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In this issue:

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REFORM PLAN

FEEDLOT AUTHORITY, REACTION TO TAX PLAN, AND MORE

HF551-HF744

Session Weekly

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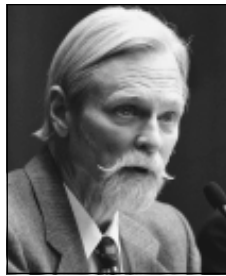
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CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

Bonding • 5	Energy • 8	Law • 10
Crime • 5	Environmnet • 8	Local Government • 10
Development • 6	Health • 8	Safety • 10
Education • 6	Higher Education • 9	Taxes • 11
Elections • 7	Housing • 9	Transportation • 12

FEATURES

At Issue: Agriculture — Farmers and legislators express concern regarding a proposal to move oversight of feedlots from the Pollution Control Agency to the Department of Agriculture. • 13

At Issue: Family — An aggressive action plan for early childcare and education in Minnesota grabs the attention of legislators at a House committee hearing. • 14

At Issue: Taxes — The public gets its first chance to comment on Gov. Jesse Ventura's tax plan, including its expansion of the sales tax to many services. • 15

People — Rep. D. Scott Dibble turns love for Minnesota and career as community activist into new role as state legislator. • 16

People — Rep. Ruth Johnson returns to the House after two-year hiatus with renewed commitment to education and the environment. • 17

People — Rep. Connie Ruth draws from all the pieces of her life in the path that led her to the state Legislature. • 18

People — Rep. Matt Entenza takes a new role as House Minority Whip after two years as assistant minority leader. • 19

Late action — House members take up Senate bill to provide \$30 million in emergency heat assistance to school districts, but amend it to provide a sales tax rebate. • 20

DEPARTMENTS/RESOURCES

It's A Fact: Perks of the Job	4	What's on the Web: Streaming video	27
The 50 States: Retaining		Committee Schedule (Feb. 12-16)	28
IT professionals	12	Reflections: The Sandager farm	31
Resources: Come to the Capitol	21	Minnesota Index: Minnesota vs.	
Bill Introductions (HF551 -HF744)	23	Top States in Education	32

On the cover: The moon rises over the Capitol Quadriga Feb. 6.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Telecommunication reform

Legislators hear a revised plan for lower costs, better technology, and improved service

BY THERESA STAHL

A telecommunications reform proposal from the Ventura Administration promises better rates and more services for Minnesota consumers — residential and business, urban and rural.

The bill (HF510), presented to the House Regulated Industries Committee Jan. 29 and Feb. 5, is a revision of a telecommunications plan introduced last year. Since then, Department of Commerce representatives have listened

to consumers across the state, met with telephone companies and legislators, and used that input in creating a plan for new telecommunications laws.

The new bill, sponsored by Committee Chair Rep. Ken Wolf (R-Burnsville), calls for standard statewide service, affordable local phone service, advanced services to anywhere

in the state, and for consumers to be able to choose their own provider.

“Telecommunications would be driven not by the whims of a monopoly, but by a vibrant competitive marketplace,” said Anthony Mendoza, deputy commissioner of commerce.

Most Minnesotans receive service by monopoly carriers. Under the new plan phone companies would be deregulated, creating competition in the marketplace.

The main initiative of the bill requires local service providers to adhere to “universal service,” or meet certain standards of telecommunications service. With universal service, hidden subsidies — access charges and rate averaging — that currently exist in phone bills would be erased.

Some small phone companies currently charge basic services below cost while making up the revenue in access charges which are not regulated by the state. Access charges are entrance and exit fees paid by long distance companies to local service providers to originate and terminate long distance calls. The low costs for basic services make it impossible for a new company wanting to enter the market to compete with them.

For the benefit of small telephone companies that have relied on these access charges, the new plan takes a “soft landing” by reducing the charges slowly over a five-year period. Reduced access charges will also decrease the cost of long-distance calls.

Rate averaging is the second hidden subsidy to be eliminated. When rates are averaged under a monopolistic market, urban consumers help ease the cost to rural consumers,

because the cost of service is much higher in non-metro areas.

Under the new plan, consumers above the average rate, generally rural consumers, would receive a subsidy to bring the cost down to the average rate consumers in the state are paying.

The subsidy would come from a “universal service fund,” which collects a 5 percent excise tax on any telecommunications service — including long distance calls and wireless services. The fund would be created by the bill.

Mendoza said the excise tax would be added after the hidden subsidies were removed, and consumers would benefit in the end.

“It is more money in the pockets of consumers and less money in the pockets of monopoly carriers,” he said.

The universal service fund will also pay for a list of “essential services,” some that consumers currently receive, and others that will be needed more and more as technology changes. They include:

- low-income assistance;
- Telecommunications Access for Communications Impaired Persons;
- touch-tone;
- 911 and E911 (“Enhanced 911,” i.e., tracing calls);
- access to operator services;
- access to directory assistance;
- toll-free Internet access; and
- a capital investment loan fund.

During the presentation to the committee, Wolf asked if the list, which includes about a dozen services, seemed long.

“We’re trying to maintain what we have today at much less cost to ratepayers,” Mendoza explained.

The capital investment loan fund included in the list of essential services would provide start-up funds for telecommunications companies wanting to begin business in Minnesota. The money, at low interest to borrowers, would help deploy advanced communications services such as high-speed Internet, especially in rural parts of the state.

Communities that don’t have access to technologies, notably high-speed Internet, are being left behind, Mendoza said. “The loan is to provide infrastructure so Greater Minnesota is not always last in line for services.”

Even with a low-interest loan incentive,



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREW VON BANK

A telecommunications reform bill intended to simplify the complicated telecommunications system in Minnesota, awaits action in the House Regulated Industries Committee.

competitors could be intimidated from entering the market. But the plan takes measures to protect new companies.

Removing the rate averaging system, also called "deaveraging" by the department, would be completed by the end of 2002. Immediately after the deaveraging, rate caps would be set on basic voice services for two years to give the market time to adjust to the new prices. Following the release of the rate caps, the plan calls for complaint-based regulation.

"There's never been a real standard for when a company is engaged in predatory pricing," Mendoza said. But now there would be.

Predatory pricing occurs when a company lowers their service or product prices below other provider's prices, thereby unfairly pricing their competitors out of the market.

The Public Utilities Commission would hear predatory pricing complaints and would have authority to order structural separation.

The commission would also take consumer complaints. This initiative addresses implications of last year's plan, which was accused of being over-regulatory, according to Mendoza.


Cable companies, which are regulated by local governments, would also be regulated by the state under the new plan. Currently cable operators must obtain a franchise from every local government within the service territory. Telecommunications providers only need approval from the state.

Franchise application fees run as much as \$50,000. The new proposal would allow local governments to continue to collect franchise fees; however, the fees can be credited against the excise fee paid to the state. Local governments would also have control over programming. The state would have ultimate authority to grant and enforce franchises.

Mendoza said the commerce plan for reform isn't trying to put telephone companies out of business, but instead intends to eliminate monopolies and allow people to choose their own provider.

The reason for the bill is to remove barriers to companies that want to enter the telecommunications market, Mendoza said.

"We need to look at the big picture, so that rates are affordable for everyone," he said. "We need to make it a more fair and open marketplace."

The committee has taken no action on the bill. 

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Perks of the job

1919 speaker given "unusually lavish" gift

Rank definitely has its privileges in the House of Representatives. But the 1919 session carried with it a special perk for then Speaker of the House William I. Nolan of Minneapolis.

At the end of the legislative session, the members of the House, along with several staff members, gave Nolan a new, six-cylinder touring car.

Though literature about the 1919 session says Nolan was very popular among the House members, no specific reason explains the gift, which was quite extravagant for the times.

However, a few of the Legislature's accomplishments that year might explain it. That was a big year for the state and the nation, as the states were called to ratify Prohibition and women's suffrage amendments.

But there were other interesting political dynamics at the time that may have explained why the House chose to bestow "an unusually lavish gift" on the speaker.

Back then, the Legislature only met during odd-numbered years and the constitution limited them to 90 legislative days.

And from 1913 to 1973, the Legislature was non-partisan, meaning the members were not elected by party affiliation. Members of the Non-partisan League, a driving political force in the state, were primarily rural farmers who banded together to draw attention to issues dominant in the rural setting. They had been most powerful during the decade from 1910 to 1920, exerting the most influence during the elections of 1918.

The League was not a specific political party, and League members represented many parties.

As a result of the non-partisan atmosphere of the time, politicians were characterized more by their stands on pivotal issues, rather than party affiliation.

For example, people and communities on either side of the Prohibition issue were described as "dry" or "wet."

Nolan's political affiliations, including support from Republican Gov. J.A.A. Burnquist, could have sabotaged his bid for speaker. Instead, the five-term legislator and long-time member of the House Rules Committee was elected by an overwhelming majority of members. The vote was 105-23.



Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

Members of the 1919 Legislature presented this car to House Speaker W.I. Nolan at the end of the session. (Can you tell what kind of car it is? If you can, please send a letter or call House Information.)

In his book about the 1919 Legislature, C. J. Buell described Nolan as a fair and efficient speaker.

"His actions were quick, and his rulings were never questioned but once, and then the member raising the question had no one supporting him,"

Buell wrote.

Nevertheless, controversy swirled around the 1919 Legislature, as critics hissed about laws the members were passing and issues that died.

New laws that year established a state Board of Education, a state Agriculture Department and a constitutional amendment to establish a state highway system.

About the only proposal attributed directly to Nolan was the 1919 appropriations law. However, the Legislature designated the highest state budget up to that point — \$31.78 million — and that figure was a \$7 million increase from the previous session.

But many criticized the Legislature for not funding certain needs deemed critical, including unallocated funds to prevent forest fires in northern parts of the state.

Several bits of unfinished business drew members back to the Capitol that September — ratifying the women's suffrage amendment and to establishing a memorial to soldiers from the state who served in World War I.

Nolan served only one session as speaker, saying he would not seek re-election in 1920.

Continued on page 31

★ BONDING

Project dollars frozen

State law requires bond money that is unspent or uncommitted be reported to the Legislature after four years. As of Feb. 1, almost \$149 million in bond proceeds were frozen in accordance with this law.

Peter Sausen of the Department of Finance reported the bond proceeds cancellations to the House Capital Investment Committee Feb. 6.

He explained the report is both a bookkeeping measure and a way of getting bond recipients to move ahead on their projects.

There are several reasons why a project might not go forward. Sometimes circumstances change. An example is the airport facilities authorization for more than \$81 million that would have paid for a Northwest Airlines maintenance base in northern Minnesota.

Other projects need to meet other requirements. For example, the public television transmitter grant of \$975,000 for the city of Austin needs approval from the Federal Communications Commission, which has not yet been granted.

Sometimes the bond regulation criteria are simply too restrictive for the receiving agency, and they choose not to use the money.

Now that the cancellations have been reported, recipients who still plan to use the money must come forward and convince the Legislature their projects are still viable.

The Legislature must then pass language to extend the bonding availability and the governor must sign off on it. Any appropriations that are not extended are automatically cancelled as of July 1. The unused money goes back into the debt service fund and is recycled into paying off other bonds.

★ CRIME

Prevention board sunset

Members of the House Judiciary Finance Committee questioned Gov. Jesse Ventura's recommendation to allow the state's auto theft prevention program to sunset at the beginning of 2002 during its meeting Feb. 6.

Formerly the Auto Theft Prevention Board and now under the authority of the Department of Public Safety's office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention, the program

distributes grants to law enforcement agencies to curtail and prevent auto theft.

Since the program began in 1997, auto theft in the state has been reduced about 33 percent.

According to state law, the program is set to end Jan. 1, 2002. In his biennial budget, Ventura has not recommended continuing the program, funded through a 50-cent surcharge per premium on auto insurance policies providing comprehensive coverage.

Each year, the surcharge provides about \$2.3 million to the program. However, existing law caps spending for the program at \$1.8 million, creating a balance in the fund.

During the 2000 session, the Legislature allocated some of the previous fund balance for other purposes, disbanded the board, and eliminated all staff positions.

In his budget proposal, Ventura explained his recommendation to let the program lapse as of June 30, 2001, by saying once a state-funded program is successful at the local level, the local communities should absorb the cost.

Mary Ellison, whose office in the Department of Public Safety now oversees the program, explained that it simply wasn't one of the governor's priorities.

Committee members and other officials questioned the logic that this should be a locally funded project.

"I don't really understand the argument," said Ramsey County Attorney Susan Gaertner. She testified that the program has allowed her department to concentrate on prosecuting auto theft cases more vigorously and obtain convictions on "difficult cases," such as those where auto owners left their keys in a vehicle and it was stolen.

"It's not taking state dollars to do this project. It's taking a user fee," she said. "Without those additional dollars we will not prosecute as many of these cases. We will not prosecute the difficult cases."

Other law enforcement and insurance industry representatives testified that the program is an effective way to use resources and prevent crime.

Committee Chair Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove) said he expects more discussion about the program as the committee weighs proposals for its overall spending target.

CriMNet funding approved

A bill that would appropriate \$41.5 million to continue development and utilization of CriMNet, a statewide system to share criminal justice information among courts law enforcement officials, cleared another hurdle.

The House Civil Law Committee approved HF260, sponsored by Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), Feb. 7 and referred it to the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

The bill would grant \$20 million to the state Supreme Court to continue redevelopment of the court information system, intended to integrate criminal justice information from all law enforcement agencies across the state. The system would be used in every county.

The Department of Public Safety would receive \$14 million, the majority of which provides grants to local agencies to actually implement integration plans they have already developed.

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension would be granted \$6 million, the majority of which would be dedicated to processing information not yet entered into the bureau's existing computer system. The remaining \$1.5 million is earmarked for the Department of Corrections to bolster statewide supervision systems and to prepare its records for CriMNet's inauguration.

Don Gemborling, director of information policy analysis for the Department of Administration, said it is important to keep crime-related information accurate and private. This data can "really have an extreme effect on people's lives," he said. "It can affect jobs and their ability to get housing."

Stanek called the CriMNet system a vast improvement over the current system. "It does not change current law" regarding access to criminal records, he said.

Rich Neumeister, a concerned citizen, told the committee he was unsatisfied with officials' assurances that citizens' right to privacy would be sufficiently protected. "I support CriMNet in principle," he said. "But how do we make sure that the system's rules correspond" to appropriate principles of data privacy?

Steve Correll, BCA director for criminal justice information system, told the committee that CriMNet will help prevent the misidentification of people charged with crimes or applying for jobs or housing.

"The intent is to facilitate communication,"

he said. CrimNet is not “a warehouse” of information; it simply helps existing agencies legally share information.

★ DEVELOPMENT

Preservation aid possible

Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka) presented two bills relating to historic preservation at the Feb. 6 House Commerce, Jobs and Economic Development Committee meeting. Both were approved.

HF331 proposes to create a historic structure preservation grant program that would award up to 20 percent of the costs of restoration projects.

HF596 would allow a person to receive an income tax credit for up to 25 percent of rehabilitation costs.

Several members of state preservation groups told legislators that historic buildings are resources for today’s communities.

“This is for preserving our state’s heritage, which gets smaller every day,” said Bob Frame, executive director of the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota. He said the lack of financial resources is the most common reason buildings are not restored.

Brenda Johnson, of the Southeast Minnesota League of Cities, expressed a need for public-private partnerships, saying they are “an effective tool,” especially for maintaining downtown areas.

In response to a question regarding tax abatement, Johnson said it “hasn’t surfaced as a tool yet.”

Brian McMahon of the Preservation Alliance said buildings they are interested in working on are those that have retained their architectural character. He stressed it was not a cosmetic program, and the buildings need maintenance that does not come cheap.

“These buildings are in need of assistance, otherwise they wouldn’t get done,” McMahon said.

HF331 calls for a \$10 million appropriation to the grant program, which would be administered by the Minnesota Historical Society.

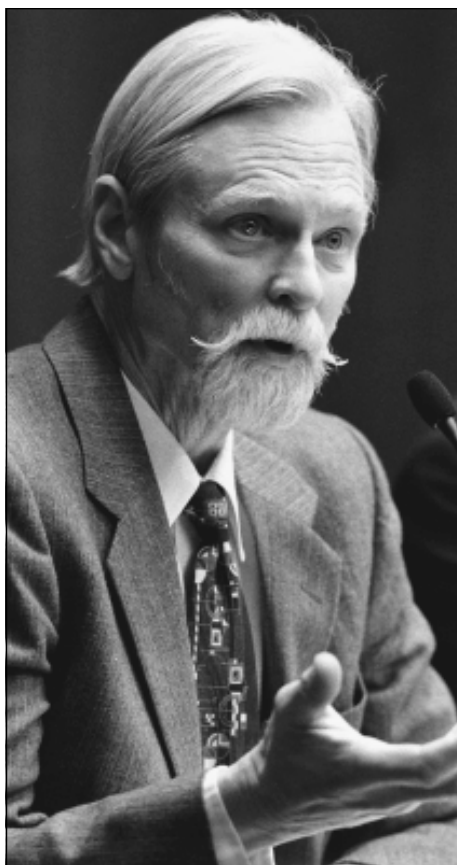
Rep. Arlon Lindner (R-Corcoran) asked if the amount would be enough.

“It’s a very good start,” Abeler replied.

The bill now moves to the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.

Referring to HF596 that allows the income tax credit, Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin) said the historical buildings in need of restoration are currently valued low for property tax, and once improved will be at a higher retail value.

“You’re working against yourself if (property) taxes (skyrocket) after restoration,” he said.



Charles Nelson, historical architect with the Minnesota State Historical Preservation Office, testifies for a bill that would create a historical preservation grant program during a Feb. 6 hearing of the House Commerce, Jobs and Economic Development Committee.

“Taxes will go up if you improve your property anyway,” Abeler replied.

HF596 now moves to the House Taxes Committee.

★ EDUCATION

Evaluation proposal examined

A plan to have an outside agency create a consistent comparison of the financial and academic achievements of school districts received a mixed reception from members at a House committee meeting.

The House Education Policy Committee approved HF71, sponsored by House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan), Feb. 8 and referred it to the House K-12 Finance Committee.

Under HF71, the commissioner of the Department of Children Families and Learning would contract with an independent school evaluation service “to evaluate and report on the academic and financial performance of the state’s independent school districts.”

This would be accomplished using six core categories: school district expenditures,

students’ performance outcomes, return on resources, school district finances, student learning environment, and school district demographics.

Representatives from Standard & Poor’s, a New York-based firm, shared what they have done in Michigan and Pennsylvania and how they could do the same in Minnesota. They said it is best to do an analysis over a number of years to see trends.

William Cox, managing director for school evaluation services, emphasized his company is not a ratings service. “We get contextual information for independent analysis. Our analysis is diagnostic, not prescriptive.”

“This way we can compare school districts using similar (numbers),” Pawlenty said, something that does not currently exist. “What we have now is a mess. We need to question if we want to improve.”

Under the proposal, the outside firm must submit its written report to the commissioner within 360 days of the date the contract is signed. The report must then be made available to the public immediately. It will also be available via the Internet.

Funding for this proposal would be appropriated from the state’s general fund. No costs were proposed, but Cox said programs in Michigan and Pennsylvania cost \$2 million to \$2.5 million per year.

Information used by Standard & Poor’s would be data already provided by school districts to the state.

Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) expressed concern about spending more money for another way to analyze data when money might best be spent elsewhere for education. “We have the Office of Educational Accountability. Why not just beef them up?”

On the other hand, Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexandria), a former school superintendent, supports the idea. “We’ve had bits and pieces in the past, but never a broad, independent analysis. If we had this it would allow us to make better decisions and then see how we did.”

Performance-based pay

Legislators showed skepticism toward a \$15 million recommendation for performance-based teacher pay in the 2002-2003 governor’s budget at the Feb. 6 meeting of the House Education Policy Committee.

The plan was not being officially proposed in the committee, but members took the opportunity to address it, while officials were appearing to provide program overviews. The committee took no official action.

The incentive moves away from the current

“steps and lanes” system by which teachers are currently paid. “Steps” refers to the number of years a person has been teaching, and “lanes” refers to the degree or degrees a person has earned.

“We want to see teachers be awarded for what they bring to the classroom,” and for how students perform, said Christine Jax, commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning, the state’s education department.

Some legislators questioned the small amount allocated for the incentive. Rose Hermodson of the department explained that few schools would be ready to restructure their compensation plans, and the department only expects the new pay method to cover 5 percent of teachers in the state. Jax added the allocation represents the limited amount of money the governor wants to spend.

To apply for the Performance Incentive Pool, as the program is called, districts or schools would create guidelines for their own plans to compensate teachers according to student’s classroom improvement. The role of the department would be to monitor program development and provide direction.

Criteria for the Performance Incentive Pool include:

- Implementation of graduation standards;
- Tools to measure student performance;
- Measures to show improved student attendance;
- Evidence of professional development;
- Measures of student, family, and community involvement;
- A data system describing academic progress for parents and public; and
- A compensation structure for teachers that eliminates pay increases tied to years of service.



Christine Jax, commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning, testifies before the House Education Policy Committee Feb. 6.

Rep. Jim Davnie (DFL-Mpls) suggested that by just looking at test results to measure student achievement — therefore not examining arts, music, and physical education — they would not be taking a “systems” look at schools. Davnie, a teacher, questioned the method by which student achievement would be gauged, stating that an administrator can have a negative effect on a school.

The department would use Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) to see if students are achieving, as well as “other methods of progress” which they did not specify.

Reps. Paul Marquart (DFL-Dilworth) and John Dorn (DFL-Mankato) talked about declining enrollment, rising class sizes, and less funding for rural districts. “How are they supposed to improve under these conditions?” Marquart asked. There is some money, he said, but not enough.

The funds aren’t sufficient to go statewide in the next biennium, Hermodson said; however, there not enough schools that would be ready anyway. Rep. Ken Wolf (R-Burnsville) commended the governor on the budget for the incentive pool, and its plan for “slow growth.”

Funds for teacher development

More than 70 school districts would qualify for financial assistance for transportation expenses associated with staff development, under a bill (HF226) sponsored by Rep. Irv Anderson (DFL-Int’l Falls).

The bill would allow teachers in school districts that receive sparsity revenue — funds for districts that are geographically isolated and have low enrollment — up to \$200 per year for travel expenses related to seminars or conferences for professional growth. Funds granted — between state aid and a district’s local levy — would total \$686,000 statewide, if every teacher used the maximum amount available.

James Baschky, a science teacher of seven years in the International Falls School District, testified in favor of the bill before the K-12 Education Finance Committee Feb. 5.

In the past, he said, his school has sent the entire science department to Minnesota Science Teachers Conference, but this year it can only send one teacher. In previous years, Baschky said, he has used his own car and covered some costs himself, but this year that isn’t an option.

Baschky’s district, like others in the state, is too far away from other school districts to have the option of partnering and sharing the cost of seminars.

John Frederickson, superintendent of the

International Falls School District, said the cost of bringing in people to conduct staff training is too expensive, as he laid out the costs for committee members.

Representatives suggested using interactive television as a cheaper means to receiving seminars, but Frederickson said the state’s ITV system is limited. Several people, including Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), explained it is much more beneficial to attend a conference in person.

“Face to face interaction with peers is something you could never get from (interactive television),” she said.

The bill will be considered for inclusion in the K-12 education omnibus bill.

Remedial instruction funding

Citing that there are no funding sources to cover remedial courses for students who do not pass a graduation standards test on their first try, Rep. Irv Anderson (DFL-Int’l Falls) introduced a bill (HF228) that would provide revenue to pay for such instruction.

The bill was heard by the House K-12 Education Finance Committee Feb. 5. It will be considered for inclusion in the committee’s omnibus bill.

One-third of students in the state fail the Minnesota Graduation Standards Test their first time and would likely benefit from early intervention with specialized instruction, supporters of the bill say.

HF228 would allow districts to use local levy funds for graduation standards remedial instruction. The cost of one course of 30 students would cost districts an average \$10,000 annually, which includes salary, benefits and course supplies.

ELECTIONS



Type size in political ads

State law requires that campaign literature contain a disclaimer stating who produced the material.

But that law does not require the disclaimer be legible. Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) has proposed a bill (HF486) that he says would attempt to address what many would consider a common sense issue by requiring that the disclaimer be at least a certain sized type.

Seifert presented the bill to the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee Feb. 5. He showed the committee a newspaper advertisement that ran in the Marshall newspaper the day before the election. He said the disclaimer to the ad was

printed in a type size and font style that made it nearly impossible to read.

Many people in the community were upset with the particular advertisement, Seifert said, and because the disclaimer was difficult to read, it was nearly impossible for voters to know who was responsible for producing the advertisement.

He said that with the increasing negativity in local campaigns, knowing who is behind an advertisement is becoming more and more of a concern.

"The disclaimer is almost of equal importance as the message that is going out," he said. "If we have no idea who is sending the message out there is no accountability."

Originally, HF486 would have required that the disclaimer be in at least 10-point type. But the bill was amended to lower the type size to eight-points.

Rep. Steve Dehler (R-St. Joseph) said he wasn't convinced the bill was necessary and was concerned about micromanaging the "art" of advertising design.

Dehler said gamesmanship is part of the political process and the advertisement Seifert brought with him from Marshall was for a candidate who lost the election.

The committee approved the bill and it was sent to the House floor.

State growth continues

The population of Minnesota grew by 12.4 percent during the past decade, the state demographer told the House Redistricting Committee Feb. 6.

Tom Gillaspay said that according to the preliminary United States 2000 Census figures used for apportionment purposes, the population of the state is 4,925,670. That total includes a resident population of 4,919,479 with 6,191 Minnesotans living overseas.

Apportionment is the federal process used in determining the number of seats each state will have in Congress.

The percent increase was larger than both the decade of the 1980s, when the state's population increased by 7.3 percent, and in the 1970s when there was a 7.1 percent increase.

The decade of the 1950s saw an increase of 14.5 percent but Gillaspay said there were differences between that large increase and the increase of the past decade. He said that in the 1950s the growth came in large part to new births, while in the 1990s the state saw a large increase in the number of people who moved here from other states or countries.

According to census figures nearly one-half of Minnesota's population increase in the 1990s was due to migration into the state.

Gillaspay said for census purposes the traditional seven-county metro area is now expanded to include Chisago, Isanti, Sherburne, and Wright counties. That area minus the St. Paul/Minneapolis area saw the largest increase in population (18.5 percent) during the past decade. By comparison, population in the two core cities dropped by 2.4 percent. The rest of the state saw a 4.2 percent increase.

Using those numbers the suburban areas are likely to gain five representatives in the House, while the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis are expected to lose two seats between them, and Greater Minnesota would lose three seats, Gillaspay said.

Yet he cautioned those numbers are preliminary, and that ultimately the redistricting process will determine the number of representatives from the different parts of the state.

The state's undercount for the last census was 0.4 percent, the third lowest in the nation. Each time the government conducts a census there can be a certain amount of underestimating what the population will be, and that contributes to the undercount. Gillaspay said that number can be partially attributed to the state being less diverse than the nation as a whole, as well.

The official census figures to be used for redistricting are expected to be released sometime in March.

ENERGY



Heating help on the way

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a new law Feb. 2 that would allow low-income families to receive heating assistance funds two weeks early.

The law, sponsored by Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), passed in the House on a 126-0 and 58-0 in the Senate.

Effective Feb. 3, the law releases \$12.2 million in federal money that would have otherwise not been granted until Feb. 13.

The Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides services that help income-eligible households keep their homes heated through the winter. Households meeting the income limits can receive a one-time grant, which is usually paid to their heating vendor.

Grant size is based on the number of people in the household, gross household income, fuel type, and fuel consumption from the previous winter. The households with the lowest incomes and highest bills receive the largest grants.

The program also provides emergency heating system repair for households in a no-heat

situation or have had their service discontinued or interrupted.

McElroy said the program has received many more applications than in the past due to high energy costs this winter. He said the average grant is \$400 to \$500 per family.

"This bill will serve a significant number of families," McElroy said.

HF421*/SF460/CH2

ENVIRONMENT



MPCA reductions planned

Reduced funding is forcing the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to eliminate the equivalent of 70 full-time jobs over the next two years, a 9 percent reduction in staff.

"This has not been an easy task," Lisa Thorvig, PCA deputy commissioner, told members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee Feb. 5, during the agency's budget presentation.

The governor has recommended about \$25.2 million in spending from various funds for the PCA. The agency has not yet completed its presentation.

The agency intends to cut staffing through attrition. Additionally, they have been holding vacancies open in anticipation of this action. During the next two years, agency officials expect to meet the objective through retirements and through employees leaving for other reasons, Thorvig said.

Programs are also being cut, and employees from those programs will be assigned to other programs as positions open.

Most of the PCA programs being eliminated or reduced are those that deal with problems that are not a top priority, agency officials say. Some have already accomplished their goals, and others are somewhat duplicated by other agencies such as the Department of Health.

Committee chair Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater) asked about staff morale in the face of these cuts.

"Morale is not good," Thorvig told the committee. "People who work at our agency are there because they care about the environment. It is especially difficult for people whose programs have been cut."

HEALTH



Removing a stigma

Words can hurt.

"Labels discriminate," Tom Peterson, executive director for the Minnesota Consumer/Survivor Network, told members of the House Health and Human Services Policy

Committee Feb. 1 during a meeting on mental health.

With the goal of eliminating such discrimination, Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) introduced a simple bill with far-reaching possibilities.

HF97 would change the phrase "is mentally ill" to "has a mental illness" in all Minnesota statutes and rules. The bill was approved unanimously by the committee and referred to the House Civil Law Committee.

Stigmatization of people with mental illness has occurred throughout history. One might think people are more enlightened now than they were 50 years ago; however, the recent U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health reported that even though the American public has become more knowledgeable about mental illness, they are no less prejudiced.

People with mental illness are avoided, distrusted, stereotyped, and feared, the report said. They have reduced access to jobs and housing; and they suffer from isolation, low self-esteem, and hopelessness.

As a result of this stigma, almost two-thirds of all people with mental illness do not seek treatment, according to recent studies.

"The stigma can be worse than the illness," Peterson said.

The 1999 White House Conference on Mental Health called for a national anti-stigma campaign, which falls in line with the spirit of Greiling's proposal.

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

College funding aid okayed

Financing help for those who will soon be enrolled in college might be on the way.

On Feb. 7, the House Higher Education Finance Committee approved HF550, sponsored by Rep. Rob Eastlund (R-Isanti). The bill now moves to the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee because it refers to rules.

HF550 extends the time for adopting rules for the Edvest savings program for nine months. The program cannot begin operating until rules are adopted.

The Edvest program was enacted in 1997 as a way to save money for post-secondary schooling by providing tax benefits and state grants to match contributions. The program allows accounts to be created for a designated beneficiary who will attend college in the future. Families with income of \$80,000 or less are eligible to receive back up to 15 percent (maximum \$300) of their contributions in the form of a state grant.

When enacted, the Legislature appropriated

\$3 million per biennium for the program. With the exception of some up front costs, no money has been spent. However, monies left in the fund at the conclusion of each biennium were transferred back into the state's general fund.

But those funds didn't go unspent because there was no interest in the program. Rather, officials allowed the initial deadline for setting rules and guidelines for the program to pass, thus the terms for granting the money were never established.

The original 18-month provision for adopting rules expired in early 1999. Phil Lewenstein, from the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office, said his organization was working on the aspects of the program and simply overlooked the time for enactment clause. Among the aspects he listed were: getting the Internal Revenue Service to adopt the regulations, identifying things in state law that need to be addressed with this program, and data privacy issues.

"I assume they won't be sleeping at the switch next time," said Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Crystal).

Lewenstein said the office hopes to have the program rules ready for adoption in advance of the nine-month time frame, because much work has already been completed.

Eastlund indicated that 2,000 to 3,000 people have already expressed an interest in this program. It is anticipated the first appropriations will be made next year, for people who enroll in the program by the end of 2001.

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

★ HOUSING

Shelter funds sought

A bill that would appropriate \$10 million for transitional housing and emergency services from the state's general fund was discussed Feb. 5 in the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee.

HF272, sponsored by Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls), will be considered for possible inclusion in the committee's omnibus spending bill.

"Housing is one of the basic needs in life," Nornes said. "I feel strongly that people should have a place to rest after, hopefully, a day of work."

"Transitional housing" is state-subsidized housing for people who are homeless or temporarily displaced from their homes. Minnesota has 64 transitional housing programs.

On an average night Minnesota shelters provide a place to sleep for 6,220 people; more than 50 percent of those are children or unaccompanied youths, according to Michael Dahl, of the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless. About 1,000 people are turned away each night.

The number of people seeking emergency shelter has been steadily rising, and has more than tripled since 1987. The number of children living in temporary housing grew more than sevenfold during that time period, according to the Family Housing Fund.

"The crisis we're seeing in affordable housing is part of the reason for the crisis in shelter availability," Dahl said. Until more affordable housing is made available, he said, "we're going to see more people trying to use shelters."

TINY DANCER



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Luke Verbout, 2, from Cottage Grove, plays on the "Star of the North" in the center of the Rotunda at the conclusion of the Feb. 8 rally for early childhood and family education.

Housing is "affordable" if it costs no more than 30 percent of household income, according to a report by the Department of Children, Families and Learning. The goal of transitional housing is to help people "obtain and maintain stable housing."

Not all people seeking shelter are jobless. Cathy ten Broeke, director of St. Stephen's Shelter in Minneapolis, said 60 percent of their guests are working. Those individuals participate in a program that requires them to set aside 40 percent of their income for permanent housing.

After discussion, committee members agreed they needed more information about the type of emergency services to be provided before they could recommend the bill. Dahl agreed to provide them with that information.

LAW

Civil clarity sought

Legislators are considering a bill that would correct a technical aspect of state law governing civil actions brought against healthcare providers.

According to the bill's sponsor, Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), HF450 is intended to clarify legislation, passed two years ago, which increased the statute of limitations on wrongful death actions brought against healthcare providers from two years to four years.

Characterizing the bill as technical, he told the House Civil Law Committee Feb. 5 the same legislation "is on the consent calendar in the Senate."

However, Richard Thomas, chair of the Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association Law Improvement Committee, wrote HF450 should be scrapped in favor of a uniform system of wrongful death regulation. "The statute of limitations against physicians had been two years for many years in Minnesota," he wrote in a letter submitted to the committee.

"What has been lost in the debate is the fundamental question of whether there should be a four-year statute of limitations against physicians and other healthcare providers in wrongful death actions when every other party is subject to a three-year period."

The committee unanimously approved the bill and referred it to the House Health and Human Services Committee.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Shooting range protection

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee approved a bill Feb. 5 that would shield shooting ranges from new local government ordinances.

Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar), sponsor of HF209, said the bill is similar to one the House passed in 1999. It requires local units of government to allow existing shooting ranges to continue operating even if local zoning ordinances change.

"A lot of shooting ranges in Minnesota are being shut down for frivolous reasons," Hackbarth said.

He said ranges are important for safety reasons as they teach young hunters how to shoot. Without the ranges, Hackbarth said there would be an increase in the number of "disasters out in the woods."

Currently, there are approximately 375 shooting ranges in the state. Hackbarth said with the increase in urban development into rural areas of the state that noise complaints against the ranges have increased.

Rep. Jim Davnie (DFL-Mpls) asked Hackbarth if he considered all noise complaints against shooting ranges as being "frivolous" and if it was the role of the state rather than local government to address the concerns.

Hackbarth said the complaints relate mostly to noise rather than any hazards caused by users of the ranges. He believes it is the state's role to become involved because it is a statewide issue being addressed.

The bill would require the commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources to develop voluntary guidelines for shooting ranges. It also stipulates that shooting ranges could only be closed or relocated because of a new development if the range becomes a "clear, immediate, and proven safety hazard" to the development.

If a range were found to be a hazard but can be made safe, the DNR or the local unit of government would be required to pay for the improvements, under the bill.

Remi Stone from the League of Minnesota Cities and Dave Weirens from the Association of Minnesota Counties both spoke against the bill saying it would severely limit local control and give shooting ranges unequaled preferential treatment.

The bill now goes to the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

Castration law might be cut

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee approved a bill Feb. 7 that might cause a collective sigh of relief from the head of town boards throughout the state, as well as certain roaming animals.

HF394 sponsored by Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) repeals a law that requires the chair of the town board to castrate a stallion, bull, boar, or ram running at large if the owner is notified and continues to allow the animal to roam free. Heads of boards refusing or neglecting to perform the duties under this law are guilty of a misdemeanor.

Seifert said that bill is part of an ongoing effort he is working on with Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville) and Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) to purge obsolete laws from the books. He said some thought was given to drafting a large omnibus bill repealing a variety of obsolete laws but such a bill would be open to nearly any amendments since it would deal with so many different areas and statutes. Therefore several specific bills will be introduced this session repealing laws.

Established in 1947, the mandatory castration statute is a section of the law establishing regulation of stray animals and imposing penalties to animal owners who allow their animals to roam free off their property.

Seifert said this particular obsolete law was brought to his attention by his father, a former township official who had come across the law more than 20 years ago and was surprised to see it still on the books.

Rep. Sharon Marko (DFL-Cottage Grove) said she ironically learned about Seifert's bill last week when there was heavy news coverage of three wandering cows that escaped on Interstate 694 and eluded capture for a number of hours.

Referring to Seifert's bill with a smile, Marko said, "We definitely need to do it. It is critical."

The bill now goes to the House Transportation Policy Committee.

SAFETY

Safer smokes

Legislators are considering a bill that could decrease the likelihood that cigarettes would start fires.

HF175, sponsored by Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), would require cigarettes made or sold in Minnesota to meet fire retardant standards established by the state fire marshal.

The House Crime Prevention Committee referred the bill to the House Governmental



Members of the House Crime Prevention Committee take a closer look at a less flammable cigarette during a Feb. 6 hearing. Members were discussing a bill that would make fire resistant cigarettes the only type sold in Minnesota.

Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee without recommendation during a Feb. 6 meeting. Members expressed concern that the Crime Prevention committee was an inappropriate venue because HF175 includes no criminal penalties for violating the standards provided in the bill.

Citing his experience as a firefighter, Ozment said, "Having an opportunity to work on this issue has been really exciting for me."

He explained that cigarette manufacturer Merit has developed a paper that resists burning unless the smoker is actually drawing oxygen through the cigarette. Small threadlike fire-retardant filaments are wound around the tobacco, surrounding the cigarette in a tight, cylindrical pattern.

Members expressed a variety of concerns ranging from the safety of inhaling fumes from the burned filaments to the legality and commercial impact of requiring the entire tobacco industry to follow the lead of one manufacturer.

In response, Ozment said there is no significant cost impact to consumers for cigarettes using the special paper.

Ozment told the committee that Minnesota was the first state to require that tents sold in the state be flame-retardant. The result was that all manufacturers chose to make only flame-retardant tents. Thus, Minnesota essentially provided protection for consumers everywhere by leading the charge for protective legislation, and could do so again.

No other state has established a mandate on the papers, Ozment said. However, the state of New York is also considering such an action.

Dangerous dog bill advances

The House Civil Law Committee approved a bill Feb. 5 that would put tougher regulations on dangerous dog owners.

The bill (HF130), in the words of its sponsor, Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul), would "get tough on dangerous dogs."

Specifically, the proposal would require owners of dogs deemed dangerous by local animal control officers to pay for the mandatory insertion of a microchip into their canines' backs. A dog would be considered dangerous based on its behavior, not its breed. The assessment would be made by local animal control authorities.

Dawkins agreed to a number of changes after several members suggested the original bill made too many changes to existing law.

Committee members approved several amendments, including one that nullified the bill's original provision barring dog owners from appealing the decisions of animal control authorities to any court higher than the district court level.

A second amendment voided the provision that would have required dangerous dog owners to take out an insurance policy worth at least \$300,000. The updated version sets that figure at \$50,000.

The bill now moves to the House Crime Prevention Committee, which will focus on penalties provided in the bill, for violations including the removal of a tracking microchip from a dangerous dog's skin and for having a dog that harms a service dog.

TAXES



Social Security break proposed

As Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar) was campaigning last fall, one of the issues he heard a lot about was Minnesota's policy of taxing Social Security benefits.

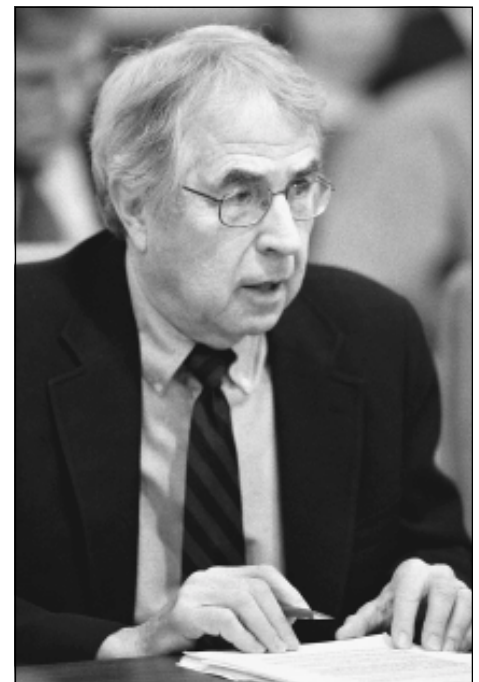
He became convinced that he should offer legislation exempting those benefits and thus was pleased to learn that last session Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-Eden Prairie) had already offered such a bill.

This session Hackbarth and Paulsen have both sponsored bills (HF148 and HF186) that would allow taxpayers to subtract Social Security benefits from their Minnesota taxable income. Both bills were presented Feb. 5 to the House Taxes Committee Sales and Income Tax Division.

The Department of Revenue estimates the cost of allowing the exemptions would be around \$285 million during the next biennium. Currently, 35 states and the District of Columbia do not tax Social Security benefits.

Under current law, for income tax purposes single filers are required to include Social Security benefits on income over \$25,000 while the threshold for married couples filing jointly is \$32,000.

Up to 50 percent of the benefits are included in taxable income for single filers with income greater than \$25,000 but less than \$34,000. Up to 85 percent of benefits are included in



Merle Genzlinger testifies in favor of a bill that would exempt Social Security benefits from being taxed as income during the Feb. 5 hearing of the Sales and Income Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee.

taxable income for single filers with income of more than \$34,000.

For married couples the 50 percent threshold applies to income between \$32,000 and \$44,000, and the 85 percent threshold kicks in on income of more than \$44,000.

Paulsen said the state's decision to tax Social Security benefits was an effort to conform to federal tax law.

Merle Genzlinger, a retired Honeywell employee, said that the policy is "ill-advised" and "unfair."

"I understand that the U.S. government's primary reason for taxing Social Security is to replenish the Social Security fund," Genzlinger said. "The state of Minnesota does not have a dog in that fight."

The division took no action on the bills, but both will be considered further for possible inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Ramp meter study

Minnesota Department of Transportation Commissioner Elwyn Tinklenberg told lawmakers the recent Twin Cities ramp meter study demonstrated that the meters provide "clear benefits" to the metro area.

Addressing a Feb. 6 meeting of the House Transportation Policy Committee, Tinklenberg spoke of results from the six-week study, mandated by the Legislature and conducted by an independent consulting firm.



Vassili Alexiadia, a consultant with Cambridge Systematics, discusses the Twin Cities ramp-meter study with members of the House Transportation Policy Committee Feb. 6.

Tinklenberg said the study "thoroughly documented the benefits resulting from ramp metering to traffic operations and related factors such as air quality in the Twin Cities metro region. The study also demonstrates the need to balance the efficiency of moving as much traffic during the rush hours as possible, consistent with safety concerns and public consensus regarding

queue length at ramp meters."

He added the ramp meters were an "imperfect" attempt to maximize the efficiency of the metro freeways, which should be understood as only a component of a more comprehensive metro transit system.

The study showed that accidents increased and travel times became longer and less predictable, although fewer drivers overall used the freeways when meters were turned off. Furthermore, the average commute increased by seven minutes of freeway driving time, while time spent on entrance ramps decreased by only 2.5 minutes.

Committee Chair Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen) suggested that one mechanism for improving metropolitan area transit could be to limit the type of travel permitted during rush hours. "Who's on the freeway that doesn't need to be there?" he asked rhetorically.

Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Wells) expressed his approval for the study's methodology, but cautioned against additional efforts to influence transportation policies by commissioning further research. "We can't micromanage," he said. "It's time to move forward."

Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul) noted the study's results showed a correlation between commute length and public attitudes toward meters. "This is a question of values," she said, referring to the study's conclusion that people with longer commutes were more likely to look favorably upon the continued use of ramp meters.



Retaining IT professionals

States' strategies may be solution to reduce employee turnover

For years the state of Kansas had difficulty competing with the private sector for employees with computer programming and technical skills. In 1997 the state decided to try a new approach to attract and retain those employees.

Instead of relying on traditional methods to attract employees, the state developed a task force, made up of human resources and information technology professionals from various state agencies, to define the scope of the problem and develop a strategy to address it.

The task force developed an IT Retention Program, which includes a pay plan that allows signing bonuses of up to \$3,000 for potential employees with specific computer skills. The program also provides a \$500

bonus for state employees who successfully recruit information technology workers from the private sector.

Making sure employees are provided with up-to-date equipment, such as laptop computers, and the latest software is also a program priority.

The changes are working.

In 1997 turnover in state information technology jobs was around 15 percent. By 1999 that number had dropped to approximately 4.5 percent.

It's not just Kansas that has successfully devised plans to retain workers.

A similar approach in Wisconsin has helped that state address its shortage of information technology skilled employees.

Shortly after the state implemented its version of the program, more than 150 new employees were hired.

A recruiting and retaining program in Missouri has government managers working with officials from the state's colleges and universities to develop class work designed to meet specific skills needed for state government jobs.

State officials have targeted two groups as potential employees. The first are underemployed workers seeking a job change. The second are middle and high school students. By designing a specific curriculum aimed directly at these groups, the state hopes to develop a lasting relationship with a pool of potential employees.

(D. MAEDA)

Power struggle

Proposed change in regulatory authority angers some farmers, legislators

By JONAS M. WALKER

Hoping to alleviate the administrative burden upon Minnesota farmers, representatives are considering transferring certain regulatory authority from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Existing state law instructs the PCA to “protect Minnesota’s environment through monitoring environmental quality and enforcing environmental regulations.”

Among the regulations promulgated and enforced by the agency are those governing feedlots, defined as an area “where the concentration of animals is such that a vegetative cover cannot be maintained within the enclosure.” Feedlots can become environmentally problematic if animal manure is improperly allowed to enter groundwater or streams.

HF495, sponsored by Rep. Tim Finseth (R-Angus), would remove the PCA’s authority to regulate feedlots and place rulemaking and enforcement responsibility in the state Department of Agriculture.

“The Department of Agriculture is an advocate for family farms. The (PCA) is an adversary of family farms. Advocates would have a more compassionate, helpful touch,” said Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City), co-sponsor of the bill.

The bill has been referred to the House Agriculture Policy Committee. However the idea of moving feedlot oversight from the PCA to the Agriculture Department dominated the Feb. 7 committee meeting, though they took no action on it.

The bill comes a year after the Legislature passed a law loosening some of the feedlot regulations proposed by the agency in 2000. Typically, the agency sets its own rules governing feedlot regulation, but the legislation superceded those.

Asked whether the department would be hamstrung if charged with the responsibilities of both promoting agriculture and regulating agricultural pollution, as his proposal dictates, Osskopp said he wants “a conflict of

interest (within the relevant regulatory agency). I don’t want an adversarial relationship (between farmers and regulatory agencies). I want to help family farmers.”

Osskopp denied that pollution control activities could be compromised if left up to the same officials who promote farming. “I’m not looking for someone to look the other way,” he said. However, he admits the Agriculture Department’s “attitude and policies would be different” from those promoted by the PCA.

Although HF495 does make a few adjustments to the actual rules governing feedlots, Osskopp explained the bill is perhaps best understood as a statement of frustration on the part of farmers and their representatives in St. Paul.

“Maybe this is a message to the PCA that we would like to see whoever is in charge of (feedlots) be a little more farmer-friendly,” he said. “If you won’t be, we will find someone else who will.”

The bill would allow the Agriculture Department to burden county officials with the responsibility of enforcing feedlot regulations. Some of those officials, though, are reluctant to assume that responsibility.

Beltrami County Commissioner Steve Booth testified that he and other county officials were not thrilled at the prospect of enforcing environmental regulations. “We would be happy to tell (the state) to do it. We don’t think we have a problem with feedlot pollution.”

As evidence, Booth presented department data that showed rural water had become more clear between 1989 and 1999, while water in more urban and suburban counties had become less transparent. Discounting the relevance of PCA regulations in contributing to that change, Booth said rural areas “are being force-fed a bunch of superfluous rules and regulations.”

He described PCA rules as “vague,” which he said contributed to “mistrust and confusion” among farmers. He suggested producers “would be more willing to enforce

(pollution control rules) if they understood them.”

Booth denied feedlots were causing problems that PCA regulations intend to prevent. “In my heart of hearts, we don’t have the problem of liquid manure.”

Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel) endorsed county-level pollution control mechanisms, explaining average farmers suffer when PCA regulations overzealously target smaller farms. “One size does not fit all,” he said.

A PCA regulation requiring farmers to register the number and location of their animals proved especially controversial.

Rod Massey, PCA south district director, said the rule’s intent was to easily identify farmers who have feedlots and would need additional assistance meeting federal and state feedlot requirements. He said farmers were asked to fill out a form that was crafted “so that (farmers) will not be subjected” to unnecessary inspections.

Instead, farmers felt assailed. Osskopp said farmers “never thought the day would come that they would have to register like sex offenders.”

Continued on page 20



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

John Peterson, who raises beef cattle in Pinewood, testifies before the House Agriculture Policy Committee Feb. 7 during an overview of the new feedlot rules that are being implemented.

Group seeks reform

Commission presents aggressive plan to re-evaluate Minnesota's priorities for early child care and education

BY MARY KAY WATSON

A blue-ribbon commission has produced a "bold" plan to reorder Minnesota's priorities in early childcare and education. The plan has an equally bold price tag: \$480.7 million annually.

"What happens to children in the first five years of life lays the foundation for their success in K-12," said former Minneapolis Mayor Don Fraser, co-chair of the Early Care and Education Finance Commission, in a presentation to the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee Feb. 7.

Fraser and other commissioners said the return would be greater than the investment, with a net savings to the public over time.

A decade ago the National Education Goals Panel set a goal for the year 2000 that all children would start school "ready to learn." But current studies estimate that 40 percent of the nation's kindergarten-aged children do not meet that goal. Estimates put Minnesota at 30 percent.

"We are spending a lot of money on remedial care because people don't get the right start," said commission member Dr. Blanton Bessinger, director for child advocacy and child policy for Children's Hospitals and Clinics in St. Paul. "A lot of what is in our report is preventive medicine."

Citing such threats to children as poverty, lack of development, lack of stimulation, and violence, Bessinger said, "These threats have to be addressed by public policy."

The commission, established in 1998, acknowledged a "new reality" in the challenges facing parents, and set a goal to "ensure that Minnesota's children receive early care and education that provides a safe, nurturing, educational, and culturally affirming environment."

The House committee has heard a lot about early childhood education in Minnesota this year. Some problems of the current system include fragmentation, inconsistency, and lack of availability to some children.

The commission's comprehensive report, Action Plan for Early Care and Education in Minnesota, addresses these issues and more. Rather than scrapping current programs, the plan would build on, and upgrade, those that are successful, while filling in the gaps to produce a comprehensive system.

The commission's recommendations fall into three categories:

- Give more power and resources to parents to raise their children.
- Increase the quality of early care and education.
- Retool and integrate early care and education to enable Minnesota's children to be kindergarten-ready.

"We want to create time for parents to spend with their children," said Jim Koppel, executive director of the Children's Defense Fund of Minnesota.

One of the recommendations that would support parents in this way would create a \$500 per child refundable, indexed state tax credit for

families with children under age 5.

Another is a program that would offer voluntary paid parental leave. This would be a limited subsidy, shared equally by employers and the state, for a period of time up to 26 weeks.

The quality of available childcare in Minnesota is inconsistent, according to experts. In addition, wages for childcare professionals are dismal — Minnesota ranks 48th out of 50 states.

"More than 60 percent of what's out there is not good child care because they do not have enough resources," said Nancy Johnson, executive director of the Minnesota Childhood Resource and Referral Network.

The plan recommends integrating all early childhood programs, including before and after school programs, at the local level. This would include upgrading existing programs and expanding School Readiness programs.

In addition, Head Start would be funded for birth to age 3, and funding for 3- to 5-year-olds would be increased. Among the Head Start components being given priority are home visitor and parent education programs.

"It's rare that we see such a broad cross-section of ideologies come together and agree on an issue," said Rep. Gregory Gray (DFL-Mpls).

Not everyone was so enthusiastic.

"I think it misses the mark," said Tom

Continued on page 31



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Former Minneapolis Mayor Don Fraser holds up a copy of the "Action Plan for Early Care and Education in Minnesota" during a Feb. 7 presentation to the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee. The report was produced by the Early Care and Education Finance Commission. Other members of the commission include Chuck Slocum, Dr. Blanton Bessinger, Steve Young, Margaret Boyer, Jim Koppel and Nancy Johnson.

A fit for all?

Legislators seek clarification, others voice concern as hearings begin regarding Ventura's tax plan

By DAVID MAEDA

Gov. Jesse Ventura likens his tax proposal to a sweater. He asked the Legislature to consider the package as a whole rather than pick out pieces causing the entire thing to unravel.

Yet as lawmakers closely examine the details, bits of the whole have already come under question. The House Taxes Committee held several

hearings the past two weeks devoted to diving into the many provisions of the bill (HF511) sponsored by House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon).

The committee has scheduled more hearings over the next several weeks throughout Greater Minnesota to take public testimony on the bill.

Matt Smith, commissioner of the Department of Revenue, said HF511 combines several goals — both saving taxpayers money and also developing a fair, balanced, and understandable system.

“While distinct unto themselves they work better in combination,” Smith said.

He said permanent tax relief proposed in the bill is designed to make the growth in government spending less than it would otherwise be. Tax reform in the bill sets out to determine what the best mix of taxes should be.

At the heart of the proposal is an attempt to shift the state's reliance on property taxes to sales taxes. HF511 proposes to remove the state determined general education levy making the property tax more local and more accountable.

To make up for that lost revenue the governor is proposing to lower the sales tax rate from 6.5 percent to 6 percent but expand that tax to more services.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the committee chair, questioned whether it is good public policy to make the state more dependent on sales tax during a time the tax is facing challenges from the proliferation of Internet sales.

During the past year the department, along with 37 other states, participated in a national effort, known as the Streamlined Sales Tax

Project, attempting to design a more universal sales and use tax system by simplifying the calculation, reporting, and payment requirements for vendors. Smith said the complexity of the current system has meant less overall compliance.

He said one of the important principles of HF511 is adopting the project's recommendation for sourcing, or the rules for deciding which state has the right to impose and collect its tax on a transaction.

According to existing law, Minnesota sales tax is based on where the greater part of the production or performance occurred. The proposal would base the tax on where the service is consumed or provided.

Under the change a Minnesota company that ships a product to an out-of-state customer would not charge sales tax to that person.

The concept, in order to work, would require other states to adopt a similar standard. The project proposed sample legislation for each state to enter into a compact governing all the states involved in the program. Several states are considering the proposal, which would bind them to an agreement, but without it nothing compels any of the states to comply.

Smith said one goal of the reform is to tax consumption of all goods sold and services provided in the state unless there was a good policy principle for why an exemption should be allowed.

“The overall thrust of the governor's proposals as they affect Minnesota businesses is to try to make sure that we keep and make Minnesota a good place from which to do business and that we don't disadvantage Minnesota firms as they try to compete in other markets,” Smith said.

Expanding the sales tax to more services

Current untaxed services that would be subject to the sales tax under HF511:

- Legal Services
- Computer and Data Processing Services
- Real Estate/Property Management Service
- Commissions
- Engineering, Architecture and Surveying Services
- Motor Vehicle Repair Services
- Construction- Special Trades
- Accounting Services
- Management, Consulting and Public Relations Services
- Intrastate Transportation Services
- Advertising Services
- Investment Counseling Services/Brokerage Fees
- Personnel Services
- General Repair Services
- Personal Services (Beauty and Barber)
- Sewer Services
- Research and Development/Testing Services
- Funeral Services
- Misc. Business Services (Veterinary, sound recording, claims adjusting, etc.)

Source: Department of Revenue

The department estimates the bill would increase by about 30 percent the number of businesses in the state that would become sales tax collectors, and the department would need around 40 to 50 staff to administer the changes. Abrams questioned whether the state would effectively enforce compliance considering the growth of remote sales even with the additional staff.

Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) and Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville) questioned how the expansion to services would affect the building of homes.

Under the measure, a construction firm employing its own electricians and plumbers would not pay sales tax on those services but a company contracting out for those services now would be subject to the tax.

Smith said the sales tax on a home valued at \$150,000 would amount to approximately \$1,872, but, under Ventura's plan, the same house would see a property tax reduction of about \$496 a year.

Rep. Tim Wilkin (R-Eagan) raised a similar concern about the equity of the bill on

Continued on page 20

Taking the next step

Dibble moves from being a neighborhood activist to working on issues of more state impact at the Capitol

By DAVID MAEDA

It was a natural career progression from his community activism. That's how Rep. D. Scott Dibble (DFL-Mpls) viewed his decision to run for a seat in the Legislature.



Rep. D. Scott Dibble

Long active in his southwest Minneapolis neighborhood as an organizer and coalition builder, Dibble had already spent much time at the Capitol working with his legislators.

"People would ask me 'When are you going to run for office?' and my stock response was, 'I don't know,'" he said, since the idea was not at the forefront of his mind.

Dibble's interest in politics began when he attended the University of St. Thomas in the mid-1980s. At the time the HIV/AIDS crisis was just entering the public consciousness and Dibble joined others in trying to help shape an effective public policy for "one of our most complex social issues."

Along with health issues and trying to find a cure and stop the spread of the disease, Dibble, who is openly gay, said issues like personal privacy, returning to the workplace, housing access, class, race, and homophobia are also important to him.

As a neighborhood activist he worked against the expansion of I-35W and for a reduction of airport noise. He said developing a statewide comprehensive transportation plan and affordable housing issues were other areas he worked on.

Dibble said he and the other neighborhood leaders soon learned their grassroots efforts were greatly helped by reaching out to all sectors of the community, and building partnerships with different groups, including the DFL party.

He served six years as an aide for Minneapolis City Council Member Dore Mead and currently holds the part-time position as the Loring Park executive coordinator.

When longtime state Sen. Allan Spear decided not to run for another term Dibble said Spear encouraged him to run for office. Then when Sen. Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls) announced he was running for Spear's seat in the Senate, Dibble said the time felt right to take his community activism to the next level.

His run for office turned out to be quite a rewarding experience. "It was a really dynamic campaign that brought in a lot of people who never had been involved with working on a campaign," he said.

Dibble said the efforts of those that

Valley High School where he was a classmate of Rep. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley). He said he learned that the state's traits are like no other.

"There is a unique character of the community," he said. "It's almost like living in a small town. I'm well connected with all my neighbors. We know each other and are involved in each other's lives."

For the most part he said the focus during the campaign was on the issues concerning his constituents and not on him being a gay candidate. He was proud of his district and of the people of the state because he received no hate mail during the campaign.

"I've been very forthright about (my identity). It's an important part of who I am," he said.

Dibble said he occasionally would run across someone who seemed a bit hostile, but without exception in the end the exchange

"There is a unique character of the community, It's almost like living in a small town. I'm well connected with all my neighbors. We know each other and are involved in each other's lives."

—Rep. D. Scott Dibble

supported him did not end with his election to office, but that he will continue to work with many of them firsthand in St. Paul to address issues.

After his first month in office, Dibble said he has been "extraordinarily busy getting up to speed" on the issues and developing relationships with other lawmakers.

"What has surprised me is the astonishing amount of paper flow around here," he said. "I've been ruthless about keeping on top of it but there is a tidal wave of paperwork."

He has been trying to read all the information sent to him from various groups outside the Capitol because he wants to learn about the variety of issues across the state.

Although he has always viewed Minnesota as home, Dibble spent much of his youth in various parts of the world. Born in New York City, he also lived in Bermuda, Italy, Portugal, Texas, and Alabama.

"I was the typical Air Force brat," he said.

Still he always looked forward to spending time in Minnesota. He graduated from Apple

turned out positive.

"I was able to engage people in a conversation, the kind I'm sure they never had before. I would say I'm gay and this is how I feel about an issue," he said. "I probably didn't change their mind but it gave them something to think about."

DISTRICT 60B

1998 population (estimate): 32,144

Largest city: Minneapolis

County: Hennepin

Location: south central Minneapolis

Top concern: "To help develop a comprehensive holistic solution to our transportation challenges on a statewide basis."

— Rep. D. Scott Dibble

Staying connected

Legislator returning after two-year hiatus plans to stay close to her roots

BY MICHELLE KIBIGER

When Rep. Ruth Johnson (DFL-St. Peter) left the House in 1998 to campaign for lieutenant governor with gubernatorial candidate



Rep. Ruth Johnson

Mike Freeman, she didn't realize the move would actually bring her back home to the place she always wanted to be anyway — a kindergarten classroom.

Freeman lost the DFL primary in 1998, and Johnson returned to St. Peter where she worked as a Title I teaching assistant at South Elementary School. She spent her time in the spring of 1999 working with kindergarten, first-, and second-grade students on their reading skills.

Johnson, who has a bachelor's degree in religion from Gustavus Adolphus College and a master's degree in college administration from Indiana University, said she initially went to college to become a kindergarten teacher.

The experience taught her the importance of preparing young children to start school and how teachers are succeeding even though their task is difficult in some cases.

"The teachers have to help them be prepared," she said. "They need more than the three R's. I got to see that for myself."

Johnson says education is her top priority in her return to the Legislature. She hopes to provide the necessary resources and rewards to schools and parents so students can be equipped to succeed.

Several proposals she supports that would accomplish that goal include loan forgiveness programs, alternative compensation plans, and other support for schools — K-12 or higher education — including infrastructure.

"We have to recognize that funding for education did not keep pace with inflation in the early 90s," Johnson said. "We're still playing catch up."

Johnson said it's important to encourage students to enter professions, not just

teaching, where there is the most need, but not necessarily the promise of a high salary.

"I have been ashamed of the level of debt that young people have had to assume to do the jobs that we require them to do," she said. "But we definitely need committed, compassionate, and caring people" in those jobs.

When Johnson was first elected in 1996, she was assigned to education, environment, and health and human services committees. This time around, she serves on the agriculture policy and finance committees, as well as the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

Johnson says that gives her the opportunity

"We have to recognize that funding for education did not keep pace with inflation in the early 90s. We're still playing catch up."

—Rep. Ruth Johnson

to focus on "stewardship of the land, air and water resources," which bring her back to her rural/agrarian roots.

The daughter of a Lutheran pastor, Johnson spent most of her formative years in the predominantly rural communities of central and northeastern Nebraska. She said as a child she could walk out her front door and see the town dairy and walk a few steps into a cornfield nearby.

Today, her office in the Capitol complex is filled with paintings and photos of farm life, including the painting of a hog shed.

She says she supports loan programs and other plans to encourage farmers. In addition, she notes the importance of using alternative means to produce sources of energy, including ethanol, biodiesel, and biomass as fuel.

"We have forgotten as a nation that we need to conserve our energy," she said.

During her absence from the Legislature, Johnson also worked with a leadership program for low-income neighborhoods throughout the state to prevent crime and violence.

Johnson says much of that work involves connecting residents with community resources and with one another. This is especially important, she says, in Greater Minnesota as it becomes more culturally diverse.

One success story Johnson tells is the Lyndale Neighborhood Association effort to bring in economic opportunity. Businesses have begun coming in to the Minneapolis area, homeowners have begun fixing up their houses, and the community is revitalizing itself.

"People start to see each other as neighbors and not as strangers," she said. "Businesses are finding it a new opportunity, and that only adds to the economic base."

Though Johnson says she plans to devote most of her time now to being a legislator, she hopes she can stay connected to campuses and classrooms, where she has spent most of her career.

She said she enjoys returning to classrooms and sharing the importance of government with students.

"Public service is a wonderful way for them to give back to their communities," she said.

That's one of the significant lessons she took with her from the campaign for lieutenant governor — that people do care about government and want to be involved. But she takes her responsibility to communicate with constituents and promote the government as an institution for the people very seriously.

"We are the government and it can work better," Johnson said. "But it works best when people are connected."

DISTRICT 24B

1998 population (estimate): 34,729

Largest city: St. Peter

Counties: Blue Earth, Nicollet, LeSueur

Location: south central Minnesota

Top concern: "Education — What I hear from people is their concern about our schools. Education plays an extremely important role in the success of our children."

—Rep. Ruth Johnson

Preparation pays off

Varied background in business, management, and education leads Ruth to St. Paul

BY MARY KAY WATSON

Until last year, Rep. Connie Ruth (R-Owatonna) had never considered running for public office. But she says she's not surprised to find herself at the Legislature.



Rep. Connie Ruth

"Everything I've ever done has prepared me for this," said Ruth who represents District 28A. "Sometimes I feel like my life has just been laid out for me."

Ruth's background looks like a Midwestern sampler: agriculture, health, communication, education, voluntarism, church, and family. She grew up on a farm, worked in radiology, stayed home to care for her young children, worked as general manager for a cable television firm, went back to school for a master's degree in organizational management, and now works as the distance learning coordinator for Southwest State University's Riverland campuses. All this, Ruth said, has been informed by her faith.

Last year, she received an unexpected phone call from House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), who represents District 28B, asking her to consider running for the seat formerly held by Republican-turned-Independent Rep. Doug Reuter, who moved to Texas. Her first reaction was negative. But after meeting with legislators from the Republican Caucus, she came away saying "Yes."

"I was so impressed by their commitment, dedication, and enthusiasm," Ruth said. "Several of them shared their faith with me, and they didn't even know me. I felt called, I really did."

Ruth, a 32-year resident of Owatonna, said friends told her, "It's a perfect fit for you." She wore red throughout her campaign, and her red campaign signs read "Connie!" with a large exclamation point. After she won the election with 54 percent of the vote, her husband had a pin made for her in the shape of an exclamation point to "capture my personality, whatever that means," she said with a laugh.

Ruth's St. Paul office reflects her energy. The walls glow with close-up photos of vivid flowers, all taken by her husband Doug, who is a county attorney. A photo of her family includes the family dog along with daughter,

order of business is to get the U.S. Highway 14 expansion completed. The highway, which runs through downtown Waseca, carries more than 10,000 cars a day on two lanes and is both inadequate and dangerous, according to Ruth.

"When I was door-knocking at people's homes along the highway, I had to shout to be heard," she said.

The highway is important for farmers because they haul their grain on it and important to the area's economic growth, Ruth said. However, it is not included in the governor's budget. "We might have to reappropriate some dollars for it," Ruth said.

Education also has a role to play in economic growth, she said. She is concerned about declining enrollment in Waseca, and the district's inability to pass a bond issue.

"To have a quality workforce, we have to have quality education," she said.

Ruth is energized by the promise of her new

"It's imperative we lower taxes. I'd love to see the surplus go back to the constituents. They know best how to use those dollars."

—Rep. Connie Ruth

Kirsten, sons, Jonathan and Greg, and Greg's wife Christine.

A plaque that defines integrity, a gift from the cable TV firm she worked for, represents her philosophy. She said she is an adherent of the idea of servant leadership and tries to treat all people with respect.

The importance of improving economic growth and development in her area is an overriding issue for Ruth. She wants to see new businesses move in and is concerned that businesses have already been lost due to high corporate taxes.

"It's imperative we lower taxes," she said. "I'd love to see the surplus go back to the constituents. They know best how to use those dollars."

The issues at the top of her list for this year are transportation and education. Her first

job. "I love a good challenge, I love to learn," she said. "I'm so honored and humbled by the response I've had. It has been overwhelming."

DISTRICT 28A

1998 population (estimate): 34,268

Largest city: Owatonna

Counties: Steele and Waseca

Location: southeastern Minnesota

Top concern: "I believe in an open flow of communication. I want to bring government to our community. I want people to feel a part of government."

—Rep. Connie Ruth

Whip squared

House now has two Whips as Entenza ascends to Minority Whip after term as assistant minority leader

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), now in his fourth term in the Minnesota House of Representatives, will fill a new role during the 82nd session of the Legislature — Minority Whip.

The 2001-2002 session marks the first time the House has had any “Whip” positions in its leadership structure. The Republican caucus named Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) as Majority Whip to assist Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan). Likewise, Entenza will aid Minority Leader Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) in his duties.

In government terms “whip” was first used in the English Parliament. It comes from fox hunting where the “whipper in” is the person responsible for keeping the hounds together and working as a team. Therefore, in the Legislature, the term can be applied to a caucus leader who keeps members informed about topics and keeps members of the same party together in voting on specific key issues.

Both Seifert and Entenza will specifically assist their respective caucus leaders with floor debate, motions, parliamentary procedures and help coordinate floor activity, including amendments, speeches, establishing the order of speakers and defending caucus policies.

In an interview earlier this session, Seifert said his position is a way to reach out to the caucus membership and provide better communication. Entenza agreed.

“We’re working to make sure our members are informed,” Entenza said. “It was part of (Pugh’s) strategy for making sure the DFL position is communicated.”

Entenza will continue in his position as assistant minority leader, which he has held since 1999. He said he has already been performing a number of the minority whip duties as an assistant leader, so he feels comfortable assuming the new role.

“I was certainly involved in floor strategy before, but now I have to take the lead,” Entenza said.

That also involves working with Pugh to develop caucus positions and strategies on specific issues. Entenza says he enjoys good, spirited floor debates and looks forward to discussing several issues, including privacy and taxes, as well as education and health care funding.


When he was first elected to the Legislature, Entenza said, he was primarily focused on education issues. In fact, he has served on the House K-12 Education Finance Committee since his first term.

But being a caucus leader allows him to explore other issues and look at legislation from a broader perspective. And floor debates require a slight departure from the specific details of legislation.

Entenza described the difference between committee hearing discussions and floor

debate, using the example of the “Patients Bill of Rights.”

“I think the floor debates tend to touch on broader topics,” he said. “We’re going to want to send a strong message, not just on the details of the (bill) but that we also support the concept.”

Entenza also looks forward to further involvement with leaders in the Republican caucus. He calls both Pawlenty and Seifert fair and competent leaders, and he enjoys working with them. 

HOUSE LEADERSHIP

Steve Sviggum-R
Speaker of the House

Tim Pawlenty-R
Majority Leader

Thomas W. Pugh-DFL
Minority Leader

Mary Liz Holberg-R
Assistant Majority Leader

Tony Kielkucki-R
Assistant Majority Leader

Jim Knoblach-R
Assistant Majority Leader

William Kuisle-R
Assistant Majority Leader

Dan McElroy-R
Assistant Majority Leader

Carol L. Molnau-R
Assistant Majority Leader

Marty Seifert-R
Majority Whip

Lyndon Carlson-DFL
Assistant Minority Leader

Matt Entenza-DFL
Assistant Minority Leader/Minority Whip

Al Juhnke-DFL
Assistant Minority Leader

Margaret Anderson Kelliher-DFL
Assistant Minority Leader

Sharon Marko-DFL
Assistant Minority Leader

Mary Murphy-DFL
Assistant Minority Leader

Mary Ellen Otremba-DFL
Assistant Minority Leader

Loren Solberg-DFL
Assistant Minority Leader



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Minority Whip, Rep. Matt Entenza, left, talks with Rep. Mary Jo McGuire, right, on the House floor earlier in the session.

Emergency heat assistance

Senate bill providing \$30 million to schools amended on House floor to give sales tax rebate

The House took the uncommon step Feb. 8 of suspending both the constitution and the House rules to allow the second and third reading of a bill that would allocate \$30 million to school districts for emergency heating and transportation costs.

House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) made the motions for the suspensions, which allowed the full House to consider SF228*/HF378, sponsored in the House by Rep. Jim Davnie (DFL-Mpls).

The bill was originally passed by the Senate Feb. 5 by a vote of 40 to 23, and senators expressed urgency, hoping the House would act on the bill so the aid could go to schools soon.

However, members amended the bill on the floor, which will require the approval of the Senate before it can move forward.

Davnies told the House, "We are experiencing some of the highest energy costs ever." His bill would require the commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning to reimburse school districts for 97 percent of the difference between any given school district's anticipated and actual energy

and transportation costs. There would be a cap of \$30 million for statewide spending on the measure.

Shortly after the debate began, Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) proposed an amendment that deleted the entirety of SF228 and introduced a bill to spend the projected \$925 million budget surplus for the current biennium in the form of a sales tax rebate, based on 1999 receipts. The amendment provides rebate recipients with the opportunity to return the money to the state for one of six appropriations ranging from K-12 education to transportation spending.

Rep. Torrey Westrom (R-Elbow Lake) proposed an amendment adding nursing homes to that list. The House approved the amendment.

Davnies resisted measures to amend his bill. "If we don't pass a clean, uncluttered bill," he warned, "school districts will have to lay off teachers, cut extracurricular programs, and reduce course offerings."

Minority Leader Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) offered an unsuccessful verbal amendment to the Abrams amendment that would

restore the complete text of SF228.

Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul) spoke in favor of Pugh's amendment. "The Davnie language is the responsible thing to do. It was what Minnesotans understand. It recognizes the mutual responsibility we have to one another."

Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Crystal) offered another amendment that would have included higher educational institutions among those schools to be reimbursed for higher heating costs. Some members remained skeptical of any spending which could be appropriated to the University of Minnesota. Carlson's amendment was defeated.

Members' opinions regarding amendments generally fell along party lines, with Republicans favoring an unmitigated rebate and DFLers favoring a modified rebate, which would funnel some funds toward energy costs for schools.

"We have bills that are due now. We don't have a surplus until the bills are paid," said Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls). "You have missed the point," countered Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield). "It's my money for my family. It's not your money."

The House passed Abrams' amendment and also passed the bill on an 82-42 vote. It must now return to the Senate for that body to concur with the amendments.


(J. WALKER)

Continued from page 13

Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba (DFL-Long Prairie) sought to differentiate between what she saw as aggressive enforcement and helpful assistance in meeting necessary environmental protections. "We have a good feedlot officer; he helps people come into compliance."

Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexandria) echoed Otremba's comment. "The PCA ought to be a helping agency and not an agency which throws up barriers."

Massey said the PCA relocated a majority of its staff outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area so they are closer to the farms they regulate. He also said the agency identified a number of counties that could serve as clearinghouses for farm-regulation information and assistance for farmers wishing to comply with environmental rules.

"We are never going to be best friends (with the farmers we regulate)," said Massey, "but we can be a good source of information." 

Continued from page 15

delivery services. The proposal would charge sales tax on private services such as Federal Express or United Parcel Service but not on the United States Postal Service, since the state cannot tax the federal government.

Smith said the shift in tax burden should be considered in the context of the entire proposal and businesses will benefit from other parts of the bill such as the reduction in the commercial industrial tax rate.

During the first public testimony on the bill Feb. 7, individuals representing nonprofit groups expressed concern with the bill's provisions that affect their organizations.

Under HF511 more nonprofits would qualify for sales tax exemptions on their purchases and more types of goods would be exempt. But the bill would also make more sales by nonprofits taxable and would create a fee that local units of government could charge


certain nonprofit organizations for public safety services.

It is the last two measures that have many concerned.

Pat Lynch, representing the YMCAs of Minnesota, said increasing taxes on the organization would mean a cut back in services provided.

"Every dollar that is redirected is a dollar that won't be directed back to our programs," she said.

Lori Fritz, the vice president of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation said her organization is already struggling to maintain its level of services, and any added tax burden would mean a cutback in programs.

"Those that need help would suffer the most," she said. "And the government would have to come in and help those in need." 



How to get here

Location

The Capitol complex is north of I-94, just minutes from downtown St. Paul. It is accessible from the east and west on I-94, and from the north and south on I-35E.

I-94 eastbound: Exit at Marion Street. Turn left. Go to Aurora Avenue and turn right. Go one block, cross Rice Street, and enter Parking Lot D.

I-94 westbound: Exit at Marion Street. Turn right. Go to Aurora Avenue and turn right. Go one block, cross Rice Street, and enter Parking Lot D.

I-35E northbound: Exit at Kellogg Boulevard. Turn left. Go to John Ireland Boulevard and turn right. Metered parking spaces line both sides of the boulevard.

I-35E southbound: Exit at University Avenue. Turn right. Go to Rice Street and turn left. Go one block and turn left to enter Parking Lot D.

Visiting the Minnesota State Capitol complex can be a rewarding and educational experience for everyone. There are buildings to explore and tours to take almost any time you choose to visit. And when the Legislature is in session during the first part of every year, there are floor sessions to observe, committee meetings to attend, and legislators to meet. Remember that this is your state Capitol, and you are always welcome.

Parking

Public metered parking is available in Lot Q, north of the Capitol at Cedar Street and Sherburne Avenue; Lot D, next to the State Office Building off Rice Street on Aurora Avenue; Lot F, directly behind the Transportation Building; Lot K, across from the Armory on Cedar Street (enter from 12th Street); and on the orange level of the Centennial Office Building Ramp at Cedar Street and Constitution Avenue. All-day metered parking is available in Lot Q. Capitol Security personnel will issue tickets for expired meters.

All-day parking permits may be purchased for \$3.50 from Plant Management on the third floor of the Ford Building. Cash or checks are accepted and correct change is appreciated. For more information, call (651) 297-3993.

Outdoor handicapped parking is available in Lot O, which is on the northeast side of the Capitol, and in Lot F.

Indoor handicapped parking is available on the lower level of the State Office Building Ramp (use the call box at the ramp entrance to gain entry); on the blue level of the Centennial

Office Building Ramp; and on the entry level of the Administration Building Ramp (two stalls).

There are two handicapped entrances to the Capitol. One is on the northeast side of the building, just off Lot O; the other is a drop-off entrance under the south main steps at the front of the building.

Since parking is limited during legislative sessions, busing may be easier. Freeway express bus service is available. Bus number 94B takes you to the Capitol and the State Office Building. Call the Transit Information Center at (651) 349-7000 for schedule and route information.

What to do

Tours

Tours of the Capitol are offered through the Capitol Historic Site Program of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Tour guides lead the 45-minute tours on the hour Mondays through Fridays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. (last tour leaves at 4 p.m.); Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (last tour leaves at 3 p.m.); and Sundays between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. (last tour leaves at 3 p.m.). The tours are free of charge and begin at the Capitol's information desk at the end of the corridor to the right of the main entrance. Brochures in about 20 foreign languages also are available there.

Tour participants may request customized tours that emphasize either the building or state government.

Historical society officials ask that groups of 10 or more call at least two weeks in advance to reserve a tour time.

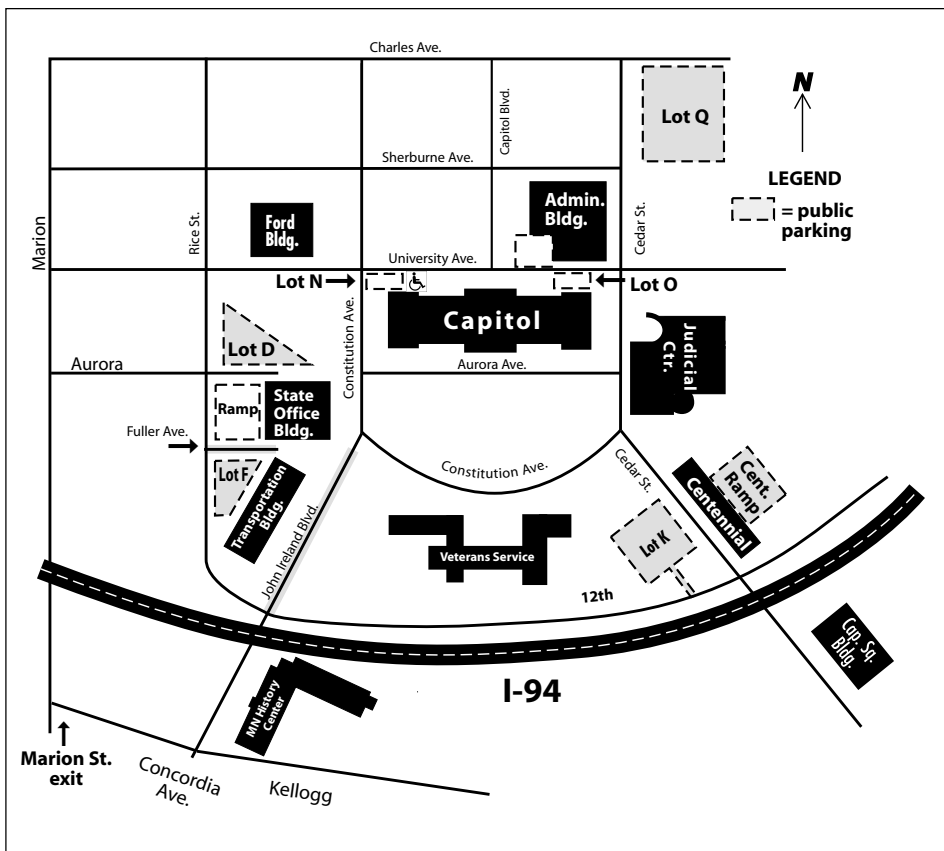
The society offers "Voice of the People: Your Role in Minnesota Government," a half-day session for students in grades 9-12.

Also, special tour events are scheduled monthly throughout the year. Some of these events entail admission fees; others are free. A special events guide is available upon request.

For more information about the tours or to reserve a time, call the Capitol Historic Site Program, (651) 296-2881.

Legislative sessions

Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate debate bills when the Legislature is in session.



At the beginning of a legislative session, the pace of floor sessions is generally slow as new bills are assigned to committees and non-controversial items are discussed. At about the session's midpoint, however, the legislative pace quickens.

The House usually meets at 3 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays, and the Senate meets at 11:30 a.m. Mondays and at 9:30 a.m. Thursdays during the first few weeks. House floor sessions are scheduled for the afternoon because committees meet in the morning and early afternoon. As the session nears the end, however, both bodies may meet several times a day, often into the night.

All House and Senate floor sessions are open to the public. Visitors interested in observing these sessions may call the House Chief Clerk's Office, (651) 296-2314, or Senate Information, (651) 296-0504, with questions. Spectators may sit in the galleries of either chamber.

Committee meetings

Visitors wanting to attend a committee meeting may call the committee hotlines for prerecorded messages with the meeting times and agendas for each day: House, (651) 296-9283; Senate, (651) 296-8088. Printed agendas for the week also appear in each issue of the *Session Weekly* and the *Senate Briefly*.

Committee meetings are open to the public. When a public hearing is scheduled, the committee may listen to comments from the audience (when time permits) in addition to the scheduled speakers. Committees have different policies on hearing testimony depending upon their size and workload. Informational handouts that committee members receive during meetings or hearings are considered public information and are available to the audience on a first-come, first-served basis.

Major proposals often have several public hearings so committee members may listen to all arguments for and against a bill.

Each committee has a chair, vice chair, administrator, and legislative assistant. A list of committees and members is available in the House Public Information Office in Room 175, State Office Building, or the Senate Information Office in Room 231, State Capitol.

Groups and individuals wishing to testify before a committee should call the appropriate committee's legislative assistant well in advance of the meeting and ask to be placed on the agenda. Committees prefer requests one week in advance but will accept later notification when unexpected issues appear on the committee schedule. A brochure containing tips on testifying at legislative committee hearings is available from the House Public Information Office.

Dining

Cafeterias are located in most state buildings. The small State Office Building cafeteria is usually open only when the Legislature is in session. A large, year-round cafeteria also is available in the State Capitol and the Transportation Building.

Also, there are many restaurants within walking distance. The Lagoon Vietnamese Restaurant, White Castle, and El Bravo Mexican Restaurant are on Rice Street. On University Avenue, you will find McDonald's, Burger King, Mai Village, and other restaurants. There also are dozens of restaurants only minutes away in downtown St. Paul. Bus rides downtown cost 25 cents. You can catch the bus on Constitution Avenue.

Group visits

Sometimes groups plan a "legislative day" at the Capitol in order to express a particular viewpoint to legislators.

Rooms for special conferences or speakers can be reserved by calling the State Office Building room scheduler at (651) 296-5408 or the Capitol room scheduler at (651) 296-0866.

If group members want to meet with their individual legislators or testify before a committee (see "Committee meetings"), arrangements should be made at least a week in advance.

Often such groups have members wear a distinctive name tag or badge to indicate their concern about a particular issue.

Groups planning a trip to the Capitol should remember that seating is fairly limited in some committee rooms — particularly when the topic is controversial.

E-mail schedules

Anyone with e-mail can receive both House and Senate committee schedules. To sign up to receive the House committee schedule, you have two options. Send an e-mail message to join-houseschedule@ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us or direct your Web browser to <http://ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us/scripts/lyris.pl?join=houseschedule> and fill out the subscription form on the Legislature's Web site.

To receive the Senate schedule, send a message to:

listserv@senate.leg.state.mn.us

Leave the subject line blank, and in the body of the message, enter:

subscribe sen-schedules

Where to find information

House Public Information Office

175 State Office Building
(651) 296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550

The House Public Information Office is a nonpartisan office that provides committee meeting schedules; legislator information; and publications, including the *Session Weekly* newsmagazine, educational brochures for all ages, and member directories. All information is available at no charge.

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216C State Capitol (651) 297-1338

House Television Services is responsible for live coverage of House floor sessions and some committee hearings. Such coverage is aired in the Twin Cities area on KTCI-TV, Channel 17. The House also broadcasts via satellite statewide. Outstate residents should check with local cable operators for time and channel information or the office's Web site at: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/htv/htv.ssi>

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Chief Clerk's Office

211 State Capitol (651) 296-2314

The Chief Clerk's Office provides copies of bills at no charge, all agendas for House sessions, and the Journal of the House.

House Index Department

211 State Capitol (651) 296-6646

The House Index Department, a part of the Chief Clerk's Office, has a computerized index available for public use. House Index lists bills by committee, topic, author, file number, and other categories. The office can also give you the current status of legislation.

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231 State Capitol (651) 296-0504

The Senate Information Office is responsible for all information about the Senate, including the committee schedule, bill status, legislator information, and the distribution of bill copies.

Senate Media Services

B-44 State Capitol (651) 296-0264

Senate Media Services, a bipartisan office, produces television programs, multi-media productions, scriptwriting, photography and graphics. It offers live coverage of the Senate floor sessions and some committee hearings.

Monday, February 5

HF551—Finseth (R) Agriculture Policy

Ethanol producer payments authorized to expand regional ethanol development and money appropriated.

HF552—Abrams (R) Taxes

Sales tax rebate payments provided, automatic rebate enacted, and money appropriated.

HF553—Ruth (R) Transportation Policy

Obsolete and duplicative transportation laws repealed.

HF554—Dorman (R) Taxes

Individual income tax rates reduced.

HF555—Finseth (R) K-12 Education Finance

Independent School District No. 628, Plummer, fund transfer authorized.

HF556—Stanek (R) Crime Prevention

Federal law enforcement officers authorized to exercise powers of arrest in Minnesota under specified circumstances.

HF557—Haas (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Osseo Volunteer Firefighters Relief Association increase in liabilities offset and money appropriated.

HF558—Swenson (R) Agriculture Policy

Johne's Disease (paratuberculosis) testing program enhancement provided and money appropriated.

HF559—Goodno (R) Health & Human Services Policy

Nursing facility, intermediate care facilities for persons with mental retardation (OCF/MR) and other program rate increase provided and money appropriated.

HF560—Goodno (R) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Patient protections provisions modified.

HF561—Harder (R) Taxes

Heron Lake watershed district increased levy authorized.

HF562—Goodno (R) Taxes

Border city enterprise zone allocations authorized for western border zones.

HF563—Lieder (DFL) Agriculture & Rural Development Finance

Farm wrap network and rural help network grants provided and money appropriated.

HF564—Rhodes (R) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Neighborhood home improvement loan pilot project established and money appropriated.

HF565—Kubly (DFL) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Olivia Center for Agricultural Innovation established, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF566—Lenczewski (DFL) Taxes

Income tax rate reduction plan required to limit growth in revenues.

HF567—Osskopp (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Fair and clean elections act; increasing campaign contribution disclosure, limiting contributions and expenditures, increasing public subsidies, and appropriating money.

HF568—Jennings (DFL) Regulated Industries

Public Utilities Commission chair duties expanded, salary limit raised, and informal dispute resolution provided.

HF569—Molnau (R) Taxes

County road and bridge maintenance equipment and vehicle tax exemptions provided.

HF570—Hilstrom (DFL) Crime Prevention

Peace officer license revocation, suspension, and denial grounds prescribed; Peace Officer Standards and Training Board minority recruiter reporting removed, and city council member peace officer empowerment repealed.

HF571—Rukavina (DFL) Health & Human Services Policy

Rehabilitation counselor qualification requirements provided.

HF572—Harder (R) Agriculture & Rural Development Finance

Soybean diseases and genetics research provided and money appropriated.

HF573—Finseth (R) Taxes

Land payments in lieu of taxation provisions modified.

HF574—Davids (R) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Public assistance eligibility irrevocable trust funds asset exclusion limits modified.

HF575—Kuisle (R) Taxes

Individual income tax education expenses deduction expanded.

HF576—Thompson (DFL) Health & Human Services Finance

Hennepin County nursing home rate increase provided and money appropriated.

HF577—Lenczewski (DFL) Taxes

Reverse referendum authorized to rescind state tax increases refund of rescinded revenues provided, money appropriated, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF578—Pugh (DFL) K-12 Education Finance

Special School District No. 6, South St. Paul, full day kindergarten grant authorized and money appropriated.

HF579—Larson (DFL) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Consumer financial record privacy provided, consumer authorization required for financial record disclosure, and remedies provided.

HF580—Entenza (DFL) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Telecommunications consumer privacy act.

HF581—Lenczewski (DFL) Ways & Means

State budget process increased public participation and notification provided.

HF582—Entenza (DFL) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Telemarketing; written consumer authorization required for electronic charges imposed by telemarketers.

HF583—Hackbarth (R) Taxes

Diesel fuel used to operate commuter rail systems sales tax exemption provided.

HF584—Hackbarth (R) Taxes

Commuter rail system construction materials and equipment sales tax exemption provided.

HF585—Gleason (DFL) Civil Law

ERA; equality of rights under the law for men and women provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF586—Seifert (R) Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Minnesota River Basin Projects, Inc. floodwater control grant provided and money appropriated.

HF587—Huntley (DFL) Health & Human Services Policy

Detoxification services provided by counties reimbursed by state funds.

HF588—Swapinski (DFL) Taxes

Western Lake Superior sanitary district sales tax exemption provided.

HF589—Jaros (DFL) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Duluth aerial lift bridge lead paint abatement and repainting provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF590—Gunter (R) Jobs & Economic Development Finance

Extended employment program hourly reimbursement rates increased, welfare-to-work extended employment partnership program funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF591—Slawik (DFL) Family & Early Childhood Education Finance

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) revenue modified, reserve fund balances capped, and money appropriated.

HF592—Dorman (R)**Taxes**

Non-mixed-municipal solid waste tax decreased, and specified accounting and recordkeeping requirements repealed.

HF593—Lenczewski (DFL)**Taxes**

Income, corporate franchise, sales and use, and motor vehicle sales tax increases limited; and tax rate reductions required to ensure revenues do not exceed limits.

HF594—Westrom (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Spinal cord injury research board and trust account established, rulemaking authorized, and money appropriated.

HF595—Ozment (R)**Transportation Policy**

Railroads; local governments authorized to establish quiet zones regulating or prohibiting locomotive warning devices.

HF596—Abeler (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Historic structure rehabilitation income tax credit provided.

HF597—Evans (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Joint and survivor annuity benefit selection required of specified retirement plans, and terms clarified.

HF598—Slawik (DFL)**Taxes**

Dependent care income tax credit expanded.

HF599—Mulder (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Resolution memorializing Congress to propose a constitutional amendment to allow states to apportion one chamber of their legislative bodies on the basis of area, not population.

HF600—Harder (R)**Agriculture & Rural Development Finance**

Minnesota agriculture in the classroom program educational specialist funding provided and money appropriated.

HF601—Johnson, R. (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 508, St. Peter, declining pupil aid grant authorized and money appropriated.

HF602—Leighton (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Special education revenue base year modified.

HF603—Abeler (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Council on disability sunset extended.

HF604—Sertich (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Employee assistance records access provided to persons receiving services, and employee assistance records required to be kept separate from personnel records.

HF605—Leighton (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 492, Austin, authorized to carry an operating capital account deficit.

HF606—Larson (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Term limits provided for state legislators and constitutional officers, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF607—Skoe (DFL)**Taxes**

Stationary feed bunks and fencing used to contain beef or dairy cattle exempted from sales tax.

HF608—Harder (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Independent School District No. 2884, Red Rock Central, Internet access grant provided and money appropriated.

HF609—Anderson, I. (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Koochiching County Big Bear Country education center construction grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF610—Solberg (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Local public officer's conflict of interest law exception provided.

HF611—Sykora (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Education price index created, general education formula allowance adjusted, and money appropriated.

HF612—Nornes (R)**Taxes**

Licensed child care facilities educational materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF613—Rukavina (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Private easements across tax-forfeited land authorized.

HF614—Huntley (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

University of Minnesota-Duluth new laboratory science building construction provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF615—Lenczewski (DFL)**Taxes**

Tax credit established for land donated for conservation purposes, and report to legislature required.

HF616—Marko (DFL)**Taxes**

Local government aid paid to specified metropolitan cities increased.

HF617—Jacobson (R)**Crime Prevention**

Ramsey County - St. Paul joint domestic abuse prosecution unit continued, and money appropriated.

HF618—Kubly (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Disaster relief provided for Yellow Medicine and Chippewa counties resulting from July 25, 2000 tornado, and money appropriated.

HF619—Swapinski (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Former military personnel service credit purchases authorized with specified public pension plans for uncredited military services.

HF620—Fuller (R)**Transportation Finance**

Akeley Highway 64 bridge construction funded, and money appropriated.

HF621—Fuller (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 306, LaPorte, grant authorized for air quality requirements construction costs, and money appropriated.

HF622—Fuller (R)**Taxes**

Bemidji Bureau of Criminal Apprehension satellite laboratory construction materials and equipment sales tax exemption provided.

HF623—Fuller (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 306, LaPorte, fund transfer authorized.

HF624—Seagren (R)**Transportation Policy**

Light rail; requiring route to be identified before spending appropriations to study light rail transit and commuter rail.

HF625—Seagren (R)**Transportation Policy**

Trunk Highway 62 in Minneapolis and Richfield construction project restrictions imposed.

HF626—Walz (R)**Jobs & Economic****Development Finance**

Family homeless prevention and assistance program funding provided and money appropriated.

Thursday, February 8

HF627—Holsten (R)**Taxes**

Hugo City Hall construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF628—Leppik (R)**Crime Prevention**

Apartment manager background checks required on individuals who have resided in the state less than 10 years.

HF629—Dorman (R)**Regulated Industries**

Austin Municipal Utilities Commission joint ventures with Freeborn-Mower counties cooperative electric power association authorized.

HF630—Swapinski (DFL)**Taxes**

Sales to political subdivisions tax exemption provided.

HF631—Skoglund (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

School trespass law clarified.

HF632—Luther (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Organ donors; paid leave required for organ donation.

HF633—Osskopp (R)**Taxes**

Tax refunds applied to pay child support before any tax offsets.

HF634—Ozment (R)**Ways & Means**

Claims against the state paid, and money appropriated.

HF635—Opatz (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

St. Cloud authorized to file notice regarding potential activity at regional airport.

HF636—Smith (R)**Ways & Means**

State spending prohibited from increasing at a greater rate than the consumer price index, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF637—Smith (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Water quality cooperative activities restricted.

HF638—Smith (R)
Civil Law
World War II; statute of limitations waived on actions for compensation by persons forced to perform labor by Germany or Japan between 1929 and 1945.

HF639—Nornes (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Brain and spinal cord injury research board and trust account established, provider reporting provisions modified, civil penalties imposed, surcharge applied to specified traffic fines, and money appropriated.

HF640—Ness (R)
Agriculture Policy
Farmer-lender mediation program sunset extended.

HF641—Ness (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Pupil unit reporting required for charter schools in initial years of operation.

HF642—Kahn (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
National health services corps state loan repayment program; disciplinary action grounds established for physicians failing to meet obligations or repay loans.

HF643—Paulsen (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Initiative and referendum provided and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF644—Johnson, S. (DFL)
Education Policy
Technical career student loan forgiveness program established and money appropriated.

HF645—Marko (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Local road improvement fund created, uses specified, fund transfers provided, advisory committee established, and money appropriated.

HF646—Sykora (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Youth programs in community education revenue provided, levy authorized, and money appropriated.

HF647—Westerberg (R)
Transportation Finance
East Bethel; Trunk Highway 65 improvement bonds issued.

HF648—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Birth centers regulatory system study required.

HF649—Fuller (R)
Higher Education Finance
Bemidji State University fieldhouse addition planning provided and money appropriated.

HF650—Fuller (R)
Higher Education Finance
Northwest Technical College - Bemidji State University colocation project phase II funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF651—Peterson (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Natural gas allowed as petroleum component of E85 fuel.

HF652—Anderson, B. (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Eminent domain proceedings owner costs and fees provided.

HF653—Evans (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
State building code terms defined, building officials designated, and advisory council extended.

HF654—Hackbarth (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
State-run gaming facility authorized, duties and powers prescribed, gaming revenue use specified, and money appropriated.

HF655—Wolf (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Minnesota unemployment insurance program law; technical and miscellaneous substantive unemployment provisions modified, procedures clarified, and eligibility extended to specified victims of domestic abuse.

HF656—Lipman (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Revisor's bill correcting erroneous, ambiguous, and omitted text and obsolete references; and making miscellaneous technical corrections.

HF657—Lipman (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
State funding of abortion services prohibited, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF658—Murphy (DFL)
Education Policy
Regent candidate advisory council abolished.

HF659—Wolf (R)
Regulated Industries
State energy plan established, energy conservation promoted, and conforming, technical and clarifying changes provided.

HF660—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Medical assistance mileage reimbursement increased.

HF661—Stang (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Accountancy Act of 2001 established, rulemaking authorized, and penalties imposed.

HF662—Rukavina (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Aurora housing and redevelopment tax increment financing district extended.

HF663—Biernat (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Traffic signal violation citations by photographic evidence authorized, local programs requirements provided, penalties imposed, and money appropriated.

HF664—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Koochiching County regional cold weather testing facility construction grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF665—Kielkucki (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Regional development commissions and other regional organization local planning assistance funding provided and money appropriated.

HF666—Clark, K. (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Equal pay commission created, and study and report required.

HF667—Seifert (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Administrative rules procedures modified.

HF668—Lenczewski (DFL)
Taxes
In-lieu property tax payments provided for state-owned property.

HF669—Rhodes (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
St. Louis Park local contribution authorized for specified tax increment financing districts.

HF670—Carlson (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Resolution memorializing the President and Congress to carry through on their pledge to fund 40 percent of special education costs.

HF671—Goodwin (DFL)
Regulated Industries
Public utilities commission required to ensure accurate utility bills, public utilities required to offer budget plans subject to approval, billing practices investigated, penalties provided, and technical provisions modified.

HF672—Hausman (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Railroad bridge expansion financial assistance authorized.

HF673—Stanek (R)
Crime Prevention
Emergency 911 telephone services maximum allowable fee increased, and specified local signage costs authorized.

HF674—Swapinski (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Child advocacy center grants provided and money appropriated.

HF675—Swenson (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
West Newton reimbursed for costs of St. George community wastewater treatment system, and money appropriated.

HF676—Wenzel (DFL)
Taxes
Medical care and health insurance expanded income tax deductions authorized.

HF677—Mulder (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
School readiness aid modified and money appropriated.

HF678—Bishop (R)
Judiciary Finance
Community corrections; sex offender treatment corrections and productive day initiative programs grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF679—Lindner (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Advocating Change Together, Inc. (ACT); grant provided for training for people with disabilities, and money appropriated.

HF680—Rhodes (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Perspective, Inc.; transitional housing grant provided and money appropriated.

HF681—Rhodes (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
St. Louis Park Meadowbrook collaborative housing project grant provided to enhance youth outreach services, and money appropriated.

HF682—Gunther (R)
Taxes
Sales tax rate reduced.

HF683—McGuire (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Chromated copper arsenate sale and use prohibited.

HF684—McGuire (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Capitol area grounds vegetation removal and cleanup required.

HF685—McGuire (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Employment of unsupervised minors prohibited.

HF686—Jaros (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Duluth technology village grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF687—Kielkucki (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School lunch and breakfast funding increased, school eligibility expanded for priority for a fast break for learning grant, and money appropriated.

HF688—Bakk (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
St. Louis County tax-forfeited land sale authorized.

HF689—Bakk (DFL)
Taxes
Beaver Bay sales and use tax authorized and revenue use specified.

HF690—Mahoney (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Tattooing of minors prohibited.

HF691—Hackbarth (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Motor vehicle transfer fee eliminated.

HF692—Sviggum (R)
Crime Prevention
Juvenile correctional facilities required to allow residents to attend religious services.

HF693—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Dentists loan forgiveness program established, donated dental services program created, dental services and provider requirements modified, reimbursement rates increased, immunities provided, and money appropriated.

HF694—Davids (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
No-fault auto insurance sale of income loss benefits coverage to senior citizens regulated.

HF695—Osskopp (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Health care reimbursement plan for state employees established, funds transferred, and money appropriated.

HF696—Stanek (R)
Crime Prevention
Correctional officers disciplinary procedures established.

HF697—Holsten (R)
Taxes
Reduced property tax rate provided for specified class 2c land bordering public waters.

HF698—Osskopp (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Fire marshal investigators or inspectors defined as classified employees included in the public employees police and fire fund.

HF699—Sykora (R)
Crime Prevention
Domestic abuse; omnibus domestic abuse bill enhancing criminal and civil provisions and appropriating money.

HF700—Lieder (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Ada 1997 flood recovery work bond interest reimbursement grant provided and money appropriated.

HF701—Gunther (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
On-site employee drug and alcohol testing permitted under certain circumstances.

HF702—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Local intervention grants for self-sufficiency formula modified.

HF703—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Senior service corps volunteer programs; foster grandparent and senior companion program funding provided and money appropriated.

HF704—Fuller (R)
Crime Prevention
Emergency medical services personnel licensure provided exception from criminal rehabilitation provisions.

HF705—Opatz (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Conservation easement matching grants provided and money appropriated.

HF706—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Breast and cervical cancer treatment medical assistance eligibility established and money appropriated.

HF707—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Carisoprodol classified as a controlled substance upon federal ruling.

HF708—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Well drilling machines and equipment registration tax exemption clarified.

HF709—Opatz (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
St. Cloud area joint powers board parks and trails grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF710—Wolf (R)
Regulated Industries
Minnesota retail electric competition act adopted and money appropriated.

HF711—Penas (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Rural hospital grants provided and grant provisions modified, health care technician and rural hospital nurse loan forgiveness programs established, telemedicine coverage sunset repealed, and money appropriated.

HF712—Mares (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Local government correctional service plan contribution rates modified.

HF713—Boudreau (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Day training and habilitation services medical assistance coverage provided.

HF714—Tingelstad (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Plumber licensure required, inspection requirements for plumbing installations established, fees and rulemaking authorized, and restricted plumbing contractor licensure provided.

HF715—Molnau (R)
Transportation Policy
Operation of certain school buses without a school bus endorsement restricted.

HF716—Kielkucki (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 111, Watertown-Mayer, fund transfer authorized.

HF717—Gunther (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Blue Earth County rural advanced business facilitation program pilot project grant provided and money appropriated.

HF718—Skoe (DFL)
Civil Law
Probate; medical assistance claim clearance provision limited.

HF719—Lieder (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Crookston; Red Lake River Ottertail dam reconstruction and modification grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF720—Wasiluk (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Employee invention agreements regulated.

HF721—Larson (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Richfield redevelopment grants provided and money appropriated.

HF722—Leighton (DFL)
Civil Law
Civil remedy provided injured employees if employer willfully or repeatedly violates safety laws.

HF723—Finseth (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Big Bog and Red River State Recreation Area operating costs funded, and money appropriated.

HF724—Rhodes (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
State professional service contract procedures specified.

HF725—Tingelstad (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Metropolitan regional parks system operation and maintenance provided and money appropriated.

HF726—Skoglund (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
 Prior service credit purchase authorized for a former Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota, instructor.

HF727—Clark, J. (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
 Graves at regional treatment center cemeteries required to show names, and money appropriated.

HF728—Sertich (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
 Declining pupil revenue calculated using five-year average enrollment.

HF729—Ozment (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
 Nursing grant program for persons of color established, summer health care interns and nursing loan forgiveness programs modified, nursing scholarship and health care planning programs established, study required, and money appropriated.

HF730—Hausman (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
 St. Paul Park roads transit regulated.

HF731—Pugh (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
 Debt service equalization aid funding increased, property tax levy for new school buildings lowered, and money appropriated.

HF732—Thompson (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
 Service credit purchase from the public employees retirement association authorized for a former Minneapolis park board employee.

HF733—Gleason (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
 Drug price control board established, maximum prices established, other duties specified, penalties imposed, and money appropriated.

HF734—Davnie (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
 School lunch and breakfast funding increased, eligibility for a fast break to learning grant expanded, and money appropriated.

HF735—Leppik (R)
Transportation Policy
 Seat belts; passenger restraint requirements for minors prescribed, booster seat requirements provided, seat belt requirement extended to all passengers in vehicle, certain exemptions eliminated, and penalties increased.

HF736—Carlson (DFL)
Taxes
 Home heating fuels year-round sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF737—Mariani (DFL)
Crime Prevention
 Racial profiling policies and report required, independent expert retained, law enforcement training in eliminating racial profile required, and money appropriated.

HF738—Opatz (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
 General education basic formula allowance increased.

HF739—Osskopp (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
 Grand Excursion 2004 planning and promotion funded, and money appropriated.

HF740—Sertich (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
 Districts with declining enrollment funding increased.

HF741—Goodwin (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
 Alternative facilities program eligibility expanded to districts with older facilities.

HF742—Mulder (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
 Prepaid medical assistance and prepaid general assistance medical care program capitation rates increased for non-metropolitan counties.

HF743—Anderson, I. (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
 Activity aid provided to school districts to fund extracurricular activities.

HF744—Anderson, I. (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
 General education revenue formula and referendum allowance for the referendum revenue program modified.

What's on the Web

Streaming video on the Internet

If you happen to be halfway around the world and are dying to find out how a particular issue is being dealt with by the Minnesota Legislature, you can now keep informed first-hand.

That's because both the House and the Senate offer Internet streaming video of floor sessions and select committee hearings. The service, which began during the 2000 session, offers unedited, live, and recorded coverage of the Legislature.

The link to the House coverage can be found at <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/htv/liveweb.htm> and the Senate's coverage

can be accessed at <http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/general/avinfo.htm>. All that is needed to stay informed is access to the Internet and Windows Media Player, a free plug-in viewer.

The service is provided by House Television Services.

As of January 2001, the public can also access all the recorded coverage throughout the legislative session using an archive on the Web site.

The ultimate goal of the service is for each person to have access to the original

footage of committee and floor action so that when they see a news story about the event, they can find more information by viewing the event from start to finish.

The site will provide an index, making it easy for users to find the specific bill or topic they wish to view, without having to weed through hours and hours of coverage.

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site.

MONDAY, Feb. 12

8:15 a.m.

Children's Environmental Health Working Group

123 State Capitol
Chrs. Rep. Kathy Tingelstad, Sen. Jane Krentz
Agenda: Health risk values.
Analysis of data regarding the environmental
triggers of asthma, Marian Marbury, Department
of Health.
Department of Health report on the comparative
risks of multiple chemical exposures, Pam Shubat.
"Danger in the Air," Sierra Club report on
particulates and air toxics in Minnesota.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: HF106 (Ness) Minnesota Agricultural
Education Leadership Council permanent or
temporary replacement members authorized for
specified ex officio seats.
HF387 (Walker) Black Minnesotans council
membership increased.
HF389 (Dempsey) Mississippi River Parkway
Commission extended and membership
modified.
HF546 (Kubly) Administrative boards and
agencies provided proportional representation
between metropolitan and outstate areas.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno
Agenda: Department of Health overview of
budget pages 315-390.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy
Agenda: Budget review of:

Minnesota Board of Architects, Engineering,
Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture,
Geoscience and Interior Design;
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission;
Minnesota Council on Chicano-Latino Affairs;
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council;
Minnesota Council on Black Minnesotans.
(Please note: The Council on Asian-Pacific
Minnesotans will present their budget overview
on Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2001.)

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau
Agenda: Conclusion of state roads budget
presentation: Randy Halvorson, Director of
Program Delivery; Pat Hughes, Program Support
Director.
Road operations budget presentation: Mark
Wikelius, Maintenance Engineer.
Office of Electronic Communications Budget
Presentation: Andy Terry, Director.
General support budget presentation: Linda
Bjornberg, Management Operations Director.
Buildings—operations and capital budget
presentation: Paul Jensen, Buildings Engineer.

9 a.m.

Legislative Audit Commission

125 State Capitol
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy
Agenda: Release and review of program
evaluation report on insurance for behavioral
health care.

10:15 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Smith
Agenda: HF415 (Knoblach) Job reference
information disclosure protection provided.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten
Agenda: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
budget presentation: air and land.
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency budget
presentation: integrated environmental
programs.
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency budget
presentation: administrative support.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: MnSCU budget request.
Witnesses: Morris Anderson, Chancellor;
Laura King, Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial
Officer.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: HF43 (Abrams) Relating to education
finance; granting an inflationary increase in
operating referendum revenue allowances.
HF168 (Folliard) Relating to education finance;
including a growth factor in the referendum
revenue cap; restoring the original referendum
revenue cap percentage.
HF365 (Mares) Relating to education finance;
authorizing a fund transfer for Intermediate School
District No. 916, Northeast Metro.
HF413 (Mulder) Relating to education finance;
extending a planning grant.
HF286 (Anderson, I.) Relating to education;
modifying sparsity correction revenue.
HF549 (Solberg) Relating to education;
modifying the general education revenue
isolation index.
HF378 (Davnie) Relating to education;
appropriating money for school district energy
costs.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt
Agenda: HF561 (Harder) Heron Lake watershed
district increased levy authorized.
HF462 (Howes) Residential buildings on
temporary sites intended to be moved property
tax exemption provided.
HF193 (Paulsen) Property taxes; area wide tax
base contributions limited.
HF381 (Lenczewski) Metropolitan area fiscal
disparities program eliminated.
HF158 (Gleason) Property Tax Refund -
continued from Feb. 5, 2001, committee meeting.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: Governor's Proposal to Consolidate
Childcare, Cherie Kotilinek, Department of
Children, Families and Learning; Elizabeth Roe,
Department of Children, Families and Learning.
Presentation on child care application and
oversight in Hennepin County, Carol Miller,
Hennepin County.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jerry Dempsey
Agenda: HF345 (Carlson) Robbinsdale Project
4 Tax Increment Financing District extended.
HF487 (Vandever) Townships; nonprofit
organizations contract limit for health, social,
and recreational services increased.
HF326 (Ozment) Local and state government

agency denial of requests for action clarified.
Other business.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: HF492 (Wolf) Relating to energy; enacting the Energy Reliability and Affordability Act; making conforming and clarifying changes (Power Initiative).

HFXXXX (Wolf) Relating to utilities; restructuring the regulation of electricity generation; providing for transition to a competitive industry; requiring restructuring plans; providing for recovery of stranded costs, etc. (Chamber's Initiative).

HFXXXX (Wolf) Relating to energy; establishing a state energy plan and promoting energy conservation (Governor's Initiative).

3 p.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

TUESDAY, Feb. 13

8:15 a.m.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: Report on facility use analysis of MnSCU and intermediate school districts.

Overview of policy and governor's budget.

Witness: Christine Jax, Commissioner, Department Children, Families and Learning.

HEALTH & HUMAN

SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF253 (Seifert) Health and human services obsolete rules repealed.

Presentation on the Prescription Drug Program.

HF13 (Abeler) Prescription drug program income limit raised, enrollees required to satisfy monthly deductibles, and money appropriated.

HF222 (Koskinen) Prescription drug program income limit increased, timeline for enrollment of disabled individuals shortened, and higher burial exclusion provided.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: Budget overview for the Department of Public Safety; Division of Emergency Services; Office of Drug Policy & Violence Prevention; Fire Marshal.

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: Public hearing on Racial Profiling.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL

RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: Commissioner Al Garber, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Forestry Initiative.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: HF218 (Krinkie) State Government Finance Bill.

Testimony on: Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation.

Section 8, proposed budget for Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: Continuation of HF511 (Sviggum) Governor's Tax Bill public testimony.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: Overview of the proposed budgets for the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI), the Minnesota Board of Animal Health, and the Minnesota Horticultural Society.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach

Agenda: Overview of Department of Transportation issues including trunk highway bonds, bridges, light rail and the governor's recommendations.

5 p.m.

REDISTRICTING

Brainerd City Council Chambers

501 Laurel St.

Chr. Rep. Erik Paulsen

Agenda: Greater Minnesota committee hearing.

Note to members and staff: Van will leave from front of State Office Building at 1:30 p.m. and return that evening.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 14

8:15 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF70 (Seifert) Presidential electors designated and duties specified.

HFXXXX (Seifert) Rules.

HF175 (Ozment) Cigarette fire retardant standards required.

HEALTH & HUMAN

SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Department of Health overview of budget pages.

JOBS & ECONOMIC

DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Budget review of:

Minnesota Board of Accountancy;

Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans;

State Board of Electricity.

Minnesota Board of Barbers.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: Presentation on Proposed MnDOT

Budget Cuts: Kevin Gray, Chief Financial Officer.

Highway Construction Industry Council Needs Assessment Study.

10:15 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF369 (Bishop) Joint and several liability apportionment regulated.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL

RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Trade & Economic Development overview of tourism in Minnesota as it pertains to natural resources and its economic impact.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: To be announced.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HFXXXX (Kielkucki) Food service bill.

HF472 (Penas) A bill for an act relating to education finance; authorizing a fund transfer for Independent School District No. 2358, Tri-County schools.

HF104 (Stang) Relating to education finance; authorizing fund transfer for Independent School District No. 750, Rocori.

HF292 (Opatz) Relating to education; requiring the board of teaching to report annually on the performance of teacher candidates on the reading, writing, and math skills exam and on common core assessments.

HF516 (Carlson) Relating to education finance; expanding the judgment levy authority to intermediate school districts.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: To be announced.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth
Agenda: HF362 (Westrom) Requires that diesel fuel sold in the state contain a minimum of five percent biodiesel fuel oil by weight.
HF76 (Davids) Requires that diesel fuel sold in the state contain a minimum of five percent biodiesel fuel oil by weight.

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

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner
Agenda: HF618 (Kubly) Disaster relief provided for Yellow Medicine and Chippewa counties resulting from July 25, 2000 tornado, and money appropriated.
HF412 (Mulder) Housing Finance Agency prohibited from excluding small-volume lenders from loan programs.
HF564 (Rhodes) Neighborhood home improvement loan pilot project established and money appropriated.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: Child care topics to be announced.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jerry Dempsey
Agenda: Presentations: Metropolitan Airports Commission (question and answer session, continued); Builders Association of Minnesota; Minnesota Association of Realtors.
Other business.

THURSDAY, Feb. 15

8:15 a.m.

EDUCATION POLICY

Tour
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares
Agenda: Tour of John A. Johnson Achievement Plus Elementary School in St. Paul.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley
Agenda: HF127 (Mulder) Nursing assistants with prior records expunged exempted from disqualification.
HF128 (Nornes) Nursing facility technology room grant program established, and money

appropriated.
HF275 (Abeler) Nursing facility closure plans savings procedure modified.
HF332 (Nornes) Nursing facility case mix transition plan established and fine imposed for noncompliance.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek
Agenda: Budget overview for the Department of Public Safety continued: Bureau of Criminal Apprehension; Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services; Alcohol & Gambling Enforcement.

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: HF130 (Dawkins) Animal control - Dangerous Dogs (criminal penalties).
HF205 (Nornes) Driver's license suspension for theft of gasoline.
Other bills to be added.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment
Agenda: HF274 (Dorman) Mercury thermometer sales prohibited.
HF455 (Ozment) Clean fuel (biodiesel) use marketing and education program established, and money appropriated.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Elaine Harder
Agenda: HF270 (Murphy) Provides for the application of the sales tax to sales of prefabricated homes.
HF107 (Cassell) Exempts sales to political subdivisions.
HF166 (Wasiluk) Exempts sales to political subdivisions.
HF188 (Stanek) Exempts sales to political subdivisions.
HF301 (Marquart) Exempts sales to political subdivisions.
HF314 (Kubly) Exempts sales to political subdivisions.
HF538 (Folliard) Exempts sales to political subdivisions.
HF468 (Erickson) Exempts materials and equipment used in the construction of a fire station in Princeton from sales and use taxes.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie
Agenda: HF218 (Krinkie) State Government Finance Bill.

Testimony on: Section 9, proposed budget for State Board of Investment.
Section 11, proposed budget for Office of Strategic and Long-Range Planning.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Ness
Agenda: To be announced.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach
Agenda: Overview of North Star Corridor issues.

COMMERCE, JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Greg Davids
Agenda: HFXXXX (Gunther) Relating to drug testing in the workplace.

3 p.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

FRIDAY, Feb. 16

8:15 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: To be announced.

10:15 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten
Agenda: Science Museum of Minnesota: budget presentation.
Board of Water and Soil Resources: budget presentation.
Board of Water and Soil Resources: Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: University of Minnesota Efforts to Spend Money Smarter.
Witness: Elizabeth Eull, Budget & Finance Officer, Office of Budget & Finance, University of Minnesota.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

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

Instead, there was a buzz surrounding the presentation of the car, that the license number “232323,” designated specifically for Nolan by Secretary of State Julius Schmahl, was an attempt to discourage Nolan from a gubernatorial bid.

Though he was not on either the primary or general election ballot in 1920, Nolan did seek and win a term in Congress, representing Minnesota’s Fifth District, in 1929.

The car presentation, shortly after noon on the final day of the session in April 1919, created quite a scene. Reports suggest that the car was actually driven up the Capitol steps to the rotunda where it was displayed for the general public to see.

Whatever the reason for the gift — be it Nolan’s popularity, leadership, or future political aspirations — might be better explained by one legislative move. The Legislature passed a law in 1919 requiring state residents to register automobile titles with the state, presumably the Secretary of State.

(M. KIBIGER)

Continued from page 14

Prichard, president of the Minnesota Family Council. “It deals with the symptoms of the problem, not the cause. We need to restore a culture of marriage. Children need two parents — a mother and a father.”

“A lot of red flags are raised by this report,” said Karen Effrem, a physician staying home to raise her children. “It promotes multiculturalism and politically correct thinking.” She said the programs advocated are based on false assumptions, are intrusive, and are not what parents want.

Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights) said, “I don’t see these as programs, I see them as opportunities. This is the direction we ought to be heading in if we want a good future for our kids.”

Steve Young, president of the Minnesota Public Policy Forum, said the 42 members of the commission “focused on approaches and values that reflect deep commonalities in human experience.”

“I don’t always agree with Don Fraser, but we agree on this,” Young said. “These are recommendations we as Americans can come together on.”

In recognition of the complexity of the plan, commissioners agreed on a five-year action plan for “coalition building, grassroots organizing, and ‘social marketing’” for implementing the recommendations. 🐼

Reflections

Minnesota’s past and present conjoin with the future at the far southwest corner of the state. Out on the prairie, west of the incorporated town of Hills, sits a 2,500-acre working farm located two miles north of the Iowa border and two miles east of South Dakota.

The fourth generation family farm was homesteaded back in 1873 by the great-grandfather of its present owners, brothers Gene and Mike Sandager and their families. Other employees include a sister, Jo Wulf, the bookkeeper, and Lee Westfall, the assistant manager.

Since 1950, the farm has used part-time international exchange students who

maintain businesses that are moving out of the state due to taxes, leaving its consumers behind.

Another concern is that of many farmers regarding the issue of low prices in return for farm products. It should be understood that farmers — even in Rock County — compete with a world market whose goods may be undersold to the United States through an outmoded national open-door policy.

In order to survive, many farm owners must make tough decisions about diversifying their livelihood. Others often decide to “sell the farm.” Such is the case for a dairyman who farmed near the Sandagers,

but recently auctioned his entire herd of cattle.

While the Sandagers are weighing options for their beef cow/calf supplier business, already they and others nearby are investing in the business of processing

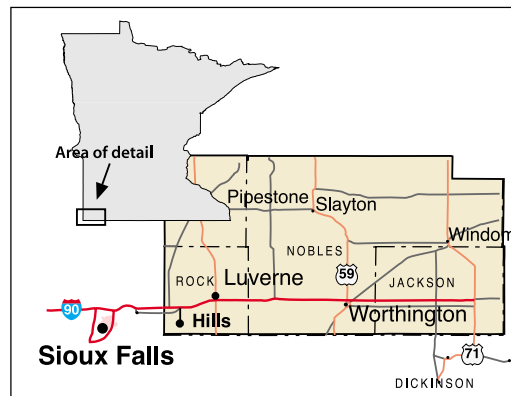
fuel alternatives for motor vehicle and other uses.

Gene Sandager is fully aware of the effect of the global economy in his far corner of southwestern Minnesota. He therefore is a major advocate among his peers to get them more involved in the legislative process, for herein lies one likely solution to their well-being.

As for the future, Sandager notes that Minnesotans — urban and rural — should appreciate living in the state, should have a voice in legislative policy, and should have the foresight to be a step ahead of others locally, nationally, and internationally.

Good advice, for the past may be preserved, the present beneficial, and the future may be worthwhile for everyone.

—LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT



Most of the Sandager farm is in District 21B

and Rock County, where Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe) is the legislator. Some separate acreage is actually farmed in South Dakota.

A few miles north of the farm, the past is ever present in Blue Mounds State Park, where buffalo still roam amongst natural prairie resources. Also located here is a more than 100-foot-high rock outcropping of reddish-gray quartzite — the highest point in the area.

The “mound” as it is known locally, is a leftover from the Cretaceous Period when glaciers formed the Minnesota landscape. It extends for more than two miles to the north and west, then drops off sharply to the south and east of the formation.

In this small corner of the world, a continued benefit for Minnesota residents will depend on work in the Legislature to help

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
175 STATE OFFICE BUILDING
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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Minnesota vs. Top States in Education

Minnesotans between ages 18 and 24 with a high school diploma or equivalent, as percent	90
Percentage for top ranking states	93
Minnesota ninth- through 12th-graders taking at least one upper level math course, as percent	38
Top states	59
Minnesota ninth- through 12th-graders taking at least one upper level science course, as percent	23
Top states	37
Scores in the top 20 percent nationally on SAT/ACT college entrance exams per 1,000 high school graduates, in Minnesota	189
Top states	192
Percentage of Minnesota high school freshman enrolling in college within four years in any state	46
Top states	54
Percent of family income in Minnesota needed to pay for college expenses at a community college minus financial aid	19
Top states	17
Expenses, minus financial aid, at a four-year public institution in Minnesota, as percentage of family income	20
Top states	19
Expenses, minus financial aid, at a four-year private institution in Minnesota, as percentage of family income	52
Top states	30
Share of income that poorest families need to pay for tuition at lowest priced colleges, in Minnesota, as percent	19
Top states	9
Average loan amount that Minnesota students borrow each year	\$3,168
Top states	\$3,094
First-time, full-time Minnesota students completing a bachelor's degree within five years, as percent	50
Top states	66
Certificates, degrees and diplomas awarded at all Minnesota colleges and universities per 100 undergraduate students	19
Top states	20

Note: many averages are weighted.

Source: *Measuring Up 2000: The State-by-State Report Card For Higher Education*. The entire report is available at www.highereducation.org.

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