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DONT KILL HIGHER ED

In this issue:

UNALLOTMENT PLAN

AGRICULTURE TRADE, GUN PERMITS, AND MORE

HF342-HF425

SESSION Weekly

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On the cover: Students from Minneapolis Community and Technical College carry a mock coffin, signifying the death of higher education, past an archway during a Feb. 12 rally of higher education students from around the state on the front steps of the Capitol. The group hoped to educate legislators on issues of concern to students at Minnesota's public colleges and universities.

— Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Executive authority

In its first use since 1986, Gov. Tim Pawlenty authorizes unallotment power to trim fiscal year 2003 budget

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

For the first time since the budget crises of the mid-1980s, a Minnesota governor was compelled to exercise the legal authority to cut the state's budget in order to balance it.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty, accompanied by Finance Commissioner Dan McElroy, announced the specifics of the plan Feb. 7 just a few hours after legislative conference committee negotiations ended in a stalemate.

"This is not about fault or blame. It's about responsibility and the responsibility now falls to me to solve this 2003 budget deficit, and we will," Pawlenty said. "This is not a scenario that we take any comfort in. This is not a scenario that we would have preferred. We would have much preferred to have a legislative solution that would have given us other options, other advantages in terms of how the cuts are structured."

All told, the cuts will reduce the state budget by nearly \$282 million for fiscal year 2003. In addition, some sales tax reimbursements will be delayed, at an estimated savings of \$50 million, and budget reserves of \$24 million will cover the full \$356 million deficit anticipated by June 30.

Specifically, the law allows the commissioner of finance, with the approval of the governor, to restrict cash flow from the state, if a deficit is anticipated at the close of a fiscal biennium. Prior to reducing any expenditures to address

cash flow, the commissioner must transfer all remaining budget reserves to the general fund.

Therefore, the governor does not technically perform the cuts, though he must specifically approve and authorize the commissioner to use the statutory power.

In 1986, Gov. Rudy Perpich authorized unallotments of \$110 million from the state's budget. Perpich employed a similar course to Pawlenty – he submitted recommendations to the Legislature, but they were unable to reach agreement. At the time, the cuts amounted to about 1 percent of the overall general fund budget, comparable to Pawlenty's.

However, the statutory authority does limit which appropriations the governor may cut – certain special funds may not be transferred in the executive branch to the general fund. In addition, the governor does not have the authority to cut

Initially, the House plan included \$468.2 million in cuts, which included funds to beef up the budget reserve accounts. The initial Senate plan included \$384 million in budget adjustments.

Prior to the breakdown in negotiations, the House and Senate had nearly the same amount of budget adjustments – about \$461 million – but they disagreed on which cuts would be carried over into the 2004-05 budget cycle.

With his 2004-05 budget due to the Legislature Feb. 18, Pawlenty said some of the documents being prepared for that release would need to be adjusted, because the executive



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Gov. Tim Pawlenty, center, announces his unallotment plan to balance the state budget for fiscal year 2003 during a Feb. 7 news conference. Joining Pawlenty at the news conference are Finance Commissioner Dan McElroy, left, and Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau. (TOMO)

branch took more base budget cuts into consideration. In addition, the governor does not have any authority to add funds to the budget reserve accounts.

As part of his plan, the governor reduced ethanol producer payments by \$20 million, leaving about \$6 million for the rest of the year. The House bill had proposed a \$5.4 million reduction and the Senate bill \$2.3 million.

"It is not that we are opposed to ethanol or the further development of the ethanol industry in Minnesota," Pawlenty said. "It is a good industry, it is a helpful industry, it is one that we want to encourage and allow to prosper. ... But I can't stand here as the governor of the state of Minnesota and justify reductions in programs for very needy people while at the same time we are providing cash subsidies to an industry that for the most part is very profitable."

In addition, the cuts strip \$49 million from the 21st Century Minerals Fund, an economic

general fund appropriations and authorize the sale of bonds to replace the money. That must be specifically addressed in legislation.

House and Senate conferees met late in the day Feb. 6 and into the early morning hours Feb. 7, attempting to negotiate an agreement between the two bodies' 2003 budget balancing plans prior to Pawlenty's established deadline of Feb. 7. They were unable to reach an agreement.

Budget adjustments for 2003

All amounts are in millions and include general fund dollars only

	House plan	Senate plan	Governor
Agriculture	\$8.3	\$3.2	\$22.8
Capital Project cancellations	\$5.4	\$2	\$12.1
Economic Development	\$73.6	\$17.4	\$67.9
Education	\$7.5	\$4.8	\$21.2
Environment	\$22.4	\$15.9	\$17
Health and Human Services	\$45.7	\$53	\$26
Higher Education	\$81.5	\$60.1	\$50.3
Judiciary Finance	\$12.9	\$6.2	\$18.1
State Government	\$12.6	\$25.7	\$21.2
Taxes	\$50	\$50	—
Transportation	\$148.4	\$145.8	\$23.6
Total	\$468.3	\$384.1	\$281.6

Source: House Fiscal Analysis



Tax thy neighbor

Minnesota has long-standing policy of income tax reciprocity governing workers from neighboring states

development tool for the Iron Range and northeastern Minnesota. That leaves \$10 million for a project currently seeking federal approval, Pawlenty said.

The House bill proposed a reduction of \$39 million to the fund, and the Senate bill initially proposed no reduction in the fund.

Pawlenty also said the cuts include about \$21 million in reductions to various education programs, primarily those which provide grants, including \$5.3 million in after school enrichment grants, \$1 million each to youth work and violence prevention grants, and \$1 million in best practices seminars. The governor also authorized telecommunications access cuts of \$1.5 million and reduced growth in adult basic education funding by \$1.6 million, which the House also proposed.

McElroy explained that certain sales tax rebates for capital improvements that businesses may apply for will be delayed, under a separate authority given to the commissioner of revenue. When a business applies for the rebates, the department may delay the payments up to 90 days. McElroy estimated a \$50 million savings to the general fund through the plan.

Both the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities systems were cut by \$25 million. In addition, the governor authorized \$20 million in refinancing of 2000 road projects. Both the House and Senate proposed converting \$130 million in cash remaining from the 2000 appropriation to trunk highway bonds.

Prior to announcing the cuts, Pawlenty opened with concerns regarding the state's high bond rating. Since the mid 1990s, Minnesota's state and local bonds have been sold at a Aaa rate, which is the highest rating offered by Moody's Investors Service. Only a handful of states have been granted the rate, due in large part to their strong financial outlook.

A number of states have been downgraded in recent weeks or have been placed on "credit watch." Pawlenty said that Moody's had placed Minnesota on watch, pending the direction taken by the Legislature and the state to address its budget deficit for 2004-05. He said the group did not indicate when it would evaluate the state again, but it expressed concern regarding Minnesota's situation, relative to other Aaa states.

"We have been working with them and pleading with them not to downgrade our Triple A status," Pawlenty said. "They're giving us a little more time."

Pawlenty plans to release his budget recommendations for the coming biennium Feb. 18, the date prescribed in state law. He is expected to deliver an address outlining the specific budget priorities. Commissioners will then deliver their specific agency budget to the House and Senate committees with jurisdiction over their accounts.

Minnesota and its neighboring states have long swapped workers. Residents of Hudson, Wis., may commute to Minneapolis to work, and folks in Moorhead, Minn., may head west to Fargo, N.D., to do the same.

Minnesota income tax laws have recognized this migration of workers since 1941. In that year the Minnesota Legislature adopted a law stating that individuals working in Minnesota but maintaining their residence (defined as a place to which they return at least once a month) in another state, shall be exempt from Minnesota income tax, provided that their native state allows a reciprocal arrangement for Minnesotans.



Taxpayers lined up at the county treasurer's office in 1940.

Work life was different then and taxes were naturally much less than today. A 1941 Minnesota Department of Taxation research bulletin shows that professionals paid an average tax of \$37.55 on an income of \$2,829; and clerical employees, \$9.12 for a \$1,820 salary. All told, income tax was the largest single source of state-collected revenues that year, totaling \$12.7 million.

As more workers began not just crossing the state line for seasonal work, but commuting for salaried jobs, and as the taxation system became more formalized, Minnesota began looking more closely at the income tax filings.

In 1967 Minnesota and Wisconsin entered into a formal reciprocity agreement designed to eliminate the taxpayers' burden of having to file in both states. Workers simply filed and paid income taxes to their home state as if all their income were earned there.

Similar agreements were reached with North Dakota in 1969, and with Michigan in 1984.

But the reciprocity law came with its own shortcomings. With more Wisconsin residents working in Minnesota than vice versa, reciprocity was resulting in a revenue loss to Minnesota and a gain to Wisconsin. According to House fiscal analysts, 25,000 Minnesotans work in Wisconsin today and 50,000

Wisconsin residents work in Minnesota.

Fed up, former Gov. Wendell Anderson suggested repealing reciprocity with Wisconsin in 1973 so that Minnesota might recapture the revenues it had been losing. Instead, that same year, the Legislature decided to enact a law that required the state collecting more revenue from in-state residents who work in the neighboring state to reimburse their neighbor the difference. In 1975, Wisconsin began making annual payments to reimburse Minnesota for the revenue losses.

Despite that agreement, Minnesota and Wisconsin have occasionally been at odds over how the loss should be calculated. The most recent disagreement came in the fall of 2000.

"We believe that the calculation of the reciprocity payment has been erroneously determined for the past 20 years," said Minnesota Department of Revenue Commissioner Matt Smith, in an Aug. 2000 letter to Wisconsin officials. In an Oct. 24, 2000 letter, John Evans, chief counsel for the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, replied, "Wisconsin is quite adamant that it is complying with the reciprocity statute."

Around the same time, then-Gov. Jesse Ventura became the second governor to suggest repealing the Wisconsin reciprocity agreement altogether.

The 2002 Legislature disagreed with Ventura and left the arrangement intact. But it did adopt a law requiring Wisconsin to pay interest on reciprocity payments to offset the delay.

Officials project that the interest alone will bring to Minnesota coffers \$5.5 million in 2003, and \$9.9 million in the 2004-05 biennium.

Income tax remains the largest single contributor to the Minnesota state budget. Projected revenues for fiscal year 2003 are nearly \$5.62 billion.

(M. BRYANT)

Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

★ **ARTS**

Carlson promotes funding

Legislators being asked to sustain funding for the arts in Minnesota could have heard from no better person than a former governor who himself wrestled with a monster-sized budget crisis.

Former Gov. Arne Carlson testified before the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee Feb. 12 in favor of continued funding for the arts, responsible for an estimated annual economic impact of more than \$1 billion in Minnesota.

Carlson said he understands the financial impact of the state's projected \$4.2 billion shortfall for 2004-05. He began what would become an eight-year run as governor in 1991 when the state was facing a \$2 billion deficit, the largest the state had encountered at that time.

"We came to the arts (and) we had the same discussion that you'll undoubtedly have: Can you really justify using very, very limited public money for something that nourishes the soul? Our answer was 'yes.' We provided level funding. We did not increase, but we did not cut," Carlson said.

Rep. John Dorn (DFL-Mankato) solicited advice from Carlson about the point at which funding cuts create long-term harm from which organizations can't recover.

Carlson answered, "Do the things that you will be proud of 20 years from now."

Some people think that art is esoteric,



Former Gov. Arne Carlson testifies in support of continued arts funding before the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee Feb. 12.

and "out there," said the former governor. "The fact of the matter is the arts are part of our daily lives," Carlson said, adding that he thinks the arts are essential to the quality of life in any locale.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty's reductions to the current fiscal year budget cut the Minnesota State Arts Board operating budget by \$40,000, according to House fiscal staff. An additional \$76,000 was cut from the folk arts grant program and \$268,000 in individual artists' grants.

The Minnesota State Arts Board funds 11 regional arts councils throughout the state.

According to the board, 67 percent of Minnesotans have attended an arts activity in a theater, auditorium, concert hall, museum, or gallery in the past year; 60 percent are involved in the arts through creative activities; and 95 percent believe the arts are important or essential to a child's education.

★ **CONSUMERS**

Clearing obsolete law

The House passed a bill Feb. 10 that would expunge from state books an antiquated law designed to protect consumers from dishonest wagon canvas salesmen.

On a vote of 124-0, the House approved HF95, which would repeal a 1913 law requiring that all cotton canvas manufacturers label canvases – used for awnings, wagon covers, tents, grain and hay covers, stable or tent tops – with their correct weight.

The same bill was approved by the House last year, but failed to become law due to a lack of a Senate companion bill. Sen. Sharon Marko (DFL-Cottage Grove) is carrying the bill (SF291) this year in the Senate, but no committee action has been taken. The House bill will now move to the Senate.

HF95 is sponsored by Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) as part of a larger effort that began last year to repeal unnecessary laws from the books.

★ **EDUCATION**

Profile repeal to the floor

Another chapter in the state's 10-year history of proposing high academic standards for public school students may soon be before the full House.

A bill (HF2) to repeal the Profile of Learning graduation standards was altered slightly

and approved Feb. 11 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy committee and referred to the House floor. It had previously received approval from the House Education Policy Committee Feb. 6.

The committee approved two amendments to the bill — repealing any tests based on the profile standards and changing all references to "language arts" in the legislation to "English."

Sponsored by Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie), HF2 would direct the state's education commissioner to first develop new education standards in math and reading by April 15. New standards in English, geography, history, and science would soon follow. The new standards, to be effective for the 2003-04 school year, are also subject to legislative approval.

"We've tried to tweak it," said Kielkucki, referring to past efforts to change the Profile of Learning. "It is beyond tweaking. We've debated this over and over and over. This year we have a historic chance to deal with the problem."

Approved by the Legislature in 1998, the profile established high academic standards in 11 learning areas for public school students. Mastering the profile standards and the state's basic skills tests are required for students to graduate, although school districts can decide which profile standards students must meet.

Following several years of criticism from school boards, administrators, teachers, and parents, the profile standards were relaxed by the Legislature in 2000. The profile has been criticized for placing too much paperwork on teachers and school districts and for excessively influencing a school district's teaching curriculum, an area critics say should be locally determined.

Joe Michel, a 40-year science teacher from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, told members of the House Education Policy Committee Feb. 6 not to discard the profile's standards-based concept. "Standards need to be academically rigorous and results-oriented," Michel said. Student understanding of scientific process is preferable, he said, "rather than going back to factoids."

Student participation fees

Minnesota public school students are paying higher participation fees for sports, fine arts, and other extracurricular activities.

"Fees have significantly increased in school districts," Minnesota State High School League Commissioner Roger Aronson told the House

Education Finance Committee Feb. 11. Aronson also represents the state Elementary and Secondary Principals' Association.

With legislators facing difficult 2004-05 biennium budget decisions because of an estimated \$4.2 billion deficit, the trend Aronson cited won't likely be reversed.

A January 2002 high school league survey of several hundred school districts indicated at the time that half were considering fee hikes averaging 42 percent for the current school year. No data is available on the number of districts that actually increased fees.

For the 2001-02 school year, the survey indicated that responding districts charged fees that ranged from an average of \$114 for hockey, \$62 for football, and \$38 for fine arts activities.

Aronson noted that middle school athletics in particular "have been squeezed due to budget constraints."

In the Anoka-Hennepin School District, the state's third largest, middle school sports programs were transferred to the community education budget several years ago. Fees for the programs have more than doubled from \$30 per participant to \$68, according to Dennis Carlson, director of Anoka-Hennepin Community Education. However, he said, the programs were expanded to include sixth graders as well as seventh- and eighth-grade students.

"The fees are a hidden tax on working families," said Rep. Connie Bernardy (DFL-Fridley). She said student involvement in extracurricular activities would likely diminish because of the increasing cost to families.

According to a nonpartisan House Research analysis, school districts may only charge fees authorized by state law. Schools are prohibited from charging fees for necessary goods and services, including instructional materials and supplies, required library books, and required school activities.

Schools can charge fees for such things as extracurricular activities, personal athletic equipment, musical instruments, supplementary field trips, class rings, and student publications.

According to the Department of Children, Families and Learning, co-curricular and extracurricular fees collected by state school districts during fiscal 2002 totaled \$25.8 million.

★ ELECTIONS

Redistricting concerns

A plan to adhere to state redistricting guidelines in city council wards could present a problem in Minneapolis, according to Mayor R.T. Rybak.

Sponsored by Rep. Phyllis Kahn

(DFL-Mpls), HF67 would require council members serving four-year, unstagged terms in wards whose redrawn population changes by 5 percent or more to be elected to new terms at the first general election following redistricting. The bill also requires that if no election would otherwise occur in a year ending in 2 or 3, such as 2002 and 2003, an election must be held in one of those years.

Under current law, if ward boundaries change after redistricting and a city councilor no longer lives in the district, they will serve out their term.

However, Minneapolis council members elected to four-year terms in 2001 would need to be re-elected this year.

Despite the objection of Rybak, the bill was approved Feb. 12 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee and referred to the State Government Finance Committee.

Rybak said the bill would create an unfunded mandate in that an election this year would cost at least \$400,000, residents who elected current council members in 2001 expect them to serve four years, and state law has a longstanding principle in giving control to municipalities.

Hamline University Assistant Professor David Schultz testified in favor of the bill saying that minorities in Minneapolis are being under represented, a violation of equal protection for voters that is provided under state and federal constitutions.

Census statistics show a greater number of minorities within certain wards. Those people are thus under represented because the city council elections were held before the state's redistricting plan was decided in 2002, Schultz said.

Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Grand Rapids) said Minneapolis is the only city with the problem of timing in local elections. Hastings was also mentioned as not complying with redistricting, but because it uniquely has staggered terms for elected officials it was excluded from the bill. Rybak said the city would look to changing the timing of elections in the future.

The bill has no Senate companion.

A similar bill received committee approval in the House during 2002, but stalled awaiting action by the full body.

★ ENERGY

Nuclear storage concerns

With a legislative decision about additional storage for nuclear fuel rods possible this session, members of the House Regulated Industries Committee heard Feb. 11 and 12 from those on both sides of the issue and advocates of the state's small but growing rural



Vince Guertin, *right*, business manager for International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 949 that represents workers at the Prairie Island nuclear power plant, tells members of the House Regulated Industries Committee Feb. 11 that he doesn't know of any long-term health effects from working at the plant. Ray Waldron, *left*, president, Minnesota AFL-CIO, also testified.

community-based renewable energy industry.

Xcel Energy officials previously testified that they would have to shut down Prairie Island's two nuclear reactors at the Prairie Island power plant near Red Wing in 2007 and the Monticello nuclear plant in 2010 if additional storage casks for spent nuclear fuel rods are not approved by the Legislature.

State business and labor groups, as well as local government officials from Red Wing and Monticello voiced support for the expansion of nuclear storage casks. They said economic and job losses resulting from shutting down the nuclear plants would devastate city, county, and school budgets, as well as businesses supported by the plants and their workers.

Closing Prairie Island "would be an economic earthquake," said Paul Drotos, a Red Wing public service worker.

Representatives of a public interest and an environmental group who have questioned the reliability and safety of nuclear-generated power for several decades oppose Xcel's request. They cautioned legislators not to give up the state's authority over nuclear waste storage. A 1994 legislative compromise limited the amount of stored nuclear waste at Prairie Island to 17 off-site casks, which reached capacity last summer. Spent nuclear fuel is also stored in a pool on the plant site.

Michael Noble, of Minnesotans for an Energy-Efficient Economy, told House members not to believe, "we're going to hell in a hand basket if the nuclear plants are closed." The foundation of the state's 1994 agreement with Xcel, he said, and other state laws regulating nuclear power, should be preserved while state government continues to support energy conservation and development of renewable energy sources.

There is not even a partial solution to the nuclear waste storage issue on the horizon, said Kristin Eide-Tolleffson of Florence Township, representing Communities United for Responsible Energy. She favored conversion of one

Prairie Island nuclear reactor to natural gas generation to allow more time to consider alternative energy sources to eventually replace the second nuclear unit. "Allow Xcel, local communities and public interest groups to work together for a new energy future," she said.

★ HEALTH

Obtaining prescription drugs

Some low-income Minnesotans could find it easier to pay for prescription drugs, under a bill approved by the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee Feb. 12.

Sponsored by Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), HF5 would create a prescription drug benefit program for Minnesota residents who have incomes less than two-and-a-half times federal poverty guidelines and do not have prescription drug benefits under any other public or private health plan.

"Most Minnesotans, in one way or another, enjoy a prescription drug benefit," Bradley said, referring to people covered by private or state-run health programs. But, he said, many senior citizens are not covered by such plans. "And guess what. That person pays full retail price. And that usually is 20 percent higher than those of us who enjoy the discounted prices through our various programs."

Under the bill, drug manufacturers would be required to provide participants with the same discounted prices currently given under the state's Medical Assistance program, which is only available to people with incomes at or below federal poverty guidelines. The bill does not limit benefits to any particular age group.

Bradley said the program would include around 70,000 participants and would not cost the state any money — beyond an estimated \$6.5 million start-up cost — because drug companies themselves would fund it.

With similar drug benefit programs, consumers go to the pharmacy to purchase a prescription and they are given the prescription at a discounted price. The pharmacy then notifies the state that the consumer has purchased the drug at a discount and the state in turn collects the difference from the company who manufactured it.

Similar laws passed in other states have been challenged in court, including a Florida case currently awaiting decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. Opponents of Minnesota's bill said it, too, would be on unstable legal ground.

Representatives of the pharmaceutical industry, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, and the Minnesota Taxpayer's League testified in opposition to the bill. They say it cuts into the profits drug companies use to research and

develop new medicines and risks shifting health care costs to other parts of the market, including small employers who are least able to absorb increased premiums.

Despite the opposition, lawmakers resoundingly approved the bill. A separate bill that would create an information clearinghouse for people seeking to participate in a prescription drug discount program was also approved. Under HF411, sponsored by Committee Chair, Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Fairbault), people could call a toll-free number and be referred to the private or public drug assistance programs that would be best for their circumstances.

Both bills move on to the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee. Neither bill yet has a Senate companion.

Collecting patient data

Though several members expressed reservations about its scope, a bill that would take away the authority of the Minnesota Department of Health to collect certain types of patient medical information was approved by the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee Feb. 10.

Sponsored by Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin), HF297 would repeal the provisions of current law that give the commissioner of health broad authority to collect medical information from hospitals and insurance companies. Privacy advocates have criticized a set of rules proposed by the department based on those statutes because they would create a statewide database of information including some data that could personally identify unique patients — name, address, and race and ethnicity.

Haas said that even if such data were encrypted, he wonders why the state needs to be gathering it at all. "I don't understand why the state needs to look at all this data and collect it when it's already available with a phone call or an e-mail to the HMOs."

But supporters said a more uniform and independent process is needed, as long as it takes steps to protect patient privacy.

Carolyn Pare, chief executive officer of the Buyers Health Care Action Group, which advocates for health care reforms on behalf of many of Minnesota's largest employers, said, "While I agree that the health plans do have a great deal of data, I think the focus here is that we would like standardized, (objective) data that would be delivered directly to the consumer so the consumer can make choices based on what the providers are actually providing."

Some committee members worried the bill

goes too far by taking away the department's authority to collect even data that is not personally identifiable. Some sections that would be repealed provide for the collection of cost containment data from health plans. A written Department of Health response said that data is used to help policymakers "examine ways to ensure affordability of health insurance coverage for employers and consumers."

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) proposed an amendment that would retain some of those sections, saying they have served a useful purpose in determining important trends in health care costs and quality since their adoption in the early 1990s. Haas opposed Bradley's amendment because there was no time to review its effect on the bill as a whole. Though some members expressed agreement with Bradley, the amendment was withdrawn with an understanding that the sections in question would be examined and tweaked as the bill moves through other committees.

The bill's next stop is the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee. It has no Senate companion.

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

Student finance woes

Kerri Ellegard is in her third year at the Mankato campus of South Central Technical College, studying to be an operating system specialist.

"I want to give my son and myself a better life," the single mother says of her decision to attend school.

However, after this semester Ellegard plans to stop attending because she can no longer afford to. "I was so excited about going to school and getting a job because I am so close to graduating (next year)," she said.

This past year Ellegard said she received less money in child-care and work-study grants, and nothing is guaranteed for next year. She estimates that she is about \$14,000 in debt from loans. She said her schoolwork has suffered because she cannot have her son in daycare while she studies.

Hers was one of many stories heard Feb. 12 by the House Higher Education Finance Committee. The meeting occurred less than one week after Gov. Tim Pawlenty reduced higher education funding by \$50.3 million to help balance the state's budget for this fiscal year.

The committee took no action at the meeting.

Students emphasized that they are the future of the state and more reductions could mean more of them financially struggling to attend college.



Yorgun Marcel, chair of the Minnesota State University Student Association, reminds members of the House Higher Education Finance Committee Feb. 12 that students are the future of this state and to remember the impact financial aid program reductions have on students.

"Students are the solution," said Yorgun Marcel, chair of the Minnesota State University Student Association. "With cuts, how many people won't become nurses, teachers, and law enforcement personnel? These are areas that the state needs people."

Sara Allen, a sophomore at St. Cloud State University said she began attending classes after being laid off at Fingerhut. Now finances will stop her progress.

"If I can't get through school, I'll need state help for me and my two small children," she said of her goal to attain a job that will pay for her family needs. "I want to be a good citizen and contribute to society. I just need help getting there."

On another topic, Andy Pamroy, legislative committee chair of the Minnesota Student Association, urged legislators to keep current state funding at approximately 45 percent each for the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System and 10 percent to the Higher Education Services Office, and that any future reductions use the same ratio.

"Putting more money into state grants and away from the institutions only helps private school students as well," he said.

★ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Electing school board officers

The House Education Policy Committee approved a bill Feb. 11 that would require local school boards to elect officers on the first Monday in January, or as soon after that date as practical.

Referred to the full House, HF302 would change state law to reflect what school boards have been doing for the past five years.

This is a "totally technical little bill," said its sponsor, Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior). Since 1997, elections for local boards of education have been held in November. A 1994 state law changed the school elections date from May to November. The statute that the bill would change requires school boards to choose officers within 10 days of the election and annually thereafter on July 1.

"It's a good idea to remind and direct (school) boards," said Bob Meeks, representing the Minnesota School Board Association.

The bill has no Senate companion.



Members of the House Transportation Finance and the Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committees view the ongoing construction at the Hubert H. Humphrey terminal during a Feb. 7 tour of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

★ METRO AFFAIRS

Cabbie controversies

Taxi drivers at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport may be appealing to the Legislature this session to intervene regarding airport policies, according to the executive director of the airport's controlling body.

Jeff Hamiel, Metropolitan Airports Commission executive director, told state legislators of the matter, as well as other issues, during a three-hour bus tour of the airport campus Feb. 7. In attendance were members of the House Transportation Finance and the Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.

At issue are two regulations, one disallowing taxi cabs older than five years from operating at the airport, and another requiring the taxi permit fee be paid in full annually.

The appearance and mechanical efficiency of cabs is important, said Hamiel, because many visitors' first impression of and last encounter with the Twin Cities is through a taxi. Five years was chosen as the maximum age, he said, because "you gotta draw a line somewhere," and older cabs have generated more customer complaints.

The Metropolitan Airports Commission owns none of the taxi cabs operating at the airport; most are leased by individuals from taxi companies. An inspector examines all cabs.

An annual fee of \$2,500 is charged to all taxi drivers to operate cabs within the airport's

formal system. Drivers claim that paying the fee in one sum represents an undue hardship. Hamiel said, however, that allowing installments would add to the commission's administrative duties.

It's tough to say "no" to someone who's new to the country and isn't fluent in English but is trying to make a living, as are most taxi drivers at the airport, Hamiel said. The commission, he said, strives to be sensitive to the drivers' plights while at the same time maintaining a high level of service.

Customer complaints about taxi service are constant and "it drives us nuts," he said. Fights between drivers from different nations occur as well, though they have decreased in past years.

Hamiel encouraged further examination of the issues, but cautioned legislators that their decisions might set off the many emotions surrounding taxi rules and regulations.

★ TECHNOLOGY

Headed for the future

A bill to put Minnesota squarely in the futuristic field of nanotechnology through the funding of a southeast Minnesota institute was approved Feb. 11 by a House committee.

Nanotechnology involves direct manipulation

of atoms and molecules at the atomic level, or the most basic level at which matter exists. The primary goal is more precision with regard to molecular and atomic structure. It has applications in nearly every aspect of modern life, from space travel to cancer treatments to clothing applications. And it is said to be the next Industrial Revolution.

To demonstrate to the House Commerce, Jobs, and Economic Development Policy Committee, Chair Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston) was instructed to pour the contents of his coffee cup onto a specially treated pair of pants.

"It doesn't stick on there," Davids said, watching the liquid bead up on the pants.

The same treatment on medical uniforms could prevent infections in hospitals, said Kevin Klungtvedt, one of six people testifying for state funding for the creation of the Rushford Institute for Technology, in Rushford.

Sponsored by Davids, HF176 calls for giving \$5 million to the institute. But in light of the state budget crisis, Davids amended the bill to leave the appropriation unspecified.

Proponents said that state funding would ensure job growth and statewide economic viability, not only for the small town of Rushford, but also for the region.

Said Klungtvedt, "This is a trillion dollar industry and we're either in it or we're not. And if we're not, we're broke."

The institute would serve as a business incubator, with a fully equipped research laboratory at its heart. There, small businesses would be able to develop prototypes to attract companies such as Kodak, 3M, and Johnson & Johnson, said Deb Newberry, president of Newberry Technologies and a nuclear physicist.

"The Rushford Institute would certainly fill a need," Newberry said.

An education component is already underway. The local school system was the first in the country to develop a nanotechnology graduation standard. And a partnership with Winona Technical College is creating what is only the second two-year technical degree in the country, said Klungtvedt.

The bill next heads to the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee. A companion measure (SF243), sponsored by Sen. Bob Kierlin (R-Winona), awaits action in the Senate.

tourism attraction behind the Mall of America, according to the museum's recent report to the Legislature. Attendance has increased since the museum moved to a new facility overlooking the Mississippi River in downtown St. Paul in 1999, and it now averages 850,000 visitors annually.

Science Museum administrators, curators, and scientists conducted a behind-the-scenes tour for members of the House and Senate environment finance committees Feb. 12.

One highlight of the visit brought legislators to the collections vault, where assistant curator Faith Bad Bear revealed intricate Native American beadwork and headdresses housed in state-of-the-art sealed cabinets. Ron Lawrenz, Research Director distributed Jurassic-era fossilized bone samples to the tour group as he led them through the climate-controlled Paleontology storage area.

The vault is surrounded by laboratories, "real scientists," and research offices that keep them grounded in science, Lawrenz said.

But scientists aren't the only ones allowed to play with microscopes at the Science Museum. Visitors to the cell lab exhibit don

protective goggles, gloves, and white coats as they discover the scientific equipment used in genetics and biology.

"Kids get excited about science when they are in Cell Lab," said Anne Hornickel, head of museum programs. "It brings them closer to the work of science."

One little girl returns regularly with her own monogrammed lab coat, Hornickel said, and it's this kind of excitement that helps the museum build on two of its public goals: science literacy and classroom achievement in math and science.

State support equals 38 percent of the museum's operating budget, a financial model that worked until this year, Museum President Dr. Jim Peterson said, but now endowment funds are down and philanthropic donations are flat.

The museum is requesting approximately \$2.5 million from the state for 2004-05. According to the report, the museum has a 20-year history of operating in the black. This is the most difficult budget situation Peterson has faced in his two decades with the museum, he said.



Program Supervisor Shari Hartshorn gives members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee a hands-on demonstration of paper chromatography during a Feb. 12 tour of the Science Museum of Minnesota.

★ TOURISM

State support for science

Recent surveys rank the Science Museum of Minnesota as the state's number one or two

Economic stimulus

Agriculture officials predict emerging foreign markets will create export and profit opportunities for Minnesota farmers

BY TOM LONERGAN

Regional and world trade agreements, as well as the state's recent trade missions, are expected to boost Minnesota's agricultural exports to at least two markets, officials say.

"Doors have been opened" in Latin American and Asian markets, said Kurt Markham, director of agricultural marketing services for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, due in part to trade delegations the state sponsored last year to China and Cuba. The state's trade agreement with the State of Jalisco in Mexico has also reaped increased exports.

Markham and Elaine Bliss, deputy trade commissioner for the Department of Trade and Economic Development, provided an update on agricultural exports Feb. 11 for the House Agriculture and Rural Development Finance Committee.

Minnesota's \$2.3 billion in agricultural exports in 2001 ranked seventh in the country with soybeans, corn, and wheat accounting for 63 percent of the state's farm commodities exports. About 30 percent of the state's agricultural production is exported, compared with 26 percent of the nation's. Statistics for 2002 won't be available until later this year.

"Our last three governors have understood the importance of agricultural trade," Markham said, referring to Jesse Ventura, Arne Carlson, and Rudy Perpich, who each sponsored trade missions abroad. While the 2001 export total was down from the state's \$3 billion peak in agricultural exports in 1996, it marked the third straight year of increased exports in farm commodities.

The state's top three agricultural export markets, according to the Minnesota Trade Office, are Japan (16 percent of total exports), Canada (15 percent), and Mexico (14 percent). Markham, who promotes state agriculture and helps farmers and small agriculture-related companies export their goods, identified growth potential for the state in China, Cuba, and Mexico.

In 2001, agricultural exports to China were \$149 million, about 6 percent of the state's total. By 2010, Markham said exports to China could reach \$231 million. A "multiplier effect" on related economic activity could increase the value



PHOTO BY KRISTINE LARSEN

Donald Nickel, a Mountain Lake soybean farmer, testifies before the House Agriculture and Rural Development Finance Committee about Minnesota grown commodities.

of that trade to \$428 million and help create 5,000 jobs, according to a department report.

"China has doubled its imports during the last 10 years," he said. China was also recently granted most-favored nation trade status by the United States and joined the World Trade Organization.

Agricultural trade with Cuba would have a smaller but significant impact, according to Markham, because it represents export growth in a market previously closed to Minnesota farmers due to 40 years of U.S. economic sanctions enforced on the island's communist government. Some sanctions have been recently eased for agricultural goods and medical supplies.

"Cuba has potential," Markham said. "Grains, wheat, pork, and edible beans," he said, are among the agricultural exports the state will be selling to Cuba. If economic sanctions were lifted, Markham said the state's agricultural exports to Cuba could reach \$45 million, generate another \$47 million of economic impact in the state, and create 900 jobs.

Minnesota's presence at last September's food and agribusiness exhibition in Cuba, led by Ventura, resulted in \$92 million in trade contracts with state-based agriculture and food companies, Markham said. A dozen Minnesota companies sponsored booths at the trade show.

For the past three years the state has developed a growing relationship with the Mexican state of Jalisco, particularly for soybean exports that supply swine and poultry feed to Jalisco.

Both Minnesota and the Mexican state have hosted visiting trade delegations, such as last year's visit from the Jalisco Agricultural Council that resulted in a \$1.5 million train shipment of Minnesota soybeans to Mexico.

"That wasn't a pallet of strawberries to Canada," Markham said. The North American Free Trade Agreement, which took effect in 1994, has increased state agricultural exports to both Canada and Mexico, he said.

"There are 80 million people in Mexico and they eat well," Markham said. As the per capita income of Mexicans increases and meat becomes a diet staple that will also lead to more exports of Minnesota farm products, he said.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) questioned why the Agriculture Department organized trade delegations to Latin America and Asia, as it did several times during the Ventura administration, since large Minnesota-based food companies like Hormel, Cargill, and Land O'Lakes negotiate their own trade deals.

Considering the state budget deficit, "why does the commissioner (Gene Hugoson) have to travel?"

"The commissioner is a spokesman for Minnesota agriculture," Markham said. "We want to get Minnesota's foot in the door." He also said smaller companies have fewer resources to market themselves, and the department can help. 🐾

An issue of discretion

Concealed weapon permit measure again moving through the House, after narrow defeat in previous Legislatures

By JEFF JONES

Nationally, the debate over who should be permitted to carry handguns in public seems to have come down to two words: “shall” versus “may.” While some states say law enforcement officials “may,” at their discretion, issue such permits, others insist that they “shall.”

HF261, the bill that would change Minnesota’s law from “may” to “shall,” was approved Feb. 11 by the House Civil Law Committee.

Sponsored by Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Fairbault), the bill goes far beyond changing one word to another. It also rewrites much of Minnesota’s handgun law, which bill supporters say is being applied inconsistently by local law enforcement officials who have too much discretion in denying permit applications.

“About half of Minnesota citizens get 90 percent of the permits,” Boudreau said. “The other half of the population gets only 10 percent. Why? Because they live in cities or counties where the local sheriff or chief of police has a standing policy of either denying permits to practically anyone, or issuing them only to security personnel such as armored truck drivers.”

Police and sheriff’s associations in many localities say they are in the best position to make permitting decisions because they know the most about who should and should not have guns in their community.

Current law requires applicants to prove they have an “occupation or personal safety hazard” that requires them to carry a gun in public. This requirement has been interpreted in different ways in different localities.

The proposed legislation would remedy the inconsistency in part by switching the burden of proof from the applicant

to local authorities, asking them to prove the “substantial likelihood that an applicant is dangerous to the public” before refusing their application.

According to the Department of Public Safety, 12,134 applications were reported by local law enforcement agencies in 2001. A majority of the 827 permits denied were because the applicant did not demonstrate a professional or personal safety need for the permit.

Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound) said the constitutional right to carry a gun is vital to people’s ability to protect themselves and should not be subject to interpretation. “There’s a weapon for preserving both life and liberty that can be handled effectively by almost anyone and it’s a handgun,” he said. “It’s a weapon that can be used effectively by both the old and the weak against the young and the strong or by one against many. And that’s the personal protection I think our Bill of Rights speak to.”

Dr. Franz Metzger, a dentist practicing in St.

Louis Park, said he held a handgun permit for years, but was refused renewal when a new police chief came to town. Even after providing evidence of threats to his personal safety, he was denied by an appeals court judge.

“Do I have to get stabbed or shot or burned before I can receive a permit?” Metzger asked committee members.

His lawyer, Elizabeth Carlson, said neither the judge nor the two police chiefs were wrong in their decisions, but that the current law simply does not give enough guidance in making them. “What is a personal safety hazard? There is no objective standard.”

Some opponents of the bill use a similar argument, saying the bill does not provide enough guidance in how to determine whether there is a “substantial likelihood” that a permit will make someone a threat to public safety. The bill would also limit the evidence a sheriff could use in a court appeal to show evidence of past crimes of violence.

“(Under this bill,) we can’t deny for a history of non-violent misdemeanors, such as repeated thefts, repeated shoplifting, repeated DUI. Those are not crimes of violence,” Olmsted County Sheriff Steve Borchardt said. “There is nothing in this bill that allows us to deny because of a history of alcohol abuse or habitual drug use if (the applicants) have not been committed by the court. ... If this bill is

passed in its current form, it will be one of the most hard line shall-issue bills in the United States.”

Many states with “shall issue” laws allow for more reasons to turn down an application. For example, Texas officials can deny permits to people behind in child support payments, delinquent in tax payments, or defaulting on student loans.

Duluth Mayor Gary Doty said many cities prefer to keep permit decisions at the discretion of local officials. “We don’t have the kinds of shootings where people are just walking up to someone on the street and



PHOTOS BY ANDREW VON BANK

Andrea Murphy, left, of Apple Valley testifies for a bill that would change how concealed carry permits are issued, while Olmsted County Sheriff Steve Borchardt, right, spoke against the bill Feb. 11 before the House Civil Law Committee.

Continued on page 23

Simplifying the system

Nationwide plan aims to end discrepancy between untaxed Internet purchases that would be taxed in traditional retail

BY MIRANDA BRYANT

You log onto the Internet and buy specialty cosmetics from a North Carolina firm. Then you order the hottest-selling exercise machine through a Louisiana television shopping network. You complete your day's purchases by calling a Philadelphia catalog company and requesting an array of spring flower seeds.

In all cases, your bill does not include sales taxes, even though sales tax is required in all but five U.S. states.

The resulting revenue loss to state governments is being noticed by lawmakers, especially in these tough economic times. The loss to Minnesota varies widely, but is estimated from \$129 million to \$489 million in 2003.

Enter the Streamlined Sales Tax System, an extensive multi-state effort that aims to capture lost revenue by having remote sellers charge all states' sales taxes on appropriate transactions and reimbursing the tax to the respective states. Nonpartisan House researchers said the program would radically simplify state sales taxes.

Consumers have always been required to pay sales taxes on Internet and catalog items, provided that their state imposes a sales tax on the item. But most consumers don't know this, said Larry Wilkie, director of the Minnesota Department of Revenue's corporate and sales tax division. Even if they did, it is the seller's responsibility to submit the tax to the proper state.

Therein lies the problem.

Different states charge different sales tax rates. Some states tax clothing while others don't. Some define a Twix chocolate bar as a cookie, others as candy. How is that small Philadelphia catalog company to know what is taxable and at what rate? And is that company to submit payment to 45 separate states?

In fact there are 8,700 different sales taxes in the nation, said Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), chair of the House Taxes Committee, which has been studying the Streamlined Sales Tax System due to Minnesota's active participation in it.

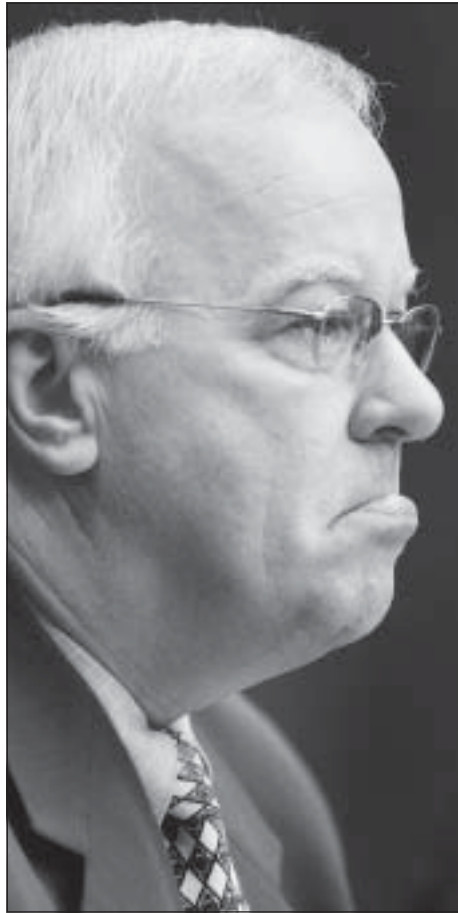


PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Larry Wilkie, director of the Department of Revenue's Sales Tax and Use Division, is questioned by members of the House Taxes Committee about the department's streamlined sales tax project during a Feb. 11 hearing.

A 1992 U.S. Supreme Court ruling found that requiring a company to decipher the tax system in multiple states is an undue burden. Only if the remote seller has a physical presence in the state can it be forced to charge that state's sales tax.

The ruling stated, however, that Congress could address the situation. In turn, Congress has made the matter contingent upon sales tax simplification at the state level.

In response, the Federation of Tax

Administrators, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the Association of Governors began the Streamlined Sales Tax System in March 2000. Thirty-four participating states hammered out uniform definitions for common terms such as food, clothing, software, drugs, and medical equipment; clarified what goods won't be taxed in each state; and simplified rates.

Abrams said he doesn't know if Gov. Tim Pawlenty approves of the program, but said that he is ready to proceed "post-haste."

"I'm ready to go right now," Abrams said.

One of the project's most tangible products would be state-certified software that allows sellers to file and pay multi-state sales taxes. The expense involved would be covered partly by participating states.

Supporters note that the streamlined tax system neither requires participating states to alter their tax rates, nor to change what items are taxed. Minnesota can maintain a 6.5 percent sales tax on goods and prepared foods. And, because Minnesota does not tax clothing, Minnesotans would be exempt from tax on a shirt purchased from an out-of-state clothing company.

Advocates add that the updated system will create equity between Internet businesses and traditional businesses.

Wilkie told of a furniture store in Minnesota that suffers when customers examine its line to determine their preferences and then purchase online from out-of-state companies to avoid the sales tax. Under streamlined sales tax, the Internet purchase would still incur sales tax.

But critics said the program is nothing more than a new tax, and that it encourages states to begin taxing items they haven't historically.

"The key to the interstate agreement is that it is voluntary," said Oklahoma state Sen. Steve Rauschenber, in the National Conference of State Legislatures' magazine *State Legislatures*. "The states will voluntarily join by adjusting their sales tax laws. Remote sellers will volunteer to collect the sales tax for the states that have simplified their sales tax systems."

In 2002, Minnesota was one of 35 states to approve the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement. However, to implement the program here, legislators must amend state sales and use tax laws to fully conform.

Legislators began doing that in 2001 when a tax was placed on bakery items made by the seller. But that measure was amended last year due to the discrepancy about the definitions of which baked goods were tax exempt. 🐼

Walking the talk

Legislative role is a 'hands-on experience' for Anderson, a high school government teacher

BY TOM LONERGAN

Rep. Jeff Anderson (R-Austin) can teach a government class, belt out a song, or tell you about close elections.



Rep. Jeff Anderson

The first-term representative from Austin won District 27B last November by 378 votes (2.48 percent), making him the first Republican to win the closely contested Mower County seat since partisan election of state legislators resumed in 1974. In 2000 Anderson lost by 520 votes (3.32 percent) to DFL former Rep. Rob Leighton, who did not seek re-election last year.

Following that narrow loss, Anderson talked it over with his family and local Republican Party officials and decided to run again. "We wanted to try it at least one more time," he said. Yet, after all the hard work, evening and weekend campaigning, and a nail-biting election night, Anderson described his victory as "bittersweet."

"I love teaching," said the 12-year Austin High School government and politics teacher who is taking a leave of absence during the legislative session. "But this is going to be a nice, hands-on experience."

Anderson's committee assignments include education policy, higher education finance, and judiciary policy and finance. The 35-year-old father of four young children said he will focus on education and rural development issues.

He plans on sponsoring a bill to help law enforcement prosecute the producers of methamphetamine, an illegal drug made from a mix of agricultural, household ingredients, and common cold medications sold over the counter. "Meth labs" are primarily located in rural and semi-rural areas.

"Our district has a problem with methamphetamine," Anderson said. He has attended

task force meetings with Austin police and the Mower County prosecutor to learn more about the issue. Austin Police Chief Paul Philip said a "precursor law," as Anderson seeks to introduce, would make it a crime to have the materials of a potential "meth lab" together in the same location.

"It's only a crime when the methamphetamine is made," Anderson said. "The state has not addressed the issue from the scope I'm looking at."

A souvenir Spam can on Anderson's office window reminds visitors of Hormel, Austin's largest corporate citizen. The Austin area has remained stable with companies like Hormel and Mayo Health Systems, but the county's

"There's not a lot of economic development to keep young people in the area. We need to champion rural areas. They're a great place to raise a family. The cost of living is less."

— Rep. Jeff Anderson

rural areas need some help, Anderson said.

Mower County has lost potential businesses to Iowa because of the neighboring state's economic incentives, he said, citing an auto parts supplier recently drawn there. "There's not a lot of economic development to keep young people in the area," Anderson said. "We need to champion rural areas. They're a great place to raise a family. The cost of living is less."

To better educate those in the rural areas, and elsewhere in Minnesota, Anderson wants the state's Profile of Learning education standards repealed. "It boils down to who is best able to determine what curriculum is to be taught," Anderson said. "Is it a federal government official or a state government official? I don't think it is. These decisions should be made by parents, teachers, and local school boards."

The freshman representative welcomed his appointment to the House Higher Education Finance Committee, because several thousand

students in his district attend institutions in the Minnesota State College and Universities (MnSCU) system. It wasn't too long ago when he served in the leadership of the student association at then Mankato State University where he earned a bachelor's degree in education.

Anderson campaigned last fall with former Republican Sen. Grace Schwab, who narrowly missed re-election to a second term in a court-challenged election.

"You don't just meet Jeff, you meet his family, too," Schwab said. "His family strengthens his commitment to children across the board. He'll bring his knowledge of education and kids forward."

He'll also bring his voice.

Anderson and his wife, Heidi, sing duets and solos for weddings and other events. He's sung in his college choir and professionally with "The Continental Singers."

"Music is important in our household," said Anderson, who sang his first solo when he was 3 years old. His repertoire covers classical,

contemporary, and gospel music.

A close election behind him, Anderson is confident he represents "the majority of people" in his district. "A lot of issues are not Republican or Democrat," he said. "There are times you align with your caucus and times you align with the region you're from. A lot of legislators feel that way."

DISTRICT 27B

2002 population: 36,865

Largest City: Austin

Counties: Fillmore, Mower

Location: south-central Minnesota

Top Concern: "We need to look at how we fund education and the criteria we base it on. Most rural school districts are not fairing well financially. There are areas where we can be more equitable."

— Rep. Jeff Anderson

Aiming high

Advice received from one of Minnesota's top statesmen continues to energize new member Borrell

By MIRANDA BRYANT

Campaigns are nothing new to Rep. Dick Borrell (R-Waverly). In fact, he's been working at them since the age of 17.



Rep. Dick Borrell

Not even of voting age himself, Borrell worked in 1968 for Hubert Humphrey's presidential campaign.

By coincidence, Humphrey spoke one year later at the commencement exercises at St. Mary's Catholic High School in Waverly. Borrell's class was the last to graduate from that school.

"Hubert Humphrey said something that has stuck with me all of these years," said Borrell. "He said, 'Thirty-three years ago this week I graduated from a high school with 15 graduating seniors and I became the vice president of the United States of America.' He said, 'Never set your sights too low.'"

Fast forward to 1998. Borrell, at the age of 47, decides to run for governor. He was one of four candidates at the start of the party's state convention, along with current U.S. Sen. Norm Coleman, former Lt. Gov. Joanne Benson, and Allen Quist. But Borrell dropped out before balloting began.

The father of five pitched himself as a small business Republican who was against high taxes, the Profile of Learning, and abortion. Such issues remain important to him as he serves on the House committees of education policy, taxes, and civil law.

Former state Rep. K.J. McDonald belongs to the same Toastmasters club that Borrell claimed as his own. McDonald said he and other members helped Borrell campaign for state representative because they favored his no-new-taxes pledge and pro-life views.

"All of his friends in Toastmasters club knew that he would be outspoken and they

(legislators) would all get to know that he's there," McDonald said.

On only the second day of the 2003 Legislative session, Borrell was one of 35 representatives to sign and introduce a bill (HF2) to repeal the Profile of Learning. If enacted as law, the bill would require the Legislature to review proposed standards in language arts, math, science, history, and geography.

"In my opinion, the profile indoctrinates rather than teaches kids to think," said Borrell. "It's paperwork intensive, teacher/student interaction time is diminished, and it's very difficult to evaluate."

Borrell said he became aware of the Profile

"In my opinion, the profile indoctrinates rather than teaches kids to think. It's paperwork intensive, teacher/student interaction time is diminished, and it's very difficult to evaluate."

— Rep. Dick Borrell

of Learning through the education of his children, the youngest of whom is a high school junior. He was dismayed to find that gifted student programs were eliminated, making it impossible for son, Tom, to take a college math class like his older brother had previously done.

A key component of the bill, according to Borrell, is that new standards would be subject to legislative review.

"I think one of the mistakes that the Legislature made when they passed the Profile of Learning was the implementation was completely outside of legislative review," said Borrell, himself a former teacher. "The Department of Children, Families and Learning could just implement it in whatever manner they saw fit."

Borrell said the Profile of Learning pushes a child toward a particular career by the eighth grade. This negates a student's developing life

experiences as well as ignores the fact that many people have numerous career changes in their lives, he indicated.

"The system is designed to push kids toward a particular career," Borrell said. "I think that's a horrible idea. I think we should teach kids the basics and let them determine what they want to do. Sometimes human beings go through a very tremendous period of suffering and out of that they develop a phenomenal product, business, or nonprofit organization. Society benefits greatly from people overcoming these tremendous times of challenge or struggle."

Terrorism is another big issue for the former Marine, whose hobby is flying a Cessna 172 from a private airstrip in his Wright County backyard. Borrell said he wants to become an expert on anti-terrorism measures.

Borrell supported the bill (HF1) that would require that the visa expiration dates of temporary visitors from other countries be printed on their identification cards and driver's

licenses. Supporters of the bill say it would help law enforcement determine whether a visitor is still legally in the country. Critics say it is another method of singling out foreigners following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

DISTRICT 19B

2002 population: 36,729

Largest city: St. Michael

Counties: Hennepin, Wright

Location: northwest and west Twin Cities suburbs

Top Concern: "I campaigned on repealing the Profile (of Learning). I thought that was an important thing to deliver to the voters that trusted me with their vote."

— Rep. Dick Borrell

Full circle

Nelson says education is the beginning of other things important to his constituents, including transportation and safety

By MIRANDA BRYANT

There was a time when Brooklyn Park was home to many farms, and Rep. Mike Nelson (DFL-Brooklyn Park) remembers it well. The



Rep. Mike Nelson

city, which now has no operating farms, claims the fifth largest municipal population in the state — and some of the worst traffic problems.

Representing District 46A, which includes Brooklyn Park, Nelson knows congestion first-

hand. He said that accidents are so frequent at the intersections of U.S. Highway 169, State Highway 81, and 85th Ave. N. that residents have dubbed it “Devil’s Triangle.”

Nelson is ready to tackle the problem — and look at alternative transportation options — as a member of the House Transportation Finance Committee. Transportation projects are important not only for the potential congestion relief provided, said the freshman legislator, but because they provide jobs to construction workers and an economic stimulus for the region.

A carpenter, and for the past year a business representative for the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, Nelson said he is acutely aware of how jobs affect the economy.

“A third of the economy is driven nationwide and in the state by people spending,” Nelson said. “Well, if people aren’t making decent wages, they’re not going to be able to buy the products. If we cut everybody’s wages in half our income tax collections go down, our sales tax collections go down. So people making decent livable wages so they can afford to go out and enjoy this beautiful state we have, that’s an important issue to me.”

Affordable housing is another issue important for Nelson, who worked for 16 years as a carpenter for the Minneapolis Housing Authority.

Brooklyn Park has a lot of affordable

housing, said Nelson, but many of the mayors governing surrounding cities are also looking for homes and apartments within their constituents’ means.

“There’s a real dearth of that out there right now — a lack of housing that a lot of people can afford to buy on the wages they’re being paid,” Nelson said. “And there’s always the question as to whether that is an issue of the price of the housing or if it’s an issue about what people make.”

But Nelson, a 48-year-old father of three, is most passionate about education.

“At the state level we’re mandated by the constitution to provide for the education of children,” said the Hennepin Technical College graduate. “The discussion that has to go

“At the state level we’re mandated by the constitution to provide for the education of children. The discussion that has to go on is (about) the quality of education we want and what that’s going to cost.”

— Rep. Mike Nelson

on is (about) the quality of education we want and what that’s going to cost.”

Education is not a stand-alone issue to Nelson, who indicated it affects nearly every aspect of the economy.

Today’s educational decisions could impact the workforce of tomorrow, he explained. Industry and business will be forced to pay for remedial education if workers aren’t properly educated. And if employees receive smaller wages because they didn’t receive a quality education, then tax revenues will be lower.

“So we’ve got to look at these things and that’s to me the thing we have to work the hardest to preserve is funding for education,” Nelson said. “To me it’s an economic issue. If you don’t have an educated work force, companies aren’t going to move here.”

In addition to the transportation finance committee, Nelson has also been assigned to the House Commerce, Jobs, and Economic

Development Policy, and Environment and Natural Resources Policy committees.

Nelson has already gained the respect of colleagues. Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Robbinsdale) said he and Nelson have discussed mutually addressing education issues specific to the suburban area northwest of the Twin Cities.

“He’s very conscientious, very hard working and I think he’s off to an excellent start in the Minnesota House,” Carlson said of Nelson. “He’s got a good grasp and understanding of the legislative process. He’s one that is very willing to gather information and ask questions.”

Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center), who represents Nelson’s neighboring district of 46B, also had good things to say about the first-term representative.

“Mike is a true reflection of his constituency in Brooklyn Park — a hard-working family man with deep roots in his community,” Hilstrom said. “Mike brings real life experience to his role as Brooklyn Park representative. I think he will do a tremendous job

representing his district.”

Nelson originally ran for the House district during the March 2002 special election. Rep. Darlene Luther, who held the seat prior to that time, died of cancer in January, leaving the seat open. Nelson was defeated by John Jordan, who served the remainder of the 2002 session. Nelson defeated Jordan in the November 2002 election.

DISTRICT 46A

2002 population: 36,558

Biggest city: Brooklyn Park

County: Hennepin

Location: northwest Twin Cities suburbs

Top Concern: “Education funding — to me that’s the biggest thing the state is supposed to do.”

— Rep. Mike Nelson

Staying connected

Strachan's family, public service connections aid in new role as legislator for geographically large, diverse district

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

Rep. Steve Strachan (R-Farmington) said he planned to run for the Legislature if the new districts created an open seat that included



Rep. Steve Strachan

Farmington when they were announced in March 2002. But he never imagined it would include his home, his workplace, and his family's farm and his boyhood stomping grounds.

"I couldn't have created a legislative district that better suits me," said Strachan, who is a sergeant with the Lakeville police department. His family's farm is also in his district, near Northfield, and he joked that many family members on his mother's side live in the district, too.

"That's sort of an automatic starting point for a campaign," he said, with a laugh. "It's sort of a running joke on my mom's side that at family reunions we have about 500 people."

Like many other new House members, the character of the newly drawn district prompted Strachan to run for office. But he said that the geographic size of the district and its diverse character will challenge him to stay connected and keep abreast of key issues throughout the district.

Strachan said he has already learned how important it is to place constituent concerns first.

"If you have a constituent who bothered to show up here at the office, you leave whatever you're in and go talk to them," Strachan said of advice many other legislators have given him since his election. "That's the way government should work. One constituent is more important than spending time with other state reps."

Strachan first served in public office as a member of the Farmington Planning Commission in the early 1990s. Later, he served on the Farmington City Council from 1996 until

his election to the House in 2002.

He said he first got involved in local government because he wanted to contribute constructively to make government effective.

Rather than complaining about government, "go do something about it if you don't like it," he said.

During the campaign, Strachan said, he appreciated being able to learn so much about the specific concerns of the people in his district, which includes both great expanses of rural farming communities and fast-developing communities on the fringe of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The evidence is clear at people's homes.

"It really sort of brings it home to you,"

"That's the way government should work. One constituent is more important than spending time with other state reps."

— Rep. Steve Strachan

Strachan said of knocking on doors in the district during the campaign. "To me, it's not so much to get votes, as it is to educate myself on not just what people are saying to me. ... But you go around the neighborhoods and you can see what's important to people."

Strachan is looking forward to dealing with budget and local government issues, as well as criminal justice issues. His background in all three areas make him comfortable with those topics, he said, and he hopes to employ the strategies that he has found effective in his own experiences, such as listening to all sides of an issue before making judgments.

Lakeville Police Chief Dave Martens said that one of Strachan's strengths is his ability to listen to the opinions on an issue and make a well-reasoned decision.

"He's become good at two things: communicating and seeking out both sides of the issue and seeking out alternative responses," Martens said. "You just kind of see both

viewpoints, and sometimes you see that the traditional response just doesn't work and you need to think of something different."

Strachan currently has an administrative assignment with the police department, including budgeting, training, and similar tasks. As an executive officer, Martens called Strachan his "right-hand man."

Though the legislative session keeps Strachan busy, he will continue in his day job part-time – when he can during evening and weekend hours.

He joked about his wife, Sue's, response to his plan to run for the Legislature. "My wife often says, 'You get what you deserve,'" he said with a laugh. And while he knows it may not always be easy, Strachan said he's ready to work with the diverse membership of the House to make good policy decisions.

"Even though some of those council members were people that didn't always agree with me, their attitude was, 'Steve, you're always the consensus builder, you're always reasonable, you're always respectful,'" Strachan said.

"I always learned that if you don't worry too much about who gets the credit, and you respect other people and listen to them, you can get a long way."

DISTRICT 36B

2002 population: 36,713

Largest city: Lakeville

Counties: Dakota, Goodhue

Location: southeastern Twin Cities metropolitan area

Top concern: "If you're going to reduce state funding, and they seem to expect that, at least reduce some of those unfunded mandates. I'm going to try to take away some of those things. In the real world, all we're doing is passing those mandates down to the local level."

— Rep. Steve Strachan

Call, visit, watch, or log on...

Legislative information is available at your fingertips

Keeping track of what's happening at the Minnesota Legislature continues to get easier.

While the traditional methods such as visiting the Capitol and calling on the telephone are still useful ways to get the information you need, the newest technological methods on television and the Internet have made your choices better than ever.

An award-winning Web site

Since the Legislature's World Wide Web site went online in 1996, more than 100 million hits have been received. The site receives more than one million hits per week on average during the year and well more than one million hits per week during the busy legislative session.

The site was honored in 2001 with an Eagle E-Government Award as The Council of State Governments named it the Best Legislative Branch Site. Among the criteria used in judging was: site design; how the site makes state government more accessible; the use of technological innovation, including online transactions; and how the site streamlines the government process.

Accessing information using your fingertips and a mouse begins by directing your browser to <http://www.leg.mn>, the Legislature's main page.

The site layout is often updated to make it visually simple but also easy to navigate. Users can use drop-down menus and hyperlink text to get to the information.

A mere click of a mouse button takes a user to both the House and Senate main pages. Easy access is also provided to other areas, including: member information, committee information, and schedules; Minnesota Statutes; Session Laws and Rules; joint legislative departments and commissions; youth pages; general information; legislative district information; and employment opportunities.

On each member's page is a link to their e-mail address so a user can easily contact his or her elected official.

One of the more popular options is the bill tracker. From the House and Senate pages, users can read any bill and track its status through the legislative process. For those not



Through the Legislature's Web site, the public can access information including bill descriptions and status, committee meeting schedules and agendas, and weekly publications of both the House and Senate.

familiar with the legal language used to draft bills, easy-to-understand summaries are also available. Bills can be searched by number, keyword, or author.

Both the House and Senate sites offer Internet streaming video of floor sessions, select committee hearings, press conferences, and other special events. The service features unedited, live, and recorded coverage. For archived events an index is provided making it

on a particular day, the time and location of the meeting, and general topic agendas.

To receive the House committee schedule, fill out the subscription form at <http://www.house.mn/info/schedule/listserv.htm>. The Senate listserv can be accessed at <http://www.senate.mn/schedule/listserv.htm>.

easy for users to find the specific bill or topic they wish to view, without having to weed through hours and hours of coverage. A Windows Media Player plug-in viewer is needed to watch the events unfold. A link to install that program is provided.

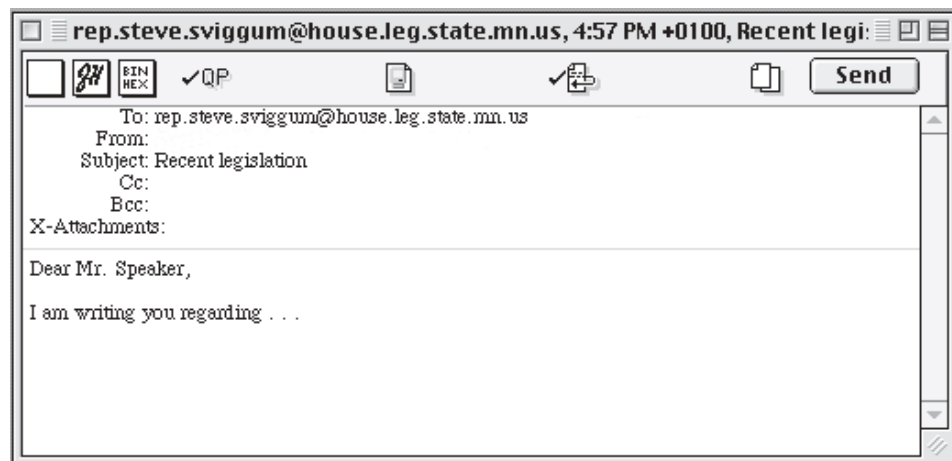
Information is available on the House Television Services Web site at <http://www.house.mn/htv/liveweb.htm>.

Schedules delivered to you

House committee schedules are available on the Web site at <http://ww3.house.mn/hinfo/hinfosched.asp>. Senate schedules are online at <http://www.senate.mn/schedule>.

Constituents with e-mail service can receive committee schedules from both the House and Senate without having to request them each day.

Updated daily, the schedules give specific information about which committees are meeting



E-mail is an increasingly common and efficient way for constituents to contact their legislators. Lawmakers regularly respond to signed messages, and they prefer that correspondents include their full names and addresses.



House television services provides coverage of action on the House floor and selected committee hearings on Channel 17 in the Twin Cities and local cable systems throughout the state.

Come on down

Technology is a wonderful asset for governmental information, but the best way to find out what's happening at the Capitol is to witness it in person. A good place to begin your visit is at the House Public Information Services Office, located in Room 175 of the State Office Building, directly west of the Capitol.

The office has a series of informational and educational publications designed to make the legislative process understandable and accessible for all.

Office staff can quickly determine in which House and Senate district you live and provide you with the name, office number, phone number, and e-mail address of your representative and senator.

Committee schedules are available at the office, as are issues of the award-winning newsmagazine *Session Weekly*, a free publication covering weekly House activities during session. To have this thorough wrap-up mailed directly to your home or business, call or stop by House Information, or complete the subscription form on the House Web site at <http://www3.house.mn/hinfo/subscribesw.asp>. Likewise, *Senate Briefly*, which covers weekly Senate activities, is available online at <http://www.senate.mn/briefly/index.htm>.

Session Daily is the online companion to *Session Weekly*. Located at <http://www.house.mn/hinfo/sdaily/sdaily.htm> it offers news from the House on a daily basis, so you can stay on top of the major events at the

Capitol. Brief, informative updates about committee and floor action are posted before 8 a.m. Monday through Friday. Links to useful resources, such as bill introductions and reports or documents, are also offered. Each day's version is also archived by date and topic.

Pick up the phone

A wealth of information is also available via the telephone. The House Public Information Office can answer general questions regarding the legislative process and who your legislators are. They can also direct you to other offices for additional information. Call the information office at (651) 296-2146 (voice), (651) 296-9896 (TTY), or 1-800-657-3550 (voice and TTY).

You don't need to leave home to obtain copies of House bills, either. Simply call the House Chief Clerk's Office at (651) 296-2314 and they'll mail you a copy. If you don't know who sponsored a bill or what a particular bill's House File number is, call House Index at (651) 296-6646. They can also give you the status of a bill.

If you have a concern about a pending bill or a policy issue, call your legislator.

A voice version of the House committee schedule is available at (651) 296-9283. For similar information in the Senate, call (651) 296-0504 or 1-888-234-1112.

Tune in

Television coverage of the Legislature is available in the Twin Cities metropolitan area on KTCI-TV, Channel 17. Coverage also is included throughout Greater Minnesota on more than 30 cable providers' services. Check with your local cable system for availability. All broadcasts are closed-captioned and schedules are available from House television services. Call (651) 297-1338 or visit the House and Senate Broadcast Television Schedule page at <http://www.house.mn/hvtv/hvtv.htm>.

Live coverage of floor sessions and committee hearings is provided throughout the day, and taped coverage is played between live proceedings.

Frequently used Web links

Legislature's main page:
<http://www.leg.mn>

Session Weekly on the Web:
<http://www.house.mn/hinfo/hinfo.htm>

Session Daily on the Web:
<http://www.house.mn/hinfo/sdaily/sdaily.htm>

Maps and legislative district finders:
<http://www.leg.mn/leg/districtfinder.htm>

To search the Legislative Web site:
<http://search.state.mn.us/leg/>

North Star government information:
<http://www.state.mn.us/>

Governor's office:
<http://www.governor.state.mn.us>

Office of the Secretary of State:
(Elections & Candidate Information)
<http://www.sos.state.mn.us>

Legislative Reference Library:
<http://www.leg.mn/lrl/lrl.htm>

Revisor's Office:
<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor.html>

Legislative Links to the World:
<http://www.leg.mn/lrl/links/links.htm>

Frequently called numbers

House Information:
651-296-2146 voice; 651-296-9896 TTY
1-800-657-3550 toll free voice and TTY

Senate Information:
651-296-0504 voice; 651-296-0250 TTY
1-888-234-1112 toll free voice
1-888-234-1216 toll free TTY

Chief Clerk's Office: (copies of bills)
651-296-2314

Office of Secretary of the Senate:
651-296-2344

House Index: (bill status)
651-296-6646

State Capitol Information Desk:
651-296-3962
651-296-2739

Monday, Feb. 10

HF342—Buesgens (R)
Regulated Industries
Elko Speedway on-sale liquor license authorized.

HF343—Abeler (R)
Transportation Policy
Used vehicle dealers sales to other dealers allowed and vehicle donation to individuals by licensed limited used vehicle dealers sales tax exemption provided.

HF344—Dorman (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Business financing program goals modified to include job enhancement, Minnesota investment fund converted to a revolving loan fund, and money appropriated.

HF345—Greiling (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Do-not-call list loopholes closed.

HF346—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Speech language pathology or audiology practice provisions modified.

HF347—Eastlund (R)
Education Policy
Student instruction and staff development training additional days mandate repealed.

HF348—Kielkucki (R)
Transportation Policy
Type III vehicle usage for transport of school children age of vehicle provision extended.

HF349—Sertich (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Vietnam veterans authorized to purchase service credit in the public employees retirement association.

HF350—Paymar (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
House of Representatives and Senate membership reduced.

HF351—Swenson (R)
Education Policy
Middle school redefined to include minimum of two grades.

HF352—Wilkin (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Parental consent for certain medical treatments required and parental access to minor's medical records permitted.

HF353—Lieder (DFL)
Transportation Finance
Safe routes to school program development and implementation grants provided.

HF354—Jaros (DFL)
Education Policy
School board membership modified.

HF355—Dorman (R)
Taxes
Regional investment tax credit provided.

HF356—Dempsey (R)
Regulated Industries
State fair on-sale liquor license authorized for sale of Minnesota-produced wine.

HF357—Rukavina (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Investments made by state Board of Investment regulated, and certain resource investments authorized.

HF358—Peterson (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
LQP-25/Lazarus Creek floodwater retention project bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF359—Rukavina (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Mining owners and operators duties specified when operations are discontinued.

HF360—Lenczewski (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Lawful gambling expenditures authorized for utility buildings used as primary headquarters for certain fraternal organizations.

HF361—Kielkucki (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Special election procedures for town officials provided.

HF362—Wasiluk (DFL)
Taxes
North St. Paul municipal building construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF363—Gunther (R)
Judiciary Policy & Finance
Fire protection industry licensing and certification requirements provided relating to multipurpose potable water piping systems.

HF364—Fuller (R)
Taxes
Tax deadline date on certain resort property delayed.

HF365—Johnson, J. (R)
Education Policy
Kindergarten through grade 12 unneeded mandates eliminated.

HF366—Dill (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Voyageurs National Park citizens council reinstated.

HF367—Dill (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Cook County land reconveyance provided free of a reversionary clause.

Thursday, Feb. 13

HF368—DeLaForest (R)
Taxes
Ham Lake; fire department facility construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF369—Erhardt (R)
Taxes
Noncommercial seasonal recreational property exempted from state property tax.

HF370—Erhardt (R)
Taxes
Sales tax refund authorized relating to bad debt losses of lender.

HF371—Dill (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Town officers allowed to serve concurrently as firefighters.

HF372—Howes (R)
Taxes
Reduced property tax class rate provided for property bordering public waters.

HF373—Nornes (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Optometrist drug prescription limitation removed, prescription of controlled substances authorized, and standards provided.

HF374—Sieben (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Crib safety definitions provided, sale and commercial use of certain cribs prohibited, and penalties provided.

HF375—Howes (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Municipal annexation of unincorporated land procedures, criteria, and exceptions specified.

HF376—Wilkin (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Health Maintenance Organization enrollee cost sharing provisions modified.

HF377—Stang (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Hennepin County Children's Theatre Company renovation and expansion bonds issued, and program authorized.

HF378—Larson (DFL)
Civil Law
Putative fathers required to serve notice of paternity actions on interested parties.

HF379—Wardlow (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Guaranteed savings contracts provided for utility savings on state buildings.

HF380—Smith (R)
Judiciary Policy & Finance
State correctional capacity increase plan report required.

HF381—Strachan (R)
Judiciary Policy & Finance
Corrections prohibition on double bunking inmates at custody level five and six institutions eliminated.

HF382—Smith (R)
Judiciary Policy & Finance
Biological specimen collection for purpose of future DNA analysis from specified offenders made permanent.

HF383—Ozment (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Environmental and natural resources projects funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF384—Goodwin (DFL)
State Government Finance
Consultant moratorium imposed on state government entities, and contracting law provisions modified.

HF385—Fuller (R)
Judiciary Policy & Finance
Arson in the fifth degree gross misdemeanor provided.

HF386—Holberg (R)
Civil Law
Childhood sexual abuse personal injury civil action limitation period modified.

HF387—Fuller (R)
Judiciary Policy & Finance
DWI offender staggered sentencing program established, and other DWI-related provisions modified.

HF388—Abeler (R)
Education Finance
Hazardous traffic condition pupil transportation zones locally controlled process defined, and levy authorized for certain hazardous pupil transportation services.

HF389—Hornstein (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Minneapolis City Council authorized to establish unclassified service positions.

HF390—Erickson (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Elections conducted by mail; county auditor approval requirement eliminated.

HF391—Olsen, S. (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
School districts authorized to convert, by election, from election by district to election at large.

HF392—Fuller (R)
Transportation Policy
DWI vehicle forfeiture standards and procedures clarified.

HF393—Goodwin (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
High-risk youth placement advisory task force provided, and report required.

HF394—Wardlow (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Municipal guaranteed energy savings contracts maximum length extended to 15 years.

HF395—Abeler (R)
Transportation Policy
Drivers' license revocation reinstatement fees increased and reallocated.

HF396—Nelson, P. (R)
Transportation Finance
North Branch; Trunk Highway 95 bridge construction funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF397—Davids (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Reinvest in Minnesota conservation reserve program funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF398—Wasiluk (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Portable fuel container spillage control requirements provided.

HF399—Kuisle (R)
Transportation Policy
Special license plate authorization and issuance procedures established.

HF400—Howes (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Mississippi headwaters board funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF401—Rukavina (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Commissioner of health required to seek federal approval for home delivery of WIC supplemental foods.

HF402—Carlson (DFL)
Education Finance
Principled pay practices system authorized for school districts, and money appropriated.

HF403—Solberg (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Itasca County nursing home facility construction bonds authorized.

HF404—Kelliher (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minneapolis teachers retirement fund association retroactive qualified part-time teacher program coverage authorized for an eligible teacher.

HF405—Erhardt (R)
Taxes
Limited market value phase-out extended.

HF406—Erhardt (R)
Taxes
Levy limits extended to taxes levied in 2003 and 2004.

HF407—Howes (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Minnesota Conservation Corps transferred to the friends of the Minnesota conservation corps, assets transferred, and money appropriated.

HF408—Mariani (DFL)
Education Policy
Pledge of Allegiance required in all public schools, and flag respect instruction provided.

HF409—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Health care provider unrestricted choice required for state employee health coverage.

HF410—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Alzheimer's disease specialized training required, grants provided, nursing assistant training models required, training expanded for family caregivers, and money appropriated.

HF411—Boudreau (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Prescription drug assistance program established through the Minnesota Board on Aging, and appropriations transferred.

HF412—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Council on Disability sunset removed.

HF413—Samuelson (R)
Education Finance
Independent School District No. 14, Fridley, levy authorized.

HF414—Cox (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Soil and water conservation district law updates provided.

HF415—Borrell (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Rockford removed from the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council.

HF416—Anderson, J. (R)
Judiciary Policy & Finance
Methamphetamine attempted manufacture defined as crime, and penalties prescribed.

HF417—Pugh (DFL)
Civil Law
Removal of a child's residence from Minnesota provisions modified.

HF418—DeLaForest (R)
Transportation Policy
License plates; "United We Stand" special license plates authorized, Minnesota antiterrorism account established and annual contribution required, and money appropriated.

HF419—Sykora (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Child care licensing provisions modified.

HF420—Wasiluk (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Adult foster care program location requirements modified.

HF421—Buesgens (R)
Taxes
Auto racing tracks extended valuation and tax deferral of open space.

HF422—Abeler (R)
Education Finance
School district staff development revenue distribution restrictions removed.

HF423—Abeler (R)
Education Finance
School district staff development reserved revenue requirement reduced.

HF424—Nelson, C. (R)
Education Policy
Charter school leave provisions modified.

HF425—Wasiluk (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Human services residential program location requirements modified.

Where to find information

House Public Information Services

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

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

Most of what this office publishes can be viewed on the Legislature's World Wide Web page. To connect, point your web browser to: <http://www.leg.mn>

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

Schedule is subject to change.
For information updates, call House Calls at (651) 296-9283.

All meetings are open to the public.
Sign language interpreter services: (651) 224-6548 v/tty.

To have the House committee schedule delivered to your e-mail address, direct your Web browser to <http://ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us/list/join.asp?listname=houseschedule> and fill out the subscription form on the Legislature's Web site.

House committee schedules are also available on the Web site at <http://ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us/comm/scheduleall.asp>

MONDAY, February 17

12:30 PM

Health and Human Services Policy

*** Note: *** Change in meeting room
Room: 300S State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Lynda Boudreau

Agenda: HF411 (Boudreau) Board on Aging to establish a prescription drug assistance program. (Committee action to approve previously-approved language and amendment)

HF51 (Davids) Health insurance provisions clarified relating to long-term care insurance.
HF151 (Seifert) Children eligible for adoption assistance exempted from the prepaid medical assistance program.

Higher Education Finance

*** Note: *** Change in meeting room

Room: 10 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Doug Stang

Agenda: Financial aid programs discussion.
Witnesses: Duane Benson, executive director, Minnesota Business Partnership Association.
Bill Blazar, senior vice president, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.
David Laird, president, Minnesota Private College Council.

Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy

Room: Basement Hearing Room

Chair: Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF330 (Sviggum) State employee labor agreements and compensation plans ratified with certain exceptions.

3:00 PM

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

TUESDAY, February 18

8:15 AM

Health and Human Services Finance

Room: 10 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: To be announced.

Transportation Finance

Room: 500S State Office Building

Chair: Rep. William Kuisle

Agenda: To be announced.

Environment and Natural Resources Finance

Room: 5 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency budget overview.

Jobs and Economic Development Finance

Room: Basement Hearing Room

Chair: Rep. Bob Gunther

Agenda: To be announced.

Education Policy

Room: 200 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: HF347 (Eastlund) Student instruction and staff development training additional days mandate repealed.

HF351 (Swenson) Middle school redefined to include minimum of two grades.

10:15 AM

Environment and Natural Resources Policy

Room: 5 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Tom Hackbarth

Agenda: Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board (SWMCB).

State Solid Waste Administrators Association.

Education Finance

Room: 10 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: To be announced.

Judiciary Policy and Finance

Room: Basement Hearing Room

Chair: Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: "Blended Sentencing in Minnesota: On Target for Justice and Public Safety?" -

(A report from the Supreme Court evaluating Extended Jurisdiction Juvenile sentencing options).

12:30 PM

Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy

Room: Basement Hearing Room

Chair: Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF307 (Adolphson) Noncommercial sign ordinance exemption provided.

Transportation Policy

Room: 200 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Ron Erhardt

Agenda: To be announced.

2:30 PM

Regulated Industries

*** Note: *** Change in meeting room

Room: 10 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Torrey Westrom

Agenda: Public testimony regarding alternative energy fuel sources and additional nuclear storage at Prairie Island.

State Government Finance

Room: 500N State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Bill Haas

Agenda: HF125 (Dempsey) Extending the sunset date for the Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

HF64 (Seifert) Requiring local government impact notes; requiring a determination of the aggregate cost of complying with proposed rules; specifying certain contents for a statement of need and reasonableness for proposed administrative rules.

Civil Law

Room: 5 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Mary Liz Holberg

Agenda: HF264 (Biernat) Housing violation summons and hearing scheduling requirements modified.

HF311 (Holberg) Internet consumer data provisions clarified. NOTE: Overview only, no votes will be taken.

WEDNESDAY, February 19

8:15 AM

Health and Human Services Policy

Room: 10 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Lynda Boudreau

Agenda: The first of a series of hearings on mental health services and systems in Minnesota. Testimony from DHS, AFSCME, and MAPE.

Transportation Finance

Room: 200 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. William Kuisle

Agenda: Budget presentation by the Department of Public Safety.

Jobs and Economic Development Finance

Room: Basement Hearing Room

Chair: Rep. Bob Gunther

Agenda: To be announced.

Environment and Natural Resources Finance
Room: 5 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Dennis Ozment
Agenda: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency budget overview.

10:15 AM

Judiciary Policy and Finance
Room: Basement Hearing Room
Chair: Rep. Steve Smith
Agenda: Overview of governor's budget recommendations for the criminal justice system for fiscal years 2004 and 2005.

Education Finance
Room: 10 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: To be announced.

Taxes
Room: 200 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: Presentation of proposed 2004-2005 budget.
Other business that may appropriately come before the committee.

12:30 PM

Agriculture Policy
Room: 5 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Howard Swenson
Agenda: Testimony on the federal farm bill from Congressman Gil Gutknecht, USDA Rural Development State Director Steve Wenzel, and USDA Farm Service Agency Minnesota State Executive Director John Monson.

Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy
Room: Basement Hearing Room
Chair: Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: To be announced.

Transportation Policy
Room: 200 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Ron Erhardt
Agenda: To be announced.

2:30 PM

State Government Finance
Room: 500N State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Bill Haas
Agenda: Minnesota Public Radio.

Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs
Room: 200 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Jerry Dempsey
Agenda: HF327 (Hackbarth) Shooting range generally accepted practices defined; and relation to local ordinances, closing and relocations, and nuisance liability provided.
HF293 (Dempsey) Municipalities authorized to prescribe fees by a fee schedule.

Regulated Industries
*** Note: *** Change in meeting room
Room: 10 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Torrey Westrom
Agenda: Public testimony regarding additional nuclear storage at Prairie Island.

THURSDAY, February 20

8:15 AM

Education Policy
Room: 200 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: To be determined.

Health and Human Services Finance
Room: 10 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Fran Bradley
Agenda: Presentation of Governor's Budget by Minnesota Department of Human Services and Minnesota Department of Health.

Jobs and Economic Development Finance
Room: Basement Hearing Room
Chair: Rep. Bob Gunther
Agenda: To be announced.

Environment and Natural Resources Finance
Room: 5 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Dennis Ozment
Agenda: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency budget overview.

10:15 AM

Environment and Natural Resources Policy
Room: 5 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Tom Hackbarth
Agenda: Report from the Citizens Committee on Wildlife Management Area Acquisition Lance Ness, Chairman (citizen).
Kim Hennings, Department of Natural Resources.

Judiciary Policy and Finance
Room: Basement Hearing Room
Chair: Rep. Steve Smith
Agenda: Discussion of shifting offenders with short-term prison sentences from the state prison system to the counties.
Presentation by the Department of Corrections. Impact on counties.

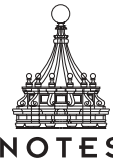
Education Finance
Room: 10 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: To be announced.

Taxes
Room: 200 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: Presentation of proposed 2004-2005 budget.
Other business that may appropriately come before the committee.

12:30 PM

Agriculture and Rural Development Finance
Room: 5 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Elaine Harder
Agenda: Fiscal years 2004-2005 budget presentation.
Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Ways & Means
Room: 200 State Office Building
Chair: Rep. Jim Knobloch
Agenda: Overview of governor's budget recommendations for fiscal years 2004 and 2005.



Otto wins election

The House DFL gained a seat Feb. 11 when Rebecca Otto won a special election in District 52B.

Otto garnered 54.3 percent of the vote, to defeat her Republican challenger by 10.8 percent. Third-party candidates combined for 2 percent of the vote.

She replaces former Rep. Mark Holsten who accepted a position last month as a deputy commissioner with the Department of Natural Resources. Holsten defeated Otto in the November election.

Otto, a small-business owner, has been assigned to the Agriculture and Rural Development Finance, Agriculture Policy, Environment Policy and Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs committees.

Republicans now hold an 80-53 majority in the House.

A special election in District 32B for the seat vacated by former Rep. Rich Stanek is scheduled for Feb. 25. Stanek resigned in January to become the state's public safety commissioner.

Continued from page 11

pulling a gun on them. If in fact we did it may be a decision of our chief of police and our city to say 'You know, maybe we do think our people should be carrying guns.' We're not at that point."

Other opponents included representatives of the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women and an official from the Minnesota Police and Peace Officer's Association.

Though often called "concealed-carry legislation," Boudreau said there is no specific provision in the bill or in current law that mandates a gun be hidden when carried in public.

The bill next goes before the House Judiciary Policy and Finance Committee. A Senate companion (SF222), sponsored by Sen. Pat Pariseau (R-Farmington), awaits committee action.

A similar bill passed the House in 2001 but was narrowly defeated in the Senate. 🐼

Minnesota State Agencies

(Area code 651)

Administration	296-6013
Agriculture	297-2200
Toll Free	1-800-967-2474
Children, Families and Learning	582-8200
Commerce	296-4026
Corrections	642-0200
Economic Security	296-3711
Toll Free	1-888-GET-JOBS
Employee Relations	297-1184
Job Information Hotline	296-2616
Finance	296-5900
Health	215-5800
Human Rights	296-5663
Toll Free	1-800-657-3704
Human Services	297-3933
Labor and Industry	284-5000
Toll Free	1-800-342-5354
Military Affairs	282-4662
Natural Resources	296-6157
Toll Free	1-888-MINNDNR
Pollution Control Agency	296-6300
Toll Free	1-800-657-3864
Public Safety	282-6565
Driver and Vehicle Services	296-6911
Fire Marshal	215-0500
Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division	296-6979
State Patrol	282-6871
Revenue	
Taxpayer Assistance	296-3781
Trade and Economic Development	297-1291
Toll Free	1-800-657-3858
Office of Tourism	296-5029
Toll Free	1-800-657-3700
Transportation	296-3000
Toll Free	1-800-657-3774
Veterans Affairs	296-2562

Reflections

Visitors who are new to the legislative process and come to see where laws are made may ask, "Who are all those people milling about in the hallways of the State Office Building, Capitol conference rooms, and outside the House and Senate chambers?" Most are lobbyists, who may spend as much time at the Legislature as elected members — from early in the morning to late in the evening.

Lobbying is defined as "a practice and profession of influencing governmental decisions carried out by agents who present the concerns of special interests to legislators and administrators."

It came into being in the 1830s when individuals spent time in public building lobbys, usually to court favor from legislators by buying influence. During this period many indiscretions surfaced which did not give the profession a credible rating. One early incident involved a conflict of interest when Congress became involved with President Andrew Jackson's battle to close the Bank of the United States. Daniel Webster, a U.S. Senator at the time, was one of those

disclosed as receiving retainers from the bank. Lobbying is now an accepted part of the political system. Today, stringent laws are in place nationally and statewide to thwart any unethical practices that would taint the profession. In Minnesota, lobbyists must be registered with the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board to conduct business with the Legislature. In 2002, the board recorded 1,350 individual registrants, and 3,075 client registrations.

Lobbyists are distinctive. What visitors see are individuals going about their business as they talk face-to-face with lawmakers or staff, and are oftentimes on a cell phone speaking with clients they work for. These

are the professionals whose "office" may be one of Capitol architect Cass Gilbert's original benches outside the Senate Chamber, or a corner table in the State Office Building cafeteria.

Other lobbyists are the grassroots types who may be identified as the ones who roam the halls in groups, wearing identical sweatshirts, special advocacy buttons, or some other matching item.

Grassroots "lobbyists" show up periodically to testify or listen to specific issues lawmakers are debating, sometimes during a special "Day at the Capitol" when issue-oriented organizations

mobilize constituents to come and press lawmakers to support their cause. They arrive by busloads hoping to sway legislators on such topics as help for the homeless, promoting the best interests of small farm owners, or keeping money flowing for the arts.

Although on some days around the Capitol it is virtually impossible to walk in a straight line through the hallways overcrowded with large single-issue

groups and lobbyists, all are essential to the democratic process of lawmaking.

Constituents who come for a one-time visit get to be a part of a "people's legislature" by talking with lawmakers or expressing their opinions. Professional lobbyists are needed to provide practical information and clarification to elected officials and assist in getting legislative functions accomplished.

Therein lies the basic mission of the Legislature.

— LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Lobbyists gather around in front of the House Chamber.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
 MAJORITY LEADER: ERIK PAULSEN
 MINORITY LEADER: MATT ENTENZA

MINNESOTA INDEX

Minnesota Youth

Percentage of public school children approved for free or reduced-price school meals in 2002	26.6
In 1996, as percent	25.3
Number of children receiving welfare in an average month through the Minnesota Family Investment Program in 2001	85,128
Percent drop since 1998	13
Births by teenage mothers, as a percentage of total live births in 2000	2.7
In 1997	3.1
Percentage of year 2000 babies weighing less than 5.5 pounds at birth	6.1
National average	7.6
Frequency low-weight birth goal set by the state Health Department by 2004	3.5
Percentage of 2001 kindergartners adequately immunized at age two	81.7
In 1997	68.4
Amount state immunization rates are greater than national average for most major diseases, as percent	2 to 4
Percentage of 2002 third-graders scoring at or above their grade level on statewide reading tests	66.8
Fifth-graders, as percent	74.8
Respective percentages in 1998	52.5, 53.4
Percentage of 2002 eighth-graders passing the statewide math Basic Skills Tests	75
In reading, as percent	80
Increases, respectively since 1996, as percent	6, 27
High school seniors in 2001 who said they experienced physical abuse or witnessed physical abuse of family member	13.6
Ninth-graders, as percent	17.3
Percentages per grade level in 1992	18.2, 20.7
Percentage of 2001 high school seniors who said they experienced sexual abuse	7.7
Ninth-graders, as percent	7.6
Percentages per grade level in 1992	11.7, 9.7
High school seniors in 2001 that said their parents care about them very much, as percent	75
Ninth-graders, as percent	74.2
Percentages per grade level in 1992	72.5, 70.5
Percentage of high school seniors in 2001 who used cigarettes or chewing tobacco at least once weekly	30.1
Percent decrease since 1998	3.9

Sources: *Children's Report Card*, Minnesota Planning, September 2002; Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning; Minnesota Department of Human Services; Minnesota Department of Health

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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