (DFL)**Financial Institutions & Insurance**

Insurance companies and agents regulated.

HF741—McGuire (DFL)**Judiciary**

Legislative information policy task force established, and money appropriated.



When a Twin Cities Public Television executive told members of the House Governmental Operations Committee's State Government Finance Division on Feb. 11 that emerging digital television technology might allow the stations to carry more House programming, legislators were elated.

"Can you imagine this being on television,

Mr. Chairman?" asked Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City). "We'd outdraw the Simpsons!"

"They'd think we're Beavis and Butthead," replied Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia), invoking the vocally challenged MTV duo.

Check your local listings to watch the House committee and floor sessions on TV.

Committee Schedule

Schedule is subject to change.
For information updates, call
House Calls at (612) 296-9283.
All meetings are open to the public.
Sign language interpreter services:
(612) 282-2331 v/tty
To have the daily and weekly schedules
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MONDAY, Feb. 17

8 a.m.

Higher Education

Finance Division/EDUCATION

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Gene Pelowski

Agenda: Mandates update: University of Minnesota, Marvin Marshak, senior academic vice president, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), John Ostrem, MnSCU Systems Office; Laura King, chief financial officer, MnSCU; and campus representatives.

K-12 Education Finance Division/ EDUCATION

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso

Agenda: Overview of Governor Carlson's budget recommendations General Education Program, Tom Melcher, Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Property Tax & Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Edgar Olson

Agenda: Overview of Sales Ratio.

10 a.m.

AGRICULTURE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Stephen Wenzel

Agenda: HF118 (Juhnke) Making the exemption for used farm machinery permanent.
HFXXXX (Juhnke) Relating to sales tax imposed on bulk fuel purchases for agricultural purposes.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Willard Munger

Agenda: The future of solid waste management, Pollution Control Agency, and Office of Environmental Assistance.

Health & Human Services

Finance Division/

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lee Greenfield

Agenda: Public testimony on the governor's budget recommendations for the Department of Human Services economic support programs and welfare reform.

JUDICIARY

Basement Hearing Room,
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Wes Skoglund

Agenda: HF268 (Murphy) Amending the appropriation to build a close-custody correctional facility of at least 800 beds.
HF81 (Murphy) Modifying multiple occupancy requirements applicable to state prisons.
HF91 (Skoglund) Repealing the law requiring single and double bunking in certain state prisons.
HF49 (Swenson, D.) Requiring a minimum of 50% of capacity in multiple occupancy in medium-security institutions.
HF194 (Bishop) Altering occupancy standards in adult correctional facilities.

State Government Finance Division/ GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Rukavina

Agenda: Budget review: Department of Revenue; and Minnesota Collection Enterprise.

12:30 p.m.

GENERAL LEGISLATION, VETERANS AFFAIRS & ELECTIONS

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Milbert

Agenda: HF74 (Osthoff) Absentee ballot voting provisions modified.
HF294 (Folliard) Voter change of address system established.
HF127 (Folliard) State election law modified and clarified related to voter requirements and election procedure.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Richard Jefferson

Agenda: HF219 (Hasskamp) Leaves of absence without pay for employees rendering services as members of the civil air patrol.
HF155 (Jaros) Restrictions on the use of temporary employees.

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jean Wagenius

Agenda: HF626 (Luther) Relating to children; modifying execution and consent requirements for designated parent agreements.
HF86 (Stanek) Radio and stereo use restricted in motor vehicles, and penalties prescribed.
HF243 (Juhnke) Truck tractor wheel flaps required, unsafe firewood hauling citation

issuance authorized, vehicle axle weight restrictions regulated, truck weight enforcement provisions modified, and technical changes provided.
HF602 (Trimble) Relating to transportation, extending the life of Mississippi River Parkway Commission to June 30, 2001.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

4 p.m.

The House and Senate meet in joint session.

5 p.m.

Ramsey County Legislative Delegation

123 State Capitol
Chrs. Rep. Alice Hausman,
Sen. Charles Wiger

Agenda: Transit/Welfare.

7 p.m.

Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Division/EDUCATION

Faribault Junior High School,
Faribault, Minnesota
Chr. Rep. Tony Kinkel

Agenda: Public hearing. (Vans leave at 4:30 p.m.)

TUESDAY, Feb. 18

8 a.m.

EDUCATION

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lyndon Carlson

Agenda: HF280 (Johnson, R.) American sign language recognized as a fully developed natural language.

HF211 (Sviggum) Telephone extended area service installation authorized within combined school districts.

HF108 (Tomassoni) Technical college employee retirement benefit protection provided.

HF130 (Carlson) Gopher state bonds; college savings bond program established, marketing plan development required, and bond sale authorized.

Judiciary Finance Division/ JUDICIARY

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: Working groups (Agency and program directors should be present to meet with members): Second working group 8:00 to 8:20 a.m.; Third working group 8:20 to 8:40 a.m. Presentation on causes and prevention of crime, Dr. James Gilligan, Department of Psychiatry, the Cambridge Hospital, Harvard Medical School.

**Transportation & Transit
Finance Division/
TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT**

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bernie Lieder
Agenda: Budget overview by the Department of Transportation.

8:30 a.m.

**ENVIRONMENT &
NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE**

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff
Agenda: Budget hearings: Interagency Community Technical Assistance and Education Initiative; and Office of Environmental Assistance.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Johnson
Agenda: Update on federal conformity issues.

10 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Basement Hearing Room,
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Phyllis Kahn
Agenda: Technology issues and procurement reform, Department of Administration.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. John Dorn
Agenda: To be announced.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dee Long
Agenda: State Auditor's report on Tax Increment Financing and other issues related to Tax Increment Financing.

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis
Agenda: HF81 (Murphy) Corrections facilities multiple occupancy requirements modified. American Disabilities Act/Prison Projects, Margot Imdieke, Council on Disabilities and Dennis Benson, assistant commissioner, Department of Corrections. Discussion of Cambridge Bank Bonds.

**COMMERCE, TOURISM
& CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Tunheim
Agenda: Minnesota demographics and housing-industry overview, Glen Dorfman, Minnesota Association of Realtors. HF441 (Orfield) Uniform commercial code revised article 5 enacted, letters of credit regulated, and conforming changes provided. HF238 (Leppik) Third-party income tax bulk filer registration required, and civil penalty provided.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES & ENERGY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Loren Jennings
Agenda: Continuation of the Federal Communications Act discussion focusing on long distance carriers: Victor Dobras, U.S. Sprint; Barry Tilley, MCI; and Teresa Lynch, AT&T.

7 p.m.

**Joint
EDUCATION/
Senate
EDUCATION**

200 State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Lyndon Carlson,
Sen. LeRoy Stumpf
Agenda: University of Minnesota Regent interviews and recommendations.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 19

8 a.m.

**Economic Development
Finance Division/
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
& INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble
Agenda: Briefings by the department of Trade and Economic Development.

**Higher Education
Finance Division/EDUCATION**

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Gene Pelowski
Agenda: Performance reports: University of Minnesota, Marvin Marshak, senior academic vice president; and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), Judy Borgen, MnSCU System Office.

**K-12 Education Finance Division/
EDUCATION**

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso
Agenda: Overview of Gov. Carlson's budget recommendations Article 2, Special Education, Wayne Erickson, Department of Children, Families and Learning. Special Education Program Evaluation Report, Marilyn Jackson, Office of the Legislative Auditor.

**Property Tax & Tax Increment Finance (TIF)
Division/TAXES**

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Edgar Olson
Agenda: HF427 (Dawkins) St. Paul, Ramsey County, Independent School District No. 625 joint property tax advisory committee duration extended. HF126 (Milbert) State election law modified and clarified related to voter requirements and election procedure. HF306 (Olson, E.) Rental residential property tax class rate reduced. HF6 (Wenzel) Commercial industrial first-tier property tax class rate reduced, and additional state aid provided.

8:30 a.m.

**ENVIRONMENT &
NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE**

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff
Agenda: Ethanol Program Evaluation Report: presentation by the Legislative Auditor.

10 a.m.

**ENVIRONMENT &
NATURAL RESOURCES**

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Willard Munger
Agenda: HF407 (Bakk) Snowmobile registration fees increased, snowmobile trail grants-in-aid provided, and money appropriated. HF580 (Tunheim) Snowmobile registration fees increased, snowmobile trail grants-in-aid funded, unrefunded snowmobile gasoline tax revenue increased, and money appropriated. HFXXXX (Hasskamp) Snowmobile safety. Board of Water & Soil Resources (BOWSR) introduction. HF266 (Munger) Water and Soil Resources Board membership provisions modified. HF232 (Finseth) Soil and water conservation district supervisors provided four-year terms of office. HF664 (McCollum) Water and soil resources board granted authority to administer federal grants, donations, gifts, and other contributions.

**FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
& INSURANCE**

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Irv Anderson
Agenda: HF447 (Murphy) Obstetric and gynecologic service direct patient access provided by health plan companies. HF638 (Abrams) Transferring regulatory authority for health maintenance organizations to commissioner of commerce; requiring commissioner of health to advise and assist. HF645 (Tomassoni) Providing uniform minimum definition of medically necessary care for mental health coverage. HF653 (Pugh) Requiring coverage for diabetes outpatient self-management training and education.

**Health & Human Services
Finance Division/
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lee Greenfield
Agenda: Department of Human Services presentation of the governor's recommendations for the Department of Human Services programs and operations.

JUDICIARY

Basement Hearing Room,
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Wes Skoglund
Agenda: How to reduce the rate of crime and violence, Dr. James Gilligan, Department of Psychiatry, the Cambridge Hospital, Harvard Medical School; director, Center for the Study of Violence; and director, Massachusetts Prison Mental Health Services. Continuation of Feb. 17 agenda. HF220 (Mullery) Religious corporation property conveyances validated, real property

disposition notices required pending marriage dissolution, and uniform probate code property distribution regulation provided.
HF100 (Wenzel) Emergency snow removal funding provided, and money appropriated.

**State Government Finance Division/
GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS**

400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Rukavina

Agenda: Budget reviews: State Auditor; State Treasurer; and Ethical Practices Board.

12:30 p.m.

Civil & Family Law Division/JUDICIARY

400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Andy Dawkins

Agenda: HF246 (Dawkins) Public nuisance definition expanded, and nuisance civil action participation and cost recovery provisions modified.

HF47 (Daggett) Domestic abuse definition modified for the purposes of evaluating the best interests of a child.

HF683 (Lieder) Civil action judgement creditor affidavit information requirements expanded.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
& INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mike Jaros

Agenda: HF413 (Rest) Job training income tax credit provided.

HFXXXX (Jaros) Establishing a Minnesota Office of International Affairs.

**Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Division/EDUCATION**

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tony Kinkel

Agenda: To be announced.

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jean Wagenius

Agenda: HF506 (Swenson, D.) School bus safety regulated, student school bus conduct requirements developed, accident reporting provided, and penalties provided.

HF387 (Wagenius) Transportation department claim payment provided and liability provisions modified, and eminent domain provisions modified.

HF529 (McCollum) Trunk Highway No. 36 in North St. Paul pedestrian-bicycle overpass construction required.

THURSDAY, Feb. 20

8 a.m.

**Judiciary Finance Division/
JUDICIARY**

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: Agency budget presentations: Tax Court, Rep. Rich Stanek; Sentencing Guidelines Commission, Rep. Doug Swenson; Department of Human Rights, Rep. Andy Dawkins, Rep. Rich Stanek; Uniform Laws Commission, Rep. Peg Larsen; Private Detectives Board and Board of Judicial Standards, Rep. Mary Murphy; and Ombudsmen for Corrections and Crime Victim Ombudsmen, Rep. Doug Swenson.

**Subcommittee on Education Planning and
Transitions/EDUCATION**

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ruth Johnson

Agenda: Overview of transitions and planning programs.

HF160 (Winter) Independent School District No. 175, Westbrook, high school student entrepreneurship pilot program established, and money appropriated.

Subcommittee on Facilities/EDUCATION

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Geri Evans

Agenda: Air quality in schools.

8:30 a.m.

**ENVIRONMENT &
NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE**

Basement Hearing Room,
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources proposal and bill.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Johnson

Agenda: Continuation of Feb. 18 agenda.

10 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Basement Hearing Room,
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Phyllis Kahn

Agenda: HF197 (Leppik) Administrative Procedures Act rulemaking procedures modified.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. John Dorn

Agenda: To be announced.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dee Long

Agenda: To be announced.

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

Agenda: Continuation of Feb. 18 agenda.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES & ENERGY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Loren Jennings

Agenda: HF640 (Solberg) Permitting the city of Naushwauk to own and operate a gas utility.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

After Session

WAYS & MEANS

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Loren Solberg

Agenda: HF268 (Murphy) Close-custody corrections facility construction appropriation and construction bid provisions modified.

**Hennepin County
Legislative Delegation**

200 State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Ron Abrams,

Rep. Linda Wejcman

Agenda: Criminal justice issues.

FRIDAY, Feb. 21

8 a.m.

**Higher Education
Finance Division/EDUCATION**

Tours

Chr. Rep. Gene Pelowski

Agenda: Tours of Rochester Community and Technical College; Winona State University, Rochester Center; University of Minnesota-Rochester; and St. Mary's University of Minnesota.

Transportation & Transit

Finance Division/

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bernie Lieder

Agenda: Budget overview by Department of Transportation.

10 a.m.

Health & Human Services

Finance Division/

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Lee Greenfield

Agenda: Continuation of Feb. 19 agenda.

2 p.m.

**Joint
JUDICIARY/**

Senate CRIME PREVENTION

10 State Office Building

Chrs. Rep. Wes Skoglund,

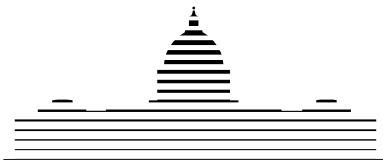
Sen. Allan Spear

Agenda: Juvenile gun violence. Presentation by David Kennedy, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and director of Boston Gun Project.

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MINNESOTA INDEX

Snowmobiles and Minnesota

Snowmobiles registered in Minnesota, 1996	254,510
Increase in the number of registered snowmobiles in the last 10 years, in percent	41
Dollars generated from snowmobile registrations, in millions, FY1996	\$2.9
Revenue collected in fines to snowmobilers, FY1996	\$37,716
Cost to register a snowmobile, per year	\$10
Total number of trails in the Minnesota snowmobile trail system, in miles	18,047
Additional trails built and operated by local trail clubs not supported by state funds, in miles	1,903
Annual cost to operate and maintain the trail system, in millions	\$8.7
Miles of additional trails proposed by county-level planning process, in miles	3,322
Estimated cost to build those trails, in millions	\$4.2
Last year that new trail construction was funded	1990
Reported snowmobile accidents resulting in injury, 1995-1996 season	630
in 1986-1987	145
Snowmobile deaths, 1995-1996	26
in 1986-1987	2
Percent of 1995-1996 deaths that were alcohol-related	76
Deaths this season, as of Feb. 13, 1997	26
Deaths in the last five winters	129
Maximum speed limit on Minnesota public lands and waters, in miles per hour	50
Stopping distance necessary for a snowmobile traveling at 50 mph, in feet	300
Rank of "operator error" in factors causing a snowmobile accident	1
Rank of trespassing, among complaints registered by landowners against snowmobilers	1
Years a snowmobile's registration will be suspended for an owner's conviction of a trespassing offense	1
Miles traveled by the average snowmobiler, 1990-1991 season	461
during the 1995-1996 season	1,000
Under current law, youngest age that a Minnesota snowmobiler may travel unaccompanied and without restriction after completing a snowmobile safety course	14
Cost of DNR-approved snowmobile safety course	\$5
Maximum civil fine for using a snowmobile to intentionally drive, chase, run over, kill, or take a wild animal	\$300

Sources: *Minnesota Snowmobile Safety Laws & Regulations, 1996-1997*, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; DNR News Releases; Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

For more information



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