Get incentives right to change behavior
by Ted Kolderie

If we want to make schools more effective for students, we might look at the way steel mills were made safer for workers. It has to do with incentives.

In the early 1900s, American factories were horrendously dangerous places—steel mills especially. In 1907, 46 men were killed in one plant in Chicago alone—one of them when a pot of molten metal spilled, boiling him alive.

Almost worse: There was no compensation for the dead and injured. Workers couldn't sue: The theory was that simply by showing up, the worker accepted the risks and costs of the job. In this system the employers' incentive was to hire lawyers rather than engineers, to deny liability, rather than to make safer workplaces.

Then a new strategy changed the incentives. A set of laws, the first in Washington state in 1911, bypassed the liability issue, accepted that accidents happen, provided compensation to injured workers and billed the cost of the program to the employers.

The effect was dramatic. Over the next 20 years, injuries in the iron and steel industry fell by 90 percent. With injuries now a cost, it made sense for employers to spend money on safety. The laws went to the heart of the problem; they got the incentives right.

The whole story is summarized in the Summer 1997 issue of the alumni magazine of Carleton College.

Study: Less funding goes to charters
by Cheryl M. Mandala

A new study confirms what charter school operators and advocates have long suspected—that charter school students are getting shortchanged in funding.

An analysis of school revenues during the 1995-96 school year (the most recent data available for the analysis), compared 14 charter schools' per-pupil revenues with those of the districts in which the charters were located. The analysis shows that charter schools receive substantially less funding per pupil unit than do traditional public schools.

Charter movement
The national charter schools movement was born in Minnesota just six years ago, with the opening of City Academy in St. Paul. This fall, the U.S. Department of Education says that more than 1,100 charters will be operating across the country.

Charter schools are public schools held to higher standards of accountability, in exchange for freedom from bureaucratic regulations that often seem to cripple traditional public schools. They have earned acclaim statewide, as well as nationally, for breathing new life into the public school system. No longer

Postpone sunset of Municipal Board
by Andrew D. Hultgren

What is the truth about the Minnesota Municipal Board?


As the current chair of the Municipal Board, I would like to offer another perspective on how the board was sunsetted and on the system proposed to replace it.

If the sunset of the Municipal Board is sustained, its contested-case procedures will be replaced by mediation and binding arbitration. Sen. Hottinger voiced strong support for this plan in his article. In reality, however, this process cannot accomplish the goals, nor meet the aspirations he touted. In the article he touts "the remarkable successes" and increasing use of mediation/arbitration in civil litigation.

The assumption is made that the same process will be enthusiastically embraced by cities and towns involved in boundary disputes. However, the evidence does not support this assumption. When the Legislature passed the sunset in 1997, it added mediation/arbitration as an alternative to the Municipal Board process until the sunset. Yet, in the 15 contested cases filed since 1997, the parties have chosen the Municipal Board process over mediation/arbitration in every instance.

It is also important to note that the principal inspiration for pushing alternative dispute resolution in the civil court system was the terrible backlog of cases and the unconscionable delay faced by litigants. In contrast, the Municipal Board has never had a backlog and is required to hold its hearings within 30 to 60 days of the commence-Continued on page 4

Continued on page 6
**Bus riders falling faster here than in other areas**

The cost per rider averages $2.83 in outstate Minnesota and $2.53 in the Twin cities area in 1996...

The infrastructure cost per ride rose 23 percent in the Twin Cities area metropolitan and 20 percent in outstate Minnesota from 1987 to 1996...

We compared transit services in the Twin Cities area with services in 31 other urbanized areas in the United States with a 1990 population between 900,000 and 4 million...

In outstate Minnesota, there were 70 public transit systems that provided 900,000 hours of service and served more than 8 million passengers at an operating cost of about $32 million annually. In the Twin Cities, riders range from regular route service and specialized services for the elderly, disabled, and in larger cities to dial-a-ride services in small cities and rural areas.

**Minnesota's future: Will 'pretty good' block excellence?**

As this fall's election approaches, it is a good time to reflect on the current political climate.

**Editors advocate for rural roads, campus rail, buses**

**Another view: Improve poll**

I read with great interest the article in the July 21 Minnesota Journal on the third annual University of Minnesota Survey Confidence Poll. The poll compiled a host of useful information, but one comment on how the poll might be improved next time around, specifically with regard to issues on highway congestion.

**Call to action:**

**AMOEBA:**

The questions on how to reduce highway congestion, moreover, project an image of partisanship and division.

**RIPPLE:**

I think the poll's authors need to give us a bit more of a context for the questions on highway congestion. Questions such as, ‘Do you know someone who has been hurt or killed by a truck driver’s mistake?’ They manifestly will not know the answer, so their opinions are relatively worthless. It is hard to figure out what ‘do you think?’ means on the highway congestion question.

**Minnesota Journal Publisher — Lyle Wray**

**Editor — Dana M. Schroeder**

**Corresponding Editor — Janet Kolderie**

**Sketches — Ray Hanson**

**The Minnesota Journal (ISSN 0141-9449) is a production of the University of Minnesota Post-University Press.**

**Twin Cities metropolitan area transit services charge higher fares per rider than other comparable systems.**

Ridership per capita has fallen much faster in the Twin Cities area than it has typically been the case in large metropolitan areas. Between 1987 and 1996, average weekly ridership per capita declined 22 percent while the average decline of 6 percent in the comparison group was only six percent.


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Continued from page 1
ment of a case. No contested case system in the State of Minnesota operates on a faster track.

Sen. Hottinger also suggests that requiring local governments to use mediation/arbitration “will result in a more locally based, less formal, less costly and less divisive process.” None of the claims is supported by the evidence.

The Municipal Board’s decisions are actually more locally based and its process more inclusive than mediation/arbitration. The Metropolitan Council and the county boards may join as parties to the proceeding. In contrast, the arbitration model for the new procedure allows for only two parties. County, property owners and other public entities or agencies are excluded.

Further, the procedures are no more formal nor inherently more costly under the Municipal Board than under arbitration. Arbitration is itself nothing magical, simply a forum for settling differences by another quasi-judicial body. The controversy over which evidence is presented by and from whom decisions are rendered.

Whether heard before the Municipal Board, in court, or by arbitration, the expense of preparing and presenting a case is solely determined by the need to present witnesses. One cannot expect the parties to make any loss of costs, financial or otherwise, to prepare for arbitration in cases under arbitration. Also, the fees charged by the mediators and arbitrators will be much higher than the $50 per dem paid to Municipal Board members for hearings.

Merely changing the identity of the decision-makers will not make the process less divisive. The fundamental policy differences inherent in annexation disputes are them- selves divisive and will be no less so in an arbitration setting. Wherever the decision-maker, the parties will naturally feel that there are still “winners and losers.” The task of the decision-maker to find a solution that is just, in accordance with the governing statutes and, in some way, satisfactory to all parties.

The overwhelming majority of the 7,000 boundary adjustments over- seen by the Municipal Board since its inception were accomplished amicably. The mediation process, which some see as a recent innova- tion, has been part of the Municipal Board mandate for years. Many local agreements have resulted after the board has directed the parties to meet with each other to discuss their differences. The board has encouraged and nurtured the development of more than 50 local joint agreements between cities and towns.

Sen. Hottinger claims that adding two county commissioners to the Municipal Board during contested annexation hearings would result in “unintentional bias.” However, the facts show that the board has acted as it should have—in the face of two or more competing petitions, as required by state law. Indeed, among contested annexation peti- tions in counties which county commissioners have voted against granting, 90 percent of the petitions have been granted. Overall, the commission- ers’ role is merely to act as a public forum where appellants and petitioners have increased their chances of learning“We are a new series: ‘The Municipal Board Turns.’”

“Incentives Continued from page 1

(Lucien Chaney, a graduate later professor at the North- field, Minn., who joined the U.S. Department of Labor in 1908, was largely responsible for the industrial-safety movement in the state.)

It is a fact of life that “People of systems behave the way they are structured and the culture an organization has” (like assigning gates) and does not what the users don’t want (like meaningful or feel connected by the MAC). The MAC members who have other ideas can quietly disappear. Everyone won’t see it. Anyone

who thinks MAC should be more accountable will need to change the way that agency is financed.

Public education is where this lesson is needed most of all. Unfortunately, this is where it’s hardest to apply. The assertion has been that there is no system problem. Good people want to put kids first and simply need the resources. Municipalities are continually offered by talk about incentives.

In truth, rather than a system problem, the districts do behave in ways and spend money in ways that clearly do not support inter- ests first. The problem of good people doing bad things has long been concealed by the rhetoric about what educators want and what they do, you must not find important.

Minnesota’s Legislature is arguably doing better than any in America in making student success—change and improvement and learning improvements. But the long is a ways from done, as of mid-1998.

In 1997, it clearly did not work to exhaust the steel executives to “cure” the problem. But what is generally true about education still consists very largely of exhausting educators to do more of the same stuff. If good people don’t do the right things, they should be made to.

Legislators would serve us if they were willing to look at the forces affecting districts not to put student inter- ests first, and change that. In other words. Get the incentives right.

Ted Kridel is contributing editor of the Minnesota Journal.
Compact seeks to raise level of political discourse

From The Minnesota Compact: A Campaign Reform Initiative

The Minnesota Compact is a campaign reform initiative designed to raise the level of political discourse in Minnesota elections. The Compact aims to persuade candidates, interest groups and political parties to change the way they communicate campaign messages in order to enhance cross-promo-
tional value.
4. that debate organizers work in partnership with media and radio whenever possible in order to blunt debate statements or dis-tract from the issues in the Congressional races.
5. that whenever feasible, debates be carried in wide as possible, including on radio and TV, in print or in full or in part in news-
papers, and/or carried on-line.
6. that debate organizers estab-
lish written criteria for inclusion of candidates in a debate and distrib-
ute the criteria broadly.
Recognizing that democratic elec-
tions require the open exchange of ideas among citizens for the benefit of the state of Minnesota, and state offi-
cers are asked to:
1. participate in as many debates as possible if that position has been
2. abide by the ground rules, format and rules as agreed upon by the
debate sponsor and the candidates.
Plank # 2 - Campaign advertis-
ing purposes... Candidates... are reminded that they have to adhere to the
following Code of Conduct in Came-
paign communications, and to pub-
licly insist that their campaign par-
ties, and associated interest groups
adhere to the standards set forth in this Code.

Funding comparison
During the 1995-96 school year, 13 of the 14 Minnesota charter schools analyzed reported less than average general fund revenues per pupil unit than the districts in which they were located received for students attends-
ning regular public schools, such as teacher,
and administrator salaries, supplies, and general fund revenues are used for costs such as transportation and food service.

The idea behind charters is that the educational system should provide a variety of schools to meet the needs of a variety of learners. Charters in Minnesota are seen from nationally in their ability to reach kids "out of the educational mainstream," but also as more tradi-
tional students.

In order to enhance cross-promo-
1. The candidate will take full responsibility for all statements and all other types of campaign comm-
munications (speeches, billboards, direct mail) that are paid for on behalf of the campaign by its staff.
The candidate will review and approve all such campaign communications.
2. In television advertising the can-
didate's voice and/or likeness will be used, the candidate will appear on the air at least once a week; and the voice only the use, it shall be explicitly identi-
fied as that of the candidate.
On television advertising, the candidate's voice, explicitly identified as such, will be in the ad at least 50 percent of the time.
3. The candidate will not use any photos of the opponent that has been photoshopped or manipulated, either in part, in
4. to de-emphasize the "horse race,

The lack of funding parity for charter schools is deeply implicat-
Continued on page 7

Charter School Home District**

Total General Fund Revenues per Pupil Unit Between Charter Schools and Other Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in Minnesota for the School Year 1995-96.

City Academy Chaska
St. Paul $1,698
Nova Education Center St. Louis County $1,574
Arlington Charter School St. Louis County $1,752
Cedar Riverside Minneapolis $2,060
Cedar River Valley Chaska $1,931
New Visions St. Paul $2,456
Wildwood Academy Minneapolis $2,423
Cedar Bluffs Chaska $2,473
Community of Peace St. Paul $2,703
Winona City charter schools accessing basic state funding through the Local Education Agency (LEA).

The current system of denying charter schools access to excess levies or referendum revenues is inconsistent with the spirit of the charter school legislation, which was enacted as a long and distinguished history of providing choices within public education. Charter schools should not be prevented from competing on a level playing field with other public schools. As a result, charters face substan-
tial financial obstacles to success.

Non-representative and mor-
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tional students.
City of Minneapolis is state’s 14th largest employer

This month’s Corporate Report lists Minnesota’s largest 100 employers. As usual three large public bodies lead the list: The state of Minnesota, the federal government and the University of Minnesota. Six of the top 15 employers in Minnesota are public organizations. Minneapolis, with a population of 362,090, is up to 14th on the list with 8,939 employees. That works out to about 40.5 residents per city employee. By contrast, St. Paul’s workforce of 3,400 for its 269,636 residents works out to about 80 residents per employee (half the Minneapolis rate).

The numbers are even more striking when comparing counties. Hennepin County, ranked 11th on the Corporate Report list, has a resident-to-employee ratio of 90.4 (11,902 employees; 1,075,907 people). Ramsey County’s ratio is 120.5 (4,128 employees; 497,423 people). Interestingly, Dakota County, with a population nearly equal to Minneapolis, has a resident-to-employee ratio of 215 (1,550 employees; 332,657 people) and does not even rank in the top 100 employers.—Phil Jenni.

The Saint Paul school board found just what Mike Casserly said it would.

In January, at the start of the search for a new superintendent, the director of the Washington-based Council of the Great City Schools told the board it probably wouldn’t get any applicants with big-city experience. That’s a killer job, he said—now something a superintendent does only once.

So, just as Casserly predicted, Saint Paul got people from cities who’d never been superintendents and superintendents who’d never been in big cities. The board wasn’t interested in nontraditional candidates. So: Zip.

The board will search again, probably next winter. Maybe Casserly’s prediction won’t hold then, since the board can now pay more. Note, though, that the cap (95 percent of the governor’s salary), no longer in effect for salary, is still in effect for the amount that can be credited toward pension.—Ted Kolderie.

Much has been made of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21 for short). There is literally something for every transportation-oriented special interest in this 200-plus billion dollar boondoggle. There are, however, some significant statements made about priorities with this legislation. For example, there was a real dollar decrease in funds reserved for new road construction and a significant increase in transit spending.

Demonstration projects also featured multi-modal projects, transit and road preservation instead of only “big road” demonstrations. It should be noted, however, that road-based projects still take up roughly 85 percent of the demonstration fund’s $9.3 billion. Still, it appears transit advocates are satisfied with TEA-21, because they got fed a little as well.—Ron Wirtz.

Honeywell threw a party last week to celebrate the groundbreaking for Portland Place, a company-sponsored redevelopment project that will bring 51 new owner-occupied homes into Minneapolis’ Phillips neighborhood, across the street from the company’s headquarters.

During the ceremony, Honeywell CEO Mike Bonsignore briefly introduced his three predecessor CEOs and noted their community achievements: Stephen Keating, who helped start the Neighborhood Coordinating Council of the Great City Schools; and Janet Dudrow, communications specialist at Allina Health System.

A recent publication of the Hazelden Foundation on drug abuse in Minnesota cites a Tobacco Research Program study that indicates smoking among adolescents increased from 27.5 percent in 1991 to 36.4 percent in 1997. This 32.3 percent increase in the rate of adolescent smoking comes despite the increased awareness of the dangers of smoking. But maybe that’s not surprising. Perhaps the demonization of tobacco as an illicit activity and the moralizing and disapproving tone of most adults, especially baby boomers, has made smoking an acceptable form of youth rebellion—similar to marijuana use a generation ago. Remember Reefer Madness?—P.J.

On a comparative cost basis, regional wastewater rates are among the lowest in the country. On top of that, the agency responsible—the Metropolitan Council’s Environmental Services Division (MCES)—recently announced a seven percent decrease in the proposed operating budget for 1999, down about $10 million over the 1998 budget of $167 million. Cost cuts in attrition-related labor, debt reduction, supplies and contracted services are being credited for the decrease.—R.W.

“Take Note” contributors include Minnesota Journal and Citizens League staff members and Janet Dudrow, communications specialist at Allina Health System.
Welcome
New and returning members

Julie Allen
Sidney Berg
Holly E. Breymaier
Phil Brown
David Inghaus
Rose Kelly
Carolyn Kompelieu
Lee Lewis
Douglas Mayo
Mr. and Mrs. Dick Moberg
Cynthia and Joel Sattler
Eric Schaefer
Robert A. Seng
Jon Shafer
Alan P. Shilepsky
Timothy J. Wicker and
Karolyn M. Deters

Housing issues open Mind-Opener season

Forget back to school sales, early sunsets and cooler nights. You know that summer is officially over when the Citizens League Mind-Opener meetings resume.

Weekly policy meetings sponsored by the Citizens League have been a regional tradition since 1961. The Mind-Opener format dates back to 1986.

The Citizens League is ready to unroll another exciting year and will kick-off the 1998-99 Mind-Opener season with a series on affordable housing, a topic that is working its way to the top of the public agenda. The series will be designed to both define the problem and showcase innovative solutions.

According to the Family Housing Fund, there are 68,900 households in the Twin Cities area that have incomes below $10,000, but there are only 31,200 units with rents considered affordable at this level.

Housing is generally considered “affordable” when it costs a family no more than 30 percent of its income, but 185,000 area households with incomes below $30,000 are currently paying more than that.

The lack of affordable housing has numerous spill-over effects. From a regional perspective one of the most important issues is the mismatch between job growth, especially in the suburbs and affordable housing most of which is concentrated in the two core cities.

This situation is also aggravated by the problems faced by suburban employers currently dealing with a labor shortage.

While affordable housing is by no means a new problem, this series will attempt to showcase new solutions.

What efforts are or should be undertaken by the business community to ensure that their employees can find affordable housing close to their job? What role can and should the nonprofit community play in this area? Are available resources being used wisely?

At this writing, speakers for the series are being scheduled. The series will begin on September 29 with an overview of affordable housing and run Tuesday mornings through October 20. But watch your mail for a brochure which contains the details of dates, speakers, time and place.

Mind-Opener policy forums and other special meetings are a regular feature of the League’s programming. Each Mind-Opener series generally consists of three to four weekly breakfast meetings on a topic of interest to the League and of importance to the region and state.

We invite members of the League and the general public to join us for a continental breakfast, followed by a presentation on the topic and discussion period.

Mind-Openers have historically been Tuesday morning breakfast meetings. While we will continue that pattern as much as possible, some flexibility in time and date allows us to bring you the most knowledgeable and thought provoking speakers possible.

Other topics on the planning board for this fall include the roles and responsibilities of Minnesota’s school boards and the numerous issues surrounding Native American sovereignty.

Watch your mail for the details on upcoming events.
Kristine Lyndon joins staff as Research Associate

The newest addition to the League staff is research associate Kristine Lyndon who began her duties with the League at the end of July.

A recent graduate of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, Lyndon holds a master's degree in public policy, as well as a bachelor's degree in political science and history from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

"I selected the masters program at Rutgers specifically for its generalist approach and focus on state and local government. Therefore, the Citizens League is a perfect fit," said Lyndon. "I am looking forward to working on a wide variety of issues that truly affect the quality of life in Minnesota."

Lyndon wasted no time in getting involved in the League's work. She is currently helping with the labor shortage committee and the New Wrinkle on Aging Task Force. She will be responsible for the League's Mind-Opener Breakfast Series and is in the process of lining up the first three series for the fall. She'll also staff the upcoming study committee on the public agenda.

While completing her education, Lyndon interned for Wisconsin Senate President Brian D. Rude and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. She also worked in Washington D.C. as an intern for the House of Representatives Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunity.

She also served as editor of the Luther College student newspaper and as chair of the college's honor council.

An Iowa native, Lyndon recently moved to the Twin Cities area after spending a year in New Jersey. She replaces Janet Dudrow who left the League staff earlier this summer.

Welcome to the Citizens League, Kris Lyndon!

Contributions crucial at year-end

Thank you to the many League members who have already made an extra contribution to the League. Don't forget that the League's fiscal year ends on August 31.

Member contributions to the League at the end of the year are a very important part of the League's financial support.

Last year's record extra contributions of $76,266 accounted for over 15 percent of the League's budget. We need a big push if we are to equal last year.

If you want to make a gift of appreciated securities (which makes a lot of sense given the success of the stock market over the past couple of years), you or your broker can transfer the asset to the League's account at Dain Rauscher. The account # is 11015317 1984 and the electronic code is DTC235. If you have questions about such a transaction, please call Jim Seidel of Dain Rauscher at 371-7680.

Board transition set for August 25

The Citizens League Board will meet at the University Club on August 25 to elect new officers and directors for the coming year. It will be the last official meeting of the 1997-98 Board and the first meeting for the 1998-99 Board and the eight directors elected in June.

Leave a Legacy Minnesota: Complete the circle of life

The Citizens League has endorsed "Leave a Legacy Minnesota," a statewide, collaborative effort to increase public awareness of and interest in gift planning opportunities.

Many people wish they could give generously to their favorite charities. There is actually a simple tool that makes such a gift possible, easy and affordable—include your favorite nonprofit organizations in a will with a bequest.

The Leave a Legacy Minnesota program, which will be introduced in September, promotes interest in charitable giving by reminding people of average incomes that they have the ability to foster and continue important values by including a nonprofit organization in their estate plan.

In the United States, at least 70 percent of households make charitable contributions annually, yet less than 6 percent of households give money to charities through bequests. In 1993, only 17 percent of the wealthiest Americans with taxable incomes exceeding $600,000 left bequests to charities.

Even people of average means have an estate, and giving in this way provides a means of answering the question, "What can I do to make the world a better place than I found it?"

There are four easy steps to leaving a legacy: 1) decide to whom and why you'd like to leave a gift; 2) contact your favorite charity for information regarding what opportunities are open to you; 3) contact your professional advisor (financial planner, attorney, accountant, etc.) and; 4) write or change your will to specify your wishes regarding your gift.

Individuals interested in leaving a legacy may contact the Citizens League at 338-0791 or the Leave a Legacy Minnesota office at 917-6252.