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STEVE SVIGGUM
SPEAKER

In this issue:

THE 2002 LEGISLATURE CONVENES

STADIUM PROPOSAL, BUDGET SHORTFALL, AND MORE

HF2586-HF2800

Session Weekly

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On the cover: House Speaker Steve Sviggum pounds the gavel shortly after noon Jan. 29 to begin the 2002 Legislative session.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Back to work

Day one of the 2002 legislative session focused on hiring freezes, patriotism

By LISA HILTON AND SARAH MCKENZIE

After opening with patriotic songs on the first day of the legislative session Jan. 29, the House quickly moved on to the state's pressing budget problem and adopted a hiring freeze resolution.

Day one for legislators contrasted sharply with the beginning of the 2001 legislative session when lawmakers returned to decide what to do with a \$924 million surplus.

This year, the Republican-controlled House, DFL-controlled Senate and Independent Gov. Jesse Ventura are charged with fixing the state's projected \$1.95 billion budget shortfall.

The hiring freeze resolution, approved

action to reduce the size of state government. That's where we should start."

Pawlenty, who introduced the resolution on behalf of the House Rules Committee (which has jurisdiction over personnel matters), cautioned against balancing the budget by cutting funding for schools or nursing homes.

"We need to start somewhere, and this is a good first step," he said. "We just can't keep everything that we've got. We've got to start making some reductions."

House leaders have not offered a detailed plan to shore up the budget, but they have pledged to oppose any tax increases and have also advocated spending cuts.

\$300 million. Others have dismissed the potential cost savings as minimal.

Meanwhile, House Minority Leader Rep. Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) questioned the usefulness of a statewide hiring freeze at a press conference just before the session commenced, saying the state likely has enough money in its reserves to avoid it.

The DFL members of the House have come out strongly against cutting funding for education and health care programs.

"In resolving the budget crisis and addressing the job losses, Democrats will stick by the values we have always stood for," Pugh said. "Our priorities are our kids, our seniors, health care and our working families."

Pugh called on the Ventura administration to expedite the release of a new economic forecast.

"Nothing is going to happen on the budget until we get the new forecast," he said.

The Department of Finance is expected to issue a revised budget forecast in February. In November, the forecast revealed a decline in state revenue from sales and income taxes.

Before focusing on the state's budget shortfall, House members paused to reflect on the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The House passed a resolution introduced by Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar) honoring the victims of the attacks, the rescue workers and the military.

"(The state) pledges its unwavering support to the President and the Congress in their response to this tragedy and stands ready to assist in any way it can," the resolution states.

The patriotic pageantry on Jan. 29 also included renditions of the "The Star Spangled Banner" and "America the Beautiful" by the Land of Lakes Choirboys from Elk River, who were clad in red, white and blue.

In keeping with the patriotic theme, Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexandria) introduced a bill requiring all Minnesota students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance each day. Meanwhile, Rep. Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls) and Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) introduced bills that would make it illegal to sell U.S. flags or items with the flag on them unless they are made in the United States. Representatives were asked by Rep. Rob Eastlund (R-Isanti) to sign a display of the state flag that will be sold at an auction for charity.

All told, House members introduced a



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

House Minority Leader Tom Pugh addresses the full House on the first day of the 2002 session.

122-9, bars the House from filling vacant positions while recommending the governor and Senate follow the same course of action.

"A hiring freeze is a common sense approach to getting state spending under control," said House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan). "This governor has proposed jacking up all kinds of taxes and cutting money for schools, but he has not taken

At a Jan. 28 news conference, House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) said the state should follow the lead of governors around the nation who have enacted hiring freezes in the executive branch. He said California, New York, and Wisconsin have enacted such measures.

House Republicans have estimated the savings would range between \$50 million and

number of bills related to the war on terrorism on opening day, including:

- a measure appropriating grants to local communities to purchase equipment to fight terrorism;
- a bill requiring that state employees activated for National Guard or other active military duty on or after Sept. 11 be paid the difference of their salaries;
- a bill appropriating money for hazardous material teams;
- a measure calling on the state to cover law enforcement costs to secure the state's nuclear power plants;
- a bill that would make it a felony to plan, encourage, or commit "certain terroristic acts intended to affect the conduct of government or advance an ideological or other system of belief."

Members offered words of support for members of the Minnesota Air National Guard who were deployed one day earlier to assist troops in Afghanistan.

"This will be a session focused on balancing the budget and protecting our homeland security," Speaker Sviggum said. "The House of Representatives reinforced those priorities today."

Other bills that were introduced on Jan. 29 include a bill that would make it illegal to use a cell phone while driving and an increase of the gas tax to pay for transportation projects.

Day one of the session was not without the foreshadowing of sadness as Sen. Linda Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park) placed a rose on the desk of her friend, Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park).

In his opening prayer, the Rev. Eugene Stenzel of St. Casimir Church in Wells mentioned Luther, who was absent from the first day because of failing health.

The 54-year-old, fifth-term representative died of stomach cancer one day later. 🌹

Correction

In the *Session Weekly Interim Report*, a photo caption misidentified the languages of a message placed on the State Capitol steps after Sept. 11. The languages should have been English and Hebrew.

We regret the error and any inconvenience it may have caused. We further want to emphasize that the error was an oversight and was not at all intended to offend. We take our responsibility to be accurate very seriously, and we have put measures in place to avoid these kinds of errors in the future.

We thank you for your patience and continued support of *Session Weekly*.



Two for one

State flag did not always appear as it does today

For 35 years of its existence, Minnesota had no state flag, but when one was finally adopted it was visibly different from what today waves in the breeze above "The Land of 10,000 Lakes."

When Minnesota became the 32nd state in 1858, a state seal was already in the works (it was formally adopted in 1861) and a state motto was adopted.

The creation of the state flag did not begin until 1891, when Minnesota legislators voted to sponsor an exhibit at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago.

In the July 1947 *Hennepin County History*, Mrs. W.S. Lindsley wrote that after Congress created a World's Fair Commission, each state was directed to provide a state commission on the matter. Six men were appointed to a board and six women were later promoted to an auxiliary commission.

"The auxiliary members soon discovered the lack and need of a state flag (for the exhibit)," Lindsley wrote. "The women drew up a petition asking the legislature to make a provision for a state flag."

On Feb. 28, 1893, the commission selected a design by Amelia Hyde Carter of Minneapolis from the more than 200 entries submitted. Carter received \$15 for her design.

In April of that year, the Legislature gave its approval of the flag, which was made of white silk with a design on one side and plain blue on the reverse. Three sides of the flag were bordered by bullion fringe. "In the center (of the white silk) is the state seal wreathed with white moccasin flowers on a blue ground," Lindsley wrote. "The red ribbon of the seal bearing the motto is continued through the wreath, entwining the blossoms and floating carelessly over the lower portions of the flag."

The account continues, describing the important dates of 1819, the time of the first settlement in Minnesota, and 1893 the time of the adoption of the state flag. Above was the date 1858, significant to

Minnesota's admission to the union. Below the design was written Minnesota.

All of those pieces were "wrought" in gold.

Grouped around the seal were 19 stars in the design of star points, with the North Star, significant of the North Star State, in a group of three at the top.

Two famous needlework artists, Thomane and Pauline Fjelde, embroidered the flag. They earned a gold medal at the fair for their efforts.

Atop the flagstaff was a golden image of a gopher, from which a gold cord and tassels hung.

For more than 60 years the white and blue flag was one of the most recognizable state symbols, but it was changed in time for the state's 1958 centennial.

"In 1955, the state legislature established a special committee

to resolve several functional problems with the flag," William Becker wrote in the Spring 1992 issue of *Minnesota History*. Other state flags measuring three-feet-by-five-feet cost about \$7 to make, but Minnesota's was about five times as much because of its two-colored sides. Also, the bulk of Minnesota's flag made it too vulnerable to fly in heavy winds.

"The panel recommended that the flag be of a single thickness, deep blue on both sides, with the seal and stars appearing on a circular white ground," Becker wrote. The recommendations were adopted on March 18, 1957.

Becker and Lee Herold, also from Rochester, proposed a new flag design in 1989, featuring three horizontal stripes of blue, white and green representing the sky and water, snow, and forest and agriculture. A gold star symbolizes the North Star State. However, no bill to change the flag in that manner was introduced.

In June 2001 the North American Vexillological Association ranked Minnesota's flag 67th best among the 72 state, provincial and territorial flags in the United States and Canada.

(M. Cook)



Minnesota's first flag, housed at the Minnesota Historical Society.

★ AGRICULTURE

Budget cuts questioned

The House Agriculture and Rural Development Finance Committee met Jan. 17 to review Gov. Jesse Ventura's proposed budget cuts, in light of a projected \$1.95 billion budget shortfall.

On the chopping block are programs supported by the Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Utilization Research Institute, Board of Animal Health, and Minnesota Horticultural Society.

Under the plan, the Department of Agriculture would see \$9.7 million in budget reductions for the 2002-03 biennium. The governor is so concerned with the threat of bioterrorism that no cuts were recommended in the key areas of meat inspection and laboratory services, Assistant Commissioner Tom Masso said.

Several committee members questioned the governor's proposal to decrease ethanol producer payments from 20 cents per gallon to 18 cents per gallon, which would reduce the total payments by nearly \$7.1 million for the 2002-03 biennium.

Minnesota's ethanol producers have been eligible for the payment program since 1986, with 13 plants receiving aid as of July 2001.

In order to make the cuts effective for fiscal year 2002, which ends on June 30 of this year, fourth quarter payments would likely be prorated and producers would receive significantly less than they were expecting.

"I don't believe there is a member on this committee that will sit still if we see some plant closings as a result of the governor's budget recommendations," said Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel), the committee chair.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) questioned the reasoning behind a budget balancing plan that would protect the labs that detect bioterrorism but not protect ethanol production and other modes to reduce reliance on foreign oil.

Also under the governor's plan, the Minnesota Horticultural Society annual state grant of \$82,000 would be reduced by 20 percent beginning in fiscal year 2003.

The Board of Animal Health would see reductions in the amount of \$292,000 for the 2002-03 budget cycle. These cuts would reduce the board's ability to detect avian pneumovirus in the state's turkey flocks and decrease the frequency and scope of the voluntary John's Disease control program, according to the board's executive director, Dr. Bill Hartmann.

"John's Disease is probably the biggest stumbling block for dairy farmers out in rural Minnesota," Rep. Greg Blaine (R-Little Falls) advised the committee.

And finally, the governor has proposed budget cuts for the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute in the amount of \$801,000 for the 2002-03 biennium.

The committee will further review the recommendations as they prepare their own budget balancing initiative.

Ag safety net

Many farms in the northwestern and west-central areas of Minnesota have been hit hard in recent years by flooding, followed by an extended period of wet weather that fostered crop diseases such as wheat scab. These conditions coupled with low commodity prices

have contributed to multiple years of crop losses for some farmers.

A network of nonprofit rural farm programs has been developed to help farmers with the complexities of farm recovery or exit strategies, offering services including agribusiness management education, tax and legal advice, and mental health counseling.

The Agriculture Programs Subcommittee of the House Agriculture Policy Committee held an informational hearing Nov. 29 to highlight the legal and social services provided by the programs in these two regions, including Rural Life Outreach, Farm Wrap, Farm Advocates, Farm Business Management, and the Passing on the Farm Center.

Subcommittee chair Rep. Michelle Rifenberg (R-La Crescent) said she intends to use the testimony to develop a flow chart of rural agriculture-related programs and services to help legislators and staff better serve their constituents from farming communities.

Glynice Johnson of Thief River Falls, chair of the Rural Life Outreach Board, said her organization is unique because it is the first point of contact in the safety net and there are no particular qualification hoops to jump through. It is cost-effective, she said, because it can often prevent more serious trouble and additional costs to the state down the road.

Rural Life Outreach clients are referred through a number of contacts, most often word-of-mouth. The program leverages emergency funds for groceries or utility bills. Program staff members will sit down and help farmers go through the mail and deal with the paperwork, as well as encourage them to seek counseling, financial or otherwise.

Sometimes financial troubles reach the point where mediation is required with lenders and other creditors. This is where the Minnesota Farm Advocate Program supported by the state's Department of Agriculture can help.

And often the only option is to leave farming and enter a new career.

"I think what we have to acknowledge in the farm game is people are going to be leaving this business and they don't know how to deal with it," said Cam Fanfulik, Farm Wrap Program Coordinator. "Farmers are a proud and independent people."

Fanfulik explained that exiting the farm does not take place within one year, particularly with tax liabilities to take under consideration. Farm Wrap is a good investment, he said, because in many cases the program prevents bankruptcies and decreases migration to metropolitan areas by enabling people to remain in their local communities.

REMEMBERING REP. LUTHER

PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

A single rose is placed on the empty chamber desk of Rep. Darlene Luther by friend and Senate colleague Linda Scheid on the opening day of session Jan. 29. Surrounded by her family, Luther died of stomach cancer one night later at her home in Brooklyn Park.

"There's too many gaps that exist in our social services agencies," Fanfulik said. "It's a frustrating process to go through if you don't know what to do."

The state of dairy

As part of the 2001 Farm and Power Show Nov. 28 in Minneapolis, farmers and legislators viewed the latest farm technology and equipment and were updated on challenges facing the industry.

House Agriculture and Rural Development Finance Committee Chair Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel) outlined several of the challenges facing the committee to develop and enhance rural agricultural growth, including the struggles for investment capital and friendlier regulatory agencies.

Although the dour November Forecast had not yet been released, there were already rumblings of state budget woes.

"Hopefully we can try our best to insulate the agricultural community," Ness said.

Representatives from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the Pollution Control Agency presented updates on the state's dairy industry and the status of the recently completed economic impact statement on animal agriculture. Funded by the 1998 Legislature, the study examined the economic, environmental, and social issues surrounding feedlots and the livestock industry.

Kurt Markham, director of the Agriculture Department's Agricultural Marketing Services Division, summarized a recently completed national study examining the future of the dairy industry and its producers, processors, and retailers.

The West will see the largest production gains, Minnesota and other Central Plains states will remain about even, and the East could see a drop in production due to inefficient processing plants, he said.

The study also predicts that dairy herds in the Southwest and Pacific regions will remain the most competitive for a variety of reasons, including environmental regulations and banking attitudes.

Minnesota lost about 600 dairy farms last year, said Harold Stanislawski, agriculture development specialist for the department. At last projection, the number of dairy farms in the state was 7,084, he said.

"Everyone is working hard to come up with solutions, particularly considering the complexity of our economy and the peril of our producers," Ness said.

BONDING



Lino Lakes prison project

Corrections officials are proposing a \$4.1 million bonding project at the medium-security Lino Lakes prison in an effort to increase safety at the facility.

The prison houses about 1,200 adult male inmates. Opening in 1963, it was constructed in a "cottage style" format to accommodate about 200 juvenile prisoners.

Most of those original buildings are still being used, and they're not sufficiently equipped to guarantee either officer or inmate safety, officials say.

"We don't have a medium-security facility that was built for those offenders," said Dennis Benson, deputy commissioner of corrections, on Dec. 5. Benson was addressing members of the House Capital Investment Committee during a tour of the facility.

Lino Lakes is the primary facility in the system for sex offender treatment. A 300-bed chemical dependency treatment program is also located in the facility.

The project is considered the department's top bonding priority for 2002. Gov. Jesse Ventura recommended full funding for the project.

According to Robert Feneis, warden of the Lino Lakes facility, officers can currently only lock about 15 percent of the inmates into their cells, if necessary. This is particularly important if there is a problem between inmates and officers need them to go back to their cells and cool down. They must rely on the inmates to do that on their own.

Fire codes, Feneis said, prohibit officials from locking most of the cells in the facility.

In fact, since most of the cells don't have a toilet or sink, inmates have keys to their rooms so they can go in and out to use a common bathroom.

Beyond that, officials are concerned that guards are not able to see all cells from the guard station. Moreover, the cottages are built so they can't see into actual cell doors.

The request is for one new unit that models two other larger units on the grounds, which allow one guard to see every cell on a four-wing pod structure. The buildings look much like an "X" with the guard stationed at the point of intersection.

The request to the state is only a portion of the cost for the new unit. Corrections officials say they will use \$10.1 million in federal funds for the remainder of construction costs.

Part of the plan also recommends demolishing some cottages and building additional facilities for programming. Feneis noted that the facility doesn't have enough space to run

the programs there, such as the treatment and educational programs, and MINNCOR industries.

The project is prompted in part by an incident nearly two years ago involving the rape of a correctional officer. Officials are concerned that any further changes to existing buildings will not provide sufficient safety.

"We've done what we can with stopgaps to address that," said Commissioner Sheryl Ramstad-Hvass. "But our hands are tied to do anything else. This really is a high priority because we really can't afford to have staff in harm's way."

BUDGET



Budgetary woes

For the first time since 1992, lawmakers will enter a legislative session with a projected budget deficit.

Department of Finance Commissioner Pam Wheelock told the House Ways and Means Committee Dec. 5 that the November forecast projects a \$1.9 billion deficit for fiscal years 2002-2003.

The forecast also indicates that a previously projected \$242 million positive balance in fiscal year 2005 will now become a \$1.2 billion structural deficit under current tax and spending laws.

Wheelock indicated that the downturn in the national economy has had an impact on all states.

"Every other state in the country is going to end up facing this challenge about changes in expectations," she said. "Minnesota is actually as well prepared as any other state in this country, not just because of this budget and decisions on this budget, but because of years of commitment to improving financial management practices."

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), the committee chair, praised Wheelock and Gov. Jesse Ventura's administration for insisting last session that \$235 million be left "on the bottom line" rather than including it in the rebate amounts.

There is also \$653 million remaining in the state's budget reserve, the use of which Wheelock said is not triggered by a forecast deficit. The state also has \$350 million in its cash flow account.

The February 2001 forecast projected an \$1.5 billion surplus for the biennium. But a recession that economists now say began in March 2001 and the events of Sept. 11 helped turn the forecasted surplus into a deficit.

State Economist Tom Stinson said employment in Minnesota fell by 23,000 jobs in September and October.

Thus individual income tax collections are expected to be \$873 million less than expected. Additionally sales tax collections in the state are projected to be \$829 million less than forecast, and corporate income revenues are expected to be down \$470 million from February.

Stinson said that because of the unprecedented events of Sept. 11, it is uncertain how the economy will respond and how quickly it will bounce back.

Economic development cuts

Everything from haircuts to home ownership would feel the affects of Gov. Jesse Ventura's proposed budget cuts, the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee was told Jan. 17.

The committee received an overview of how the governor's proposed cuts would affect agencies and organizations under the committee's purview. Ventura asked each department to recommend 10 percent cuts to their budgets.

Among the proposed cuts is the elimination of the Department of Commerce's cosmetology enforcement unit.

Commerce Commissioner Jim Bernstein said when looking at what to cut the department took into consideration what areas had the most impact on taxpayers and what the department does that isn't done elsewhere.

Although he said the unit's enforcement responsibilities are important, he added cuts had to be made somewhere. Licensing requirements would remain in place but actual inspections would be eliminated.

Currently the department inspects salons and cosmetology schools once every two years. If a problem is found, the department can take disciplinary action against an individual or salon's licensee, including reprimands, a fine, or license revocation.

Kit Hadley, commissioner of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, said that in considering potential cuts the agency tried to protect programs that serve the most vulnerable populations and those that have no existing alternative funding sources.

Among cuts to the agency, Ventura is proposing to reduce funding for the housing assistance program. That program helps reduce the down payment and closing costs for low income, first-time homeowners.

The administration also proposes to reduce the rehabilitation loan program and eliminate the manufactured housing program.

Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) said that in a time of affordable housing shortages, any cuts are "counterproductive in the most basic way."

Rep. Tony Sertich (DFL-Chisholm) said the proposed cuts to economic development programs appear to be weighted against Greater Minnesota communities. "What does the governor have against rural Minnesota"? he asked.

CAPITOL VIEW



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Rep. Dennis Ozment, right, and House staffers Mary Telega, middle, and Marilyn Brick, left, get a bird's eye view of the Capitol grounds atop an aerial platform truck during a Jan. 29 Fire/EMS event on the Capitol Mall. The event was designed to educate the public on fire and emergency medical services.

★ CONSUMERS

Refining windshield laws

It seems everyone is unhappy about the state's auto glass repair laws, except consumers.

Department of Commerce Commissioner Jim Bernstein told the House Commerce, Jobs, and Economic Development Policy Committee Jan. 17 that the department receives few complaints from consumers about the way their broken windshields were repaired.

But he said the department has become involved in determining fair prices for repair, as well as negotiating some of the differences between what price repair companies charge and insurance companies find appropriate. And he doesn't think it is an appropriate role for the department.

"We support any bill that gets the Department of Commerce out of the business of regulating the price of auto glass repair," Bernstein said. "The marketplace should be allowed to work."

The committee heard three ideas that would change a 2000 law that makes insurance companies pay market price for glass replacement as determined by a survey of costs charged in communities around the state.

"(The law) was a compromise between all parties involved," said Rep. Ken Wolf (R-Burnsville), who sponsored the 2000 law. "The survey quite frankly just isn't working."

Wolf is sponsoring HF2570 that would allow insurance companies to cover damage to glass on the same basis as damage to other parts of an automobile, and eliminate the market survey.

David Williams, national glass manager for State Farm Insurance, said that because of the survey auto glass costs in Minnesota, already the highest in the nation, are increasing.

He said the survey establishes a target that repair companies charge, rather than the actual market price cost of the repair.

Mark Anderson, owner of an auto glass repair shop in St. Paul, said he supports maintaining the survey and establishing an arbitration process for resolving disputes.

"Keeping the survey is imperative because there is no other way to define the market," Anderson said. Eliminating the survey would "run the risk of putting 190 small shops out of business," he said.

Establishing an arbitration process was one of two other plans the committee heard, even though neither has been formally introduced.

That idea, which had no sponsor at the meeting, would require the party who loses the arbitration process to pay the fees involved within 10 days after the decision is rendered.

They would also be banned from requesting arbitration against the same party for one year.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) is sponsoring a bill that would allow deviation from the market price determined by the survey to take into account the geographic region involved.

Rukavina said the survey's market price for the cities around Duluth are skewed because of the size of Duluth. Because of this he said some constituents are forced to drive 50 to 100 miles to get their auto glass repaired at a price an insurance company is willing to pay.

No votes were taken at the meeting.

★ EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment needs requested

Joseph Wellcome has been receiving unemployment checks since July 2001. The 43-year-old former tool and die maker, who was laid off when his employer of 20 years was closed, is near completion of a degree program in manufacturing, something that wouldn't have been possible without state assistance for tuition and books.

"This program has been a real blessing for me," Wellcome told members of the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee Jan. 30. State unemployment agencies and workforce centers appeared before the committee to request more financial resources as economic conditions are unlikely to improve in the coming months.

Wellcome said more unemployment insurance is needed. He testified that to provide health insurance for his two children and wife, who is also unemployed and working toward a nursing degree, it would cost him between \$650 and \$700 a month, an amount his family could not afford.

"This is the time to make this work," said Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul). But there are no proposals yet, and Committee Chair Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville) explained that due to the computer system used for unemployment disbursement, changes could not be implemented until January 2003.

Rebecca Yanisch, commissioner of the Department of Trade and Economic Development, said unemployment has jumped from 3.2 percent to 4 percent in the past year.

Fiscal year 2001 was a record year for the Dislocated Workers Program, she said, serving 14,500 people. "At the rate we're at, we will, in 2002, double the record set in 2001."

Yanisch said current program funds could not serve Minnesota-based Fingerhut, which could soon lay off 2,700 people in the state.

"Are we going to run out of money?" asked



Joseph Wellcome from Big Lake, who lost his tool and die job last July, urges members of the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee Jan. 30 to continue and increase funding to the state's Displaced Workers Program.

Rep. Tony Sertich (DFL-Chisholm).

"We are going to be hard pressed to manage our resources through the end of this fiscal year," Yanisch replied. Fiscal year 2002 ends on June 30.

The Dislocated Workers Program was recently awarded \$8 million from a \$24 million request to the federal government for emergency assistance. Yanisch said she hopes that money will "take the stress off local workforce centers."

McElroy said a final decision would be made after legislators receive the February budget forecast.

★ ENVIRONMENT

PCA operations discussed

Less than one-half of the state's major factories and wastewater plants operate with renewed water quality permits, according to a legislative auditor's report presented to the House Environmental and Natural Resources Finance Committee Jan. 30.

With 54 percent using expired permits, the state's industries lag behind the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's goal of 10 percent. The national average is 25 percent.

Joel Alter, the report's author, cited a number of reasons for the backlog: the permits are complex and some have been contested, agency budget reductions, a 1998 staff reorganization, and problems with a new computer program.

In a letter responding to the findings, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Commissioner Karen Studders wrote that the report "is an accurate analysis."

Studders said that the agency has been required to divert resources and staff members to the state's feedlot regulatory program and other high-priority programs, which has made it difficult to tackle the permit backlog. But the agency is taking steps to address the problem through agency reorganization and increased enforcement.

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) expressed concern that the report didn't raise broader questions about the quality of the state's waterways. For instance, she said the report should have investigated the overall question of what it would take to improve the state's lakes and rivers.

"We have no idea about outcomes. We are still in the old-fashioned mode of process," she said. "Minnesota used to be on the cutting edge of these questions. Now we don't even ask."

Committee members also reviewed a legislative auditor report on PCA funding that found the agency's staff costs have risen by 33 percent from 1996 to 2001, higher than the average 25 percent increase for other state agencies.

While the agency's employee expenses have risen, the revenue from water quality and hazardous waste fees has not increased since 1992. In addition, there have been revenue shortfalls since the mid-1990s.

Committee Chair Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater) raised questions about whether the agency could raise the fees without a legislative mandate. He also said he hoped the committee could address the agency funding problems this session despite the state's projected \$1.95 billion budget shortfall.

★ GAMBLING

Increasing state funds

Facing a state budget deficit of nearly \$2 billion, two lawmakers have offered bills they say would generate needed revenue for the state.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) and Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar) presented state casino bills to the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee Dec. 5. No votes were taken, since the

Legislature had not yet reconvened its regular session.

Bishop's bill (HF1036) would allow the Minnesota State Lottery to establish a casino in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Sixty percent of the casino funds would be distributed to a new economic development fund with the remainder dedicated to the state's environmental trust fund.

"This is the greatest opportunity available in the next session for additional revenue short of new taxes," Bishop said.

Lottery Director George Andersen said studies indicate that a casino placed next to the Mall of America could generate up to \$200 million in net revenue for the state annually.

Andersen said the gambling market has not reached a saturation point.

"Minnesotans love to gamble," he said pointing to a survey that said 94 percent of all Minnesotans have placed a bet, when purchasing a raffle ticket is included in the definition of betting.

Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls) said that expanding the already passed constitutional amendment allowing the state lottery to include casino gambling could be seen as a "ruse" on the public to justify not placing the matter before the people for them to decide.

HF2528, sponsored by Hackbarth, would require a constitutional amendment to authorize one or more privately operated casinos in the state.

Hackbarth said the bill, as it is drafted, would dedicate casino funds to highway or education funding, but that he was willing to amend that to address other issues as long as the scope remains focused.

James Belisle, president of Multi-Gaming Management, Inc., said a privately run casino would likely be run more efficiently than a state-run casino and would therefore generate more funds for the state.

Rep. Steve Dehler (R-St. Joesph) said dedicating the funds for education or transportation doesn't necessarily mean those state priorities would receive more funding.

He said that nothing in the bill would require current funding levels to remain, and it is likely that with dedicated funding available future legislatures might be tempted to shift current funding to other areas.

Expansion ideas

Gamblers would be able to play slot machines at the airport, Canterbury Park, and two undetermined Twin Cities locations under proposals heard by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee Dec. 12.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater) is sponsoring a proposal that would allow the state lottery to enter into an agreement with Canterbury Park to put slot machines and blackjack tables at the Shakopee horse racing facility.

Although not formally introduced in the House, Holsten said the plan is similar to bills he sponsored in 1997 and 1999. If the state decides to get involved in a casino, he said the track is the best location since it would not expand gambling because pari-mutuel wagering and card playing already occurs there.

Similar to the lottery, the revenue generated from the slot machines would be divided between the environment and natural resources trust fund and a new fund that could be used for other spending needs.

Holsten estimated that casino funds would add \$30 million to \$80 million to the state's revenue annually.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said she considers gambling "a regressive tax on stupidity," because those who can least afford to lose money are often the ones hit hardest.

She is the sponsor of HF1689 that would allow the lottery to operate a casino at the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport. Only passengers with airline tickets for flights would be allowed in the casino.

Because those with higher disposable incomes tend to fly more often, Kahn said the airport casino would not be as regressive as other proposals. She did not have an estimate of how much revenue would be generated, but said the funds would be used for general purposes.

In an effort to address funding needs for sports stadiums, Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) is sponsoring HF2608. The bill would require the owner of a privately run, state-licensed casino to pay an up-front fee of \$450 million. The owner would have the exclusive rights to run up to two casinos in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Kielkucki said his constituents have repeatedly told him they are against state funding of a stadium but want to keep the Twins and Vikings in Minnesota. In addition to the up-front fee, he said the casino would generate between \$35 million and \$40 million per year for the state, not including the property, income, and other taxes generated.

John McCarthy, executive director of the Minnesota Indian Gaming Association, said his organization is against all the proposals because they would expand gambling in the state — something American Indian tribes agreed not to do when the gambling compacts were signed.

McCarthy said tribal governments have honored the compacts by limiting gambling

to certain games and limiting gaming activities within reservation boundaries.

"Turning Minnesota into Las Vegas is bad for Minnesota, bad for tribal government, and bad for the gaming revenue tribal governments use to partner with rural governments throughout the state," he said.

★ GOVERNMENT

Altering airport oversight

The Legislature would have more control over how the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport and its six reliever airports are operated, under a measure heard by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee Nov. 29.

As it is currently written, HF2568, sponsored by Rep. Tim Wilkin (R-Eagan), would fold the Metropolitan Airports Commission into the state Department of Transportation effective July 1, 2003. But after discussing the issue with other lawmakers and because that department's "plate is full," Wilkin said he will likely amend the bill to make the airports commission a separate state agency.

"The Legislature needs to have a bigger say and some oversight" in how the airport is run, Wilkin said, citing the size of the commission's \$170 million annual budget.

By making the commission a state agency, the bill would require the commission to have its budget approved by the Legislature like other state agencies do.

"The airport serves the entire state, yet we don't have a whole lot of say on what goes on," Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) said in support of the bill.

Wilkin and some committee members were critical of the commission's decision to increase its 2002 budget by 3 percent over the previous year, including salary increases, while Northwest Airlines, its chief tenant, is experiencing financial difficulties.

Former Gov. Arne Carlson testified that it is critical for the state to ensure that the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport remains a hub for Northwest Airlines.

"The hub is of frightful importance to the economy of the state," Carlson said. "If you take the hub out of Minnesota it would be like pulling the veins out of your body."

Carlson said he thought it was important that an independent entity oversees airport operations. But he also emphasized that it is vital for the Legislature to carefully scrutinize the governor's appointments to the commission, as well as build better relationships with the airline industry.

Dave Dombrowski, deputy executive director of government affairs for the Metropolitan Airports Commission, said the group agrees that the aviation industry is of critical importance to the state.

Cuts start at the top

The state budget deficit will even directly affect the governor's office, the House State Government Finance Committee was told Jan. 24.

To help address the \$1.95 billion projected deficit, Gov. Jesse Ventura asked state agencies to propose 5 percent and 10 percent reductions to their budgets. The administration then incorporated the requests into their own proposal to the Legislature.

Steven Bosacker, Ventura's chief of staff, said among the proposed cuts to the governor's office is a reduction of nearly eight full-time equivalent positions. Four jobs would be reduced with the elimination of the state's Office of Citizen and Volunteer Services.

Rep. Harry Mares (R-White Bear Lake) said cuts have to be made, but the state's volunteers should continue to be recognized for their contributions.

Mares said volunteerism has played an important role in many Minnesotans' lives — "everything from the first regiment at Gettysburg to Meals on Wheels." He said the value of volunteer services in the state is an estimated \$6.5 million per year.

The office's mission is to promote citizen participation efforts, increase the impact of volunteer programs, and stimulate public-private partnerships in Minnesota. Bosacker said the administration agrees that the office has served a useful purpose.

"It was one of the most difficult decisions of the budget proposal we faced. We agonized over it for weeks," he said.

Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview), the committee chair, questioned Ventura's bonding proposal of more than \$4 million to restore the governor's residence.

Because the governor and his family do not reside at the residence fulltime, Krinkie said perhaps the administration should reconsider the bonding proposal, as well as consider cuts in staff at the residence.

The administration is proposing to eliminate a chef position at the residence and Bosacker said the governor would be open to discussing the overall purpose of the residence.

As the committee looks at the proposed reductions to state agencies and possible tax increases, Krinkie said it will be important to keep in mind whether the agency is

proposing to actually lay off employees or whether they are proposing not to fill vacant positions.

"It is a difficult time and a difficult situation we are in. I don't know a business that hasn't reduced its employment complement," he said, adding that his own company laid off two employees before Christmas. "(State employees) are not losing jobs. All we are doing is not hiring as quickly as we were before."

Joint cooperation

Members of the House-Senate Task Force on Joint Rules completed their work in January, and the group recommended a number of reforms in an effort to eliminate some issues that can inhibit cooperation between the bodies.

The goal of the task force, established last session, was to determine ways the rules could be changed to open the lawmaking process, engage the public, and generally encourage better policy making.

Recommendations of the task force were submitted to the rules committees in the House and Senate for review. Both committees and the House and Senate would have to approve the changes before they could take effect. The Legislature did not pass permanent joint rules in 2001.

Of particular importance in task force discussions were recommendations governing joint organization between the House and Senate, conference committees, and settling

budget matters including the major omnibus appropriations bills.

To address those concerns, the task force recommended a joint organizing committee be established each biennium to determine which standing committees in the House and Senate should meet at the same time, what topics they should discuss, and which budgetary accounts should be assigned to which omnibus bill. Once leaders determine what those assignments would be, those bills could not be combined, according to the proposed changes.

Existing practice assigns omnibus bills by committee. However, the committee structures in the House and the Senate are significantly different, leading to logistical difficulties at the end of the session when bills must be assigned to conference committees.

The proposed joint organizing committee would also help establish committee deadlines for when legislative business must be completed.

Along the same lines, the task force recommended that net expenditures, budget reserves and cash flow accounts, and each omnibus appropriation bill target be established by concurrent resolution of the House and Senate. The recommendation also would restrict the Legislature's ability to do other work if those limits were not set early enough in the session to complete work on time.

Conference committees would continue to be open to the public, but rules would govern

PEACE PROJECT



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Elly Huston, right, gets a hug from Breanna Austed Jan. 29 after finding the faces they created for the "Remember the Children" display in the north corridor of the Capitol. The pair is part of a group of 16 third-grade students that participated in a Peace Project at Schumann Elementary School in Orono. The project involved the creative efforts of a handful of professional artists and metro area children from churches, synagogues, and schools who painted 1,500 portraits of children's faces to represent a portion of the homeless children in our community.

that the committees could not meet between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. unless two-thirds of the members voted to extend the meeting. Then the latest a conference committee could meet would be 1 a.m., under the proposal.

Members expressed concern regarding the short notice of conference committee meetings and the late hours they are often held at the end of the legislative session.

In addition, bills could receive further amendment and discussion before going to conference committee, under the plan, and reports from conference committees would need to be presented at least 72 hours before it could be considered. Current rules allow a 12-hour lie-over for conference committee reports.

★ HEALTH

Donation clarification

Minnesota residents who have indicated they would like to donate their organs when they die should have their wishes fulfilled without interference from family members, the House Civil Law Committee decided Jan. 30.

The committee approved a bill that would clarify existing law to make sure those who designate their intention to be donors on their driver's license or state identification card actually become donors.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls), the sponsor of HF2473, said the bill is needed because family members sometimes override the wishes of their deceased relative and refuse to allow the persons organs to be donated.

Kathy Bakkenist, chief operating officer of LifeSource, an independent nonprofit organ procurement organization that matches donors to recipients, also spoke in support of the bill.

Bakkenist said the organization currently relies on the next of kin to approve the donation.

Since organs must be taken from the body shortly after death, grieving family members have to make a decision quickly and sometimes decide not to allow the donation, she said.

"This will help to ensure an individual's wishes, as indicated on their driver's license, are granted," Bakkenist said.

According to LifeSource, there are nearly 80,000 people nationally waiting for an organ transplant, including about 2,100 in the upper Midwest region, which includes Minnesota, western Wisconsin, and North and South Dakota.

Those numbers have increased steadily over



Kathy Bakkenist, chief operating officer of LifeSource, an independent organization that matches organ donors to recipients, testifies in support of HF2473 during the Jan. 30 House Civil Law Committee meeting. The bill would make organ donor designation on a driver's license considered conclusive legal intent to donate organs.

the past 10 years and the list continues to grow while the number of donors remains fairly steady, Bakkenist said. About 16 people nationally die each day while waiting for an organ transplant, she said.

The bill would help ease that shortage. "It truly has the potential to save lives," she said.

People in Minnesota can choose to be an organ donor when applying for or renewing a driver's license or state identification card. The bill would apply to those who are already designated as donors as well as future donors.

It would also include those under age 18. Minors may request to be donors, but only with the approval of a parent or guardian.

The bill now goes to the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee.

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

Reacting to recommended cuts

Increasing tuition is not one of the top priorities for state higher education institutions that may have their funding cut. But, it could happen.

Gov. Jesse Ventura is proposing a 5 percent reduction in fiscal year 2003 to both the University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, which equals \$33.2 million for the university and \$32 million for MnSCU.

Leaders of each shared their reactions Jan. 30 before the House Higher Education Finance Committee.

"I'm asking you to weigh this very carefully," University President Mark Yudof told the committee, which will consider the testimony for a future recommendation. He said the funding cut "will hurt one heckuva lot."

He spoke about momentum the university has gained in recent years, through improving the medical school, increasing student applications by 60 percent since 1995, and a general improvement in student satisfaction rates.

"It would be a historic mistake to cut our budget to the point where our momentum stalls," he said.

Yudof noted the university has saved millions of dollars by leaving the state health plan and going out on its own, eliminated two vice-presidents and provosts and their offices, reprioritized \$113 million, and delayed any nonessential hires.

MnSCU Chancellor James McCormick and Kathy Nelson, president of Lake Superior College, said the system has also made its share of money-saving decisions.

At her college Nelson said retiring faculty and staff have not been replaced, services have been decreased or eliminated, and one program is suspended for next year, with a second being considered for such a move.

Both Nelson and McCormick noted it is getting tougher to do more with an approximate 10 percent increase in students each semester at MnSCU institutions, but no funding increase.



University of Minnesota President Mark Yudof testifies Jan. 30 before the House Capital Investment Committee about the university's bonding request.

"We need to look to hire as growth continues," Nelson said.

A statewide hiring freeze would prevent that. "We'd prefer you hold the board accountable," McCormick said. "This way we can see if it is in the best interest of each college to hire."

As for solutions, both Yudof and McCormick said their institutions would continue to look for efficiencies and could spend down reserves, or raise tuition, although many students are already seeing a double-digit increase this year.

"Our board will try to minimize the amount on students as much as possible," McCormick said. Yudof said a tuition increase is the last thing he will look at as a solution.

Renovations, new labs requested

The governor's bonding recommendations for Minnesota's higher education institutions would fund less than half of their combined total requests. As a result, those institutions presented cases for full funding for projects to the House Capital Investment Committee Jan. 30.

Gov. Jesse Ventura wants to give the University of Minnesota \$86 million of their nearly \$232 million request, and \$135 million of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system's \$251 million request.

Despite low numbers, University President Mark Yudof sounded optimistic and thanked the committee for past support of the university.

"There is a strong and remarkable sense of momentum at the 'U' due to the Legislature and governor," he said. However, it has reached "a tipping point," he said, and is at a "very fragile" stage.

The university system has received high rankings in many national surveys, and Yudof wants to retain those honors, particularly in the area of public research.

Capital requests for the university's four campuses, he said, will turn labs into patient research, will provide up-to-date space for students to learn, study, and meet, and will be able to accommodate the increasing number of computer science students by 50 percent.

They include:

- \$80 million for asset preservation and replacement;
- \$33 million for a laboratory science building in Duluth;
- \$24 million for renovation of Nicholson Hall at the Twin Cities campus; and
- \$18.4 million for a mineral resources research center at the Twin Cities campus.

Ventura has recommended funding

\$35 million for asset preservation and replacement, \$25.5 million to match \$7.5 million in private grants for the laboratory science building at Duluth, and \$10 million for Nicholson Hall. He has also proposed funding the entire request for system-wide classroom improvements and a new student services center on the Crookston campus.

The governor has proposed funding the following MnSCU requests: \$35 million for asset preservation and replacement, \$30 million for a science building at Winona State, \$19 million for a science laboratory and auditorium at Minnesota State University, Moorhead, and \$17.4 million for a library and information access center at Metro State in St. Paul. Funds were also recommended for renovation and consolidation of the Minneapolis Community and Technical College, science renovations at Normandale Community College, and for a classroom and computer lab building at Alexandria Technical College.

Committee Chair Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud) has said he plans to fund more for higher education than proposed by the governor. The committee will make a final decision on funding later in the session.

Regents selection proposal

Members of a joint House-Senate task force have recommended changes to the existing process used for selecting regents to the board that governs the University of Minnesota system.

The House-Senate Task Force on Joint Rules met between October and January to recommend adjustments to the joint rules that govern meetings involving both the House and the Senate. The task force addressed many issues, including regent selection.

Members expressed concern about the existing selection process following the 2001 legislative session, where members of the House and Senate were unable to agree on a slate of candidates for the open regent positions. Instead, Gov. Jesse Ventura appointed people to fill the seats.

Existing regent selection process is as follows: a candidate advisory council reviews applicants and recommends a slate to the Legislature. Then a joint meeting of the education committees in the House and the Senate make recommendations to the full Legislature, which will approve the final slate of candidates. The Legislature is not limited to the recommended candidates at any point in the process.

One point of controversy in 2001 involved the fact that existing rules do not specifically define who is a member of the joint

education committee. Last year, members of the higher education finance committees in each body expressed an interest in the process and suggested they be allowed to vote.

The task force recommended that the education committee be specifically defined. It would include 24 members: the chair and ranking minority member of the education policy and higher education committees in the House and the Senate and eight other members from those committees, split equally between the majority and minority caucuses.

The recommendations also suggest regents should be selected by a joint convention of the Legislature by April 7, rather than May 7 of each odd-numbered year.

Task force recommendations were submitted to the rules committees in both the House and Senate for consideration. The recommendations could not be adopted until they receive the approval of those committees and the full House and Senate.

★ INDUSTRY

Biodiesel incentives

After its last-minute removal from the 2001 agriculture omnibus bill, biodiesel incentive legislation is mounting a comeback.

"It is a fuel with a great deal of promise," said Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), the sponsor of HF2574. McElroy presented the bill Jan. 30 to the House Regulated Industries Committee.

Biodiesel is a blend of traditional diesel fuel and biodegradable combustible liquid fuel made of organic oils. Soybeans provide the biological component in 90 percent of biodiesel, according to the National Biodiesel Board.

Under HF2574, the definition of renewable energy would be expanded to include biodiesel fuel for the purposes of the Renewable and High-Efficiency Rate Options Program.

Biodiesel fuel would also qualify under renewable energy objectives established in the 2001 Legislative session, which would require electric utilities to make a good faith effort toward having at least 10 percent of the electricity they provide come from these types of energy.

Lastly, the bill would add an incentive for qualified biodiesel generation facilities to be eligible for a 1.5-cent per kilowatt-hour subsidy.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) suggested that before expanding the definition of renewable energy the Legislature should first try the program for one year.

However, McElroy said, proponents of

biodiesel no longer consider it experimental.

In 2001, legislation would have required that by 2002 all state-owned and operated diesel vehicles use a biodiesel blend and by 2003 all diesel fuel sold in Minnesota contain at least 2 percent biological material by volume.

Opponents of the legislation maintain that the mechanics of biodiesel use in combustion engines has been insufficiently tested. The transportation industry questioned a bill they said would ultimately raise fuel costs for consumers.

Not all these issues were addressed during the Jan. 30 committee meeting, but the bill was approved, and will now move to the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee, one of many committees it may have to visit before it goes before the full House.

Health care options

Employers would have greater flexibility in what they offer in their health care plans to employees, under a measure approved by the House Commerce, Jobs, and Economic Development Policy Committee Jan. 30. The bill now goes to the House floor.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), the sponsor of HF1580, said a version of the bill that passed the committee last session was a broader attempt to address health care coverage issues. He offered a successful amendment limiting the scope of the bill to only raise the limit of the annual out-of-pocket enrollee cost sharing expenses allowed under current law.

Health maintenance organization contracts are now limited to annual co-payment and deductible amounts of \$3,000 per individual and \$5,000 per family. The bill would permit HMO contracts to have annual deductibles of up to \$5,000 per individual and \$10,000 per family. The bill would also allow contracts to have co-payments of up to 50 percent of the total amount paid to the provider.

The annual deductible amount does not apply to preventative health services.

"This is one of the many efforts to try to find ways to control the rapidly escalating costs of health care," Bradley said. "Many employers are reaching the breaking point on whether or not they can offer insurance."

Michael Scandrett from the Minnesota Council of Health Plans said that allowing employers more options in their health care plans would allow more employers to continue to offer plans to their employees.

Bradley said that reform to address escalating health care costs is most effective when consumers are "connected with the costs."

Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) said she was "astounded" that the committee was considering a bill where consumers may end up paying "five times more than they do now. It's ridiculous to have that kind of huge increase," she said.

LAW



Judiciary finance cuts

Members of the House Judiciary Finance Committee met Jan. 22 to review Gov. Jesse Ventura's proposed supplemental budget recommendations for 2002. However, given that the state is facing a nearly \$2 billion projected shortfall at the end of the 2002-03 biennium, committee members were reviewing the department cuts the governor recommends to balance the budget.

According to the recommendations, criminal justice funding would be adjusted by \$35 million through fiscal year 2003, which ends June 30 of that year.

Criminal justice funding includes the Department of Corrections, the state court system, portions of the Department of Public Safety, as well as other smaller state agencies.

Officials testified that the governor's recommendations would not negatively affect the state's smaller agencies.

Many of the adjustments involve shifting money from special revenue funds to the general fund to offset other spending. For example, the governor recommends transferring carry-forward dollars from the auto theft prevention fund to the general fund. In addition, he proposes capping expenditures for the theft prevention fund at \$1.7 million a year and transferring the remaining approximately \$1.3 million to the general fund.

Other such transfers would affect the law enforcement training grants, the criminal justice special projects account surcharge, and portions of the DWI reinstatement fee a convicted drunken driver spends to have his or her license reinstated.

Ventura recommends cutting nearly \$9.5 million from the community services division of the Department of Corrections, amounting to reduced juvenile residential placement grants, reduced funding through the community corrections act, and elimination of several alternative sentencing and transitional grant programs.

The Department of Public Safety would primarily reduce the grants it allocates in certain programs, such as violence prevention, gang strike force, and other drug policy and prevention grant programs.

For many departments, Ventura simply recommends cutting 5 percent from the budget.

The committee will review the recommendations in the coming weeks and compile a bill with its own spending priorities.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT



Annexation options

Officials from Minnesota cities and townships agree that 95 percent of annexation proceedings are amicable and occur with cooperation from all sides.

It's the other 5 percent that have lawmakers looking at current laws to determine if the system is fair or if improvements should be made.

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee heard differing accounts Nov. 29 of how the current process is working.

Rep. Jerry Dempsey (R-Red Wing), the committee chair, said the hearing was the fourth held during the interim, and that the issue would be further discussed once the 2002 Legislature convenes.

Although the committee did not discuss specific proposals, Rep. Larry Howes (R-Walker) has introduced a bill (HF869) that would allow the lesser of 35 percent or 100 affected property owners to petition for an election to determine whether an annexation can occur.

Howes said the issue should be about people's right to have a voice in the decision, not solely about the fiscal matters often involved.

Don Waller, a Wyoming Township supervisor, said annexations can often be a "land grab" by cities wishing to expand their tax base.

"By allowing citizens the right to vote that's when debate happens. Nothing gets talked about until it gets on the ballot," Waller said.

In 1959 the Minnesota Municipal Board was established to hear and decide local incorporation and boundary adjustment issues. In 1999 Minnesota Planning took over those responsibilities.

Some contested proceedings have been settled in mediation, but others go through a legal process involving an administrative law judge, according to testimony at the hearing.

Kasson Mayor Duane Burton said giving people the right to vote in the annexation process would result in more divisiveness between cities and townships. He said the current process encourages local officials to work cooperatively and proactively on planning issues.

Burton said his city meets monthly with

officials from neighboring communities on "how the community should take shape." The process of working together has served the region well, he said.

★ SAFETY

Anti-terrorism measure heard

As the Legislature gets underway for the first time since Sept. 11, one of the biggest issues facing lawmakers is how to prevent and respond to possible terrorist attacks in Minnesota.

Several House committees have heard testimony on HF2622, which is based on similar federal legislation dealing with anti-terrorism issues. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), defines terrorism and attempts to improve measures set in place to prevent and recover from possible terrorist acts.

The bill would make it easier for law enforcement to obtain permits for roving wiretaps and would allow them easier access to suspect's voicemail, e-mail, and other stored communication.

It would also make it illegal to trespass on public works facilities, allow public meetings to be closed when security matters are discussed, create a biological agents registry with the state, and require background checks for drivers transporting hazardous material.



Al Bataglia of the St. Paul Fire Department's Hazardous Material Unit testifies before the House Crime Prevention Committee Jan. 30 about a proposed House anti-terrorism package.

Colleges and other higher education institutions would also be required to report any known violations of student visas to the state.

Commissioner of Public Safety Charlie Weaver said the bill is similar to Gov. Jesse Ventura's proposal.

He explained some of the differences between the bill and the governor's proposal before the House Crime Prevention Committee on Jan. 30.

The bill would close a loophole in the law that allows visitors to receive a Minnesota driver's license that expires after their visa has expired. The governor's proposal would also make it harder for people from other states to acquire a Minnesota license.

Weaver said the state has worked to balance public safety and personal freedoms in the fight against terrorism.

"We want to be smart, we want to do what's necessary, but we don't want to trample over individual freedom in the name of public safety," he said.

The bill would also set stiffer penalties for hoaxes and terroristic threats, and it would designate money for training and equipment for law enforcement agencies.

Airbag safety

Minnesota drivers could be more assured their vehicles are equipped with airbags, under a measure heard by the House Commerce, Jobs, and Economic Development Policy Committee Jan. 30.

Rep. Dan Larson (DFL-Bloomington) is sponsoring the bill that has yet to be formally introduced. His proposal would require that when a motor vehicle is repaired following an accident where the airbag has deployed, the person performing the repair must repair or replace the airbag.

Alyssa Schlender, representing the Minnesota Auto Dealers Association, said there are three ways to determine whether a car actually does have an airbag: a visual inspection, checking the light on the dashboard that is supposed to illuminate if there is a problem with the airbag, and a hand-held computer device plugged into the cigarette lighter that determines if the airbag is there.

"None of these systems are fail proof," Schlender said. "Consumers are thinking they're buying cars with airbags and you only find out when it's too late."

The bill provides an exemption for cars that have an actual cash value of less than \$4,000.

Rep. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley) said the \$4,000 number seemed arbitrary and that he was concerned that requiring additional

repair costs would cause more people to junk their cars.

He said the problem might be better addressed by the industry to make it easier to detect when an airbag has been tampered with.

"I appreciate the intentions but often times we pass laws that have unintended consequences," he said.

Larson said that when the bill was drafted he realized the \$4,000 exemption figure might be problematic, but that he was attempting to address the concern of requiring people to pay additional costs on older, lesser valued cars.

Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston), the committee chair, said the committee would likely take up the bill again at a later hearing once it has been formally introduced.

★ TAXES

'Big Fix' questioned

Members of the House Taxes Committee expressed concern Jan. 16 about some of Gov. Jesse Ventura's proposed tax increases to address the state's \$1.95 billion budget deficit.

The governor has proposed around \$397 million in tax changes for the current biennium and \$1.3 billion in 2004-2005.

Department of Revenue Commissioner Matt Smith said among the proposals is a 5-cent per gallon gas tax increase the governor hopes would become effective March 1. The tax would be indexed to the consumer price index effective June 1, 2003.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the committee chair, said that when the Legislature agreed to Ventura's license tab fee reduction two years ago, conference committee members expressed concerns about leaving a hole in transportation funding.

"The worst fears of a number of the conferees is coming to fruition," Abrams said.

"The governor believes the gas tax is a more appropriate user fee than license tabs are," Smith said.

The administration is also proposing to reduce aid to local governments by \$146 million in the 2002-2003 biennium and \$323 million in 2004-2005.

Smith said local units of government whose 2002 levy and aid growth is more than 25 percent above the three-year average local household growth and inflation would receive the highest aid reductions.

Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea) said the reductions might be viewed as a spending cut by some, but will actually result in a tax increase, as local property taxes might need to be raised to make up for lost revenue.

Dorman also criticized the administration's

proposal to charge schools sales tax on purchases. He said the proposal was a "shell game" to prevent a cut in the per-pupil formula.

Smith said Ventura proposed eliminating the sales tax on purchases by local units of government last year, but it failed to gain support in the Legislature. He said expanding the sales tax to school purchases would make the law more consistent.

He added that the proposed tax would also give schools greater flexibility than a formula cut because they have some control over when they make purchases.

Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) was critical of a proposed sales tax expansion to legal services purchased by individuals. The tax would not be applied to business legal transactions.

Mullery said most working people only seek legal services in adverse times and thus the tax would hit them particularly hard.

"Most people would rather go to a dentist without novocaine than to an attorney," Mullery said.

Local taxing options

Equity is in the eye of the beholder when it comes to tax issues. Such is the case in St. Cloud where the House Taxes Committee traveled Dec. 13 to hear city officials describe the need for a local option sales tax to pay for up to \$40 million in projects.

St. Cloud Mayor John Ellenbecker said a local sales tax, supported by surrounding cities, would help pay for projects that currently fall solely on St. Cloud property taxpayers but are regional in scope.

In the 2000 general election, city voters approved a sales tax to fund airport, library, and road improvements along with funding for park and trail needs. State law requires the Legislature to authorize imposition of local sales taxes.

Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud) introduced HF1806 for such authorization last session. It awaits action by the committee.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the committee chair, said that during the past few sessions, the Legislature has moved further away from authorizing any more local option sales taxes.

Currently there are about a dozen cities in the state that have local sales taxes including Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, and Rochester.

"There has to be somebody who is the last one," Abrams said. "There has to be a time when you say we're not going to do these anymore."

He said there are several reasons why lawmakers are trying to get to one sales tax rate statewide. One is a national movement toward taxing purchases made over the Internet that would necessitate a uniform rate throughout the state.

Abrams said it is also an equity issue as he pointed to a recently approved referendum by Minneapolis voters to fund a new downtown library via a property tax increase.

Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville) said paying for the projects through the imposition of a sales tax rather than property taxes was a way "to levy taxes on people who didn't get to vote" on the issue.

McElroy said the city of Burnsville, which

is similar in population to St. Cloud, receives far less local government aid from the state, and its leaders would "get laughed out of town" if they proposed a local option sales tax.

George Hontos, a St. Cloud city councilmember, said it was an "injustice" to local taxpayers that an issue they approved at an election is being met with resistance.

"This is a unique area," Hontos said. "Let us manage our government as we see fit."

What's on the Web

Session Daily news updates available on the Web

Get the latest news on legislative happenings daily on your desktop.

Each day during the legislative session, news items regarding House actions will be posted on the House Web site through the Session Daily page.

Session Daily is the online companion to *Session Weekly*, a publication of the nonpartisan House Public Information Office.

On Session Daily, you will find short, easy-to-understand snapshots of House actions from a particular day — from committees, the House floor, or the governor's office.

The page also links to bills, reports, and other areas of state government enabling users to connect with the information they need.

These items will be updated by 8 a.m. Monday through Friday so you can make the site your first stop of the day. Find Session Daily at <http://www.house.mn/hinfo/sdaily/sdaily.htm>.

All news items are arranged by topic area, making it easier to find information about a particular subject of interest.

Items are also archived by date.

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NORTHSTAR RIDE



PHOTO BY BECKY EKSTAM

Approximately 60 legislators and local community members participated in a Jan. 28 train ride that organizers hope will garner support for the proposed Northstar Corridor commuter rail line from downtown Minneapolis to St. Cloud.

Minnesota House of Representatives 2002 Standing Committee Schedule

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| 8:15 to 10 a.m. | Jobs & Economic Development Finance 200 Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy B Health & Human Services 10 Transportation Finance 5 | Education Policy Health & Human Services 200 Policy 10 Judiciary Finance B Transportation Policy 5 | Jobs & Economic Development Finance 200 Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy B Health & Human Services 10 Transportation Finance 5 | Education Policy Health & Human Services 200 Policy 10 Judiciary Finance B Transportation Policy 5 | Jobs & Economic Development Finance 200 Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy/ B State Government Finance B Health & Human Services 10 Finance 10 |
| 10:15 a.m. to 12 noon | Civil Law Environment & Natural Resources Finance B Higher Education Finance 10 K-12 Education Finance 300S Taxes 5 200 | Crime Prevention Environment & Natural Resources Policy B State Government Finance 10 Taxes 300N 200 | Civil Law Environment & Natural Resources Finance B Higher Education Finance 10 K-12 Education Finance 300S Taxes 5 200 | Crime Prevention Environment & Natural Resources Policy B State Government Finance 10 Taxes 300N 200 | Environment & Natural Resources Finance B Higher Education Finance 10 K-12 Education Finance 300S Taxes 5 200 |
| 12:30 to 2:15 p.m. | Family & Early Childhood Education Finance 5 Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs 200 Regulated Industries 10 | Agriculture & Rural Development Finance 10 Capital Investment 5 Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development 200 | Agriculture Policy Family & Early Childhood Education Finance 10 Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs 5 Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development 200 B | Agriculture & Rural Development Finance 10 Capital Investment 5 Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development 200 | |
| 3:00 p.m. | HOUSE IN SESSION | | | HOUSE IN SESSION | |

Ways & Means, Rules & Legislative Administration, Redistricting and Ethics meet at the call of the chair.

1/30/02

B - Basement Hearing Room
All rooms in State Office Building

Weighing in

Gov. Ventura recommends \$746 million in bonding, but House members say plan lacks money for roads and higher education

By THERESA STAHL

Gov. Jesse Ventura has recommended spending \$746 million for new buildings and repairs to state facilities, which he said focuses on projects with significant state-wide impact.

Members of the House Capital Investment Committee have said the governor's proposal comes up short in a number of areas, including money for higher education and roads and bridges. But spending bills are in their preliminary stages, giving time for committee members to decide which projects to ultimately fund.

The majority of time in even-numbered years is dedicated toward a bonding bill, which authorizes the state to borrow funds for acquiring or improving public land and buildings.

State agencies this year put forth more than \$2 billion worth of requests. Leaving local projects out of his proposal, Ventura said he included those that would protect the health and safety of state residents and employees, those that would take advantage of federal matching funds, and those that are consistent with budgeting goals and smart growth principles.

Here are a few highlights:

- \$120 million to match federal funds for the Northstar Corridor rail line between Minneapolis and St. Cloud;
- \$86 million to the University of Minnesota for science, technology, and other instructional facilities on its campuses;
- \$85 million for a new laboratory for the Health and Agriculture departments;
- \$50 million for a Twin Cities metropolitan area busway; and
- \$40 million for state park improvements.

The recommended projects are equally divided between the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota, and they preserve the investments the state has already made, Ventura said in his announcement Jan. 14.

Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud), chair of the House Capital Investment Committee, said House Republicans haven't decided which projects to fund and won't make any final decisions until early March.

During the interim, members of the

committee toured the state, visiting more than 100 sites of projects that were proposed for the bonding bill. Knoblach said he's sure he wants to support a few projects, one of which is a proposed anti-terrorism center at Camp Ripley. This project was not included in the summary of projects recommended by the governor. The final deadline for consideration was in October, just a few weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Knoblach also said he wants to spend more than the governor has proposed for higher education. Besides \$86 million for the University of Minnesota, Ventura has recommended \$135 million to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system.

The University of Minnesota submitted more than \$232 million in project requests for 2002. MnSCU project requests totaled nearly \$251 million.

Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Wells), DFL lead on the committee, said state debt has risen an astronomical amount under Ventura's administration. The House DFL caucus hasn't yet determined what to fund, Kalis said, but he doesn't want to contribute much to the debt.

"Our main objective is to get this budget balanced," he said, and added that, "We'd like to see something that would spur the economy."

Senate Majority Leader Roger Moe (DFL-Erskine) has said he would like to pass a

smaller bonding bill early in the session to spur economic development, then come back and pass a larger bill later. Kalis said Moe's idea "makes sense" because the bonding bill is usually last to pass, and a bill that came out quickly could get some summer construction projects underway sooner.

However, Knoblach doesn't believe that move would make a difference, because leaders hope to wrap the session up by Easter.

Both Kalis and Knoblach expressed the need to fund roads and road maintenance, neither of which is included in the governor's proposal. Ventura designated \$30 million for the repair or replacement of local bridges. Knoblach said he wants to fund the full \$48 million requested by the Department of Transportation for bridge replacement and rehabilitation.

The governor's recommendation of \$120 million for a commuter rail line between St. Cloud and Minneapolis would be matched by \$139 million in federal funds and \$27 million locally. Knoblach said he has not decided whether he supports this initiative; Kalis said he's not against Ventura's light rail proposals, but wants to first see a "balanced system of transportation."

In recent years the bonding bill has seen some historical milestones. Two years ago the Legislature approved \$684 million in capital spending. That year Ventura had line-item vetoed eight projects from the bill, but the Legislature overrode four of those vetoes.


Four years ago, in 1998, the largest capital investment bill in Minnesota history was passed. Also significant was that more than one-half of the \$999 million law was paid for with cash from the general fund. 



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

The Fergus Falls Regional Treatment Center requested \$3 million in the 2002 bonding bill for programing facility upgrades. The project was not recommended for funding by Gov. Ventura.

A leaner budget

Gov. Ventura proposes tax increases and spending cuts to eliminate projected deficit, House counters with plan of its own

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

More than 10 years have passed since state officials anticipated a budget shortfall in Minnesota. Department of Finance officials announced last December that the state could anticipate a deficit of nearly \$2 billion when the biennium closes its books in June 2003.

Officials are also projecting a \$1.2 billion deficit for the 2004-05 biennium.

Since that announcement, Gov. Jesse Ventura and legislative leaders have been trying to establish a method for balancing the budget — by either cutting spending, raising revenue, or a combination of the two.

And though the different players disagree on the direction the state should take, all sides have been challenged to act as quickly as is prudent to protect the state from long-term ramifications.

From surplus to deficit

After many years of state finance officials predicting not only surpluses, but significant surpluses, news of a budget deficit may have come as some surprise to Minnesotans.

However, two important events share in the blame for Minnesota's downturn: a national economic recession and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

In announcing the projected deficit last December, Finance Commissioner Pam Wheelock clearly stated that the actions of the 2001 Legislature had no significant impact on the budget problem.

But the recession, which economists said officially began in March 2001, compounded by the unanticipated attack on the U.S. economy in September, provided a bleak outlook for Minnesota and nearly all of the other 50 states.

State of the State

Ventura hinted at the solutions he would propose in his State of the State Address Jan. 3.

Considered the primary policy speech to set the tone for the year, the State of the State is usually a preview of things to come and is delivered to the Legislature in the State Capitol.

However, this year, the governor chose to deliver the speech from his official residence and have the speech broadcast to the public.

That was his designated audience this year.

Though the governor avoided specifics, he emphasized that nothing would be off limits for potential cuts. He also said that revenue lost due to the recession cannot be recovered and delaying action may exacerbate the problem.

Ventura urged the Legislature to act as quickly as possible to solve the budget shortfall problem. He challenged them to act during the first week of the legislative session, though he was not specific about whether he expected them to pass a bill or propose one. However, legislative leaders were quick to point out that acting fast may not necessarily be the most prudent course.

"I don't know what act means," said House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) after the speech. "Passing a bill in a week would be very, very difficult."

House Minority Leader Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) said he was particularly concerned about potential education cuts, given reports of districts struggling around the state.

Specific fixes

It wasn't until Ventura announced his supplemental budget recommendations a week later that his plans to solve the shortfall became clear: across-the-board spending cuts coupled with some tax increases.

In formulating his plan, Ventura and his commissioners were focusing on eliminating the deficit without harming the state's credit rating and without creating a bigger funding problem down the road, he said.

Among the solutions for the 2002-03 biennium are the following:

- \$700 million in spending cuts, including at least 5 percent cuts to state agency operations;
- \$667 million from budget reserves and the local government aid account;
- shifting \$245 million in general fund dollars for transportation, allocated in 2000 and



A sign outside the Secretary of State's Office tells of the 21 permanent and temporary staff.

- 2001, to trunk highway bonds;
- raising \$199 million in 2002-03 through a 5 cent gas tax increase (existing taxes total 20 cents per gallon);
- increasing the cigarette tax from 48 to 77 cents per pack and increasing other tobacco product taxes proportionally;
- changing corporate and individual income taxes; and
- expanding the sales tax to cover motor vehicle repairs, individual legal services, newspapers and magazines, meals at state institutions (including colleges and prisons), and telemarketing calls.

For 2004-05 the spending cuts and tax changes proposed by the governor would cover the projected \$2.5 billion deficit, according to the presentation.

Ventura emphasized in the Jan. 10 presentation that he would use his executive powers to cut the budget if the Legislature did not act quickly. This time he gave a deadline of early February.

"If you do not act on the entire package," he said. "I will use my powers to affect what I can."

Historical similarities

This is not the first time the state has faced a deficit. Nor is it the first time a governor has discussed using his power to cut legislative allocations.

Since 1980, state finance officials have

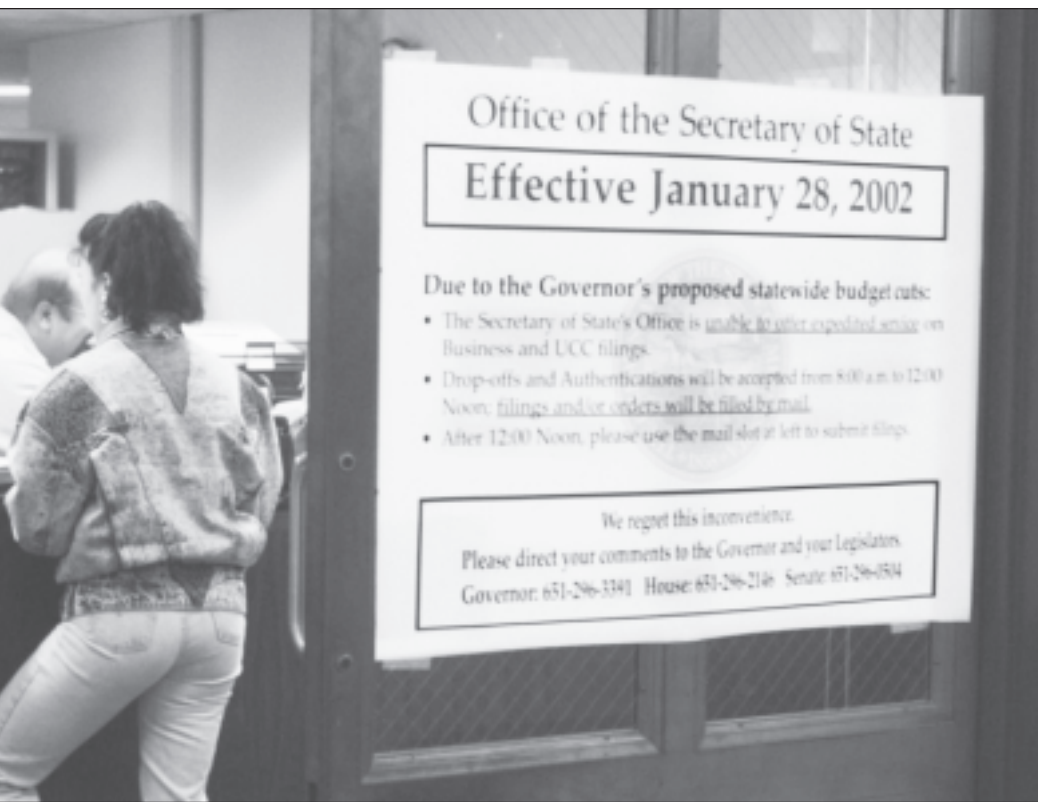


PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Reduced hours at the office due to the nearly \$2 billion projected state budget shortfall. The office has laid off

anticipated that expenditures would exceed revenues in five biennia. During the early 1990s, Gov. Arne Carlson faced slight projected deficits, but short-term tax increases and spending cuts alleviated the problem.

Gov. Rudy Perpich was faced with a significant deficit in 1986 and after a long and contentious legislative battle, he cut the budget by \$110 million in the spring of the year.

In the early 1980s, Gov. Al Quie faced an even more significant deficit of more than 15 percent of the state budget. He cut about \$195 million in late 1980 to help eliminate the problem.

Preliminary 2002 plans

While legislative leaders recognize the importance of handling the problem quickly, they are cautious in their approaches and have differing priorities.

Historically, the Legislature has been slow to bind future Legislatures by the decisions they make now. This is particularly a concern for many representatives and senators as all seats are up for re-election in November.

Leaders are also hesitant to raise taxes — even though the proposed taxes focus on the kinds of taxes that people technically have a choice in paying.

“We are ready in the House to show leadership and commit that this budget problem will be solved without raising taxes,” said Speaker

Sviggum.

The governor has said property tax changes enacted in 2001 will not be affected by his plan. However, some leaders are concerned that changes will indirectly increase property taxes by reducing local government aid.

While Ventura’s plan also does not directly affect the state’s general K-12 education formula, members are concerned about the proposed cuts to higher education and other unintended educational consequences.

Sviggum also said the House Republican plan will not affect education funding or nursing homes.

Said Ventura, “If the House Republicans think they can do this without raising taxes, and not touching K-12 education, and not touching nursing homes, and not touching local aid to cities, I welcome their plan. Let’s see it.”

Minority Leader Pugh also emphasized that particularly higher education can be seen as an economic development tool that is important at a time of recession.

The next step

Committees in the House have been reviewing the governor’s supplemental budget since Jan. 15. The process will continue as members debate the merits of the plan and suggest proposals of their own.

Typically in the even-numbered year, the Legislature reviews the supplemental budget

and formulates omnibus finance bills, just like during the odd-numbered, budget year. The bills are usually smaller.

This year, many of those bills will focus on budget cuts. However, the governor also has suggestions regarding anti-terrorism and preparedness plans. The House is also discussing those items, many of which may require additional spending.

Committees must finish their work on finance bills by March 8. 🐼

Writer David Maeda contributed to this report.

Executive branch powers to cut the budget

Gov. Jesse Ventura has reminded legislative leaders over the past few weeks that he will use his executive powers to balance the budget if the House and Senate don’t act quickly to solve the deficit.

State law does allow the governor some freedom to cut allocations when faced with a deficit.

The state constitution prohibits the state from running a deficit at the end of a fiscal biennium. In Minnesota, biennia last from July 1 of the odd-numbered year through June 30 of the next odd-numbered year. For example, the state is currently in the middle of the 2002-03 biennium; it began July 1, 2001.

The Department of Finance estimates that the state will have a deficit of \$1.2 billion at the end of fiscal year 2003, which ends June 30, 2003.

According to state law, if the commissioner of finance determines there will be a deficit, he or she first uses funds in the budget reserve account to balance the budget. If that amount is not enough, as is true in the current situation, the next step is to reduce appropriations.

Such actions are called “unallotments.” Basically that means that the state will reduce unexpended allotments for appropriations made by the Legislature in 2001. If the money hasn’t yet been spent, it’s still available to help reduce the deficit.

That power has only been exercised twice since 1980 — once by Gov. Al Quie that fall and once by Gov. Rudy Perpich in the spring of 1986.

During the past 20 years, governors, including Ventura, faced with deficits have advised state agencies to begin trimming their budget in anticipation of later cuts.

In addition, Ventura has said he will try to avoid short-term borrowing to alleviate cash flow problems that may occur toward the end of the current biennium. Such borrowing is often accompanied by high interest rates because the state would be paying for operating costs on credit. Finance Commissioner Pam Wheelock has suggested that such practices could harm the state’s good, AAA bond rating.

(M. KIBIGER)

Going for two

Stadium task force recommends public financing for two new professional sports facilities that also benefits the U of M

By Mike Cook

Baseball under the stars and major college football in the autumn air are two possibilities following the Jan. 28 recommendation of a legislative stadium task force.

The 18-member Tripartisan Task Force on Stadium Issues advocated that the 2002 Legislature and Gov. Jesse Ventura adopt legislation providing for public financing of a baseball park for the Minnesota Twins and a football stadium to be shared by the Minnesota Vikings and University of Minnesota. The recommendations do not specify a site for the stadiums.

The House, Senate, and governor's office each appointed six people to the task force. The governor's appointees included interested Minnesota residents and state agency officials.

Despite members of the task force expressing displeasure with the "pressure tactics and crisis atmosphere caused by Major League Baseball," the recommendation says, "Action in 2002 is important for the Twins and the future of professional baseball in Minnesota because there is a real possibility that the Twins could be eliminated."

The recommendation calls for state participation in a baseball stadium to be contingent on the reform of baseball's economic structure, including some form of payroll equalization between teams.

As for the Vikings, whose Metrodome lease runs until 2011, the recommendation urges action now as a National Football League program for aiding in new stadium construction expires this year. Additionally, new revenues for the university would help its cash-short athletics department.

"The task force said each should have equal priority," said Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead), co-chair of the task force.

House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) said the stadiums issue is not more important than balancing the budget or transportation funding, but he expects a vote this session.

The task force recommended that financing options for a stadium be pursued in the following order:

- All private funding;



PHOTOS BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak sits in front of a map illustrating the location for a new baseball park for the Minnesota Twins in Minneapolis during the city's Nov. 29 presentation to the Tripartisan Task Force on Stadium Issues.

- A combined investment of team owners and the local government where the facility would be built; and
- Investment of the state and team owners or other private sources.

In the latter, the state's contribution could be in the form of an additional sports memorabilia tax, income tax paid by visiting players reallocated from the general fund to a stadium, an additional tax on tickets and stadium food and beverages, an added car rental tax in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and gaming revenue. The latter could be a state lottery game, casino, slots at Canterbury Park, or games of chance in bars, according to the recommendation.

"We put food on the table so to speak, and now the parties can decide what they want on their plate," Goodno said.

Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul) said the recommendation "isn't perfect by any stretch," but sums up what was done. "I came into this meeting not thinking I'd ever vote for two stadiums in one year, but this has given me some options to think about. It's doable. (Whether) we have the votes is another day's fight."

Conversely, Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville) was the lone task force member to vote against the recommendation. She said the proposed fees might not raise enough revenue.

"I'm concerned that the public believes we can pay for two stadiums with user fees, and I'm not sure we can," Holberg said.

Twins President Jerry Bell said at a Nov. 29 meeting of the task force that his team needs a new ballpark to bring its revenue in line with the rest of the league. He said the Twins have \$32 million in local revenue, second worst in baseball. The average is \$95 million.

"A new stadium would likely provide the \$63 million disparity," Bell said. "Clearly the problem cannot be solved in the Metrodome even with a winning team." He said a new stadium would likely eliminate contraction talk in Minnesota.

Team officials described the Vikings as "near a financial crisis." On Dec. 13 Mike Kelly, the team's executive vice-president, said the average combined stadium and local revenue for teams in the league is \$123 million. The Vikings are at \$108 million.

He said parking and club/stadium revenue is now last in the league, while concession revenue — the team gets 10 percent — and suite revenue are 25th among the 31 teams. It is expected to drop further in the next three years. The Vikings have \$35 million less in facility revenue than the average of the teams with the five newest stadiums.

The Vikings proposed a \$500 million



Former St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman, *right*, listens as current Mayor Randy Kelly presents his city's proposal for a new baseball park for the Minnesota Twins during a Nov. 29 hearing of the Tripartisan Task Force on Stadium Issues.

retractable-roof facility at the university's Minneapolis campus that could be shared with the Gophers.

University officials reiterated the school couldn't participate in the construction and operation of a new stadium, other than the site east of Mariucci Arena.

"Our academic priorities come first," said Sandra Gardebring, vice-president of university relations.

Men's Athletic Director Tom Moe said "moving the football team to the dome (in 1982) was one of the most significant mistakes the university has made." He said football revenues are limited in the dome.

The task force recommendation does not include the possibility of a renovated Metrodome for any of the three tenants, although Gov. Ventura has advocated the idea.

"A renovated Metrodome would still lack

many of the fan amenities characteristic of newer stadiums," the recommendation states. Additionally, the Vikings said they would not renew their lease in a renovated facility.

Representatives from the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission showed a way the 20-year-old stadium could be renovated into a football-only facility for \$259 million, with more seats, suites, concession areas, and a new-look exterior. Architects said the work could be done so the Vikings and Gophers would not need to relocate for one season.

However, Viking consultants said the fix is not economically feasible or a workable solution and still does not produce enough revenue in the form of total seats, suite and club seats, and parking.

Representatives from two sports design firms said the renovation plan is about \$100 million low in its cost estimate, would force the Vikings and Gophers to play one season elsewhere, and would call for the replacement of the roof, something the sports facilities commission said would not be necessary.

The university is also against renovation. Eric Kruse, vice president for university services, outlined six reasons in a March 6, 2001 letter to the sports facilities commission. Among them are the lack of a "collegiate look and feel," continued limited revenue streams, and no indication of who pays what for renovation and ongoing maintenance costs. 🐾

Longtime legislator passes away



Sen. Sam Solon

Flags at state buildings flew at half-staff the first weekend of January to honor Sen. Sam Solon (DFL-Duluth) who died from cancer Dec. 28.

Solon, 70, served in the Legislature for more than 30 years and was the second-most senior member of the Senate, behind Majority Leader Roger Moe (DFL-Erskine).

A retired junior high school social studies teacher, Solon was first elected to the House in 1970. He then served nine terms in the Senate beginning in 1972.

Gov. Jesse Ventura said colleagues thought of Solon "as a quiet and thoughtful legislator who always put the interests of his district first."

He was the son of two Greek immigrants, Nick and Dimitra Eliopoulos, who later changed the family surname to Solon. Ironically, that name was shared by a famous statesman and lawmaker in ancient Athens.

Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown), a House member since 1976, said she knew

Solon before they both became legislators — serving with him on a union board and teaching with him in Duluth.

"He was a caring man who respected his students and expected respect back," Murphy said. "When he gave you his word you knew you could count on it."

Murphy said Solon was the type of legislator who always made visitors to the Capitol comfortable, such as offering his office as a place for visitors from the northland to put their coats.

"He just was respectful of other people and never put himself above anybody," she said. "He was non-threatening and resourceful, always willing to help others. He wasn't just interested in his own projects but everybody's projects."

Murphy said that she and other Duluth area legislators met with Solon last November, and that he was looking forward to returning to St. Paul this session.

Rep. Mike Jaros (DFL-Duluth), a 13-term House member, worked with Solon on several pieces of legislation on behalf of the city.

Although they didn't always agree, particularly when it came to economic development and social justice issues, Jaros said

Solon was always an "easy person to work with."

"He was one of the best PR people you could have," Jaros said. "He knew how to deal with people. He didn't create enemies."

Solon chaired the Senate Commerce Committee for a decade. He also was a longtime member of the Senate Higher Education Budget Division.

Last August he was honored by his alma mater, the University of Minnesota-Duluth, which named a student services building after him. Solon was a 1958 graduate of the school with a Bachelor of Arts degree in social science.

"He is a loyal friend with vision, commitment, and leadership who has helped guide UMD in its role of academic excellence and accessibility to all Minnesotans," Chancellor Kathryn Martin said. "We are enormously grateful for all that he has done."

Solon is survived by his wife Yvonne Prettner Solon (who was elected Jan. 29 to finish his Senate term), four children, a sister, three brothers, and his mother.

(D. MAEDA)

State 'family' loses a member

Luther remembered for her focus, determination, and smile

By DAVID MAEDA

Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park), who served for five terms in the House, died Jan. 30 from the effects of stomach cancer.

She is survived by her husband, U.S. Rep. Bill Luther (D-Minn.), and two children Alex and Alicia. Her family was with her when she passed away in their Brooklyn Park home.



Rep. Darlene Luther

In a written statement Congressman Luther said, "Darlene was a beautiful person in every sense of the word. Her unpretentious and friendly nature was a joy to all who knew her. She was generous beyond belief, and she truly loved her family, friends, and constituents. We had 34 terrific years together and the most enjoyable campaign we ever had was when she first won her seat, especially when she received more votes than her husband. Alex, Alicia, and I will truly miss her."

Gov. Jesse Ventura has ordered state flags be flown at half-staff in Luther's honor.

Sen. Linda Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park) a friend of the Luther's for 28 years, and a neighbor for the past 22, said Darlene was a determined person who loved being a state representative.

"She liked our community so much. She liked working for ordinary people so much," Scheid said. "One of her strongest suits was introducing legislation to solve problems for people in the community. She did more of that than a lot of us do. She was an advocate for people who didn't have a voice anywhere else."

Luther, 54, served on the House Civil Law, Capital Investment and Redistricting committees. She held a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of St. Thomas.

She was a recipient of a liver transplant in February 1998 after being stricken with hepatitis.

Among Luther's legislative accomplishments was a measure in 2000 that funded an educational mobile unit that encourages organ donation. The \$135,000 appropriation for the measure was vetoed by Ventura but the Legislature later overrode the veto.

She also sponsored bills to help developmentally disabled people live independently. Her son, Alex, has Down Syndrome.

Scheid said that Luther's tenacity was another of her strengths as a legislator.

"She did not give up. When Dar made up her mind to do something she was determined and focused. Those are great qualities if you're going to be successful at the Legislature. She'd hang in there until they adjourned."

Luther was also a cook who liked to share with others.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Rep. Darlene Luther speaks on the House floor during the 2001 session.

Scheid said that one Thanksgiving in the mid-1990s when she had her elderly step-mother living with her, she arrived at home to find that Luther had left a full turkey meal on her doorstep.

"She loved to fix food for people," Scheid said. "Food was one way she expressed her concern and love for people."

House members stood in silence at the beginning of the Jan. 31 floor session to honor Luther, whom Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center) described as a dedicated and compassionate person who was a "very precious human being."

"She was a remarkable friend and state representative," Hilstrom said.

House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) said Luther would be greatly missed by her colleagues.

"She was probably one of the more well-

liked members of the Legislature — her smile, her outreach to people. She was very personable."

He said that despite the inherent partisanship in a sometimes "volatile" atmosphere members of the House feel like they belong to a close extended family.

"When we lose a member it hurts everybody. We are a family, though we may have our differences and disagreements," he said. "(She was an) absolutely wonderful person who seemed to always have a smile on her face. I will miss her a lot."

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A different viewpoint

Television reporter shares perspective on terrorist attacks, legislators' role in the aftermath

By **THERESA STAHL**



The moment CNN anchor Aaron Brown knew how much the events of Sept. 11 would change Americans' lives wasn't when he signed off the air after his 15 hours of nonstop coverage of the attacks.

It didn't hit him on a visit to Ground Zero or during an interview with someone who had lost a loved one in the World Trade Center.

It was the look on his daughter's face when she walked into an airport with him and, for the first time, saw guards dressed in camouflage, armed with machine guns.

Brown is the face many watched on Sept. 11, and the day is so prominent in his career that describing it takes up more than one-fourth of his biography, which lists coverage of some of the biggest events during the past two decades.

Brown, a native of Hopkins, was invited to share his thoughts of that historic day and his experience since as a news reporter with members of the Minnesota Legislature on Jan. 31. His talk was part of "Minnesota Horizons 2002: A Changing State in a Changing World."

Earlier that day, House and Senate members participated in panel discussions about the state's changing demography and public infrastructure. Listening and talking with Brown was an opportunity to look at issues from a national perspective.

He shared his view of the attacks as a reporter, as an American, and as a father.

"The biggest story of our lives landed in my lap," he said, and he got to tell the whole world about it.



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

CNN Anchor Aaron Brown speaks to legislators and staff Jan. 31 as part of "Minnesota Horizons 2002: A Changing State in a Changing World," held at the St. Paul Technical College.

As a reporter, he said he wants to see that important issues are talked about in full. "We want to create an environment where all issues are talked about in a civil way."

Sometimes on his way to work, Brown would walk by Ground Zero. Of all the tragedy that took place there, he said it was heartening to never once see a disrespectful moment. No jokes, no laughs, he said.

He reflected on how he and many others saw much of America before the attacks, saying people had separate lives, separate schools, separate churches, and separate neighborhoods. "We were part of a much broader, bigger community, but it took a painful experience to make that clear to me," he said.

Brown said that day he wasn't just reporting the news, he was reporting history. "And history is going to judge how we handled our fear." Legislators, he told the audience, are going to be asked to change laws that affect freedoms, and that it is going to cost them a lot of money. "We shouldn't have to do it ... (especially) in a time when money is hard to find."

Rep. Ruth Johnson (DFL-St. Peter) said later in an interview that last year making preparations in law for a potential threat of foot and mouth disease was a "good foundation" for upcoming legislation for facing terrorism in Minnesota. She said Brown's message of freedoms made her think about creating a balance of security and liberty.


"We want to get it right," she said.

Brown, who lives in New York with his wife and daughters, said the attacks have changed his sense of security for his family, and for his community.

One audience member asked what Brown thought would happen to the site of Ground Zero. Brown replied that there will be a lot of demands and a lot of genuine concern for the place where 2,000-plus victims are never going to be found.

"It is a graveyard," he said. He said the discussion of what should be done should involve the nation, not just New York City.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) asked how the media have changed since Sept. 11. Brown said reporters have a better understanding of the role they're in and have a much better sense of purpose.

"It's a shame that it takes something so horrific to remind us of that," he said. "But we remembered again why it matters." 

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Starting early

YMCA's Youth in Government program allows many who are yet unable to vote to take part in legislative process

By DAVID MAEDA

The freshly painted House chamber served as an appropriate backdrop as hundreds of junior and senior high school students gathered to participate in the 48th Model Session of the Minnesota YMCA Youth in Government Program Jan. 10-13.

The program gives students the opportunity to get hands on experience practicing the policymaking process that can lead to a career in government down the road.

"What an exciting time for you to be involved," Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer said in opening the model session. "Certainly since Sept. 11 there is the need to pull together no matter what your party is, no matter what your issues are."

While at the Capitol, participants proposed legislation, debated issues in committee and on the floor, and voted on which bills should become laws.

Like the occupants that normally fill the building, this year's student lawmakers debated issues including school bus safety, the environment, and whether there should be a nap hour for all students.

Burnsville senior Beth Ruscello, who was elected House Speaker at the Youth in Government state convention, has been active in the program since seventh grade.

Ruscello's interest in government led to her spending last year in Washington D.C. serving as a page for U.S. Rep. Jim Ramstad (R-Minn). She said she enjoyed the experience, particularly having the chance to meet a variety of famous people including Israel Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, professional wrestler "The Rock," and the Duchess of York.

After her experience in Washington Ruscello doesn't want to pursue a career in government because she got tired of dealing with "too many politicians and lawyers." Still she enjoyed the Youth In Government program because she likes to debate issues with peers who don't always share her conservative point of view.

For other participants, government is

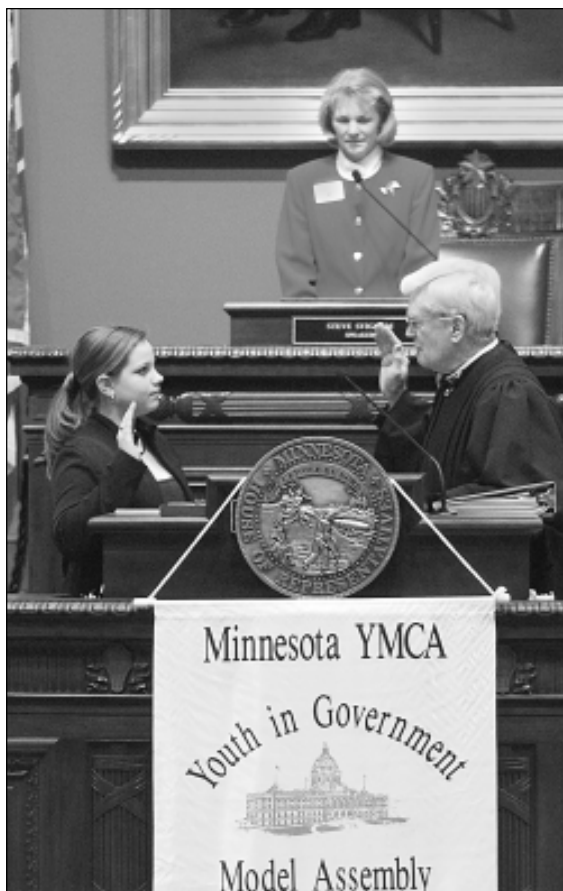


PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Associate Justice Edward Stringer of the Minnesota Supreme Court swears in Beth Ruscello of Burnsville as the Youth & Government program's Speaker of the House Jan. 11, while Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer looks on.

something that's in their blood.

Jaclyn Hallstrom, a sophomore at Woodbury High School, said her interest in government grew after she watched her aunt at work. Her aunt is Gail Romanowski, second assistant chief clerk in the House.

This was Hallstrom's second year in the Youth in Government program. She said the experience has been educational and fun.

"I know a lot more about what's going on," she said. "I have a much better understanding of government. It's easier to follow newspapers and what's in the news."

After serving as a page in the program last

year, Libby Murphy, the niece of House Journal Editor Pat Murphy, said that this year she learned how to write a case brief as she served as counsel in the program's court of appeals.

The Blake High School freshman plans on continuing in the program next year, hopefully as a lobbyist because she would like the opportunity to "persuade people" on issues.

Also in her second year was Elizabeth Hagmann, a Fridley High School freshman.

The niece of Barb Thomas, committee administrator for the House Capital Investment Committee, Hagmann said of the program: "You get to meet a lot of people and it's fun to learn."

Youth in Government participants may also return at some point in the future to work for real in the House.

Kevin Mosher, a research assistant in the House Research Department and an intern with the state Court of Appeals, participated in the program in 1992 and 1993 as a high school student from Rochester.

He said the program gives students invaluable hands-on experience that could help them choose a profession.

"There are few other careers at the eighth- to 12th-grade level where you actually get to go and be that person," Mosher said. "There is no better way to teach the democratic process."

Mosher said that he has remained in touch with others that were in the program with him.

"Every year during the Youth in Government session we'll talk about it," he said. "(Participants) walk away with a majestic impression of what elected officials do. They have a real appreciation for the daily things that are done to get legislation through a committee and to the floor."

In his address to a joint convention of the House and Senate, this year's governor, Burnsville senior Matt Blackmar, said that not all leaders hold titles such as president, governor, or CEO.

"Leaders are any individual who guides others forward," Blackmar said. In urging the student lawmakers to be "passionate and progressive," he said the students could make an impact on the "real world" by using the model session to get their voices heard.

Pre-filed Bills Tuesday, December 11

HF2586—Kielkucki (R) K-12 Education Finance

Enrollment options established for students at low-performing schools.

HF2587—Kahn (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Baseball: Minnesota Twins community ownership process provided.

HF2588—Smith (R) Civil Law

Family law recodification provided.

HF2589—Ness (R) Transportation Policy

Corn-based highway de-icing solutions provided for snow and ice control on state trunk highways.

HF2590—Swapinski (DFL) Judiciary Finance

Hazardous materials teams reinstated in Duluth, Moorhead, and Rochester; and money appropriated.

HF2591—Goodno (R) Health & Human Services Policy

Optometry legend drug prescription restrictions removed, and reporting requirements expanded.

HF2592—Juhnke (DFL) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Metropolitan transit authority established, authority transferred, sales and use tax imposed, motor vehicle sales tax proceeds distribution modified, and conforming changes provided.

HF2593—Kahn (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

City council ward elections provided after reapportionment.

HF2594—Mullery (DFL) Taxes

Limited market value phase-out repealed, and program sunset provided.

HF2595—Smith (R) Civil Law

Family law recodification provided.

HF2596—Holberg (R) Civil Law

Child custody provided for by de facto custodians and third parties.

HF2597—Kubly (DFL) Crime Prevention

Smoke detectors required to be attached to central power source in dwelling units and guest rooms that are not owner-occupied.

HF2598—Cassell (R) Education Policy

Pledge of allegiance recitation required in all public schools, and United States flag respect instruction provided.

HF2599—Mulder (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Health care nonprofessionals defined as essential employees.

HF2600—Mulder (R) Health & Human Services Policy

Wading pools at family day care homes exempted from public swimming pool requirements.

HF2601—Davids (R) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

No-fault auto insurance medical expense benefits regulated.

HF2602—Rifenberg (R) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Rushford redevelopment tax increment financing district extended duration authorized.

HF2603—Paulsen (R) Health & Human Services Policy

Optometrists and ophthalmologists required to give patients copies of eyeglass and contact lens prescriptions.

HF2604—Ozment (R) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Deer hunting lifetime firearms and archery license provided.

HF2605—Gunther (R) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Drug and alcohol testing provisions modified and point of collection testing regulated relating to employment.

HF2606—Koskinen (DFL) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Telephone sales call regulation provided, no call list maintained, educational efforts provided, remedies provided, and money appropriated.

HF2607—Sertich (DFL) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Workforce development fund assessment increased.

HF2608—Kielkucki (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Casino; privately operated metropolitan area casino authorized, tax on gross receipts imposed, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2609—Anderson, I. (DFL) Jobs & Economic Development Finance

Cold weather research center grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2610—Bernardy (DFL) K-12 Education Finance

Locally inflationary increase in the basic formula allowance authorized, inequities among school district revenue sources reduced, alternative facilities program expanded, and other revenue provisions modified.

HF2611—Bernardy (DFL) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Anoka County emergency radio system bonds and levy authorized.

HF2612—Rhodes (R) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

Licensed architect, engineer, land surveyor, landscape architect, geoscientist, or certified interior designer requirement circumstances revised.

HF2613—Tuma (R) Crime Prevention

Firearms; persons convicted of a crime of violence prohibited from possessing firearms for life.

HF2614—Dehler (R) Taxes

Local government aid city aid base increased for specified cities.

HF2615—Ozment (R) Transportation Policy

License plates; alternative-fuel license plates authorized, and vehicles authorized to operate in high-occupancy lanes.

HF2616—Seifert (R) Taxes

Lyon County public works household hazardous waste facility construction materials and supplies sales tax exemption provided.

HF2617—Tuma (R) Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Mill towns state trail bonds authorized and money appropriated.

HF2618—Holberg (R) Crime Prevention

Public employees and officials required to report certain unlawful actions to law enforcement.

HF2619—Huntley (DFL) Health & Human Services Policy

State Emergency Health Powers Act established requiring reporting of illnesses and health conditions, specifying standards for declaring a health emergency, authorizing special powers, establishing enforcement, and appropriating money.

HF2620—Rukavina (DFL) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development

American flag and related items sale prohibited unless manufactured in the United States.

Tuesday, January 29

HF2621—Abrams (R) Taxes

Bakery products including bread specifically exempted from the prepared foods sales tax.

HF2622—Stanek (R) Crime Prevention

Minnesota Anti-Terrorism Act of 2002 adopted providing civil and criminal penalties, establishing biological agents registry and hazardous materials regulations, issuing bonds, and appropriating money.

HF2623—Winter (DFL) Transportation Finance

Worthington greater Minnesota transit fund assistance provided for operating subsidies for taxi service through Prairie Land transit joint powers authority.

HF2624—Buesgens (R) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Shakopee Public Utilities Commission increased from three to five members.

HF2625—Seifert (R) Health & Human Services Policy

Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act new or amended rules legislative approval required.

HF2626—Mulder (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Intensive early intervention behavior therapy evaluation required and sunset provided.

HF2627—Holberg (R)
Taxes
Employee and employer identity information exchange between Department of Labor and Industry and Department of Revenue authorized.

HF2628—Pelowski (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Winona and Southwest State university measurements provided for minimum distance from campus for liquor license location.

HF2629—Stanek (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Retired individuals license by the board of architecture, engineering, land surveying, landscape architecture, geoscience, and interior design authorized to use a retired professional designation.

HF2630—Erhardt (R)
Taxes
Noncommercial seasonal recreational property exempted from the state property tax.

HF2631—Molnau (R)
Transportation Finance
Previous transportation appropriation unobligated balance for an exclusive busway canceled.

HF2632—Molnau (R)
Transportation Policy
Freeway and expressway shoulder bus usage expanded to include all buses where such use is permitted.

HF2633—Ness (R)
Taxes
Local government aid city aid base increased for certain cities.

HF2634—Winter (DFL)
Crime Prevention
School trespass law clarified.

HF2635—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Individual education plan services billing consent requirements modified for billing medical assistance and MinnesotaCare.

HF2636—Dorman (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Farmland Foods Company employees extra unemployment benefits provided.

HF2637—Ozment (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Temporary town officeholders authorized in the event of inability or refusal to serve.

HF2638—Ness (R)
Taxes
Local government aid city aid base increased for certain cities.

HF2639—Penas (R)
Transportation Finance
Trunk highway improvements to year-round 10-ton status provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2640—Wilkin (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Medical assistance, MinnesotaCare, or general assistance medical care; persons wrongfully obtaining assistance disqualified.

HF2641—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Health plan company regulation modified, prescription drug discount program established, Minnesota provider tax and tobacco tax provisions modified, malpractice punitive damage limit imposed, and money appropriated.

HF2642—Gerlach (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Mine inspector annual audit requirement modified.

HF2643—Gerlach (R)
Transportation Policy
Impounded vehicle sale authorized within 15 days of notice unless owner declares intent to reclaim.

HF2644—Pawlenty (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Veterans and single homeless adult housing projects authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2645—Rhodes (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Minneapolis veterans home remodeling provided to accommodate 80 skilled nursing beds, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2646—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Prescription drug discount program established, and money appropriated.

HF2647—Erickson (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Federal tax rebates not considered means of support relating to veterans home discretionary admission.

HF2648—Ness (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Dassel wastewater treatment facilities improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2649—Smith (R)
Transportation Policy
Personal data related to operation of a motor vehicle disclosure by the department of public safety provided.

HF2650—Dempsey (R)
Transportation Finance
Port development assistance funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2651—Wolf (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Auto glass repair and replacement fair and reasonable market price regulation provided.

HF2652—Lieder (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Polk County recorder and auditor-treasurer offices appointment provided.

HF2653—Greiling (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Transportation of animals in motor vehicles prohibited unless protected or secured, and exceptions provided.

HF2654—Anderson, B. (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Fergus Falls veterans home construction funding provided to provide 25 to 30 skilled nursing beds, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2655—Pawlenty (R)
Taxes
Property tax deferral extended on art park property.

HF2656—Dempsey (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Hastings hydro-electric plant capital improvements grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2657—Dawkins (DFL)
Civil Law
Probate and power of appointment provisions modified.

HF2658—Erickson (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Casinos; counties authorized to issue casino license, taxation authorized, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2659—Schumacher (DFL)
Education Policy
School districts authorized to retain elementary music and art specialists.

HF2660—Erickson (R)
Education Policy
Sexually transmitted disease educational program modified to include promoting marriage.

HF2661—Osskopp (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Game and fish law harassing conduct provision clarified relating to access to marinas by water.

HF2662—Stanek (R)
Crime Prevention
Interstate compact for adult offender supervision adopted, existing compact repealed, advisory council created, administrator appointed, and money appropriated.

HF2663—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Newborn circumcision medical assistance coverage prohibited unless medically necessary.

HF2664—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Supplemental nursing services agencies requirements modified.

HF2665—Jaros (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Duluth aerial lift bridge repair and restoration grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2666—Dorman (R)
Taxes
Tax amnesty program established.

HF2667—Dorman (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Albert Lea tax increment financing district authorized.

HF2668—Dorman (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Blazing Star State Trail segment construction authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2669—Dorman (R)
Judiciary Finance
Freeborn County crime victim crisis center grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2670—Seifert (R)
Transportation Policy
Trunk Highway 23 from St. Cloud to I-90 designated as a high-priority inter-regional corridor, and reconstruction directed as a multi-lane divided highway.

HF2671—Hackbarth (R)**Transportation Finance**

Anoka County park-and-ride lot authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2672—Seifert (R)**Environment &
Natural Resources Policy**

Special hunting provisions authorized for persons with walking disabilities.

HF2673—Holsten (R)**Environment &
Natural Resources Finance**

Stillwater; Brown's Creek environmental protection grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2674—Carlson (DFL)**Taxes**

Bakery goods including bread specifically exempted from the prepared food sales tax.

HF2675—Swapinski (DFL)**Jobs & Economic
Development Finance**

Spirit Mountain Recreation Area authority improvements grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2676—Jaros (DFL)**Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**

State lottery sports pool games established, net proceeds credited to a human resources account and appropriated annually to nutrition, housing, and health care.

HF2677—Jaros (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Cell phone use prohibited in moving motor vehicle unless in case of emergency, and misdemeanor penalty imposed.

HF2678—Solberg (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Medical assistance demonstration project prepaid medical assistance and prepaid general assistance medical program requirements modified.

HF2679—Solberg (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

State's compensation liability insurance for licensed providers increased.

HF2680—Lieder (DFL)**Transportation Finance**

Trunk highway major projects account established, gasoline and special fuel tax imposed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2681—Hackbarth (R)

Resolution to the President and Congress pledging support and extending sympathy and appreciation to the sacrifices of those responding to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Thursday, January 31**HF2682—Daggett (R)****Environment &
Natural Resources Finance**

Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) conservation reserve program funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2683—Holsten (R)**Environment &
Natural Resources Policy**

Nonprofit organizations authorized to charge admission fee to venison meals.

HF2684—Hackbarth (R)**Environment &
Natural Resources Policy**

Game and hunting technical modifications and clarifications provided.

HF2685—Ozment (R)**Environment &
Natural Resources Finance**

State park and recreation area improvements, restoration, and acquisition funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2686—Pawlenty (R)**Transportation Finance**

Tobacco settlement revenue bonds authorized to fund road improvement and bottleneck reduction fund, and money appropriated.

HF2687—Entenza (DFL)**Taxes**

Motor vehicle sales tax payment provided for vehicle sold in violation of dealer licensing requirements, and certain motor vehicle title misdemeanor penalties abolished.

HF2688—Opatz (DFL)**Taxes**

Bakery items including bread specifically exempted from the prepared food sales tax.

HF2689—Opatz (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Newborn infant dependent health insurance coverage required to cover cleft lip and cleft palate conditions.

HF2690—Davids (R)**Environment &
Natural Resources Finance**

Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) conservation reserve program funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2691—Tingelstad (R)**Environment &
Natural Resources Policy**

Pollution Control Agency required to amend rule to provide for bioremediation technologies in failed individual sewage treatment systems.

HF2692—Davids (R)**Agriculture & Rural
Development Finance**

Feedlots funding usage authorized for environmental improvements.

HF2693—Davids (R)**Environment &
Natural Resources Finance**

Blufflands trail system segment funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF2694—Davids (R)**Environment &
Natural Resources Policy**

Hunting season artificial light prohibition modified.

HF2695—Mares (R)**Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**

Minneapolis Firefighters Relief Association retirement provisions corrections provided.

HF2696—Slawik (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Student-on-student abuse policy required consistent with existing related policies.

HF2697—Skoe (DFL)**Environment &
Natural Resources Finance**

Big Bog State Recreation Area addition provided.

HF2698—Paulsen (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Board of Physical Therapy rulemaking authority on licensee ethics extended.

HF2699—Nornes (R)**Jobs & Economic
Development Finance**

Parkers Prairie street flooding mitigation funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2700—Nornes (R)**Family & Early Childhood
Education Finance**

Fergus Falls public library expansion project funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2701—Greiling (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs &
Economic Development**

Parenting leave definition of "child" clarified.

HF2702—Mulder (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Nurse licensure compact enacted.

HF2703—Biernat (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Purple Heart Trail designated on Trunk Highways 390, 391, and 392.

HF2704—Greiling (DFL)**Education Policy**

Local school board student advisory members authorized, and student school board involvement evaluated.

HF2705—Howes (R)**Family & Early Childhood
Education Finance**

Pine River city library renovation and expansion funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2706—Entenza (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Obstruction of emergency vehicle during emergency duty misdemeanor penalty provided, and money appropriated.

HF2707—Skoe (DFL)**Environment &
Natural Resources Policy**

State lands withdrawn from sale shoreline provision modified.

HF2708—Ness (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Minnesota Extension Service county extension work definition clarified.

HF2709—Skoe (DFL)**Environment &
Natural Resources Finance**

Big Bog State Recreation Area visitors center construction funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2710—Entenza (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs &
Economic Development**

Telephone solicitation limited, no-call list maintained, and penalties provided.

HF2711—Skoglund (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs &
Economic Development**

Telephone solicitation limited, no-call list maintained, and penalties provided.

HF2712—Mulder (R)**Environment &
Natural Resources Finance**

Lewis and Clark rural water project funding provided, previous bonding appropriation cancelled, and money appropriated.

HF2713—Workman (R)**Environment &
Natural Resources Finance**

Carver County Seminary fen acquisition and restoration funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2714—Rukavina (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs &
Economic Development**

Auto glass repair and replacement regulated.

HF2715—Goodno (R)**Taxes**

Border city development zone newly constructed homes property tax, rental income, and housing tax incentives provided.

HF2716—Clark, J. (R)**Family & Early Childhood Education Finance**

Youth enrichment activity facilities capital improvements funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF2717—Fuller (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Emergency medical services occupational provisions modified.

HF2718—Mulder (R)**Taxes**

Homestead property tax classification extended to specified non-homestead property.

HF2719—Leppik (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Uniform Athlete Agents Act providing student athlete agent registration adopted, and money appropriated.

HF2720—Dempsey (R)**Taxes**

Local government aid city aid base increased for certain cities.

HF2721—Dempsey (R)**Taxes**

Local government aid city aid base increased for certain cities.

HF2722—Hilty (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Aitkin County; Don M. Beerbower Memorial Highway established.

HF2723—Clark, K. (DFL)**Civil Law**

Undocumented non-citizens qualified as Minnesota residents for higher education purposes.

HF2724—Koskinen (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Prescription drug program enrollment limitation eliminated.

HF2725—Kelliher (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Minneapolis Lake of the Isles flood mitigation funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2726—Stang (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Motor vehicle dealer transfers deadline clarified.

HF2727—Stang (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Home improvement and new home warranty breach damages modified to include attorney fees.

HF2728—Slawik (DFL)**Civil Law**

Biological agents registry and safety standards established, rulemaking authorized, civil penalty provided, and money appropriated.

HF2729—Rifenberg (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Winona County surplus land sale authorized.

HF2730—Winter (DFL)**Agriculture Policy**

Diesel fuel minimum biodiesel content required.

HF2731—Leppik (R)**Education Policy**

Minnesota College Savings Plan technical correction provided.

HF2732—Pelowski (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Minnesota State College - Southeast Technical science labs funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2733—Ness (R)**Taxes**

Bakery goods including bread specifically exempted from the prepared foods sales tax.

HF2734—Dibble (DFL)**Taxes**

Bakery goods including bread specifically exempted from the prepared foods sales tax.

HF2735—Greiling (DFL)**Civil Law**

Civil commitment standards conformity provided, and courts authorized to commit certain persons with mental illnesses to community hospitals.

HF2736—Goodwin (DFL)**Taxes**

Bakery goods including bread specifically exempted from the prepared foods sales tax.

HF2737—Goodwin (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Firearms possession lifetime prohibition imposed on persons convicted of a crime of violence.

HF2738—Rifenberg (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Open air swine basin new construction permits prohibited.

HF2739—Dorman (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Feedlot upgrade expenditure limits modified.

HF2740—Larson (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

MinnesotaCare eligibility four-month insurance barrier eliminated for specified airline workers.

HF2741—Pelowski (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Minnesota State College - Southeast Technical student services areas renovation funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2742—Lipman (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

State agency contested case procedures regulation provided.

HF2743—Workman (R)**Transportation Finance**

Trunk Highway 212 multi-lane divided highway construction funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2744—Fuller (R)**Taxes**

Electric generation facility personal property tax exemption provided.

HF2745—Goodwin (DFL)**Education Policy**

School boards required to adopt policy prohibiting intimidation and bullying, and other harassment and violence policy consistency required.

HF2746—Tuma (R)**Civil Law**

Minnesota Anti-Terrorism Act of 2002 adopted.

HF2747—Solberg (DFL)**Taxes**

Itasca and Koochiching tourism, agricultural, and industrial development spending limit increased.

HF2748—Westrom (R)**Education Policy**

Independent School District No. 801, Browns Valley, early school year start authorized.

HF2749—Harder (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Jackson County Fort Belmont restoration funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2750—Larson (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Unemployment; extra benefits provided for workers laid off from airline and related industries.

HF2751—Stang (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Minnesota credit union protection act adopted.

HF2752—Goodwin (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

State government use of consultants limited and moratorium on consulting contracts imposed.

HF2753—Hilty (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Carlton County recorder appointment authorized.

HF2754—Wolf (R)**Transportation Finance**

Freight improvement projects funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2755—Haas (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Health insurance form and rate filing requirements modified, task force on small business health insurance extended, geographic premium variations modified, and renewal premium increases cap established.

HF2756—Kuisle (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Annexation processes limited, municipal council member election after annexation provided, reversion of property provided, tax rates limited until sewer and water are provided, and annexation moratorium provided.

HF2757—Abeler (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Human services licensure; commissioner's authority to set aside a disqualification limited.

HF2758—Ozment (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Sprinkler system installation required in certain existing high-rise buildings, and tax deduction provided.

HF2759—Bradley (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Case management choice provided for persons with mental retardation or related conditions.

HF2760—Greiling (DFL)**Education Policy**

Nonpublic schools required to annually provide notice of equal transportation requirements.

HF2761—Erickson (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

State treasurer duties transferred.

HF2762—Swapinski (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Lake Superior College in Duluth addition and remodeling funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2763—Entenza (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Mutual insurance holding company authorized to reorganize into a stock company, ceding transaction accounting provisions modified, and workers' compensation rating plan threshold calculations modified.

HF2764—Abrams (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Unicameral legislature established and constitutional amendment provided.

HF2765—Paymar (DFL)**Taxes**

Bakery goods including bread specifically exempted from the prepared food coverage.

HF2766—Haas (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Motor vehicle fuel franchise sale federal code compliance expiration date removed.

HF2767—Kubly (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Granite Falls flood mitigation projects funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2768—Lieder (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Crookston; Red Lake River restoration and habitat improvement project funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2769—Swenson (R)**Transportation Finance**

County-state-aid highway priority reconstruction project funding provided for specific highways in specified counties, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2770—Finseth (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Rural finance authority loan eligibility criteria modified, and additional business organizations made eligible for value-added stock participation.

HF2771—Paymar (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Telephone sales calls limited, no call list established, remedies provided, and money appropriated.

HF2772—Harder (R)**Crime Prevention**

Climbing on the roof of school buildings prohibited.

HF2773—Seifert (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Southwest State University in Marshall fire-damaged facilities replacement funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2774—Howes (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Annexation of unincorporated land procedures and criteria provided.

HF2775—Mulder (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Casey Jones State Trail length and use provisions expanded.

HF2776—Mulder (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Casey Jones Trail capital planning, acquisition, and development funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2777—Juhnke (DFL)**Taxes**

Paper returns for quarterly sales tax filers authorized.

HF2778—Wolf (R)**Regulated Industries**

Telecommunications special master position created in the Office of Administrative Hearings, carrier operations separation authorized for repeated violations, and civil and administrative penalties increased.

HF2779—Lipman (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

State agency rule interpretive notice authority provided, and notice and comment procedures authorized.

HF2780—Lipman (R)**Civil Law**

Land conveyance by counties curative act created, recording of documents written in foreign languages provided, and affidavit of custodian form established.

HF2781—Erickson (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Legislative size, committee organization provisions, leader service limitations, and term regulations established; gubernatorial cabinet created; departments and agencies assigned; and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2782—Erickson (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Kanabec hospital employee PERA pension benefit provisions established in the event of privatization.

HF2783—Davids (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

No-fault auto insurance residual liability coverage regulated.

HF2784—Anderson, I. (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Credit information use by insurer prohibited.

HF2785—Goodno (R)**Civil Law**

Limited liability companies and business corporations, corporate name usage, and investment company share issuance procedures regulated; electronic record and signature legal recognition provided.

HF2786—Mares (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Restrictions for supplemental, deferred compensation, and local pension plans clarified for plans funded from accumulated sick and vacation leave.

HF2787—Hilty (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Criminal background checks for electronic security system company employees required, procedures provided, discharge and license disqualification authorized, and criminal penalties imposed for failure to request checks as required.

HF2788—Evans (DFL)**Taxes**

Bakery products including bread specifically exempted from the prepared foods sales tax.

HF2789—Osthoff (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Stadium; St. Paul major league baseball stadium construction provided, St. Paul food and liquor tax levied, ticket tax established, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2790—Osthoff (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Como Park Conservatory restoration project funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2791—Rukavina (DFL)**Civil Law**

Parenting time right required in certain custody proceedings.

HF2792—Ozment (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Local governments indemnification provided for participating in household hazardous waste programs.

HF2793—Osskopp (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Gambling and gambling devices obsolete language deleted, and conforming changes provided.

HF2794—Solberg (DFL)**Transportation Finance**

Aitkin County Great River Road completion funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2795—Swapinski (DFL)**Family & Early Childhood Education Finance**

Emergency assistance and transitional housing funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2796—Ozment (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Minneapolis joint venture asphalt plant construction authorized and local approval required.

HF2797—Holberg (R)**Civil Law**

Private detective or protective agent license holder employee criminal history check data usage regulations clarified.

HF2798—Holberg (R)**Transportation Policy**

Interregional transportation corridor development advance funding provision modified.

HF2799—Bishop (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Casino; state-run gaming facility authorized, Native American government net profit portion established, and gaming facility revenue usage regulations provided.

HF2800—Ness (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Career and technical education permanent funding source created.

Schedule is subject to change.
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<http://www.house.mn/hinfo/schedule/index.htm>.

MONDAY, February 4

8:15 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: ***NOTE CHANGE***

HF2793 (Osskopp) Gambling and gambling devices obsolete language deleted, and conforming changes provided.

HF2779 (Lipman) State agency rule interpretive notice authority provided, and notice and comment procedures authorized.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Continued review of HHS-related capital investment requests.

Continued review of HHS-related portions of the Governor's capital investment proposal.

HFXXXX (Kahn) Request for funds for a facility in Minneapolis (MCDA and People Inc.) (informational hearing).

HFXXXX (Eastlund) Request for funds to demolish DHS structures in Cambridge (informational hearing).

HFXXXX (Tingelstad) Request for funds for a facility in St. Paul (American Lung Association) (informational hearing).

Other bills may be heard.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Supplemental Budget Review.

Minnesota Historical Society, Nina Archabal, Director.

Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Kit Hadley, Commissioner.

Department of Commerce, Jim Bernstein, Commissioner.

Department of Labor and Industry, Shirley Chase, Commissioner.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: HF2650 (Dempsey) Port development assistance funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2671 (Hackbarth) Anoka County park-and-ride lot authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HFXXXX (Tingelstad) Northstar Corridor commuter rail funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

10:15 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF2622 (Tuma) Minnesota Anti-Terrorism Act of 2002 adopted providing civil and criminal penalties, establishing biological agents registry and hazardous materials regulations, issuing bonds, and appropriating money.

HFXXXX (Lipman) Real Property changes.

Note: Any agenda items not completed in the morning will be heard in 500S State Office Building 15 minutes after session.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources bonding requests.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: HFXXXX (Leppik) Athlete Agents Act. Witness: James Bernstein, Commissioner, Department of Commerce.

Responses to the Governor's FY 03-05 budget recommendations - Student and faculty organizations and affected HESO programs.

Witnesses: Jim Pehler, President, IFO; Brad Krasaway, President, MSCSA; Angie Siverhaus, Ridgewater College; Justin Klander, President, MSUSA; Tyler Despins; Ed Schones, Co-President, Minnesota State College Faculty; Larry Oveson, Co-President, Minnesota State College Faculty; Ann Hutton, Legislative Chair, Minnesota Library Association; Chris Olson, Executive Director, Cooperating Libraries in Consortium.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: Education lobbying groups' response to Governor's budget: Education Minnesota; MSBA; Special Education Organizations - ARC, PACER, Minnesota Learning Resource Center; Service employees; Other education lobbying groups.

Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: Public testimony on Governor's tax proposals.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: Minnesota Economic Opportunity Grants (MEOG); Continuation of child care overview.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jerry Dempsey

Agenda: HF2602 (Rifenberg) Rushford redevelopment tax increment financing district extended duration authorized.

HF2667 (Dorman) Albert Lea tax increment financing district authorized.

HF2624 (Buesgens) Shakopee public utilities commission increased from three to five members.

HF2652 (Lieder) Polk County recorder and auditor-treasurer offices appointment provided.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: HF2550 (Osskopp) Emergency 911 telephone system provisions modified to establish emergency telecommunications system. Discussion of the following bills:

HFXXXX (Wolf) Relating to telecommunications, establishing a special master, authorizing the PUC to order structural separation, and increasing civil and administrative penalties.

HFXXXX (Stanek) Domestic Terrorism prevention proposal and 911 fees.

3 p.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

TUESDAY, February 5

8:15 a.m.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: Overview of changes to the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HFXXXX (Paulsen) Board of Physical Therapy Housekeeping Bill.

HF2603 (Paulsen) Optometrists and ophthalmologists required to give patients copies of eyeglass and contact lens prescriptions.

HF2473 (Kahn) Organ donor designation on driver's license considered conclusive evidence of intent.

HF2515 (Goodno) Notice of death of unidentified homeless persons provided on Department of Health web site.

HF2531 (Goodno) Hospice care providers regulated.

HF2664 (Bradley) Supplemental nursing services agencies requirements modified.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: Continuation of Governor's Budget Recommendations: Department of Public Safety; Department of Corrections.

Governor's office testimony regarding how budget decisions were made.

Note: Public testimony will be heard regarding Department of Public Safety and Department of Corrections recommendations. Please contact Jeff Davidman at 651-296-4110 if you are interested in testifying.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: HF2643 (Gerlach) Impounded vehicle sale authorized within 15 days of notice unless owner declares intent to reclaim.

HF2589 (Ness) Corn-based highway de-icing solutions provided for snow and ice control on state trunk highways.

HF2632 (Molnau) Freeway and expressway shoulder bus usage expanded to include all buses where such use is permitted.

HF2649 (Smith) Personal data related to operation of a motor vehicle disclosure by the Department of Public Safety provided.

10:15 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. John Tuma

Agenda: HF2662 (Stanek) Interstate compact for adult offenders.

HFXXXX (Clark, J.) County attorney association proposals.

Bills returned from the General Register under Rule 4.20 at the end of the 2001 Session:

HF170 (Leighton) Stay of adjudication for certain driving offenses.

HF1025 (Entenza) State Board of Investment.

SF1297/HF1908 (McGuire) Gunshot wound reporting.

CANCELED

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: Canceled. (Legislative Auditor Report and State Solid Waste Advisory Committee Report will be taken up on Thursday, Feb. 7.)

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: Governor's bonding recommendations: Department of Military Affairs; Department of Administration; Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board; Amateur Sports Commission.

Note: Agenda will carry over to Thursday.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

Tour

Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: Tour of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's laboratory facilities.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach

Agenda: Overview of the Governor's 2002 capital budget - Peggy Ingison, Assistant Commissioner of Finance; Lee Mehrkens, Capital Budget Coordinator.

COMMERCE, JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HFXXXX (Sertich) Relating to background checks; Department of Labor.

HF2492 (Davids) Relating to insurance; regulating the reporting of insurance information; prohibiting credit scoring.

HF1868 (Davids) Relating to public employees; establishing a mandatory statewide health insurance plan for school district employees; providing for post-retirement health insurance

coverage through individual trust funds; establishing a labor-management team to design the insurance plan; appropriating money. Other bills may be added.

1:30 p.m.

Legislative Commission on Minnesota

Resources

300N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: Review the Issues Seminar and website survey results.

Decide on changes and adopt the Strategic Plan priorities for Trust Fund and for the Future Resources Fund.

Decide when to announce the RFP, and hearing selections meetings and hearings time frame.

Consider approval of \$382,350 in allocations for RIM Critical Habitat match from 2000 bonding, 1998 general revenue and Critical Habitat License plates proceeds.

WEDNESDAY, February 6

8:15 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: To be announced.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Consideration of a recommendation to the Capital Investment Committee on HHS-related proposals and legislation.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Presentation of local bonding projects.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: HF2639 (Penas) Trunk highway improvements to year-round 10-ton status provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

MnDOT Communications Backbone Digital Conversion.

Department of Administration/MnDOT Exterior Repair.

HFXXXX (Holberg) Advance funding for inter-regional corridor development.

10:15 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF2596 (Holberg) Child custody provided for by de facto custodians and third parties.

HFXXXX (Tingelstad) Assisted reproduction.
HF2657 (Dawkins) Probate and power of appointment provisions modified.
HF97 (Greiling) Revisor's instruction to replace phrase concerning mental illness.

Note: Any agenda items not completed in the morning will be heard in 500S State Office Building beginning at 3 p.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources bonding requests.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: Reciprocity agreements update - Report by HESO.

Witness: Jack Rayburn, Research & Program Services, HESO.

HESO February State Grant Quarterly Report.
Witness: Dr. Robert Poch, Director, HESO.

HF2566 (Stanek) Antiterrorism grants provided to local law enforcement agencies for training and equipment, and money appropriated.

Witnesses: Rep. John Tuma, HF2566 Co-Author; Dr. Steve Franz, System Director for Disability/Student Life, MnSCU.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: Investigation of alternative compensation agreements.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: Department of Revenue response to public hearing testimony and questions.
HFXXXX (Abrams) Department of Revenue Data Disclosure Bill.

HFXXXX (Abrams) Department of Revenue Technical and Administrative Changes Bill.
Other bills to be announced.

11 a.m.

Subcommittee of the Legislative

Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy

400N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. David Bishop

Agenda: To be announced.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth

Agenda: Individual septic treatment systems in Greater Minnesota.

Rod Massey, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA); Lisa Thorvig, Assistant Commissioner, MPCA; David Weirens, Association of Minnesota Counties.

COMMERCE, JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HFXXXX (Davids) Relating to insurance; changing the definition of insured.

HFXXXX (Entenza) Relating to consumer protection, no call list.

HF1413 (Tuma) Relating to insurance; no-fault auto; regulating basic economic loss benefits.
Other bills to be announced.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: To be announced.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jerry Dempsey

Agenda: To be announced.

4 p.m.

EDUCATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: Informal meeting for a demonstration of the Department of Children, Families and Learning's CLASS website.

THURSDAY, February 7

8:15 a.m.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: To be determined.

HEALTH & HUMAN

SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF2646 (Bradley) Prescription drug discount program established, and money appropriated.

HF2641 (Bradley) Health plan company regulation modified, prescription drug discount program established, Minnesota provider tax and tobacco tax provisions modified, malpractice punitive damage limit imposed, and money

appropriated.

HFXXXX (Haas) Small Group Reform Bill.

HFXXXX (Boudreau) Minnesota Fair Health Plan Contracting Act.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: Presentation on CrimNet: Updates on the status of the projects funded during the 2001 legislative session.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: HF1885 (Workman) Licensed motor vehicle dealer bonding requirements clarified.

HF2670 (Seifert) Trunk Highway No. 23 from St. Cloud to I-90 designated as a high-priority interregional corridor, and reconstruction directed as a multi-lane divided highway.

Bills to be added.

10:15 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. John Tuma

Agenda: HF2618 (Holberg) Requiring public employees to report certain unlawful actions to law enforcement.

Departments of Public Safety and Corrections departmental initiatives (Bill numbers and authors will be listed later).

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: Legislative Auditor Report "Recycling and Waste Reduction," Deborah Junod, Program Evaluation Division.

State Solid Waste Advisory Committee Report, Gene Merriam, Chair.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: To be announced.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: Continuation of Governor's bonding recommendations from Tuesday's meeting: Department of Military Affairs; Department of Administration; Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board; Amateur Sports Commission.

12:30 p.m.

**AGRICULTURE & RURAL
DEVELOPMENT FINANCE**

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: Language implementing the Governor's supplemental budget recommendations.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach

Agenda: Overview of Department of Administration proposal for a combined public health/agricultural lab building.

**COMMERCE, JOBS &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF2629 (Stanek) Relating to professions; allowing retired individuals licensed by the Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience, and Interior Design to use a retired professional designation.

HFXXXX (Gunther) Department of Trade and Economic Development/Department of Economic Security Merger Bill.

3 p.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

6 p.m.

**Legislative Commission on Pensions and
Retirement**

112 State Capitol

Chr. Sen. Dean Johnson

Agenda: Appropriate mechanism for the recovery of unpaid member and employer retirement plan contributions from closed charter schools (4th consideration). Review of First Special Session Laws 2001, Chapter 10, Article 11, Sections 10 and 12: PERA-General and PERA-P&F service credit proration provisions. SFXXXX/HFXXXX: Minneapolis Firefighters Relief Association; corrective provisions. SF XXXX-Johnson, D.E./HF XXXX-Mares: Supplemental thrift plans; authorization of plans funded from employee accrued benefits. Rule of 90 early normal retirement age and benefit tier; potential extension to post-June 30, 1989, hirees covered by TRA. Other items as added by the chair.

FRIDAY, February 8

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.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: Overview of the MnSCU Curriculum Transfer/Collaboration Agenda.

Witnesses: Linda Baer, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, MnSCU; Craig Froke, System Director for Program Collaboration, MnSCU.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: To be announced.

1:30 p.m.

**Legislative Commission on Minnesota
Resources**

300N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: Review the Issues Seminar and Web site survey results.

Decide on changes and adopt the Strategic Plan priorities for Trust Fund and for the Future Resources Fund.

Decide when to announce the RFP, and hearing selections meetings and hearings time frame.

Consider approval of \$382,350 in allocations for RIM Critical Habitat match from 2000 bonding, 1998 general revenue and Critical Habitat License plates proceeds.



Litter control

Maine plan would create deposit program for cigarette butts

It's a common occurrence — cigarette butts being flicked out of car windows or lying in many areas on the ground.

Some people find them repulsive, including a Maine representative who sought to take action.

Rep. Joe Brooks (D-Winterport) introduced a plan during the 2001 session that would have created "returnable tobacco products." It was ultimately snuffed out in the House 107-29.

LD258, which is based on similar legislation for bottles and aluminum cans, called for consumers to pay an extra \$1 per pack, but smokers would get their money back by recycling all butts in their pack at a redemption center. The plan called for each cigarette to have "5-cent deposit" printed on the filter.

Brooks said the state expected to collect \$100 million via the surcharge. He estimated

that one-half of the butts would be returned, meaning the state would receive approximately \$50 million to help operate redemption centers and cover costs associated with burying or incinerating the butts. Remaining monies would go to support state health programs.

During a May 1 floor debate Brooks said 2.3 billion cigarettes are sold in Maine annually. "We estimate that more than 10 percent of those end up on the streets, at the doorway, walkways, or sidewalks," he said. Brooks also said that of Maine's 60 annual forest fires, 10 percent are started by "illegally disposed of cigarette butts."

Brooks emphasized his plan was not a health bill. "This is a litter control bill."

Despite its failure, the bill has sparked further debate. Lawmakers are considering a

15-member panel, including legislators and tobacco industry representatives, to look at the problem.

Two cigarette companies spoke against the plan. Philip Morris representatives said to print the "5-cent deposit" in just one state would create problems logistically and financially. A spokesman for R.J. Reynolds told the *Bangor Daily News* that although cigarette litter is a serious problem, the additional price would fall disproportionately on lower-income residents, the majority of state smokers.

Brooks also said representatives in other states, including Alabama, California, Florida, and Hawaii, contacted him about his legislation.

(M. Cook)

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Minnesota Memorials



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Korean War Memorial

A "Dear Abby" column helped in developing the Minnesota Korean War Veterans Memorial.

Located east of the Court of Honor along Old Columbus Walk on the State Capitol grounds, the monument cost about \$600,000 with an even match between the state and private funding. It was dedicated in September 1998.

Created by Art Norby, and landscaped by Bob Kost and Dean Olson, the memorial honors the 94,643 Minnesotans who served in the conflict, the 738 killed in action, the 1,500 wounded soldiers, and the 154 listed as missing in action.

The advice columnist wrote a piece in 1993 about fundraising for a Korean War memorial in Washington D.C. that spurred Ed Trabing into action. The veteran joined the Minnesota Korean Veterans Chapter 1 and quickly became its president. He then traveled the state talking to anyone or any organization willing to donate money.

By December 1997 enough private money had been accumulated to match the state grant.

Highlighting the memorial is a soldier approaching a hollowed-out silhouette in a rectangular arch representing those missing in action. The soldier was created in fine detail as Norby spent months consulting with Korean vets about every trait, such as what the fanny packs looked like, how the bayonet would have been carried, and the diameter of the helmet.

The pillars at the monument feature the names of those lost in battle. Along the pathway are key dates in the conflict, and the nations that took part in United Nations action.

(M. Cook)

Reflections

Tuesday is merely just the second day of the week in much of the work-a-day world. For some, it takes most of Monday to mentally switch from a relaxed weekend mode to one of concentrating on giving the best of oneself to work projects. Legislators operate somewhat differently.

Day one of the week for most lawmakers is Sunday. They begin to prepare for the upcoming week while many leave from such distant towns as Preston, Crookston, Virginia, and Ivanhoe to get to St. Paul in time for an early-Monday meeting.

Yet, when an annual session of the legislature is convened, Tuesday is usually the day that legislative business gets going.

When the first day of the 2002 session convened on Tuesday, Jan. 29, time-consuming task force committees on stadium issues, health and human services budgeting, and the governor's budget recommendations had already met to be ahead of themselves once session got underway.

For 19 of the last 25 years, a new session began at noon on a Tuesday.

Previous bodies also needed to resolve budget shortfall issues similar to those facing the 2002 Legislature.

In 1981, for example, the Legislature's main purpose once it convened on a Tuesday was to enact a short-term borrowing law so the state could meet its financial obligations.

On Tuesday, Jan. 12, 1982 it convened to balance the state budget and address cash flow problems in the regular session, before completing its work in a special session.

Tuesday, Jan. 5, 1993 was opening day for

a session that dealt mostly with budget bills, matters concerning finance for health and human services, higher education, and election campaign finance disclosure.

There is something about Tuesday that

relates to everyone, not just to the Legislature. *USA Today* noted last Tuesday, Jan. 29, that "48 percent of executives surveyed believe that employees are most productive on Tuesdays."

In state history, Minnesota's constitution was ratified and adopted on Tuesday, Oct. 13, 1857. Seven months later the state was admitted to the Union on a Tuesday — May 11, 1858.

Of no connected coincidence, another Tuesday highlight includes the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Jan. 15, 1929 at noon, exactly one week after the Minnesota Legislature convened that year.

Even the tragedy of terrorist attacks on Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001 likely will forever be a sad and surreal memory on any Tuesday in September from now on.

Yet, having fun will be around forever on Fat Tuesday at the end of Mardi Gras in New Orleans.

Lawmakers, and those for whom laws are made, can find some distinct direction in Mitch Albom's best-selling book, *Tuesdays with Morrie*.

In Morrie Schwartz's words, "Remember what I said about finding a meaningful life? ... Devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning."

—LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Minnesota unemployment

| | |
|--|---------|
| United States unemployment rate in December 2001 | 5.4 |
| In December 2000 | 3.7 |
| In December 1991 | 6.9 |
| In December 1981 | 8.3 |
| December 2001 unemployment percent in Minnesota | 3.7 |
| In December 2001 | 2.8 |
| In December 1991 | 5.0 |
| In December 1981 | 5.9 |
| Number of unemployed Minnesotans in December 2001 | 103,516 |
| In December 2000 | 77,194 |
| In December 1998 | 61,234 |
| Highest county unemployment percentage in Minnesota (Clearwater) | 11 |
| Second highest (Kanabec) | 9 |
| Lowest county unemployment percentage rate in Minnesota (Rock) | 2.2 |
| Second lowest (Clay) | 2.3 |
| December 2001 unemployment rate in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, as percent | 3.4 |
| In Duluth/Superior | 4.7 |
| In St. Cloud | 3.6 |
| In Rochester/Olmsted County | 2.4 |
| In Northwest Minnesota | 4.2 |
| In Southwest Minnesota | 3.8 |
| Statewide job vacancy decrease from fourth quarter 2000 to fourth quarter 2001, as percent | 43 |
| Estimated job vacancies in Minnesota during the fourth quarter of 2001 | 80,000 |
| As a job vacancy rate percent | 3.1 |
| Rate in December 2000 | 5.5 |
| Estimated number of vacancies in seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area | 47,000 |
| Job vacancy decrease in the Twin Cities from fourth quarter 2000 to fourth quarter 2001, as percent | 52 |
| Percent decrease in Greater Minnesota | 22.1 |
| Occupational group with highest job vacancy rate (health care support), as percent | 6 |
| Percent of state job vacancies that offer paid vacation | 66 |
| Health benefits | 65 |
| Retirement plans | 59 |
| Sick leave | 51 |

Source: *Fourth Quarter 2001 Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey*, Minnesota Department of Economic Security, Minnesota Workforce Center Web site (www.mnwfc.org).

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