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In this issue:

NEW REP. JOHN JORDAN

BIO DIESEL MANDATE, ELECTION JUDGE PLAN, AND MORE

HF3661-HF3677

SESSION Weekly

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On the cover: Nicole Tauer, an eighth grader at New Ulm Middle School, holds a chain of petitions from the second floor of the Capitol Rotunda, March 7, during a rally of about 200 students from around the state for continued funding of the Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Biodiesel mandate

Proponents say plan to require the additive by 2005 makes Minnesota an energy policy leader, others disagree

By SARAH MCKENZIE

A measure mandating that all diesel fuel sold in the state as of March 2005 contain at least 2 percent biodiesel gained momentum March 6, achieving approval from a House-Senate conference committee.

The committee included the mandate as part of the conference committee report to HF1547/SF1495*, a bill that stalled in conference committee during the 2001 session. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Tim Finseth (R-Angus) and Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing), now returns to both the House and Senate for final approval.

Biodiesel is a fuel additive derived from animal fats or plant oil, typically soybeans.

Proponents of the measure, including the state's soybean growers, herald the mandate as a sound initiative to boost alternative fuel

committee moved quickly to approve the mandate, passing it in about 20 minutes. More than 100 people filled the Capitol hearing room and several others watched the meeting on a television in the hallway.

Members had previously heard testimony from supporters and opponents.

Murphy, the committee co-chair, predicted the mandate would turn the state into an exporter of energy instead of an importer.

"Minnesota has the opportunity to lead the nation in energy policy," he said.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) echoed Murphy.

He said agricultural leaders around the nation point to Minnesota as a model in ethanol production, and he predicted the same would hold true for biodiesel.

Minnesota has taken a number of steps to

"We should take the helm," Juhnke said. "This is timely for Minnesota."

Juhnke noted that Congress is also considering taking action to promote biodiesel.

Those opposed to a mandate in Minnesota have argued that the federal government would be in a better position to encourage use of the alternative fuel.

U.S. Sen. Mark Dayton (D-Minn.) secured \$20 million for biodiesel education programs in the farm bill that passed the U.S. Senate in February.

Federal lawmakers have also considered approving biodiesel tax credits as part of the energy bill.

The conference committee action comes after the House voted last May to defeat an earlier version of the mandate. At the close of the 2001 legislative session, members voted 76-55 to send the bill back to the conference committee.

The new version of the mandate pushes back the effective date, which Murphy said would allow the Legislature time to work on the proposal.

Under the new plan, all diesel sold in the state would have to contain the 2 percent biodiesel blend by March 1, 2005. The measure defeated last year would have required state vehicles to use biodiesel fuel by 2002 and all other vehicles by 2003.

The mandate would go into effect sooner under another trigger in the plan: if 18 months pass, subsequent to the state or federal government passing a 3 cent per gallon biodiesel tax credit.

An earlier version of the measure included a 2 cent per gallon tax credit.

"The intent is to make it more workable for everybody," Murphy said of the proposal.

Along with those conditions, the state's biodiesel production would have to exceed 8 million gallons before the mandate could go into effect. Specifically, the agreement would require that 30 days pass after the commissioner of agriculture publishes a notice in the State Register announcing that state biodiesel production had reached the requisite capacity.

The new proposal, however, would exclude motors used by nuclear power plants, trains, and taconite and copper mines.

The bill also includes a reimbursement clause, which was drafted to ease the concerns of producers. If the state repealed the



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Rep. Tim Finseth, center, and Sen. Steve Murphy, right, co-chairs of a conference committee on HF1547/SF1495*, a bill requiring a biodiesel mandate, listen to questions on a proposed agreement March 6 during a meeting of the committee.

consumption and the lagging farming sector.

Meanwhile, opponents, led by the Minnesota Trucking Association, have argued the mandate would burden diesel users with higher costs at the fuel pump.

At the hearing, members of the conference

encourage the production of ethanol, which is typically derived from corn. The state has producer payment and tax credit programs for the additive. It also mandated the statewide use of oxygenated gasoline like ethanol or an equivalent in 1997.



Road hazards

Report finds road damage outweighed safety benefit of studded tires in 1970s

mandate within two years of the effective date, distributors would be eligible to recoup 80 percent of their costs to adjust to the new biodiesel blends. Then the reimbursement rate would decline each year after the state imposes the mandate.

While the conference committee did not hear testimony at the March 6 meeting, representatives from both sides of the biodiesel debate attempted to sway legislators at a Feb. 27 hearing.

An opponent of the measure, John Hausladen, president of the Minnesota Trucking Association, said the state should leave it up to producers and consumers to decide whether they want to turn to biodiesel.

Hausladen said truckers aren't opposed to the use of biodiesel as an alternative fuel, but he argued a mandate would create costly burdens for diesel users. He also suggested truck stop operators would lose business.

He predicted the mandate would increase the cost of diesel fuel as much as 44 cents a gallon. Further, Hausladen argued that a small group of biodiesel processors would benefit — not the average Minnesota farmer.

The Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, a leading advocate of the mandate, countered opponents' points by arguing that costs to truckers have been exaggerated.

The group cites studies showing the cost of diesel fuel would increase by 2 to 3 cents a gallon.

Further, the association has pointed to the events of Sept. 11 as a factor in changing the debate over biodiesel.

In a policy statement, the association asserts the following: "Initially, biodiesel was seen only as an ag issue, which it never really was. But things have changed dramatically since the events of Sept. 11, making it very apparent that the major opportunity of biodiesel is energy security."

The statement continues: "As war looms in the Middle East — threatening our supply — those who are now opposing biodiesel, will be the first to clamor for help when prices skyrocket as they did last year."

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture concluded in a February 2001 study that soy diesel production would generate \$185 million to \$460 million in economic impact. The department also predicted between 983 and 2,439 jobs would be created. 

Studded tires were legalized in Minnesota during the mid-1960s with the idea of providing better traction, improved driving stability, and reducing stopping distance for vehicles on icy roadways.

The tires were snow tires fitted with tungsten carbide studs that protruded from the surface of the tire tread. Under the law they could be used between Oct. 15 and April 15 beginning with the biennium following the 1965 Legislature, subject to renewal every two years.

About 40 percent of the state's vehicles had some of the tires underneath them in the winter of 1969-70 and about 37 percent one winter later. Of the latter, 99.9 percent had studs only on their back wheels.

But some residents and officials questioned whether the studded tires were safer than regular tires and whether they were hurting the state's roadways.

Four years after the tires were allowed, the Legislature directed the state's highway commissioner to conduct an in-depth study on the pavement-wear and safety effect of using such tires. The commissioner expressed concern over pavement damage in various parts of the state and recommended that further use of studded tires not be renewed.

A March 1971 report from the Department of Highways offered a conclusion that agreed with the commissioner.

"It seems reasonable to conclude, based on all findings as well as influences which cannot be quantified, that if studded tires were discontinued there would be little appreciable change in traffic safety in Minnesota," the report said.

Results regarding roadway damage came from controlled wear tests in a laboratory on a variety of concrete and bituminous surfaces and observed wear measurements in the field. The results showed that different types of pavement suffered significant wear, particularly softer road surfaces. Results also showed that studded tires produced at least 100 times more abrasion damage than that produced by sand and salt with unstudded tires.

"It is estimated that damage repair of pavements and bridge decks due to stud abrasion and the use of more wear-resistant pavements for new construction would amount to \$55 million on the trunk highway system by 1980," the report states. "The damage cost would increase significantly after 1980 when the wear depth on medium-volume roads would have reached the point of repair."

But what about a new type of road?

The study determined that it is possible to create more wear-resistant pavement conditions, but at an increased cost. "On the basis of laboratory tests the wear of the best concrete pavements could be reduced about 10 percent at a cost increase of 25 percent, and the wear of the high type bituminous pavements could be reduced about 50 percent at a

cost increase of 40 to 45 percent," the report states.

As for safety, the study found that vehicle performance is "significantly enhanced" when using studded tires on icy roads, but the performance is "far short" of any tire on bare pavement. It also said that straight-line travel on ice is enhanced with studded tires, but cornering and maneuverability is not improved unless all four tires are studded.

"Improvements in vehicle use performance through the use of studded tires on ice are much smaller than improvements obtained by sanding, deicing chemicals and chains," the report states. It also stated that "use of studded tires is generally detrimental to vehicle performance on bare pavement in terms of increased stopping distances."

But it emphasized that the benefit of studded tires "must be weighed in relation to the potential detrimental effects of studded tires on year-round highway safety." Among those listed were loss of pavement lane markings from studded tire abrasion, loss of pavement grooving for skid protection, and improper placement of vehicles in driving lanes to avoid worn wheel tracks.

Studded tire usage was repealed by the 1973 Legislature.

(M. Cook)



A studded tire from 1971.

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★ **CONSUMERS**

Regulating e-messages

A bill that would protect Internet users' privacy and regulate unsolicited commercial e-mail messages received approval from the House Civil Law Committee Feb. 28.

House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan), sponsor of the bill (HF3625), said it would prohibit Internet service providers from disclosing information on customer accounts without their consent.

It would also require companies to place an identifying advertisement symbol before unsolicited e-mail messages, often called spam.

For example, it would require an "ADV" to precede commercial messages where the recipient did not request the information.

The advertisement designation would then allow people to buy software that would block the messages, Pawlenty said.

HF3625 would also require companies sending unsolicited e-mail messages to place a toll-free phone number on the bottom of the message so recipients could call to request that no more messages be sent.

Many other states have implemented similar laws, Pawlenty said.

Although most committee members saw a need for the bill, some questioned how it would work.

Rep. Eric Lipman (R-Lake Elmo) questioned whether Minnesota has the right to regulate Internet service providers in other states and e-mail messages sent from other states.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that if an Internet service provider is located in one state but has modem banks in another, that is sufficient legal ground for regulation, Pawlenty said.

Emily Hackett, state director of an Internet trade association called Internet Alliance, sent a letter to the committee opposing the bill.

State laws attempting to regulate Internet privacy online would be difficult and expensive to enforce, she wrote. Web sites and Internet service providers often operate outside the jurisdiction of state and U.S. law, she added.

In addition, requiring labels on "spam" messages has done little to stop it in the three states that have tried it, and the laws are not enforced, Hackett wrote.

The bill now goes to the full House.

★ **CRIME**

Felons and firearms

Convicted violent felons would permanently lose their right to possess firearms, under a bill approved by a House committee Feb. 28.

The House Crime Prevention Committee approved HF2613, which would bar criminals convicted of a crime of violence from possessing a firearm.

Committee Chair Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield) sponsored the bill.

Current law restores the right to possess firearms 10 years after a felon's sentence ends.

The measure would still allow felons the right to go before a court 10 years after their sentence ends and request a partial or total restoration of rights.

Rep. Barbara Goodwin (DFL-Columbia Heights) also spoke in support of the plan. Had the bill been in law earlier, an incident in her district might have been avoided, she said.

She told committee members about Michael McGee, a Columbia Heights police officer who was shot by a convicted felon while walking home from work. David Joseph Byrne, the man who shot McGee, had pleaded guilty to killing two people with a shotgun in 1966.

In 1994, two of the weapons used in the assault against McGee were found in Byrne's vehicle, but since it had been 10 years since Byrne's sentence ended, police had no reason to take them away.

Minnesota is one of only 13 states without either a lifetime ban or where a governor's pardon is required for a felon to possess firearms, Goodwin said.

Even states with laws that are more lenient regarding gun possession have stricter laws than Minnesota, she added.

Currently four states have a lifetime ban, 33 require a pardon from the governor or the courts, and 13 restore felons' rights after between five and 20 years.

Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) said the bill is too broad since it penalizes those convicted of all crimes of violence. Under the bill, a crime of violence would include offenses such as murder, robbery, and kidnapping as well as assault, arson, and terroristic threats.

The bill now goes to the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

Harassment penalties

A bill designed to crack down on sex offenders and people who harass children cleared the House Crime Prevention Committee Feb. 28.

HF3613 would make it a felony to harass children under age 18 if the perpetrator is more than 36 months older than the child, and the harassment is done with sexual or aggressive intent. The crime would be punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine.

Sponsor Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield) said the bill was brought about after a harassment case in Dakota County where a man was caught stalking and videotaping high school gymnasts in a sexual manner.

Since the measure was not law at the time, the man could only be sentenced to a year in prison and five years probation, the maximum penalty for felony-level stalking.

The proposal would also update Minnesota's 10-year conditional release period to include offenders whose previous conviction was from another state or was a federal offense.

Under the bill, the definition of a pattern of harassing conduct would be tightened to include two or more acts or attempted acts within five years.

In addition, it would add sexual conduct crimes to the list of crimes that can be used to determine a pattern of harassing behavior.

Tuma said the measure would likely cost the state and counties money since it would involve keeping offenders behind bars for longer amounts of time. Cost estimates have not been completed yet, he said, but the bill's next stop is the House Judiciary Finance Committee, where the cost will be discussed.

Offender registration

A bill requiring more repeat sex offenders to register with the state for the rest of their lives is now law.



Gov. Jesse Ventura signed the legislation Feb. 28, just in time to prevent the state from losing about \$850,000 in federal grant money.

Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield), the House sponsor of the measure, said Feb. 27 on the House floor that the state could lose money from the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance program if the bill was not passed by March 1.

That money goes to local law enforcement units for training and other purposes, he said.

State laws requiring certain criminals to register for 10 years went into effect in 1991, but lifetime registration was not added until 2000. At that time, 1991 was set as the cutoff for considering previous offenses.

Lifetime registration was previously only required if the offender's first offense was one that required registration at that time. The new law now requires criminals who were convicted of an offense before 1991 to register if they are convicted of a second offense.

It also applies to residents convicted of similar crimes at the federal level or in other states, as well as those who work in Minnesota but live in other states.

The bill, which was sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls), passed the House 129-0 Feb. 27 and the Senate 60-0 on Feb. 26. It is effective March 1.

HF3049/SF3019*/CH222

Sharing data

The House Civil Law Committee approved a bill Feb. 28 that would include Minnesota in an interstate agreement to more easily share criminal history data for background checks.

HF1934, sponsored by Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), would make the state a member of the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact, which is an agreement between member states to electronically share fingerprint-based data. So far, 14 states have entered into the compact.

Karen McDonald, an administrator with the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, said states have been working on the agreement for about 10 years.

The agreement allows states in the compact, as well as the federal government, to get data directly from each other without having to go through the Federal Bureau of Investigation, she said. The compact does not include juvenile data, which is not currently sent to the FBI.

Data that is shared can only be used for background checks relating to licensing, employment and other noncriminal matters.

The bill would give the state better access to data, since states are currently under no obligation to share background data with other states, McDonald said.

The compact also sets up a council of representatives from member states that would adopt rules and set guidelines for the compact.

Under the bill, the state Commissioner of Public Safety would be responsible for administering the compact and would send a representative to act on behalf of Minnesota.

Although some committee members worried about giving authority to the council without having any legislative oversight, Stanek said the Legislature empowers the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to do good for the state in other matters.

The bill next goes to the House floor. A companion bill (SF1030), sponsored by Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul), awaits action on the Senate floor.

ENERGY



Prevailing wage may expand

A bill moving through the House would require that prevailing wages be paid to workers contracted for construction of energy generation plants.

Out-of-state contractors are winning bids in Minnesota because wages for the state's workers are higher, according to state unions.

"Minnesotans are being undercut," said Dick Anfang, president of the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council. He testified at the Feb. 28 hearing of the House Commerce, Jobs, and Economic Development Policy Committee.

The state's prevailing wage law requires that contractors pay wages comparable to wages being paid in a local area, as defined by the

state Department of Labor and Industry.

The prevailing wage bill is designed to protect local jobs, according to Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), sponsor of HF3340. The intent is to pay workers of public projects comparable wages for similar work in the field, so as not to lose contracts to others that pay their workers less.

Prevailing wage law currently applies only to construction projects that receive state funds directly. Energy plants receive state assistance indirectly, generally in the form of property tax subsidies.

HF3340 would direct energy plants receiving "special tax treatment" to pay prevailing wages.

The bill was recommended to pass and was sent to the House Taxes Committee.

"We want a level playing field," said Gary Thaden, government affairs director for the Minnesota Mechanical Contractors Association. "We're losing to nonunion or out-of-state bidders ... this takes wages off the table."

Tom Hesse is director of labor management policy for the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. He said it is a "good thing to compete on all levels," but his organization does not support a state mandate on wages.

"Indirect financing such as tax exemptions should not be triggering prevailing wage," Hesse said.

Jason Grev, government affairs director for the Associated Builders and Contractors, said

32 ROSES



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

As part of Action Day to End Violence Against Women, 32 roses are placed in the Capitol Rotunda March 1 to represent women, children, and advocates killed in domestic violence incidents last year. The event was sponsored by the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women.

he disagrees with how prevailing wage is calculated.

"If prevailing wage is set it doesn't guarantee Minnesota workers will get the jobs anyway."

★ GOVERNMENT

Voter's choice

Voters would not only be able to decide whether the state should go to a one-house legislature, but also whether they should have the ability to place issues on the ballot, under a bill approved by the House State Government Finance Committee Feb. 28.

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

Both the unicameral and initiative and referendum issues have been discussed for several sessions, but neither has ever been successful. Now HF2764, sponsored by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), encompasses both ideas.

The bill would place a constitutional amendment on the November general election ballot asking voters whether the state should adopt a 134-member one-house legislature. If voters approved the proposed amendment, the unicameral legislature would be implemented in 2007.

The committee adopted an amendment offered by Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) that would place a second constitutional amendment question before voters in November asking whether the state should adopt an initiative and referendum process.

If adopted, initiative and referendum would allow Minnesota voters the ability via petition to have questions of state policy placed on the general election ballot, without gaining the Legislature's approval first.

Kielkucki said that an important part of the Nebraska unicameral system is the ability of that state's voters to initiate and repeal laws.

The committee also adopted an amendment proposed by the chair, Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview), that changed the terms of the members of the proposed unicameral system from four years to two.

Rep. Mark Thompson (DFL-New Hope) proposed an unsuccessful amendment to remove a provision requiring the secretary of state's office to provide a voter's guide on the issues involved with a unicameral legislature.

After voting for an amendment that placed the voter's guide provision in the bill during the Feb. 15 House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy committee hearing, Thompson said he learned from other members that the cost of the guide would

likely decrease the chances of the bill passing.

"This bill does not advocate for a unicameral legislature. It advocates that the decision should be left up to the voters of the state," Thompson said.

Abrams also spoke against the voter's guide provision saying that such state paid guides were provided for none of the previous constitutional amendments. He said an amendment approved in 1984 that changed the appeals process in the state's judicial system was just as important as the proposed legislative structural change.

Filling a vacancy

That empty chair at the local town board meeting may not sit empty as long, under a measure passed by the House 123-4 Feb. 28.

HF2637, sponsored by Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), would authorize townships to appoint another person to serve in place of a board member who is unable or unwilling to serve after a 90-day period.

Ozment said the issue was brought to him by officials from the Minnesota Association of Townships.

Existing law specifies the circumstances that an elected position can be defined as vacant. Those include the death of the incumbent, the resignation of the incumbent, the incumbent moving out of state, the conviction of an "infamous" crime or violation of official oath, or the official's refusal to take the oath of office.

The bill would allow town boards to declare and fill vacancies when an officer is unable or unwilling to serve in the office or attend board meetings for a 90-day period because of illness or absence.

Under the measure, town boards, by resolution, would declare a vacancy exists and would make an appointment to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term or until the absent member is able to resume duties, whichever is earlier. If the original member is again able to resume duties, the board would be required by resolution to remove the appointed officeholder and restore the original member to office.

The bill awaits action on the Senate floor.

Family protection

For the most part, public employees' personnel data is public information. Data such as the employee's name, salary, job title, education, and training background is all public.

Current law does classify some information as private, such as information relating to a person who is doing undercover law

enforcement work or employee assistance data where the employee seeks counseling in a diagnostic or referral services program.

By a 129-0 vote, the House passed a bill (HF3296) Feb. 28 that would specify that data pertaining to an employee's dependents is private data.

During a Feb. 19 House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee hearing, Rep. Mark Thompson (DFL-New Hope), the sponsor of the bill, said that for safety reasons certain law enforcement personnel data is considered private but state law does not provide the same protection to family members.

The bill would also transfer duties relating to the administration of the Social Security Program for public employees from the Department of Employee Relations to the Public Employees Retirement Association.

The measure awaits action in the Senate Rules and Administration Committee.

Saving ink

State law requires any licensed architect, engineer, land surveyor, landscape architect, geoscientist, or certified interior designer to physically sign each plan, specification, plat, report, and other official documents they prepare.

The House passed a measure Feb. 28 by a 129-0 vote that would reduce some of the signature requirements.

HF2612, sponsored by Rep. Jim Rhodes (R-St. Louis Park), would eliminate the signature requirement on documents prepared in those licensed professions that are drafts, or of a preliminary, schematic, or design development nature.

Rhodes said that a signature would still be required on the final version of the documents.

An official from the state Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architects, Geoscience and Interior Design testified in a Feb. 7 House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee hearing that the bill would put into law what is already generally in practice.

The bill would also add drawings to the list of documents covered under state law, and specifies that a stamp, printed signature, or electronic signature has the same force and effect as a handwritten signature if it creates an accurate depiction of the original signature.

The measure awaits action on the Senate floor.

★ HEALTH

Nurses get a choice

A hospital supervisor would be barred from punishing a nurse who refuses to work overtime if he or she believes that overtime would jeopardize patient care, under a bill that cleared the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee Feb. 28.

A statewide nursing shortage has brought the overtime issue into sharper focus. Currently, the state has 3,500 unfilled nursing positions.

Speaking in support of the bill (HF2993), Sue Stout, representing the Minnesota Nurses Association, said that many nurses have raised concerns about working back-to-back, 12-hour shifts and the subsequent impact on the quality of patient care.

David Feinwachs, representing the Minnesota Hospital and Healthcare Partnership, also spoke in favor of the bill. "The safety of patients is the preeminent goal," he said.

HF2993, sponsored by Rep. Larry Howes (R-Walker), would not apply to nursing homes or long-term care providers since those facilities are already subject to state overtime regulations.

The bill would also establish a reciprocity program between bordering states. Under the agreement, licensed nurses in Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Iowa would be able to practice in Minnesota.

Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe) attempted to add an amendment to the bill that would have added Minnesota to a 16-state nurse-licensing compact. The amendment contained the same language as is in a Mulder-sponsored bill (HF2702) that the committee approved Feb. 13.

Mulder suggested that the compact would alleviate the state's nursing shortage. He also said in the event of an emergency, such as a bioterrorism attack, the compact would allow Minnesota to recruit nurses from participating states.

However, Stout objected to the amendment but said the nurses association would be willing to discuss the compact in the future. Mulder then withdrew his amendment.

The bill now goes to the House floor.

Dental assistance

Dentists would be able to voluntarily treat patients who can't otherwise afford dental care, under a plan that advanced in the House on Feb. 28.

The House Health and Human Services Policy Committee quickly approved HF3350,



Dominic Sposeto, representing the Minnesota Dental Association, testifies in front of the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee March 7 in support of a bill that would establish donated dental services.

sponsored by Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka). The program would target lower-income and disabled Minnesotans.

Abeler said the program would cost the state about \$70,000 to pay for an outreach program.

"It's a good idea in a time of shrinking budgets," Abeler said.

Dominic Sposeto, representing the Minnesota Dental Association, said similar programs in other states have been successful. For states that have had volunteer dentists for at least five years, \$1 of state money has been matched by \$8 in pro bono dental care, he said.

"The cost is small, the payback is high, and the track record of this program throughout the country is well-established," wrote Richard Diercks, executive director of the dental association, in a letter to Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), the committee chair.

With Colorado leading the way, 32 states have established volunteer dentist programs with three other states working on establishing them.

Bradley said he has high aspirations for the program. In Rochester, he said about 40 dentists have agreed to volunteer for a program launched by the Salvation Army.

Nationwide, 10,000 volunteer dentists have treated patients with 2,000 laboratories also offering free services.

The dental care that patients receive costs an average of \$1,500. Some dentists have

provided more than \$20,000 in services to patients.

All told, the volunteer program serves 7,000 patients annually for an estimated \$9 million in pro bono care.

The committee referred the measure to the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

★ LAW

Family matters

The House passed a bill Feb. 28 that would allow all judicial matters affecting a particular family to be heard by the same judge.

Since most judicial districts in the state already have one judge assigned to family, probate, or juvenile affairs, the bill only addresses the second and fourth judicial districts, which include Ramsey and Hennepin counties, said Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights), the bill sponsor.

The measure does not include juvenile delinquency proceedings.

HF3344 doesn't mandate anything, but would allow the practice if the districts want to use it, McGuire said.

At the Feb. 21 House Civil Law Committee meeting, Assistant Chief Judge Gregg Johnson of the second judicial district in Ramsey County spoke in favor of the bill.

He said the measure came from a pilot program, started in 1996, that placed all cases such as divorce, domestic abuse, or child protection with the same judge or referee.

That allows the family and the judge to become familiar with one another and helps the judge when making decisions about family matters, he said.

Johnson called the program a success and asked lawmakers to approve the bill.

Janet Marshall with the Minnesota Supreme Court Administrator's Office said any other county could already handle cases in such a way, and that only Ramsey and Hennepin counties are arranged differently.

In the Senate, the bill awaits a hearing in the Rules and Administration Committee.

★ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Commission expansion

The second public utilities commission member expansion bill of the 2002 session passed the House 129-0 Feb. 27.

Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound), the sponsor of HF3202, said the bill, which would increase the Delano Public Utilities Commission from three members to five, was similar to another

bill (HF2624) approved by the House Feb. 11. That bill expands the Shakopee Public Utilities Commission from three members to five.

The city of Grand Rapids received the same authority from the Legislature in 1999.

Public utility commissions are responsible for the management of publicly owned water and electric utilities. HF3202 would maintain staggered three-year terms for the Delano commission and would prohibit more than one city council member from serving on the commission at any time.

Smith said that since the commission was formed in 1936 the city's population has quadrupled and the commission's budget has increased 800 percent. The current budget is around \$2.8 million, which is 50 percent higher than the city's general fund.

The bill, which passed the Senate March 4, awaits the governor's signature.

Appointment plan rejected

Do the eyes of most voters gloss over the local soil and water conservation board candidates on the ballot at election time?

The House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee debated that question Feb. 28 before rejecting a Hennepin County proposal to change the elected positions on the board to appointments made by county commissioners.

A proponent of the defeated measure, Karen Johnson, chair of Hennepin County's Soil and Water Conservation Board, said an appointment process would attract more qualified candidates.

She said candidates for the five-member advisory board typically run unopposed and face difficulties campaigning at-large in a county with more than 500,000 voters.

HF2252, sponsored by Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center), would only apply to the Hennepin County selection process, but members predicted it would be duplicated in other parts of the state.

Under the proposal, the county would be divided into five districts with the approval of the state Soil and Water Conservation Board. A supervisor would be appointed in each district for a four-year term.

To be qualified for the post, an individual would have to be an eligible voter in the district and be "knowledgeable of soil and water conservation issues."

Phil Eckhert, the county's director of environmental services, said an appointment process would allow the county board to better carry out its environmental stewardship responsibility.

Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin) pointed to the Hennepin County Library Board as an effective body made up of appointed members.

JUMPING FOR LIFE



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Members of S.P.O.T.S. (Students Performing On Tough Situations) from New Ulm perform "Jump" as part of a March 7 rally in the Capitol Rotunda for the continued funding of the Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program. About 200 youth from around the state brought petitions and met with legislators during their day at the Capitol.

"It's valuable for the county to be able to tap expertise," Haas said, arguing that most people don't know their soil and water conservation board members.

Other members argued that the appointment process would dilute the board's authority and make it more beholden to the interests of county commissioners.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater) said the measure would remove a "firewall" between the county and the soil and water conservation board, effectively eliminating the board's purpose.

Rep. Tim Finseth (R-Angus) said county commissioners might be inclined to appoint candidates opposed to environmental regulations in order to facilitate economic development.

In response, Eckhert said that members of the soil and water conservation board already operate without the authority to regulate or levy taxes. The board's role as an independent advisory board would not be compromised, he said.

required each year to choose to be a part of the program. The bill would reverse that process by allowing cities, once they have enrolled, to remain in the program until they vote to opt out, rather than having to opt in.

"This will take a step out of the process," Holberg said.

The program awards grants to cities to clean up polluted land, creates affordable housing opportunities, and creates development that incorporates efficient use of land, a range of housing types and costs, and access to transit and open space.

The bill also would allow the grants to go to development authorities. Under current law the grants must go directly to a municipality.

Development authorities include redevelopment authorities, economic development authorities, and port authorities. The bill requires that a grant to a development authority must be used for a project in the participating municipality.

The bill awaits action on the Senate floor.

METRO AFFAIRS



Livable communities clause

A tradition for many cities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area may be coming to an end under a bill passed 126-1 by the House Feb. 27.

HF2899, sponsored by Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), would allow cities to remain in the Metropolitan Council's Livable Communities Program until they opt out.

Holberg said that city councils are currently

MILITARY



Better benefits

Minnesota's two Congressional Medal of Honor recipients would be eligible for state paid health insurance benefits, under a measure approved March 1 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township), the sponsor of HF3558, said that the Medal

of Honor is the highest award for bravery and valor awarded to members of the military. Created for the Civil War, Congress made the medal a permanent decoration in 1863.

Minnesotans Donald Rudolph and Mike Colalillo were both honored for their service during World War II.

Rudolph, who was born in South Haven in Wright County, was honored for his actions as a platoon leader in the Philippines. Colalillo, a Hibbing native, was cited for his service in Untergriesheim, Germany.

Anderson said that 1,000 World War II veterans die every day and that only 149 Medal of Honor recipients are still alive.

Sen. Bob Lessard (Ind-Int'l Falls), the Senate sponsor of the measure, said that the word "hero" has been misused in today's society, being applied to athletes who he said were "stars" and not heroes.

"We've taken the word 'hero' to the extreme," Lessard said. "The ultimate hero is someone who did what these two people did."

Veterans' benefits are generally handled at the federal level but Mike Pugliese, a deputy commissioner with the Department of Veterans Affairs, said the bill would allow the two residents to receive health care closer to their homes.

Lessard said that the Department of Employee Relations spoke against the bill in a Senate hearing, expressing concern that it would set a precedent in state paid benefits.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said the precedent established in the bill would be a positive one. She said the separate "medical system" set up for veterans is "doing them a great disservice" and that the state's health care system would provide for better care.

The bill now goes to the House State Government Finance Committee.

More benefits

The House passed a measure 129-0 Feb. 28 that would allow the state's military personnel to receive the benefits of a federal act while performing state active duty.

HF3274, sponsored by Rep. Greg Blaine (R-Little Falls), would align the state statute to conform to the federal Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act of 1940.

That act provides protections for military personnel including reduced interest rates on mortgage payments and credit card debt, protection from eviction, and temporary suspension of certain civil court proceedings such as bankruptcy, foreclosure, and divorce.

"This is an opportunity for all (House) members to show our support for all of our members of the state of Minnesota who serve in the National Guard," Blaine said.

Under current law, if the state's military members are called into action under Title 32 the benefits of the act do not apply. That is because that particular section designates the service as federally funded state active service.

If members are called to duty under Title 10, the federal active service provision, they do qualify for the benefits.

Military personnel that were called to beef up security at the airport following the events of Sept. 11 were called up under Title 32.

The bill awaits action on the Senate floor.

★ RETIREMENT

Reference change

Retired engineers would be allowed to refer to themselves as such, under a bill the House passed 129-0 Feb. 28.

Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), the sponsor of HF2629, said the issue was brought to him by a constituent but applies to people throughout the state.

To ensure public safety and to minimize confusion due in part to deceptive advertising, current licensing laws for people who practice architecture, landscape architecture, professional engineering, professional geoscience, land surveying, and interior design prohibit the use of the titles unless the person is properly licensed and certified.

Those professions are licensed by the state Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience and Interior Design. The 21-member board is appointed by the governor and consists of members of the various professions.

The bill specifies that restriction of the use of the titles does not include individuals who are retired from one of the professions.

Stanek said that his constituent, who was an engineer for more than 40 years, does a lot of volunteer work at schools and various other functions and would like to refer to himself as a retired engineer.

The bill awaits action on the Senate floor.

★ SAFETY

'United We Stand' plates

The House anti-terrorism proposal cleared another station in its trip through the body but not without a few changes and added features, including a specialty license plate.

The bill (HF2622), sponsored by Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), would appropriate about \$22 million in fiscal year 2003 for various public safety functions related to preven-



This prototype license plate was part of a presentation to the House Judiciary Finance Committee, advocating for a license plate to help fund anti-terrorism measures. The committee approved the plan.

tion of and response to potential terroristic threats to the state.

The House Judiciary Finance Committee approved the bill March 7. The bill, which also gives law enforcement increased access to information, particularly for the purpose of investigations and helps agencies monitor certain activities, now goes to the House Ways and Means Committee.

Funds would be distributed for preparedness and other training, grants for equipment purchases, communications upgrades, and other needs related to the plan.

Among changes to the bill, the state would increase its collection of DNA samples during fiscal year 2003 from 4,000 to 21,000, at an increased cost of \$150,000. The plan is only for one year but will be reviewed for future years.

In addition, the committee adopted an amendment that would allow residents to purchase "United We Stand" license plates, with revenue from the plates going directly to the fight against terrorism worldwide.

David Dix, representing the Rewards for Justice program, explained that the idea for the license plates has been adopted in 30 states, with the revenue going to anti-terrorism efforts.

The program is a registered federal non-profit organization, operated by State Department personnel who are also responsible for the safety of American embassies. Dix said no administrative costs at the federal level would be paid for by proceeds from plate sales.

The plates would cost an extra \$50, with the state taking \$25 per plate for administration, and forwarding \$25 to the Rewards for Justice program, which would then be disbursed to the Minnesota office for homeland security, as well as Rewards for Justice initiatives.

"This is the only opportunity, I believe, where you'll be able to give Minnesotans the direct opportunity to contribute to the fight against terrorism," Dix said.

He estimated that about 100,000 plates would be sold in the state.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) questioned the use of the U.S. flag on the plates, saying it

was an inappropriate display of the symbol that would be dirty throughout the winter in Minnesota. The bill was amended to remove a requirement that the flag be used on the plates.

Other members were concerned that the state was sending money it would collect for license plates to the federal government. Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center) wondered if there was any language the committee could add to alter the program if the state determines the money isn't going where it's supposed to.

"I guess I'm just not sold on what I'm hearing," said Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound). "It strikes me as being a rather strange notion. I don't support it."

Airbag replacement

The House Crime Prevention Committee approved a bill Feb. 28 that would make it illegal to repair a car after an accident without replacing a deployed or damaged airbag.

Rep. Dan Larson (DFL-Bloomington), the sponsor of HF2904, said the measure would protect consumers buying used cars by ensuring the airbags are intact.

The bill would exempt cars more than seven years old.

If a person violates the repair requirement, he or she would be charged with a misdemeanor, under the bill.

Alyssa Schlander, representing the Minnesota Auto Dealers Association, testified in support of the bill.

Used car dealers are seeing more and more cases of people trying to sell cars that do not have airbags but are made to look as if they do, she said.

She explained that there are three ways to tell if a car has an airbag. There can be visual evidence, such as a taped steering wheel, or there can be a light in the dashboard. Inspectors can also test the car using sensors.

Unfortunately, none of these tests are fool-proof, she added.

Schlander said auto dealers are concerned about the airbags because they are afraid of being sued if they sell a car that appears to have an airbag but really doesn't.

Larson agreed, but said the real concern is for consumers. Most people don't think of asking about the condition of the airbag when buying a used car, he said.

"I wouldn't have thought to ask if the airbag is there," he said. "I would assume it's there."

But some members of the committee were concerned about making it mandatory to replace the airbag.

Rep. Doug Fuller (R-Bemidji), said that it isn't the government's role to decide what a person does with their car, especially since the bill would effect people who never intend to sell their car.

The bill is a bad idea because people who

wouldn't be able to afford to replace the airbag would be unable to do other repair work and would lose their car, said Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester).

Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior) also noted that short people can be hurt by airbags and might prefer not to have them anyway.

The bill now goes to the full House.

TAXES



Stadium receipts

Professional football and baseball players paid between \$7.5 million and \$8.5 million in Minnesota income taxes in 2001, according to information provided to the House Taxes Committee March 6 by staff from the non-partisan House Fiscal Analysis Department.

The information was provided as background for the committee as it considers a number of sports stadium related proposals. The committee was scheduled to hold at least three hearings on stadium bills.

Players on the Minnesota Twins team paid between \$1.9 million and \$2.2 million while players from visiting teams paid between \$1.1 million and \$1.3 million last year. Members of the Minnesota Vikings paid \$4.2 million to \$4.6 million while opposing players paid between \$250,000 and \$350,000.

The information takes into account that most of the home team players are not Minnesota residents but pay a portion of their salary based on the number of "duty days" spent in the state. Since visiting football players spend fewer days in Minnesota, the amount of taxes due from those players is less than their counterparts in baseball.

Currently the state imposes a 10 percent ticket tax on Twins, Minnesota Gophers, and Vikings tickets. That money goes to the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission that operates the Metrodome. In 2001 the ticket tax generated around \$6.3 million.

Sales tax revenue on food, alcohol, and novelties (not including clothing) at the Metrodome was around \$1.4 million last year.

A proposed tax on Major League Baseball, National Football League, and college memorabilia in the state could generate around \$14.9 million, according to the fiscal staff.

Likewise a proposed additional tax on rental vehicles would generate around \$4 million if applied statewide at a 2 percent rate. If applied in only the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the same tax would generate around \$3.4 million.

A 1 percent on-sale liquor tax levied in St. Paul alone would generate around \$750,000, while the same tax levied only in Minneapolis would raise about \$1.6 million.

LONG-TERM CARE RALLY



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Seniors and caregivers rally in the Capitol Rotunda March 6 for improvement of staffing and quality in long-term care services.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Bonding plan derailed

The House Transportation Finance Committee rejected its own capital bonding recommendations March 6 after an hour-long debate on whether to include \$60 million in funding for the Northstar Commuter Rail Project.

That project would connect Rice, which is about 15 miles north of St. Cloud, to downtown Minneapolis, with stops in St. Cloud, Clear Lake, Becker, Big Lake, Elk River, Ramsey, Anoka, Coon Rapids, and Fridley.

Using rail line already in place, 18 trains would shuttle commuters, visitors, and students between Minneapolis and Rice.

The project also includes an inter-modal connection in Minneapolis allowing passengers to transfer to buses or the Hiawatha Light-Rail Transit line, which is currently under construction.

Committee chair Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Cologne), who put the proposal together, voted against it after Rep. Andrew Westberg's (R-Blaine) suggestion to add the funding for the project was approved.

The original recommendation included bonding requests of about \$123 million, including \$48 million for local bridge assistance, \$30 million for high-use local roads, and \$25 million for local highway improvements.

Committee members who opposed the Northstar project said the state doesn't know where the money for the project would come from, and shouldn't be borrowing money it can't afford to pay back.

Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville) called spending \$60 million on the project a horrible idea, and tried to kill the idea by changing the money to funding for local roads. The committee voted down that suggestion.

If the committee is going to increase its budget recommendation by so much, the money should at least go to higher priority areas such as local roads, she said.

Supporters countered that the rail project would clear up traffic in the fastest growing transportation corridor in the state and would save commuters time and money.

Other members said the committee needs to have a more open discussion of the commuter rail project, which is scheduled to eventually expand to other areas of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

But Molnau said the issue has received a fair debate, noting that the committee has had two hearings on the project.

The move means the committee does not currently have recommendations to forward to the House Capital Investment Committee,

PERSONAL TRANSPORTATION



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Matthew Dailida, government affairs representative, demonstrates the Segway™ Human Transporter in front of the House Transportation Finance Committee March 7. A bill that considered regulation of the device's use was previously approved by the committee.

which will compile requests into a bonding bill. The capital investment committee may still include the project in its final bill.

Extinguishing debts

Car fires are costing communities money, and the House is considering a plan to do something about it.

The House Transportation Finance Committee approved a plan March 6 that would expand the authority of cities and counties to collect on expenses leftover after car fires.

Bill sponsor Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount) said HF211 would give the state a way to collect money from drivers who refuse to pay the bill.

It would also allow the state to reimburse city or volunteer fire departments that put out car fires on state or interstate highways but never receive compensation from the car's owner. Up to \$300 could be collected by local governments.

The plan would set up a motor vehicle fire revolving account, where money that is eventually collected by the state could be placed.

Collecting on bills from car fires has been a nagging problem for volunteer fire departments, said John Dooley, chief council for the Minnesota Association of Townships. It is estimated that about 10 percent of bills from car fires are left unpaid.

If a car fire occurs in one county, but the driver lives in another, it is difficult to force drivers to pay, he said.

The bill would reduce that problem by allowing cities and counties to turn the amount due over to the county auditor of the driver's town of residence. The auditor can then go after the resident directly with a levy against any property owned by the recipient.

If the money still cannot be collected, the fire department could turn the bill over to the state for payment out of the revolving account. If the car owner pays up, the money would be deposited into the account.

Hopefully between 50 and 70 percent of unpaid fees will be collected through county auditors without having to use the account, Dooley said.

The bill will next be heard in the House Ways and Means Committee.

Where to find information

House Public Information Office

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

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

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Budget cuts, part one

New law that will eliminate part of the projected state deficit affects all areas of Minnesota government

SESSION WEEKLY STAFF

Most of the provisions of the first piece of the Legislature's plan to address the state's projected deficit for the end of the 2002-03 biennium, became law March 1 without Gov. Jesse Ventura's approval.

The new law addresses the deficit identified by the Department of Finance's November 2001 forecast, which indicated a \$1.9 billion shortfall for the current biennium.

The most recent budget forecast released Feb. 25, shows an additional deficit for the state of around \$330 million, which is not addressed in this law, but legislators will discuss further remedies in the coming weeks.

However, the law also calls for base budgets in many departments to be reduced in 2004-2005.

Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove) and Sen. Doug Johnson (DFL-Tower) sponsored the measure. Here are a few highlights. (HF351*/SF264/CH220)

Cancellations and transfers

The new law uses around \$1.59 billion from various reserve accounts and one-time spending reductions.

The law shifts the balance of the \$653 million budget reserve account to the general fund. (Art. 13, Sec. 7)

The law also transfers a \$195 million balance in the state's cash flow account, used to meet deficiencies resulting from uneven distribution of revenue collections and required expenditures. (Art. 13, Sec 7)

A transfer of \$120 million from the state's assigned risk plan to the general fund is provided in the law. The assigned risk plan provides workers' compensation coverage to employers rejected by a licensed insurance company. (Art 13, Sec 9)

A tax increment finance grant account was established in 2001 to lessen the impact of property tax class rate reductions on TIF districts in the state. The new law cancels the \$130 million total appropriation for 2002-03.

For future biennia, the law allows the commissioner of finance to transfer cash reserves

of the tobacco prevention and public health endowment to the general fund if a deficit is expected. The law requires that any such transfers be reimbursed as soon as sufficient cash balances are available in the general fund. (Art. 13, Sec. 6)

The law prohibits future budget forecasts from making an allowance for inflation in determining expenditure estimates. (Art. 13, Sec 1)

Agriculture

Under the law, general fund appropriations for agriculture will be reduced by \$1.69 million for 2002-03.

Cuts include an \$800,000 reduction in spending for 2002-03 on the Agriculture Utilization Research Institute, a nonprofit corporation that promotes rural economic development projects. (Art. 9, Sec. 4)

Spending on agriculture protection services will be trimmed by \$250,000 in fiscal year 2003. Agriculture marketing and development programs will see nearly \$100,000 in cuts for the biennium. (Art. 9, Sec. 2)

The law will also cut \$175,000 in grants to agriculture information centers and an \$11,500 appropriation for the Seaway Port Authority of Duluth. (Art. 9, Sec. 2)

Ethanol producer payments will be reduced beginning in 2005, under the law, from 20 cents per gallon to 19 cents. (Art. 9, Sec. 6)

Criminal justice

Portions of the law affecting the state court system and the Corrections and Public Safety departments will be cut about \$26 million for the 2002-03 biennium.

The new law provides a \$16.6 million reduction to corrections for the biennium, including nearly \$7 million in cuts to adult institutions and \$7.9 million in cuts to the community services division of the Department of Corrections.

In 2003, those cuts include \$1.2 million from the extended juvenile jurisdiction reimbursements, \$800,000 for community corrections counties, and \$320,000 for probation and supervised release services provided to counties by the department. (Art. 6, Sec. 3)

The Department of Public Safety will receive total cuts of \$5.3 million for the biennium, including \$1.37 million to the Minnesota Center for Crime Victims Services, as well as the elimination of the crime victims ombudsman and transfer of the duties to the department. (Art. 7, Sec. 5)

In addition to providing grants to local communities, the crime victims center disburses per diem reimbursement to domestic violence shelters. The law eliminates \$600,000 for the reimbursements in 2003 and calls for base funding to be reduced by that amount in fiscal years 2004 and 2005.

Another \$2.3 million will be cut from the



Included in the \$16.6 million budget reduction for the Department of Corrections are nearly \$7 million in cuts to adult institutions, such as the Stillwater Prison.

law enforcement and community grants, including drug policy and violence prevention, a model policing program addressing mental illness calls, elimination of state funding for the Camp Ripley weekend camp in 2003, and staff reductions. However, the law calls for use of federal grants to sustain some of the programs. (Art. 7, Sec. 4)

The law requires the balance from the auto theft prevention fund, estimated at \$1.3 million each year, to be transferred to the general fund. (Art. 7, Sec. 9)

The new law also includes reductions of \$1.59 million to the court system for 2003, including the state Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, and the state's district courts. (Art. 11, Sec. 2)

Economic development

Economic development funds will lose almost \$6 million over the next biennium due to budget cuts.

The Legislature deducted portions of previous allocations from programs in the departments of Trade and Economic Development, Economic Security, Commerce, and Labor and Industry. (Art. 12, Secs. 2, 4, 6, 7)

The deductions include amounts from overall administrative costs, the Minnesota Trade Office, Minnesota Technology, Inc., workforce services, and the Housing Finance Agency. (Art. 12, Secs. 2-4)

The Office of Tourism will lose \$340,000 during the biennium, with instructions that the deduction cannot include a decrease of the grant to the Mississippi River Parkway Commission. (Art. 12, Sec. 2)

The law says the Minnesota Historical Society's reduction of \$400,000 should be implemented with the "smallest possible reduction in services and without the closing of sites." (Art. 12, Sec. 9)

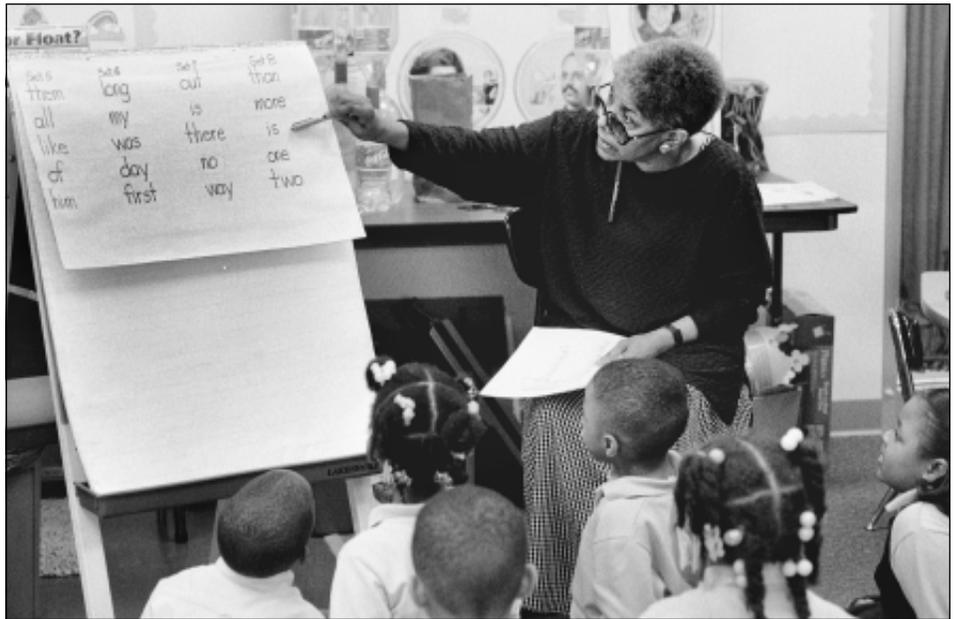
Transfers from several program funds to the general fund are also provided in the law, including \$426,000 from the Journey Travel Information System, \$1 million from the Rural Policy Development and \$3.2 million from the Real Estate Education, Research, and Recovery fund. (Art. 12, Sec. 10)

The new law will delay merging the departments of Economic Security and Trade and Economic Development until July 1, 2003. (Art. 12, Secs. 13-15)

Environment

General fund appropriations for environment and natural resources programs will be trimmed by \$12.9 million this biennium.

Legislators subtracted \$103,000 from the general fund in fiscal year 2002, leaving \$12.8 million in cuts for fiscal year 2003, which begins July 1, 2002.



A fund for alternative pay plans for teachers will be reduced by \$1 million for the biennium, under the new law.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (PCA) budget will increase by \$927,000 this year but will be reduced by \$1.4 million in 2003. (Art. 8, Sec. 2)

As for the Clean Water Partnership Program, the new law shifts \$1.3 million originally slated for 2003 for use this year. The program, which assists local governments in reducing pollution from runoff in agricultural and urban areas, will lose \$683,000 in 2003. Revenue from fee increases is expected to compensate for the cut. (Art. 8, Sec. 2)

The solid waste fund will provide money for land protection programs, under the new law. General fund appropriations will be reduced by \$1 million over the 2002-03 biennium. (Art. 8 Sec. 2)

The PCA's administration will also face a \$510,000 cut for the biennium. And the Office of Environmental Assistance appropriation will be trimmed by more than \$2 million in 2003. (Art. 8, Secs. 2, 3)

The state's zoological board, which oversees the Minnesota Zoo in Apple Valley, will see a \$383,000 reduction and the new Science Museum of Minnesota in St. Paul will lose out on \$65,000, both in 2003. (Art. 8, Secs. 4, 7)

Although the Department of Natural Resources' budget will see an \$800,000 bump in funding this year, it will have to absorb cuts of \$4.5 million in 2003. (Art. 8, Sec. 5)

State spending will also be reduced by \$2.9 million in the area of DNR operations support, including more than \$1 million set aside to help operate youth programs.

The law also directs the commissioner of finance to transfer \$1.3 million from the future resources fund to the general fund by June 30, 2002. (Art. 8, Sec. 9)

Family, childhood education

Under the law, the amount trimmed from family and early childhood education funding is a total of \$4 million for fiscal years 2002 and 2003, although \$3 million of that is made up for by the transfer of federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families funds.

The law sets aside \$3 million of federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant money for use by the Department of Children, Families and Learning until June 30, 2003. (Art. 2, Sec. 14)

The budget fix also eliminates \$100,000 in spending in 2002 by cutting the position of Adult Basic Education director, which was approved last year, but has not yet been filled. (Art. 2, Sec. 1)

Health and human services

Health and human services programs face the heaviest cut in the law — total budget cuts of \$95.9 million, \$55.4 million of which comes from the general fund.

In the area of continuing and long-term care, the law shifts health care costs to providers and counties. It also increases the amount the state raises in surcharges assessed on licensed nursing home beds.

And beginning Jan. 1, 2003, the law requires counties to pay 20 percent of the costs associated with caring for disabled people in nursing homes. It applies to patients younger than 65 who stay for more than 90 days. (Art. 14, Sec. 7)

The law also directs the University of Minnesota to transfer \$4.85 million each year of the biennium from the Academic Health Center account to the commissioner of health for medical education programs. The state is obligated to repay the university the amount

borrowed with interest. (Art. 15, Sec. 3)

Hospitals will face a 0.5 percent reduction in Medical Assistance and General Assistance Medical Care payments from the state beginning July 1, 2002.

Then starting on Jan. 1, 2003, the state will reduce both types of assistance payments to managed healthcare plans by 0.5 percent. The payment reduction would not affect nursing homes or demonstration projects for the disabled. (Art. 15, Sec. 19)

Combined, the two assistance programs cover health care costs for about 387,000 low-income Minnesotans.

The law also cuts grants for programs targeting chemical dependency, suicide, and health disparities in preventing cancer and AIDS. (Art. 17, Secs. 2, 3)

Higher education

The law cuts higher education funding by \$50 million, the second greatest total among all categories.

The University of Minnesota is getting the biggest cut at \$23.6 million, followed by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system with \$22.7 million, and the Higher Education Services Office at nearly \$3.68 million. (Art. 5, Sec. 1)

Language in the law says that the university and MnSCU should decrease administrative expenditures and reserve balances, and restructure programs to minimize the student impact of reductions. (Art. 5, Secs. 3,4)

To further help students, the law calls for an additional \$4.45 million in state grants for the biennium, much of that from an increase in the maximum federal grant over \$3,750 remaining in the state grant program.

Various scholarship programs are cut, under the law, as are allocations of \$2.5 million for interstate tuition reciprocity and \$2 million from the Minnesota College Savings Plan. In both cases the amounts represent excess money in the accounts, and investments in the savings plan will not be lost.

The law also cuts about \$3 million from three systems that help increase student access to library resources across the state. (Art. 5, Sec. 2)

K-12 education

Nearly every state-controlled funding stream will experience losses from the 2001 legislative appropriations, under the new law's total cuts for K-12 education of \$14.9 million in the biennium. (Art. 3, Sec. 4)

Only one district request received a new appropriation: the Cambridge-Isanti School District was allocated \$400,000 to make a special education payment.

Funds for examination fees, teacher training, and support programs, originally \$2 million each year, are cut in half. Also, the department will continue to pay fees for low-income students taking advanced placement or international baccalaureate exams, but not all students as was previously provided. (Art. 3, Sec. 9)

A \$2.5 million appropriation for contracting with an independent school evaluation service to evaluate and report on school districts' academic and financial performance was cut by \$1 million. (Art. 3, Sec. 12)

The alternative teacher pay fund decreased from \$4 million to \$3 million in both fiscal years. The money was incentive for schools to create a plan for paying teachers using non-traditional methods. (Art. 3, Sec. 13)

State government

The constitutional officers, state agencies, boards, commissions, and Legislature will see a \$41.9 million cut under the new law.

The Department of Revenue takes the biggest hit, a reduction of \$14 million from its budget. In announcing his veto of the bill, Ventura said the cut would cause an estimated loss of \$11 million in revenue annually due to reducing the department's capacity to audit and collect taxes. (Art. 10, Sec. 13)

The governor's budget is reduced \$1.1 million this biennium while the Legislature's budget will see a \$2.2 million reduction. (Art. 10, Secs. 2,4)

State agencies and the Legislature are prohibited from hiring any permanent or temporary employees before July 1, 2003, estimated to save about \$40 million. The MnSCU system is exempt from the hiring freeze. (Art. 10, Sec. 38)

The law requires the governor to reduce expenditures for professional or technical service contracts in the executive branch by at least \$35 million in 2002-03. (Art. 10, Sec. 36)

With some exceptions, new consultant contracts and renewals of existing contracts are prohibited until July 1, 2003. Exceptions to the moratorium include federally funded contracts, and contracts relating to a public health threat, welfare or the safety of people. State agencies may apply for a waiver. (Art. 10, Sec. 37)

The law gives discretion to agencies in making the budget cuts, but does specify that funding cuts be distributed across the agency's accounts without a disproportionate reduction from a single program. The law further states that reductions should be geared toward cutting administration and overhead with as little impact as possible on programs and services. (Art. 10, Sec. 27)

Transportation

The law trims about \$3 million from state general fund transportation spending, including about \$2.7 million from the Metropolitan Council and its transit operations, primarily in 2003. (Art. 7, Sec. 3)

To make up the difference, the law calls for the council to increase revenue or reduce operating expenses by cutting less popular routes.

The budget modification also cuts \$600,000 from the council's administration costs and \$100,000 from the council's transportation services other than Metro Transit bus service.

The Department of Transportation will lose about \$500,000 from non-highway programs over the biennium. (Art. 7, Sec. 2)

The law also limits the Greater Minnesota Transit Fund administration costs for bus and transportation services to \$400,000. (Art. 7, Sec. 7)



The state's higher education institutions' budgets will be cut a total of \$50 million during 2002-23, under the new law.

Fairness at the polls

Officials debate effectiveness, as a recruiting and balancing tool, of proposal to remove partisan requirements for election judges

By DAVID MAEDA

The average St. Paul election judge is 67 years old. Fifty-five percent of the city's judges are at least 70, and 7 percent are older than 80.

Dorothy McClung, the director of Ramsey County's property records and revenue department, said that the county, which oversees the city's elections, is having a hard time recruiting enough new people to properly handle the polling place duties.

And officials are concerned that laws compelling party representation of election judges may be impeding recruiting efforts.

Current law requires that no more than half

as election judges.

Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul), the sponsor of the bill, said it would allow election officials to address a growing problem of recruiting people to serve as judges.

McClung said that more and more people are identifying themselves as independents — with no party affiliation. Polls indicate that between 35 percent to 40 percent of voting age Minnesotans do not consider themselves members of a major political party.

She said that the bill would not remove requirements that certain duties — such as providing assistance to voters in reading or marking a ballot or witnessing public accuracy testing of

as election judges. Reichert said that at least 250 judges were needed for the city's 21 precincts.

Speaking in support of the bill, Reichert said most judges choose to work as a matter of "service to the community not as representatives of a party." She said the aging poll workers who work a 15-hour to 16-hour day would be able to work in shifts if more judges could be found.

But the state's chief election official said the bill takes the wrong approach.

Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer agrees that more judges are needed to do polling place work. She said election judges play a vital role in ensuring the public's confidence in the process, as well as the validity of election outcomes.

But she said that as her office has stepped up efforts to recruit more judges, including college students and local business people, she has often heard that people who are interested in working don't know how to go about getting involved in the process.

Kiffmeyer said that having representation from all political parties is important because some of the judge's most important responsibilities, such as ensuring that only those qualified to vote in a precinct are allowed to do so and the certification of results at the end of the day, need close scrutiny in order to satisfy the public's confidence in the system.

While the bill would address the shortage in the number of judges, she said it was an "admission of failure." She said a better approach would be to continue efforts to recruit more people by appealing to the sense of civic duty.

Rep. Eric Lipman (R-Lake Elmo) said eliminating the requirement of partisan election judges would allow highly partisan people to say they aren't affiliated with any party, which could lead to a situation where a precinct has an abundance of judges from one party.

Kiffmeyer echoed Lipman's concerns. "The nonpartisan label doesn't mean they don't have party affiliation. You just don't know what it is."

Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls) said nothing in the current system requires a person to disclose the party they belong to. The law requires party balance in each precinct, but doesn't specifically say that a person needs to declare a party affiliation in order to serve.

The law specifies that municipal election officials must first appoint judges from the lists provided by the parties, but if no lists have been provided, or if additional judges are needed, officials are permitted to appoint others to serve.

"I'm just trying to expand the list of people," Mahoney said.

The bill now goes to the House floor. 

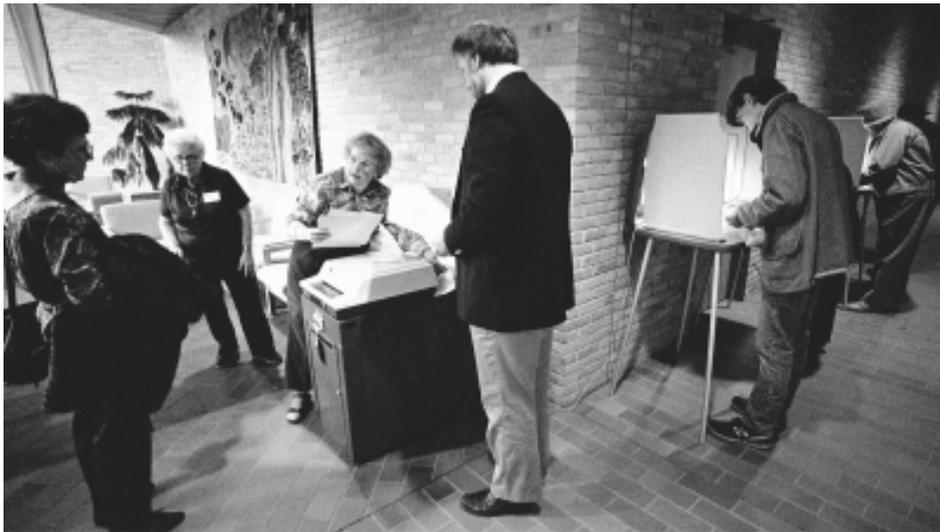


PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

A House proposal would allow nonpartisan election judges, in an effort to recruit new judges.

of the election judges in a precinct belong to the same political party unless there is an odd number of judges. In that case the number of judges of the same party may be one more than half the total number in the precinct.

As a practice, election judges declare what party they are affiliated with prior to appointment in a precinct so county officials can ensure they are following the law.

A bill (HF3283) approved by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee March 1 would allow individuals not affiliated with a party to serve

voting systems — require judges from opposite parties, as current law dictates.

But nonpartisan judges could handle other duties, such as registering voters and determining if a voter is in the correct polling place.

By law the state's major political parties are required by July 1 to provide a list of judges for each precinct to county auditors for elections involving partisan political office races.

Cindy Reichert, the St. Louis Park city clerk, said that for the 2000 elections the city was provided a list of nine names from the political parties. Seven of those people were willing to serve

Protecting local earnings

Minnesota's prevailing wage law aims to protect Minnesota jobs and provide a fair bidding process

BY THERESA STAHL

In the 1920s construction contractors were shipping nonunion minority laborers from Alabama to New York, paying them at rates lower than those that prevailed locally.

This concerned U.S. Rep. Robert L. Bacon, who, in 1927, introduced a bill requiring contractors on federal government projects to comply with state laws regulating wages of employees. That legislation failed, but four years and 14 bills later, the Davis-Bacon Act became law.

The intent of the 1931 Act, also sponsored by U.S. Sen. James J. Davis, was to protect local wage scales from the consequences of low-bid competition.

By 1973, 41 states, including Minnesota, had prevailing wage statutes. Since then, several states have repealed their laws, but Minnesota's remains substantially intact.

Each year, legislators propose additional jobs that should be subject to the prevailing wage, and many have been adopted. A 2002 proposal would apply prevailing wage law to construction of energy generation plants.

The 1990 Legislature commissioned a study of prevailing wage in the state. In it, the Department of Administration provided a history of the concept, analysis of its enforcement, opinions from the workforce, and recommendations for future action.

Minnesota's prevailing wage law is nearly 30 years old. Each year the Department of Labor and Industry's Labor Standards Division conducts a survey to determine a prevailing wage rate. The law requires that each wage determination be based on the actual wage rates paid to the largest number of workers within each labor classification reported in the survey typically county-by-county. This determination must be made before the state asks for bids.

Some legislators interviewed for the study about the prevailing wage law argued that the department's methodology is problematic, pointing to wide variations in wage rates between counties. Contractors also voiced their opinions, claiming the rate system "is not representative because not all eligible contractors receive wage surveys and because survey data



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY TOM OLMSCHEID

The state's prevailing wage law, which governs construction contracts, is nearly 30 years old and remains substantially unchanged since its enactment in 1973.

is rarely verified," according to the report.

Some legislators said a prevailing wage benefits the economy by protecting Minnesota jobs and workers and by providing a level playing field for the bidding process. Others argued the policy is inflationary and the costs associated with its benefits are unknown.

Labor organizations favor the prevailing wage. AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations) and Teamster representatives said the law strengthens economic stability in the construction industry and secures livable wages for workers, according to the study. They also said the policy limits the number of irresponsible contractors and ensures quality work by skilled employees.

Those organizations also addressed concerns with prevailing wage enforcement. (The Department of Labor is responsible for enforcing

prevailing wage rates on non-highway construction projects, and the Department of Transportation is responsible for enforcing prevailing wage for highway projects.)

They said the language was vague and occasionally contradictory, and violation investigations were seen as prolonged. They suggested quality enforcement required additional Department of Labor staff.

Labor organizations were not alone in their frustrations with the department. "All contractors and contractor groups cited poor communication as a cause of many problems and misunderstandings," the study says.

Nonunion contractors had concerns with the entire concept. "In general, nonunion contractors said that prevailing wage legislation is not necessary and is an inflationary tool of organized labor, one that increases construction costs without commensurate benefits," according to the report. "They said the law imposes union work rules on nonunion employers, restricts competition, and impedes the hiring of youth, minorities, and women."

Economic development groups claimed the application of the law to every project would negatively affect funding for low-income housing and lead to the suspension of programs.

Local government representatives said they were concerned with the application of the prevailing wage law to state-aid dollars, arguing that municipal construction costs would increase. They also added that information from the department was often confusing.

Interviews with state contracting agencies revealed that problems tended to be concentrated in rural Minnesota, where contractors and workers are less familiar with policy requirements.

The study made a large number of specific recommendations for improving the prevailing wage law, as the Legislature requested. Specifically, it called for the Legislature's intent for the law to be clarified and for improved procedures governing how the wage is calculated and how wage data is collected.

No specific legislative action addressing the recommendations has been taken since the study was completed, though department rules do govern some of those items.

The report concluded the prevailing wage law does accomplish the main objectives it set out to do: provide a fair wage to Minnesota workers; to ensure a "level playing field" in the bidding process; to protect local workers and contractors; and to create a positive economic factor. 

At a crossroads

University of Minnesota Extension Service has proud past, but its future direction is debated

By SARAH MCKENZIE

Many rural legislators have argued that the extension service, the nearly 100-year-old outreach arm of the University of Minnesota, has strayed from its agricultural roots.

Today extension educators work in every Minnesota county, offering assistance on a range of topics, including economic development, environmental stewardship, precision farming, and youth development programs like 4-H.

University officials have said those core features of extension's mission won't change despite plans to trim its budget by \$4.5 million over the next two years. Under the new model, the university will look to raise \$2.5 million in revenues to compensate for a leaner budget.

Meanwhile, legislators have questioned how the university can provide the same services in the state's 87 counties with fewer resources.

The university announced in February that it would eliminate 43 of the extension's 275 positions because of financial constraints. The extension service received \$23.8 million from the state in 2001 along with \$10.7 million in federal dollars.

"Our goal is to retain extension staff in every county in the state, and this model meets that goal," extension dean Charles Casey said in a statement outlining the changes.

Extension's beginnings

The Legislature established the extension service in 1909. It was known as the Agriculture Extension Division.

James Gray, in his book chronicling the university's history from 1851 to 1951, wrote that enterprising agriculture professors paved the way for the outreach service.

One such professor, Willet Hays, worked to bring "the school to the students." He pushed to establish agriculture schools in rural Minnesota with strong ties to the university.

In its early days of the 20th century, the division focused on offering rural communities hands-on training in handling livestock and managing home economics.

The university used trains as portable

those who attempted to admit to the company of academic aristocrats any part-time, night-time beggars of scholarship."

To drum up support for extension and convince Minnesotans of the university's statewide value, Vincent launched "university weeks." Throughout Greater Minnesota, the university

offered mini-extension courses, and other events including a play, lecture, recital, and debate.

Extension staff also worked to ease the burdens faced by many in Minnesota during the Great Depression.

The university established centers throughout the state and helped 70,000 Minnesotans make mattresses with surplus cotton provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, according to

extension's Web site. Many had previously slept on cornhusk mattresses.

Gray wrote that World War II provided an impetus for extension to pursue an aggressive agenda in rural communities.

"With its group of allies, the farmers themselves, the agriculture campus was in daily communication throughout the war," Gray wrote. "Its army of county and home demonstration agents multiplied their visits as the emergency grew more and more acute and the government wished to see its gospels spread as far as possible."

The university launched demonstration projects in 50 communities as agents worked to encourage farmers to increase cultivation of their land.

Extension agents, now known as educators, advised farmers on agronomy and marketing a range of commodities — poultry, eggs, and dairy products. They also provided expertise on horticulture, vegetable gardening, forestry, and soils.

Wider reach

Following the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, extension educators focused on teaching science to 4-H clubs, and spent more



Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

The North Central Agriculture School of Extension in Grand Rapids, pictured here in 1940, was one of several schools operated by the extension service in Greater Minnesota.

classrooms to reach out to rural communities, according to a history of extension posted on the university's Web site.

The university also had a General Extension Division beginning in 1913. Small groups gathered to take courses in advertising, salesmanship, business law, and creative writing.

Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act in 1913, which further supported the university's extension service. The federal law bolstered a nationwide effort between federal, state, and local governments to keep farmers up-to-date on the latest technology and information.

The state Legislature appropriated \$860,000 for county agent work during the 1913-1914 biennium. Another federal act provided \$4.3 million for extension efforts in 1917. The number of Minnesota counties with extension agents jumped from 16 to 85 during this period.

George Vincent, president of the university at the time, faced difficulties convincing other academics of extension's value to the state, according to Gray.

"To encourage extension work was to open the citadel of culture to an invasion of barbarians," Gray wrote of the attitudes of some in the university. "Destruction lay ahead for

time serving low-income families and the disabled, according to historian Ann Pflaum, in her book *The University of Minnesota: 1945-2000*.

Extension also had an international focus, advising the agriculture research institute in Chile on ways to collaborate with the country's farmers.

The extension division became known as Continuing Education and Extension in the 1970s. It continues to be one of the country's largest credit-based programs.

In 1986, the university dropped agriculture from the program's name, and it became the Minnesota Extension Service — a move intended to emphasize its broad mission. Later it formally became the University of Minnesota Extension Service to emphasize its ties to the institution.

Pflaum wrote that extension broadened its scope in the 1990s to include services for minorities, immigrants from Southeast Asia, and additional programs in Greater Minnesota, the inner city, and suburban communities.

Yet it continued to focus on rural communities during these years.

In an effort to respond to declining economic conditions in farming communities, extension educators formed "rural response teams" in 25 communities. The teams collaborated with state and local agencies to campaign for financial assistance.

By the time Mark Yudof became university president in 1997, enrollment in extension and continuing education reached more than 80,000 students compared to the 51,000 collegiate enrollment.

Conflicting visions

This session, Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel),



Photo taken from *The University of Minnesota: 1945-2000*

Extension agents have been advising farmers on agromomy and marketing a range of products for more than 50 years.

chair of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Finance Committee, has sponsored a bill (HF2708) directing the university's extension service to place less emphasis on community, economic, and human development programs in favor of a more traditional agriculture focus.

Two committees have approved the bill. It now awaits action on the House floor.

At a January committee hearing, other members of the state's agriculture community testified that extension should stay focused on farming.

University officials have responded to the criticism by arguing extension's mission goes

beyond just serving the needs of farmers.

"Extension needs to change," Charles Casey wrote to extension faculty and staff in December. "Our state's population is more urban and more diverse than ever before."

In written testimony addressed to the committee, Jim Werner, chief administrator of the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation, said he believed extension was drifting away from agriculture.

"I would submit that the extension service is a 'people' business," Werner added. "The importance of working directly with people and more often than not, in a one-on-one setting, cannot be stressed enough."

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Attorney General

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Secretary of State

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Careful observer

Jordan brings local government experience and concern for public safety to Legislature

BY THERESA STAHL

Before February, Rep. John Jordan (R-Brooklyn Park) had not considered running for state representative.



Rep. John Jordan

"I had zero intention, zero desire to do it," he said.

But encouraging phone calls and e-mails from friends and business ties made him think twice. After receiving his family's blessing and his

company's approval, he decided to campaign. "It's humbling," Jordan said. "Almost a feeling of being drafted."

The seat for District 47A opened when Rep. Darlene Luther, who served five terms in the House, died Jan. 30 after a battle with stomach cancer.

If the Legislature fulfills its goal of adjourning by the Easter holiday, Jordan will only spend three weeks of his 9-month term in session. He said he won't begin campaigning for the November election until the session is over.

Born in St. Paul, Jordan has lived in Brooklyn Park for 17 years. He and his wife Michelle have two children — Erik, 15, and Allyson, 10 — one dog, and three cats.

Jordan, 41, believes residents deserve from their legislators "someone who will read about the issues, listen to constituents, learn what they can before voting, and make the best decision for residents."

Key issues in Jordan's campaign were equitable funding for education, public safety, transportation, and wise use of tax dollars.

In terms of education, he said it is unfair that Minneapolis schools receive \$2,000 more per student than schools in his district.

He also wants better roads and better transit opportunities, particularly Highway 610 and a busway on Highway 81.

"We need a balanced approach (to transportation) ... and we have to do it without raising taxes," he said. He does not support light-rail transit because it is being forced into developed areas. But he thinks commuter rail proposals, such as the Northstar Corridor plan, are good solutions to congestion because the infrastructure is already built for high-speed trains.

He didn't offer specific ways taxpayers' money was being unwisely used, but he said there are ways to streamline what the state does.

"What are we doing here that we could do better?" he said. "I intend to look for ways to economize. Now is the time."

Jordan said his city government experience is part of what may make him a good state representative. He has spent two years on the Brooklyn Park Planning Commission, served as vice chair on the Brooklyn Park Long-Range Improvement Committee, and sat on the board of directors for his local chamber of commerce.

His community involvement started when he formed a neighborhood watch group after his house was burglarized.

Another injustice, on a much greater level, sparked the business he runs today, an Internet-based business devoted to crime prevention.

In December 1999 the mother of a friend of Jordan's was shot by her estranged husband. She survived, and to track down her husband her son posted photos and information on a Web site, using a domain name of Jordan's.

The site first received local, then national media attention and then started receiving 1 million hits a month. The accused was arrested one year after the crime, convicted, and sentenced to 20 years without parole.

Jordan wondered, "What can we do with

this momentum?" So he met with police chiefs and crime prevention groups to determine what was needed, and then raised money to build a Web site. CitizenObserver.com was launched in August 2001. Currently 70 police departments use it to post information and rewards about their fugitives, missing persons, and unsolved crimes.

The Web site also caught the eye of the Bush administration, and Jordan recently traveled to the White House to discuss his venture with the Office of Homeland Security. He said their support will allow the company to move significantly faster than in normal business operations. Jordan said they have a three-year plan to expand nationally.

From his business to community work, Jordan follows through on his word, said Brooklyn Park Mayor Grace Arbogast.

Jordan asked that Arbogast hold the Bible when he would be sworn into office March 8.

"I really wanted to make it a Brooklyn Park affair," Jordan said.

Over the six years Arbogast has known Jordan, she said she's learned how he will be a representative who is going to carry out what is best for his region.

"He will be in touch with and working with residents of Brooklyn Park that he serves," she said.

"I will have an extremely open door policy," Jordan said. If someone leaves a message he said he will always return the call.

"It's a legacy that Luther left of really good constituency, and I intend to continue that."

DISTRICT 47A

1998 population (estimate): 39,552

Largest city: Brooklyn Park

County: Hennepin

Location: northern Minneapolis suburbs

Top concern: "Education, safe neighborhoods, good transportation, and wise use of tax dollars."

— Rep. John Jordan

Wednesday, March 6

HF3661—Davnie (DFL)

Civil Law

Graffiti damage actions authorized.

HF3662—Osthoff (DFL)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Ramsey County sheriff and attorney offices made appointive.

HF3663—Seifert (R)

Transportation Policy

Transportation building energy conservation required.

HF3664—Abrams (R)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Local municipal bonding authority restrictions provided.

HF3665—Bernardy (DFL)

K-12 Education Finance

School district referendum equalization aid increased.

HF3666—Smith (R)

Civil Law

Housing warranty breach damages modified to include attorney fees.

HF3667—Murphy (DFL)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Parole and probation officer retirement coverage provided under the local correctional employee plan or state correctional employee plan.

HF3668—Erhardt (R)

Taxes

Sales and use tax imposed on certain telecommunications installation charges.

Thursday, March 7

HF3669—Rifenberg (R)

Taxes

Owner-occupied and owner-operated lodging property tax classification established.

HF3670—Tuma (R)

Crime Prevention

Traucny; child in need of protection or services cases counsel at public expense abolished if the sole basis for the petition is habitual truancy.

HF3671—Abeler (R)

Taxes

Commercial improvements property tax valuation exclusion provided.

HF3672—Abeler (R)

Health & Human Services Policy

Clinical nurse specialist waiver provided.

HF3673—Smith (R)

Higher Education Finance

Higher education funding accountability financial audit required.

HF3674—Smith (R)

Taxes

Property leased to school districts exempted from taxation under certain circumstances.

HF3675—Anderson, I. (DFL)

Taxes

Agricultural homestead property tax class rate reduction provided.

HF3676—Rifenberg (R)

Taxes

Property tax classification provided for bed and breakfast lodging facilities.

HF3677—Stanek (R)

Transportation Finance

Special "United We Stand" license plates issued, creating a Minnesota anti-terrorism account created, annual contributions required as a condition of using the special license plates, and money appropriated.

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8 A • Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL) B • Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL) Sen. Becky Lourey (DFL)	22 A • Rep. Ted Winter (DFL) B • Rep. Elaine Harder (R) Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL)	36 A • Rep. Chris Gerlach (R) B • Rep. Dan McElroy (R) Sen. David L. Knutson (R)	50 A • Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R) B • Rep. Kathy Tingelstad (R) Sen. Debbie J. Johnson (R)	64 A • Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL) B • Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL) Sen. Richard J. Cohen (DFL)
9 A • Rep. Kevin Goodno (R) B • Rep. Paul Marquart (DFL) Sen. Keith Langseth (DFL)	23 A • Rep. James T. Clark (R) B • Rep. Howard Swenson (R) Sen. Dennis R. Frederickson (R)	37 A • Rep. Dennis Ozment (R) B • Rep. Ray Liz Holberg (R) Sen. Pat Parisseau (R)	51 A • Rep. Andrew Westerberg (R) B • Rep. Mary Vandever (R) Sen. Jane Krentz (DFL)	65 A • Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL) B • Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL) Sen. Sandra L. Pappas (DFL)
10 A • Rep. Bud Nornes (R) B • Rep. George Cassell (R) Sen. Cal Larson (R)	24 A • Rep. John Dorn (DFL) B • Rep. Lynda Johnson (DFL) Sen. John C. Hottinger (DFL)	38 A • Rep. Tim Wilkin (R) B • Rep. Tim Pawlenty (R) Sen. Deanna L. Wiener (DFL)	52 A • Rep. Barbara Goodwin (DFL) B • Rep. Geri Evans (DFL) Sen. Satveer Chaudhary (DFL)	66 A • Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL) B • Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL) Sen. Ellen R. Anderson (DFL)
11 A • Rep. Roxann Daggett (R) B • Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba (DFL) Sen. Dallas C. Sams (DFL)	25 A • Rep. John Tuma (R) B • Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R) Sen. Thomas M. Neville (R)	39 A • Rep. Thomas W. Pugh (DFL) B • Rep. Bob Milbert (DFL) Sen. James P. Metzen (DFL)	53 A • Rep. Philip Krinkie (R) B • Rep. Carl Jacobson (R) Sen. Mady Reiter (R)	67 A • Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL) B • Rep. Sheldon Johnson (DFL) Sen. Mee Moua (DFL)
12 A • Rep. Dale Walz (R) B • Rep. Greg Blaine (R) Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL)	26 A • Rep. Bob Gunther (R) B • Rep. Henry J. Kalis (DFL) Sen. Chuck Fowler (DFL)	40 A • Rep. Dan Larson (DFL) B • Rep. Ann Lenczewski (DFL) Sen. David H. Johnson (DFL)	54 A • Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL) B • Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL) Sen. John Marty (DFL)	
13 A • Rep. Torrey Westrom (R) B • Rep. Doug Peterson (DFL) Sen. Charles A. Berg (R)	27 A • Rep. Dan Dorman (R) B • Rep. Ruth Leighton (DFL) Sen. Grace S. Schwab (R)	41 A • Rep. Alice Seagren (R) B • Rep. Ken Wolf (R) Sen. William V. Belanger Jr. (R)	55 A • Rep. Harry Mares (R) B • Rep. Scott Wasiluk (DFL) Sen. Charles W. Wiger (DFL)	
14 A • Rep. Steve Dehler (R) B • Rep. Doug Stang (R) Sen. Michelle L. Fischbach (R)	28 A • Rep. Connie Ruth (R) B • Rep. Steve Sviggum (R) Sen. Dick Day (R)	42 A • Rep. Ron Erhardt (R) B • Rep. Erik Paulsen (R) Sen. Roy Terwilliger (R)	56 A • Rep. Mark William Holsten (R) B • Rep. Eric Lipman (R) Sen. Michele Bachmann (R)	

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MONDAY, March 11

9 a.m.

Topic Selection Subcommittee of the Legislative Audit Commission

125 State Capitol

Chr. Sen. Claire Robling

Agenda: Review list of possible program evaluation topics and select those for further consideration.

10:15 a.m.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: Continuation of hearings on sports stadium bills and consideration of resulting legislation and related amendments.

12:30 p.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

30 minutes after session

WAYS & MEANS

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. David Bishop

Agenda: To be announced.

6:30 p.m.

NOTE TIME CHANGE

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

112 State Capitol

Chr. Sen. Dean Johnson

Agenda: Potential additional amendments to the 2002 omnibus retirement bill. Review of proposed procedures for awarding post-June 30, 2002 actuarial services contract. Review of implementation plan study for the aggregation

of the four teacher retirement plans. Other items as designated by the chair.

TUESDAY, March 12

8 a.m.

Legislative Coordinating Commission Subcommittee on Employee Relations

500S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: Review/approve proposed managerial plan.

Review/approve commissioner's plan.

Review/recommend salary cap waiver for Rochester Public Utilities manager.

Update on negotiations with state employees.

Review of HF2033, defining state radio communications operators as essential employees.

Other items as approved by the chair.

10:15 a.m.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: Continued consideration, if necessary, of sports stadium legislation and related amendments.

Hearings on other bills to be announced.

12:30 p.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

WEDNESDAY, March 13

8:15 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: To be announced.

9 a.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

30 minutes after session

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: To be announced.

THURSDAY, March 14

9 a.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

30 minutes after session

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: To be announced.

FRIDAY, March 15

8:30 a.m.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: To be announced.

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(Area code 651)

Administration	296-6013
Agriculture	297-2200
Children, Families and Learning	582-8200
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Job Information	296-2616
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Public Safety	296-6642
Driver and Vehicle Services ...	296-6911
Fire Marshal	215-0500
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State Patrol	297-3935
Public Service	296-5120
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Minnesota Memorials



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Peace officers memorial

Between 1882 and June 1995, 177 Minnesota peace officers were killed in the line of duty.

On June 14, 1995 a memorial to honor them was dedicated at the intersection of 12th and Wabasha streets in the southeast corner of the Capitol complex.

"Their sacrifice can never be forgotten as they did not die in vain," reads an inscription atop columns nearest the streets.

Begun in 1993, construction of the \$500,000 memorial was completed with private fundraising. The state contributed \$50,000 for a maintenance fund.

One highlight of the memorial is a fiberoptic blue line that runs down the center of the memorial. It represents the thin, blue line peace officers walk every day between anarchy and civilization.

At the north end of the memorial is a plaque that was originally placed at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport in 1977. The plaque is on the backside of an obelisk that features a passage from the Bible: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Two eagles are engraved near the saying.

Unlike many memorials, names of those peace officers killed are not included.

"We wanted this to be as much about those that are presently serving as those who have died in the line of duty," Dennis Flaherty told the St. Paul Pioneer Press before the dedication. At the time, Flaherty was executive director of the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association. "We wanted something that people would see and think about the difference the police — both living and dead — make in our lives."

(M. Cook)

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Reflections

When President George W. Bush flew to Minnesota on Air Force One March 4, by many accounts he was the nation's 24th chief executive to visit the state. Counted in this grouping are some who came before they held the nation's highest office and others who visited after they served.

Zachary Taylor was the first to arrive. He came to Fort Snelling in 1828 as the military post's new commandant. At the time, the post was located in what later became the Minnesota Territory in 1849. Taylor served as president in 1849 and 1850 before dying in office.

Millard Fillmore, who finished Taylor's term, came up the Mississippi River by riverboat to St. Paul in 1854 with a large excursion party of easterners.

A celebration of his arrival is now an annual social event in the Capital City.

And in 1979, President Jimmy Carter left town aboard the Delta Queen riverboat with his family to spend five days cruising to St. Louis.

Previously, Carter flew into the state twice. In October 1977 he stopped to give Hubert H. Humphrey a ride back to Washington after the senator had cancer surgery. Three months later Carter returned for Humphrey's funeral.

Warren Harding campaigned here in 1920, one year after his opponent, President Woodrow Wilson, came to St. Paul as part of an 8,000-mile trek to generate public demand for Congress to ratify an international security treaty. The exhausting trip cost Wilson his health, and he lost the upcoming election to Harding.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt visited in 1936 during a re-election campaign. And once during World War II, he likely was on board his presidential train when it secretly stopped in Minneapolis for

refueling. His dog, Fala, was seen being exercised on the station platform.

Like when his father came in 1991 to discuss education issues, the President Bush was greeted by state and local Republican leaders on his recent visit.

When President Bill Clinton arrived late one night in 1994, a few Democratic leaders were there to greet him. However, the next morning, one, Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls), had the honor of jogging

with him in downtown St. Paul, prior to the president's speech on health care. Many state and local Democratic leaders were present for the speech.

Other chief executives who visited Minnesota included Grover Cleveland, Calvin Coolidge, Dwight D. Eisen-

hower, Rutherford B. Hayes, Herbert Hoover, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, William McKinley, Richard Nixon, William Taft, and Harry Truman.

Former President Ulysses Grant and President Chester Arthur were in St. Paul two weeks apart in 1883 to help celebrate the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad.

Like Hayes in 1878, Theodore Roosevelt spoke to Minnesotans at the state fair in 1901. It was at the fair that Roosevelt uttered his famous quote: "Speak softly and carry a big stick."

Roosevelt was vice-president at the time under William McKinley, albeit not for long. McKinley was assassinated four days later, when Roosevelt was returning to Washington from the fair.

He would return to the fair in his new role as president in 1903.

—LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT



President Theodore Roosevelt speaking at the Minnesota State Fair.

Photo courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
 MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
 MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Women in Minnesota

Women in the Legislature	59
Overall increase since the 2000 general election	1
Percent of women in the Legislature	29.4
In 1996	30.3
In 1992	27.4
In 1972	3
Percentage of Minnesota women and girls age 16 and older in the state's labor force, 2000	70.3
National rank	1
National average, as percent	60.2
Percentage of Minnesota women in the labor force in 1990	62.5
In 1980	54
In 1970	43.5
Minnesota women with children under age 18 in the labor force during 2000, as percent	72.9
National average	70.6
State percentage in 1980	64.3
Minnesota women, age 25 and above, that have at least a high school diploma, as percent	92.2
National average, as percent	84
National average in 1940, as percent	25.9
Percentage of white Minnesota women, age 25 or greater, with at least a high school diploma	85
African-American women	78.3
Hispanic women	57.5
Percentage of Minnesota women, age 25 or greater, with at least a bachelor's degree	29.2
National average	23.6
Minnesota white women, age 25 or greater, with at least a bachelor's degree, as percent	23.9
African-American women	16.7
Hispanic women	10.6
Life expectancy, in years, for Minnesota women, in 1995	80.8
For Minnesota men	75.1
National numbers, in 1998	79.5, 73.8
Minnesota pregnancy rate for women ages 15 to 44, per 1,000 women, in 1999	62.5
Highest county (Watonwan)	83.3
Lowest county (Cook)	46.7
National rate	65.9

Source: Minnesota Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women (www.lcesw.leg.mn),
 1999 Minnesota Annual Health Statistics Summary, Minnesota Department of Health.

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