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SESSION Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

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HOW TO RESPOND WHEN YOUR TEENAGER ASKS YOU TO HOST AN UNDERAGE DRINKING PARTY:

It's time to...
IS NOT SOMETHING
FOR THE YOUTH
YOU HAVE TO GO TO ALL

Guest star
ON AVERAGE
THE YOUTH
ALL OF THE NEWS

It's time to...
THE YOUTH
THE HOUSE AND THE
TO GO TO A PARTY

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GOV. VENTURA'S BUDGET PLAN

BONDING PROPOSED, ETHICS LAW CLARIFIED, AND MORE

HF252-HF399

Session Weekly

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On the cover: Brandon Koller, a junior at Irondale High School in Mounds View and member of MADD's Youth in Action, speaks in support of keg registration during a Jan. 24 press conference in the Rotunda.

—Photo by Jenny J. Dean

Cutting back

Gov. Ventura's \$27 billion proposed budget reflects more than \$1 billion in tax reform and \$700 million in new spending

BY MIKE COOK AND MICHELLE KIBIGER

Saying his plan will provide tax relief to all Minnesotans and reduce state government, Gov. Jesse Ventura presented his 2002-03 biennial budget Jan. 23.

The governor's budget has \$27.3 billion in general fund spending, a \$2.7 billion increase over the current biennium.

While House members are supportive of differing aspects of the governor's budget, they're concerned about the methods used to put the budget together and the rhetoric surrounding overall spending and reducing the size of government.

In his budget address, delivered at the Science Museum of Minnesota, Ventura said he is "much more satisfied with the 'science' applied to this budget. It is built upon a solid foundation of tax reform and relief, carefully targeted spending, and initiatives designed to better address the demands of a changing economy."

Since March 2000, Ventura's cabinet has been developing budget targets that fall within the bounds of normal inflation. In addition, Ventura wanted to eliminate agency "wish lists." According to budget documents, agency heads were required to "demonstrate significant, specific reform and reallocation initiatives within current funding."

Part of that process involved the "challenge pool" concept, which required agencies to reduce their operating budgets by at least 2.5 percent. That money would then be reallocated to higher priorities, encouraging innovative and cooperative solutions to a tight funding situation, according to the budget executive summary.

During State Finance Commissioner Pam Wheelock's budget presentation to the House Ways and Means Committee Jan. 24, Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) said he supported that idea but was interested to know which programs were "chopped" in order to accommodate the plan. Wheelock said each agency would be addressing that issue in their presentations to individual House finance committees.

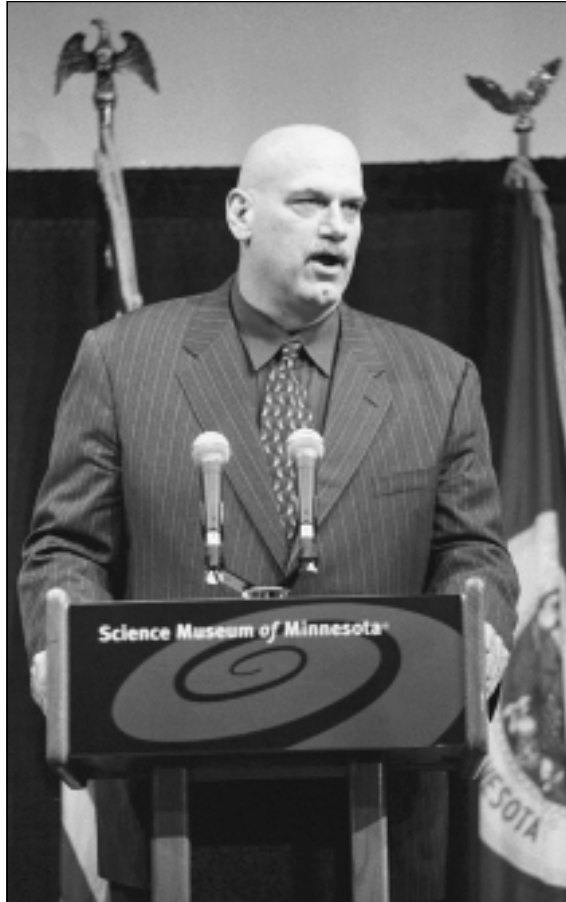


PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Gov. Jesse Ventura gives his state budget address at the Science Museum of Minnesota Jan. 23.

Though the budget is traditionally about state expenditures for the coming biennium, Ventura has pointed his 2002-2003 budget toward tax relief. "Tax relief should be across the board for all citizens," he said.

First on that list, the governor said, is returning the \$925 million state surplus to taxpayers, with checks to be mailed this summer.

He said it is a matter of the Legislature fulfilling a promise. "That means keeping our word about returning the surplus to taxpayers once we've settled up and closed the books for the current budget period."

Current law already sets that money aside

for a rebate, but the 2001 Legislature must establish the basis for the rebate.

The November forecast projected there will be a budget surplus of more than \$2 billion for the 2002-2003 biennium, unless current law or other conditions change.

However, that doesn't go far enough for the governor.

"My tax reform and relief recommendations begin with continuing the reduction of motor vehicle (registration) tabs to \$75 by 2004 (the 2000 Legislature reduced tab fees to \$99 in the third year of a car's life), a reduction in the income tax rate by 0.5 percent in each of our brackets, and finally a recognition that we must take additional steps to prepare our state for the next century."

The across-the-board income tax rate reduction would be 0.4 percent this year, followed by 0.1 percent in 2003. If resources permit, Ventura would like them to drop another 0.1 percent in 2004.

Other tax reductions include: lowering the corporate income tax rate to 9.4 percent, eliminating the wholesale prescription drug tax and HMO premium tax, eliminating the scheduled 0.5 percent increase in the provider tax, and increasing the working family credit for 2001, and more than doubling it by tax year 2003.

His tax reform centers around the idea that lawmakers should not "squander the opportunity" to help improve Minnesota's position in the global economy.

"It means we now have the chance, and the leadership from my office, to reduce our reliance on property taxes for state and local spending and make our income taxes more competitive as we compete for a shrinking workforce."

Ventura admits his ideas may be controversial, especially on the idea of altering the state's sales tax.

Noting that services, rather than goods, account for 60 percent of consumer spending, Ventura said ultimately both the state and local governments will become more reliant on income and property taxes.



Justice Served?

County judge nearly impeached a century ago for his actions

In 1878, just 10 years after the first impeachment of a president (Andrew Johnson), the Minnesota Legislature was faced with trying to decide what constituted grounds for impeachment within its own borders.

According to the book "The Controversial Sherman Page" by Kermeth Northwick, trouble followed judge Sherman Page throughout his life.

Page, an outspoken reformer, was appointed superintendent of the Austin area schools in 1866. He attempted to hold an August teachers' conference in the school building during working hours, but the school board told Page he had to hold the meeting elsewhere after school hours. They went so far as to nail the school doors shut. Page broke into the building with an ax and was arrested.

He would publicly wield his ax again. The town had begun laying wooden sidewalks throughout the community, but one blocked the driveway to the barn where Page kept his team of horses. He destroyed the sidewalk — not once, but twice, each time ignoring warnings from local officials.

Following the second incident, the sheriff was sent to arrest him, but Page locked the officer in his office and argued with him. When help arrived, Page was forcibly removed to court. He was fined \$15 for violating the town's ordinance prohibiting the mutilation of sidewalks.

When the Legislature created the Tenth Judicial District in 1872, Page, who was by then a state senator, resigned from his seat in order to run for a judgeship. He won easily.

Two years later a near riot occurred in Austin as a group of protesters stormed a saloon operating without a liquor license. Page, a leader of the local temperance movement, ordered the sheriff to make arrests and also asked men in the crowd to assist the sheriff. One of the men, Thomas Riley, refused Page's request.

Riley later became a deputy sheriff, and when he attempted to collect expenses from the county, Page ordered that the county refuse to pay him.

County Treasurer Ingmundson criticized Page for abusing judicial power. The next year Page ordered

a grand jury to investigate Ingmundson's office. When they failed to uncover any irregularities, Page sent them back ordering them to come out with an indictment, which they did not do. Page dismissed the jury and charged them with incompetence and ordered the county attorney to arrest Ingmundson. A jury later found the treasurer innocent of all charges against him.

As more and more of his detractors began to speak out, Page had them arrested for contempt. He charged the county attorney, Lafayette French, with libel, tried him, found him guilty, and suspended his law license.

In 1878, 26 citizens from Mower County presented a petition to the House of Representatives calling for the impeachment of Page. Following judiciary committee hearings, the full House, by a vote of 71-30, approved 10 articles of impeachment. Eight counts charged Page with malicious treatment of individuals.

Not one to go down without a fight, Page selected former Gov. Cushman Kellogg Davis to argue his case in front of the Senate. Davis contended that none of the charges reached the threshold of "corrupt crimes in office, and crimes and misdemeanors" as defined in the state's constitution. He said judgment against Page must be based upon his official actions as opposed to his personal matters.

Davis argued in order for the Senate to remove Page it had to be demonstrated "...he is not only a weak and erring man...not only that he has been impulsive beyond what you would have restrained yourselves to—but that he has deliberately, knowing his duty ... turned aside from that way and took the path of malice, injustice, partiality, bias, corruption."

A majority of senators found Page guilty on a few counts, but the necessary two-thirds vote was reached on none. Page returned to Austin and was defeated in the next election.

In 1880 a shot was fired into Page's living room window. Fragments of glass hit him in the side of the head and neck. A brother of Thomas Riley was arrested for the act.

Riley testified that he hated Page but that did not make him unique in the Austin community. Riley was found not guilty.

(D. MAEDA)

He also spoke of inequities in the state's current tax system, such as: alterations on a suit at the time of its purchase are not taxed but later alterations are, and haircuts for people are non-taxable but those for dogs are. "Apparently the dogs don't have a very good lobbyist at the Capitol," he said.

"It's in our best long-term interests to expand the sales tax to those services," the governor said. "We should reduce this impact by lowering the tax rate from 6.5 percent to 6 percent and continue to exempt necessities of life such as food, clothing, and heating oil."

As for rectifying the property tax system, Ventura wants to take "a big step" by having the state pay for basic K-12 educational costs, instead of local taxpayers.

"Under my proposal, when school programs are paid for with property taxes it will only represent those choices truly made at the local level," Ventura said.

"After all of this, even after paying for part of the cost with some local shifts and a state-wide levy on business and cabin owners, who don't get to vote in local elections, we still provide double-digit tax relief to all classes of property."

Under Ventura's proposal, through the next biennium the state and local governments would collect \$801 million less in property taxes, \$496 million less in income taxes, \$197 million less in license tab fees, and \$446 million more in sales taxes, according to Revenue Commissioner Matt Smith's presentation to the Ways and Means committee. As a result, the state would lose \$1.048 billion from those revenue sources in the biennium.

Ventura's plan to restructure the property tax system and provide significant cuts to rates would require the state to offset the revenues lost by the local governments. As a result, that would technically increase spending.

When taking into account changes from the restructuring of the property tax system, Ventura's proposed \$27 billion general fund budget represents an 11 percent increase in spending. Without the property tax factor, the proposed increase in state spending is 5.4 percent over the previous biennium.

Historically, executive budgets have included various state aids to local governments.

Among the spending proposed in this budget is:

- more than \$115 million to help emerging and incumbent workers, including \$53 million to enhance the working family credit to make it easier for low-income families to stay in the work force;
- \$103 million in recommendations to enhance technology and improve technological investments;

Continued on page 13

★ AGRICULTURE

Dairy consultant program

"You bet" was the answer one Minnesota dairy farmer gave when asked if her business benefited from a state program which provides professional dairy consultants to state farmers.

Administered by the Department of Agriculture, the Dairy Diagnostic program tries to slow the exodus of state dairy producers and to help the remaining farmers become economically viable.

The teams include veterinarians, farm business management instructors, nutritionists, crop experts, University of Minnesota dairy specialists, and officials representing milk processing companies.

Christine Ott, co-owner and operator of Square Deal Dairy in Randolph, testified Jan. 23 before the House Agriculture and Rural Development Finance Committee that the program "has made a huge difference in our dairy," she said.

Countering the downward trend in milk prices which troubles many Minnesota dairy producers, Ott said Square Deal has been able to raise the price of its milk because of improvements suggested by program consultants. She predicted that, given her farm's improved economic status, she expects to soon hire consultants privately, freeing up state resources for other dairy producers.

But not all had such praise for the program.

Committee Chair Rep. Robert Ness (R-Dassel) asked Mayer farmer Bob Dressen why there is not higher demand among dairy farmers for the free consultation service. Dressen said farmers were reluctant to expose themselves to potential criticism. "Most people are reluctant because you're opening yourself up to finding out weaknesses. No one wants to open up."

Rep. Doug Peterson (DFL-Madison) relayed the horror story of one constituent who was advised to leave dairy farming by Dairy Diagnostic consultants who said his farm could not be made economically viable.

Pointing his finger at Bruce Kleven representing the Minnesota Dairy Leaders Roundtable, a group which endorses the Dairy Diagnostic program, Peterson said, "We help people *in* dairy, not *out of* dairy. I don't want to hear any more (stories from disgruntled farmers)."

★ BANKING

Banks seek tax breaks

Community banks and other financial institutions would receive a tax break under similar bills heard by the House Taxes Committee Sales and Income Tax Division, Jan. 25.

HF67, sponsored by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) and HF119, sponsored by the division chair Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson), would repeal the corporate franchise tax that applies to banks that have elected subchapter S status under the IRS tax code.

The division took no action on either bill but Harder said both would be considered for inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

Prior to 1997, federal law did not permit financial institutions to elect S corporation status. That status allows businesses to be treated as partnerships for tax purposes, where the income of the business is directly taxed to its shareholders whether distributed or not.

Abrams said that since 1999 Minnesota banks have been allowed S corporation treatment for state tax purposes, except that the bank is subject to the corporate franchise tax and the shareholders are allowed a credit against the individual income tax equal to 80 percent of the corporate tax.

The two bills would allow those banks full conformity with the federal tax treatment.

Abrams said it is good tax policy whenever possible for the state tax laws to conform with federal tax laws and thus simplify the system.

He said the proposed change would effect about 1,500 people. The state Department of Revenue estimates the cost to be around \$5.3 million in fiscal year 2002.

Steve Johnson, representing the Minnesota Bankers Association, said the issue is a matter of fairness for banks to be treated the same as other main street businesses.

Linda Swanson, owner of the Blaine State Bank, said she started working at the bank when she was 20 years old as a bookkeeper and has seen the benefits of a community bank.

She said she had the opportunity to purchase the bank in 1998 due in large part to the changes allowing subchapter S status for banks.

"I look at our business as a small business first and a bank second," she said.

★ CHILDREN

Department responds to audit

A recent legislative audit of early childhood education programs raised questions about how well these programs are accomplishing their goals and was critical of the lack of monitoring by the Department of Children, Families and Learning, the overseeing agency.

The three programs examined were Head Start, Early Childhood Family Education, and School Readiness. Excessively large balances in the ECFE reserve accounts of some districts were of particular concern.

Karen Carlson, assistant commissioner of the department, responded to questions about the report before the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee Jan. 22.

"We think this audit represents a fair picture of the three programs," Carlson said.

She outlined several ways in which the department differs with the report:

- Unlike the auditors, the department is convinced by research that early childhood programs improve later school performance;
- Structural differences among the programs make it hard to make direct comparisons; and
- The department would like to oversee program progress and funding more carefully but does not have the capacity to do so.

"I have a lot of concerns about this report," said Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin). "I think the department has a lot of work to do monitoring these programs and reporting on them."

Committee members agreed on two things. They would like to see the implementation of some form of tracking to determine the effectiveness of the programs over time. And they would like the department pay closer attention to the ways in which program funds are used.

★ CRIME

CriMNet system progressing

The state's endeavor to create a criminal justice information system is moving forward, but there are still many pieces to add, state officials told the joint meeting of the House

Judiciary Finance and Crime Prevention committees Jan. 18.

The plan would link conviction, probation, sex offender registry, warrant, protection orders, pre-trial release and juvenile felony record information for all offenders from the 1,100 different law enforcement agencies across the state.

Currently, some of that information is available but it's usually incomplete.

Dale Good, information technology director for the state court system, said Minnesotans expect the state to know all of these things already, when that's not true.

"We have a broken system," he said. "There is no criminal justice single system in the state of Minnesota."

Good said the Legislature has funded several pieces of the system. But, he also said there needs to be more focus on what the local communities provide to the state system. If the exchange of information is incomplete from their end, the entire system will have holes.

For example, the state Bureau of Apprehension's system links offenders with their fingerprints. If their fingerprints are not available, then all the information about that offender goes into "suspense" and can't necessarily be accessed by law enforcement officers in the field.

One way the state has remedied the problem is in the creation of a new suspense file system housed on a secure Internet site to which law enforcement agencies across the state have access.

However, that suspense information is not accessible for such things as criminal background checks.

"It doesn't mean a thing for someone to do a background check when there's potential for 26,000 mistakes," said Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), in reference to the backlog of fingerprints waiting to be entered in the bureau's system.

Approximately \$13 million was appropriated for information system purposes in Katie's Law, passed by the 2000 Legislature. But the idea was actually born in the 1993 legislative session.

At that time a criminal justice information policy group was created to recommend the best course of action for developing a state-wide system.

Since then, many advancements have been made toward a statewide system, including additional electronic fingerprinting machines and other technological advancements.

Still, state officials have focused on helping local agencies understand how important their role in the process is.

"This is not about technology," said Charlie Weaver, commissioner of the state Department

MCCL RALLY



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

An estimated 5,000 people rally in front of the State Capitol Jan. 22 to commemorate the *Roe v. Wade* abortion decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973. The event was sponsored by Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life.

of Public Safety. "The problem is that the data isn't getting in there or that the data in there isn't good. It isn't reliable. It's about changing the way people do their jobs every day."

★ EDUCATION

Troubling math skills

Guests to a joint meeting of the House Education Policy and Higher Education Finance committees declared two specific reasons students in Minnesota are not exceeding in math.

Lack of high expectations for students and proper math education at an early age might be key in determining why students in the state and around the rest of the country produced mediocre scores on a international test.

Bill Lender-Scholer, director of SciMath Minnesota, presented an overview of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) to the House Education Policy and House Higher Education Finance Committees Jan. 23. Members heard testimony on that day and Jan 25.

"Students cannot be high performing without high expectations," he said. "TIMSS reinforced that."

The study confirmed that Minnesota is not yet making progress in math. This was shown in test data released in December 2000 from the second test of the study taken in 1999. Fourth, eighth, and 12th grade students in the state were tested both years.

Lender-Scholer purported that teaching in the United States is less rigorous and said curricula have little depth as compared to other countries.

Additionally, Sharon Stenglein, a math specialist with the department of Children, Families and Learning, said "high performing countries focus on fewer topics, spend more



Joane McKay, dean of the College of Education at St. Cloud State University, explains math pedagogical techniques in higher education institutions during a Jan. 25 joint meeting of the House Education Policy and Higher Education Finance committees.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD NEWS CONFERENCE



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

In recognition of the 28th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the Minnesota Pro-Choice Education Coalition launched a public education campaign Jan. 22. Participating were, *left to right*, Tim Stanley, executive director, Minnesota NARAL Foundation; Amy Brugh, public affairs organizer, Planned Parenthood Action Fund; Pat Sandin, executive director, Midwest Health Center for Women; and Linnea House, development director, ProChoice Resources.

time on them, and keep the topic in the curriculum for less time.”

For example, she said all eighth-grade teachers in Minnesota who responded to a survey said they spend at least some time teaching the meaning and operation of whole numbers, a concept taught in elementary school.

The two committees met together in hopes for a “better alignment between K-12 and higher education math,” according to House Higher Education Finance Chair Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley).

Part of the problem for the average test scores, Stenglein said, is memorization of subject matter but not use and application.

“Many students are not prepared,” she said. “They have learned the content, but forget and are no longer able to demonstrate learning.”

Mary Moreira, who teaches math to 10th-12th graders in the Robbinsdale school district, agreed.

“They come to us in ninth grade ill-prepared,” she said.

Moreira, a teacher of 12 years, pointed to a learning shortfall at an earlier stage.

“We have elementary teachers who don’t like math,” she said.

Joane McKay, dean of the College of Education at St. Cloud State University, said St. Cloud’s program includes a math lab with tutors for students with a “math phobia,” and students are taught by an elementary-methods teacher who has a background in math.

Many teachers, Moreira said, took the minimum math requirement in college. When they reach the classroom they generally teach math “by the book” and don’t know different ways to approach the subject matter.

Stanglein said that may be a matter of time as elementary educators teach many subjects, while in other countries a teacher may only teach one or two.

Moreira, also a longtime school board member, said school administrators, including herself, have not given students the education they deserve.

“Partly we want to be nice,” she said. “With good intentions we have allowed them to do less than they’re capable of.”

★ ELECTIONS

House approves board members

The House gave advice and consent approval Jan. 18 to four governor nominees to the State Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board.

Three of the nominees, Shirley Chase, Wilbur Fluegel, and Donald Roggenbauer have previously served on the board. Their confirmation is to affirm reappointment to the board. Gov. Jesse Ventura nominated the fourth, former state Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls), to fill a seat vacated by former congressman Tim Penny.

The Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board is a service and regulatory agency that administers and enforces state laws about public officials financial interests and potential conflicts of interest, as well as overseeing lobbying expenditures.

Rep. Ted Winter (DFL-Fulda) expressed concern that none of the board members is from a rural community and that all are from the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Chase is from Little Canada, Fluegel is from Minneapolis, and Roggenbauer calls Maple Grove home.

Rep. Jim Rhodes (R-St. Louis Park), chair of the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee, said members of that committee expressed similar concerns while hearing testimony from the nominees.

Rhodes said Rep. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls) would be introducing a bill shortly to address the lack of rural representation on the board.

Current state law requires the six-member board be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of three-fifths of both the House and Senate. Two board members must be former members of the Legislature from different political parties.

The law also requires that two members must be people who have not been public officials, held any political party office other than precinct delegate, or been elected to public office for which party designation is required by law. No more than three of the board members may support the same political party and no member may currently serve as a lobbyist.

The candidates now must have their nominations approved by the Senate.

Ensuring every vote

Replacing poor election equipment will not address the primary issues lingering from last fall’s presidential election, the state’s head election official said.

“What’s broken is the public’s confidence,” Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer told the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee Jan. 24. “We need to restore that confidence.”

Kiffmeyer and her staff gave an overview of the office’s election division. Bradley King, the office’s election director, said his staff fielded more than 4,000 calls the week prior to the election and more than 6,000 on election day.

“That’s an average of a call every few seconds, 24 hours a day,” King said.

Minnesota was the first state to provide results down to the precinct level via the Internet on election night. Ninety-eight percent of the

results were available by 3 a.m. the next day, King said.

Kiffmeyer said the difficulties facing Florida election officials would not happen to their counterparts in Minnesota because the state does not allow the use of punch card voting systems. However, she said, the equipment Minnesota uses has its own issues in regard to making sure each voter has equal assurances their ballot is ultimately counted.

About 92 percent of Minnesota voters cast their ballots on optical scan equipment, with the remaining 8 percent counting ballots by hand. But Kiffmeyer said even those communities with optical scan equipment face different assurances of having their ballot counted.

Two-thirds of the precincts with optical scan machines have ballot counters at the polling place and therefore a voter who mismarks the ballot has the opportunity to correct the ballot before leaving, she said.

But the other one-third mark their optical scan ballot that is later counted at a central location, usually the county government center. Those voters do not have the same chance to correct a ballot.

Kiffmeyer said this raises the questions about whether the state complies with the equal protection concerns raised in the Florida situation.

★ ENERGY

Gas relief in sight?

Natural gas prices, while expected to slightly decrease by next year, are not expected to be significantly reduced any time soon, commerce representatives told members of the House Regulated Industries Committee Jan. 22.

Representatives heard from several local energy companies on the current natural gas situation and potential ways to assist customers with high heating bills.

Xcel Energy's Pat Boland, manager of low-income assistance programs, said his company has been working with "different groups" to find strategies to manage high energy prices, yet the need for assistance is tremendous.

"Unfortunately, the impacts of this winter go beyond low-income households," he said.

Brad Holland, director of customer service for Minnegasco, said his company offers flexible payment plans and encourages customers to participate in energy conservation plans. Minnegasco is also working with the Salvation Army, asking their customers to donate money to the Heat Share program to assist people in greatest need.

Kim Rezek from the Department of

Economic Security said her office has received one additional increase to appropriations from Congress, and three releases from the president's emergency contingency fund to aid low-income households. Rezek's office runs a federally funded block grant service that helps people in need to pay heating bills, awarding an average grant of \$475.

Through the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Rezek says the department plans to serve 18,000 additional households. The program, which currently runs on a first come, first serve basis, is being evaluated to consider prioritizing for the neediest.

After relatively mild winters due to El Nino and La Nina, weather experts have now predicted normal, or cold, winters for the next few years, commerce officials say. The forecast includes the entire country, as more than just the northern states have experienced colder weather this winter.

"The \$2 to \$3 (per thousand cubic feet that customers have been paying) in the past couple years has been undervalued," said Marya White, from the energy division of the Commerce Department. Currently, natural gas is costing consumers \$11.11 per thousand cubic feet, compared to \$3.64 one year ago.

Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston) suggested the committee was not getting at the root of the issue at hand.

"We're not addressing the rising price problem," Lieder said. "We can't just help people pay their bills if the cost is only going to rise."

★ ENVIRONMENT

DNR a winner in lottery

Last year, the Legislature granted the Department of Natural Resources a new funding source in the form of the 6.5 percent in-lieu sales tax on lottery tickets. Previously, this money went to the general fund.

Targeted for natural resources programs, one-half goes to the Heritage Fund, which includes fisheries and wildlife, and the other one-half to the Natural Resources Fund, which includes parks, trails, and zoos.

"We gave the DNR great discretion in the use of these funds," said Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), chair of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee. The fund budget for fiscal year 2001 is nearly \$25.5 million.

DNR Deputy Commissioner Steve Morse presented a budget allocation report for the program to committee Jan. 24.

The agency developed a spending plan after meeting with employees, stakeholders, and lawmakers. It covers a wide range of projects.

The \$12.7 million allotment for the Natural Resources Fund was divided between state and metropolitan parks and trails. It was earmarked for a broad spectrum of services from park operations to environmental education.

Of the \$12.7 million in the Heritage Fund, fisheries received \$4.8 million, of which almost one-half was designated for the acquisition of parcels to complete aquatic management areas and provide access to trout streams.

An equivalent amount of the Heritage Fund went to wildlife, about one-half of which, \$2.55 million, was used to acquire wildlife management areas. The remaining \$2.2 million was designated for habitat development, restoration, and conservation.

Ecological services received \$1 million, which has been designated for such projects as river and floodplain restoration and dam modification.

Enforcement received \$1.7 million. Much of that will go for equipping and training conservation officers.

Committee members voiced a number of concerns about staffing. In particular, they challenged Morse to be more aggressive in recruiting women and minorities.

"The record of the department is dismal," said Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul). "The agency has to get these people on board."

Morse said diversity was a goal, but the department was having difficulties attracting minorities.

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) said the DNR should have "no trouble whatsoever" recruiting women with college degrees at the salary range they offer.

★ GAMBLING

Big bucks bet in 2000

Gambling remains a highly lucrative industry in the state, according to the director of the Minnesota State Lottery.

George Andersen told the House Government Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee Jan. 22 that last year was the most profitable yet, bringing in more than \$397 million in revenue. The lottery began in 1990.

By comparison \$1.5 billion was bet at charitable gambling venues in 2000 with \$73 million wagered on horse racing at Canterbury Park. Andersen said the state estimates there was about \$1 billion spent on illegal gambling activities in Minnesota, primarily organized sports betting.

Andersen said he expects lottery revenues to decrease over the next year due to rising gas prices. He said many sales are made at gas stations where patrons use change leftover

from their purchase of gas to buy a lottery ticket.

Retailers of lottery tickets made more than \$27.1 million in 2000, an average of \$8,336 per outlet. Retailers earn 5.5 cents for every dollar in lottery products they sell. They also collect 1 percent of each winning ticket redeemed at their location.

Andersen said the agency estimates it loses more than \$5 million in sales annually because the state does not allow holiday-related games. He said Minnesota is the only state among the 37 that have lotteries to impose this restriction due to concerns with using religious-related imagery in its games.

He said the largest amount of revenue goes to paying out prizes — \$241 million in 2000 and \$2.2 billion since the lottery began. The net proceeds from lottery sales are divided between the state's general fund and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, amounting to more than \$590 million and \$255 million respectively during the past decade.

Since its inception, the lottery has also allocated more than \$11.5 million to the Department of Human Services for problem gambling programs. Andersen said a 1996 University of Minnesota study showed that very few compulsive gamblers in treatment named the lottery as their preferred form of gambling.

★ GAME & FISH

★ Overlimit penalties proposed

Legislators are considering a bill that would provide criminal penalties for people who “grossly” violate existing limits on fish and game. The bill designates the severity of the offense based on the monetary restitution value of the overhunted or overfished game, a dollar amount meant to reimburse the state for the loss of wildlife.

In its current form, HF94 establishes a felony penalty for taking animals with a restitution value of \$5,000 or more. Any lesser value could lead to a gross misdemeanor charge.

However, one of the bill's authors has already offered an amendment so that the maximum conviction would be gross misdemeanor. Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin) told a Jan. 25 assembly of the House Crime Prevention Committee that the Department of Natural Resources was in favor of moderating the original proposal.

The bill would also allow conservation officers to arrest and take into custody those they discover breaking the law. A violator's

hunting or fishing license would also be suspended for an amount of time based on the total restitution value of the animals killed.

For example, a person found taking three deer over the limit would be arrested, immediately have their game and fish licenses suspended, and conservation officers would seize their equipment and vehicles. A conviction would lead to a \$1,500 fine and the revocation of all fishing and game licenses for five years. It would also be considered a gross misdemeanor, which is punishable by up to one year in jail and a \$3,000 fine.

Currently, the maximum penalty for overlimit violations is \$700, a fee often paid on the spot by violators. According to Haas, many violators resume fishing almost immediately.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) expressed his concern that tourism could suffer if out-of-state hunters and anglers got the message that Minnesota strictly enforced limit laws already in effect. “Maybe this is too harsh,” he said.

Rep. Dale Walz (R-Brainerd) disagreed, saying that responsible, desirable tourism would benefit from the protection the bill would help enforce. “I don't think this will deter tourism, it will protect it,” he said.

Haas added “all the major sporting group in the state are behind this.”

The bill remains in the Crime Prevention committee in part to allow its supporters more time to clarify the powers granted to conservation officers who discover violators.

★ GOVERNMENT



Tight hold on the billfold

In an effort to caution state agencies of hopes for a high budget, State Government Finance Committee Chair Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview) presented a fiscal appropriations bill (HF218) much earlier in the session than the bill has ever appeared previously.

Typically a finance committee hears proposals from state agencies over the course of the session and compiles them into one omnibus spending bill.

Krinkie's bill appropriates \$135 million less than the governor's recommendations. Gov. Jesse Ventura's budget proposes to spend \$791 million, compared to the bill's \$656 million.

“We are going to learn, once again, that Chair Krinkie is much more fiscally conservative than the governor,” Krinkie said at the Jan. 25 committee meeting.

The committee took no action on the bill.

Krinkie has chaired the committee since 1999 and served on it two years prior to that. He said there has always been confusion in

regard to operating objectives.

“I wanted to lay before the committee a starting point for the level (a state) agency is funded,” and prompt more ongoing evaluation of increased spending needs in areas such as salary, health care, and rent, he said in an interview.

Krinkie said he wants the bill to “show that the governor is proposing substantial increases, and give a side-by-side comparison” to show differences between the two. Krinkie's “starting point” is tremendously less than the governor's projections for several state agencies.

Funding for the Office of Technology in Krinkie's bill, for instance, falls more than \$28 million behind the governor's budget. Spending for the Department of Administration, under the bill's proposal would be \$39 million less than Ventura's plan.

Few of the bill's recommendations appear higher than the governor's and total less than \$1 million.

Another of his intentions with the bill, Krinkie said, is to forewarn members that what the committee did not fund in 1999, it will still not fund. “There is going to be greater scrutiny on agencies that have been examined closely before,” he said.

State agencies will have a bigger challenge presenting their budget requests since HF218 already establishes different priorities than the governor's proposal.

“The reason for early introduction of (HF)218 is to lay down budget principles,” he said.

★ HEALTH



Home health care

The growth in home health care is giving headaches to the agencies that regulate it.

“It is ironic that when we have a trend toward use of more home-based services almost all our dollars are committed to nursing home regulations,” said Linda Sutherland, director of the Facility and Provider Compliance Division of the Minnesota Department of Health.

Speaking before the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee Jan. 23, Sutherland said if it was up to her to decide how federal funding was allocated, she would spend less on regulating nursing homes and more on home health care.

Other officials agreed that while complaints about home care are growing in number, the resources to address them are very limited.

Most of the growing pains in home health care relate directly to staff shortages. It's not unusual for personal care assistants to show up late, and sometimes not at all, leaving vulnerable people to fend for themselves, according to Sutherland.

"Work force issues pervade all the problems in health care," she said.

A health care staffing crisis has led employers to hire people they would not have considered in the past, said Jerry Kerber, director of licensing for the state Department of Human Services. The agency does background checks on people who provide direct personal care; it has disqualified people at increasing rates over the past nine years.

In addition to complaints to agencies, individuals who have concerns about publicly licensed and regulated programs can turn to a state ombudsman for help.

An ombudsman will teach individuals about their rights and help them to advocate on their own behalf, said Sharon Zoesch, from the office of Ombudsman for Older Minnesotans. She said that 83 percent of complaints reported to her office are successfully resolved.

"We focus on real people with real lives," said Roberta Opheim, ombudsman for mental health and mental retardation. She emphasized that her staff try to resolve issues before they become candidates for regulatory agencies.

HIGHER EDUCATION



Students may pay more

Gov. Jesse Ventura's commitment to higher education is in question by members of the House Higher Education Finance Committee.

At its Jan. 24 meeting, the committee members took turns questioning Ventura's proposal for post-secondary institutions.

The unpleasantness centered around proposed allocations for the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities — \$40 million to each in the form of faculty and staff compensation.

The amounts equal two-thirds of the total compensation increase. The remaining one-third is scheduled to come from tuition increases. State Budget Director Peggy Ingison said traditionally the state pays for two-thirds of instruction costs, with the rest coming from tuition.

Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) said this proposal "looks like a passing of the buck to students." He said the only way post-secondary institutions may be able to meet their needs are through tuition increases or layoffs.

Rep. Gene Pelowski, Jr. (DFL-Winona) said students at Winona State University were already facing a 7 percent tuition hike for next year, but now that number is expected to be 15 percent. "My assumption is it may be more at other campuses. This is not unfortunate, it is tragic."

Ingison reminded members that Ventura's

other tax cuts will put money back in families' pockets so they can do what is best for them.

At least one legislator was a bit more optimistic. Rep. Steve Dehler (R-St. Joseph) said he thinks the Legislature will ultimately end up passing a good higher education bill. "I'm thrilled at the adventure ahead of us."

Ventura's higher education budget proposal is 4.8 percent (\$126 million) higher than fiscal year 2000-01. The recommendation includes a net increase in \$99.2 million in new initiatives. The increase to the University of Minnesota is \$49 million more than last biennium, \$41 million more to MnSCU, and \$10 million more to the Higher Education Services Office.

Stewart McMullan, executive budget officer, said higher education institutions requested \$519 million in funding, 19.3 percent more than the previous biennium.

Among the highlights of the governor's plan are \$8 million to the University of Minnesota to stabilize core funding at its medical school, \$7 million from the Workforce Development Fund to MnSCU to create regional programs that address critical workforce needs in each region, and new spending of more than \$30 million for financial aid.

The governor also included \$68.3 million for the University of Minnesota, and \$86.4 million for MnSCU, in his bonding proposal, primarily for building maintenance.

Operating cost help

The University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities will soon be seeking funds for operational costs.

But private college officials are urging legislators to not focus solely on public institutions.

Before the House Higher Education Finance Committee Jan. 19, David Laird, president of the Minnesota Private College Council, spoke about policy concerns and issues regarding higher education in general.

"There is no better investment return anywhere in society than a college degree," he said, adding Minnesota needs strong, diverse, and adaptive educational institutions to maintain its competitive edge in the economy.

Using numbers from the Minnesota Department of Economic Security, Laird noted that state employment is expected to increase by more than 400,000 jobs through 2016, with 59 percent of those positions expected to be in occupations requiring at least a college degree.

Laird did spend a little time addressing the value Minnesotans receive from private colleges: an average of 60 percent of students remain in Minnesota after graduation (including 80 percent in 1999), private colleges and universities employ more than 10,000 people,

and taxpayers save \$200 million when undergraduate state students attend private colleges instead of public universities.

However, he urged the 2001 Legislature to consider three ways to ensure greater investments in higher education, both public and private, to bring maximum returns.

Raising the ire of at least one member was a recommendation to "double the direct investment in Minnesota students by increasing to 20 percent the share of state funding that flows to them through the Minnesota State Grant Program," Laird said.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), committee chair, said she was "troubled that the state private colleges are asking the state to double the state grant fund when it would be at the expense of public education."

Laird's other two recommendations were: that the state increase funding to \$5 million annually for a program that helps prepare middle and high school students for college, particularly for those from low-income families with parents who did not attend a post-secondary institution; and develop fair and equitable indicators of all colleges and universities in the state, and use that information to direct state subsidies in the most appropriate way.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT



Pay for protection

Getting a day job in the city of Mahtomedi might be a bit more attractive to potential paramedic candidates under a bill heard by the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee Jan. 24.

The bill (HF172), sponsored by Rep. Harry Mares (R-White Bear Lake), gives the city the authority to provide housing assistance for volunteer firefighters with paramedic credentials.

Mares said the legislation is necessary because of a precedent established by a 1952 opinion from the state attorney general. The opinion held that the city of Newport did not have the authority to provide living quarters to its police chief unless the Legislature granted special authority.

City Administrator Jon Hohenstein said Mahtomedi has had a difficult time finding volunteer firefighters because most of the department's members work outside the community during the day and there is a small employer base from which to recruit other daytime volunteers.

Todd Rogers, the city's fire chief, said the bill would give the city one potential solution to a larger problem.

"If the program is successful, it would be another tool of recruitment," he said.

The city council recently approved a \$390 a month stipend to new recruits who agree to work dayshifts, along with making themselves available on other days.

Remi Stone, from the League of Minnesota Cities, said the league has heard from at least six other cities — including Balaton, Excelsior, Roseville, Shoreview, and St. Cloud — with a similar problem. She said those cities have expressed interest in what is being proposed in the bill to address their own public safety employee shortages.

The league is now researching the issues of expanding the idea statewide.

Mares said he has sought a new opinion from the attorney general that may mean the bill is not even necessary and the city may proceed without legislation.

The committee took no action on the bill but Rep. Jerry Dempsey (R-Hastings), the committee chair, said further hearings on the matter would occur once the attorney general's office has issued its opinion and the League of Minnesota Cities has determined the statewide benefits of a similar bill.

★ RECREATION

Expansion of trails

With almost 17,000 miles of snowmobile trails, Minnesota has one of the largest systems in the country. Now, advocates of other off-highway vehicles (OHVs) would like the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop similar trail systems for their use.

The status of trail development and funding for the vehicles in Minnesota's forests was addressed at the Jan. 22 meeting of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance committee.

The vehicles under discussion include all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), 4X4 trucks, and off-highway motorcycles.

"It will be an ongoing challenge to keep user conflicts to a low level," said Dennis Asmussen, director of trails and waterways for the DNR. "There are increasing opportunities for users to irritate each other."

The planning process for off-highway vehicle trails is underway and involves four points, he told the committee:

- Prevention of environmental damage;
- Enforcement of rules;
- Paying attention to non-motorized needs; and
- Off-trail riding.

Stakeholders from user groups agreed on the importance of these guidelines.

"We have recognized and advocated for some time that ATV use needs to be registered

and managed similar to snowmobiles," said Sonia Bartz, president of the All-Terrain Vehicle Association of Minnesota. She said the effort to designate all-terrain vehicle trails in the state has "not been painless," but the group has tried to honor the process.

Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Mpls) asked about education and safety training programs. Bartz said safety is important to the group and they intend to focus on it after the trails are established.

Don Youngdahl, legislative chair of the Amateur Riders Motorcycle Association, pointed out that about 90 percent of the trails they want to use for off-highway vehicles already exist and need mostly signage, rerouting, and maintenance.

The economic impact on Minnesota's economy from the building and use of off-road vehicles was a common theme of discussion.

Doug Franzer of the Minnesota United Snowmobilers' Association said the Department of Tourism estimates the economic impact of snowmobiling on the state's economy at \$148 million.

Mitchell Johnson, ATV division manager of Polaris, said his Minnesota company employs 3,500 people and had \$1.3 billion in sales in 1999. He said their ATV business is three times that of their snowmobile business.

Not everyone wants to see such a trail system built. Gene Larimore, speaking for the Minnesotans for Responsible Recreation, told the committee his group believes off-highway vehicle use violates two principles of state land use: to protect the resource and minimize conflict among users of public land. The group wants an environmental assessment done before any such trails are built.

★ TAXES

Checks in the mail?

As has been the case the past two years, many Minnesotans could receive a check from the Department of Revenue this year in the form of a sales tax rebate as provided in two separate bills heard by the House Taxes Committee Jan. 24.

Rep. Dale Walz (R-Brainerd) said his bill (HF2) would fulfill a promise to the taxpayers of the state.



Mitchell D. Johnson, the ATV division manager for Polaris Industries, tells the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee about the contribution his company brings to the economy of the state and the need for ATV trails. The committee was hearing trail development and funding proposals from the Department of Natural Resources.

"It is very important to rebate the money back to the people who paid it in," Walz said. "Families could use the rebate for home repairs, vacations, or unfortunately as may be the case, catching up on overdue fuel heating bills."

The bill is similar to legislation passed in 1999 and 2000 providing for an automatic rebate in which eligible recipients are not required to file any forms to receive a check.

The bill would provide for a sales tax based rebate totaling \$924.5 million. Residents who were not claimed as dependents and who filed a 1999 Minnesota tax return would be eligible as would Minnesota residents at least 18 years old who received social security income.

Current law already designates the money to a rebate, but the Legislature must determine the basis for the rebate.

As with last year's rebate, dependents with at least \$1 of income tax liability would receive a rebate equal to 35 percent of the amount for single filers.

Under Walz's bill the maximum rebate amount would be \$3,400 for joint filers and \$1,700 for single filers. The minimum would be \$240 for married couples and \$136 for single filers.

The committee chair, Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) presented a similar bill (HF48). Abrams said his bill addresses a couple of issues that came up in the state's first two sales tax rebates.

One issue is that individuals or married couples who received social security or public pension benefits are eligible for a rebate of \$136 individually. But those same people may also be eligible for a rebate based on whether they filed a Minnesota income tax return in 1999. The bill specifies in that instance the recipient receives the larger of the two amounts.

The committee took no action on either bill

but Abrams said both will be considered for inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

Provider tax may be axed

For the past few sessions several bills have been introduced reducing, reforming, or repealing the health care provider tax. But because the tax helps fund the insurance program for lower income Minnesotans, lawmakers have not been able to agree on how to deal with it.

So perhaps it was a symbolic sign of some kind that something is different this year when the fire alarm sounded during the House Taxes Committee hearing Jan. 23, providing a brief interruption in testimony from a variety of groups supporting a bill that would eliminate the tax.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), sponsor of the measure (HF14) said efforts to eliminate the tax have received "enthusiastic support from members on both sides," and he said his bill attempts to address concerns raised in the past.

Bradley said the bill would credit one-time and ongoing tobacco settlement payments to the health care access fund and eliminate the provider tax and premium tax on nonprofit health plan companies. The bill would require health care providers to lower rates reflective of the savings resulting from the elimination of the taxes and document their compliance with the rate reduction requirement.

"This is a desire to get rid of a regressive and very unpopular tax," Bradley said.

The bill requires the commissioner of the Department of Revenue to set the provider tax rates beginning in 2002 based on Department of Finance budget estimates regarding the balance of the health care access fund. If there is no deficit forecast, no taxes would be imposed under the measure. If a deficit is predicted, the commissioner would determine the rate by reinstating the tax in one-quarter of 1 percent increments up to 2 percent.

Currently the provider tax rate is set at 1.5 percent and is scheduled to increase to 2 percent starting Jan. 1, 2002 if no changes in the law take place.

Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) offered an amendment, supported by Bradley, clarifying the reporting and enforcement requirements to make sure the tax reduction ultimately means lower rates for consumers. The amendment was adopted but no further action was taken on the bill.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), committee chair, said the bill would be considered for possible inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

Special vote for new taxes

Raising taxes would require a supermajority vote of the Legislature under a bill approved by the House Taxes Committee Jan. 24.

HF12, sponsored by Rep. Eric Lipman (R-Lake Elmo), proposes a constitutional amendment asking voters if a three-fifths vote in each house of the Legislature should be required on bills that would increase the state income, sales, and property taxes, as well as state fees and surcharges.

"The Taxpayer's Protection Act does not solve all problems in state government," Lipman said. "It is a needed improvement and it is not a radical change.... It is a modest reform and a needed reform."

Lipman said the bill would impose a similar restriction on the Legislature's ability to raise taxes as is already in place with its ability to pass legislation that incurs debt. A three-fifths vote is required on bonding bills.

Similar supermajority requirements are already required in 12 states with eight of those states requiring an even tougher standard, a two-thirds or a three-fourths vote.

Lipman said the bill would limit the state's power to tax family budgets and help ensure that tax increases are only used as a last resort.

Under the proposal, voters would decide on the constitutional amendment in the 2002 general election.

Tom Pritchard, the president of the Minnesota Family Council, said the group supports the bill because it reduces family budgetary burdens.

"Families are ultimately the ones who pay taxes," Pritchard said.

Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) said the bill was "anti-democracy" because it allows a minority vote to ultimately decide the issue if it receives less than 60 percent approval, thereby killing the bill. He said that states that impose the supermajority requirement such as California have seen a decline in the quality of their schools.

"I don't think it's necessary. We've spent the past five or six years cutting taxes," Dawkins said.

Rep. Michelle Rifenberg (R-La Crescent) said she supported the measure because it addresses an "important point — whose money is it, the government's or the taxpayers?"

The bill now travels to the House Ways and Means Committee.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Improving bus safety

Minnesota may soon add to the list of offenses that prevent some convicts from being allowed to drive school buses.

The House Transportation Policy

Committee forwarded a bill to the House floor Jan. 23 that would bar those convicted of certain offenses from obtaining the endorsement necessary to drive. The crimes would include illegal use of minors in sexual performance, possession of child pornography, and the dissemination and display of harmful material to minors.

Representatives approved the increased restrictions following testimony from Chaska Police Chief Scott Knight that his department had arrested a school bus driver who had illegally obtained official permission to drive. According to Knight, the driver altered his name slightly while making a job application, so state employees did not discover his criminal record, which included a prior conviction of child molestation. "He didn't even change his birth date," Knight said.

Dennis Lazenberry, pupil transportation safety director at the state Department of Public Safety, told the committee his department conducts state-mandated background checks on all applicants. He conceded the applicant had eluded detection by simply modifying his name.

The department currently relies on fingerprinting to discover convicted applicants who alter their names, but only those applicants who moved to Minnesota within the previous five years have been fingerprinted. The technique allows the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to better search applicants' criminal histories for disqualifying convictions in other states.

Rep. Dan Larson (DFL-Bloomington) expressed his disapproval of a system that he sees as allowing inappropriate applicants to win endorsements.

"We depend on the state to conduct background checks. It's a false sense of security," he said, promising to examine the possibility of mandating fingerprinting for all new applicants. The department currently fingerprints under its own policy; doing so is not required under state law.

Where to find information

House Public Information Office

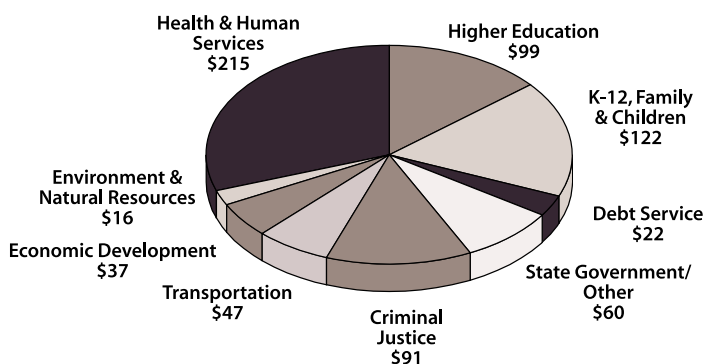
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Recommended New Spending for 2002-03

\$709 Million Increase



Source: Department of Finance

Continued from page 4

- a 13 percent increase in criminal justice dollars, including \$27 million for CriMNet, a system that shares criminal information between state and local jurisdictions;
- \$13.8 million to provide health care coverage to more low-income children by simplifying health care programs in the General Fund and Health Care Access Fund;
- \$489 million for K-12 education, a 4.4 percent increase, including \$10 million for teacher recruitment strategies, and \$15 million for schools and districts that try alternative approaches to compensating teachers, focusing more on performance than on seniority;
- a 4.8 percent increase (\$126 million) in higher education funding, including \$14 million to increase financial aid for low income independent, non-traditional, and part-time students, \$11 million to increase the period someone is eligible for the State Grant program, and \$8 million to stabilize core funding for the University of Minnesota Medical School;
- \$95 million for transportation, including \$33.1 million for public transit assistance in 64 Greater Minnesota counties.

Other proposed spending could be categorized as "taking from Paul to give to Peter."

"My budget redirects \$73 million from nursing homes into an \$82 million initiative to expand community-based health care services," Ventura said. "By creating incentives for nursing facility downsizing, more options will be available to help our elderly remain in their homes or live independently."

However, according to Wheelock's presentation, many of those allocations will not be available until fiscal year 2003 because they already received extra funding from the 2000 Legislature for the current fiscal year.

That's because the Legislature didn't heed the governor's request for no additional funding during the previous session, Wheelock said, and he built that into his budget proposal.

Ventura finished his Jan. 23 presentation with a challenge to lawmakers.

"I am recommending a capital budget this year because I believe the Legislature can get both the capital and operating budgets done in one session."

In submitting a \$504 million capital budget, the governor said his goal is to eliminate next year's legislative session.

He warned legislators if they send a capital budget to his office at the end of session, but don't adjourn *sine die*, they will risk a veto of the entire package.

During Ways and Means committee discussion of the governor's budget, Wheelock re-emphasized the governor's goals of keeping spending down.

However, members questioned the veracity of some numbers within the presentation and accused the governor of using account-

ing tricks to make his budget appear as if it didn't significantly increase state spending.

For example, House Speaker Steve Sviggum asked Wheelock to address the governor's contention that the Legislature increased spending by 16 percent in the previous biennium and whether it is fair to compare that figure with the governor's proposed spending increase of 5.4 percent.

"You know that I am mostly supportive of the governor's budget," Sviggum said. "But I'm also sensitive to the fact that the governor said we (the Legislature) increased spending by 16 percent in the last biennium. ... Let's compare apples to apples."

Wheelock said the previous spending increase by the Legislature was probably closer to 13 percent, though officials contend that does not hold with how the governor's recommendations and Legislature's actions were compared historically.

During the presentation, Wheelock outlined several other areas that will benefit from the budget, including using various other state funds and endowments, such as tobacco settlement payments.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), chair of the committee, said the governor should include those funds as state spending and use proper terms to compare how his recommendations have increased over the previous biennium.

Bishop then told Wheelock to admonish the governor to use the proper numbers. He said he thinks the public perceives all spending to come from the general fund, when that is only a part of the numerous funds in the state coffers.

"I think that was misleading and a hit at the Legislature," Bishop said.

However, Bishop concluded by saying that the budget does reflect a lot of hard work on behalf of the executive branch.

Ventura's budget priorities emphasized helping Minnesota compete with other states and

nationally. But Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Mpls) said it's important to not curtail the power of service-related businesses, which made significant contributions to the economic boon Minnesota has experienced in recent years.

"What we'll be looking for are unintended consequences of this proposal," she said. "By suddenly shifting the costs to those (service-related) firms, we immediately shut them down."



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

State Finance Commissioner Pam Wheelock uses several graphs to present Gov. Jesse Ventura's biennial budget during a Jan. 24 hearing of the House Ways and Means Committee.

'One session, one budget'

Legislators wrestle with Ventura's capital investment plan in what's typically a non-bonding year

BY MARY KAY WATSON

Gov. Jesse Ventura presented his 2002 capital budget in 2001, with the caveat to lawmakers that his approval of any capital bonding this year is contingent on their agreement to hold a single session each biennium instead of meeting annually.

"This budget is based 100 percent on (Ventura's) initiative of 'one session—one budget,'" Lee Mehrkens, capital budget coordinator for the Department of Finance, told the House Capital Investment Committee Jan. 23.

In keeping with the proposal made in his State-of-the-State address, the governor presented a \$576 million capital bonding plan in a year that would typically see only a small budget for bonding.

In the past, the governor presented the biennial operating budget in odd years and the capital bonding budget in even years.

In 2000, Ventura's strategic capital budget plan was for \$462 million, of which \$401 million was to come from general obligation bonds.

In 1999, a non-bonding year, the Legislature approved about \$150 million in new projects, and in both 1997 and 1995, bonding for projects was less than \$100 million.

This year, of the \$576 million recommendation, \$504 million would come from general obligation bonds. Other funding sources include \$2 million from the general fund, \$27 million from the trunk highway fund, \$8 million from the solid waste fund, and \$35 million from user-financed bonds.

State bonding is intended for major construction projects, such as for highways and buildings, particularly state university and college facilities.

The governor's bonding proposal for this year hinges on his conviction that "the state should adequately maintain its current buildings before adding new ones."

The underlying principles of this plan are preservation of state assets and facilities.

"The governor's budget focuses on the three R's," Mehrkens summed up. "Repair, renovation, and replacement."

Over time, repairs to state-owned property have fallen well behind what is needed. Commonly referred to as the "capital iceberg," this deferred maintenance backlog is estimated at more than \$1.5 billion by the Department of Administration.

In keeping with his view of government's role as a steward of public assets, Ventura has proposed a capital budget that allocates \$365.3 million, about 60 percent of the total, to asset preservation and replacement projects.



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Lee Mehrkens, Department of Finance capital budget coordinator, presents the governor's 2001 capital budget proposal to the House Capital Investment Committee Jan. 23.

"The idea is to fix up what we've got and make it more workable," Mehrkens said.

The remaining 40 percent of the capital budget, \$210.7 million, would be committed to strategic investments consistent with what the governor calls his "Big Plan." Several of these projects take advantage of federal funding opportunities.

Transportation

The largest single allocation is for \$115 million for the state's share of the Northstar Commuter Rail line between St. Cloud and downtown Minneapolis. With the federal appropriation for this project due to expire in September 2002, "time is of the essence" to approve this funding, according to Mehrkens.

Of the \$115 million, \$7 million would be available immediately, with the remainder available only when federal funding is in place.

The proposed Northstar project would use existing rail corridors for an 80-mile, 12-station commuter rail line that would act as a link in the governor's vision of a multi-modal transportation system for Minnesota.

Other transportation-related projects include \$37.2 million for the repair, renovation, or replacement of three state transportation buildings and \$30 million for repair and replacement of local bridges.

Education

Higher education accounts for \$154.7 million of the governor's capital budget. Included in this amount are the following:

- \$75 million to Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) for safety and statutory compliance, repairs, and mechanical improvements on its 53 campuses;
- \$50 million for health and safety improvements, improved access, and infrastructure repairs at University of Minnesota campuses;
- \$18.3 million for upgrades to U of M plant growth facilities and science lab design for the Duluth campus; and
- \$11.4 million for the remodeling of science labs and buildings on MnSCU campuses.

Continued on page 31

Playing by what rules?

Bill seeks to clarify ethics laws for constitutional officers, including the governor, as state employees

By DAVID MAEDA

A cynic might say that the words “ethics” and “government official” are not often found in the same sentence.

But the state’s code of ethics for its government employees dates back to 1959. And now lawmakers are grappling with the question of whether Gov. Jesse Ventura should be able to referee wrestling matches or do color commentary for football games while in office or if taking such outside employment opportunities violates the code of ethics.

The issue was before the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee Jan. 19 as members heard a bill that would prohibit Ventura, and five others, from holding outside jobs.

The committee did not vote on the measure but will continue taking testimony and discussing it.

Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview), the sponsor of HF111, said he believes the governor is already bound by the existing ethics code for state employees, but the bill would clarify that the six constitutional officers (governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, state auditor, state treasurer, and attorney general) are indeed state employees.

“I’m not here to try to prohibit or eliminate the potential earning income of any citizen in the state of Minnesota,” Krinkie said. “When you take the oath of office to be a legislator or to be a constitutional officer of this state you do indeed give up certain other opportunities that we all might have.”

Alan Gilbert, an attorney from the state Attorney General’s Office, said he issued two opinions, one in January 1999 and the other last November, stating the governor is governed by the state employee code of ethics. Gilbert said Ventura’s acceptance of a position with the new Xtreme Football League may therefore be a conflict of interest.

According to a report published by the Department of Employee Relations in 1987, the Civil Service Board developed the original code of ethics for classified state employees in 1959.

The 1961 Legislature then required each

state agency to develop its own code for its employees; as most agencies merely adopted the already existing code.

In 1973 the Civil Service Board was abolished, and a year later the Legislature repealed the law requiring state agencies to develop their own code of ethics. This left the state without any code in place. In 1975 the commissioner of personnel was required to develop a new set of standards through the rulemaking process.

In 1981 the bulk of the current laws governing state employee ethics was passed by the Legislature. That law covers all executive branch employees.

Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), a co-sponsor of HF111 and the chief author of a similar bill last year, said the issue is broader than just the current governor.

“Imagine if the secretary of state went into the business of selling election equipment, or the recycling of used chads, or other issues involving elections, and argued that when he or she was doing that, they were doing it in their spare time,” Entenza said. “I think we would be concerned about that, and be concerned that a constitutional officer was not focusing on her primary duty of upholding the election laws of this state.”

Entenza said in his research for the bill he came across no instances of a governor seeking outside employment.

Krinkie’s bill includes “constitutional officer” as part of the definition for employee for the purposes of the state employee code of ethics.

Further, it stipulates the attorney general would be responsible for determining whether a constitutional officer is violating conflict of interests laws, and the governor would be charged with determining conflict of interest charges against the attorney general. Currently the commissioner of the Department of Employee Relations makes the determination on all constitutional officers.

Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey) expressed concern with allowing the attorney general and governor to make the conflict of interest determinations against the other officer. He said this may lead to unnecessary political fighting.


Rep. Mark Gleason (DFL-Richfield) said even though legislators are part-time employees, as opposed to the full-time position of governor, he was wary of passing law that holds the chief officer of the state to a different standard than legislators.

“I’m very mindful of my own situation,” said Gleason, who is a practicing accountant. “I’m very concerned about holding the governor to a standard where a conflict of interest for him is a violation of the law but I can still personally do all the things I’m not letting the governor do.”

Former representative Marc Asch, now the director of Common Cause Minnesota, a citizen’s lobbying group, said the governor knew while running for office he would have to give up some of his citizen rights if elected.

“As someone from the private sector who holds a responsible position, I am appalled at the assumption that a CEO would not owe his full faith and effort to the entity that was employing him,” Asch said.

Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount) took exception to some of Asch’s remarks.

“If you’re saying he’s doing something different than what he campaigned on, that’s not true. He campaigned on the fact that he was not a career politician, and if he is forced to give up his entertainment career then he becomes a career politician,” Ozment said. 

If you have Internet access, visit the Legislature’s web page at:
<http://www.leg.state.mn.us>

Liquor limitations

Keg registration plan gathers momentum with legislative, teenage support

By JONAS M. WALKER

The situation is all too common, according to law enforcement officials. Officers receive a report of a loud party, or come across a large group of young people gathered in a warehouse or field. In moments, the teenagers scatter, leaving plastic cups strewn about, a beer keg half-empty, and no clue as to who is responsible.

Representatives are considering a bill that would require liquor stores to number all kegs so they can be individually identified. The bill (HF58) would require liquor stores to record the name, address, and driver's license number or social security number of the person making the purchase.

That information, in addition to the date and time of purchase and the keg identification number, would be recorded and kept by the liquor store for at least 90 days. The identities of purchasers would be made available upon request by law enforcement officials.

Proponents of the bill say keg registration will assist in the tracking and prosecution of adults who provide beer to underage drinkers.

Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights) is sponsoring the bill and, at a Jan. 24 House Civil Law Committee hearing, described the legislation as "our attempt to link that specific keg to that specific purchaser) in order to hold that person responsible for providing alcohol to minors."

The committee plans to hold further hearings on the bill.

McGuire said she was approached by students who wanted her to sponsor the bill.

She was joined by Rep. Steve Dehler (R-St. Joseph), who began his testimony by emphasizing the bipartisan support for the initiative.

McGuire and Dehler were joined by two Irondale High School students who support the bill.

Anna Gregg said it "will help parents think twice before providing alcohol" to their underage children. Brandon Keller affirmed Gregg's remarks, conveying the issue's importance to people his age. "I see firsthand the effects of underage drinking. It is a problem



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Student Youth Coordinator for Mothers Against Drunk Driving Selena Reilly testifies before the House Civil Law Committee Jan. 24 in support of a bill that would prescribe standards for identification of beer kegs and require retailers to maintain records of beer keg sales.

in the high schools," he said.

The Minnesota chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving base their support for the bill on the same motivation: deterrence.

State MADD Youth Director Selena Reilly argued that tracking the movement of kegs would restrict a significant source of alcohol for underage drinkers. Kegs are an "easy way to provide lots of beer to lots of kids."

McGuire pointed out MADD's calculation that a typical 12-ounce cup of beer from a keg

costs only 30 cents. She added that "we have studies showing that the higher the cost of the beverage, the less (underage people) will drink." Under the proposed law, underage drinkers would be forced to illicitly procure alcohol by more expensive anonymous means, such as purchasing canned beer.

That economic disincentive could have far-reaching effects, say plan proponents. For example, the new law could help alleviate the state's drunken driving problem. According to figures provided by Reilly, incidents of drunken driving decreased 32 percent in Massachusetts following that state's adoption of a similar law.

Dehler said he could speak from the retailer's perspective, given his job as a grocer. He mentioned that he may eventually amend the bill to make retailers less liable for the crime of underage alcohol possession. Currently, he explained, "liability follows the purchaser." That is, liquor stores now break the law only if they illegally provide alcohol to minors.

The bill provides for no additional punitive action against liquor stores. Dehler explained that existing criminal laws provide for punishment of those liquor stores that knowingly violate laws against selling liquor to those under 21. The bill explicitly protects liquor stores from litigation as long as they "reasonably and in good faith rely upon the identification provided by the purchaser of a beer keg."


Legislators raised a number of concerns regarding the specific language of the bill.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) objected to the inclusion of social security numbers as acceptable forms of identification for those purchasing liquor.

"There are some federal restrictions on the use of social security numbers," he said. He went on to argue the numbers are easily forged, and they cannot be relied upon as a secure means of identifying liquor purchases.

Wishing to help the authors avoid unintended consequences, Skoglund also suggested that Dehler and McGuire amend a section of HF58 that would bar the possession of an unregistered keg by any "person other than a wholesaler or retailer licensed or authorized... to sell malt liquor."

There is no penalty for such possession written into the bill.

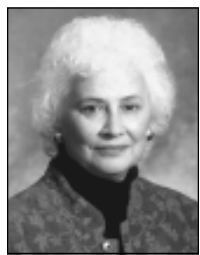
He gestured to a keg the students had hauled into the committee meeting as a prop. "I would hate for someone to get into trouble for having that one," he said. 

Third time's a charm

Evans brings concern to safe, strong schools back to Legislature for her third term representing District 52B

By MARY KAY WATSON

From her first job out of college as arts coordinator for the Hudson, Wis., school system, Geri Evans (DFL-New Brighton) has been passionately involved in education issues.



Rep. Geri Evans

passionately involved in education issues.

"I really love education," said Evans, who received her bachelor's degree in arts education from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn. "My training as an educator informs my whole life."

Her life is also informed by the principle of voluntarism, for which her father was her role model. She got her first taste of volunteering in 1970 when she formed a tenant's rights group to fight an illegal rent increase.

"It was the beginning of my belief that you should do what you can to improve things in your community and to educate people about their rights," she said.

Not surprisingly, education and voluntarism have come together often in Evans' life: as the chair for the St. Anthony-New Brighton School Board, as president of the League of Women Voters of New Brighton, and as a board member for the Minnesota Alliance for Arts in Education, among others.

"It was in the League of Women Voters where I got my education in issues," she said. "It was like a graduate course."

She achieved these notable positions through years of work behind the scenes on issues such as parks, child safety, and day care for mentally handicapped adults.

Her hard work has not gone unnoticed. Among the awards Evans has received are: the Minnesota Human Rights Award, the Advocate for Heart Award from the American Heart Association, the Channel 11 Volunteer Recognition Award for Community Service, the state

Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation Service Reward, and the state Board of Education Leadership in Vocational Equity Award.

Now in her third non-consecutive term as a legislator from District 52B (she also won a seat in 1992 and 1996), Evans, the mother of two grown sons and a 37-year resident of New Brighton, plans to continue her support of the issues she has championed.

"I hope we're beyond the rhetoric of 'We just can't keep pouring money down the rat hole of education,'" Evans said. "Education is an investment."

She is especially concerned about healthy environments in schools. "I really care about safe schools," she said.

Legislators should revisit the laws they've passed to see what has resulted from them, she said. "If you care about something, you ought to be sure it's still workable."

This session Evans plans to return to the issue of indoor air quality she advocated in her second term, when children and teachers in an elementary school in her district were getting very sick from what was found to be mold in the ventilating system.

With a rueful smile, she acknowledged that she'd also like to revisit another issue — this one from her first term. It's the one that made her famous, gender equity in restrooms, called the "potty parity" bill by her detractors. Men may have scoffed, but her successful effort to require public buildings of certain capacities to have equivalent restroom facilities for women and men made some women cheer.

In addition to education and air quality issues, Evans said she plans to focus on health care costs — especially prescription drugs —

and property taxes, which she hears about frequently from her constituents.

She said she gets calls from people who say, "What are we going to do? We're being taxed out of our home."

The importance of lowering property taxes is one area where she agrees with the governor. On others she's not as enthusiastic.

"I have deep concerns about education being 100 percent state funded," she said.

Evans said she would prefer to see a balanced approach used in dealing with the budget surplus — one that would include some kind of rebate but that would also go toward meeting the needs she sees in education, health care, and transportation.

Regarding a rebate, Evans said, "I don't hear much 'Give me back all my money' from my constituents. I hear a lot of 'Couldn't we pool this money and accomplish something big?'"

Evans said her committee assignments — Capital Investment, Government Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy, and State Govern-

ment Finance — were not the ones she had hoped for, but she is enthusiastic about them.

Evans said she moved from volun-

teering to politics when she "realized there's a larger picture here." She has fond memories of the people she worked with as a volunteer and shows an undiminished enthusiasm for making a difference as a lawmaker.

"I really love education. My training as an educator informs my whole life."

—Rep. Geri Evans

DISTRICT 52B

1998 population (estimate): 33,707

Largest city: New Brighton

County: Ramsey

Location: northern St. Paul suburbs

Top concern: "Indoor air quality is one of my top priorities, particularly when it comes to schools. I am very concerned about safe facilities."

—Rep. Geri Evans

'Eye'ing the environment

Campaign to help clean up the Pig's Eye dump site prompted successful run for the House

By DAVID MAEDA

Looking into the future, Rep. Sheldon Johnson (DFL-St. Paul) envisions a quiet and serene park on the old St. Paul Pig's Eye dump site, complete with walking trails and educational materials on how flood plains operate and what happens when a site becomes contaminated.



Rep. Sheldon Johnson

That anyone is even in a position to envision the potential rejuvenation of one of the state's most contaminated areas is due in part to Johnson's involvement in seeing that cleanup began on the dump.

And his successful lobbying efforts during the 2000 session helped prompt his successful run for the Legislature and taught him a valuable lesson in the process.

"Maintaining a positive attitude is important in how effective you are," Johnson said.

The 300 acre Pig's Eye site is located approximately three miles southeast of downtown St. Paul. From 1956 to 1972 it served as an unofficial dumping ground for the city's garbage, junk, and other pollution. For the last 28 years tall grass has grown, covering all the leftover waste.

Johnson became involved in cleanup efforts in the early 1990s, volunteering to serve as a member of the Pig's Eye Park Task Force. After finding out the site had served as a dump, he went to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and began to examine files on the polluted area.

The files showed that the site was contaminated with heavy metals, PCBs, and other toxic materials.

"It was leaching into Battle Creek and into Pig's Eye Lake," Johnson said.

He and his neighbors were concerned that because the homes in the area have their own

wells, there was potential for the residents' drinking water to become contaminated.

"The MPCA needed some impetus to tackle this project," Johnson said. "With all the other projects the case had to be made (for the Pig's Eye site)."

He said that around 20 major environmental organizations became involved in "prodding" the MPCA to put the project near the top of the list of contaminated sites that needed cleaning up. For the past few years, Johnson worked with Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) on legislation that would give priority to the Pig's Eye site.

Last session a law was passed allowing responsible parties at Superfund sites to apply for 15 percent to 20 percent of entire cleanup

the Harding High School PTSA, Johnson brings to the Legislature 14 years of experience working in the area of corrections. He currently supervises the work release program at the Ramsey County Workhouse.

Johnson said his experience working with troubled juveniles should help him add perspective as a member of the House Crime Prevention Committee.

"I've found I'm good at working with people and effective in helping people make a better future," he said.

As a freshman member Johnson knows he will spend a lot of time listening and learning. He said his community activism has taught him the necessity of working collaboratively and collectively with others in order to get things done.

Indeed it was a collective family effort that helped him win his election. His wife and two teenage daughters played an integral role in his campaign.

"They were excited and they helped out quite a bit — from door knocking to phone

"I've found I'm good at working with people and effective in helping people make a better future,"

—Rep. Sheldon Johnson

costs resulting from contamination caused by individuals or businesses unable to pay for cleanup, or responsible parties that cannot be located. Before the law was changed, funding came as a reimbursement after the entire project was completed.

One of the first sites expected to benefit from the change is the Pig's Eye Dump.

For Johnson, the experience was very gratifying and convinced him he should run for the House seat vacated by former Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul).

A lifetime Minnesotan, Johnson was born on a small dairy farm in Braham. He has a bachelor's degree in social work from Bethel College and a master's degree in psychology from the University of St. Thomas.

Besides his involvement with several community organizations, ranging from the St. Paul District One Community Council to

call work to cleaning the house — they did whatever needed to be done," he said.

DISTRICT 67B

1998 population (estimate): 32,120

Largest city: St. Paul

County: Ramsey

Location: southeastern St. Paul

Top concern: "To take a balanced approach: that in education funding our state dollars are satisfactory; that the health care needs in the community are met and particularly that all kids are insured; that our environmental policy is geared toward sustainability; and that our tax policy is fair to working families."

—Rep. Sheldon Johnson

Call her 'Maxine'

Former teacher continues her education as a new representative from Greater Minnesota in St. Paul

By DAVID MAEDA

Behind Rep. Maxine Penas' (R-Badger) office desk in the State Office Building, rests a picture of her 18-month-old grandchild sitting atop a big lustrous Victory motorcycle posed to rev it up and take off.



Rep. Maxine Penas

With the juxtaposition between family and adventure, and its prominent display spot in her office, the snapshot gives visitors a sense of the new lawmaker's priorities and a glimpse of her down-to-earth sense of humor.

Judging her by her mild-mannered grandmotherly appearance, you'd probably never guess that one of Penas' favorite hobbies is riding a motorcycle.

Penas and her husband Albert, an engineer at Polaris Industries, began riding the company's distinctive motorcycles a couple years back. But despite her enjoyment of the hobby, she said that last fall she had to learn to use the bike sparingly during her campaign.

"I got some pretty weird looks when I'd pull up at my age in a leather jacket," she said.

Now retired, Penas said her 31 years of teaching remain the single most inspirational part of her life.

"My students, to my dying day, will be the highlight of my life," Penas said. "Their enthusiasm. Their energy. They keep you on your toes. I enjoyed them immensely."

Indeed her former students provided much assistance with her campaign, ultimately not only with their votes but also through their encouragement. Penas said after she decided to run for the House she contacted more than 450 of her former students, many of whom supported her and helped with her campaign.

"My message to them was if they had me as a teacher in school and felt I was honest, treated them fairly and they learned something, then vote for me," she said.

Running against a popular incumbent, Rep.

Jim Tunheim (DFL-Kennedy) who served nine terms in the House, Penas said when she started off the campaign trail she didn't even realize that few gave her much of a chance to win.

But she said it was her hard work and diligence in covering at least every town once and just about every township in one of the state's largest geographic legislative districts that paid off in the end. The vast district covers much of northwestern Minnesota and Penas racked up more than 35,000 miles on her vehicle between June and October and 3,000 to 4,000 more on her husband's truck. But she said the

effort it took was one of the most rewarding lessons she learned.

"Win or lose, I won. I never would have expended the energy to meet people if I hadn't run," she said.

Penas was no stranger to the lawmaking process when House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) asked her to run last spring.

A member of several education groups, including serving seven years on the Minnesota Rural Education Board, including one as its president, Penas had come to the Capitol several times to work on issues with her legislators. Still she wasn't quite prepared for what would face her on the other side of the table.

"I don't think a person realizes the work involved in the whole legislative process until you've gotten into it," she said. "I understand it's designed to move slowly for a good reason, but it's like pumping water out of a well and not getting any water until May."

A few years ago, Penas said she and her husband decided to join the Republican Party because they felt it fit their long-held beliefs better than the DFL party did. She mentioned specifically that she is strongly supportive of

pro-life and land rights issues, and as an avid hunter she is a strong advocate for gun rights.

The switch to the other party didn't exactly please her parents, both very active Democrats, but she was reminded of a lesson her father told her when she was growing up.

While she was in college and home for the holidays, she took a job at the town's liquor store because it paid well for part-time seasonal work. She asked her father for approval and she remembers him telling her, "It's not where you work, it's how you act."

That is a lesson she'll keep in mind as a member of the Legislature where the key to being effective is to "be honest, work hard, research the issues, vote with a good conscience, and keep constituents informed."

Thus far into the session she has been able to fly home for the weekends where she, among other things, can enjoy her first time being a

"My students, to my dying day, will be the highlight of my life. Their enthusiasm. Their energy. They keep you on your toes. I enjoyed them immensely."

—Rep. Maxine Penas

grandmother. She is glad the steady stream of emails and phone calls have kept her quite busy, even though she sometimes still has to reassure her constituents that she is the same person in St. Paul that she was back home.

"I still am not used to people calling me 'representative.' I'm no different than I was in my district. So calling me Maxine is wonderful," she said.

DISTRICT 1A

1998 population (estimate): 31,766

Largest city: Roseau

Counties: Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, and Roseau

Location: northwestern Minnesota

Top concern: "Equity in education funding ensuring that the poor districts are equal to the rich districts. Decreasing taxes, reducing property taxes. It's an agricultural district and reducing property taxes would give some relief to farmers already distressed by bad prices on grain."

—Rep. Maxine Penas

Minnesota House of Representatives

2001-02 Committee Assignments by member

Abeler, Jim (R)-Anoka 49A Health & Human Services Policy Health & Human Services Finance K-12 Education Finance	Finance, Environment & Natural Resources Finance, Family & Early Childhood Education Finance, Health & Human Services Finance, Higher Education Finance, Jobs & Economic Development Finance, K-12 Education Finance, State Government Finance, Transportation Finance	Daggett, Roxann (R)-Frazee 11A Ethics, chair Taxes, vice chair Sales Tax Division Capital Investment
Abrams, Ron (R)-Minnetonka 45A Taxes, chair Property Tax Division Sales and Income Tax Division Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Redistricting Rules & Legislative Administration Ways & Means	Boudreau, Lynda (R)-Faribault 25B Health & Human Services Policy, vice chair Civil Law Health & Human Services Finance Redistricting	Davidson, Gregory M. (R)-Preston 31B Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy, chair Economic Development & Tourism Division Ethics Jobs & Economic Development Finance Regulated Industries
Anderson, Bruce (R)-Buffalo Township 19B State Government Finance, vice chair Education Policy Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy	Bradley, Fran (R)-Rochester 30A Health & Human Services Policy, chair Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Health & Human Services Finance	Davnie, Jim (DFL)-Minneapolis 62A Education Policy K-12 Education Finance Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Anderson, Irv (DFL)-International Falls 3A Taxes, DFL lead Sales Tax Division Redistricting Ways & Means	Buesgens, Mark (R)-Jordan 35B Education Policy K-12 Education Finance Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs	Dawkins, Andy (DFL)-St. Paul 65A Sales Tax Division, DFL lead Taxes Ways & Means
Bakk, Thomas (Tom) (DFL)-Cook 6A Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Environment & Natural Resources Finance Environment & Natural Resources Policy	Carlson, Lyndon R. (DFL)-Crystal 46B Higher Education Finance, DFL lead Education Policy Ways & Means	Dehler, Steve (R)-St. Joseph 14A Higher Education Finance, vice chair Education Policy Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy Ways & Means
Bernardy, Connie (DFL)-Fridley 48B Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Taxes Sales Tax Division	Cassell, George (R)-Alexandria 10B Agriculture Policy Education Policy Environment & Natural Resources Policy Higher Education Finance	Dempsey, Jerry (R)-Red Wing 29A Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs, chair Capital Investment Taxes Property Tax Division
Biernat, Len (DFL)-Minneapolis 59A Education Policy Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy K-12 Education Finance	Clark, James T. (R)-New Ulm 23A Transportation Policy, vice chair Capital Investment Civil Law Transportation Finance	Dibble, Scott (DFL)-Minneapolis 60B Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Transportation Policy Ways & Means
Bishop, Dave (R)-Rochester 30B Ways & Means, chair Capital Investment Crime Prevention Judiciary Finance Ex-officio: Agriculture & Rural Development	Clark, Karen (DFL)-Minneapolis 61A Jobs & Economic Development Finance, DFL lead Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Ways & Means	Dorman, Dan (R)-Albert Lea 27A Sales Tax Division, vice chair Agriculture Policy Agriculture & Rural Development Finance Taxes

Dorn, John (DFL)-Mankato 24A Education Policy, DFL lead K-12 Education Finance Rules & Legislative Administration	Gleason, Mark S. (DFL)-Richfield 63B Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy Regulated Industries Taxes Property Tax Division	Hilstrom, Debra (DFL)-Brooklyn Center 47B Crime Prevention Judiciary Finance Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Eastlund, Rob (R)-Isanti 18A Education Policy Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy State Government Finance	Goodno, Kevin (R)-Moorhead 9A Health & Human Services Finance, chair Health & Human Services Policy	Hilty, Bill (DFL)-Finlayson 8B State Government Finance, DFL lead Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy Regulated Industries
Entenza, Matt (DFL)-St. Paul 64A Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Education Policy K-12 Education Finance	Goodwin, Barbara (DFL)-Columbia Heights 52A Education Policy K-12 Education Finance	Holberg, Mary Liz (R)-Lakeville 37B Civil Law, vice chair Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Transportation Finance Transportation Policy
Erhardt, Ron (R)-Edina 42A Property Tax Division, chair Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Taxes Ways & Means	Gray, Gregory (DFL)-Minneapolis 58B Education Policy Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Redistricting	Holsten, Mark William (R)-Stillwater .. 56A Environment & Natural Resources Finance, chair Capital Investment Environment & Natural Resources Policy Regulated Industries
Erickson, Sondra (R)-Princeton 17A Education Policy Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy K-12 Education Finance State Government Finance	Greiling, Mindy (DFL)-Roseville 54B K-12 Education Finance, DFL lead Capital Investment Education Policy	Howes, Larry (R)-Walker 4B Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs, vice chair Environment & Natural Resources Finance Environment & Natural Resources Policy Transportation Policy
Evans, Geri (DFL)-New Brighton 52B Capital Investment Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy State Government Finance	Gunther, Bob (R)-Fairmont 26A Jobs & Economic Development Finance, vice chair Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Crime Prevention Regulated Industries	Huntley, Thomas (DFL)-Duluth 6B Health & Human Services Finance, DFL lead Health & Human Services Policy Rules & Legislative Administration
Finseth, Tim (R)-Angus 1B Agriculture Policy, chair Agriculture & Rural Development Finance Environment & Natural Resources Finance Environment & Natural Resources Policy	Haas, Bill (R)-Champlin 48A Ways & Means, vice chair Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Environment & Natural Resources Policy Health & Human Services Policy	Jacobson, Carl (R)-Vadnais Heights 53B Health & Human Services Policy Taxes Sales Tax Division
Folliard, Betty (DFL)-Hopkins 44A Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Health & Human Services Finance Health & Human Services Policy	Hackbarth, Tom (R)-Cedar 50A Environment & Natural Resources Finance, vice chair Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Economic Development & Tourism Division Environment & Natural Resources Policy	Jaros, Mike (DFL)-Duluth 7B Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy, DFL lead Capital Investment State Government Finance Ways & Means
Fuller, Doug (R)-Bemidji 4A Capital Investment, vice chair Crime Prevention Judiciary Finance Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs	Harder, Elaine (R)-Jackson 22B Sales Tax Division, chair Agriculture Policy Agriculture & Rural Development Finance Taxes	Jennings, Loren Geo (DFL)-Harris 18B Regulated Industries, DFL lead Environment & Natural Resources Finance Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Gerlach, Chris (R)-Apple Valley 36A Regulated Industries, vice chair Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Jobs & Economic Development Finance Rules & Legislative Administration	Hausman, Alice (DFL)-St. Paul 66B Transportation Policy, DFL lead Transportation Finance Environment & Natural Resources Policy	Johnson, Jeff (R)-Plymouth 34B Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Education Policy K-12 Education Finance

Johnson, Ruth (DFL)-St. Peter 24B Agriculture Policy Agriculture & Rural Development Finance Environment & Natural Resources Policy	Kubly, Gary W. (DFL)-Granite Falls 15B Agriculture Policy Agriculture & Rural Development Finance Ethics Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy Health & Human Services Policy	Mahoney, Tim (DFL)-St. Paul 67A Civil Law Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Economic Development & Tourism Division Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Johnson, Sheldon (DFL)-St. Paul 67B Crime Prevention Judiciary Finance Regulated Industries	Kuisle, William (R)-Rochester 31A Property Tax Division, vice chair Taxes Transportation Finance Transportation Policy	Mares, Harry (R)-White Bear Lake 55A Education Policy, chair Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy K-12 Education Finance Rules & Legislative Administration State Government Finance
Juhnke, Al (DFL)-Willmar 15A Agriculture Policy Agriculture & Rural Development Finance Transportation Finance Transportation Policy	Larson, Dan (DFL)-Bloomington 40A Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Economic Development & Tourism Division Transportation Finance Transportation Policy	Mariani, Carlos (DFL)-St. Paul 65B Capital Investment Education Policy Redistricting
Kahn, Phyllis (DFL)-Minneapolis 59B Capital Investment Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy Regulated Industries State Government Finance	Leighton, Rob (DFL)-Austin 27B Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Taxes Sales Tax Division	Marko, Sharon (DFL)-Cottage Grove .. 57B Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs, DFL lead Transportation Finance Transportation Policy
Kalis, Henry J. (DFL)-Wells 26B Capital Investment, DFL lead Regulated Industries Transportation Finance Transportation Policy Ways & Means	Lenczewski, Ann (DFL)-Bloomington ... 40B Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Taxes Property Tax Division	Marquart, Paul (DFL)-Dilworth 9B Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Education Policy Higher Education Finance
Kelliher, Margaret Anderson (DFL) Minneapolis 60A Environment & Natural Resources Finance Environment & Natural Resources Policy Ways & Means	Leppik, Peggy (R)-Golden Valley 45B Higher Education Finance, chair Capital Investment Education Policy Family & Early Childhood Education Finance	McElroy, Dan (R)-Burnsville 36B Jobs & Economic Development Finance, chair Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Taxes Property Tax Division Ways & Means
Kielkucki, Tony (R)-Lester Prairie 20B K-12 Education Finance, vice chair Education Policy Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy State Government Finance	Lieder, Bernie L. (DFL)-Crookston 2A Transportation Finance, DFL lead Regulated Industries Transportation Policy	McGuire, Mary Jo (DFL)-Falcon Heights ... 54A Family & Early Childhood Education Finance, DFL lead Crime Prevention Education Policy Rules & Legislative Administration
Knoblach, Jim (R)-St. Cloud 16B Capital Investment, chair Redistricting Rules & Legislative Administration Taxes Property Tax Division	Lindner, Arlon (R)-Corcoran 33A Economic Development & Tourism Division, chair Civil Law Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Jobs & Economic Development Finance	Milbert, Bob (DFL)-South St. Paul 39B Ethics, co-chair Property Tax Division, DFL lead Rules & Legislative Administration Taxes
Koskinen, Luanne (DFL)-Coon Rapids ... 49B Health & Human Services Policy, DFL lead Health & Human Services Finance Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs	Lipman, Eric (R)-Lake Elmo 56B Judiciary Finance, vice chair Capital Investment Civil Law Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy	Molnau, Carol L. (R)-Chaska 35A Transportation Finance, chair Capital Investment Rules & Legislative Administration Transportation Policy Ways & Means
Krinkie, Philip (R)-Shoreview 53A State Government Finance, chair Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Taxes Ways & Means	Luther, Darlene (DFL)-Brooklyn Park 47A Civil Law, DFL lead Capital Investment Redistricting	

Mulder, Richard (R)-Ivanhoe 21B Health & Human Services Finance, vice chair Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Health & Human Services Policy Ways & Means	Otremba, Mary Ellen (DFL)-Long Prairie 11B Agriculture Policy Health & Human Services Finance Health & Human Services Policy Ways & Means	Rifenberg, Michelle (R)-La Crescent ... 32B Redistricting, vice chair Agriculture Policy Regulated Industries Taxes Property Tax Division
Mullery, Joe (DFL)-Minneapolis 58A Economic Development & Tourism Division, DFL lead Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Taxes Property Tax Division	Ozment, Dennis (R)-Rosemount 37A Environment & Natural Resources Policy, chair Environment & Natural Resources Finance Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Rules & Legislative Administration	Rukavina, Tom (DFL)-Virginia 5A Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Taxes Property Tax Division Ways & Means
Murphy, Mary (DFL)-Hermantown 8A Judiciary Finance, DFL lead Capital Investment Crime Prevention Ethics	Paulsen, Erik (R)-Eden Prairie 42B Redistricting, chair Regulated Industries Rules & Legislative Administration Taxes Sales Tax Division	Ruth, Connie (R)-Owatonna 28A Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Economic Development & Tourism Division Transportation Finance Transportation Policy
Ness, Robert “Bob” (R)-Dassel 20A Agriculture & Rural Development Finance, chair Agriculture Policy Education Policy K-12 Education Finance	Pawlenty, Tim (R)-Eagan 38B Rules & Legislative Administration, chair	Schumacher, Leslie J. (DFL)-Princeton 17B Agriculture Policy Education Policy K-12 Education Finance
Nornes, Bud (R)-Fergus Falls 10A Family & Early Childhood Education Finance, vice chair Environment & Natural Resources Policy Health & Human Services Policy	Paymar, Michael (DFL)-St. Paul 64B Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Crime Prevention Jobs & Economic Development Finance	Seagren, Alice (R)-Bloomington 41A K-12 Education Finance, chair Education Policy Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Ways & Means
Olson, Mark (R)-Big Lake 19A Education Policy, vice chair Crime Prevention K-12 Education Finance Rules & Legislative Administration	Pelowski Jr., Gene (DFL)-Winona 32A Redistricting, DFL lead Education Policy Higher Education Finance Regulated Industries	Seifert, Marty (R)-Marshall 21A Rules & Legislative Administration, vice chair Education Policy Higher Education Finance Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy Redistricting
Opatz, Joe (DFL)-St. Cloud 16A Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Education Policy Higher Education Finance	Penas, Maxine (R)-Badger 1A Crime Prevention, vice chair Agriculture Policy Education Policy K-12 Education Finance	Sertich, Anthony “Tony” (DFL)-Chisholm 5B Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development Policy Economic Development & Tourism Division Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Osskopp, Mike (R)-Lake City 29B Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy, vice chair Agriculture & Rural Development Finance Agriculture Policy	Peterson, Doug (DFL)-Madison 13B Agriculture & Rural Development Finance, DFL lead Agriculture Policy Environment & Natural Resources Policy Rules & Legislative Administration	Skoe, Rod (DFL)-Clearbrook 2B Agriculture Policy Education Policy Environment & Natural Resources Policy K-12 Education Finance
Osthoff, Tom (DFL)-St. Paul 66A Environment & Natural Resources Finance, DFL lead Capital Investment Environment & Natural Resources Policy Ways & Means	Pugh, Thomas W. (DFL)-South St. Paul 39A Rules & Legislative Administration, DFL lead	Skoglund, Wes (DFL)-Minneapolis 62B Crime Prevention, DFL lead Civil Law Judiciary Finance
	Rhodes, Jim (R)-St. Louis Park 44B Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy, chair Capital Investment State Government Finance Ethics (alternate)	Slawik, Nora (DFL)-Maplewood 57A Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Health & Human Services Policy

Smith, Steve (R)-Mound 34A
 Civil Law, chair
 Crime Prevention
 Judiciary Finance

Solberg, Loren A. (DFL)-Bovey 3B
 Ways & Means, DFL lead
 Capital Investment
 Governmental Operations &
 Veterans Affairs Policy
 Rules & Legislative Administration

Stanek, Rich (R)-Maple Grove 33B
 Judiciary Finance, chair
 Civil Law
 Crime Prevention
 Ways & Means

Stang, Doug (R)-Cold Spring 14B
 Commerce, Jobs, &
 Economic Development Policy, vice chair
 Higher Education Finance
 Regulated Industries
 Ways & Means

Sviggum, Steve (R)-Kenyon 28B
 Rules & Legislative Administration
 Ways & Means

Swapinski, Dale (DFL)-Duluth 7A
 Civil Law
 Crime Prevention
 Family & Early Childhood Education Finance

Swenson, Howard (R)-Nicollet 23B
 Agriculture & Rural
 Development Finance, vice chair
 Agriculture Policy
 Environment & Natural Resources Finance
 Environment & Natural Resources Policy
 Ways & Means

Sykora, Barb (R)-Excelsior 43B
 Family & Early Childhood
 Education Finance, chair
 Commerce, Jobs, &
 Economic Development Policy
 Crime Prevention
 Education Policy
 Ways & Means

Thompson, Mark (DFL)-New Hope 46A
 Governmental Operations &
 Veterans Affairs Policy
 State Government Finance

Tingelstad, Kathy (R)-Andover 50B
 Environment & Natural
 Resources Policy, vice chair
 Capital Investment
 Environment & Natural Resources Finance
 Redistricting

Tuma, John (R)-Northfield 25A
 Crime Prevention, chair
 Higher Education Finance
 Judiciary Finance
 Rules & Legislative Administration

Vandevier, Ray (R)-Forest Lake 51B
 Transportation Finance, vice chair
 Environment & Natural Resources Policy
 Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
 Transportation Policy

Wagenius, Jean (DFL)-Minneapolis 63A
 Environment & Natural
 Resources Policy, DFL lead
 Environment & Natural Resources Finance
 Rules & Legislative Administration

Walker, Neva (DFL)-Minneapolis 61B
 Health & Human Services Policy
 Taxes
 Sales Tax Division

Walz, Dale (R)-Brainerd 12A
 Economic Development &
 Tourism Division, vice chair
 Commerce, Jobs, & Economic Development
 Policy
 Crime Prevention
 Jobs & Economic Development Finance

Wasiluk, Scott (DFL)-Maplewood 55B
 Environment & Natural Resources Finance
 Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Wenzel, Stephen G. (DFL)-Little Falls 12B
 Agriculture Policy, DFL lead
 Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
 Crime Prevention
 Ways & Means

Westerberg, Andrew (R)-Blaine 51A
 Commerce, Jobs, &
 Economic Development Policy
 Economic Development & Tourism Division
 Transportation Finance
 Transportation Policy

Westrom, Torrey (R)-Elbow Lake 13A
 Agriculture Policy, vice chair
 Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
 Regulated Industries
 Transportation Policy

Wilkin, Tim (R)-Eagan 38A
 Health & Human Services Finance
 Health & Human Services Policy
 Taxes
 Sales Tax Division
 Ways & Means

Winter, Ted (DFL)-Fulda 22A
 Rules & Legislative Administration
 Taxes
 Property Tax Division
 Transportation Policy

Wolf, Ken (R)-Burnsville 41B
 Regulated Industries, chair
 Education Policy
 K-12 Education Finance

Workman, Tom (R)-Chanhassen 43A
 Transportation Policy, chair
 Environment & Natural Resources Finance
 Environment & Natural Resources Policy
 Regulated Industries
 Transportation Finance

Minnesota State Agencies

(Area code 651)

Administration	296-6013
Agriculture	297-2200
Children, Families and Learning	582-8200
Commerce	296-4026
Corrections	642-0200
Economic Security	296-3644
Employee Relations	297-1184
Job Information	296-2616
Finance	296-5900
Health	215-5803
Human Rights	296-5663
Toll Free	1-800-657-3704
Human Services	296-6117
Labor and Industry	296-6107
Military Affairs	282-4662
Natural Resources	296-6157
Pollution Control Agency	296-6300
Public Safety	296-6642
Driver and Vehicle Services ...	296-6911
Fire Marshal	215-0500
Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division	296-6979
State Patrol	297-3935
Public Service	296-5120
Revenue	
Taxpayer Assistance	296-3781
Toll Free	1-800-652-9094
Trade and	
Economic Development	297-1291
Office of Tourism	296-5029
Transportation	296-3000
Veterans Affairs	296-2562
State Information	296-6013

Monday, January 22

HF252—Seifert (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Repeal of obsolete rules.

HF253—Seifert (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Health and human services obsolete rules repealed.

HF254—Seifert (R)
Transportation Policy
Transportation obsolete rules repealed.

HF255—Seifert (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Environment; obsolete rules repealed.

HF256—Howes (R)
Transportation Policy
Gross weight seasonal increase for transporting carrots authorized.

HF257—Marko (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Previous transportation appropriations modified to require grants to local governments for right-of-way acquisition and construction costs.

HF258—Swapinski (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Additional unemployment insurance benefits provided specified employees on layoff from M. E. International.

HF259—Swapinski (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Duluth aerial lift bridge repair and restoration authorized, and money appropriated.

HF260—Stanek (R)
Crime Prevention
Criminal justice information system improvements provided and money appropriated.

HF261—Paymar (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Political party units receiving public subsidies resulting from income tax and property tax form checkoff required to create oversight committees, and civil penalties imposed.

HF262—Boudreau (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Abortion informed consent required and civil remedies provided.

HF263—Walz (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Camp Knutson renovation and construction grant provided and money appropriated.

HF264—Wolf (R)
Regulated Industries
Legislative Energy Task Force; correcting names of committees represented by members.

HF265—Wolf (R)
Regulated Industries
Legislative Energy Task Force sunset delayed and composition modified.

HF266—Swapinski (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Lake Superior Center authority enabling law modified, contract and agreements made conditional, and status as a political subdivision clarified.

HF267—Wagenius (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Well water; model notice created regarding testing of wells, and dissemination required including posting on health department web site.

HF268—Mulder (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Murray County; Current Lake level maintenance required.

HF269—Anderson, B. (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Wright County aggregate materials production tax authorized.

HF270—Murphy (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax applied to prefabricated homes.

HF271—Anderson, B. (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Wright County authorized to impose production tax on aggregate materials removed from the county.

HF272—Nornes (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Emergency assistance and transitional housing programs and grants appropriation provided.

HF273—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Juveniles; domestic abuse and harassment misdemeanors excluded from juvenile petty offense definition.

HF274—Dorman (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Mercury thermometer sales prohibited.

HF275—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Nursing facility closure plans savings procedure modified.

HF276—Paulsen (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Candidates prohibited from accepting specified contributions.

HF277—Clark, J. (R)
Transportation Finance
Highway User Tax Distribution Fund appropriations provided.

HF278—Nornes (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Dentists; medical assistance reimbursement rate increased for specified dentists, dental hygienists permitted to perform services under supervision, grant program for community clinics established, and money appropriated.

HF279—Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
MinnesotaCare premium and other provider taxes repealed, pass-through of savings required, tobacco settlement disposition provided, health care access fund contingent repeal provided, and civil penalties imposed.

HF280—Anderson, B. (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Elk River additional on-sale liquor licenses authorized.

HF281—Greiling (DFL)
Civil Law
Civil commitment mentally ill definition and emergency hold standard modified, early intervention hospital stay extended, and specified hearings on medications combined with civil commitment proceeding.

HF282—Knoblach (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Truancy prevention pilot program provided and money appropriated.

HF283—Knoblach (R)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate provided and money appropriated.

HF284—Goodno (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Moorhead additional liquor licenses authorized.

HF285—Ness (R)
Agriculture Policy
Agricultural liens regulated; revising and consolidating crop liens and agricultural liens on livestock.

HF286—Anderson, I. (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Education finance; sparsity correction revenue modified.

HF287—Mares (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Intermediate school districts authorized to sell and issue bonds under specific conditions.

HF288—Jaros (DFL)
Education Policy
School board membership modified.

HF289—Daggett (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Four-year terms provided for representatives and senators and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF290—Milbert (DFL)
Taxes
Home heating fuels sales and use tax exemption expanded.

HF291—Seifert (R)
Higher Education Finance
Higher education grant stipends calculation modified relating to Pell grants.

HF292—Opatz (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Board of Teaching required to report annually on performance of teacher candidates on reading, writing and math skills exam and on common core assessments.

HF293—Pawlenty (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Legislative sessions limited to odd-numbered years, and special sessions authorized by written agreement of speaker of the house and majority leader of the senate, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF294—Walz (R)
Taxes
Income tax subtraction allowed for national guard and active duty military pay.

HF295—Cassell (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Teachers retirement association service credit authorized for specified former St. Paul police officer.

HF296—Peterson (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Automobile insurance retroactive cancellation not to affect third-party claimants under specified conditions.

HF297—Peterson (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 2853, Lac qui Parle Valley, authorized to include a school nurse and medical personnel in health and safety program costs.

HF298—Peterson (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 2853, Lac qui Parle Valley, severance levy authorized.

HF299—Peterson (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 2853, Lac qui Parle Valley, fund transfer authorized.

HF300—Peterson (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Snowplows defined as special mobile equipment exempted from registration taxes and title requirements.

HF301—Marquart (DFL)
Taxes
Sales to political subdivisions tax exemption provided.

HF302—Davnie (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Excess fuel cost adjustment and energy assistance aid to school districts authorized, and money appropriated.

HF303—Cassell (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Purchase of specified service credit authorized for prior police or salaried firefighter service.

HF304—Juhnke (DFL)
Transportation Finance
State patrol vehicles equipped with video cameras, and money appropriated.

HF305—Johnson, R. (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 391, Cleveland, fund transfer authorized.

HF306—Folliard (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
General education basic formula allowance increased.

HF307—Evans (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
General education basic formula allowance increased.

HF308—Bernardy (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
General education basic formula allowance increased.

HF309—Walker (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
General education basic formula allowance increased.

HF310—Johnson, R. (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Voluntary full-day kindergarten funding established and money appropriated.

HF311—Hilstrom (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Voluntary full-day kindergarten funding established and money appropriated.

HF312—Bernardy (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Voluntary full-day kindergarten funding established and money appropriated.

HF313—Goodwin (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Voluntary full-day kindergarten funding established and money appropriated.

HF314—Kubly (DFL)
Taxes
Sales to political subdivisions tax exemption provided.

HF315—Kubly (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax general rate reduced.

HF316—Peterson (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Purchase of prior service credit from the public employees retirement association authorized for a specified individual.

HF317—Evans (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Campaign contributions and spending limits imposed on political parties participating in the political contribution refund program, multicandidate expenditures by parties limited, and maximum refund amount increased.

Thursday, January 25

HF318—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Corporate franchise tax; single sales apportionment adopted.

HF319—Bishop (R)
Crime Prevention
Trial court judgeships increased in specified judicial districts and money appropriated.

HF320—Davids (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Licensed property-casualty insurance agents authorized to assist in procurement of surplus lines insurance without a license.

HF321—Fuller (R)
Taxes
Unmarked police cars exempted from motor vehicle sales tax.

HF322—Rhodes (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota utilization review act and practice of medicine definition modified.

HF323—Haas (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Motor vehicle fuel franchises change in ownership provisions expiration date removed.

HF324—Kuisle (R)
Taxes
Agricultural property net tax capacity, and homestead and agricultural credit aid payments computation modified; and educational agricultural credit application increased and extended.

HF325—Daggett (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Hospital surcharge repealed for specified medical assistance costs, and money appropriated.

HF326—Ozment (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Local and state government agency denial of requests for action clarified.

HF327—Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Statutory vote recount margins modified, presidential and congressional election recounts provided, ballot requirements increased, and instant runoff provided for state and federal offices.

HF328—Dorman (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School district revenue subject to equalization increased.

HF329—Hackbarth (R)
Crime Prevention
Death penalty imposed for first degree murder under aggravating circumstances, criteria and procedures established, automatic appellate review and administrative framework provided, and money appropriated.

HF330—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Nonprofit agency grant provided to agency currently serving deaf and hard-of-hearing adults with mental illness.

HF331—Abeler (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Historic preservation grant program created and money appropriated.

HF332—Nornes (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Nursing facility case mix transition plan established and fine imposed for noncompliance.

HF333—Biernat (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Secretary of state prohibited from serving on campaign committees or participating in recounts for an office for which the secretary is a candidate.

HF334—Tuma (R)
Crime Prevention
Negligent homicide of a vulnerable adult defined as third degree murder, penalties for failure to report maltreatment increased, and scope of kidnapping expanded to include certain acts involving vulnerable adults.

HF335—Erhardt (R)
Taxes
Corporate franchise tax single sales apportionment adopted.

HF336—Erhardt (R)
Taxes
Capital equipment sales tax collection and refund repealed.

HF337—Erhardt (R)
Taxes
Capital gains income tax exclusion authorized.

HF338—Erhardt (R)
Taxes
June accelerated payment of sales taxes eliminated.

HF339—Dempsey (R)
Taxes
Individual income tax deduction provided for owning an automobile.

HF340—Tuma (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 392, Le Center, technology integration grant authorized, and money appropriated.

HF341—Dehler (R)
Crime Prevention
Liability and criminal penalties imposed for unlicensed driver involved in a traffic accident resulting in bodily harm or death.

HF342—Dehler (R)
Higher Education Finance
Higher education grants terms and conditions modified.

HF343—Dehler (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Public trails construction, administration, and use requirements established.

HF344—Greiling (DFL)
Civil Law
Treatment facilities liability limited for administering medication to certain mentally ill persons.

HF345—Carlson (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Robbinsdale project 4 tax increment financing district extended.

HF346—Juhnke (DFL)
Education Policy
One statewide bargaining unit created for all K-12 teachers employed by school districts, and statewide bargaining revenue provided.

HF347—Swenson (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Manure processing and odor control project loans authorized and money appropriated.

HF348—Gunter (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Youth intervention program grants provided and money appropriated.

HF349—Rifenberg (R)
State Government Finance
Independent School District No. 492, Austin, previously canceled grant to construct a television transmitter reauthorized.

HF350—Seifert (R)
Higher Education Finance
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities appropriations distribution provided.

HF351—Stanek (R)
Crime Prevention
DWI; felony level driving while impaired offense established.

HF352—Kuisle (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Annexed property not serviced for two years reversion to township provided.

HF353—Kubly (DFL)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance

Farm advocates program and agriculture information centers financing provided and money appropriated.

HF354—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention

Background checks required before transferring a pistol or semiautomatic military-style assault weapon at a gun show.

HF355—Koskinen (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy

MinnesotaCare employer-subsidized insurance definition modified, four-month uninsured requirement exemptions provided, and prohibition on coverage in same month repealed.

HF356—Workman (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Teachers retirement association service credit purchase authorized for a specified teacher in Independent School District No. 270, Hopkins.

HF357—Boudreau (R)
Health & Human Services Policy

Alcohol and drug counselor licensing requirements modified.

HF358—Wilkin (R)
Taxes

Property tax class rate on apartments reduced and increased homestead and agricultural credit aid provided.

HF359—Murphy (DFL)
Taxes

Proctor community center construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF360—Winter (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Workers' compensation; injured employees not required to submit to examination by employer's physician, and benefits continued except as determined by a neutral health care professional.

HF361—Rukavina (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Market assistance plan activation and joint underwriting association regulated.

HF362—Westrom (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Diesel fuel minimum biodiesel fuel content specified.

HF363—McGuire (DFL)
Taxes

City aid base and maximum aid increased for specified metropolitan municipalities.

HF364—Sertich (DFL)
Crime Prevention

Hands-free use of mobile telephones (cell phones) required in motor vehicles.

HF365—Mares (R)
K-12 Education Finance

Intermediate School District No. 916, Northeast Metro, fund transfer authorized.

HF366—Gleason (DFL)
Transportation Policy

Special license plates authorized for retired veterans.

HF367—Murphy (DFL)
Taxes

Hermantown indoor sports and physical education complex construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF368—Stang (R)
Transportation Policy

Stearns County Highway 55 bridge designated as Old St. Anne's pass.

HF369—Bishop (R)
Civil Law

Joint and several liability apportionment regulated.

HF370—Stanek (R)
Transportation Finance

Express bus service provided between Rogers and downtown Minneapolis, and money appropriated.

HF371—Workman (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Local metropolitan government comprehensive plans required to include protection and development of aggregate resources in land use plans.

HF372—McGuire (DFL)
Crime Prevention

Crime victim notification of expungement proceedings required, and victims allowed to submit a statement to the court.

HF373—McGuire (DFL)
Civil Law

Child support work reporting non-compliance penalties modified, payors hiring independent contractors for public projects required to comply, and report required.

HF374—McGuire (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Pollution Control Agency noise survey and analysis conducted and money appropriated.

HF375—Kubly (DFL)
Civil Law

Farm tractor clock-hour meter tampering prohibited, criminal and civil penalties imposed, and remedies provided.

HF376—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy

Omnibus health and human services senior and long-term care services and appropriations bill.

HF377—Harder (R)
Taxes

Income tax credit for taxes paid to other states extended to taxes paid to Canada and Germany.

HF378—Davnie (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance

School district emergency energy assistance provided and money appropriated.

HF379—Winter (DFL)
Taxes

Diesel fuel minimum biodiesel content required, B5 or B20 diesel fuel required in specified vehicles and equipment, special fuel tax rate on biodiesel fuel reduced, and money appropriated.

HF380—Kubly (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy

MinnesotaCare provider tax and health plan premium taxes repealed, health care access fund eliminated, hospital surcharge repealed, and money appropriated.

HF381—Lenczewski (DFL)
Taxes

Metropolitan area fiscal disparities program eliminated.

HF382—Rukavina (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Seasonal firefighter force maintained, and temporary emergency firefighters eligible for unemployment insurance.

HF383—Haas (R)
Health & Human Services Policy

Health insurance premium tax and premium tax on nonprofit health plan companies repealed.

HF384—Rukavina (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Board of services for the blind created and money appropriated.

HF385—Juhnke (DFL)
Regulated Industries

Statewide extended area telephone service provided.

HF386—Juhnke (DFL)
Civil Law

Notice required prior to engaging in electronic monitoring of employees or use of such monitoring as basis for employment decisions.

HF387—Walker (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Black Minnesotans council membership increased.

HF388—Wenzel (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Disabled peace officers and firefighters health coverage continuation provided.

HF389—Dempsey (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Mississippi River Parkway Commission extended and membership modified.

HF390—Winter (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Prairieland exposition center nonprofit management corporation authorized.

HF391—Kahn (DFL)
Capital Investment

Previous Hennepin County office space appropriation redirected to People, Inc.

HF392—Finseth (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Water and soil resources board state commissioner members defined as nonvoting members.

HF393—Mahoney (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Ramsey County and St. Paul city employees allowed equal competition for vacant county jobs in combined city-county departments.

HF394—Seifert (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Repealing statutes concerning castrating animals running at large in a town.

HF395—Juhnke (DFL)
Agriculture Policy

Agricultural land definition modified for purposes of hunting trespass restrictions.

HF396—Juhnke (DFL)
Agriculture Policy

Agriculture department principal offices located outside of the metropolitan area.

HF397—Koskinen (DFL)
Taxes

Home heating fuels year-round sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF398—Seifert (R)
K-12 Education Finance

Agricultural lands exempted from the school district debt service levy.

HF399—Kuisle (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Municipal tax rate limited to township rate prior to annexation until sewer and water are provided.

To find out who represents you at the Capitol . . .
Call the House Public Information Office at (651) 296-2146

MONDAY, Jan. 29

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Tour of National Guard, Rosemount

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: Overview and tour.

8:15 a.m.

Children's Environmental Health Working Group

125 State Capitol

Chrs. Rep. Kathy Tingelstad, Sen. Jane Krentz

Agenda: ***NOTE CHANGE***

Children's environmental health issues - Report from John Helland, House Research.

Pesticide and integrated pest management issues, Department of Agriculture and University of Minnesota Extension.

Governor's "Healthy Kids Learn" initiative.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Overview of the budget books by the Department of Finance.

Budget review of the Department of Labor and Industry.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: Commissioner Charlie Weaver, Department of Public Safety.

State Patrol budget presentation, Chief Anne Beers.

8:30 a.m.

Regent Candidate Advisory Council

400S State Office Building

Chr. Nedra Wicks

Agenda: Business meeting 8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. Interviews for positions on the University of Minnesota Board of Regents 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (lunch break 12 noon to 1:15 p.m.).

10:15 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Finance budget overview.

Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Commission budget presentation.

Science Museum of Minnesota budget presentation.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: University of Minnesota budget request, Witness: Mark Yudof, President, University of Minnesota.

Northern Resources Research Institute (NRRI) and Physics and Electrical Engineering Department funding, Witness: Charles Nutter, CEO, Silicon Valley Corporation.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: Governor's budget presented by the Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Elaine Harder

Agenda: HF294 (Walz) Allows a subtraction for National Guard and active duty military pay from the individual income tax.

HF68 (Buesgens) Allows a subtraction for U.S. military pay from the individual income tax.

HF230 (Bernardy) Allows a subtraction of up to \$5,000 for military pay in U.S. and U.N. armed forces from the individual income tax.

HF90 (Mulder) Allows a subtraction for military pension from the individual income tax.

HF91 (Mulder) Exempts sales tax for goods and admission for non-profit dance clubs.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: Federal funds overview.

Department of Children, Families and Learning staff: Mary Thissen-Milder, Sue Devich, Lois Engstrom, Elizabeth Roe, Barbara O'Sullivan, Connie Greer, Barry Shaffer, and Joyce Swonger. Department of Finance staff: John Breckenridge; Brent Gustafson.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jerry Dempsey

Agenda: Presentations: Office of State Auditor, Metropolitan Radio Board, and Metropolitan Airports Commission.

Other business.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: HF264 (Wolf) Legislative Energy Task Force; correcting names of committees represented by members.

HFXXXX (Wolf) Relating to telecommunications; modifying and recodifying telecommunications

laws (Governor's Telecommunications Reform Bill).

Presentation by the Department of Commerce on the governor's telecommunications bill.

3 p.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

15 minutes after session

WAYS & MEANS

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. David Bishop

Agenda: HF12 (Lipman) Constitutional amendment proposed requiring three-fifths vote to enact laws imposing or increasing taxes, fees or surcharges.

4 p.m.

ETHICS

400S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Roxann Daggett

Agenda: Introductory comments from Chair Daggett.

Approval of committee rules.

Overview of committee process by House Research.

TUESDAY, January 30

8:15 a.m.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: To be announced.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: Presentation of the nursing home case-mix system transition plan.

Presentation on the prescription drug program.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: Ramsey County Domestic Abuse Pilot Project.

Domestic Fatality Review Team overview.

Bomb Disposal and Domestic Terrorism Plan overview.

Auto Theft Prevention Board overview.

Presentation on Governor Ventura's budget as it pertains to the section on Criminal Justice.

Gary Karger, House Fiscal Analyst.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: HF254 (Seifert) Transportation obsolete rules repealed (continued from Jan. 25 meeting). HF368 (Stang) Stearns County Highway 55 bridge designated as Old St. Anne's pass. Others to be announced.

8:30 a.m.

Regent Candidate Advisory Council

400N State Office Building

Chr. Nedra Wicks

Agenda: Business meeting 8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. Interviews for positions on the University of Minnesota Board of Regents 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (lunch break 12 noon to 1:15 p.m.).

10:15 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. John Tuma

Agenda: HF260 (Stanek) CriMNet - Criminal justice information system improvements and appropriations.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: HF80 (Hackbarth) Anoka County; Coon Lake water level control installation required. Continuation of air toxic discussion, American Lung Association.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: HF218 (Krinkie) State Government Finance Bill.

Testimony on: Section 19, proposed budget for Veterans of Foreign Wars; Section 20, proposed budget for the Military Order of the Purple Heart; Section 21, proposed budget for the Disabled American Veterans; and Section 18, proposed budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HFXXXX (Sviggum) Governor's tax bill.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: Overview of the governor's budget proposals relating to agriculture by the Department of Agriculture.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach

Agenda: Overview of Department of Finance issues and procedures, Peter Sausen.

COMMERCE, JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF47 (Rukavina) Relating to economic development; requiring a closed iron mine and related facilities to be maintained for a period of time; amending Minnesota Statutes 2000, section 93.003.

HF219 (Sertich) A resolution requesting a ban on the importation of certain steel products.

1 p.m.

Major Transportation Projects Commission

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. to be elected

Agenda: Introduction and comments by members.

Introduction of legislative and Department of Transportation (MnDOT) staff.

Election of chair.

Discussion of commission goals.

Discussion of procedural issues.

Election of other officers: vice chair and secretary.

Scheduling of meetings: monthly/bi-monthly/semi-monthly

Location of meetings: Capitol complex, other metro/outstate locations.

Staff services: meeting notices, other mailings, minutes.

Presentation by MnDOT: Discussion/presentation of transportation planning process and project selection process.

Setting of time, place and agenda for next meeting.

2:30 p.m.

REDISTRICTING

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Erik Paulsen

Agenda: Analysis of Minnesota's population shifts, Tom Gillaspay.

Background on redistricting software, Lee Meilleur.

Legislative Audit Commission

316 State Capitol

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Release and review of program evaluation report on affordable housing.

WEDNESDAY, January 31

8:15 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: Department of Employee Relations overview, Julien Carter.

Campaign Finance Board, Jean Olsen.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Budget discussions regarding health-related licensing boards.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Budget review of the Department of Commerce and Minnesota Technology, Inc.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: Deputy Commissioner Doug Weiszhaar, Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

Chief Financial Officer Kevin Gray, MnDOT.

Cecil Selness, Modal Operations Division.

Office of Aeronautics Budget Presentation, Ray Rought, director.

8:30 a.m.

Regent Candidate Advisory Council

500S State Office Building

Chr. Nedra Wicks

Agenda: Business meeting 8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. Interviews for positions on the University of Minnesota Board of Regents 9 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. The meeting may close to the public after the last interview for a discussion of reference checks, and then re-open to the public as the council votes for candidates to recommend to the Legislature. Between two and four candidates will be recommended for each open position on the Board of Regents. The council will take a lunch break from 12 noon until 1:15 p.m.

10:15 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF130 (Dawkins) Dangerous dog definitions and regulations modified, animal control officers duties expanded, evidence preservation provided, and criminal penalties imposed.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Minnesota Zoological Garden budget presentation.

Academy of Science budget presentation.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: Academic Health Center (University of Minnesota) budget request, Witness: Dr. Frank Cerra, Senior Vice President for Health Sciences, University of Minnesota.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: To be announced.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: HFXXXX (Sviggum) Governor's tax bill.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE POLICY

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth
Agenda: HF149 (Pawlenty) Regulating the serving, selling, and labeling of certain religion-sanctioned food.
 HF106 (Ness) Allowing certain members of the Minnesota Agriculture Education Leadership Council to designate permanent or temporary replacement members.
 Overview of rural statistics, Tom Gillaspay, State Demographer.

Economic Development and Tourism**Division/COMMERCE, JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Basement Hearing Room
 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner
Agenda: Affordable housing.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: Introduction/overview of governor's budget.
 Budget analysis of following programs: ECFE, Head Start, School Readiness, Screening, and Way to Grow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Jerry Dempsey
Agenda: Presentations: Metropolitan Mosquito Control District, Minnesota Regional Development Organizations, and Metropolitan Council.
 Other business.

THURSDAY, February 1

8:15 a.m.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Harry Mares
Agenda: To be announced.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: Presentation on issues surrounding adult and child mental health.
 HF97 (Greiling) Revisor instructed to replace phrase concerning mental illness.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek
Agenda: Dakota County Community Justice Zone.
 Budget hearing for the Ombudsman of Crime Victim Services.
 Budget hearing for the Ombudsman of Corrections.
 Budget hearing for the Peace Officer Standards & Training Board.
 Budget hearing for the Sentencing Guidelines Commission.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Tom Workman
Agenda: To be announced.

10:15 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. John Tuma
Agenda: HF 94 (Haas) Fish and game law gross overlimit criminal penalties established (continuation from Jan. 25 hearing).
 Crime trends overview from the Department of Corrections, Courts, and Minnesota Planning

Joint House ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY/ Senate ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

NOTE ROOM

123 State Capitol
 Chrs. Rep. Dennis Ozment,
 Sen. Jane Krentz
Agenda: Office of Environmental Assistance - 2001 Biennial Report.
 Department of Administration - procurement and recycling issues.
 Minnesota Soft Drink Association & Recycling Association of Minnesota - statewide recycling campaign.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie
Agenda:
 HF218 (Krinkie) State Government Finance Bill.
 Testimony on Section 17, proposed budget for Department of Military Affairs.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: HFXXXX (Sviggum) Governor's tax bill.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Bob Ness
Agenda: Continuation of overview of the Governor's budget proposals relating to agriculture by the MN Department of Agriculture.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach
Agenda: Department of Finance report on cancellations, Peter Sausen.

3 p.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

4:15 p.m.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

Tour, St. John's/St. Benedict's colleges
 Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: Tour departs from the north entrance of the State Office Building at 4:15 p.m.
 Roundtable presentation and tour scheduled from 6 p.m. to 7:20 p.m.

FRIDAY, February 2

8:15 a.m.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy
Agenda: Budget review of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.

8:30 a.m.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

Tours
 Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: University of Minnesota-Crookston roundtable discussion and tour (8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.).
 Northwest Technical College tour (12 noon to 12:30 p.m.).
 Bemidji State University lunch/roundtable discussion and tour (12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.).

10:15 a.m.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: To be announced.

Environment

A proposal to clean up the Minnesota River would invest \$50.8 million in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Federal funding of up to \$163 million is guaranteed for this project, but it is only available until Sept. 30, 2002, and a percentage must be matched with state dollars.

The goal of the project is to provide a 20 percent reduction of pollutants in the river by putting 100,000 acres of marginal cropland into conservation easements. Essentially, CREP would pay farmers not to farm flood-prone land. The Water and Soil Resources Board predicts that improved water quality and expanded wildlife habitat will benefit tourism, recreation and economic development.


Historically, members of the Capital Investment Committee take a state tour of projects during the interim before they decide which ones to fund. If they agree to the one budget-one session initiative, they will not have time to see projects first-hand.

Some committee members responded to the governor's proposals with frustration and concern about items from the 2000 bonding bill. They suggested the governor may yet recommend canceling some previously approved projects, though currently his plan contains no specific cancellations.

"It seems to me that the governor is trying to undo legislative intent," said Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), referring to much lower than expected allocations for higher education facilities and previously approved projects.

Mehrkens said it was not possible "within this funding level" to go ahead with some of the projects passed in last year's session.

"Then why didn't he veto them last year?" asked Committee Chair Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud).

The proposed tax rebate hung like a cloud over the discussion. "It is political nonsense," said Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), "to send money back to taxpayers then turn around and commit ourselves to bonds for building repairs." 

Reflections

The Saint Paul Winter Carnival pays homage to the coldest season of the year. It begins or ends about the time the Legislature convenes, either in odd- or even-numbered years.

In 2001, the Legislature began its two-year session earlier, but normally, the ice festival is the first to begin in even-numbered years.

The carnival was the first major celebration of winter in the United States. Today, it lasts for 12 days with many outdoor activities, including parades, ice sculpting contests, and softball games on ice.

About the time of the festival's inception 116 years ago, legislative sessions lasted for 60 calendar days. Today, the business of providing for the people overlaps the mid-winter gala during 120 non-consecutive session days during a two-year period.

The Legislature begins its work in January or February out of tradition and constitutional mandate, which dates back to 1858, when most lawmakers were farmers. The first legislators decided to make their roles part-time because most of them had crops and animals to tend to during the other three seasons.

The legislative session and the Winter Carnival underscore the fact that nothing in Minnesota shuts down because of the weather.

The tradition began in response to a visiting New York reporter who wrote that the city was just "another Siberia, unfit for human habitation" at this time of the year.

To disprove "those easterners," members of the Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce created an association in 1885 to manage the winter celebration.

At its first event in 1886, the sponsors promoted many outdoor events and other unusual activities not seen by those from

warmer climes. They also built what was then the tallest ice structure in the world — a 106-foot palace where state government buildings now stand at the edge of the present-day State Capitol building grounds. In 1937, another palace was constructed directly opposite the Capitol.

The palace has always been part of the myth created to help draw more people from across the country to what some called the "frozen tundra." The structure houses Boreas, King of the North Wind, and his court — all who want the weather to stay cold.

His nemesis, the Fire King, or Vulcanus Rex, and his "Krewe," the Vulcans, make frequent assaults on Boreas' realm to try and make spring reappear. Vulcanus Rex usually emerges as the victor after he makes a major assault on the castle near the end of the carnival.

Legislators such as Rep. Daniel A. Morrison (R-Rochester), who had already served in the Senate for four terms, joined in as The Fire King for the 1888 carnival, when the then-tallest ice structure to date was constructed. It was so large that 6,000 people attended a wedding inside its walls before it was attacked by Morrison and his Vulcans.

Another state elected official involved in a mid-winter gala was the 1896 Speaker of the House, Samuel R. Van Sant (R-Winona), who served in Boreas' court as Lord High Chancellor. Van Sant became governor in 1901.

When winter comes to the Capital City, so do elements that make ice palaces vulnerable and legislators energetic enough to spend long hours in conducting legislative business.

—LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT

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MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Minnesota State Lottery

Number of states with lottery in fiscal year 2000	37
Total U.S. lottery sales in fiscal year 2000, in billions	\$38.1
Sales per capita in Minnesota during fiscal year 2000	\$83
Minnesota's ranking nationally	26
Number of states with no form of legalized gambling	2
Minnesota State Lottery sales in fiscal year 2000, in millions	\$397
In 1999	\$390
In 1998	\$372.8
In 1997	\$369
Sales since lottery began in April 1990, in billions	\$3.7
Fiscal Year 2000 sales by product, as percent:	
Scratch Games	71
Powerball	19
Gopher 5	6
Daily 3	3
Cash 4 Life	1
Payout in winnings in fiscal year 2000, in millions	\$241.5
In 1999	\$235.5
In 1998	\$224.5
Prize payments since lottery began in April 1990, in billions	\$2.2
Lottery proceeds donated to state's general fund, as percent	60
Proceeds dedicated to the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, as percent	40
Amount transferred to state General Fund since April 1990, in millions,	\$590
In fiscal year 2000, in millions	\$37
Amount transferred to State Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund since April 1990 (in millions)	\$255
In fiscal year 2000 (in millions)	\$23.5
Number of projects funded with that money	217
Percent of adult Minnesotans who gambled in 1998	82
Percent of those who played the lottery	55
Percent of people with incomes higher than \$75,000 annually who gamble	88
Those with incomes of less than \$15,000	69
Lottery proceeds provided to the Department of Human Services in 2000-2001 for problem gambling programs (in millions)	\$3.4
Total state non-lottery wagering during fiscal year 2000, in billions	\$5

Source: Minnesota State Lottery Overview 2001 and Minnesota State Lottery Web site (www.lottery.state.mn.us).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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