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In This Issue:

2000 LEGISLATURE CONVENES,

BONDING PLANS, AND TEST TROUBLES

HF2476-HF2741

SESSION Weekly

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AT ISSUE: TRANSPORTATION — The long, sometimes strange debate over light-rail transit continues at the Capitol and the courthouse.

HISTORY — Gov. Floyd B. Olson advocated the switch to a unicameral Legislature in his 1935 inaugural address, but Olson, who was himself a third-party insurgent, made his advocacy of a one-house system seem like a polite suggestion.

POLICY — Lawmakers this week heard two experts debate over the safety of genetically altered foods.

PEOPLE — Participants in the YMCA's Youth in Government program prove there are plenty of students interested in serious societal issues. The program teaches students the nuts and bolts of the lawmaking process.

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On the cover: Speaker Steve Sviggum prepares to convene the 2000 House of Representatives.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Action begins at gavel

The 2000 session is expected to be brief but busy, much like the opening day, which included votes on two controversial matters



Rep. Joe Opatz (left) listens to debate while Rep. Matt Entenza and Rep. Ann Lenczewski confer on the House floor the first day of session.

BY JON FURE

With one successful year of tri-partisan government behind them, House members started the 2000 Legislative Session on Feb. 1 with the solemn reminder of a member lost and raucous debate regarding standardized testing and prayers on the House floor.

Moments into the first floor session, Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) introduced a measure to throw out the writing tests taken by Minnesota 10th graders before they could be sent to be scored.

The writing test is part of the state's Graduation Standards program, which means students must pass before they can get a high school diploma.

Reuter said some 10th graders had objected to the test question, which asked them to write about one thing they would change about themselves.

He asked lawmakers to suspend normal rules and proceed with a vote on his proposal immediately, instead of allowing it to be referred to the House Education Policy Committee to begin the committee process. But Reuter failed to persuade a two-thirds majority of his colleagues that such urgency was needed.

On the prayer issue, Reuter said House rules that require prayers to be nondenominational

and to "respect the diversity" of the members of the House are impossible to follow. No one prayer could possibly reflect the many different beliefs of the House members, he said.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) said people who are invited to give a prayer on the House floor have for years been sent a letter asking them to try to keep their statements nondenominational in nature. The House rules adopted in 1999 simply reflect the standard practice, she said.

"It is not a gag; it is a request to please be mindful of the fact that there is diversity in this body," she said.

Reuter's amendment to alter the House rules, so they would only say that each session would begin with a prayer by the chaplain, failed to win enough votes.

While the 2000 Legislative Session began with little fanfare and an unusual amount of action, there was time to reflect on the loss of a Capitol fixture.

House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) noted the absence of Rep. Willard Munger with a moment of silence. Munger, the longest-serving member of the House, first elected in 1954, died in July 1999.

Newly elected Rep. Dale Swapinski (DFL-Duluth) will be serving the remainder of Munger's term.

House members applauded as Swapinski was introduced, and he said, "I feel honored and privileged to sit in this seat that was so ably filled by Willard Munger for many, many years."

House Minority Leader Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) praised Munger's important contributions to the state and invited members and public to a memorial service in honor of Munger planned for Feb. 7.

As it turns out, the first day may be a harbinger of what comes this year. The 2000 session is expected to be brief but busy.

The primary function will be to decide how

To our readers:

Welcome to the second year of Minnesota's 81st Legislative Session. It's the 17th year of publication for *Session Weekly*, and you may notice some changes.

First, let's talk about what hasn't changed. We will continue to bring you complete, no-nonsense coverage of House committee meetings and floor action. And handy sections such as the Bill Introductions and the Committee Schedule can be found, as always, in the back of the magazine.

The changes that have been made — some subtle, some not-so-subtle — are intended to make the publication more informative, easier to use, and more attractive.

The Highlights section, which is consistently the best-read part of the magazine, will continue to provide concise, straightforward reports on all sorts of bills.

A new section we've added, called At Issue, will offer in-depth stories on major initiatives under consideration. This week, the section includes pieces about the governor's bonding proposal and light-rail transit.

To help you find the information you need, we've added an in-depth Contents section that will be on page 2 in every issue. It will offer quick access to a list of the subjects covered in Highlights each week and of all the other articles and information.

We have made several other editorial and graphic changes in the publication that we hope will make it more appealing to our readers.

Many of the ideas for changes in *Session Weekly* were taken from the survey of readers conducted at the end of the 1999 session. Thanks to all those who replied. We hope you are pleased with the magazine.

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please call us at 651-296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550 if you need answers to general questions or assistance in following the legislative process.

—LeClair G. Lambert



Depressed no more

A 70-year-old report shows many concerns remain, though economic conditions are wildly different

to deal with another projected budget surplus and how much money to borrow for capital projects. But lawmakers likely will also act on measures to protect families from repeat sex offenders and decide whether a proposal to reduce the size of the Legislature should appear on the ballot in the November election.

Plans for dealing with the projected budget surplus were not discussed on the House floor on the first day of session, but House Republicans are proposing tax cuts and another rebate as their major agenda for the session.

"As long as the state continues to take more money from our families than it needs, Republicans will continue proposing tax cuts," Sviggum said.

The proposed tax cut would reduce the percentage of state income tax charged to each bracket: 0.75 percent in the middle bracket and 0.5 percent in the upper and lower brackets.

House Republicans are also proposing another sales-tax rebate, appropriations to reduce property taxes, economic development programs for rural communities, and one-time spending for road and bridge projects.

The recent abduction and murder of Katie Poirier has influenced several crime prevention proposals. Funding a statewide computer network that will prevent criminals from hiding by changing their name or using aliases and other proposals will be introduced and referred to as "Katie's Law."

The main function of the 2000 session will be to determine how much money the state should borrow by selling bonds to pay for capital projects. Gov. Jesse Ventura has recommended that the state should only sell \$400 million in general obligation bonds. That number is based on the average size of bonding bills in the past 15 years.

Ventura's bonding proposal also includes revenue from \$34 million in user-financed bonds, \$27 million from the trunk highway fund, and \$1 million from the general fund. The proposal also would cancel \$37 million that has been previously authorized for capital projects but has not been spent.

The governor's plan would spend the funds to improve public buildings, natural resources, or other infrastructure areas like roads and water treatment facilities.

The House Capital Investment Committee, chaired by Rep. Jim Knobloch (R-St. Cloud), will be putting together an omnibus bill with input from the other House finance committees. The committee's task will include proposing a total amount to be bonded and a list of specific projects to be funded.

All in all, it appears the 2000 session should be one featuring debate on a variety of issues of significance to many Minnesotans. 🐾

In the late 1930s, Minnesota went looking for answers to economic problems that had gripped the state — and the nation — for the entire decade.

A special commission created to study the state's economic woes came up with a list of solutions that — unlikely as it may seem after the boom of the late 1990s — included many ideas still advocated by some political leaders today.

The House passed a resolution in 1937 that created the commission to examine the factors slowing commercial and industrial development in the state. Two years later, the commission issued a report titled "There is No Lack of Markets."

The title reflected the commission's conclusion that it wasn't a lack of consumer need that was hindering economic recovery. Rather it was the absence of purchasing power and the disparity between producers and their ability to get fair market value for their goods.

In the report, the commission took great lengths to make it clear that the downswing in the state's economy was a direct result of the Great Depression, which had devastating effects nationwide. Therefore, the report said, complete recovery in Minnesota could not occur until the nation's economy strengthened.

The commission noted that Minnesota's economy during the Depression declined at a sharper rate than the rest of the nation but also was recovering at a quicker rate. Minnesota's recovery was due in part to the relative strength of the state's leading industries — meatpacking, flour milling, news printing, book printing, and the production of liquor.

But something else was holding Minnesota's recovery back.

"America has the manpower, machines and natural resources, skill and brains," the report said. "Americans know how to produce. Our factories, mines and farms are the most highly developed in the world. But Americans cannot buy the goods they produce. We do not have sufficient buying

power. Wages and farm prices are too low."

Although Minnesota was a state that depended heavily on its agricultural resources, the commission said, income from agriculture in 1935 accounted for only 18 percent of the total annual income of the state's people.

To remedy the lack of purchasing power, the commission recommended that the state move to guarantee farmers fair prices for their goods. The commission also cited the growing control of corporate farming as harmful to the Minnesota farmer.

"During the Depression, the position of the farmer has become worse," the report said. "The food trusts, with the power of monopolistic control, have protected their profits at the expense of the producer."

The commission made other recommendations aimed at increasing consumer buying power. It called for the state to uphold labor's power to bargain for a fair wage and to develop a tax system based on the ability to pay.

The state also needed to develop a system of long-term planning and managing the state's resources, the commission found. Conservation of the state's timber, water, and soil was key, the report said, because "the industries most important to the industrial future of the state are those based on our natural resources."

Using tax concessions to attract industry ultimately was ineffective, the commission concluded, because such moves only transferred Minnesota's unemployment problem to neighboring states.

"Since Minnesota sells a large percentage of its industrial products outside its border we do not gain when increasing unemployment cuts into this outside market," the report said.

Seventy years later, Minnesota is in good times, with unemployment low and consumer spending high. But the issues of concern in late 1930s — from the plight of the family farmer to the economic competition from neighboring states — continue to draw debate at the Capitol.

★ **CONSUMERS**

Tornado victims hit twice

Two years after a tornado devastated St. Peter, the town's residents are still reeling, in part due to unscrupulous contractors who took people's money and didn't complete the job, said Rep. Julie Storm (R-St. Peter), who has proposed a bill to protect homeowners.

Storm testified in favor of the bill (HF2563) before the House Civil Law Committee Feb. 2. The committee took no action on the bill, but the proposal is expected to come up again during the next few weeks.

Storm shared horror stories about a contractor who collected money from St. Peter-area homeowners, then did not pay subcontractors. The subcontractors then placed mechanic liens on the homeowners, who thought they had finished paying for the repairs.

"It's taken two years, with no resolution," she said.

Jerold Lucas, a St. Peter attorney, told the committee that one particular contractor conducted dishonest deals with

15 homeowners in the area. The contractor eventually went bankrupt, but the mechanic liens were already placed on the homes, Lucas said.

"It was a nightmare," Lucas said. "It is a time warp. They couldn't get out of it."

Current state law says a builder, material supplier, or subcontractor can place a mechanic lien on property if he or she is not paid for work done on the property.

The bill would create stiffer penalties for violators, said St. Peter resident Jerry Yushta, a police officer. In the St. Peter case, the contractor was charged with a gross misdemeanor for each of the 15 cases.

Yushta said the contractor should face felony charges for the amount of money he took from the homeowners.

Storm said the contracting industry helped draft the bill's language.

"They are eager to get rid of bad contractors, too," Storm said.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) liked the bill, but he questioned why the proposal only applies to residential construction.

"There is no harm to the homeowner to having this uniform (for all construction)," Bishop said.

★ **CRIME**

Capitol security needs help

The Capitol complex might need a makeover in the next few years to prevent possible acts of terrorism or dangerous incidents, according to a recent report on complex security.

Nicholas V. O'Hara, superintendent of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, told the House Crime Prevention Committee on Feb. 3 about the planned upgrades to the Capitol that feature metal detectors, X-ray conveyor belts, and fewer entrances accessible to the public.

"This is a managed approach to access, not a restriction of access," O'Hara said, explaining that people will still be able to enter the Capitol.

The report was initially released on Jan. 17. The proposal recommended by the task force would cost the state \$3.07 million. O'Hara presented four different protection packages, ranging from \$1.8 million to \$6 million.

O'Hara said the Legislature should create a Capitol complex security oversight committee, which would be responsible for the development and implementation of security measures.

The plan would require employees to carry color- and access-coded cards to move throughout the Capitol complex. Vendors and other people who have business at the Capitol would be issued temporary identification cards, the proposal states.

There are currently 37 doors providing access to the Capitol. Under the proposal, the public doors would be reduced to seven. In total, there would only be 14 public doors between the Capitol, Judicial Center, and State Office Building, the report recommends.

O'Hara suggested the state increase security for the governor by assigning additional state troopers to the governor's residence. Additional troopers should be assigned to follow the governor, the lieutenant governor, and legislative and judicial officials, O'Hara said.

In addition, Capitol security should have a

uniform look so they are recognizable to the public, but distinguishable from other uniformed officers.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) objected to the outfit changes, saying it is better for people to think Capitol security guards are police officers. Skoglund suggested that people are less likely to commit a crime when they think an officer is nearby.

The \$3.07 million proposal includes \$1.67 million for screening devices and the access card system and \$1.4 million for additional troopers, staff, equipment, and training costs.

The committee took no action on the task force's recommendations.

Prison projects pitched

Repairs to aging facilities and new construction to handle emerging mental health and high security needs are the focus of the Department of Corrections' capital budget for 2000.

Department officials presented their bonding requests to the House Judiciary Finance Committee Feb. 1.

Initially, corrections officials requested \$25.6 million in bond funds for 2000. Gov. Jesse Ventura recommended funding for \$19.5 million, leaving two of the department's major initiatives unfunded — a vocational building at the Red Wing facility and an activities building at Willow River.

Several of the state correctional facilities are old and deteriorating, said Dennis Benson, deputy commissioner of corrections. The project requests for this year reflect that, and many of the concerns have been problems for several years.

Benson also said problems are approaching the point where the facilities will no longer be in compliance with state fire and building codes if they continue to deteriorate.

One project would fix the sanitary and storm sewer systems at the Faribault prison. A former state hospital, the medium-security prison for men is more than 100 years old. Recent tests show that high, unsafe levels of fecal coliform have contaminated the nearby Straight River. Cost of the sewer project is \$10.6 million.

Officials have also proposed moving the current health services department at the maximum-security Stillwater prison into the former laundry area, at a cost of \$1.8 million. The health facility is now located outside the secure parts of the prison, which requires staff

**HOUSE
COMMITTEE
PROFILE**

Civil Law

Chair: Smith
(R-Mound)

Vice Chair: Seifert, J.
(R-Woodbury)

Minority Lead: Carruthers
(DFL-Brooklyn Center)

Members: 16
(9 R, 7 DFL)

Scope: Reviews all areas of Minnesota's civil laws, including family law, personal injury law, probate, landlord-tenant, nuisance law, and data privacy statutes.



During the Department of Corrections presentation before the Judiciary Finance Committee, Jim Bruton, warden at the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Oak Park Heights, points out features of a proposed addition of 60 cells to house the worst of the worst inmates.

to transport inmates outside for medical care and increases risk, said David Crist, warden at Stillwater.

Ventura also recommended \$1.8 million in funding to repair the crumbling 85-year-old prison yard walls that surround the Stillwater facility.

Also among Ventura's recommendations is \$855,000 to help build a high-security, self-contained unit at Oak Park Heights prison to handle inmates who are a risk to themselves, other inmates, and staff. Most of the \$13.9 million total cost is being paid by the federal government.

Two other projects backed by Ventura would renovate the food service building at Minnesota Correctional Facility-Lino Lakes for \$3.9 million and renovate a cottage at Minnesota Correctional Facility-Red Wing for mental health needs at a cost of \$801,000.

The committee is expected to send its entire judiciary finance bonding plan to the House Capital Investment Committee in late February.

Probation database planned

The state Department of Corrections has developed a pilot project to integrate probation data statewide in the ongoing effort to create a single criminal justice information system in the state.

The department presented its project to the House Judiciary Finance Committee Feb. 3.

The project would take data about current and former probation cases and place it on a secure Internet site accessible by law enforcement personnel around the state.

Each user would have an identification number or name and password to access the

system. It would be available only to law enforcement, said Dennis Benson, deputy commissioner for the department.

An official could search the database by using a person's first and last name or several other identifying factors, including driver's license number or social security number. In addition, any aliases someone has used would also be available.

For example, an officer makes a traffic stop and finds out the driver of the car is named John Smith. The officer suspects Mr. Smith has been drinking and checks his driving record. The database also would allow the officer to see if Mr. Smith is on probation for a previous drunken driving violation that may include a "no drinking" provision.

The project is still in development stages. The department has been working on it for the past 12 to 18 months.

Benson did not know exactly how much the project would cost. He did say about \$200,000 had been transferred from the state Department of Public Safety for the project. He said he suspected it would cost more.

Minnesota prison costs high

Minnesota spends about \$85 per inmate, per day to run the state prison system, corrections officials said at a Jan. 27 joint meeting of the House Judiciary Finance Committee and Senate Crime Prevention and Judiciary Budget Division.

The committees held the interim hearing to discuss ways of cutting operating costs in the correctional system. Concerns were initially raised after a 1996 Bureau of Justice Statistics report listed Minnesota as the most

expensive state, spending \$104 per day, per inmate.

Corrections officials testified that since the 1996 report, several changes have been made to help lower the per diem costs to about \$85 a day on average.

A chart prepared by the department shows the lowest per diem for 1999 was \$75.55 a day at the Stillwater prison and the highest was \$137.96 a day at Oak Park Heights prison.

David Crist, warden of the Stillwater prison, testified that because Minnesota incarcerates the most serious offenders, costs are going to be higher.

Currently, the state has about 120,000 people on probation. Most state prisoners have committed crimes against people, not property crimes.

Oak Park Heights prison, the state's super-maximum security facility, takes the worst of the worst and costs the most per day to operate, Crist said

Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) said he wanted more information about how Minnesota compares to other states regarding operating costs and costs per inmate. Fiscal analysts for both the House and Senate said statistics found in the annual corrections yearbook are typically the most reliable, though it's important to note how the figures are calculated.

For example, the 1996 report included overall prison operating costs, including administrative positions.

"Any way you calculate it, we are extremely expensive," Kelly said.

Members of both committees asked corrections officials to provide more information about how Minnesota's costs compare to other states.

The committees also briefly discussed ways to cut costs, including privatizing canteen services in the prison.

Tracking criminals statewide

Developing an integrated statewide law enforcement database is a key priority, said the head of the state's Department of Public Safety during a Jan. 6 joint hearing of the House Crime Prevention and Judiciary Finance committees.

"It's clear as a bell this issue is the most important in criminal justice," said Charlie Weaver, commissioner of the department. "The governor is focused like a laser on this issue."

The interim hearing centered on an issue expected to be discussed during the 2000 Legislative Session. Many people believe that law enforcement would be aided by a better way of tracking criminals through the different jurisdictions in the state.

Officials want to avoid situations where a lack of information allows a criminal to slip through the cracks. Say a suspect picked up on misdemeanor charges in Martin County has a warrant for his arrest on a more serious charge in Ramsey County. If the Martin County officials don't know about the warrant, the suspect will soon be back on the street. A statewide tracking system would ensure the information would be available.

Weaver described a Hennepin County project that will link computer systems from the county courts, county attorney, sheriff, and probation offices. The pilot project will serve as a model for the state. Establishing other pilot projects through state grants would be the next step, Weaver said.

Officials have not yet determined how much such a statewide system would cost the state. The department plans to coordinate the formation of a group to explore alternative technologies and offers from vendors.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) asked if Gov. Jesse Ventura will support funding for an integrated system, even though the governor has said he will back only emergency funding measures this session.

Weaver said it would be premature for the administration to support funding without knowing what the actual costs will be.

★ DEVELOPMENT

Housing, history get support

Bonding recommendations totaling \$6.5 million greeted the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee at its first meeting Feb. 2.

The recommendations were part of the governor's capital budget plan for 2000. The requests before the committee equal just 37.5 percent of the total requested by the state Department of Commerce, the Housing Finance Agency, and the Minnesota Historical Society.

Among the governor's recommendations are \$2 million for loans to local government for publicly owned transitional housing for low- and middle-income people. Gov. Jesse Ventura's plan also calls for \$2.5 million for the energy investment loan program administered by the Department of Commerce, which provides loans to public schools, cities, and counties to implement energy-efficient projects.

The governor is also requesting \$1.75 million for the Historical Society for statewide asset preservation efforts along with \$250,000 to restore furnishings in the State Capitol in preparation for the building's centennial celebration in 2005.

Finally, the governor is requesting funding for a variety of wastewater treatment projects, Clean Drinking Water Act projects, and other environmental programs.

Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), the chair of the committee, said that along with the governor's proposals, the panel will consider many of the 62 projects requested by local jurisdictions that were not included in the governor's capital investment requests. Those projects total more than \$407 million.

McElroy said that the committee would hold a hearing for any bill whose author has requested a hearing, on the condition that the project met the Nov. 1 deadline for submissions and has a Senate companion bill.

He said one exception to these guidelines would be a potential request from the City of Minneapolis for money for the Guthrie Theater project. That project is expected to come before the Legislature this year, although a request has not yet been made.

★ EDUCATION

Writing test stands, for now

An "urgent" attempt at revising a controversial statewide 10th-grade writing test fell short during the first day of the 2000 legislative session, and will now be taken up by the House Education Policy Committee later this month.

The bill (HF2720) will now travel through the regular committee process, after a motion to accelerate a vote failed.

The statewide writing test, taken by Minnesota sophomores during the last week of January, is required as part of the state's Graduation Standards program.

Some students and their parents objected to the test, which asked students to write an essay about one thing they would like to change about themselves.

Many people feel the question was inappropriate because it touched on issues of self-esteem. Even Christine Jax, commissioner of the state Department of Children, Families and Learning, suggested the question may have gone too far.

Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) introduced a bill Feb. 1 that would order destruc-

Committee deadlines for 2000 session

Each year the House and Senate set deadlines by which most bills must be heard in a committee and forwarded through the process.

Committee deadlines for this year will be officially determined by a joint House-Senate resolution. While that resolution still must be formally approved, it is expected to contain the following deadlines and language further defining each deadline.

The first committee deadline will be **Friday, March 3**. By that date, bills must pass out of necessary policy committees in their house of origin.

The second committee deadline will be **Friday, March 10**. By that date, bills other than those containing appropriations will have to be passed out of all policy committees in the both the House and the Senate.

The third deadline will be **Friday, March 17**. All omnibus finance bills will have to pass out of committee by that date.

Of course, there are exceptions to the deadlines. The taxes committees and rules committees in both bodies are exempt. And a bill can be heard after the deadlines if the rules committee in either body grants its permission.

tion of the current test, require students to be retested by answering a different question, and demand legislative approval of future test questions.

"I don't think I need to remind you that this question went too far," Reuter said.

Reuter moved that the House suspend normal rules and allow members to vote on passage of the measure without first requiring the bill to pass through committee.

He argued the House needed to vote on the bill right away because the state was ready to send the tests to be scored. Delaying action, he said, would cost the state additional money to re-administer the test at a later date. The motion to suspend the rules, which required a two-thirds majority to pass, gained only 63 of the 90 votes it needed.

Rep. Harry Mares (R-White Bear Lake), chair of the Education Policy Committee, urged members to vote against a suspension of rules. Mares said it was only fair that the bill be heard by committee so that the public could have a chance to give its input.

Several members agreed that the question went too far, but were adamant the bill should

Progress Report

BILL: HF2720

SUMMARY: Requires destruction of Graduation Standards writing test given to 10th graders and retesting of all students

ACTION: House rejected procedural move to pass immediately Feb. 1

UP NEXT: Referred to House Education Policy Committee

SENATE: Awaits hearing in Senate Children, Families & Learning Committee

travel through the committee process where the public could comment.

Auditor eyes school finances

A legislative auditor's report released Feb. 2 says that Minnesota schools are in better financial condition than they were a decade ago.

And although more than one-third of the districts surveyed reported making cuts this year, the statewide teacher-student ratio is expected to hold at or near the level of the last academic year.

The School District Finances report, which polled 79 percent of Minnesota's school districts (accounting for 89 percent of public school enrollment), also indicated that more money is being received and spent on students than 10 years ago.

The growth in spending has largely gone for instruction or related activities, according to the Office of the Legislative Auditor, which produced the report.

To illustrate that point, John Yunker, project manager for the office, said more of the state's school districts have added new programs this year than have eliminated them.

But the report notes that the statewide average teacher salary has declined 4 percent since 1989.

The dip in average teacher salary over the decade can be attributed in part to a greater number of new teachers who enter at the lower end of the pay scale being hired to accommodate enrollment growth, Yunker said.

In a letter included in the report, Christine Jax, commissioner for the Department of Children, Families and Learning, said the report is both an accurate and fair portrayal of the trends in school district finance over the past decade.

"Although the report indicates there is no evidence of a statewide financial crises in K-12 education," Jax wrote, "we need to find ways to measure if Minnesota districts are making the most of current revenues, to tie spending to measures of student success, and to develop other accountability indicators to help guide districts and staff in making educational decisions."

The report did not purport to measure whether current education funding is adequate to educate students or whether the state's schools are making the most of the revenue they receive.

Vacancies may prompt changes

Alternative ways to train and compensate teachers were considered by the House K-12 Education Finance Committee during an interim hearing held Dec. 15, 1999.

Officials estimate there will be 5,000

teaching vacancies statewide for the 2000-01 school year, according to a report of the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning. By 2004, districts will need to replace a total of 24,500 teachers.

National and local experts who testified during interim hearings said teachers need more opportunities for career advancement in the classroom and further development. They also said colleges and universities that train teachers need to work more closely with classroom teachers.

"The days are gone when the people at the colleges and universities do the research and the people in the classrooms do the practical," said Michael Tillmann, executive director of the State Board of Teaching.

A bill (**HF1324**) sponsored by Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexandria) would establish grants for programs that link local districts with teacher training programs.

Local school districts could apply for one of five \$20,000 grants to begin a program that establishes those links by such methods as placing teaching students in K-12 classrooms, encouraging certified educators to teach courses, or encouraging post-secondary teachers to mentor.

Another bill (**HF 1804**), sponsored by Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins), would allow teachers to choose whether they are paid for a 9-month or 11-month calendar. Those choosing the 11-month calendar would be required to spend the extra time on staff development.

"Many of our best teachers are already working that time," Folliard testified. "But they're still being paid on a 180-day (9 month) schedule. I just don't think that's right."

The bills are expected to be considered by the K-12 Education Finance Committee during the 2000 Legislative Session.

Report says more info needed

A report presented to the House Education Policy Committee Feb. 3 concluded there isn't sufficient information to determine an acceptable standard for measuring overall school performance.

Submitted by the Department of Children, Families and Learning, the report said officials cannot recommend a sufficient definition for levels of pupil achievement and overall accountability.

The report also suggested that a study group continue to work toward developing a comprehensive model that not only holds students accountable for achievement but also identifies indicators that gauge the effectiveness of the system that supports continued student improvement.

"We don't feel it's fair to put all accountability on a student's back until we're able to further examine the impact a community's system of support has on that student," said Jessie Montano, assistant commissioner for the department.

Officials assembled a group of educators to assist in the development of policies that support a successful K-12 education system, Montano said. The group met over the past two months to review and discuss research and literature on educational reform and accountability, but could not reach a satisfactory conclusion.

The lack of a conclusion by the study group and the department, however, frustrated some

MINNESOTA TEACHER OF THE YEAR



House members cheer Minnesota Teacher of the Year Brett Smith during opening day proceedings in the House chamber Feb. 1. Smith, a teacher at O. H. Anderson Elementary School in Mahtomedi, is one of four finalists for the title of National Teacher of the Year.

lawmakers, including Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield). Tuma asked Montano precisely when the committee could expect to see a more decisive conclusion.

Montano was hesitant to give a definite answer and replied only by saying the department would continue to move forward as more data became available.

The department previously submitted recommendations in December 1998 defining state expectations for student achievement. Once adopted, the expectations were to be used by the state and school districts to evaluate if each school site met the performance standard for a particular year.

However, Montano said, shortly after Gov. Jesse Ventura took office in January 1999, the Legislature was asked to delay action on the recommendations and language contained in the report, and another report was ordered for submission by January 2000.

After presenting the most recent report, Montano offered to speak later that day with concerned committee members in private and take further comment back to the department for consideration.

★ EMPLOYMENT

Overview of job programs

Studying the state's employment and training programs is the first step toward improving workforce development efforts, an official from the Department of Economic Security told the House Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee Feb. 3.

Jim Korkki, deputy commissioner with the department, said the state has had 27 consecutive months of unemployment rates below 3 percent. The department projects that by 2006, there will be just 337,000 workers for 416,000 new jobs.

The study was required as part of last year's omnibus economic development law. Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont) sponsored the original legislation calling for the report.

It marks the first time the state has ever looked at all the workforce development programs as a whole.

"It was never the intention to ax programs," Gunther said. "It was the hope to provide legislative oversight for dollars paid by taxpayers. We can look at ways to consolidate some of the programs to serve the people of Minnesota better."

Korkki said the study examined programs helping individuals assume jobs or advance in the labor market. But, he said, the information in the report is not comprehensive because the data collected was self reported, was not verified by an outside entity, and involved

certain data privacy restrictions. The study looked at 78 programs administered by 14 state agencies and three federal agencies.

Those programs received \$632 million in state funds, including \$500 million from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, and \$255 million in federal funds.

Officials from the Department of Trade and Economic Development presented an overview of another study required by the 1999 omnibus law, examining the state's marketing plan for trade, tourism, and economic development activities.

Steve Markuson, the director of the Office of Tourism, said the study found the state spends less than \$10 million, or less than one-tenth of one percent of the state budget, annually on economic development marketing.

Markuson said the study concludes that an integrated marketing approach between various state agencies and organizations will increase Minnesota's competitive position in the marketplace.

★ ENVIRONMENT

Ventura's bond plan questioned

The debate over how much money to spend on the environment-related capital projects began Feb. 2 in the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

The panel heard an overview of Gov. Jesse Ventura's \$462 million capital budget plan, which includes \$125 million for projects related to agriculture, pollution control, outdoor recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other programs affecting the environment.

Several lawmakers objected to the amount of money that would be available under Ventura's plan.

State agencies requested a total of \$1.5 billion for capital projects. Under the governor's proposal, most of those requests would be denied, which Rep. Jean

Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) said would create a backlog of maintenance projects that will need to be done in the future.

"How long will it take us to get out of that hole?" she asked. Repairs that are ignored tend to get worse — and more costly to fix — she added.

Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul) questioned the logic of the governor's proposal, which is based on the average amount that has been bonded in each of the last 15 years. The amount of money to be bonded traditionally has been based on a percentage of general fund revenue, Osthoff said.

To maintain the state's bond rating, the state should spend less than 3 percent of its total general fund revenue in a biennium on debt service. Under that guideline, the state could authorize more than \$1 billion for fiscal years 2000-2001, Osthoff said.

One consequence of the governor's proposal is that a project to clean up the Minnesota River would be only partially funded. Wagenius pointed out that the state is eligible for \$163 million in federal matching funds, but only half of that could be collected under the governor's plan.

To be eligible for the entire \$163 million, the state's contribution would have to be \$70 million. The state has already allocated \$10 million for that purpose, and the governor's proposal is to spend another \$25 million.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), chair of the committee, said he plans to begin hearing proposals soon from other House members on environmental projects that could be included in the House version of the bonding bill.

DNR supports license fee hike

A proposal to raise hunting and fishing license fees has the backing of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which needs revenue to restore programs and staff.

"This is not a total solution to the crisis in funding," Deputy Commissioner Steve Morse said. "But it is important we do something this year."

The issue was debated during an interim hearing of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee held Jan. 11. Lawmakers are expected to take up the matter again during the 2000 session.

The DNR is seeking a \$1 increase for fishing licenses, a \$2 increase for small-game licenses, and a \$3 increase for firearms deer licenses. The Senate passed a similar proposal during the 1999 session, but it failed to pass the House.

HOUSE COMMITTEE PROFILE

Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Chair: Holsten (R-Stillwater)

Vice Chair: Hackbarth (R-Cedar)

Minority Lead: Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul)

Members: 13 (8 R, 5 DFL)

Scope: Reviews and recommends funding for environment and natural resources-related programs. Oversees the budgets of agencies including the Department of Natural Resources, Pollution Control Agency, Office of Environmental Assistance, Minnesota Zoo, Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources, and the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

Under the proposal, the state would provide \$1 in additional support for every \$2 raised by the fee increase. The department estimates the fee increases would raise \$6 million.

The last hunting fee increase came in 1991, and the last fishing fee increase was passed in 1997.

Morse said fishing and conservation groups support the proposed fee increases. The additional revenue will go toward restoring cuts in jobs and programs.

Officials estimate the unreserved fund portion of the larger Game and Fish Fund will have a negative balance in 2003. The Game and Fish Fund is created through the license fees.

Morse said Gov. Jesse Ventura supports the proposed fee increase, but even with the additional revenue, the department still falls short of proper funding levels for its fish and wildlife programs.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), committee chair, said that the issue will be a major focus this session.

"Hopefully this committee and others in the House and Senate will bring up awareness (of the need for additional DNR funding)," he said.

Rep. Tim Finseth (R-Angus) said it would be difficult to support the DNR's proposal because it doesn't provide a long-term solution to the lack of funds.

"This is a two year, short-term fix. It is not solving anything," he said.

★ GOVERNMENT

No consensus on House prayer

House rules regarding the prayer that opens each floor session, a matter of emotional debate last year, made an encore appearance Feb. 1, the first day of the new session.

Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) introduced an amendment to the Permanent Rules of the House that would have eliminated language calling for "a nondenominational prayer by the chaplain that respects the religious diversity of the House."

In its place, Reuter sought to install wording simply requiring "a prayer by the chaplain." But his effort did not win enough support on the House floor. The amendment got a 69-63 majority of votes, but it failed to muster the two-thirds support (or 90 votes) needed.

The references related to religious diversity were added to the House rules during the 1999 session. House leaders said the memos sent to visiting chaplains have long included such provisions, and by putting them in the rules, the practice was simply made official.

The matter was raised after a choir

performing as part of opening day events last session sang a song including references to Jesus Christ.

In debating the issue Feb. 1, Reuter said the new rule inhibits free speech and expression.

"If we tried to pass this as a law," he said, "it would be unconstitutional."

Reuter, who left the Republican Party after the end of the 1999 session, noted the displeasure some expressed about seeing the matter raised again, but he said he felt it was important to revisit.

"This is the last remaining thing for me to fix of my legislative career," he said.

Several other lawmakers argued in favor of the proposed amendment. Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) said the existing rule does not allow people to hear the unique beliefs of others or to express their own religious values.

"We need to learn to respect that diversity and to allow people to experience that," he said.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) proposed an amendment that would have removed only the word "nondenominational" from the House rules. That amendment failed by a margin of 110-20.

★ HUMAN SERVICES

State must get more into jobs

Despite research indicating an increase in the percentage of Minnesota welfare recipients who are employed, a report presented to the joint Legislative Audit Commission

Jan. 27 suggested that the state must do more to help traditional welfare recipients.

The report found that compared with most other states, Minnesota has more generous welfare assistance levels and eligibility criteria, with less severe imposed sanctions, but also lower participation rate by welfare recipients in work-related activities.

According to the report, in welfare households where at least one adult was eligible to work, fewer than 50 percent of them were working or involved in work-related activities such as school. That could prove to be a problem for the state in the future, said Legislative Auditor James Nobles.

Minnesota could suffer financial penalties from the federal government if it fails to show that at least half of its welfare recipients are participating in work-related activities in 2002, Nobles said.

A work-related activity, according to the report, includes schooling, job searching, or actual employment.

The report suggests that lawmakers should use up more of the federal money the state receives for programs to remedy the weak statistics. By July of next year, Minnesota expects to have \$164 million in reserve.

Information provided by the Department of Human Services suggests the state has extra money because it continues to receive \$267 million per year from the federal government even though caseloads have declined.

The report also suggests the state impose stronger sanctions for people who aren't making sufficient progress toward joining the workforce by their established deadline. In

WELFARE PROTEST



JoAnn Gonzalez, right, holds a friend's grandchild as another participant carries a sign in protest to welfare changes during a rally in the Capitol rotunda Feb. 1. Protesters expressed opposition to the five-year lifetime cap on welfare eligibility.

July 1997, the state limited welfare recipients to 60 months of eligibility. Currently, the stiffest penalty the state can impose on recipients making little progress is a 30 percent reduction of benefits.

Proposals for job-training programs, housing stipends, and other services to plug the gaps in the state's welfare program are expected to surface in both the House and Senate this legislative session.

★ IMMIGRATION

Information on illegal employment

Immigration and Naturalization Service officials (INS) would gain access to more state records, under a bill approved Feb. 2 by the House Civil Law Committee.

The bill (**HF2522**), sponsored by Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound), would allow immigration officials to obtain employment records from the state Department of Economic Security.

The bill will stay within the committee for now and is expected to be rolled into an omnibus data practices bill later this session.

Charles Midby, special agent in charge of the regional INS office, told the committee he investigated an area employer last year that had several illegal immigrant employees. Midby said he tried to get employment records that showed the employer knowingly hired the illegal immigrants, but the Department of Economic Security refused to turn over the records.

"We decided to proceed without the more serious charges because we couldn't get the information," Midby said.

The company was still fined, but without the serious penalties that could have come with more information, he said.

Rick Caliguirri, budget coordinator with Department of Economic Security, said the information his agency collects is private and nonpublic, and the INS does not have statutory authority to gain the information.

The bill would allow agents access to it.

Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) expressed concern about the proposal and questioned how it would be known if immigration officials are investigating a company.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) asked if economic security officials can call immigration agents when they suspect illegal immigrants are working for a company.

"Is whistle-blowing going to get a [department] official in trouble?" Skoglund asked. "I think some of them are afraid. Are they in trouble?"

Caliguirri assured Skoglund that no state employees would be in trouble, nor have any employees been disciplined in the past for

reporting information to the immigration service.

The bill would also allow immigration agents to gain access to employment records without the consent of the individual employees.

Currently, the Department of Economic Security is allowed under statute to disseminate the information to the departments of Revenue, Labor and Industry, and Trade and Economic Development.

★ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Assessments for rural addresses

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee approved a bill Feb. 2 to allow counties to use special assessment procedures for address signs related to 911 emergency services.

In recent years, many rural residents received street addresses for the first time as a result of enhanced 911 services. Many of the costs of implementing that service were paid for by telephone surcharges.

Terry Overn, Le Sueur County auditor, said the costs of house signs cannot be assessed under current law. Special assessment can only be used for county state-aid highways, county highways, waterworks, and sewer systems.

Overn said the average cost of the special assessment in his county would come to around \$25 per household. He said rural residents see the benefit of having a street address as opposed to a route or box number for police, fire, and ambulance services.

Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield), who is sponsoring the bill (**HF2549**), said the assessment is akin to a user fee because residents benefit from the 911 services.

"Most of the rural residents I know want the signs. They appreciate them," Tuma said.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) said she was concerned that the bill would result in an increase in property taxes and that the state should assist in helping to pay the costs because it initiated the move to street addresses.

The bill was referred to the House Taxes Committee.

Mandatory bike registration

A House committee approved a bill (**HF2489**) that would allow municipalities selling impounded bicycles to require purchasers to register the bikes.

The registration fee is currently \$9 for a three-year period.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), the bill's author, said the measure is in response to a recommendation of a bicycle theft task force he serves on. He said there are an increasing

number of "strong arm" thefts occurring in Minneapolis where riders are literally shoved off their bikes by a thief.

Skoglund said in such instances that it is difficult for a bike owner to prove that the bicycle belongs to him or her and not the perpetrator. He said the aim of the legislation is to return bicycles to their owners, as well as prevent thefts from occurring in the first place.

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee approved the bill Feb. 2 and sent it to the House floor.

State mandates, local strains

Local government officials often complain about mandates from higher levels of government, especially when the higher level doesn't help pay for the costs of complying with the mandate.

A recent report from the Office of the Legislative Auditor found that the state has several ways to resolve such conflicts between state and local governments, but they are seldom used.

The report was presented to the joint Legislative Audit Commission Jan. 26.

One method involves local fiscal impact notes that give lawmakers accurate information on the potential costs passed down to municipalities in order to comply with the pending legislation. The chair or ranking minority member of the House or Senate tax committee can request a local fiscal impact note from the state Department of Finance.

However, only eight local fiscal impact notes have been prepared in the last two years.

A 1997 law requires the department to prepare a biennial local fiscal impact summary report that specifies local governments' costs of complying with state mandates. The department's first report is expected in September.

Another option is for sponsors of pending bills to be asked to provide a "mandate explanation," which must have seven specific types of information: policy goals of the bill, performance standards that allow flexibility for compliance, how those standards govern staffing and other administrative requirements, revenue sources, reasons why voluntary compliance won't work, input from affected agencies regarding their ability to implement the proposed mandate, and feedback from local government officials in developing the proposed mandate.

Many of those subjects are discussed during hearings on pending legislation, but according to the report, specific documents with all of that information have not been requested or prepared. Mandate explanations can be requested by a chair or ranking minority member of any legislative committee.

Yet another remedy is to acquire a variance from a state agency, available for such things as child care licensing rules or water quality standards. Also, a local unit of government can apply for a waiver through the Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation, or it can request a state agency to amend or repeal a rule through a petition process.

The report recommends that legislators use the remedies already available, rather than trying to develop new ones.

★ RECREATION

Good marks for running parks

Increasing demands for services at state parks have caused Department of Natural Resources officials to make some tough choices.

The Office of the Legislative Auditor recently evaluated the DNR's process of making those choices and released a report on its findings.

The joint Legislative Audit Commission discussed the report Jan. 26.

According to DNR surveys, park visitors have consistently expressed satisfaction with campgrounds, hiking trails, cleanliness of facilities and other features of the parks. The report found that the DNR does a good job in balancing its priorities among the various areas of park management: maintaining park facilities, providing educational and recreational programming, and preserving the state's natural resources.

The DNR has rational standards for setting

priorities, such as ranking capital improvement projects and soliciting public input for programming decisions, according to the report.

However, the report also listed some areas that could be improved.

One concern is that preserving natural resources is a lower priority than maintaining campsites and providing educational or "interpretive programming." That programming includes presentations or tours given by naturalists, publications that teach park visitors about natural resources or environmental problems, and many other types of programs.

Bill Morrissey, director of the DNR's Parks and Recreation Division, said that while preserving natural resources is important, it does not draw as much reaction from the public as a decision to save money by closing a campground for the fall or spring seasons.

Morrissey added that the division has increased spending on preserving resources over the last 15 to 20 years. Pine trees were removed from Itasca State Park that were at-risk for spreading disease, for example. Controlled burns to restore pine forests and harvesting native prairie seed are other examples of the division's resource management programs, he said.

Some of the funding for preserving natural resources comes from sales of merchandise and equipment rental in parks. That money goes into a revolving fund, the Working Capital Account, which is spent on resource management and interpretive programs.

Another concern is that assessing the condition and estimating repair costs of state-

owned buildings has been inconsistent. The DNR is adding a new database for building maintenance, which is expected to improve that concern.

Also, the report recommends that the DNR continue including estimates of future operating costs of new buildings in its biennial budget requests.

★ TAXES

Closing a tax loophole

A change clarifying the assignment of non-business income for non-Minnesota residents is one of the provisions in the Department of Revenue's policy bill this session.

Department officials presented an overview to the House Taxes Committee Feb. 3 of two bills proposing technical, administrative, and policy changes in the state's tax laws.

The provision is a response to a Minnesota Supreme Court ruling last year that held that the term "compensation for labor or personal or professional service" did not include wages paid to an executive for managerial or administrative work.

The court ruling meant that the plaintiff in the case, Victor Benda, a Texas resident, did not have to pay taxes on wages he earned while in Minnesota.

"I am offended that Mr. Benda was able to get away with that," Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the committee chair, said.

The proposed change would replace the terms "labor or personal or professional services" with the word "wages" and thus would require wages earned by all employees for work in the state to be assigned to Minnesota.

That way, Minnesota could collect income tax on the wages.

Jennifer Engh, deputy commissioner of the department, said the change would result in a \$2.3 million revenue gain for the state.

The committee took no formal action on the bills, but Abrams said they would be considered as part of the omnibus tax bill this session.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Transit demands growing

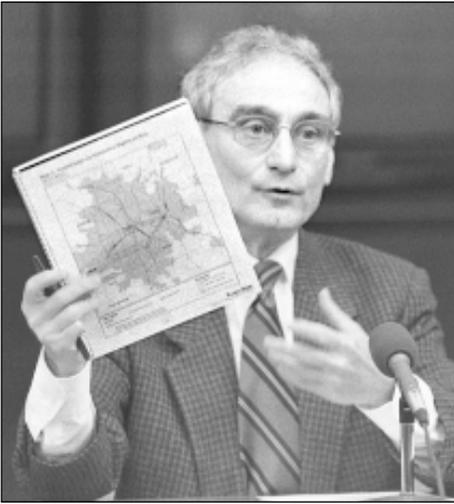
The Twin Cities region should double its fleet of buses in the next 20 years to keep up with the area's transportation needs, said Nacho Diaz, transportation planning director for the Metropolitan Council.

Diaz testified before a joint meeting of the House Transportation Finance and Transportation Policy committees Feb. 2. He said doubling the number of buses and creating dedicated

CELEBRATING PUBLIC SERVICE DAY



Stearns County Commissioner Rose Arnold waves to her fellow public servants after being acknowledged by Speaker Steve Sviggum during ceremonies in the House chamber Feb. 3. Commissioner Arnold sent the speaker a letter that initiated "Celebrating Public Service Day," which brought county, city and school board members to the Capitol to meet with their legislators.



Metropolitan Council Transportation Planning Director Nacho Diaz presents an overview of the Met Council's 2020 Transit Master Plan before a joint meeting of the Transportation Policy and Transportation Finance committees on Feb. 2.

roads for buses could keep 200,000 vehicles off the packed highway system each day.

"The Twin Cities continues to grow rapidly," Diaz said. "But that leads to transit problems."

There are 250,000 bus riders each day now, Diaz said. He hopes to increase that number to 500,000 riders over the next 20 years.

The state would need to invest \$440 million by 2010 in buses to double its numbers, according to a transit report. There also would be additional operating costs of \$70 million per year, the report states.

To obtain more riders, the state must strengthen its current bus system, develop a network of dedicated transit corridors and promote development along those corridors, Diaz said.

A dedicated transit corridor, involving both light-rail lines and roads exclusively for buses, would speed passengers to their destination.

Along with more buses, the state must provide more garages, more park and ride locations, additional transit stations, and other passenger amenities, Diaz said.

Ted Mondale, chairman of the Metropolitan Council, told lawmakers he hopes that two, possibly three, dedicated busways can be built during the next 20 years. There are no plans for light-rail lines outside of the Hiawatha Corridor, he said.

There are currently 100 miles of congestion on metro highways, Mondale said.

"To do nothing now will ensure 300 miles of congestion in the future," he said. "We know congestion is getting worse."

Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska), who chairs the transportation finance committee, questioned the funding requests for Minneapolis.

"We're putting a lot of resources back into an area that lost population," Molnau said.

Suburban road funds uncertain

Areas throughout the state need more money for transportation infrastructure improvements, state and local officials said at a joint meeting of the House Transportation Policy and Transportation Finance committees Dec. 6, 1999, at the Woodbury City Hall.

Several local officials testified at the interim hearing in favor of full funding for the project to reconstruct the Wakota Bridge on Interstate 494 between Newport and South St. Paul so it has four lanes of traffic heading both eastbound and westbound. The plan also calls for the widening of U.S. Highway 61 from four lanes to six lanes through Newport.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) estimates the cost of the project at \$168 million, nearly \$50 million more than original numbers. The increased costs have prompted the department to propose scaling back the project and delaying several portions until additional funding is found.

Supporters stressed the importance of moving ahead with the entire project now.

"The individual parts of the project are too integrated with each other to remove them individually," said Craig Yolitz, chairman of the I-494 Wakota Bridge Coalition.

St. Paul Park Mayor Donald Mullan said the project is essential to his community because of safety issues. Gas tankers traveling from the Ashland-Marathon Petroleum refinery use the city streets to avoid traffic bottlenecks, he said.

For Newport, the project affects both safety issues and concerns over the long-term viability of the city, said Mayor Tim Geraghty.

"With a half-build, 800 gas tanker trucks will still rumble by our elementary school daily," he said. "Residents and businesses will still lose time, money and accessibility within our own community."

★ VETERANS

WWII memorial must wait

The House narrowly defeated a proposal Feb. 3 to override Gov. Jesse Ventura's line-item veto of \$150,000 to plan and design a monument to honor Minnesota's World War II veterans.

The vote was 79-53 in favor of the override, but a two-thirds majority is needed to override a veto — 90 votes in the House and 45 votes in the Senate.

The override motion was made by Rep. Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls), who had sponsored the legislation that was vetoed from last year's bonding bill.

"It's a disgrace," Anderson said. "It's a

disgrace that we do not have a World War II memorial in this state."

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) urged House members to support the override, especially because Ventura had stamped the bill with a picture of a pig, calling it a pork-barrel project.

But House Majority Leader Rep. Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) and Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud), chair of the House Capital Investment Committee, promised Anderson that his proposal would be included in this year's bonding bill.

Pawlenty said there is no reason to override the veto, which would be an "affront to the governor," and that they should instead try to negotiate with him and persuade him not to veto the proposal this time.

"We owe (World War II veterans) this, and we will deliver it to them," Pawlenty said. "It's just a matter of a few weeks away."

In order to override a governor's veto, the motion must pass through both the House and the Senate by a two-thirds majority. The Legislature successfully completed one override during the 1999 session — for the first time since 1982.



As the 2000 Legislative Session begins, the House includes 70 Republicans, 63 DFLers, and one Independent. The Senate has 41 DFLers, 25 Republicans, and one Independent.

The makeup of the House of Representatives changed slightly during the interim.

Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) left the Republican Party shortly after the conclusion of the 1999 Legislative Session and declared himself an Independent.

Later, the longest-serving member of the House, Rep. Willard Munger (DFL-Duluth), died at age 88. A special election to fill his seat was won by Rep. Dale Swapinski (DFL-Duluth).

A modest proposal

The governor's bonding plan is relatively lean, and some lawmakers fear it ignores critical needs

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

Two years ago, Gov. Arne Carlson responded to the projected \$1.3 billion surplus by proposing a \$1 billion capital projects budget.

This time around, it's a new governor and an even bigger surplus. But Gov. Jesse Ventura has taken a different approach than his predecessor, submitting no supplemental budget request and a \$462 million capital budget, which lawmakers are calling "thin."

Ventura's plan adheres to the promise he made last year that he would not recommend more than \$400 million in general-fund backed bonding for 2000. He received requests for more than \$1.5 billion in capital improvements, not all of which would be financed with general obligation bonds.

The governor's plan centers on investment in state government infrastructure, specifically repairs for aging facilities. But he also places emphasis on bonding for higher education and K-12 education projects.

Leaders from both the Republican and DFL caucuses in the House say the governor's requests are low, especially considering the projected \$1.6 billion surplus and Minnesota's strong bond rating.

Some also want to pass supplemental budget appropriations this year, something Ventura has said he won't support.

Ventura's plan technically calls for \$499 million in new projects for the state. However, through cancellations of old projects worth about \$37 million, the total new spending in his capital budget is \$462 million. Of that figure, \$400 million would be financed through general obligation bonding, \$1 million through the general fund, \$34 million through user-financed bonds, and \$27 million from the trunk highway fund.

Just as the heft of Carlson's bonding plan raised a few eyebrows two years ago, current legislative leaders are concerned about how small Ventura's proposal is.

"It's something that we'll be using as a guide," said House Speaker Steve Sviggum

(R-Kenyon). "Two years ago, the bonding bill was huge. It was bloated. ... This time around it is very thin."

Preserving buildings and roads

Ventura has proposed more than \$65 million for state facilities for asset preservation or to fix those currently out of compliance or dangerously close to violating various building and safety codes.

Two such projects involve crumbling walls around the yard at the state prison in Stillwater, estimated to cost \$1.5 million, and the replacement of the storm sewer at the Faribault prison at a cost of \$10.6 million.

The governor has also recommended funding to relocate several state offices that have

outgrown their facilities or can no longer use their facilities.

Among those is the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension building and laboratory, which is currently located in a former Department of Transportation garage. Ventura has recommended \$58 million to construct a new facility in St. Paul.

In addition, the governor is recommending bonding \$11 million to acquire property for future state development on the Capitol complex.

The governor's plan also provides funding grants to political subdivisions including regional jail facilities, a sports complex in Duluth, several Minneapolis park projects, and an events center in St. Cloud.

However, another major part of the governor's plan calls for \$30 million for local bridge repairs and replacement. Last year, Ventura line-item vetoed \$10 million for bridge repair.

Higher education

Ventura's plan calls for a total of \$118 million for the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system.

Foremost among his recommendations is the governor's support of the new biology research



The Arts Building on the West Bank campus of the U of M would be replaced under the governor's bonding recommendations, which include a total of \$54 million for the university.

facilities at the U of M. Under his plan, \$35 million would help finish the Molecular and Cellular Biology Building on the Minneapolis campus. Another \$10 million would match a private donation for the Microbial and Plant Genomics Building on the St. Paul Campus.

The governor has also proposed \$30 million for infrastructure and preservation work on the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities campuses.

In addition, MnSCU would receive \$34.3 million for additional science labs at Normandale Community College, remodeling for the science and general education buildings at North Hennepin Community College, and a new information center and remodeled library at Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

The governor's goal, his plan says, is to support the state of the art research at the U of M and help MnSCU campuses prepare college and corporate customers with the technical skills they will need in the coming years.

Agriculture and the environment

Various projects, including an initiative to clean up the Minnesota River, are part of Ventura's proposed \$122 million for the environment.

The state has until Sept. 30, 2002, to come up with a required match to receive \$163 million in federal funds to retire 100,000 acres of flood-prone marginal cropland in the river's watershed.

To that end, the governor has proposed about \$36 million for easement programs that would pay farmers to agree not to farm certain marginal agricultural land.

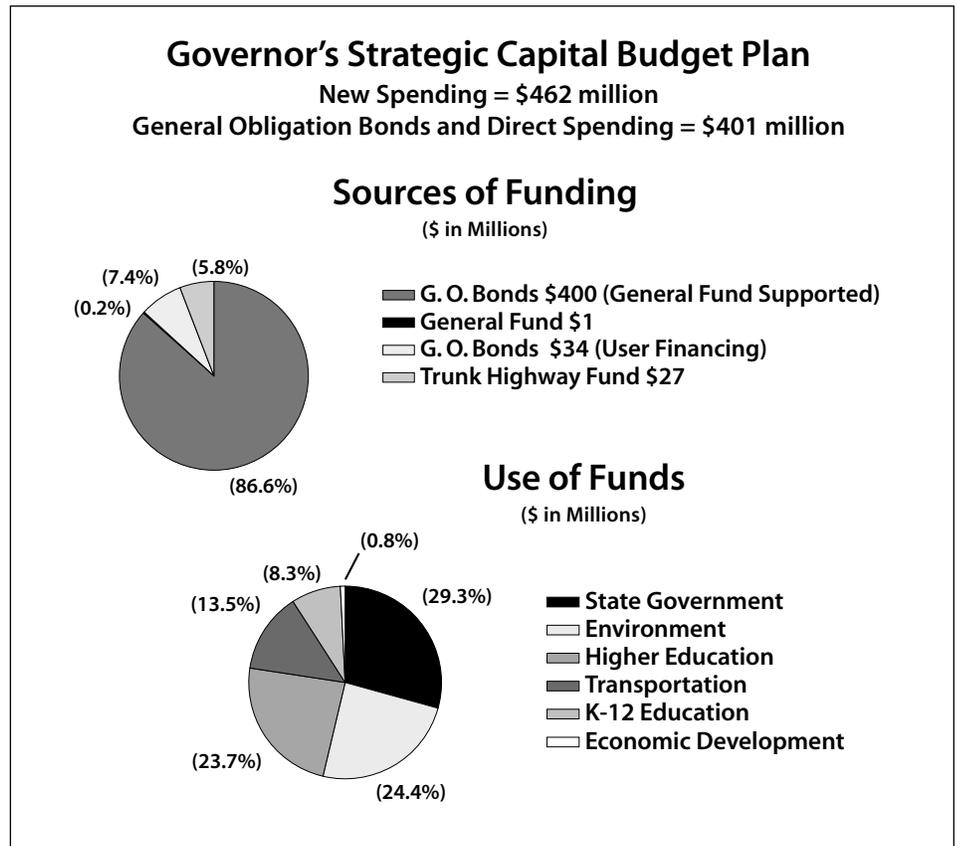
In addition, Ventura has recommended funding of \$26 million for water management issues. Among the programs is a loan program for local communities to improve wastewater and drinking water. Another loan program would help restore lakes, rivers and streams, and groundwater aquifers.

The governor has also recommended funding of more than \$14 million for state parks, trails, and forests.

K-12 initiatives

Primarily funded through local property taxes, K-12 initiatives are often minor parts of the capital investment proposals. However, two prominent projects are highlighted in the governor's plan.

Ventura wants \$34 million for investments in several K-12 facilities that have demonstrated critical needs. Among projects identified as critical are a new middle school in Cass Lake, an elementary school in Caledonia, and both a middle and elementary school in Red Lake.



Sources: House Fiscal Analysis; Minnesota Strategic Capital Budget Plan: Executive Summary.

The Ventura administration is also considering a proposal for an enhanced financing program for the next operating budget that would help schools better address their facility needs.

The governor also is seeking \$17.7 million to complete the East Metro Magnet School in St. Paul. According to the plan, the school is designed to expand voluntary desegregation in participating school districts.

In addition, the plan calls for \$3 million to plan a west metro magnet.

Republican and DFL plans

Even though higher education projects comprise nearly 25 percent of the governor's bonding recommendations, leaders in both the House Republican and DFL caucuses say it's not enough.

Sviggum said there are a number of critical facility needs beyond what the governor has recommended that need the Legislature's attention.

House Minority Leader Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) agreed that the governor's proposals fall far short of the goals his caucus has.

"Certainly we see great needs in the higher education systems, especially when our businesses are looking for skilled workers to fill jobs in the state," he said.

Both men also agreed the lack of a supple-

mental budget request from the governor's office will make things tight this session. Republicans have already proposed spending \$400 million on transportation projects.

Pugh also discussed critical bridge and highway repairs.

Both Sviggum and Pugh also said there needs to be more of a balance in the bonding bill between metro area projects and those benefiting Greater Minnesota.

Though both party leaders say the Legislature will weigh the governor's requests heavily, they're concerned that too many important projects will be sacrificed if constraints are too tight.

"To get the concerns that we're talking about in education and higher education would squeeze out other projects," Pugh said.

At the same time, Sviggum said, he's well aware there have to be limits because bonding bills are especially difficult to pass if they are too high or too low.

"It's just like a family budget," he said. "Sometimes you need a repair. . . but you can't always do them all in the same year." 🙏

Bumpy ride

The long, sometimes strange debate over light-rail transit continues at the Capitol and the courthouse

By DAVID MAEDA AND MICHELLE KIBIGER

Debate over light-rail transit will likely flare up during the 2000 session, in light of a cost-benefit analysis and a legislator's lawsuit against Gov. Jesse Ventura and his administration.

Several committee hearings held during the interim may have set the tone for the debate, with lawmakers and administration officials clashing verbally over strategies for public transportation.

In addition, some legislators see light-rail transit as a metropolitan issue that conflicts with other transportation needs in Greater Minnesota. They're concerned that the light-rail project is going to eat up the money for highways in need of repair elsewhere.

"The lives we're going to trade away in my district for a train to nowhere is completely unacceptable," said Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) at a hearing of the House State Government Finance committee Nov. 15. (U.S. Highway 14, which statistics show is one of the more dangerous roads in the state, runs through Reuter's district. Many in southern Minnesota want state funds to improve the highway.)

Officials from the Minnesota Department of Transportation presented a cost-benefit analysis of the Hiawatha Corridor light-rail transit project at the November meeting.

The rail line will include stops along Hiawatha Avenue between downtown Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota campus, the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and the Mall of America. Current estimates say the project will cost about \$548 million to construct, with much of the funding coming from the federal government.

According to the Transportation Department cost-benefit study, which includes operating, maintenance, and other costs up through 2028, the project will cost \$765 million. The benefit gained is estimated at \$379 million.

Therefore, the state will likely spend twice as much as it gets in benefit from the project, according to the study.

Benefits include saved time, reduced vehicle

and bus accidents, and lower auto emissions, as well as reduced infrastructure expenses and lower parking and vehicle ownership costs based on the assumption that more people will live within the urban core because of the transportation options available.

The Legislature has provided \$100 million for the project, or roughly 20 percent of the overall construction cost. The federal government will pay for 50 percent, and the remaining 30 percent will come from Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Airports Commission.

The controversy regarding the project stems from steadily increasing cost estimates for light rail. When the Legislature first considered the project in 1998, cost estimates were \$401 million, said Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City) at the November hearing. Last session, costs were estimated at \$446 million. Now, officials say, it will cost \$538 million to build the light-rail line.

State law requires that when any project costs more than \$5 million to construct, it must undergo a cost-benefit analysis and the benefit must outweigh the cost. If the project does not achieve at least a one-to-one ratio, then the project will not go forward, unless the governor finds that the project is the most effective way to achieve a prescribed goal.

After the study was completed, Transportation Commissioner Elwyn Tinklenberg sent a letter, dated Oct. 28, 1999, to Gov. Jesse Ventura asking him to deem the project as the most effective way to begin developing a regional multi-faceted transportation infrastructure, including both buses and trains.

Ventura has signed a letter saying he agrees that it is.

Nevertheless, members of the committee expressed their concerns about the project and its trend toward higher costs.

Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview) said he is concerned that the Transportation Department has not been forthcoming with information.

Bob Winter, an engineer with the Transportation Department, testified that throughout the process, officials have been giving legislators project estimates in 1997 dollars to maintain consistency. In other words, inflation and other factors that increase costs were not figured in until now.

Krinkie's concern about the lack of openness and information regarding the project prompted him to file a lawsuit in Ramsey County, demanding that the governor and Commissioner Tinklenberg comply with the state law.

Krinkie, chair of the State Government Finance Committee, filed the lawsuit as a citizen, not in his capacity as a legislator. In the same capacity, several other lawmakers have signed on to the lawsuit, filed Dec. 29, 1999. They are paying for the legal expenses out of their own pockets.

Despite the controversy over the Hiawatha project, many legislators say it's a worthy idea to pursue.

"The only problem with the project is that we're probably doing it 20 years too late," said Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) at the November hearing.

Kahn also said other cities are leading the way in using light rail to cut congestion. It's only a matter of time before Minnesota should be considering a system that serves the entire metropolitan area, she said.

But lawmakers have also heard from several light-rail critics, including Jonathan

"It is time to demystify this and separate the myth from the facts."

—Jonathan Richmond of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University

Richmond of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, who summarized his 18-month study of light-rail projects across the country at the Dec. 7 meeting of Krinkie's committee.

Richmond said research shows most light-rail projects are built without proper study of alternatives and proceed with little assessment in how the rail systems perform. In the projects he examined, Richmond told lawmakers, light rail has made little contribution to total trans-

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Bread & butter issues

Biotechnology experts debate safety of genetically altered foods as part of Capitol Forum series

By CHRIS VETTER

The farming sector in Minnesota has adopted biotechnology, or genetic engineering, as a necessary way to produce a higher yield and prevent insects from destroying the crops.

But questions over whether genetically altered foods are safe and healthy linger in the minds of many consumers.

Two doctors familiar with biotechnology discussed the issue Feb. 2 for the first event in the annual Capitol Forum series at the Minnesota History Center. House and Senate members were invited to listen to the discussion and ask questions.

Dr. Michael J. Phillips, executive director for the Food & Agriculture Biotechnology Industry Organization, said genetically altered food is completely safe. Currently, 75 to 80 percent of processed food is bio-engineered, he said.

Phillips said legislators must base any bill

include enhanced nutritional value — more vitamin A or iron — or exclude allergenic substances, making the food safe for people who have allergies, Phillips said.

While Phillips touted the products as a breakthrough for farmers and safe for consumers, Dr. Rebecca Goldberg from the Environmental Defense Fund, questioned the potential unintended side effects of biologically engineered foods. She referred to a May 1999 *Time* article, which detailed how pollen from a genetically-altered plant was killing caterpillars.

“With biotechnology, we’re bringing in lots of new things that have never been in the food supply,” Goldberg said. “Regulatory decision-making cannot be just about science. And that’s where the value of constituents come in.”

Goldberg said she expects constituents will prompt lawmakers to propose food-labeling



Dr. Michael Phillips (left), from the Biotechnology Industry Organization, and Dr. Rebecca Goldberg, of the Environmental Defense Fund, debate the merits of genetically engineered crops.

proposals on facts, not fears from constituents.

“You must begin with a foundation,” Phillips said. “And that foundation must be science.”

Biotechnology is the scientific manipulation of living organisms at the molecular genetic level, according to a summary report. Common biotechnology products include a strain of corn resistant to the European corn borer, which eats the corn stalk, and soybeans that are resistant to commercially produced herbicides.

Future genetically altered foods could

legislation for biotechnology foods. Phillips said such a measure is unnecessary. If a company thought it would be profitable to label food as non-altered, it would do so, Phillips said.

Goldberg strongly disagreed, noting that all ingredients in food are listed.

“You can read all the things,” she said. “People want to know what is in their food. It’s a problem.”

However, Phillips contended that genetics has helped farmers cope with the lagging agricultural economy.

“I can assure you . . . if we did not have access to this biotechnology, our bad year this year would have been even worse,” Phillips said. “Farmers are very eager to have access to those products.”

Goldberg countered, saying the genetically altered crops don’t do Minnesota farmers any good if foreign markets like Japan or Europe refuse to buy them out of fear.

Phillips said much of the fear in Europe is unfounded. He said Europe does not have an equivalent to the Food and Drug Administration, and that those nations have been hit by bad foods, like beef tainted by the so-called “Mad Cow Disease,” which have made people unnecessarily leery.

Goldberg questioned whether biotechnology foods from foreign countries could be dangerous for Americans. Phillips said there is no need to worry.

“No country can import food into our country that is any less safe than what we have in our country, by law,” he said.

There is a potential harmful side effect to the environment as well as to people, Goldberg said. For instance, genetic crops could cross-pollinate with adjacent natural plants. Goldberg fears weeds or insects could become resistant to the altered gene.

Phillips said cross-pollination is not a concern because pollen from corn only travels a few feet, so it is not spreading to other fields.

Many legislators spoke highly of the forum. Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel) said genetics in food is nothing new.

“This provides information to help legislators relate to the issues and understand the issues,” Ness said.

Rep. Satveer Chaudhary (DFL-Fridley) said many people believe this is just a rural issue, but he had many people talk about biotechnology at a recent town meeting.

“People in the suburbs are interested in what type of food comes out of Greater Minnesota,” Chaudhary said. “We legislators have only gotten the first taste of this huge topic.”

Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Walters), a farmer, questioned whose scientific results the legislators should listen to. He said the genetic industries are far ahead of universities in providing information on genetics.

The forum was sponsored by the Blandin Foundation and leadership of both the House and the Senate. A second forum about biomedicine policies will be held Feb. 9 at the Minnesota History Center. 📍

Is less more?

The long history of the unicameral issue in Minnesota includes a Depression-era push by a third-party maverick

BY JON FURE

In the 1930s, proposals to reduce the size of the Minnesota Legislature were among the many ideas to help the state cope with the Great Depression.

While the nationwide economic problems of that era influenced Nebraska's switch to a unicameral Legislature, the concept didn't catch on in Minnesota.

Gov. Floyd B. Olson, a member of the Farmer-Labor party, advocated the switch to a unicameral Legislature in his 1935 inaugural address.

"I am heartily in favor of a unicameral Legislature and I recommend that you submit a proposal to the people of the state for the

establishment of that form of Legislature with a maximum membership," Olson said, sounding something like the current occupant of the governor's mansion.

But Olson, who was himself a third-party insurgent, made his advocacy of a unicameral legislature seem like merely a polite suggestion.

"During past sessions of the Legislature many members of those bodies have informed me that the work of the Legislature is very difficult because of the excessive number of members in both Houses," he said.

"Accepting that as an existing fact, I hope I am not overbold in suggesting to you that in a program of reduction in the agencies of government by you, your attention should first be directed toward reduction in the numbers of your own membership."

The debate of the 1930s was just a part of the issue's complex history in Minnesota and elsewhere. Whether the public is better served by a one-house legislature is a question that has been considered long before Minnesota became a state.

Olson saw a move toward unicameralism as part of a larger effort to increase the efficiency of government. He urged the Legislature to examine the structure of government carefully.

"There will be bills introduced in this session of the Legislature for the purpose of either reducing or abolishing various state departments and bureaus," Olson said. "You have my assurance that I will cooperate with you in every way in such an endeavor, where no useful public service is crippled or eliminated."

Although the governor supported a one-house legislature, it wasn't at the top of his list of proposed reforms.

Instead, Olson urged the Legislature to increase relief appropriations for drought-stricken farmers and unemployed people. He also advocated redistributing wealth by reforming the tax system.

Blaming large industries for the Depression, Olson sought to increase taxes on iron ore, chain stores, and other industries.

Olson also said that the cause of the Depression was not overproduction, but that massive unemployment and low wages for common laborers had led to "underconsumption."

"We believe in restoring prosperity by restoring the purchasing power of the men at the bottom," Olson said.

In the 1935 Legislative Session, a few bills were introduced that would have changed the Legislature from two chambers to one, but none of those bills made it to Olson's desk. One such proposal, sponsored by Rep. John W. Cox of Becker and Rep. John J. White of Ogilvie, sought to create a one-house Legislature composed of an equal number of men and women.

In the early days of Minnesota's statehood, leaders chose a bicameral system because of its success elsewhere, according to *The Debates and Proceedings of the Minnesota Constitutional Convention*, an 1857 report by Francis H. Smith.

Minnesota's Territorial Legislature in the 1850s was patterned after Wisconsin's bicameral system, one that had prevailed in all other states at that time.

In fact, the state's early leaders did not devote much energy to other models for the Legislature. They focused on the pressing matters of resolving statehood issues on the threshold of the Civil War.



Gov. Floyd B. Olson, a popular speaker among students, addresses a crowd at the University of Minnesota.

Congress gave the Minnesota Territory permission to become a state in 1857. Minnesotans were concerned with all of the nationwide questions surrounding the threat of war, as well as basic questions with becoming a state, such as determining the state's boundaries, choosing the site of the state capital, and designating public lands for railroads and a university.

But even before statehood, the state's two major political parties were jockeying for the right to control the Legislature. Even though a slight majority of Republicans had been elected, both parties alleged the other committed election fraud.

Delegates from both parties met July 13, 1857, in St. Paul to write the state's constitution. But each party refused to recognize the other, so they organized separately and each party wrote a separate state constitution.

However, neither side disputed the idea of a two-house system. Both constitutions specified there would be both a House of Representatives and a Senate.

There were other differences between the two documents, but the two sides ultimately worked them out to form the state's first constitution, and Congress approved Minnesota's statehood May 11, 1858.

The makeup of state legislatures proved to be a fundamental question during the forming of the United States. Most colonies were influenced by the two-chamber system of British Parliament, where one chamber represented a wealthier class than the other chamber that represented the common people, according to *The Unicameral Legislature*, a 1938 book by Alvin W. Johnson.

However, Pennsylvania and Delaware had unicameral Legislatures as colonies, and they remained so after the United States was born. The practice was short-lived, though, as both states switched to bicameral legislatures by 1790.

Vermont also was admitted as a state with a unicameral legislature in 1791, but it switched to a bicameral system in 1835.

Georgia had a bicameral Legislature as a colony, and then it switched to unicameral after it ratified the U.S. Constitution. But like Pennsylvania and Delaware, Georgia adopted a new state constitution in 1790 that made the Legislature bicameral.

Many related issues influenced those changes. The rapid increase of immigrants in each state caused larger cities to be disproportionately represented compared to rural areas. Voting districts were re-apportioned to reflect the changing populations, and the two-chamber concept was designed to foster good law-making decisions while accommodating the volatile electorate.

Members in one chamber, for example, would be elected to longer terms than members of the other body. Then the chamber with longer terms would, in theory, make decisions with a great focus on statewide impact.

In some states, members of that "upper" chamber, as the House of Lords in British Parliament was sometimes called, would be appointed instead of elected, or would be elected on an at-large basis instead of by district. Members of the other "lower" chamber would serve shorter terms, and each member would be chiefly concerned with the needs of his particular district.

Also, the right to vote and to run for public office in some states was only given to men based on the amount of land they owned. In many states, two chambers had different eligibility rules based on land ownership, so that each chamber would be responsive to a different social class.

In Virginia, for example, Thomas Jefferson objected to the state's system because no difference was apparent in the two chambers of the state legislature. Both chambers served the same electorate, which he said was "superfluous."

That same argument lies at the heart of today's unicameral debate. The current Minnesota system is set up so that members of the House and Senate represent the same districts. The senator represents all 66,000 people in the district and two House members split those constituents.

In Minnesota's recent history, questions about the purpose of the bicameral system and about the size of the Legislature have often been debated. But none of those proposals have passed the Legislature or been put before voters. 🐱

Nebraskan gets into the act

Proponents of a unicameral Legislature brought in the best advocate they could find — former Nebraska Congressman George Norris, who led the successful initiative campaign to change the Nebraska Legislature from two chambers to one in 1934.

Well, it wasn't the real Norris who came to St. Paul. It was current Nebraska state Sen. David Landis, a historical reenactor who has served in his state's unicameral Legislature since 1978.

Landis, decked out in period dress, played the role of Norris during a Feb. 1 event at the Capitol. And he explained the virtues of a one-house system.

"I believed it would be simpler for the voters to follow," he said. "They could see and understand what their elected officials were doing on their behalf and how successful they were."

Under the bicameral system in Nebraska, conference committees were used as a convenient excuse for lawmakers who were trying to halt bills that were popular with their constituents but were opposed by lobbying groups with a lot of money, Landis said.

It allowed lawmakers to tell their constituents, "We did the right thing," only to have the bill die in the conference committee.

Nebraska's initiative and referendum laws were a crucial factor in the state's switch to a unicameral model. Those laws allow citizens to place proposed changes in state law on the ballot.

According to Landis, Norris "wore out two sets of tires" while driving around the state urging voters to support the unicameral initiative.

During the campaign at that time, Norris told audiences that the two-chamber system of U.S. Congress was designed as a compromise between large and small states, but that the model doesn't serve a purpose on the state level.

Nebraska voters approved the initiative by nearly



Historical reenactor and Nebraska state Sen. David Landis performs a program on the history of the unicameral Legislature in his state.

93,000 votes. The system seems to be there to stay, Landis said, because no initiative has yet been placed on the ballot to switch back to a bicameral legislature.

Hands-on government

Program gives students a chance to see the legislative process from the inside

By DAVID MAEDA

If all your news about today's youth culture came through the mass media, you would think the kids are only interested in trading Pokemon cards, listening to Britney Spears, and learning history by watching Regis Philbin's "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?"

But as the participants of the YMCA's Youth in Government program prove, there are plenty of students also interested in deeper societal issues.

Nearly 1,500 high school students from throughout the state participated in a model legislative session Jan. 13-16. The program, which begins in the fall, teaches the students the nuts and bolts of the lawmaking process — from participating in mock caucuses, to holding committee hearings, to passing bills on the House and Senate floors.

Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer used the model session to stress the importance of getting involved at an early age and staying involved.

"The Constitution says we have a government of the people," she said. "You are the people. Therefore, you are the government. It is your government, and it is important to make a life long commitment."

Reg Pelowski, who was elected by his peers to serve as the speaker of the House, said that one of the most beneficial outcomes in his five years in the Youth in Government program is that his perspective on issues and his point of view have been broadened.

"Most of the people in my neighborhood have views that are similar to my own," he said. "It's been great to get to work with people with different points of view from all over the state."

Pelowski, who is from White Bear Lake, is the nephew of Rep. Gene Pelowski (DFL-Winona). The younger Pelowski said that while he isn't sure he wants to follow his uncle into politics, his experience has prompted him to want to learn more. He plans to study political science in college next year.

Pelowski said the students work hard on researching the topics for their bills and that the program tends to attract the more serious students. "We get to meet a lot of great people here," he said.

Orville Lindquist, the state program

director, said the students take their participation seriously, researching and proposing bills that they believe can actually improve a problem in their community.

"A lot of the bills have meaning to them or their families," Lindquist said.

Lindquist said that during the nine years he has participated in the program he recalls a couple of student bills that led to actual

(State Targeting Accessible Recreation Trails), is well underway. According to the DNR, about 65 state trails have been surveyed. Work on a portion of the Old Logging Trail in Wild River State Park measuring 2.6 miles has been completed. Design work for building accessible trails has begun in six other state parks including Jay Cooke and William O'Brien.

This year students saw a variety of areas to examine and highlight. Among them were the state's abortion laws, a publicly funded baseball stadium, and animal protection laws.

While many of the bills have local implications a few attempted to address broader social issues.

Rich Ahn, a Hastings student, said he researched a bill in Michigan to help him come up with his proposal to make it mandatory that welfare recipients be drug-tested to remain eligible for benefits. Ahn said that as he researched the topic he became more and more convinced of the importance of finding ways to break the poverty cycle in this country.



Melia Garza, a junior at Lakeville High School, and other participants in the annual YMCA's Youth in Government Model Assembly are "sworn in" as members of the House of Representatives during opening day ceremonies in the House chamber on Jan. 13.

legislation being drafted and passed into law.

One was a 1995 bill sponsored by Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope) that required the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop a five-year plan to construct or modify trails in state parks to allow accessibility for handicapped people. The measure was eventually passed as part of that session's environment omnibus bill.

The initiative, known as Project START

Lindquist said that it is refreshing to see the students come in with a determination to learn how they can participate in the process to make a real difference. He said that the program not only teaches them how to get involved, but also helps them establish some long-term relationships with colleagues throughout the state.

"They get to meet a lot of people, and we want them to have a good time," he said. 🐼

Tuesday, Feb. 1

HF2476—Orfield (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) nonprofit agency teaching service credit purchase authorized for a certain member.

HF2477—Mulder (R) Civil Law

Conciliation court provided jurisdiction in actions against foreign and domestic corporations if the plaintiff resides in the county.

HF2478—Stanek (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Re-employed annuitant earnings limitation eliminated for retirees serving as substitute teachers.

HF2479—Stanek (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) improved money purchase benefit program savings clause extended to eligible members.

HF2480—Stanek (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) benefit coverage adjusted for extracurricular activity management compensation amounts and rule-making required.

HF2481—Carruthers (DFL) Civil Law

Government data copy charges modified, copyright limited, local government private or confidential data dissemination authority limited, monitoring of citizens prohibited, data practices compliance officers required, and remedies provided.

HF2482—Stanek (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Minneapolis Police Relief Association members provided optional future coverage under the public employees police and fire plan.

HF2483—Erickson (R) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Pollution Control Agency termination of the Mille Lacs water resources agreement required.

HF2484—Kahn (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Unicameral legislature provided with 135 members, governor selection authorized, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2485—Erickson (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

American Indian tribes prohibited from making political contributions with funds derived from casino operations.

HF2486—Murphy (DFL) Crime Prevention

Fleeing a peace officer crime clarified to include tribal officers.

HF2487—Solberg (DFL) Taxes

Sales tax rebate filing deadlines extended and money appropriated.

HF2488—Tingelstad (R) K-12 Education Finance

School facility commissioning cost information inclusion in the indoor air quality review and comment process required.

HF2489—Skoglund (DFL) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Political subdivisions authorized to require registration of impounded bicycles upon sale.

HF2490—Skoglund (DFL) Crime Prevention

Predatory offender registration law expanded to include additional offenses.

HF2491—Skoglund (DFL) Crime Prevention

Kidnapping statute of limitations lengthened.

HF2492—Skoglund (DFL) Crime Prevention

Kidnapping statute of limitations modified.

HF2493—Skoglund (DFL) Crime Prevention

Kidnapping statute of limitations eliminated.

HF2494—Knoblach (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Local property tax and sales tax referenda provisions modified, reports to the campaign finance and public

disclosure board required, public expenditures to advocate tax increases prohibited, and ballot preparation guidelines provided.

HF2495—Gleason (DFL) Education Policy

Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission exhibitions not qualifying as State High School League activities repealed.

HF2496—Davids (R) Commerce

Department of Public Service abolished, and powers and duties transferred.

HF2497—Rifenberg (R) K-12 Education Finance

Independent School District No. 299, Caledonia, maximum effort capital loan authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2498—Seifert, M. (R) Commerce

Barber shop registrations fees exception provided.

HF2499—Rifenberg (R) Commerce

Mortgage registry tax exemption provided for agricultural loans.

HF2500—Krinkie (R) State Government Finance

Light-rail transit project contract requirement language modified and usual state procurement laws explicitly required.

HF2501—Lieder (DFL) Transportation Finance

Local bridge rehabilitation and replacement federal funding matched with state transportation bonds, and money appropriated.

HF2502—Wenzel (DFL) Transportation Policy

Trunk Highway No. 371 portion known as the Brainerd bypass designated as C. Elmer Anderson Memorial Highway.

HF2503—Carruthers (DFL) Crime Prevention

Misdemeanor and petty misdemeanor offenses provided increased maximum fines.

HF2504—Erickson (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Private nonprofit organizations provided funding to perform functions

on behalf of communities of color, conforming changes provided, and money appropriated.

HF2505—Leppik (R) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Annual state park permits effective for a 12-month period.

HF2506—Hackbarth (R) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Blaze orange requirements modified.

HF2507—Carruthers (DFL) Commerce

Auto insurance wage loss reimbursement coverage age threshold reduced for retirees.

HF2508—Schumacher (DFL) Education Policy

Metro area school district definition clarified.

HF2509—Skoe (DFL) Taxes

Local government aid base increased for eligible cities.

HF2510—Davids (R) Commerce

Governmental cable operators regulated.

HF2511—Anderson, I. (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Partisan office candidates allowed to include a part of the name of a major political party on the nominating petition.

HF2512—Greiling (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Minnesota State Retirement System General state employees retirement plan (MSRS-General) late disability benefit application authorized for an eligible former member.

HF2513—Vandevveer (R) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Washington County authorized to privately sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF2514—Rifenberg (R) Taxes

Dependent education expense amount, maximum education credit amounts, and income limits annual inflation adjustment provided.

HF2515—Solberg (DFL)
Commerce
Independent School District Nos. 508, St. Peter, and 316, Greenway-Coleraine, authorized to create school banks for educational purposes and sunset eliminated.

HF2516—Smith (R)
Crime Prevention
Harassment definition and provisions modified relating to restraining orders.

HF2517—Haake (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Local governing body members prohibited from serving on city charter commissions.

HF2518—Haake (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
State employee government efficiency suggestion program developed, income tax checkoff provided, and money appropriated.

HF2519—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
MinnesotaCare notice period reduced for persons ineligible due to income limits and private health insurance coverage information requirement expanded.

HF2520—Wagenius (DFL)
Education Policy
Parents' right to know; parental and employee notification of pesticide application at schools required.

HF2521—Hasskamp (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Township of Lake Edwards name changed to the township of Lake Edward.

HF2522—Smith (R)
Civil Law
Federal Immigration and Naturalization Service provided access to economic security data on specific individuals or employers under investigation.

HF2523—Harder (R)
Taxes
Bleacher safety materials sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2524—Folliard (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Air toxics reduction plan and greenhouse gases reporting required.

HF2525—Biernat (DFL)
Education Policy
Satisfactory student performance on statewide assessment tests required for grade promotion.

HF2526—Biernat (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate extended to all Minnesota residents and filing time specified.

HF2527—Biernat (DFL)
Civil Law
Sole physical custody of a child modification standards altered.

HF2528—Koskinen (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Periodic background checks of rental property managers conducted by the bureau of criminal apprehension.

HF2529—Johnson (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Reduced class size and full-day kindergarten programs provided increased funding, and money appropriated.

HF2530—Murphy (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Legislative commission on pensions and retirement actuarial cost allocation modified.

HF2531—Greiling (DFL)
Commerce
Minnesota nonprofit employee benefit plan created and money appropriated.

HF2532—Kielkucki (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Five star school accreditation program established and money appropriated.

HF2533—Kielkucki (R)
Crime Prevention
Correctional fees allocated and probation officer salary state reimbursement pro-ration eliminated.

HF2534—Davids (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Root River Trail designated as a dogsled route.

HF2535—Sykora (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Shorewood authorized to establish wards and elect city council members by wards.

HF2536—Sykora (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Excelsior, Shorewood, Deephaven, Tonka Bay, and Greenwood authorized to establish an area fire protection district.

HF2537—Gleason (DFL)
Taxes
Nontaxable social security and disability income included in the sales tax rebate calculation.

HF2538—Kelliher (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission authority modified related to natural resources administered lands.

HF2539—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Wildlife management area designation orders rescinded.

HF2540—Clark, K. (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate extended to eligible taxpayers and filing dates specified.

HF2541—Rest (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate extended to eligible dependents and persons over age 65, filing dates extended, and money appropriated.

HF2542—Gleason (DFL)
Taxes
1999 sales tax rebate extended to dependents.

HF2543—Gleason (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Special School District No. 1, Minneapolis, teachers retirement fund association prior service credit purchase authorized.

HF2544—Lieder (DFL)
Taxes
Agricultural relative homestead definition expanded to include grandchildren.

HF2545—Tingelstad (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School facility continuous indoor air monitoring required, portable classroom use limited, and operating capital revenue portion reserved for facilities purposes.

HF2546—Kielkucki (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Nonprofit adult day training and habilitation, and daytime developmental achievement center services for children programs provided limited liability.

HF2547—Lieder (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 914, Ulen-Hitterdal, K-6 school building constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2548—Anderson, I. (DFL)
State Government Finance
Virginia to International Falls fiber optic cable project appropriated money.

HF2549—Tuma (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Eligible county enhanced 911 program expenses special assessment procedure authorized.

HF2550—Storm (R)
Civil Law
Private college campus security personnel authorized to receive telephone access to motor vehicle registration information.

HF2551—Dawkins (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) police and fire plan benefits salary credit specified, and department of public safety payments required.

HF2552—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
County stream maintenance program grants provided and money appropriated.

HF2553—Seifert, J. (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Supportive housing and managed care pilot project appropriated money.

HF2554—Sykora (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Adult basic education performance accountability system created and data sharing provided.

HF2555—Carruthers (DFL)
Civil Law
Civil third-party liability imposed for damages caused by intoxicated persons under age 21.

HF2556—Ness (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Telecommunications access grants for schools continued funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2557—Ness (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Secondary vocational education funding reinstated and money appropriated.

HF2558—Ness (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Career and technical agricultural education program funding authorized, and money appropriated.

HF2559—Howes (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Inland water sunken logs recovery provided.

HF2560—Kubly (DFL)
Taxes
Yellow Medicine County law enforcement and family service center construction materials sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2561—Kahn (DFL)
Crime Prevention
DNA; first and third degree criminal sexual conduct cases authorized to proceed without a named defendant when identifying DNA evidence exists.

HF2562—Rest (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Juvenile court records availability modified for child protection background checks.

HF2563—Storm (R)
Civil Law
Mechanics' lien requirements and procedures modified, penalties and civil cause of action provided, and attorney fees authorized.

HF2564—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Public utility facilities relocated due to light rail construction entitled to expense reimbursement from the state.

HF2565—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Public utilities incurring relocation expenses due to light rail construction prohibited from ratepayer cost recovery.

HF2566—Greiling (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) eligible administrative error interest charges refund provided.

HF2567—Greiling (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Gifted and talented programs established as permanently funded components of general education revenue, and money appropriated.

HF2568—Clark, K. (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Youthbuild; adultbuild program and demonstration project created in conjunction with youthbuild to provide job training and affordable housing development, and money appropriated.

HF2569—Kielkucki (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School food service appropriation provisions modified.

HF2570—Bradley (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Energy code rules to remain in effect for specified residential buildings.

HF2571—Carruthers (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Convicted or charged felon name change standards provided, marriage license application notice required, criminal records expungement provisions clarified, and penalties imposed.

HF2572—Tuma (R)
Transportation Finance
Deputy registrars of motor vehicles filing fee increased.

HF2573—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Natural resources local initiative grants, parks, and recreation areas appropriated money.

HF2574—Howes (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Cass Lake rest area and interpretive center construction provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2575—Howes (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 115, Cass Lake, maximum effort capital loan approved and money appropriated.

HF2576—Tuma (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Rice County joint powers board grant provided for Dundas to Faribault Milltown trail acquisition and betterment, and money appropriated.

HF2577—Westfall (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Pelican Rapids library improvement grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2578—Tuma (R)
Higher Education Finance
Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College capital improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2579—Lieder (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Fisher K-12 school building and community center construction provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2580—Kubly (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission grant authorized for the Minnesota River tourism initiative, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2581—Clark, K. (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Ovarian cancer blood test screening and healing touch therapy health plan coverage required.

HF2582—Tingelstad (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Rice Creek Regional Trail in Anoka County previous capital improvement appropriation provisions expanded.

HF2583—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Koochiching County Minnesota cold weather testing center construction grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2584—Wenzel (DFL)
State Government Finance
Minnesota military museum improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2585—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minnesota-Ontario legislative commission authorized and money appropriated.

HF2586—Erhardt (R)
Taxes
Vending machine items sales tax exemption provided and products specified.

HF2587—Westfall (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) improved money purchase plan annuity election authorized for an eligible teacher.

HF2588—Mares (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Monarch designated as the state butterfly.

HF2589—Smith (R)
Civil Law
Health care provider action expert review certification regulated.

HF2590—Seagren (R)
K-12 Education Finance
K-12 education code modified.

HF2591—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Koochiching County economic development commission created.

HF2592—Winter (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Health care facilities provided automatic annual inflation adjustments and additional rate increases provided.

HF2593—Haake (R)
Commerce
Boats permanently moored on Lake Superior, St. Croix River, or Mississippi River authorized on-sale liquor licenses.

HF2594—Murphy (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) specified formula annuity percentages increased.

HF2595—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Senior citizen drug program eligibility expanded to include Medicare enrollees under age 65 and money appropriated.

HF2596—Hasskamp (DFL)
Commerce
Auto insurance mandatory wage loss coverage modified relating to disabled persons.

HF2597—Abeler (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Secondary vocational education funding reinstated and money appropriated.

HF2598—Abeler (R)
Education Policy
School districts allowed to dispose of surplus computers.

HF2599—Mares (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Public employees police and fire plan one-time special optional annuity election authorized for specified former consolidation account retirees.

HF2600—Tunheim (DFL)**Taxes**

Family farm corporations and partnerships specified shareholders authorized to reside off the homestead property.

HF2601—Howes (R)**Taxes**

Counties with more than one gaming casino provided modified aid payments.

HF2602—Howes (R)**Civil Law**

Water buoy placement civil liability immunity provided.

HF2603—Hackbarth (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

Disabled hunters use of motorized vehicles authorized in wildlife management areas.

HF2604—Hilty (DFL)**Jobs & Economic****Development Policy**

Northern Technology Initiative, Inc. created.

HF2605—Wenzel (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Higher education retirement specified vendor contracts extended, supplemental retirement plan participants prior service credit purchase authorized, and maximum contribution limits increased.

HF2606—Hilty (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) prior service credit purchase authorized for an eligible member.

HF2607—Fuller (R)**Commerce**

State university proximity statutory restriction exemption provided to Bemidji for an on-sale liquor license.

HF2608—Westerberg (R)**Taxes**

Telecommuting expenses income and franchise tax credit provided for employers.

HF2609—Peterson (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Physician licensure requirements modified.

HF2610—Boudreau (R)**Crime Prevention**

Criminal vehicular operation definition expanded.

HF2611—Dehler (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Community and technical college resident tuition rates provided to non-residents and contract requirements specified.

HF2612—Cassell (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

School administrator and teacher recruitment effort appropriated money.

HF2613—Boudreau (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

Big Woods Heritage Forest established through specified county board resolutions.

HF2614—Kahn (DFL)**Agriculture Policy**

Genetically modified organism use regulated.

HF2615—Larsen, P. (R)**Taxes**

Child passenger restraint systems sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2616—Dawkins (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Youth works grant funds authorized to be used for percentage of administrative costs, other costs designated, and money appropriated.

HF2617—McElroy (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Joint standing committee system adopted by the Legislature and conference committee appointment procedure modified.

HF2618—Storm (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) contribution provisions modified for interfaculty organization member employees and year-round professional teachers organization officers.

HF2619—Murphy (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Public employees post-retirement health care task force created and specified supplemental plan contributions authorized.

HF2620—Bakk (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

Archery bow transport by boat and bowfishing permits authorized for persons with physical disabilities.

HF2621—Folliard (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

School district health and safety program expanded to include student and staff safety plans, and money appropriated.

HF2622—Tingelstad (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Homeless and runaway youth initiative created; and street outreach, drop-in services, basic center shelter, and transitional living programs established.

HF2623—Anderson, B. (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Infant inborn metabolic defect testing and follow-up program expanded to include medium chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase deficiency, rules amended, and money appropriated.

HF2624—Anderson, B. (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 728, Elk River, debt service levy rate provided.

HF2625—Anderson, B. (R)**Jobs & Economic****Development Policy**

Buffalo community center grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2626—Kelliher (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board flood mitigation grant provided for Lake of the Isles, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2627—Luther (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Failure to provide proof of automobile insurance penalties increased.

HF2628—Tingelstad (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Plumbers required to be licensed in all cities, new installation inspection requirements established, fees charged, and restricted master plumbers licensed.

HF2629—Tingelstad (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

K-12 educational facilities indoor air quality standards provided.

HF2630—Luther (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Minnesota organ procurement organization capital improvements grant provided for organ, eye, and tissue donation initiatives; and money appropriated.

HF2631—Abeler (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

School district levy for crime prevention increased.

HF2632—Luther (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Nonprofit service dog organization grants provided, report required, and money appropriated.

HF2633—Luther (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

School health and safety program revenue eligibility expanded to include pupil and staff safety improvements.

HF2634—Anderson, I. (DFL)**Local Government &****Metropolitan Affairs**

Northern Itasca hospital district hospital board membership modified.

HF2635—Luther (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Driver's license applicants authorized to make a donation for public education and information on anatomical gifts.

HF2636—Mulder (R)**Jobs & Economic****Development Policy**

Lewis and Clark joint powers board grant provided for a rural water system, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2637—Chaudhary (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Senior citizen drug program eligibility expanded and money appropriated.

HF2638—Buesgens (R)**Transportation Policy**

Motor vehicle registration information release fee exemption provided to towing companies relating to impounded vehicles and liens.

HF2639—Ozment (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

OSHA; occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens through sharps injury reduction standards established.

HF2640—Haas (R)**Taxes**

City base aid and maximum aid increased for eligible cities.

HF2641—Fuller (R)**Commerce**

School bank pilot project made permanent.

HF2642—Rhodes (R)**Jobs & Economic
Development Policy**

Bond requirement waivers provided for eligible job search firms that were formerly licensed employment agencies.

HF2643—Luther (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Clean health care services claims prompt payment required of health plan companies and third-party administrators.

HF2644—Carlson (DFL)**Commerce**

Continued employer-paid health insurance coverage provided for dependent spouses of retirees.

HF2645—Trimble (DFL)**Taxes**

Outdoor advertising devices considered taxable property.

HF2646—Trimble (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Metropolitan State University, St. Paul region campus, library construction provided; bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2647—Peterson (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Lac Qui Parle state park campground area developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2648—Erhardt (R)**Taxes**

Individual income tax rates reduced.

HF2649—Abeler (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Anoka-Hennepin Technical College facilities remodeled and repaired, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2650—Stanek (R)**Judiciary Finance**

State and local law enforcement computer controlled driving simulators previous grant appropriation eliminated.

HF2651—Tuma (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Legacy 2000; statewide natural resources projects provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2652—Goodno (R)**Commerce**

Border cities provided residential building energy code requirements exemption.

HF2653—Smith (R)**Education Policy**

Public school student conduct policy components modified.

HF2654—Seifert, M. (R)**Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**

Post-retirement earnings limitations raised for specified Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) plan participants.

HF2655—Leppik (R)**Crime Prevention**

Underage persons attempting to purchase alcohol or tobacco products with false identification provided increased penalties and driver license sanctions, and retailers authorized to seize false I.D.

HF2656—Wolf (R)**Commerce**

Auto glass repair and replacement regulated, rebates and incentives limited, and prompt payment required.

HF2657—Tomassoni (DFL)**Commerce**

Commercial establishments where wine is made for personal use and not for resale exempt from licensing requirements.

HF2658—Koskinen (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

MinnesotaCare: employer-subsidized health insurance options for eligible children provided.

HF2659—Koskinen (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Nursing facility salary adjustment per diem modified.

HF2660—Koskinen (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

County enhanced registration category required for exempt nonlicensed child care providers, county direct payments to licensed child care providers required, and unlicensed child care extended for one year to specified providers.

HF2661—Clark, K. (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Crime victims reparations not to be considered as assets for the purposes of determining medical assistance eligibility.

HF2662—Clark, K. (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Crime victim loss of income reparations time limit extended for those with continued disabilities.

HF2663—Carlson (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Voluntary full-day kindergarten funding established and money appropriated.

HF2664—Gray (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Voluntary full-day kindergarten funding established and money appropriated.

HF2665—Skoglund (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

Firearm hunting license certification that the holder is eligible to possess a firearm required.

HF2666—Mullery (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Crime of contributing to the delinquency of a minor prosecution and penalty provisions modified, and sentencing guidelines aggravating factors specified.

HF2667—Mullery (DFL)**Governmental Operations &****Veterans Affairs Policy**

State government minority employee recruitment and retention plan required.

HF2668—Mullery (DFL)**Governmental Operations &****Veterans Affairs Policy**

Automobile insurance geographic discrimination prohibited within the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

HF2669—Mullery (DFL)**Taxes**

Sales tax rebate eligibility extended to Minnesota veterans home residents and money appropriated.

HF2670—Bradley (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Family support grants and community-based waived services simultaneous receipt authorized for eligible individuals.

HF2671—Bradley (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Mental retardation protection public guardianship responsibility transfer recommendations developed and legislative report required.

HF2672—Westerberg (R)**Civil Law**

School districts and their employees provided limited liability immunity for good faith use and sharing of juvenile data.

HF2673—Rest (DFL)**Local Government &****Metropolitan Affairs**

Political subdivision corporation creation standards established and existing corporations continued.

HF2674—Finseth (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Red River state recreation area established in Polk County, visitors' center and campground constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2675—Haas (R)**Commerce**

Vicarious liability insurance coverage for punitive and exemplary damages authorized.

HF2676—Carruthers (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Trucks transporting gravel required to adhere to hours of service regulations.

HF2677—Ozment (R)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Goodhue County nursing facility rate adjustment provided and money appropriated.

HF2678—Nornes (R)**Family & Early Childhood****Education Finance**

Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) previous appropriations increased for transitional housing programs and emergency services.

HF2679—Sykora (R)**Family & Early Childhood****Education Finance**

Family homeless prevention and assistance program appropriated money.

HF2680—Jaros (DFL)**Governmental Operations &****Veterans Affairs Policy**

Political party treasurers authorized to sign political contribution refund receipt forms.

HF2681—Juhnke (DFL)**Taxes**

Manufactured homes low market value improvements property tax exemption provided.

HF2682—Hasskamp (DFL)**Jobs & Economic****Development Finance**

Camp Knutson capital improvements grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2683—Mares (R)**Governmental Operations &****Veterans Affairs Policy**

Local police and fire consolidation accounts and the public employees police and fire plan merger ambiguities clarified.

HF2684—Wolf (R)
Commerce
Legislative electric energy task force sunset extended.

HF2685—Wagenius (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Survivor benefits extended for spouses of deceased Minneapolis Fire Relief Association members.

HF2686—Wolf (R)
Commerce
Legislative electric energy task force sunset extended.

HF2687—Wolf (R)
Commerce
Minnesota power plant siting act exemption modified for electric power generating plants.

HF2688—Broecker (R)
Judiciary Finance
Ramsey County Attorney's Office domestic assault and child abuse prosecution unit established, grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF2689—Solberg (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Itasca Community College engineering building constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2690—Solberg (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Itasca County Taconite trail head building constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2691—Dehler (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Town officer and employee personnel data classification provided.

HF2692—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Hennepin County nursing facility rate adjustment provided and money appropriated.

HF2693—Luther (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Independent medical examination of automobile accident victim being treated by a chiropractor required to be conducted by a chiropractor.

HF2694—Ozment (R)
Commerce
Vasa Township detached banking facility authorized.

HF2695—Greiling (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Political party caucuses participating in the contribution refund program required to adhere to campaign contribution and spending limits, multicandidate party expenditures limited, and maximum refund increased.

HF2696—Greiling (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Political party independent expenditures on behalf of their own candidates limited in order to receive a public subsidy.

HF2697—Buesgens (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan council, parks and open space commission, sports facilities commission, and radio board abolished; powers and duties transferred; metropolitan wastewater control commission established; and money appropriated.

HF2698—Dorman (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Ethanol producer payment eligibility expanded.

HF2699—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Nursing facility operating cost reimbursement floor established.

HF2700—Davids (R)
Taxes
Electric generation peaking facility personal property tax exemption provided.

HF2701—Winter (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
K-12 education telecommunication access grants expanded and money appropriated.

HF2702—Osthoff (DFL)
Transportation Finance
St. Paul: new Maxson-Dale business center roads constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2703—Leighton (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Austin Riverside arena expanded and remodeled, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2704—Leighton (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Austin historic paramount atmospheric theatre restoration grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2705—Lieder (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Polk County regional jail facility in Crookston provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2706—Lieder (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Ada outdoor recreation complex developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2707—Juhnke (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Organization sponsored potluck event requirements modified.

HF2708—Nornes (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Adult basic education funding modified, policy review board established, and money appropriated.

HF2709—Koskinen (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Reduced class size and full-day kindergarten programs provided increased funding, and money appropriated.

HF2710—Koskinen (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Anoka-Hennepin Technical College facilities remodeled and repaired, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2711—Osskopp (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Mazeppa dam removed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2712—Broecker (R)
Judiciary Finance
Private counsel retained for appeal or postconviction matters required to make transcript fee arrangements with the state public defender.

HF2713—Rest (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Funeral acts and services regulated, and preneed arrangement requirements established.

HF2714—Koskinen (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate extended to eligible dependents and persons over age 65, filing dates extended, and money appropriated.

HF2715—Daggett (R)
Taxes
Lawful gambling tax rates reduced.

HF2716—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Tobacco settlement revenues credited to the health care access fund, provider premium tax modified, and contingent elimination of MinnesotaCare provider taxes created.

HF2717—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Commerce
Intrastate long distance call toll charges prohibited.

HF2718—McElroy (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Council-assembly state government established, metropolitan council composition modified, greater Minnesota regional council created, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2719—Lieder (DFL)
Commerce
Rental automobile insurance coverage regulated.

HF2720—Reuter (Ind.)
Education Policy
Current state test of the basic requirement for written composition destroyed, students required to be retested, and legislative approval of the test prompt required.

HF2721—Tunheim (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Lake Bronson State Park visitor's center renamed the Victor Johnson visitor's center and money appropriated.

HF2722—Tunheim (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Kittson County granted the authority to dissolve a town with less than five full-time residents.

HF2723—Ness (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
McLeod County authority to temporarily office in Glencoe Township extended.

HF2724—Ness (R)
Taxes
Local government aid base increased for eligible cities.

HF2725—Ness (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Dassel wastewater treatment plan expanded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2726—Ness (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Litchfield city library grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2727—Ness (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Dassel Historical Society ergot museum renovated, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2728—Paymar (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Inmates transitioned from punitive segregation confinement to the general prison population, disciplinary rules required, and felony sentence length extended to include disciplinary confinement periods.

HF2729—Anderson, I. (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Acquired natural resources land payments to counties increased, inflation adjustment provided, and consolidated conservation land titles conveyed.

HF2730—Dempsey (R)**Transportation Finance**

Port development assistance grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2731—Davids (R)**Commerce**

Motor vehicle manufacturers, distributors, and factory branches unfair practices regulated.

HF2732—Rostberg (R)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Home-sharing grant program extended and money appropriated.

HF2733—Mares (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Soccer; Amateur Sports Commission new facilities plan developed and implemented statewide, grants authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2734—Westfall (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Pelican Rapids natural resources district office provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2735—Lieder (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Agassiz Environmental Learning Center residential dormitory constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2736—Tunheim (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Roseau County nursing facility rate adjustment provided and money appropriated.

HF2737—Solberg (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Municipalities and veterans' organizations authorized to donate to all public school programs and facilities.

HF2738—Mullery (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Peace officers authorized to transport alleged truants from home to school or truancy service center.

HF2739—Solberg (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Itasca County railroad authority grant, Itasca County highway improvement grant, and Nashwauk wells and wastewater treatment facilities construction grant provided; bonds issued; and money appropriated.

HF2740—Rest (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Charitable organization annual report filing extension granting authority provided to the attorney general.

HF2741—Dehler (R)**Civil Law**

Collections; creditors authorized to refer unsatisfied conciliation court judgments to the commissioner of revenue.

***Bill introductions from Feb. 3 were not available when this issue went to press. You can find them in the next *Session Weekly*.**



Right to farm?

Iowa case could put farmers in legal bind

Lawyers and officials in several states are keeping a close eye on court rulings regarding "right to farm" laws that could change the landscape of rural America.

Last February, the U.S. Supreme Court chose not to hear a case from Iowa that overturned the state's "right to farm" statute. The Iowa Supreme Court ruled the statute unconstitutional.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, states across the country enacted "right-to-farm" laws in response to pressures caused by suburban sprawl.

The laws were meant to protect farms by offering them a qualified defense to nuisance lawsuits by neighbors who objected to the smells and noise generated by farming activities.

In 1998, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that by uniformly protecting farmers from lawsuits, the law diminished the value of neighbors' land, allowing the taking of land without payment.

The court reasoned that the Iowa statute created what amounted to easements because it gave agricultural operations the right to do things that could affect neighboring landowners.

The law also prohibited those landowners from bringing a legal action against the agricultural operation, the court said. That meant Iowa farms could create a nuisance and neighbors could take no legal action.

The U.S. Supreme Court justices without comment refused to review the decision.

Agricultural groups have said that

similar "right to farm" laws in other states could now be invalidated. The precedent set by the Iowa ruling could stand because the Supreme Court refused to review the case.

Some experts say the issue could heat up as more and more people move to the fringes of suburbia and into rural areas, without thinking ahead about their farming neighbors.

Conflict between livestock producers and neighboring residents is increasing in many areas. New residential homeowners sometimes find the noise and odors produced by livestock operations offensive. Producers often feel that pressure to change their practices is unjust, in part because it comes from relatively new residents of their communities.

Schedule is subject to change.
 For information updates, call House Calls at **(651) 296-9283**.
 All meetings are open to the public.
 Sign language interpreter services: **(651) 224-6548 v/tty**.
 To have the House committee schedule delivered to your e-mail address, send an e-mail message to join-houseschedule@ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us or direct your Web browser to <http://ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us/scripts/lyris.pl?join=houseschedule> and fill out the subscription form on the Legislature's Web site.

MONDAY, February 7

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Presentation of capital bonding requests, Elaine Timmer, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Human Services.
 HF2630 (Luther) Minnesota organ procurement organization capital improvements grant provided for organ, eye, and tissue donation initiatives; and money appropriated.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: HFXXXX (Howes) Adds funds to the nearly-depleted Tourism Revolving Loan Fund.
 HF2725 (Ness) Dassel wastewater treatment plan expanded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF2726 (Ness) Litchfield city library grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF2727 (Ness) Dassel historical society ergot museum renovated, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 Report on fiscal reforms for the State Services for the Blind (SSB). Testimony from the Departments of Economic Security and Finance and SSB.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

Tour of MnDOT Waters Edge Building
 1500 West County Road B2
 Roseville, Minn.
 Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: Tour will depart from east side of State Office Building (outside of Secretary of State's office) at 8 a.m.

8:30 a.m.

NOTE TIME CHANGE GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF1250 (Kahn) State and local election voting age changed from 18 to 16, and constitutional amendment proposed.

Note: There will be a short video presentation.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF537 (Boudreau) Complementary and alternative health care freedom of access act adopted.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources bonding recommendations:
 NB-2 State park betterment and rehabilitation.
 NB-15 State park acquisition.
 NB-4 Trust fund lands.
 NB-1 Dam repair/reconstruction/removal.
 NB-3 Flood hazard mitigation grants.
 NB-8 SNAs and Prairie Bank.
 NB-12 Metro greenways.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: Overview of workforce development programs in prisons, Department of Corrections.
 Bonding process overview, Department of Finance.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HF2663 (Carlson) Voluntary full-day kindergarten funding established and money appropriated.
 HF2529 (Johnson) Reduced class size and full-day kindergarten programs provided increased funding, and money appropriated.
 HF1330 (Mahoney) Sober high school pilot program grants provided and money appropriated.
 HF2616 (Dawkins) Youth works grant funds authorized to be used for percentage of administrative costs, other costs designated, and money appropriated.
 HF2567 (Greiling) Gifted and talented programs established as permanently funded components of general education revenue, and money appropriated.
 HF1804 (Folliard) Licensed K-12 teacher staff development training opportunities and additional salary provided.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt

Agenda: Update on the property tax administrative process by the Department of Revenue.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: TANF overview: Brent Gustafson, Department of Finance; Cherie Kotlinek, Department of Children, Families and Learning (DCFL); Michael O'Keefe, Commissioner, Department of Human Services.
 Integration of early childhood initiatives, Karen Carlson, Assistant Commissioner, DCFL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen

Agenda: Presentation by Legislative Auditor: Report on State Mandates on Local Governments.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) presentation: description of the technology and its use by local governments; identification of issues.
 Other business to be announced.

Legislative Audit Commission

118 State Capitol
 Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Review of the Financial Audit Report on the Chicano Latino Affairs Council.
 Review of the Financial Audit Report on the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council.

CANCELED

Regulated Industries Subcommittee/ COMMERCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: HF2496 (Davids) Department of Public Service abolished, and powers and duties transferred.

Note: This bill will be heard on Wed., Feb. 9.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

7 p.m.

Joint HOUSE GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY/ SENATE ELECTION LAWS

200 State Office Building
 Chrs. Rep. Jim Rhodes,
 Sen. John Marty

Agenda: Joint unicameral hearing.
 HF159 (Sviggum); SF43 (Spear) Unicameral legislature provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

Note: Gov. Ventura will be testifying.

TUESDAY, February 8

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF2699 (Goodno) Nursing facility operating cost reimbursement floor established. HFXXXX (Seifert, J.) Nursing facility reimbursement increases.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner

Agenda: HF2820 (McElroy) Pilot projects funded to extend high-speed Internet access to businesses in areas not served by quality access to the World Wide Web. Continued discussion on the Inventory of Employment and Training Programs Report, Department of Economic Security.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker

Agenda: Continuation of Ombudsman for Correction presentation, David Larson, Ombudsman for Corrections and Diane Grindy, Assistant Ombudsman for Corrections. Department of Public Safety-MN Center for Crime Victim Services, Laurie Ohmann, Director of Center for Crime Victim Services. HFXXXX (Stanek) Training facilities; Testimony from Paul McCullough, Bloomington Police Department and Jerry Boespflug, Maple Grove Police Department. HF2650 (Stanek) State and local law enforcement computer controlled driving simulators previous grant appropriation eliminated.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: To be announced.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: Y2K Final Report, Department of Administration. Update on income tax re-engineering, Department of Finance.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: School Safety Task Force update, Rep. Andy Westerberg. HF1502 (Rhodes) Bias crimes provided additional penalty enhancements. HFXXXX (Stanek) Department of Corrections; creation of law enforcement agency.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: HF2720 (Reuter) Current state test of the basic requirement for written composition destroyed, students required to be retested, and legislative approval of the test prompt required. Other items to be determined.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: SF83 (Stevens, Ozment) Wetlands regulations simplification and consolidation. Delete everything amendment. HFXXXX (Haas) DNR enforcement bill.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HFXXXX (Paulsen) Department of Revenue insurance tax recodification bill. Others may be added.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: Testimony on the poultry industry and avian pneumovirus.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knobloch

Agenda: Overview of the governor's 2000 Capital Budget Recommendations by the Department of Finance.

COMMERCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF2656 (Wolf) relating to consumer protection; regulating auto glass repair and replacement; and restricting certain rebates and incentives. HF2675 (Haas) authorizing insurance coverage for vicarious liability for punitive and exemplary damages. HF2719 (Lieder/Davids) regulating rental vehicle auto insurance coverage. Other bills to be announced.

2:30 p.m.

Liquor Subcommittee/COMMERCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Erik Paulsen

Agenda: Presentation by House Research on the restrictions of shipping liquor within the state. Discussion by proponents and opponents of direct shipment.

Note: This meeting was rescheduled from Jan. 19.

6 p.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF1769DE (Abeler) Senior citizen drug program eligibility expanded and money appropriated.

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: PERA-P&F; consolidation account merger technical corrections. PERA-P&F; consolidation accounts; modify survivor benefits.

HF2551 (Dawkins) PERA-P&F; purchase of salary credit by St. Paul police officer on intergovernmental transfer.

PERA local correctional plan; membership eligibility revision.

SFXXXX (Neuville) TRA; purchase of pre-age 25, pre-1957 teaching service credit.

HF2566 (Greiling) TRA; refund of interest charges caused by administrative errors.

HF2512 (Greiling) MSRS-General; authorization of late disability benefit application.

SF1846 (Pogemiller) MTRFA; membership for teacher union business agent.

HF2289 (Carlson); SF2121 (Junge) MTRFA; purchase of school social worker independent contractor service credit.

HF2476 (Orfield) MTRFA; service credit purchase for Loring Nicollet-Bethlehem

Community Center teaching service. Other items as designated by the commission chair.

WEDNESDAY, February 9

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF159 (Sviggum) Unicameral legislature provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Presentation of capital budget request for building occupied by the Department of Health (717 Delaware St.) given by David Johnson, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Health and Kath Ouska, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Administration. Presentation of capital budget requests given by the Veterans Homes Board.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: HF2682 (Hasskamp) Camp Knutson capital improvements grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2703 (Leighton) Austin Riverside arena expanded and remodeled, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2704 (Leighton) Austin historic paramount atmospheric theatre restoration grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2705 (Lieder) Polk County regional jail facility in Crookston provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2706 (Lieder) Ada outdoor recreation complex developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2739 (Solberg) Itasca County railroad

authority grant, Itasca County highway improvement grant, and Nashwauk wells and wastewater treatment facilities construction grant provided; bonds issued; and money appropriated.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: MnDOT bonding requests: local bridges; St. Cloud headquarters; Detroit headquarters; Moorhead truck station; Traffic Management Center.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF1865 (Pawlenty) Stay-at-home nursing mothers excused from jury duty. HFXXXX (Holberg) Revisor's bill. HF2527 (Biernat) Sole physical custody of a child modification standards altered. HF2555 (Carruthers) Civil third-party liability imposed for damages caused by intoxicated persons under age 21.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources bonding recommendations:
NB-5 Forest roads and bridges.
NB-14 State forest land acquisition.
NB-16 Forest recreation facility rehabilitation.
NB-10 Reforestation (governor zeroed out).
NB-6 Fisheries acquisition.
NB-7 RIM - fisheries improvement.
NB-9 Stream protection and restoration.
NB-17 Water access, fishing piers.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: Overview of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities bonding requests and priorities.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HF2569 (Kielkucki) School food service appropriation provisions modified. HFXXXX (Solberg) Greenway Schools. HF2579 (Lieder) Fisher K-12 school building and community center construction provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated. HF2633 (Luther) School health and safety program revenue eligibility expanded to include pupil and staff safety improvements. HF2621 (Folliard) School district health and safety program expanded to include student and staff safety plans, and money appropriated. HF2631 (Koskinen) School district levy for crime prevention increased.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: Childcare program integrity. Testimony from Dan Haley, Department of Human Services; Tom Guthery and Michael Kline, MN Fraud Investigators Association.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen

Agenda: HF590 (Anderson, B.) Private property rights protection act adopted. HF591 (Anderson, B.) Private property protection act adopted. HF2521 (Hasskamp) Township of Lake Edwards name changed to the township of Lake Edward. HF2722 (Tunheim) Kittson County granted the authority to dissolve a town with less than five full-time residents. Other business to be announced.

Regulated Industries Subcommittee/ COMMERCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: HF2496 (Davids) Department of Public Service abolished, and powers and duties transferred.

3 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knobloch

Agenda: To be announced.

THURSDAY, February 10

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN

SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HFXXXX (Nornes) Nursing facility case mix and MDS assessment systems consolidated. HFXXXX (Howes) Senior Prescription Drug discount cards limited.

JOBS & ECONOMIC

DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner

Agenda: HF2642 (Rhodes) Bond requirement waivers provided for eligible job search firms that were formerly licensed employment agencies. HF2839 (Storm) Providing funding for the e-Business Institute. HF2840 (Cassell) Providing support for the development of workforce identification systems.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker

Agenda: HFXXXX (Broecker) Regional jails. Testimony from Kevin Corbid, Association of Minnesota Counties and Gary Waller, Gary Waller and Associates, Inc. Overview of the courts budget, Sue Dosal, State Court Administrator.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: To be announced.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: HF2500 (Krinkie) Light rail transit project contract requirement language modified and usual state procurement laws explicitly required.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: HFXXXX (Stanek) Felony DWI.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: *Listening and Learning Report*, Lieutenant Governor Mae Schunk. Other items to be determined.

ENVIRONMENT &

NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: HF2505 (Leppik) Annual state park permits effective for a 12-month period. HFXXXX (Swenson) State park boundary bill. HF2534 (Davids) Root River Trail designated as a dogsled route. HF2506 (Hackbarth) Blaze orange requirements modified. HFXXXX (Hackbarth) Archery bow fishing. HFXXXX (Bakk) Archery bow fishing. HF2559 (Howes) Inland water sunken logs recovery provided.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: To be announced.



NOTES

Gov. Jesse Ventura is the 38th person to serve as Minnesota's chief executive, but he is one of only a handful to hail from the suburbs. Ventura lists Maple Grove as his official hometown. Former Gov. Arne Carlson had a home in Shoreview. A look back shows only two other governors from suburbia. Harold LeVander and Harold Stassen both came from South St. Paul, a place with a history and personality that hardly fit the profile of a bedroom community.

More than a dozen governors came from either St. Paul or Minneapolis, and the rest came from towns all across the state — from Hibbing to Worthington and from Askov to Appleton. St. Peter has sent four governors to St. Paul — the most of any outstate town — but the last one served more than 90 years ago.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: HF2698 (Dorman) Ethanol producer payment eligibility expanded.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach

Agenda: Overview of the regional jail facilities capital budget request.

Overview of light rail transit by the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

COMMERCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF2183 (Davids) Motor vehicle sales and distributions regulated, unfair practices specified, and civil remedy provided.

HF1394 (Pawlenty) Uniform commercial code secured transactions provisions adopted, and revised article 9 provided.
Other bills to be announced.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

Immediately Following Session

**Elections & Rulemaking Subcommittee/
GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY**

400N State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Marty Seifert, Rep. Steve Dehler

Agenda: HF933 (Holberg) Legislative and congressional districts coordinated.
HFXXXX (Seifert, M.) Secretary of State's technical bill.
HF301 (Knoblach) Legislature size fixed after the 2000 census.
HF2570 (Bradley) Energy code rules to remain in effect for specified residential buildings.
Additional bills to be announced.

FRIDAY, February 11

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF159 (Sviggum) Unicameral legislature provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: Department of Human Services report on policy considerations for nursing facilities.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Note: The Health and Human Services Finance Committee will not meet today.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: HFXXXX (Fuller) DWI recodification.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources bonding recommendations:
NB-18 Trail acquisition - Paul Bunyan Trail.
NB-19 Lake Superior safe harbors.
G-1 Metro regional parks capital improvement.
G-2 State trail connections.
NB-11 RIM Critical habitat match.
NB-13 RIM Wildlife development.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: Overview of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities bonding requests and priorities continued.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: To be announced.

TAXES

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Note: Tax committee will not meet today.

Continued from page 16

sit ridership, has actually decreased the number of people riding buses, and has shown little effect on improving congestion or air quality.

He said supporters of light rail often base their support on the colorful role trains and street cars played in the nation's history.

"It is time to demystify this and separate the myth from the facts," he said.

Richmond said the political debate ac-

companied this decision making detracts from the facts. He said rather than politicizing the process lawmakers should look at the most cost-effective ways to improve transportation systems, which usually includes improving existing bus service.

Randal O'Toole, an economist from the Thoreau Institute, an environmental protection nonprofit organization, said that the

debate surrounding Minnesota's light-rail project is similar to others he has followed across the country.

"Minneapolis is suffering from a serious case of light-rail envy, a highly contagious disease of American cities which there is no cure," he said.

O'Toole described the "disease" as spending hundreds of million of dollars on "Disneyland-like rides"

that produce no benefit to communities.

He also said the Transportation Department's analysis was flawed because the benefits of light rail were accepted without asking whether the same benefits could be achieved through other means at a lower cost.

"Minneapolis is suffering from a serious case of light-rail envy."

—Randal O'Toole, the Thoreau Institute

What's on the Web

Session Daily is the new online companion to *Session Weekly* magazine, which is published by the nonpartisan House Public Information Office.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Minnesota's budget

November 1999 forecast surplus for 2000-01 biennium, in billions	\$1.58
March 1997 Minnesota Planning projected state and local revenue shortfall for 2002-03 biennium, in millions	\$200
March 1997 Minnesota Planning projected state and local revenue shortfall for 2004-05 biennium, in millions	\$400
Percent probability that a U.S. recession will occur in late 2002	35
Total spending for 2000-01 biennium passed in 1999, in billions	\$23.6
Governor's 2000 capital budget plan for state construction projects, in millions	\$462
Amount to be financed with general obligation bonds (paid from the general fund), in millions	\$400
Amount spent in capital project law passed in 1998, in millions	\$999
Total financed through general obligation bonds, in millions	\$438
Total financed through general fund cash, in millions	\$500
Amount in 1998 bonding law for University of Minnesota construction projects, in millions	\$138.3
Amount for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, in millions	\$143.1
State correctional facilities, in millions	\$14.2
Amount in 1998 and 1999 bonding laws for Hiawatha Corridor light-rail transit project, in millions	\$100
Amount included in governor's 2000 capital budget plan for K-12 facility needs, in millions	\$34
Amount included in governor's 2000 capital budget plan to construct a new Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Facility in St. Paul, in millions	\$58
Current balance in state's budget reserve, in millions	\$622
Permanent income tax cuts passed by 1999 Legislature, in billions	\$1.3
State tax collections during fiscal year 1999, in billions	\$11.569
Total collected in income taxes, in billions	\$5.027
Total collected in sales taxes, in billions	\$3.849
Total collected in state license taxes, in millions	\$562
Total collected in cigarette taxes, in millions	\$190

Sources: *Minnesota Data Book for Legislators, 1999*, House Research Department; *Laws of Minnesota, 1998*; *Laws of Minnesota, 1999*; *Minnesota Strategic Capital Budget Plan: Executive Summary, 2000*, Office of the Governor; *Staying Within Our Means, 1997*, Minnesota Planning; January 2000 Economic Update, February 1999 Economic Forecast, and November 1999 Economic Forecast, Department of Finance.

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