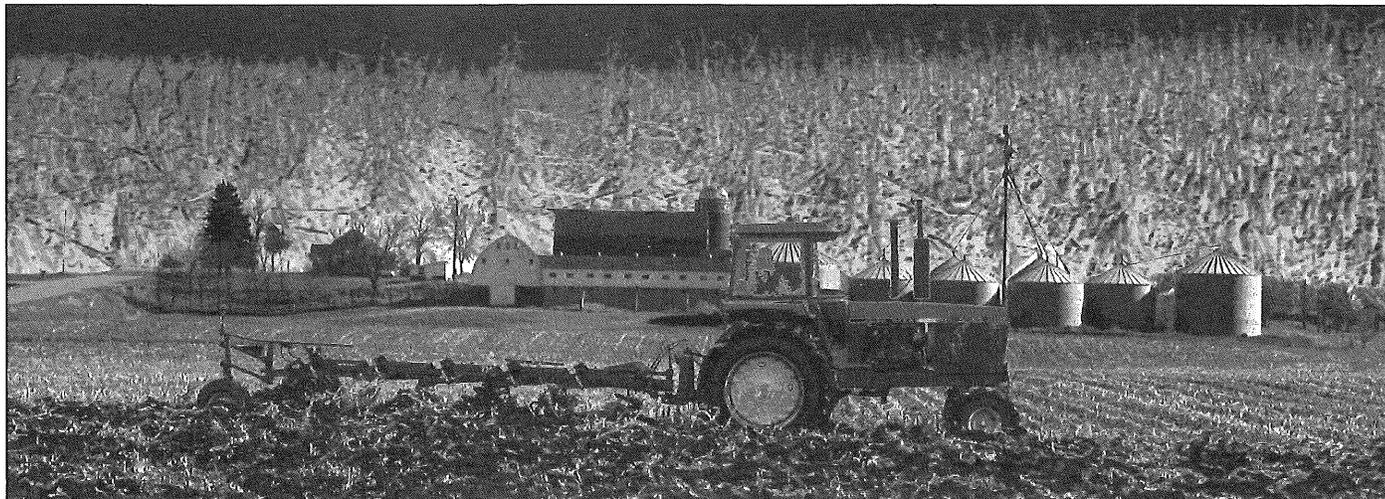


MINI-SESSION REPORT

A Non-Partisan Publication of the Minnesota House of Representatives ♦ November 10, 1995 ♦ Volume 3, Number 2



State lawmakers traveled to the fertile farmland of Austin-Albert Lea for the Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session Oct. 24-26.

— photo illustration by Tom Olmscheid

Austin-Albert Lea . . .

Southern Twin Cities welcome state lawmakers



Minnesota House members recently visited the land of Spam, pork farms, and the state's only pull-tab manufacturing plant during the 1995 Austin-Albert Lea Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session.

They were there to hear concerns from local residents and discuss the future of southern Minnesota.

Interested citizens were invited to attend more than 30 legislative hearings held in Austin, Albert Lea, and Faribault. Hearing topics included juvenile justice, school funding, consumer fraud against the elderly, corporate farming, and the economic survival of main street businesses.

The mini-session, held Oct. 24-26, was the 13th held outside the St. Paul State Capitol since the Minnesota House of Representatives began conducting them in 1987. In all, about 100 of the 134 House members participated in the mini-session.

The goal is to bring politics to the people so that citizens can easily participate in the legislative process without the time and expense of a trip to the Twin Cities. It also allows lawmakers to see firsthand how certain policies affect different sections of the state.

Many of the issues discussed during the three days of meetings centered around those of importance to most communities in the state: the impact of federal budget cuts on local affordable housing and access to health care, school finance reform, and economic development.

Many of those issues were raised by locals at an Oct. 24 town meeting in Austin. More than 250 citizens turned out to listen to policymakers and to give them advice.

House Speaker Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls) was encouraged by the large turnout.

"This tells us that you, the people, want to see government in action," he said.

Some citizens put Minnesota legislators on the spot to soften the impending congressional changes to Medicare and Medicaid.

Others wanted the state to come up with money to absorb potential cuts to homeless programs. Still others wanted state dollars to cushion federal cuts to farm subsidies and the fuel assistance program that helps low-income families heat their homes during the winter.

Several additional hearings were devoted to specific issues of concern to the Austin-Albert Lea area such as corporate farming, local transportation problems, and the 1995 Federal Farm Bill.

A panel of lawmakers toured several local facilities such as the Hormel Institute Research Center and GameTec Inc., a pull-tab manufacturing plant.

Lawmakers also toured area schools and the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Faribault to study buildings that may need improvements and require the sale of state-authorized bonds to pay for them.

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Mini-Session at a glance

Save family farms — Family farmers in southern Minnesota have several reasons they don't want large corporate farming operations across the road: awful odors, environmental hazards, and stiff competition. In Oct. 25 testimony before the House Agriculture Committee, a number of farmers urged lawmakers to avoid any change in state law that would make it easier for corporate farms to develop. **Page 5**

Fewer federal funds — Residents of Minnesota may soon feel the sting of Congressional budget cuts because the state cannot afford to replace the money it currently receives from the federal government, said Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey), chair of the House Ways and Means Committee. **Page 6**

Main Street survival — Small businesses in rural Minnesota face all sorts of competition from nationwide big chain gas stations, discount stores, and specialty shops popping up in town and taking dollars from the local operators. But what irritates some is that Minnesota's state and local governments are helping the big chains. **Page 6**

Juvenile justice woes — Members of the House Judiciary Committee heard Oct. 24 from judges, prosecutors, and public defenders on the state of today's juvenile justice system. The verdict? The system needs work. **Page 8**

More dollars for education — A quality education doesn't come cheap, state lawmakers were told at an Oct. 24 meeting of the House Education Committee's K-12 Finance Division at Austin High School. The panel was asked to increase per pupil funding, mark more resources for technology, and provide "new dollars" to districts to train teachers and administrators to ensure the successful implementation of the graduation rule. **Page 9**

Frog Project — The kids in Cindy Reinitz's class came upon some very strange looking frogs while exploring a small marsh near Henderson, Minn., last summer, and now they're telling the world about it. Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Rep. Willard Munger (DFL-Duluth), heard the story firsthand during the 1995 Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session. **Page 12**

MinnesotaCare praised — Austin resident Jill Vollmer says MinnesotaCare has made it possible for her to move off welfare and back into the working world. The state-subsidized health insurance program provides an important, affordable option, Vollmer told members of the Minnesota Care Finance Division of the House Health and Human Services Committee. **Page 15**

Congressional cuts — Talk from the nation's Capitol of cutting higher education dollars has state officials and students more than a little nervous. **Page 16**

Housing assistance — Homelessness and housing shortages in rural Minnesota will only get worse if cuts federal housing and welfare programs. **Page 17**

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Town Meeting . . .

Local citizens brace for impact of federal budget

About 250 people packed the Austin High School Auditorium to question visiting Minnesota lawmakers about taxes, farm odor problems, pending federal cuts to Medicare, and a host of other issues.

About 100 members of the Minnesota House of Representatives were on hand as part of the Austin-Albert Lea Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session and many participated in the town meeting Oct. 24.

The get-together is designed to give local citizens access to House members and staff without having to drive to St. Paul during the legislative session. Lawmakers appreciate the input and it gives them a chance to specifically hear more about Austin-Albert Lea concerns.

Past mini-sessions have triggered many pieces of legislation. Among them the Environmental Trust Fund, Local Government Trust Fund, and MinnesotaCare. Other legislation brought 911 emergency service to rural areas, helped farmers after the 1993 floods, and toughened juvenile crime laws in 1994.

Although folks attending the town meeting spoke out on many subjects, there was a re-occurring theme: fear of the proposed congressional budget cuts and how it could affect them. Some citizens put Minnesota legislators on the spot to soften the impending congressional changes to Medicare and Medicaid.

Medicare is strictly a federal medical care program for the nation's elderly.

Medicaid — known as Medical Assistance in Minnesota — is a jointly funded, federal-state program designed to provide health care for certain low-income individuals.

"Can Minnesota do anything about this?" asked Donna Olson of Austin, referring to proposed cutbacks in the two programs.

She was concerned about millions of elderly people who may not have medical coverage if Medicare realizes \$270 billion in savings over the next seven years. She also noted that the program may become out of reach for many seniors on a fixed income if Congress raises Medicare premiums too high.

Rural hospitals too, are worried, Olson said. They treat many elderly patients on Medicare and depend primarily on federal reimbursement dollars to meet operating expenses. With changes to Medicare they may lose too much money to keep their doors open.

Of the \$270 billion in proposed savings to Medicare over the next seven years,



About 250 people packed the Austin High School Auditorium to question visiting Minnesota lawmakers about taxes, farm odor problems, pending federal cuts to Medicare, and many other issues. About 100 members of the Minnesota House of Representatives were on hand as part of the 1995 Austin-Albert Lea Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session and many participated in the town meeting Oct. 24.

Minnesota's loss would amount to about \$4.5 billion of which \$1.3 billion is likely to come out of hospital reimbursements, according to House fiscal analysts.

In terms of Medicaid, the congressional proposal is to cut \$182 billion from projected growth in the program by 2002. Minnesota's share would be \$2.3 billion to \$3.4 billion over the next seven years depending on which version of the bill finally passes, according to the fiscal analysts.

House Majority Leader Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) cautioned the Austin-Albert Lea audience that the state doesn't have the money to make up for Medicare or Medicaid cuts.

Rep. Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls), chair of the House Health and Human Services Finance Division, asked the audience to write the president and the Congress. He added that his division will hold hearings on the issue to figure out the best way Minnesota can deal with the federal dollar loss.

House Minority Leader Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) disagreed there would be cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, rather there is a reduction in the size of the spending increase for those programs.

Although he agreed the congressional action will cause some harm, Sviggum noted that the Medicare budget has to be brought under control or it will be bankrupt in seven years.

A reduction in the spending increase for

Medicare should be "palatable," said Sviggum.

Below are some of the other issues raised during the town meeting.

Environment

Kendall Langseth, an Albert Lea extension educator in the livestock industry, noted that more frequent rifts occur between urban dwellers and rural dwellers such as discontent over the size of farms and the odors and water quality concerns they produce.

He asked lawmakers if they saw any new laws coming down the pike regarding farm environmental issues.

Rep. Roger Cooper (DFL-Bird Island) said he had just participated in a conference on the subject and agreed farm operations can divide a community and raise issues of water and air quality.

Rep. Doug Peterson (DFL-Madison) said a few years ago there was money in a bill to address the issue of farm odors, but it was taken out. He said he doesn't expect any new legislation this year.

Matthew Simonson of Austin also asked why, if there are health warnings on cigarettes, residents of nearby farming communities are not warned about the potential health hazards of breathing in agriculture chemicals that drift through the air.

Waste management

Betty Groe drove up from Lake Mills, Iowa, to Austin to talk trash.

She was disturbed that garbage from the Twin Cities was being dumped in a landfill in her back yard. She said a recent *Star Tribune* article called Lake Mills "Dump Truck Junction."

Currently, the town is getting 100 loads a day, she said. "It's wrecking our roads, and it doesn't look good coming through our town.

"We know there are leaching problems going on in the water. And we know that there'll be liability issues. Something must be done soon," she said. "It's getting worse every day."

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) agreed that this was an issue that affects Minnesotans as much as it does Iowans.

She said that according to the Minnesota Association of Counties, Minnesota has \$300 million in outstanding bonds to pay for the waste systems throughout the state.

"We need the waste to come to those systems to pay for them so our property taxes won't have to pay that bonding."

Iowa House member, Rep. Cliff Branstad, who accompanied Groe, also said the problem was mutual. "You need refuse and garbage in Minnesota to make your facilities economical. And we don't want the garbage in Iowa." He said he was willing to work on the issue on both the state and federal levels.

Sviggum agreed to try to arrange for a meeting on the issue between Gov. Arne

Carlson and Iowa's Gov. Terry Branstad.

Taxes

Terry Plath of Austin, a small businessman, complained about some business owners not paying their fair share of taxes and cheating on their state and federal forms. He asked why he should bother to be honest when others are not.

"It's a losing, losing battle," Plath said.

Rep. Ron Kraus (R-Albert Lea), a business owner himself, told Plath to "keep the faith and do what's right as a small businessman."

Small businesses that cheat won't last long, Kraus said.

Education

Austin Mayor John O'Rourke scrutinized the wording of a ballot question that would let Minnesota voters decide if local property taxes should continue to fund K-12 education.

The measure, which passed the House during the 1995 Legislative Session but has yet to pass the Senate, would place a referendum on the 1996 general election ballot proposing an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution to eliminate the use of locally levied property taxes to pay for school operating costs.

The question reads:

"Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended

to require that operating funds for public schools come from sources other than local property taxes?"

The question, O'Rourke said, is misleading because it doesn't tell the voters where the money will come from.

"It's like voting for [either] ice cream or horseradish," he said.

The mayor raised concerns that the state would tap the aid dollars it currently gives municipalities to help pay for schools.

Local Government Aid and Homestead and Agricultural Credit Aid help cities operate so they don't have to impose high property taxes.

House Speaker Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls) noted that he has no intention of tapping state aid to cities to help pay for schools and that in past years he has fought to restore proposed cuts in aid to local governments.

House Minority Leader Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) stated that the public should be told on the ballot question that a property tax decrease for school funding means taxes will increase someplace else to make up for it, or that other programs will see cuts.

If voters approve, the amendment would eliminate \$1.7 billion in local property taxes that now go to K-12 education and shift school operating costs exclusively to the state.

The 1997 Legislature would then have to decide how to replace the property tax dollars.

The man who founded Albert Lea, Minn., in 1855 named it for a man he had never met.

George S. Ruble helped found Albert Lea when he and a crew began building a dam and later a mill on the inlet of Lake Albert Lea, according to a 1949 edition of the *Evening Tribune*.

Ruble and another settler, Lorenzo Merry, petitioned for a post office for the new town and requested the name the Village of Lake Albert Lea after the nearby lake and in honor of Col. Albert M. Lea, a topographer with the U.S. Dragoons who passed through the area in July 1835. The city's name was later shortened to Albert Lea.

The Dragoons weren't there to find a site for a settlement but "sought to impress on the Indians the power of the U.S. government, and to explore the terrain," the *Evening Tribune* reported. Lea recorded landmarks, forests, lakes, rivers, and other geographical features.

Do you know?

Much of Col. Lea's topographic information was incorporated in a larger map of the territory. It was Jean Nicolle, the mapmaker, who put the name "Lake Albert Lea" on the largest lake in the area. Col. Lea had originally called it Fox Lake because he saw a white fox as he was sketching the body of water during his explorations.

When Ruble named the town after Lea, he did not know the man. But when Ruble moved to Tennessee after

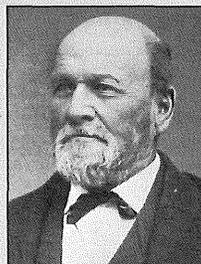
the Civil War, he entertained the colonel several times.

Lea, a West Point graduate from Tennessee and later a citizen of Texas, served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War.

"When the emotions of war were at their highest, the loyal citizens of Albert Lea, Minnesota (having learned that their namesake was serving the rebel cause) were debating a proposal to change the name of the town. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed . . ." according to the Freeborn County Historical Society.

The colonel was invited back to Albert Lea in 1879 and in 1890 wrote the following:

"I might well wish that my freed spirit could leave this green earth with the impression made just fifty-five years ago, as I gazed and sketched when halted for rest on the shaded, grassy shores of Lake Albert Lea."



Col. Albert M. Lea

Photo courtesy Minnesota Historical Society



AGRICULTURE

Save family farms

Family farmers in southern Minnesota have several reasons they don't want large corporate farming operations across the road: awful odors, environmental hazards, and stiff competition.

In Oct. 25 testimony before the House Agriculture Committee, a handful of corporate farmers outlined the positives of merging family farms, while a number of farmers urged lawmakers to avoid any change in state law that would make it easier for corporate farms to develop.

"At stake is kind of a way of life to put it mildly," said Dwight Ault, who farms land about five miles north of Austin. "If we assume that the big can get bigger and the small can take it on the chin, then I don't think [family farms] can survive for another 100 years."

Some say corporate farms are threatening to overthrow the family farming industry. Corporate-run operations are usually much larger than their family-run competitors and have cost-saving advantages smaller farms find it tough to match.

In 1994, lawmakers passed legislation designed to help family farmers by allowing more of them to pool resources to raise hogs, cattle, and other livestock (with the exception of dairy cows).

The law expanded corporate farming law to allow an unlimited number of investors to participate in certain cooperative farms as long as Minnesota farmers control at least 75 percent of any one farm.

Before 1994 such joint farms, called Authorized Farm Corporations, couldn't have more than five shareholders, and farmers had to hold at least 51 percent of the stock.

Farmers requested the changes made in 1994 to help them compete against corporate farms. The law aimed to let family farmers team up to take advantage of the latest technologies and farm practices, which many of them couldn't afford to do independently.

But Ault and other farmers cautioned legislators against any further liberalization of corporate farming law.

"Mega-size farms will only benefit mega-size farm owners," said Jeanne Wertish, a Renville County farmer. "Everyone benefits from family-owned, family-run farms."

Lawmakers heard criticism of corporate farms beyond the competitive problems they pose to family operations.

Factory farms that raise large numbers of hogs were the subject of complaints about odor and environmental dangers. Lagoons designed to hold huge volumes of waste create a "god awful odor problem," said Ault, and leakage from lagoons can threaten nearby surface lakes and streams along with the groundwater.

Not all the farmers who testified were critical of corporate farms.

"The corporate farm is not necessarily the enemy of the family farm," said Faribault County farmer Jeff Ward, who owns shares in two large agricultural operations. "Many corporations are made up of family farmers merging their efforts."

Jackie Duncanson, a farmer and member of the Blue Earth County Farm Bureau, said corporate farms already face more environmental scrutiny than family farms.

Family farms can compete, Duncanson said. And she warned against the promulgation of laws that would inhibit the operation of corporate farms.

"Every farmer in Minnesota, regardless of their size, should have the opportunity to

succeed," Duncanson said. "It's good management, good planning, and good environmental stewardship that will take agriculture into the 21st century."

The hearing was part of the 1995 Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session in Austin.

Farming subsidies

Farmers worried about their financial future want state lawmakers to help control the damage that may be caused by proposed cuts to federal farm subsidy programs.

While it remains uncertain how severe federal cuts will be, several southern Minnesota farmers seem to be certain about one thing.

"The bottom line is we're probably going to end up with less money in our pockets," said Waseca farmer Steve Scheffert.

Scheffert and several other farmers testified Oct. 25 before the House Agriculture Finance and Rural Development Subcommittee during a hearing held at South Central Technical College in Albert Lea.

Congress is considering measures that would cut as much as \$13.4 billion from federal farm subsidies over the next seven years.

One leading proposal in the U.S. House, the "Freedom to Farm Act," would overhaul federal farm programs. Under the measure, the amount of subsidies would no longer be connected to production and crop prices. Farmers would instead receive payments of fixed but decreasing amounts.

Bill Oemichen, deputy commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, told members of the state panel the situation in Congress "is still very much in a state of flux."

But, even with the threat of a presidential veto looming, it appears certain that farmers will have to absorb reductions in the money they receive through federal programs.

So what can state lawmakers do about it? Several farmers urged legislators to protect the markets for their products — especially the ethanol market.

In 1993, the Legislature approved a law designed to give corn farmers and producers of ethanol an expanded market for their goods.

The law increased the required minimum oxygen content of gasoline sold in the 10-county metro area to 2.7 percent — up from 2 percent. The law calls for the 2.7 percent minimum to be extended statewide after Oct. 1, 1997.

Adding ethanol to gasoline is one way to



In testimony Oct. 25 before the House Agriculture Committee, a handful of corporate farmers outlined the positives of merging family farms, while a number of farmers urged lawmakers to avoid any change in state law that would make it easier for corporate farms to develop. About 90 people attended the hearing at the Minnesota Riverland Technical College in Austin.

increase its oxygen content. Supporters of the 1993 law claimed it would help stimulate the rural economy by increasing demand for the products of Minnesota-based ethanol plants.

Critics say ethanol detracts from engine performance, and some are pushing for the oxygen content requirements to be lifted or reduced for certain grades of gasoline.

Scheffert said keeping ethanol use up will be crucial to helping Minnesota farmers absorb the blow of federal subsidy cuts.

Farmers also told legislators that the state should actively lobby Congress to protect the interests of the state's agricultural industry.

Olmsted County farmer Mike Clemens said cuts in federal subsidies should not come without changes that would bring profitability to family farms.

"This country has got to realize that family farmers are the backbone of the nation," Clemens said. "You've got to realize that [farming] keeps rural America alive."



BUDGET

Bracing for cuts

Lawmakers gathered Oct. 25 in Albert Lea to discuss the effects of proposed federal budget cuts on local governments.

Since Congress has not yet passed its budget, "our task is like trying to create a sculpture out of Jell-O," said Rep. Dee Long (DFL-Mpls). The ever-changing federal budget numbers and formulas are now being negotiated in conference committee. While the details are uncertain, it is understood that cuts are coming.

"I think the public is unaware of the potential severity of the cuts," said Kevin Kelleher, Houston County commissioner. "I really do think the public is somewhat unaware of the services that are provided normally. I think in many cases that's taken for granted."

Kelleher's job in the coming months will be one of public relations: telling the public exactly what the county provides. He noted that people in his county demand a high level of services, but don't want to pay more to retain them.

And with talk of large cuts, local organizations are jockeying for position.

"There is a tendency to protect the size of your [budget] pie at the expense of others," Kelleher said. "Everyone feels the services they provide are the most important."

In the wake of significant cuts, members from the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee and Property

Tax and Tax Increment Financing Division of the House Taxes Committee were told that counties have but one option to maintain current services: increase property taxes.

In Freeborn County, the county board has said it cannot accept financial obligations resulting from state and federal budget reductions, said Daryl Meyer, director of Freeborn County Social Services.

City officials told members their budget belts have already been tightened.

Mayor John O'Rourke of Austin told members, "We're already making valiant efforts to save money." In recent years, the city has cut 25 full-time positions to tighten its budget.

Jim Mulder, executive director of the Association of Minnesota Counties, encouraged lawmakers to recognize that counties have different needs and serve diverse populations.

Recognizing that the largest pinch in federal funds will be in the form of Medicaid and Medicare dollars, Mulder warned "If we end up with one set of rules and principles that affect both Lake of the Woods County and Houston County, we're going to be doing the same thing we're doing now over wetlands: having a war. It didn't work in wetlands, and believe me, it isn't going to work if we move it into the human services and health field."

Fewer federal funds

Residents of Minnesota may soon feel the sting of congressional budget cuts because the state cannot afford to replace the money it currently receives from the federal government, said Rep. Loren Solberg, (DFL-Bovey).

Solberg chairs the Federal Cuts Task Force of the Ways and Means Committee, which met Oct. 25 in Albert Lea as part of the 1995 Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session. The meeting was the panel's fifth in a series designed to let legislators hear from experts and local residents about what might happen if currently proposed congressional cuts become law. Previous meetings were held in St. Paul, Duluth, Mankato, and Hopkins.

At least one national expert believes the cuts will be tough on Minnesotans.

Michael Bird, a federal affairs staff member for the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), estimated that Minnesota would lose about 6 percent to 7 percent of the money that the federal government allocates for state and local assistance. The chief fiscal analyst for the House makes a similar projection in the Oct. 23, 1995, issue of *Federal Budget Update*. For fiscal year 1996-97, the impact is estimated to be between \$390 million and \$640 million.

According to Bird, the most explosive issue in the current congressional reconciliation bill, which addresses tax changes and entitlement programs, is how much money to allocate for Medicaid (called Medical Assistance in Minnesota). Both houses of Congress have recently passed a bill that would cut the increase in the yearly appropriations for both Medicare and Medicaid. Congress still plans to give more money to the programs but not as much as the cost of providing those services is expected to increase. This will mean either increased premiums for enrollees or a cutback in services. The planned cuts are part of a wide effort in Washington, D.C., to balance the federal budget.

Also discussed were potential cuts in Pell Grants to college students. Under the state grant program, Minnesota currently picks up the difference between how much the federal government pays in Pell Grants and the calculated financial need of a student. If the proposed cuts are enacted, Minnesota would have to increase the amount of money it spends to make up that difference or not provide students with the full amount for which they are eligible. The latter option would leave students or their families to fund the difference.

If the proposed Congressional budget cuts happen, the average debt for students attending a four-year public college will rise to approximately \$20,000, said Jim Schmidt, dean of students at Austin Community College. Schmidt was concerned that these and other cuts would squeeze the working poor out of a chance at higher education. He also pointed out that the proposed cuts to higher education are actual cuts in funding, not decreasing the increase, as in other programs.



BUSINESS

Main street survival

Small businesses in rural Minnesota face all sorts of competition from nationwide big chain gas stations, discount stores, and specialty shops popping up in town and taking dollars from the local operators.

But what irritates some is that Minnesota's state and local governments are helping the big chains.

A handful of members of the Austin area business community told lawmakers that it is not necessarily the competition that bothers them but the fact that many of these chains are getting government tax subsidies to help them open their doors.

The business people addressed the Business Regulation Division of the House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee. They were assembled as part of the 1995 Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session.

Steve Johnson, former owner-operator of Johnson's Department Store in Buffalo, Elk River, and Monticello, said a major problem is that the state and local governments are using tax subsidies to help lure businesses to Minnesota, too many of which offer low-paying jobs.

Through such programs as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), local governments can help buy down the cost of property on which a new business can relocate. Or, they can pay for road improvements or upgraded sewer and water services to encourage a new company to move in.

That hurts Main Street businesses who are already there and are among the taxpayers who have to pay for the tax subsidy, Johnson said.

He asked the Legislature to do something to stop the bidding wars that companies force upon often neighboring municipalities. If a business wants to locate in a particular area, it should be based on the economics of making money, not on what subsidy a business can get, Johnson said.

Tom Purcell, a member of the Austin City Council agreed. "It goes on all the time."

Austin, Purcell said, competes with other cities for businesses and jobs, but when the city puts its best offer on the table, the company usually uses it as a bargaining chip to get a better deal from another city.

The state's TIF program was designed to attract businesses to create good-paying jobs, replace blighted areas with productive development, and create housing, Purcell said.

Too often, he said, TIF subsidies aren't being used to clear blighted areas or create housing. "And, the jobs aren't that great."

When a business comes in to town on tax subsidies, often they're a national chain or headquartered somewhere else. They aren't part of the community, they don't bank here so their money leaves town, and they don't participate in local activities such as charity drives, Purcell said.

Fertile business ground

Well-educated employees and emigrating businesses were the prevailing themes at the Oct. 25 hearing of the House International Trade and Economic Development Committee held in Austin.

Lawmakers were told that southern Minnesota was a fertile place to do business.

A quality work force helped Wayne Johnson decide to move his business, IB Industries, to Brownsdale, Minn. IB Industries, a database management company, employs about 80 area residents. IB is looking to expand and is constantly looking for workers with technical skills. In fact, IB has invested over \$150,000 dollars to educate and train area students in technical fields for the career paths of the future.

Are the local high schools preparing students for those technical careers? Rep. Dee Long (DFL-Mpls) wanted to know.

According to Johnson, area schools are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of a technical background and seem to be emphasizing those areas of study in their respective districts.

In fact, the quality of education has helped to retain local businesses as well.

The two primary reasons Dennis Jones has continued to operate Jones' Cabinets in the Austin area are the high-caliber work force and the quality educational facilities. Approximately half of Jones' 20 employees are graduates of Minnesota Riverland Technical College in Austin. According to Jones, Riverland graduates constitute his best employees and are "extremely dedicated and know the basics."

George Brophy, speaking for the Development Corporation of Austin, took the educa-

tion-business issue even further, stating that local business should be given an inducement to hire workers with technical backgrounds. According to Brophy, the result of hiring well-educated workers is a livable wage and a correspondingly healthier community.

Brophy also was concerned that southern Minnesota is losing livestock production to other states.

"Livestock, especially hogs, is the lifeline of Austin and the surrounding communities" said Brophy. Currently, about 16,000 hogs are slaughtered daily in Austin. "Because Austin relies heavily on food markets as an economic root, the area cannot afford to lose this root to other states," Brophy said.

He speculated that livestock operations may be leaving southern Minnesota as a result of state laws regulating farming practices and workers' compensation.

"The strength of the area is agriculture and we should not lose sight of that when legislating [such] issues," said Brophy.

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) noted that the unique karst topography (an irregular limestone region with sinks and underground caverns and streams) of southern Minnesota requires regulation of agricultural run-off; a problem other states may not have. In response, Brophy said there was no significant environmental difference between southern Minnesota and those states to which livestock production operations are moving.

Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City) suggested that legislation and government are responsible for emigrating business.

"It's like a dog chasing it's tail. Half of government is trying to support business and another half is busy regulating business to the point of driving them out," he said.



Austin Mayor John O'Rourke joined other area community and business leaders to tell members of the House International Trade and Economic Development Committee at a hearing Oct. 25 that southern Minnesota is a good place to do business because its workforce is so well trained.



CRIME

Juvenile justice woes

Members of the House Judiciary Committee heard Oct. 24 from judges, prosecutors, and public defenders on the state of today's juvenile justice system.

The verdict? The system needs work.

In 1994, state lawmakers, faced with data suggesting large increases in serious juvenile crime, passed a sweeping new law designed to target tough juvenile offenders.

As part of that law, a new category of offender, an "extended jurisdiction juvenile," or EJJ, was created. Under the law, these 14- to 17-year-olds are entitled to legal counsel and a jury trial. Those teens found guilty receive a juvenile court penalty and a stayed adult criminal penalty. If the juvenile fails to complete or violates the conditions of the juvenile penalty, or commits another crime, the adult sentence can be imposed.

Todd Kosovich, assistant county attorney for Watonwan County, said the EJJ law is a positive change, providing his office with another tool to use in charging juvenile offenders.

Judge Terry Dempsey, the sole district court judge in Watonwan County, believes as word gets out among juveniles, that the "law will also function as a deterrent."

But the jury is still out in southern Minnesota on the effects of the new EJJ law. Mower County has had only two EJJ cases. The entire Third Judicial District, covering 11 counties in extreme southeastern Minnesota, has had just 13 EJJ cases.

Department of Corrections officials told lawmakers earlier this year that EJJ proceedings would cost both the state and counties untold millions to finance additional hearings, trials, and an assortment of treatment programs that were spelled out in the 1994 law.

Richard Mulcrone, deputy commissioner of the Department of Corrections, estimated in February that 435 juveniles would be classified as EJJ's in 1995.

But to date, those predictions have yet to materialize.

"I don't think we're spending a lot more money" on EJJ cases, Judge Chuck Porter, Hennepin County District Court judge, told lawmakers. The state's most populated county has had over 16,000 petitions filed in juvenile court this year. Out of 1,700 felony cases, the county has had 70 EJJ proceedings. Of those, just two have gone to trial.

Porter also called the EJJ option a "great

innovative tool," but told lawmakers more dollars should be spent to help juvenile offenders transition back to their home community following a period of incarceration.

"Unless we make a good return, and provide good services . . . we'll see them back in court," Porter said.

But most of Minnesota's residential juvenile facilities do not offer such "after care" services, which often take the form of peer group meetings and individual or family counseling.

"We have good placement facilities, said Lane Ayers, assistant Hennepin County attorney, "but almost none of them have after care facilities."

A recent report from the Office of the Legislative Auditor found that for many juvenile offenders, "regular contacts with probation officers are the primary form of after care service following release from a facility." The report also said that after care services "have as much impact on the likelihood of re-offense as the program offered at the residential facility," according to most surveyed county officials.

Many agree that diversion programs — that aid kids on the front end of the judicial system — would prevent more juveniles from ever reaching those residential facilities.

"There should be a statewide diversion program, properly funded, and with uniform guidelines," said Leonardo Castro, chief public defender for the 5th Judicial District. Such programs, linking kids with community service instead of courtrooms, would ease the exploding caseloads of juvenile courts statewide, Castro said.

But diversion programs cost money, and exist in only four of the 15 counties in southwestern Minnesota's 5th Judicial District.

Another reason for increased caseloads, both Castro and Dempsey agreed, is the increasing number of petty offenses now landing in court: shoplifting, underage drinking, and tobacco possession among them.

"These kids should be in diversion programs," Castro said. "We cannot afford to have our courts solving societal woes."

Scott Christenson, assistant state public defender in the 5th Judicial District, said juvenile court filings are up 40 percent in the district since 1990. In part, that's because of a jump in referrals from the school system to the criminal system.

And in Watonwan County, where the court's budget for 1995 ran out in August, those petty cases are clogging the docket.

"Our resources would be better utilized if parents would take care of these problems at home," Dempsey said.

Prison overcrowding

Lawmakers touring the Faribault medium security state prison saw a six-year old facility already at its capacity with 800 inmates.

Department of Corrections officials used the Faribault prison and the recent protest at the St. Cloud state prison regarding overcrowding to explain why Minnesota needs more prison beds.

In October, inmates in St. Cloud barricaded themselves in a room after prison officials took over some inmate activity space to add more beds.

"We've never been as crowded as we are right now in all corrections facilities," James Bruton, Department of Corrections deputy commissioner, told members of the House Judiciary Committee touring the Faribault prison as part of the 1995 Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session.

Bruton cautioned that as the system gets more and more crowded, tension and outbursts among inmates, and between inmates and staff, will increase.

During the 1996 session, state prison officials plan to ask lawmakers for bonding authority to build a new 800-bed prison in Braham, which sits some 50 miles north of the Twin Cities in Isanti and Kanabec counties.

It is unclear how much the Department of Corrections will ask of the 1996 Legislature, but as much as \$100 million from the sale of state bonds will be needed, Bruton said. The dollar figure is unclear because if the prison system asks for what it needs, it will be asking for one-third of all the bonding authority expected to be allotted by the 1996 Legislature, leaving less for other areas such as schools and state environmental and social service needs.

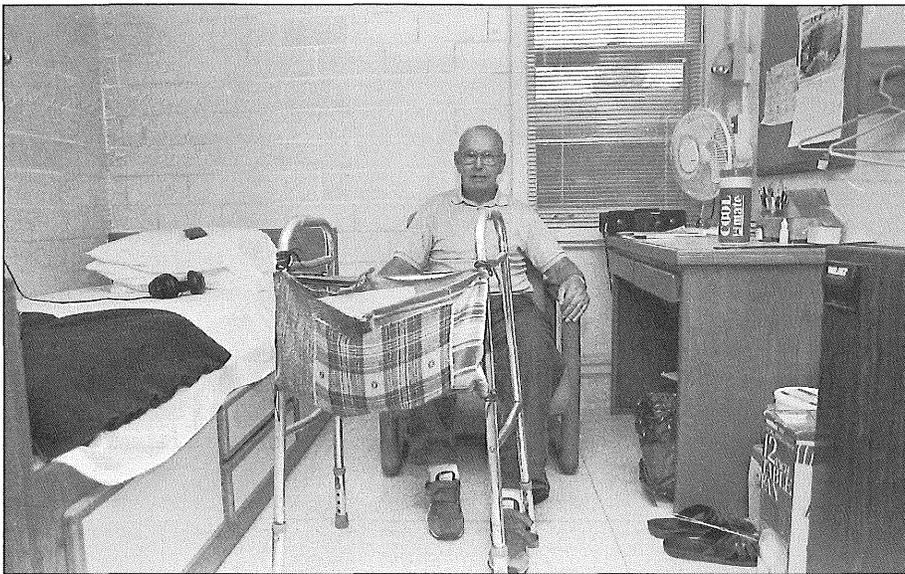
The new prison received \$2 million in planning dollars from the 1994 Legislature.

Bruton noted that the real cost in prisons is not in building the institutions, but in operating them for decades.

The Faribault prison may be the subject of a separate piece of legislation in 1996.

Ah-Gwah-Ching, a state nursing home in Walker, Minn. may soon be home to more than 100 elderly prisoners from Faribault if officials from the departments of corrections and human services can persuade the lawmakers to authorize the move during the 1996 Legislative Session.

It is unclear how much it will cost to renovate Ah-Gwah-Ching to provide the security and care for the Faribault elderly prisoners. Figures ranging from \$1 million to \$3 million have been discussed.



Harvey Cole may be one of 100 elderly inmates from Faribault's medium security prison to transfer to Ah-Gwah-Ching, a state-run nursing home in Walker, Minn., if officials from the departments of corrections and human services can persuade lawmakers to authorize the move during the 1996 Legislative Session. Members of the House Judiciary Committee toured the prison Oct. 24, as part of the Austin-Albert Lea mini-session.

Some prison officials see it as a good fit because it will reduce medical costs for the elderly inmates. Medical costs in outstate Minnesota are lower.

In addition, moving the elderly will free up 100 more beds for younger, more predatory prisoners to be housed at Faribault. Elderly prisoners represent less of a security risk so they can more safely be moved.

Dana Baumgartner, a health care administrator with the Department of Corrections, also has noted that the state would save money by sharing services already provided by Ah-Gwah-Ching staff. For instance, the Faribault prison currently must contract out for physical therapy, while the nursing home already has therapists on staff.

Older inmates represent a growing population and currently number 250 (or 2 percent) of Minnesota's prison population, Baumgartner has said. But because of their medical needs, the elderly cost 10 percent to 15 percent of the overall budget of the Department of Corrections.

Faribault Warden Louis Stender noted that he'd miss the elderly prisoners if they leave because they are self-motivated and represent few problems.

"They're a good population. They're easy to manage," Stender said.

And during a day when you've got problems with other inmates, it is nice to know that there is one calm area within the prison, he said.

Scamming seniors

Senior citizens in Minnesota are the targets of many telemarketing, mail, and door-to-door scams which cause some to lose thousands of dollars and even their life savings.

And the state needs more tools to arrest and convict swindlers, Attorney General Hubert Humphrey III told the Consumer Affairs Subcommittee of the House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee Oct. 24.

He suggested adding the crime of attempted theft by telemarketing fraud to the state's theft statute.

"The con-artists fear criminal prosecution," Humphrey told the panel, adding that many times his office has been able to shut down scam operators with civil suits, but "for every one we can shut down, there are tens, if not hundreds, of others."

Humphrey said that with the federal government's forthcoming cuts to Medicare and other programs, seniors will have to stretch their fixed income dollars, which means the state should be more protective of them.

Common scams involve con-artists calling individuals or mailing letters that indicate they've already won a big prize, seeking payment to secure the prize (often \$2,000 or more), and then rarely coming through with a prize. Sometimes the victim will receive a trinket; sometimes they'll receive nothing.

Some scams involve trivia contests in which the questions are simple and an individual pays \$10 to answer each question in hopes of answering enough to win the grand prize. But they don't win.

Another involves entities posing as recovery companies that target individuals who have been scammed and play on their anger and hurt. The "recovery" company acts angry, too, and for a fee, promises to get the victim's money back. They, too, rarely produce.

The elderly are particularly targeted and many companies sell computerized lists of individuals with their date of birth so telemarketers know who to target.

The state of Minnesota plays a role in that problem.

Along with other companies across the country, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Driver and Vehicle Services Division sells the information gathered as Minnesotans apply for drivers' licenses or register their motor vehicles. That information includes name, date of birth, and address.

Rep. John Sarna (DFL-Mpls) asked if the state could pass a law prohibiting the sale of the drivers' license or vehicle data.

"I don't think the list should be sold. . . . So the state may lose a few bucks," he said.

Both Sarna and Rep. Howard Swenson (R-Nicollet) asked the Office of the Attorney General to draft some potential legislation.

"Please don't let the state of Minnesota sell those lists. It's pretty bad," said Marion Tangren of Austin.

A federal law passed in 1994 and scheduled to take effect in the fall of 1997 will automatically make drivers' license and motor vehicle data private, said Carl E. Peaslee, supervisor of Record Information Management in the state's Driver and Vehicle Services Division. Each state legislature, however, will have the authority to allow a check off box on forms so each citizen can decide whether they want their information made public or not.

If states do nothing, the data will become private, he said.

The federal law does allow for some exemptions. For instance, insurance companies, private investigators, and government agencies will still have access to the information.



EDUCATION

More dollars for education

A quality education doesn't come cheap, state lawmakers were told at an Oct. 24 meeting of the Education Committee's K-12 Finance Division at Austin High School.

The panel was asked to increase per pupil funding, mark more resources for technology, and provide "new dollars" to districts to train teachers and administrators to ensure

the successful implementation of the graduation rule.

"We always find too few dollars chasing too many needs," said Gary Knudson, who has taught at Austin High School for the last 33 years.

Austin residents just voted to help out as well. On Nov. 7 they approved (by a 69-31 percent margin) an excess levy referendum that will bring an extra \$1.4 million to the district.

The local school board has said it will use those dollars to reinstate a seven-period day at the local high school and middle school, reduce class sizes to last year's levels, maintain current sport and activity programs, and maintain or restore teacher and support staff positions.

Absent from that list: new computers and in-service dollars to explain the new graduation standards to local teachers.

"Most of our computers are years behind," said Chris Deufel, a senior at Austin High School. He noted that the computer he used in elementary school 10 years ago "is still being used." He encouraged lawmakers to provide funds to improve technology in the schools. "We just want a chance to succeed in today's world," he said.

Lawmakers did set aside millions in grant funds in the 1995 session to link schools to the information superhighway. A total of \$10.5 million was marked to help schools and libraries link to the Internet and expand access to those already on-line.

Another \$5.4 million was appropriated to establish Instructional Transformation Through Technology grants to school districts. In part, these grants are to be used to "enhance teaching and learning productivity through the use of technology."

While these dollars are helpful, they don't come close to meeting the technology needs of all Minnesota districts. And in Austin, the district often has competing needs that are equally important.

"Do we buy new computers or hire a new teacher for overcrowded classrooms?" Knudson asked.

And besides new technology, there is another major shift in education that will begin with the 1996-97 school year: Incoming ninth graders must meet new state requirements in math and reading in order to graduate from high school. These new graduation standards have been years in the making. The state has spent \$12 million testing and developing the new standards in the past two years. The 1995 Legislature marked another \$12.5 million to be spent over the next biennium.

To successfully implement those new stan-

dards, "there is training of staff that needs to take place," said Neil Hanson, curriculum facilitator for the Cedar River Education District and Austin Public Schools.

Hanson, a supporter of the graduation standards, noted that as several districts statewide prepare for referendums "to maintain current programs, we're also being asked to provide more training and needed in-service to our staff to adequately prepare them" for the new standards.

Candace Raskin, principal of Ellis Middle School, encouraged lawmakers to provide administrators and teachers with "clear direction and financial support," for the graduation standards.

"Together, I think we can do a good job," she said.



ELECTIONS

Special election reform

When the Legislature reconvenes in 1996, work will continue on a bill to "bring sense and order to future special elections," according to Rep. Richard Jefferson (DFL-Mpls).

Jefferson chairs the Elections Division of the House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee, which met Oct. 25 in Austin to discuss the bill (HF220) as part of the 1995 Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session. The proposal stalled during the 1995 session.

Chief sponsor Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) said the "good government" proposal will do three things: allow future special elections to be held on regular election days, allow eligible voters to vote by mail if it's impossible to hold the special election on a regular election day, and give the governor more flexibility in selecting a date for special elections if the election is to be held by mail. Under the bill, the governor would be given seven weeks to set the date for the special election — up from four weeks under current law.

Greiling said the bill is in line with a current trend in Minnesota to establish more uniform election dates. One objective is to increase voter participation. Participation the past two years in special elections has been low, with the percentage of eligible voters casting ballots ranging from 11 percent in Legislative District 33B to 25 percent in legislative districts 52A and 26A.

Uniform election dates also save money, since administrative costs — primarily the costs of paying election judges — are dove-

tailed.

According to William Champa, city clerk of Fridley, it cost the city \$6,000 to hold special elections to fill a vacancy in House District 52A. The cost, not budgeted for, was seen as an unfunded mandate. Also, due to the time frame mandated by the governor, the city found it "impossible to inform the electorate, and there wasn't any time for voters to obtain absentee ballots," Champa wrote in a letter sent to the Office of the Secretary of State.

Questions about the bill were primarily aimed at increasing the number of elections conducted by mail. Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville) noted that when he served as mayor of Burnsville, the city clerk estimated the cost of an election by mail to be two to three times the cost of a normal election, primarily due to overtime pay for employees, hiring temporary help, and renting space in which to process ballots.

Joe Mansky, director of the Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, said that costs incurred by large jurisdictions such as Burnsville may be somewhat higher due to personnel costs. On average, his office projects mail-in election costs will be similar, or slightly less. And since more people are expected to vote, the cost per voter will decline. Those areas with mail-in balloting, primarily in northern Minnesota, have seen voter participation climb to a rate that is 20 percent higher than the rest of the state since the procedure began in 1987. A total of 110 precincts in Minnesota now vote by mail in both primaries and general elections, and that number is steadily rising.

In December, all eligible voters in the state of Oregon will be allowed to vote by mail in the election to replace U.S. Senator Bob Packwood. Voter turnout in that election could affect future legislation in Minnesota.

Mansky also said that fraud isn't an issue when conducting elections by mail, since it requires a witness, and the name of the witness is checked against an up-to-date list of eligible voters within the designated area. To date, there have been no falsified ballots.

Concerned about any hindrances placed on college students, Frank Viggiano, executive director of the Minnesota State University Student Association, spoke in support of the bill and other efforts to increase voter participation by eligible students. One concern is that past special elections have been held in December near or during the holiday season, when students are traditionally away from campus and, therefore, polling places. Another is an attempt by Winona State University to prevent candidates from knocking

on students' doors. The organization views any attempt to discourage or restrict participation by students as harmful to the election process.

EMPLOYMENT

Women and jobs

Jobs may be scarce in rural communities, but jobs you can raise a family on are especially scarce for outstate women, House members learned during the Austin-Albert Lea mini-session.

The Economic Equality Subcommittee of the House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee chaired by Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park) met Oct. 25 to hear testimony on "Job Creation and Job Training in Rural Minnesota."

In assessing the employment situation for rural women, members of the Albert Lea business community outlined some major concerns, such as: low wages, the cost and availability of child care, child support enforcement, isolation from professional activities, transportation expenses, and welfare.

Jean Eaton of Albert Lea's Convention and Business Bureau and owner of Eaton Image Development, said the biggest problem is the lack of white collar jobs. For students leaving the technical college, the average wage is \$6.44 per hour. "You cannot live adequately on that," she said.

Amy Kennedy, manager of Express Personnel Services, a human resource staffing company in Albert Lea, sees the most important issue as the discrepancy between welfare pay and what employers are offering. She said that, according to a Dow-Jones report, the average rate of pay for a person on welfare in Minnesota is \$10 per hour. "Our average rate of pay is \$6.99 without benefits," she said. "Welfare pays better than work."

Agreeing with Kennedy, Marge Hamersley, executive director of the United Way of Freeborn County, said, "People on welfare have a difficult time trying to move to full independence because of the loss of benefits."

She also mentioned issues of transportation and child care. "Women who have small children and must commute long distances for job training are using most of their money for child care and gasoline . . . in preparing themselves for a better job," she said.

Rachel Lund, a business loan officer for Security Bank Minnesota in Albert Lea, said growth in jobs and employment is coming through small business. There seems to be a growing interest among women in starting



Rachel Lund, a business loan officer for Security Bank Minnesota in Albert Lea, told the House Economic Equality Subcommittee that there seems to be a growing interest among women in starting their own businesses. The meeting was held Oct. 25 at the Albert Lea City Hall.

their own businesses, she said. Even so, considerably more men than women apply for loans. Why? "Women tend to be more cautious," she said. "They are somewhat fearful of the process, and they don't have the mentors and the role models that men do."

Laura Turner, who works for the Community Based Services Division of the Department of Economic Security in St. Paul, talked about federal budget cuts and changes to five agency programs that work with employment and training for rural women.

First, she said Job Partnership Training Act (JTPA) for adults will suffer federal cuts, though the amount is not yet known. Second, the state-funded Displaced Homemaker Program did not receive cuts, but rather will receive a small increase this year. Third, the Dislocated Worker Program may be cut as much as \$2.5 million in the coming year. Fourth, the JTPA-funded Youth Program for Young Women and all summer youth positions will be eliminated for next year she said. Last year, there were 6,300 positions. Fifth, STRIDE (Success Through Reaching Individual Development and Employment), which is the Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) job placement program, is expected to go under block-grant programs.

Turner also anticipates that there will be welfare reform legislation passed in the state this year and that the major emphasis will be job placement rather than training.

Many women who are on these state and federal programs talked about how their lives have been affected. Cindy Steele's story was typical.

Steele, a single parent of two children and a first-year electronics technology student at Minnesota Riverland Technical College in Austin, is currently on AFDC.

She said she tried to get off a year ago, but failed because her monthly expenses came to

\$50 more than her monthly income of \$1,000 from the two jobs she got through JTPA.

One of those jobs paid \$6 per hour which was just enough to cause her to lose her housing assistance, so she had to pay full rent. She became ineligible to receive food stamps. And though she was on a sliding fee scale for day care, she paid \$57 per month. At the time, she was still on Medical Assistance, but that would have lasted only another year, and her two part-time jobs carried no benefits.

Steele said she feels trapped in the system. "You can't get out because there's no way out."

But she describes the STRIDE program as the "link" to her future. If STRIDE is cut along with the proposed cuts for financial aid and day care, she said she would not be able to continue her education.

Roy Wilkins Memorial

A memorial, complete with 46 elements representing the 46 years that Roy Wilkins devoted to civil rights in his work with the NAACP, was dedicated on the State Capitol grounds Nov. 3.

Wilkins grew up in St. Paul and graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1923. He began working for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at an early age and headed the association for 22 years, from 1955 to 1977. A dedication program pays this tribute to Wilkins: "Under the stewardship of Wilkins, this nation produced the most important civil rights gains of the Twentieth Century, including landmark victories like the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, 1964, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, as well as successful court cases argued by the NAACP to the United States Supreme Court. Often referred to as the Father of Civil Rights, Wilkins was awarded the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, by President Lyndon Johnson in 1967."



Pete and Kimberly Rhodes, owners of WRNB Cable Radio and producers of the Minnesota Black Music Awards, pulled out a section in one of the walls of the Roy Wilkins Memorial Nov. 3.



ENVIRONMENT

Ney Frog Project

The kids in Cindy Reinitz's class came upon some very strange looking frogs while exploring a small marsh near Henderson, Minn., last summer, and now they're telling the world about it.

Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Rep. Willard Munger (DFL-Duluth), heard the story firsthand during the 1995 Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session.

Four students, all of whom attend the Minnesota New Country School in the LeSueur-Henderson School District, testified at an Oct. 24 committee meeting at the Hormel Nature Center Auditorium in Austin.

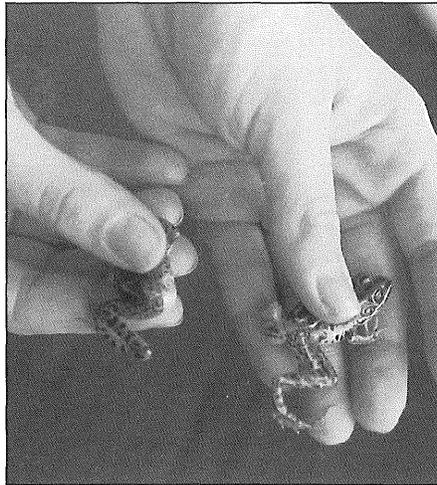
The school is a year-round operation for teachers, but for the students, it's optional. "And that's how it came to be that we were out in the field at the beginning of August," Reinitz said.

Elaine Farley, 14, told lawmakers that the field trip was part of a week-long nature studies course.

"It was just a simple trip out to the Ney Woods," said 13-year-old Jeff Fish.

(Don Ney is a retired farmer who has set aside some of his property as a nature preserve and wildlife refuge, where teachers often bring their classes for nature activities.)

"We saw these frogs jumping around and I caught one," Fish said. "I looked at it closely and said, 'Oh, my Gosh, I broke its leg.' And then we picked up another one and it had a broken leg. So after the third or fourth one, we got more interested, and we thought something was going on. Then we started to chart down on paper what we had found."



Misty Herrley, a seventh grader at Minnesota New Country School in LeSueur, held two of the deformed frogs her classmates discovered while on a nature hike near Henderson. Cindy Reinitz, who teaches the students, said in an Associated Press article, "Some had four back legs. Some had two legs growing out of the same socket, and they were webbed to the knees." This chance discovery has caused an environmental investigation by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

"Out of 22 leopard frogs, 11 were deformed," Farley said.

She said they got information from Ney regarding what chemicals were used on the fields, and they contacted experts through the Internet.

Ryan Fisher, 15, said, "We did a lot more than just show up at the frog pond to catch more frogs. We had to do a lot of work in the classroom, like research on possible causes."

We established an e-mail account and a home page on the World Wide Web for the frog project, and we received many responses, Fisher said. Findings are updated frequently because many are interested in the project. (The group's home page address on the World

Wide Web is: <http://mncs.k12.mn.us/frog/frog.html> and their e-mail address is: creinitz@mncs.k12.mn.us).

Betsy Kroon, 14, said they tested the water in the Ney Pond, and that the only irregular result they found was an unusually high pH reading. (pH measures the degree of acidity in the water.)

They also speculated that parasites are the cause of the frog deformities. In the spring, she said, they will gather eggs and follow the hatching process.

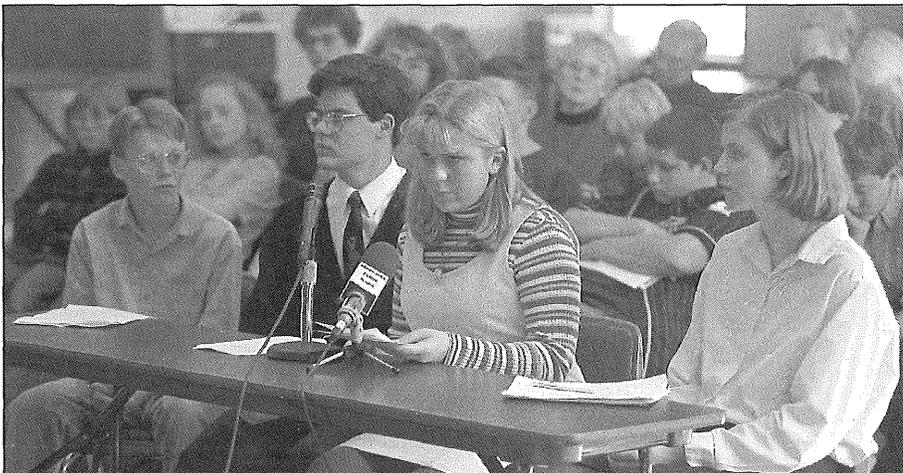
The story of this chance discovery has caused a major environmental investigation. Judy Helgen, a research scientist with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency who is studying the findings, calls the kids in Reinitz's class an "inspiration."

"While people are fighting over the development or alteration of our remaining small, natural wetlands — the ones where the frogs reproduce — these students and their outstanding teacher have taught us all that we need to look at what we are doing. Not only might we need to look at the biological effects of restoring, altering, or creating wetlands, we may need to look at all the chemicals we all use."

Frog Reflection Paper

Cindy Reinitz, who teaches at the Minnesota New Country School in LeSueur, Minn., distributed to lawmakers a collection of "student reflections" on the Ney Frog Project. Here is an excerpt from one that Jeff Fish, 13, wrote:

"What have [you] done with this whole thing you ask? Well, for starters, I'm Mr. Hothands. What does Mr. Hothands mean you ask? Well, Cindy gave me that name, because I have the fastest hands in the Midwest. Catching frogs that is. Well let's start out with the first day. The first day was an ordinary trip to the Ney Farm. Until Mr. Hothands saw it. It was the biggest, most slimiest, creature I had ever seen in my life. It was . . . the common Leopard Frog. I dove, then I looked up and there it was in the grasp of my hands. I looked at his body but, what was this? He didn't have a back left leg! I had caught the first deformed frog. It was the ugliest sight I had ever seen. Then left and right, left and right they were jumping all over the place. Our group was catching them left and right. It was so weird. I couldn't believe my eyes. That day soon came to an end, but not before we knew [our] lives had changed for the next few months. As we started down the road, with [our] notes in hand, I began to wonder what all this means. . . ."



Betsy Kroon told members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee about how her classmates at the Minnesota New Country School in LeSueur, Minn., made the deformed frog discovery while on a nature hike near Henderson, Minn. Other students who testified during the hearing Oct. 24 were, left to right, Jeffery Fish, Ryan Fisher, and Elaine Farley.

Wetlands revisited

Lawmakers are trying to find a balance between preserving Minnesota's wetlands and allowing for development.

The continuing discussion of the Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA), and possible changes to it, took place in Austin before the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Oct. 24 as part of the 1995 Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session.

Currently, the act requires developers, local governments, property owners, or others to replace certain wetlands that are drained to build roads, housing, and other developments.

Many environmentalists like the act's "no net loss" policy to protect wetlands. Some contend the act needs to be more flexible, taking into account differences in regions of the state.

Local governments argue that current state and federal rules unnecessarily prevent land development, especially regarding roads in northern Minnesota, where much of the acreage is composed of wetlands.

Jeff Nielson, Southern Region supervisor for the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR),

explained that the intent of the WCA is "no net loss" of wetlands in Minnesota.

Wetlands are important factors in water quality as reported by Ken Albrecht, a Nicollet County commissioner and chair of the Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board; and Rich Perrine of the Watonwan Soil and Water Conservation District, and Linda Meschke from Martin County, both Blue Earth River Basin Initiative participants.

Wetlands help purify water by allowing sediments and pollutants to settle out before water returns to a lake or stream. They provide retention area in times of flooding, fish and wildlife habitat, and help recharge the groundwater.

Under the WCA, Nielson said "if your plans are to drain or fill a wetland, you must first try to avoid it. If that's not possible, try to minimize the impacts on that wetland, and finally, to replace any lost wetland areas." Local units of government are charged with administering this program. Presently, 400 units of local government are doing so in the state, he said.

On the other hand, several northern Minnesota counties have refused to implement

the act. They oppose state oversight and want local government autonomy over their own wetland management plans.

Rep. Willard Munger (DFL-Duluth), committee chair, said the wetlands act is a major piece of legislation that has been fine-tuned yearly since 1991.

In the 1995 session, Munger sponsored major changes in the law proposed by the BSWR "to satisfy some of the criticism." The compromise bill (HF787), which was the result of many months of deliberation by local governments, interest groups, and private citizens passed the House 127-4, but the Senate wetlands amendments (SF483) differed significantly.

"The conference committee appointed to hash out the differences between the two versions reached no agreement by the time the regular session ended," Munger said.

John Voz, resource specialist for the Mower County Soil and Water Conservation District, believes that controversy around wetland protection stems from the fact that a "one-size-fits-all" regulation falls short of the comprehensive plan goal. He supports the proposed draft bill by the BSWR.

If Albert Friedrich had only known.

Friedrich was George A. Hormel's business partner when the two opened a butcher shop in Austin, Minn., in 1887. Hormel borrowed \$500 to start the venture.

Just four years later, the two dissolved their partnership. Hormel moved his operation to an abandoned creamery near the Red Cedar River.

From its humble beginnings as the George A. Hormel and Company, the Hormel Foods Corporation now employs over 10,000 people. Sales totals for 1994 exceeded \$3 billion.

Perhaps the most famous of its products, Spam, is sold in 50 countries and trademarked in 42 more. More than five billion cans have been sold since its introduction in 1937.

Hormel developed the country's first canned ham in 1926, and 11 years later developed the first canned meat product that didn't require refrigeration. It was marketed as Hormel Spiced Ham. The name lacked a certain marketing punch, so Hormel offered \$100 to the person who could rename their miracle meat product.

Kenneth Daigneau, an actor and the brother of a Hormel executive, chose the

It's a fact!



George A. Hormel's butcher shop business began in 1887 with a \$500 loan and a partnership with Albert Friedrich, which dissolved in four years. Today, the Hormel Foods Corporation employs more than 10,000 people, and in 1994, sales topped \$3 billion. The company is the largest employer in Austin and each Fourth of July hosts the annual Spam Jam.

name Spam, a contraction of *spiced* and *ham*.

A high-profile ad campaign followed, and sales boomed. A 1940 radio commercial sang "... tastes fine, saves time. If you want something grand ask for Spam." Hormel also sponsored the popular Burns and Allen radio show, which included the character Spammy the Pig.

Since then, Spam has become a household word if not a dinner choice.

The meat was drafted by the U.S.

Army to feed troops during World War II. (As recently as 1989, U.S. armed forces bought 3.3 million pounds of Spam.) It has been the focus of jokes from Monty Python to David Letterman, who suggested it be put on a rope "for snacking in the shower." U.S. Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia reportedly has three Spam and mayo sandwiches (on white bread) per week.

And Spam is the focus of celebration throughout the country.

The annual Spam Jam, held every Fourth of July weekend in Austin, Minn., is the only Spam shindig officially sponsored by Hormel. Others include the annual Spamorama in Austin, Texas, the Spam cook-off in Maui, and the Spam carving contests held annually in Seattle.

And there is, of course, Spam in cyberspace. Tidbits on Hormel and its famous product can be found in dozens of places on the World Wide Web. (<http://www.rsi.com/spam/> is a good place to start.)

At home in Austin, Minn., visitors can explore Spam's history at the Hormel Foods Museum in the Oak Park Mall. Admission, of course, is free.

The BSWR found that many of the problems with the WCA occur in counties with a high percentage of wetlands remaining. Its draft bill remedies those problems by:

- exempting more wetlands from the WCA in counties with more than 80 percent of their presettlement wetlands remaining;
- providing more flexibility for local governments to determine the amount of wetland replacement; and
- reducing the replacement ratio and subsidizing replacement for road projects in counties with more than 80 percent of their presettlement wetlands remaining.

In a news release last summer, Munger said, "I hope by our next session that we will have a resolution of our problems and enact revisions that will allow participation by all 87 counties without sacrificing the 'no net loss' policy of the original act."

GAMBLING

Producing pulltabs

If the Legislature approves video poker, keno, and blackjack machines in Minnesota bars and restaurants, the pull-tab gambling industry would be hit hard, lawmakers learned as they toured the state's only pull-tab manufacturing plant.

As part of the Austin-Albert Lea Mini-Session, the Gambling Division of the House Governmental Operations Committee toured GameTec Inc. in Albert Lea Oct. 25.

GameTec produces for both domestic and international markets. GameTec currently has charitable sales in 15 states and produces tickets for four state lotteries and the Virgin Islands. All production is carried out at the plant in Albert Lea which employs approxi-

mately 80 people. Sales and shipping are handled at the distribution center in Golden Valley, which employs five people.

According to spokesperson Gary Parker, GameTec has no problem with state regulation aimed at industry security and keeping pull-tab production honest. However, when asked about the prospect of statewide video gambling in bars and restaurants, Parker noted that video gambling would have a "definite, negative impact on pull-tab gaming."

Although GameTec could possibly switch its production from pulltabs to other printed items, the prospect of such a move may not be economically feasible, Parker said.

Albert Lea Mayor Marv Wangen talked about how GameTec was enticed to the area. The building that currently houses the GameTec operation is owned by the Albert Lea Port Authority and leased to GameTec.

The port authority bought the building and remodeled it to GameTec's specifications. Wangen noted that the key to Albert Lea's economic success is to entice business to the area by offering deals like the GameTec proposal.

GOVERNMENT

Greater Minnesota jobs

State jobs and services would be welcome in the cities of Austin and Albert Lea, lawmakers were told at an Oct. 26 meeting of the House State Government Finance Division in Austin.

George Brophy, president of the Austin Development Corporation, said that the idea of placing state services in outstate areas "isn't so much a political issue as it is an issue of doing the right thing, doing what's cost effective."

According to Brophy, the building occupancy rate per square foot is, on average, 50 percent to 60 percent lower in Austin than in downtown St. Paul, Minneapolis, and some suburban locations.

Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Walters) said that when the state chooses to expand services, it should look to locate some of those services in rural areas. Division chair Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) agreed, saying this would bring well-paying jobs to areas with declining populations, and could save the state some money since facilities often already exist.

A provision in last session's state government finance law calls for locating state jobs in the area of debt collections — to the extent feasible and cost-effective — in counties in greater Minnesota where the population declined by 5 percent or more between 1980 and 1990.

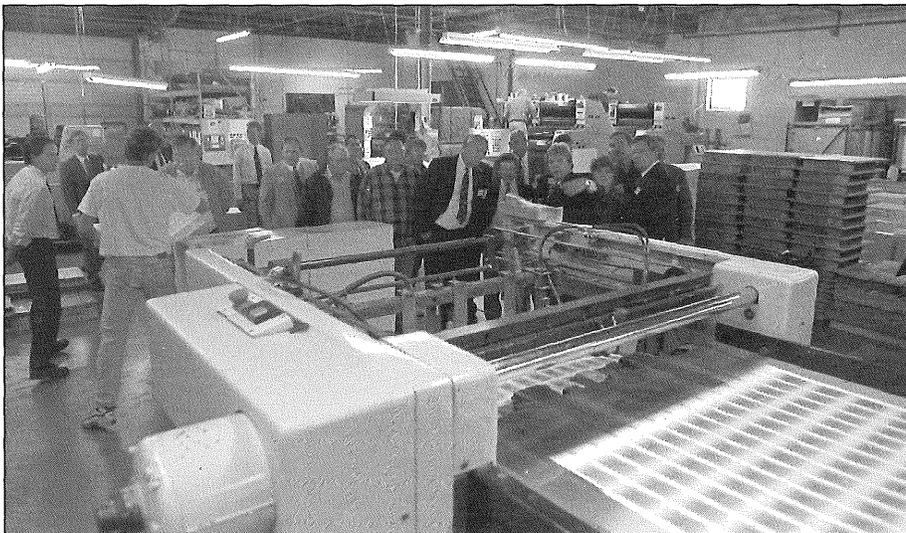
Amy Baskin, also with the Austin Development Corporation, cited continued work on a community information network as another plus for locating state services in the area. Development is being funded with a grant from the National Science Foundation, and is a collaboration of city government, business, and post-secondary education institutions.

Part of the grant money goes to instruct technical and community college students on how to build and place information on communication networks, which should lead to the creation of both jobs and a skilled work force.

Work is also being done to expand the network to link communities all over southeastern Minnesota, in hope of increasing information sharing. If the network proves successful, Baskin sees the possibility for replication throughout the state.

Jane Leonard of the Department of Administration echoed Baskin's remarks. As community development manager for MNet — Minnesota's public sector telecommunications backbone network — she's spent four years traveling throughout the state encouraging the construction of community networks and the linkage of these networks to create "a distance-insensitive location of jobs and people."

An immediate benefit — used often during the 1995 Legislative Session — is the ability to hold interactive committee meetings, where citizens in other parts of the state can participate in legislative hearings in St. Paul. A long-term possibility is the elimination of location and distance as factors in the placement of any type of job, public or private, through the ability to easily and efficiently communicate statewide and worldwide.



Members of the Gambling Division of the House Governmental Operations Committee toured the state's only pull-tab manufacturing plant, GameTec Inc. of Albert Lea Oct. 25.

Bill Schmidt of Albert Lea, however, isn't so sure. When the city wanted to connect the city garage to a recently constructed network controlling city operations, they were told it wasn't possible due to the absence of high speed data transmission lines. U.S. West has the capability to get the lines running, but according to Schmidt, doesn't plan to do so because they're busy providing access to the metro area. This, he said, could make it difficult to locate state offices in areas like Austin and Albert Lea because high speed, high volume data transmission isn't currently available.

Leonard said U.S. West won't provide services if unconvinced of market demand, but sees this as an example of the need for communities to work to build partnerships with local telecommunications providers and convince them certain services are necessary.

With the number of legislators from the seven-county metro area outnumbering those from outstate Minnesota, Tom Purcell, councilman-at-large for the city of Austin, questioned the relevance of the entire debate, doubting that the location of state jobs outside the metro area would be a priority for the majority of the Legislature.



HEALTH

Health care reform

Proposed changes in federal medical programs could mean problems for rural Minnesotans, according to one official from a small community hospital.

Shirley Raetz, director of patient care for Waseca Area Memorial Hospital and an affiliated medical clinic, said changes in Medicare and Medicaid could cut the lifeline to some rural hospitals that receive much of their incoming revenue through the programs.

"The proposed cuts are going to have a severe effect on our community and the health and welfare of it," Raetz said during an Oct. 24 hearing before a House panel. "... We're getting down to the you-can't-get-blood-out-of-a-turnip stage."

The Waseca hospital, having already frozen salaries and put off other spending, may be forced to close its emergency room if incoming revenue drops off further, Raetz said.

That would force Waseca residents to travel to Owatonna, about 15 miles away, or Mankato, more than 30 miles away, for emergency treatment.

Raetz joined several medical field insiders

and other southern Minnesota residents in voicing concerns on how the state will handle congressional changes to Medicaid (called Medical Assistance in Minnesota) and Medicare funding.

The hearing before the Health and Human Services Finance Division of the House Health and Human Service Committee was held at Austin High School as part of the 1995 Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session.

During the three-day stint in the southern part of the state, lawmakers heard many concerns about what money-saving changes at the federal level will mean to the state. Lawmakers will need to address the repercussions of those changes during the 1996 session.

Proposals being considered in Congress would set 2 percent to 4 percent annual increases in Medicaid spending, while the state estimates 10 percent annual growth in costs of the program.

Margene Gunderson, director of Mower County Public Health Nursing, said the changes could prevent some people from getting the medical attention they need.

"My concern is these proposed cuts are being made at the cost of the most vulnerable among us," she said. "Again, it's the poor, the elderly, the disabled."

Gunderson also warned that the changes may prevent people from seeking preventative care and leave them with more serious and more expensive health problems in the long run.

Rep. Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls) agreed with Gunderson.

"It would make a lot more sense to reform all of health care and not start with two programs — one for the elderly and one for the poor," Greenfield said. "But we don't seem to have much choice about that."

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) suggested the situation is not "nearly as hopeless as we have been led to believe."

Congress is not actually reducing the amount spent on Medicare and Medicaid but rather is slowing the annual growth in the programs, he said. And the elimination of the some of the regulations on the health care industry may balance the curtailment of funding.

"There are opportunities for a great deal more efficiencies," Bradley said.

Rep. Arlon Lindner (R-Corcoran) said the programs simply cannot be allowed to continue to go unchecked.

"If something isn't done, we're not going to have anything by the year 2002," Lindner said.

MinnesotaCare praised

Austin resident Jill Vollmer says MinnesotaCare has made it possible for her to move off welfare and back into the working world.

Vollmer, a single parent of one, worked her way off Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). But while she receives medical insurance through her employer, her son would not have been covered if not for MinnesotaCare.

The state-subsidized health insurance program provides an important, affordable option, Vollmer told members of the Minnesota Care Finance Division of the House Health and Human Services Committee during an Oct. 26 mini-session hearing.

Vollmer and others spoke in support of MinnesotaCare during the hearing, which was held at St. Mark's Lutheran Nursing Home in Austin.

"MinnesotaCare is vital to rural Minnesota," said Karen Olson, a registered nurse from Faribault who serves on Regional Coordinating Board Six (one of the citizen panels created to give input on the health insurance program). "We feel very strongly that the program is proving to be effective."

Olson said MinnesotaCare has helped significantly in making medical insurance available to great numbers of farmers and other rural residents who have been without such coverage.

In 1995, legislators passed a law that may allow more people to be eligible for MinnesotaCare. The law increased income caps that decide who can receive coverage.

Under the law, couples earning up to \$13,530 annually and singles earning up to \$10,120 could be eligible. The old law set the limits at \$12,300 for couples and \$9,200 for singles.

The 1995 law also altered a provision in the original MinnesotaCare Act that called for every Minnesotan to have health insurance by July 1, 1997.

The new law does not set a date by which universal coverage must be achieved. Instead, it redefines universal coverage as "when every Minnesotan has access to the full range of health care services, including preventive and primary care, and pays into the system according to one's ability."

While lawmakers heard no complaints about the changes made in 1995, they received a preview of what promises to be a controversial health care issue in 1996.

Regional Coordinating Board members said they expect their members to consider making recommendations on proposals to man-



Randy Krulish, a quadriplegic who depends on a home care worker, told members of the MinnesotaCare Division of the House Health and Human Services Committee Oct. 26 that he would feel penalized for being disabled if federal cuts in Medicare benefits translate into state cuts in his home care benefits.

date a minimum hospital stay for newborns and their mothers.

Critics claim short hospital stays, sometimes less than 24 hours, result in increased future health problems for babies and mothers. And some lawmakers are promising to offer legislation mandating insurers allow at least 48 hours in the hospital for mothers and newborns.

"You can look at it as a mandate on insurers . . . or you can look at it as an option for women," said Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-North St. Paul). "Nothing is going to make [mothers] stay."

HIGHER EDUCATION

Congressional cuts

Talk from the nation's capitol of cutting higher education dollars has state officials and students more than a little nervous.

"The bottom line is that going to school will become more expensive" should aid be cut, said Mike Lopez, system director for student services for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU). Lopez shared his concerns at an Oct. 25 meeting of the Higher Education Finance Division of the Education Committee. The hearing, chaired by Rep. Tony Kinkel (DFL-Park Rapids), was designed to hear testimony on the effects federal budget cuts in higher education would have on Minnesota.

Any cuts would hit non-traditional students particularly hard, according to Lisa Frank.

Frank is both a mother and an elementary education student at Austin Community College. She receives a Pell Grant, state, Stafford, and Perkins loans, and is on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). She told legislators that her main reason for going to college is to educate herself so that she can get a good job and get off welfare. She said if Congress cuts these programs she would be forced to drop out of school. Without more education, she feels that she will be on welfare for the foreseeable future.

Frank was one of a number of students who testified that they would be forced to drop out of college if the government cut the aid they were receiving. Many were single mothers, concerned with child care costs as well as getting good grades. Many students mentioned specifically that they were in college so they could earn enough money to get off government aid but needed a helping hand right now.

Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey) said that he would like Minnesota to fully fund any federal cuts but that such a move is just not possible due to the state's limited financial resources. The state could probably fully fund one or two programs but would then have even less money for other programs. He urged people to look at budgeting decisions in a holistic way, realizing that there are many groups who want money for legitimate reasons, but that the state cannot afford to fund them all.

Congress is cutting appropriations for many programs in a broad effort to balance the federal budget. One current proposal would save federal funds by eliminating the grace period for student loan repayment. (Cur-

rently, students don't begin repaying their loans until they've been out of school for six months.) This would cost a student with \$11,000 in outstanding loans about \$500 more over the life of the loan, according to Mark Gelle, director of financial aid for St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn. Gelle said the elimination of the grace period is the most problematic idea that has come out of Congress concerning education.

Reduce rules, regulations

Minnesota legislators can greatly improve the efficiency of higher education institutions statewide by easing the number of state rules and regulations, said Dr. Vicki Smith, president of Austin Community College.

Smith was one of several administrators, faculty members, and students to testify before the Higher Education Mandates Subcommittee of the House Education Committee.

The panel met Oct. 26 at Riverland Technical College in Austin to discuss mandates placed on higher education, particularly in light of the recent merger of state, community, and technical colleges and universities to form the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system.

"Rethinking mandates will help build for the future," said Judith Eaton, chancellor of MnSCU.

Smith also told panel members that while well-intentioned, the cumulative effect of the regulations is to stifle creativity and efficiency.

She said one example lies in a requirement that the attendance of all state employees at any meeting where food is served — even simply coffee and cookies — be documented. She estimated that it costs \$20 in administrative overhead to serve \$4 worth of cookies.

Rep. Becky Kelso (DFL-Shakopee) said that all the regulations were put in place for a reason, but that the cumulative impact was a cumbersome set of rules. She indicated a desire to change outdated and onerous rules while making an effort to safeguard the state's post-secondary institutions and the taxpayers who support them.

Smith said that the Legislature needs to give college presidents not just accountability, but the authority to run their institutions as well as they can. Smith proposed a system of regular review, in which presidents who are not doing well could be removed.

Prior to the mini-session, Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Crystal), chair of the Education Committee, wrote to college administrators, faculty, student, and union groups ask-



Members of the Higher Education Mandates Subcommittee listened to appeals from college administrators and educators for the easing of state rules and mandates Oct. 26 at the Minnesota Riverland Technical College in Austin.

ing which regulations they would like modified or lifted.

Several college administrators talked about being hamstrung when it comes to buying products from local merchants. Now a part of the MnSCU system, Riverland Community College has to follow a state-imposed central purchasing process, making it difficult to patronize local merchants.

These merchants often offer better prices, can provide the merchandise more quickly, and are more apt to service their products. One administrator noted how difficult it is for administrators to raise money from local business people when the college does not buy much from them.

Other feedback included a complaint that technical schools, in hiring, had to go through a statewide central personnel list, which hurt the chances of local candidates and caused a "big waste of time because many potential hires are not willing to relocate."



HOUSING

Housing assistance

Homelessness and housing shortages in rural Minnesota will only get worse if the U.S. Congress passes pending legislation to cut federal housing and welfare programs.

Programs in southern Minnesota to help families who have lost, or may lose, their homes or apartments are working one family at a time, according to affordable housing and homeless advocates who met with members of the House Housing Committee Oct. 26 as part of the 1995 Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session.

They outlined the work they've done in finding transitional housing for families and

individuals who lost their homes after a job, divorce, or after building code violations were uncovered.

They talked about the need for emergency shelters to give people the time and space to get back on their feet but stressed how expensive shelters are to operate. Government, they said, could help more if it concentrated on helping people buy their own home. Sometimes that means supporting zoning changes on the city level to allow for the development of low-income housing. Sometimes that means supporting down payment subsidies and emergency mortgage programs.

Advocates also cautioned against the ever-increasing trend of creating low-wage new jobs in communities and then offering no affordable housing for workers.

Many of the advocates asked members of the committee to write the president and Congress in opposition to the pending federal cuts.

"Right now, without any of the federal cuts, we are not doing real well as far as being able to house the people within Minnesota," said Sue Watlov Phillips, chair of the legislative committee for the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless.

Minnesota is creating jobs that don't pay enough to afford housing. Twenty-one percent of Minnesota households pay more than one-third of their income on housing, Watlov Phillips said.

She ran down some of the potential cuts from Washington and how they could impact Minnesota.

For instance, Minnesota could lose \$3 million to \$6 million in federal dollars that help the homeless, more than \$7 million in rural housing program dollars, \$38 million in public housing dollars, \$8 million in housing for the elderly and those with special

needs, and see the total elimination of the Emergency Fuel Assistance Program, she said. The U.S. House bill eliminates the program completely, the Senate version cuts the \$50 million program in half.

The country has "forgotten the idea that we were having a war on poverty and clearly we have a war on the poor," Watlov Phillips said.

She suggested that state lawmakers are going to have to look at the current tax breaks given to some Minnesotans in terms of mortgage interest, capital gains, and others and decide whether it is fair that the poor get very little, by comparison.

Trixie Goldberg of the Southeastern Minnesota Initiative Fund asked lawmakers to look at several recommendations, including the property tax inequity between homestead property and rental property. Rental property pays a higher rate, two to three times as much, depending on the size of the property.

Those costs deter private individuals from building apartment buildings, even those with two to four units.

The 1995 Legislature did lower the tax rate for apartment buildings with four or more units in small cities (outside the seven county metro area and in counties contiguous to the seven metro counties). The tax rate dropped from 3.4 percent of the property's value to 2.3 percent of taxes payable in 1996.

She also added that pursuing livable wage jobs was critical for the state as well as helping people afford the initial down payment on a house. They afford monthly rent in an apartment so they can afford a mortgage, Goldberg said. It is just the down payment they need help with.



HUMAN SERVICES

Cutting social services

Uncertainty is the key word these days as state and local governments and welfare recipients await the outcome of federal welfare and social service legislation. This uncertainty was apparent when members of the House Health and Human Services Finance Division met in Albert Lea Oct. 25 to try to make sense of how proposed federal cuts will affect social services in southern Minnesota.

Bills still in the process of being reconciled look to save the federal government billions, but may leave states scrambling to make do with less, or force them to spend more.

According to House fiscal analysts, the proposed federal legislation cancels the guarantee that AFDC, child care, food stamp, and

nutrition programs will be around when someone needs them.

Instead, there will be a fixed amount of federal money coming into Minnesota in the form of block grants, with no growth scheduled over time. That is expected to change the relationship between state and local government, and the way they provide social services. It also means the U.S. House and U.S. Senate will have to renew the funding.

Over the next seven years, Minnesota's share of federal social service cuts is expected to exceed \$1 billion. Yet, the proposed work requirements for AFDC recipients would increase the demand and cost for child care services, leaving the state to pick up the tab.

Furthermore, with current non-resident legal immigrants being cut off from all public assistance — with the exception of emergency medical care — come Jan. 1, 1997, and those immigrating after the enactment date ineligible upon entry, states may be asked to make up for the loss of Supplemental Security Income, Food Stamps, and non-emergency Medical Assistance.

A connection exists, too, between future federal funding for Medicare and Medicaid and funding provided by Minnesota for what are generally considered social services. This means that a cut in future health care funds would translate into less money for social service-related programs. Past availability of health care money made it possible for the state to fund Meals on Wheels, case management services, and residential care which is primarily meeting a housing need rather than a strict medical service.

Those testifying, many of whom are former or current AFDC recipients, were generally supportive of proposed time limits for cash assistance, but fear those limits may be too short. Pending legislation would impose a two-year limit on welfare benefits without work, and a five year lifetime limit. Both bills contain hardship exemptions.

Jill Volmer, a HeadStart employee from Austin, wondered how people with children will be able to afford child and health care after they lose their benefits.

When asked by Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe) how the Legislature should proceed, she suggested removing people from cash assistance slowly, rather than cutting them off completely after a set amount of time. This, she said, would allow to people to get on their feet and take care of back bills. She'd also make sure child and health care services and food stamps were available. Without those services she would have been forced to stay home with her son instead of working, she said, and never would have made it off AFDC.

Lois Suckow, a licensed social worker from Austin, fears that those welfare recipients most adversely affected by the proposed provisions will be people with learning disabilities or suffering from mental illness, who tend to be, in her experience, the least educated and least equipped to work.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), while acknowledging that some safety nets for welfare recipients would disappear, pointed to the proposed work requirements and time limits as incentives, ways of getting people into the work force and back on their feet.

Greenfield, however, sees these incentives becoming detriments if people are forced into dead-end jobs, and the federal or state government is forced to spend money, possibly large amounts of money, to create jobs and run programs.

Although proponents are hopeful that these jobs are available in the marketplace, public jobs would have to be created if that doesn't hold true. And, given that proposed work requirements are high, and the fact that there are restrictions on the types of jobs that can be created, Greenfield perceives a dilemma — one of many — leading to a 1996 Legislative Session full of long hours and few options.



HUMANITIES

Humanities and economics

Members of the House Economic Development, Infrastructure and Regulation Finance Committee heard 10 people — teachers, project directors, and organization heads — describe their experiences with Minnesota Humanities Commission (MHC) programs funded, in part, by state appropriations.

Those testifying at the Oct. 26 meeting focused on the connection between the humanities and economic development.

"Humanities [the study of the history and culture of humankind in every age] create quality of life and the richness of life that cannot be measured in dollars, but it does take dollars to present humanities programs and keep humanities education up and running," said Paul Goodnature, vice chair of the MHC.

Three MHC programs were discussed: Grants and Community Programs, Motherhead/Fatheread, and the Teacher Institute.

Grants and Community Programs

"Grant programs give communities the opportunity to celebrate their own place and

to appreciate the fact that important things have happened where they are," Goodnature said.

For example, Barry Baker, executive director and general manager of KSMQ Television in Austin, said a recent MHC grant made possible a 60-minute documentary, *The Surf Ballroom*, which explores the 60 years of cultural and social history of a community and its ballroom.

Another grant recipient, Marilyn Chiat, co-director of the Center for the Documentation and Preservation of Places of Worship, tries to help Minnesotans recognize the treasures that remain in their communities. She narrated a slide presentation showing some of the "jewels" (places of worship) that remain in southern Minnesota. We travel to other places to find gems of historical significance, she said, but at the same time should realize that we have them in our own back yards.

Rep. Jim Rice (DFL-Mpls), committee chair, said, "I'm just amazed with what happens with the grants that are made, not only by the humanities commission, but by our arts groups and by our history groups. . . . These things multiply themselves manifold — exponentially . . ."

Last year, the community of Wells, Minn., benefited from an MHC grant that enriched a community theater production experience. *A Common Feeling*, a musical centering on Harry Gillam, a black entertainer and music instructor who lived in Wells from 1899 until his death in 1929, started out simply as entertainment to celebrate the community's 125th anniversary. However, the project ended up with the school district receiving the Clarence E. Harris Cultural Diversity Award, which Mankato State University gives to those who have demonstrated continuous support of cultural diversity in southern Minnesota.

The grant allowed for seven intergenerational discussions between high school students and adults, all led by humanities scholars, said Jim Ramaker, project director. "The discussions centered on the issues of nativism contrasted to immigration, minority by race, gender discrimination, and minority of opinion. The scholars' goals were to reveal the similarities and differences between the same issues in the two time periods, the early 1900s and the 1990s," he said.

Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Walters), who has lived in the area all his life, said, "I knew there was a black man in town who owned a music store, but I had no idea of the dynamics of that and the politics of what took place at that time. Cultural diversity and the whole race

issue is something we, in the rural areas, are going to have to address in the future. I don't think we've even started to take a look. . . . The play helped to no end. People talked about it a lot."

Motheread/Fatheread

The Motheread/Fatheread program assists economic development in helping disadvantaged parents and children become better readers, Goodnature said.

The program is based on the concept that nurturing fosters education, that the power of a relationship grows through the power of the story.

As parents become better readers, their economic situation improves and the children learn to love reading as they associate the activity with the closeness of their parents.

"School success is often related to how much a child is read to before entering school," he said.

Teacher Institute

MHC's Teacher Institute helps create excellent schools by inspiring teachers to excellence. The institute is helping build the infrastructure of small town Minnesota by providing new training for teachers to become renewed and inspired, Goodnature said.

Cheryl Dickson, executive director of the MHC, said the Teacher Institute was developed after Minnesota teachers said they weren't getting the kind of professional development they thought they needed. Though the MHC could not provide any kind of stipend or college credit, they could plan something that teachers could do "purely for the love of learning," she said.

In the fall of 1992, the first year of the program, 125 teachers participated in five week-long seminars. This year, Dickson expects that 500 teachers will participate in 20 seminars. Each seminar is limited to 25 teachers.

Seminar topics have included: "Deep Like the Rivers: Music and the African American Experience," "Planet Wave: The Nature of Environmental Ethics," and "Digging Up the Past: A Multicultural Approach to Archaeology."

Teachers needn't be experts on the topics to enroll in any of the seminars. In fact, Dickson said, "teachers need to be reminded of what it's like to be learners again."

"It's a wonderful thing to watch a roomful of teachers who have to learn how to get their arms around a new topic just as those kids do day after day after day," she said.



LABOR

Livable wage jobs

The findings of a recent study on livable wage jobs and the state's new workers' compensation law were discussed at an Oct. 24 meeting of the House Labor-Management Relations Committee.

The hearing was held in Austin, Minn., as part of the 1995 Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session.

The Job-Gap Study was presented by Jan O'Donnell and Bruce Steuernagel of the JOBS NOW Coalition, the organization that produced it. JOBS NOW is a non-profit, non-governmental organization with research funded by several foundations.

The study found that jobs paying a livable wage constitute 48 percent of all jobs in Minnesota. It also found that there are many more job seekers than jobs to be had — particularly livable wage jobs.

On average, there are 2.7 new job seekers per job in Minnesota. That ratio of job seekers per job climbs to 6:1 for each livable wage job and to 31:1 for each livable wage job that requires up to one year of training. The study also found that those Minnesotans who are unemployed believe that the biggest obstacle facing them is a shortage of livable wage jobs.

One proposal discussed to create more livable wage jobs was prohibiting the practice of mandatory overtime. Such a change would add more workers instead of making fewer employees work longer hours.

Rep. Marvin Dauner (DFL-Hawley) didn't like the idea.

"I see a problem . . . telling a business that

you can't have mandatory overtime," he said.

Steuernagel noted that such a change was just one possibility. "The issue is how do we create livable wage jobs," he said.

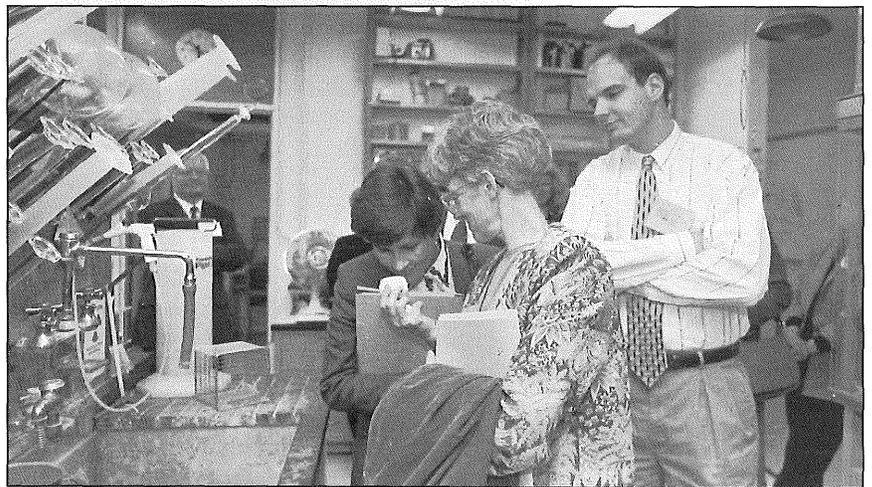
DFL lawmakers pushed a proposal during the 1995 session that called on all for-profit businesses receiving at least \$25,000 in tax breaks or state aid to pay its employees at least \$7.21 per hour, which amounts to the federal poverty guideline amount for a family of four. While parts of the proposal became law, the "livable wage" requirement was dropped. (A similar proposal failed in St. Paul on election day Nov. 7. It would have required businesses receiving \$25,000 in aid from the city to pay the same livable wage.)

The changes in the workers' compensation law also were discussed at the hearing.

The law, which took effect Oct. 1, had three major components:

First, the annual hikes in the benefits paid to injured workers will be trimmed from the current maximum of 4 percent to 2 percent. Second, it is now more difficult to qualify for permanent total disability benefits. Third, the workers' compensation insurance industry will face limited regulation come Jan. 1, 1996. Insurance companies will have to receive approval from the Department of Commerce for any premium increases or decreases exceeding 25 percent. (Currently, insurance companies are required to notify the state of rate increases only before they are implemented.)

Although the reformed compensation laws may not be perfect, in Rep. Gary Worke's (R-Waseca) opinion, "it's a better system now than what it was." Worke also stated that the only issue left for the Legislature to look at is



During an Oct. 25 tour of labs within the Hormel Institute, a University of Minnesota research center, House members, left to right, Barbara Sykora (R-Excelsior), Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), and Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), passed around a jar of moisturizing cream which scientists at the institute had been hired to study.

insurance regulation. That being said, "the Legislature will probably not look at [workers' compensation] for about five years."

But not everyone agreed that the issue will lay dormant.

Rep. Walt Perlt (DFL-Woodbury) predicted that workers' compensation issues "will be back on the table again" this session.



TAXES

Earned income tax credit

The House Taxes Committee's Sales and Income Tax Division met in Austin Oct. 26 to discuss proposed changes to the federal earned income tax credit.

The credit, started in 1975, serves to supplement the incomes of the working poor and as an incentive to move people from welfare to work.

Minnesota is one of seven states to offer a companion credit, called the working family credit. Those qualifying receive an extra 15 percent of their earned income credit amount from the state.

For the 1994 tax year, the state returned \$29.8 million to qualifying Minnesotans. Over \$198.6 million federal earned income credit dollars were refunded.

The maximum refund under the state working family credit is now \$455 (for a family with two or more children). For the same family, the maximum federal earned income credit is \$3,033.

Proposed cuts to the federal program would slice deep.

The U.S. Senate has passed a bill calling for \$43.3 billion to be slashed from the program over the next seven years. The U.S. House has called for \$23.3 billion to be cut. A total of \$150 billion is expected to be spent on the credit over the same time period.

For some, those credit dollars are essential.

Lisa Suckow works as a licensed social worker for \$7.68 per hour. Her earned income credit this year was just over \$1,800.

She distributed a worksheet to lawmakers outlining how she spent her credit: heating fuel, furnace repairs, medical bills, snow removal and cleaning her septic system topped the list.

"I can't do these things without that extra help," she said.

Most of those credit dollars were put back into local businesses, Suckow said. And cuts to the credit mean those businesses also would take a hit. For the 1994 tax year, \$1.9 million earned income credit dollars were funneled to Freeborn County; more than \$2 million went to Mower County.

Mary Moffit, a single mother who recently returned to school for electronics training, said she used the credit as a savings account to pay bills "or shop for clothes at the Salvation Army."

"I need the [money] to pay my bills," she said. "Please think of why you started the program to begin with."

Both federal proposals would eliminate the credit for adult workers with no dependents. Currently, such workers are eligible for up to a \$324 federal credit and an additional \$45 from the state.

Others who now qualify for the program would eventually be phased out or receive less of an earned income credit.

According to the U.S. Treasury Department, a family of four with an annual income at federal poverty level (\$15,160) would lose \$4,140 in federal and state credits over the next seven years. This family would receive no benefit should the \$500 child credit tax cut become law. (Under a current federal proposal, many middle-class taxpayers would receive a \$500 per child tax credit deducted from their final federal tax liability. Those not owing any taxes would not receive the credit as a refund.)

Division Chair Rep. Bob Milbert (DFL-South St. Paul) called the proposed cuts to the program "counter productive."

"If we clobber these people . . . it's not going to take long before we have all kinds of other problems as a result of taking away any incentive that they have to get out there and work."



TOURISM

Marketing Minnesota

Marketing southern Minnesota, building a bike trail, and working with the Mall of America to promote tourism were themes of a recent meeting of the Tourism Subcommittee of the House Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee.

The Oct. 26 hearing in Austin was part of the 1995 Southern Twin Cities Mini-Session.

Director Steve Markuson from the Office of Tourism began the hearing with a detailed account of a new travel marketing strategy for Minnesota.

Known as "Journey," the strategy is being billed as one of the premier travel services in the nation. Slated to begin in November, Journey will serve tourists by offering specific planning information.

Journey is essentially a computerized system. Tourists will be able to call the Office of

Tourism with their specific needs. A staff member will then enter the caller's needs and perform a computerized search which will produce a list of choices that might fit those needs. The information will then be faxed or mailed to the caller. Journey will be advertised in newspapers in selected markets across the nation.

Markuson also gave a summary of a recent marketing strategy sponsored by the Southern Minnesota Region of the Office of Tourism. Performing above expectations, the strategy targeted more mature audiences by using specific publications based on area historical events. The result of the marketing campaign was an upswing in information inquiries at a cost less than was estimated.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) inquired about state coordination with the media in order to give tourists a better idea of weather conditions in a given area.

Markuson said that while some stations were better than others, the success of coordination efforts with the media has been limited in the past.

The committee also heard testimony from a cooperative of local communities who are trying to spark tourist interest in southern Minnesota. Known as Prairie Vision, the group is sponsoring the Shooting Star bike trail to attract tourists to the area. The proposed 31-mile trail would follow an existing railroad bed that meanders through wildflowers, hardwoods, and farmlands.

The trail would allow people a welcome alternative to riding their bicycles on Highway 56 to and from such places as softball fields and swimming pools.

Former Rep. Leo Reding (DFL-Austin) said that while currently at a funding crisis, Prairie Vision would like the state to help pay for the trail and include it in a future state bonding bill.

Mall of America Tourism Manager Kim Rakos advocated more inclusion of the mall in ads the Office of Tourism produces. The Mall of America has over 38 million visits per year, outdistancing the Grand Canyon and Disney World combined. Because of the heavy volume of visitor traffic, the mall is currently working with the Office of Tourism to develop an information kiosk to promote Minnesota to tourists.

Located within the mall, the kiosk would provide a place for free tourist information and brochures. The Mall of America is also developing an infomercial featuring both the mall and Minnesota.



Transportation needs

Like many areas of the state, southern Minnesota has its transit and highway repair needs. But with a limited transportation budget, some of those projects may just have to wait.

Lawmakers learned of local transportation needs during an Oct. 24 mini-session meeting of the House Transportation and Transit Committee in Austin.

Competing for transportation and state bonding dollars are bridges, highways, railways, and airports all in need of upgrades or repairs. Still another competing project is the push by some for a high speed rail system linking Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois.

Kermit McRae, regional director with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, told legislators that because southern Minnesota was the first part of the state settled by Europeans, parts of its 1,417 miles of highway and 837 bridges are the oldest in the state and deteriorating.

Houston County Commissioner Dylan Hamston asked the state for \$33 million per year in state bonding dollars to replace only the bridges. There would be no expansion, he said, just fixing existing structures.

John Kahler, a Rochester airport official discussed the controversial subject of high speed rail.

Last year, the Legislature conditionally appropriated \$500,000 over the two-year budgeting period for the second phase of a study to evaluate a high-speed train linking Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois.

The project, if completed, is expected to cost millions, but as a video Kahler presented showed, travel time from the Twin Cities to Chicago would be cut to 90 minutes and a trip from the Twin Cities to Rochester would only run 20 minutes.

Although Kahler outlined the advantages of high speed rail, such as safety, little noise or pollution (using electricity, not fuel), like many projects, the chief obstacle is money.

Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Walters), chair of the Capital Investment Committee which assembles the state's bonding bill, warned that in tough budget times, it would be difficult to fund a new transportation program when the existing needs of roads and bridges already are high.

Kahler also updated legislators on Rochester's efforts to keep its airport financially viable. He noted that Rochester serves 300,000 passengers per year, but is not expected to increase because of the proximity to



John Kahler, president of Full Service Companies, testified in favor of light-rail transit Oct. 24 before the House Transportation and Transit Committee at Austin Community College. The model in the foreground is a winning entry in a design competition for high-speed rail.

the much larger Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

Seeing little chance of increasing commuter traffic, Rochester Municipal Airport has made a concerted effort to increase the amount of freight that passes through the

airport. This effort to recruit freight companies has proved a money-maker. Four additional flights per day now fly out of Rochester carrying freight.

Not all the transportation proposals discussed during the mini-session meeting, however, would cost millions.

Kalis said he plans to introduce a bill during the 1996 session that would rename a portion of Highway 22 between Mankato and Mapleton the Victory Memorial Highway.

The name change would honor all the women and men from the area who have served our country in the armed services from World War II to the present.

The idea was spawned after WWII when veterans began planting trees along the highway. The effort has continued, with the latest effort on Arbor Day 1995 yielding 253 trees planted. The transportation department provides the trees, veterans and senior citizens provide the labor, and local units of government provide most of the planning and maintenance, including the future costs of maintaining the trees.

Dutch Treat Dinner

Austin resident Carol Kuettner shared her concerns about senior housing and education with Reps. Roger Cooper (DFL-Bird Island) and Betty McCollum (DFL-North St. Paul) during a Dutch Treat Dinner Oct. 25 at Jerry's Other Place in Austin. Kuettner, director of the Mower County Senior Center, said the dinner demonstrated to her the wide variety of issues legislators face and how many of those issues are tied together.

In addition to dinner, the trio also took a night tour of Austin which included a visit to the Mower County Senior Center. "I had a wonderful time," Kuettner said. "It's exciting to be a part of government."

Cooper and McCollum agreed they liked the Dutch Treat event. Of the mini-sessions he has been to, Cooper said "... The people who you remember the most are those who you spend time with one-on-one." McCollum said the dining experience reinforced her belief that constituents across the state have the same basic needs. "Basic needs come first ... that's what we all have in common."

In all, 47 House members and about 52 area residents participated in the Dutch Treat Dinner.



Minnesota House of Representatives 1995-96

Unofficial list as of November 9, 1995

District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (612) 296-	District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (612) 296-		
45A	Abrams, Ron (R)	209	9934	47A	Luther, Darlene (DFL)	525	3751
10A	Anderson, Bob (DFL)	437	4946	50B	Lynch, Teresa (R)	295	5369
19B	Anderson, Bruce (R)	281	5063	37B	Macklin, Bill (R)	349	6926
3A	Anderson, Irv (DFL)	463	4936	40A	Mahon, Mark P. (DFL)	401	7158
6A	Bakk, Thomas (DFL)	429	2190	55A	Mares, Harry (R)	239	5363
14B	Bertram, Jeff (DFL)	571	4373	65B	Mariani, Carlos (DFL)	403	9714
10B	Bettermann, Hilda (R)	243	4317	57B	Marko, Sharon (DFL)	507	3135
30B	Bishop, Dave (R)	343	0573	55B	McCollum, Betty (DFL)	501	1188
25B	Boudreau, Lynda (R)	327	8237	36B	McElroy, Dan (R)	259	4212
30A	Bradley, Fran (R)	241	9249	54A	McGuire, Mary Jo (DFL)	567	4342
53B	Broecker, Sherry (R)	321	7153	39B	Milbert, Bob (DFL)	579	4192
13A	Brown, Chuck (DFL)	597	4929	35A	Molnau, Carol (R)	287	8872
46B	Carlson, Lyndon R. (DFL)	365	4255	21B	Mulder, Richard (R)	387	4336
52A	Carlson, Skip (R)	289	4331	7A	Munger, Willard (DFL)	479	4282
47B	Carruthers, Phil (DFL)	459	3709	8A	Murphy, Mary (DFL)	557	2676
61A	Clark, Karen (DFL)	503	0294	20A	Ness, Robert "Bob" (R)	379	4344
38A	Commers, Tim (R)	217	3533	2B	Olson, Edgar (DFL)	565	4265
15B	Cooper, Roger (DFL)	549	4346	19A	Olson, Mark (R)	223	4237
11A	Daggett, Roxann (R)	225	4293	20B	Onnen, Tony (R)	273	1534
9B	Dauner, Marvin (DFL)	581	6829	16A	Opatz, Joe (DFL)	423	6612
31B	Davids, Gregory M. (R)	371	9278	64B	Orenstein, Howard (DFL)	529	4199
65A	Dawkins, Andy (DFL)	409	5158	60B	Orfield, Myron (DFL)	521	9281
14A	Dehler, Steve (R)	203	7808	29B	Osskopp, Mike (R)	329	9236
51A	Delmont, Mike (DFL)	575	4226	66A	Osthoff, Tom (DFL)	585	4224
29A	Dempsey, Jerry (R)	251	8635	24B	Ostrom, Don (DFL)	433	7065
24A	Dorn, John (DFL)	533	3248	11B	Otremba, Ken (DFL)	545	3201
64A	Entenza, Matt (DFL)	531	8799	37A	Ozment, Dennis (R)	283	4306
42A	Erhardt, Ron (R)	237	4363	42B	Paulsen, Erik (R)	221	7449
67A	Farrell, Jim (DFL)	491	4277	38B	Pawlenty, Tim (R)	231	4128
1B	Finseth, Tim (R)	377	9918	52B	Pellow, Richard (R)	233	0141
31A	Frerichs, Don L. (R)	247	4378	32A	Pelowski Jr., Gene (DFL)	517	8637
63B	Garcia, Edwina (DFL)	411	5375	57A	Perit, Walter E. (DFL)	473	7807
21A	Girard, Jim (R)	213	5374	13B	Peterson, Doug (DFL)	523	4228
9A	Goodno, Kevin (R)	369	5515	39A	Pugh, Thomas (DFL)	583	6828
62A	Greenfield, Lee (DFL)	375	0173	46A	Rest, Ann H. (DFL)	443	4176
54B	Greiling, Mindy (DFL)	553	5387	44B	Rhodes, Jim (R)	309	9889
26A	Gunther, Bob (R)	337	3240	58A	Rice, James I. (DFL)	381	4262
48A	Haas, Bill (R)	201	5513	18A	Rostberg, Jim (R)	323	5364
50A	Hackbarth, Tom (R)	313	2439	5A	Rukavina, Tom (DFL)	471	0170
22B	Harder, Elaine (R)	277	5373	59A	Sarna, John J. (DFL)	563	4219
12A	Hasskamp, Kris (DFL)	451	4333	17B	Schumacher, Leslie (DFL)	413	5377
66B	Hausman, Alice (DFL)	449	3824	41A	Seagren, Alice (R)	315	7803
56A	Holsten, Mark (R)	345	3018	62B	Skoglund, Wes (DFL)	477	4330
6B	Huntley, Thomas (DFL)	569	2228	34A	Smith, Steve (R)	353	9188
7B	Jaros, Mike (DFL)	559	4246	3B	Solberg, Loren (DFL)	445	2365
58B	Jefferson, Richard H. (DFL)	577	8659	33B	Stanek, Rich (R)	351	5502
18B	Jennings, Loren (DFL)	537	0518	28B	Sviggum, Steven A. (R)	267	2273
48B	Johnson, Alice M. (DFL)	539	5510	51B	Swenson, Doug (R)	255	4124
4A	Johnson, Bob (DFL)	551	5516	23B	Swenson, Howard (R)	331	8634
32B	Johnson, Virgil J. (R)	207	1069	43B	Sykora, Barbara (R)	357	4315
59B	Kahn, Phyllis (DFL)	367	4257	5B	Tomassoni, David (DFL)	593	0172
26B	Kalis, Henry J. (DFL)	543	4240	36A	Tompkins, Eileen (R)	245	5506
44A	Kelley, Steve (DFL)	417	3964	67B	Trimble, Steve (DFL)	485	4201
35B	Kelso, Becky (DFL)	415	1072	25A	Tuma, John (R)	301	4229
4B	Kinkel, Anthony G. "Tony" (DFL)	453	2451	1A	Tunheim, Jim (DFL)	509	9635
40B	Knight, Kevin (R)	307	4218	34B	Van Dellen, H. Todd (R)	291	5511
16B	Knoblach, Jim (R)	215	6316	15A	Van Engen, Tom (R)	359	6206
17A	Koppendrayner, LeRoy (R)	389	6746	23A	Vickerman, Barb (R)	211	9303
27A	Kraus, Ron (R)	279	8216	63A	Wagenius, Jean (DFL)	439	4200
53A	Krinkie, Phil (R)	303	2907	49B	Warkentin, Eldon H. (R)	253	4231
56B	Larsen, Peg (R)	311	4244	49A	Weaver, Charlie (R)	261	1729
27B	Leighton, Robert (DFL)	527	4193	61B	Wejoman, Linda (DFL)	431	7152
45B	Leppik, Peggy (R)	393	7026	12B	Wenzel, Stephen G. (DFL)	487	4247
2A	Lieder, Bernie (DFL)	515	5091	22A	Winter, Ted (DFL)	407	5505
33A	Lindner, Arlon (R)	227	7806	41B	Wolf, Ken (R)	317	5185
60A	Long, Dee (DFL)	591	0171	28A	Worke, Gary D. (R)	229	5368
8B	Lourey, Becky (DFL)	421	4308	43A	Workman, Tom (R)	335	5066

Note: Room numbers are still subject to change.

*All rooms are in the State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155

Minnesota Senate 1995-96

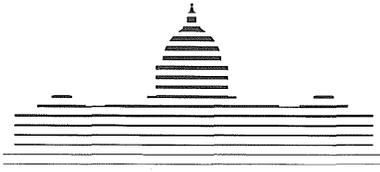
District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (612) 296-	District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (612) 296-
66 Anderson, Ellen R. (DFL)	G-27 Cap.	5537	33 Limmer, Warren (R)	132D SOB	2159
26 Beckman, Tracy L. (DFL)	306 Cap.	5713	54 Marty, John (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	5645
41 Belanger, William V., Jr. (R)	113 SOB	5975	49 Merriam, Gene (DFL)	122 Cap.	4154
13 Berg, Charles A. (DFL)	328 Cap.	5094	39 Metzzen, James P. (DFL)	303 Cap.	4370
61 Berglin, Linda (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	4261	2 Moe, Roger D. (DFL)	208 Cap.	2577
14 Bertram Sr., Joe (DFL)	323 Cap.	2084	44 Mondale, Ted A. (DFL)	226 Cap.	7-8065
48 Betzold, Don (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	2556	32 Morse, Steven (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	5649
55 Chandler, Kevin M. (DFL)	111 Cap.	9307	29 Murphy, Steve L. (DFL)	301 Cap.	4264
8 Chmielewski, Florian W. (DFL)	325 Cap.	4182	25 Neuville, Thomas M. (R)	123 SOB	1279
64 Cohen, Richard J. (DFL)	317 Cap.	5931	52 Novak, Steven G. (DFL)	322 Cap.	4334
28 Day, Dick (R)	105 SOB	9457	43 Oliver, Edward C. (R)	121 SOB	4837
20 Dille, Steve (R)	103 SOB	4131	34 Olson, Gen (R)	119 SOB	1282
4 Finn, Harold R. "Skip" (DFL)	306 Cap.	6128	19 Ourada, Mark (R)	145 SOB	5981
62 Flynn, Carol (DFL)	G-29 Cap.	4274	65 Pappas, Sandra L. (DFL)	G-27 Cap.	1802
23 Frederickson, Dennis R. (R)	139 SOB	8138	37 Pariseau, Pat (R)	109 SOB	5252
50 Hanson, Paula E. (DFL)	328 Cap.	3219	27 Piper, Pat (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	9248
24 Hottinger, John C. (DFL)	G-29 Cap.	6153	59 Pogemiller, Lawrence J. (DFL)	235 Cap.	7809
5 Janezich, Jerry R. (DFL)	328 Cap.	8017	57 Price, Leonard R. (DFL)	235 Cap.	7-8060
15 Johnson, Dean E. (R)	147 SOB	3826	63 Ranum, Jane B. (DFL)	325 Cap.	7-8061
6 Johnson, Douglas J. (DFL)	205 Cap.	8881	46 Reichgott Junge, Ember D. (DFL)	205 Cap.	2889
18 Johnson, Janet B. (DFL)	322 Cap.	5419	40 Riveness, Phil J. (DFL)	317 Cap.	7-8062
35 Johnston, Terry D. (R)	117 SOB	4123	45 Robertson, Martha R. (R)	125 SOB	4314
67 Kelly, Randy C. (DFL)	122 Cap.	5285	53 Runbeck, Linda (R)	107 SOB	1253
30 Kiscaden, Sheila M. (R)	143 SOB	4848	11 Sams, Dallas C. (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	7-8063
16 Kleis, David (R)	151 SOB	6455	12 Samuelson, Don (DFL)	124 Cap.	4875
36 Knutson, David L. (R)	133 SOB	4120	31 Scheevel, Kenric J. (R)	129 SOB	3903
47 Kramer, Don (R)	131 SOB	8869	7 Solon, Sam G. (DFL)	303 Cap.	4188
51 Krentz, Jane (DFL)	235 Cap.	7061	60 Spear, Allan H. (DFL)	G-27 Cap.	4191
58 Kroening, Carl W. (DFL)	124 Cap.	4302	17 Stevens, Dan (R)	127 SOB	8075
56 Laidig, Gary W. (R)	141 SOB	4351	1 Stumpf, LeRoy A. (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	8660
9 Langseth, Keith (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	3205	42 Terwilliger, Roy W. (R)	115 SOB	6238
10 Larson, Cal (R)	153 SOB	5655	22 Vickerman, Jim (DFL)	226 Cap.	5650
21 Lesewski, Arlene J. (R)	135 SOB	4125	38 Wiener, Deanna (DFL)	303 Cap.	7-8073
3 Lessard, Bob (DFL)	111 Cap.	4136			

*Capitol or State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155

Minnesota House and Senate Membership

1 A • Jim Tunheim-DFL B • Tim Finseth-R Sen. LeRoy A. Stumpf-DFL	15 A • Tom Van Engen B • Roger Cooper-DFL Sen. Dean E. Johnson-R	29 A • Jerry Dempsey-R B • Mike Oskopp-R Sen. Steve L. Murphy-DFL	43 A • Tom Workman-R B • Barbara Sykora-R Sen. Edward C. Oliver-R	57 A • Walter E. Perlt-DFL B • Sharon Marko-DFL Sen. Leonard R. Price-DFL
2 A • Bernie Lieder-DFL B • Edgar Olson-DFL Sen. Roger D. Moe-DFL	16 A • Joe Opatz-DFL B • Jim Knoblach-R Sen. David Kleis-R	30 A • Fran Bradley-R B • Dave Bishop-R Sen. Sheila M. Kiscaden-R	44 A • Steve Kelley-DFL B • Jim Rhodes-R Sen. Ted A. Mondale-DFL	58 A • James I. Rice-DFL B • Richard H. Jefferson-DFL Sen. Carl W. Kroening-DFL
3 A • Irv Anderson-DFL B • Loren Solberg-DFL Sen. Bob Lessard-DFL	17 A • LeRoy Koppendrayner-R B • Leslie Schumacher-DFL Sen. Dan Stevens-R	31 A • Don L. Frerichs-R B • Gregory M. Davids-R Sen. Kenric J. Scheevel-R	45 A • Ron Abrams-R B • Peggy Leppik-R Sen. Martha R. Robertson-R	59 A • John J. Sarna-DFL B • Phyllis Kahn-DFL Sen. Lawrence J. Pogemiller-DFL
4 A • Bob Johnson-DFL B • Anthony G. "Tony" Kinkel-DFL Sen. Harold R. "Skip" Finn-DFL	18 A • Jim Rostberg-R B • Loren Jennings-DFL Sen. Janet B. Johnson-DFL	32 A • Gene Pelowski Jr.-DFL B • Virgil J. Johnson-R Sen. Steven Morse-DFL	46 A • Ann H. Rest-DFL B • Lyndon R. Carlson-DFL Sen. Ember D. Reichgott Junge-DFL	60 A • Dee Long-DFL B • Myron Orfield-DFL Sen. Allan H. Spear-DFL
5 A • Tom Rukavina-DFL B • David Tomassoni-DFL Sen. Jerry R. Janezich-DFL	19 A • Mark Olson-R B • Bruce Anderson-R Sen. Mark Ourada-R	33 A • Arlon Lindner-R B • Rich Stanek-R Sen. Warren Limmer-R	47 A • Darlene Luther-DFL B • Phil Carruthers-DFL Sen. Don Kramer-R	61 A • Karen Clark-DFL B • Linda Berglin-DFL Sen. Linda Berglin-DFL
6 A • Thomas Bakke-DFL B • Thomas Huntley-DFL Sen. Douglas J. Johnson-DFL	20 A • Robert Ness-R B • Tony Onnen-R Sen. Steve Dille-R	34 A • Steven Smith-R B • H. Todd Van Dallen-R Sen. Gen Olson-R	48 A • Bill Haas-R B • Alice M. Johnson-DFL Sen. Don Betzold-DFL	62 A • Lee Greenfield-DFL B • Wesley J. "Wes" Skoglund-DFL Sen. Carol Flynn-DFL
7 A • Willard Mungler-DFL B • Mike Jaros-DFL Sen. Sam G. Solon-DFL	21 A • Jim Girard-R B • Richard Mulder-R Sen. Arlene J. Lesewski-R	35 A • Carol Molnar-R B • Becky Kelso-DFL Sen. Terry D. Johnston-R	49 A • Charlie Weaver-R B • Eldon H. Warkentin-R Sen. Gene Merriam-DFL	63 A • Jean Wagenius-DFL B • Edwina Garcia-DFL Sen. Jane B. Ranum-DFL
8 A • Mary Murphy-DFL B • Becky Lourey-DFL Sen. Florian W. Chmielewski-DFL	22 A • Ted Winter-DFL B • Elaine Harder-R Sen. Jim Vickerman-DFL	36 A • Eileen Tompkins-R B • Dan McElroy-R Sen. David L. Knutson-R	50 A • Tom Hackbarth-R B • Teresa Lynch-R Sen. Paula E. Hanson-DFL	64 A • Matt Entenza-DFL B • Howard Orenstein-DFL Sen. Richard J. Cohen-DFL
9 A • Kevin Goodno-R B • Marvin Dauser-DFL Sen. Keith Langseth-DFL	23 A • Barb Vickerman-R B • Howard Swenson-R Sen. Dennis R. Frederickson-R	37 A • Dennis Ozment-R B • Bill Macklin-R Sen. Pat Pariseau-R	51 A • Mike Delmont-DFL B • Doug Swenson-R Sen. Jane Krentz-DFL	65 A • Andy Dawkins-DFL B • Carlos Mariani-DFL Sen. Sandra L. Pappas-DFL
10 A • Bob Anderson-DFL B • Hilda Betterman-R Sen. Cal Larson-R	24 A • John Dorn-DFL B • Don Ostrom-DFL Sen. John C. Hottinger-DFL	38 A • Tim Commers-R B • Tim Pawlenty-R Sen. Deanna Wiener-DFL	52 A • Skip Carlson-R B • Richard Pellow-R Sen. Steven G. Novak-DFL	66 A • Tom Osthoff-DFL B • Alice Hausman-DFL Sen. Ellen R. Anderson-DFL
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Unofficial list as of November 9, 1995



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MINNESOTA INDEX

Austin and Albert Lea, Minnesota

Population of Albert Lea, 1970	19,418
in 1990	18,848
Full-time police officers in Albert Lea	29
Number of employees at Streater, (a store fixtures company), largest private employer in Albert Lea	800
Employees of Independent School District #241, largest public employer	600
Unemployment rate, Freeborn County, in percent, March 1995	4.9
Number of airplane runways in Albert Lea	2
in Austin	1
Motels in Albert Lea	8
Number of rooms	508
Places of worship in Albert Lea	26
in Austin	31
Different types of animal farms listed on an Albert Lea/Freeborn County tourism brochure that offer tours (including donkey, emu, and llama farms)	16
Population of Austin, 1970	26,210
in 1990	21,907
Employees at Hormel Foods in Austin, largest private employer	3,000
Employees of Independent School District #492, largest public employer	520
Annual average unemployment rate, Mower County, in percent	4.3
Number of truck lines serving Austin	24
Countries in which Spam is trademarked	92
Number of visitors to the Spam merchandise page on the World Wide Web, as of Nov. 8, 1995	8,564
Cost of a Spam cookbook, featuring "48 pages of tantalizing recipes," including award-winning recipes from state fairs."	\$1.99
Pounds of Spam sold worldwide each year, in millions	100
Ratio of dentists in Austin to dentists in Albert Lea	2:1
Year that Austin's Main Street burned, causing \$50,000 worth of damage	1869
Year that Austin's first fire station, the "Pioneer Hook and Ladder Company," was built	1869

Sources: Albert Lea/Freeborn County Convention & Visitors Bureau; Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development; Austin Chamber of Commerce; Hormel Foods Corporation.



For more information . . .

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