



# Minnesota Journal

## Inside This Issue

A publication of the Citizens League

Stand and deliver real reform. — Page 2.

Extend school day for underperformers. — Page 4.

Less confidence about our quality of life. — Page 8.

Volume 14, Number 5  
May 20, 1997

## Teacher unions should organize around quality, individual schools, 'craft' model

by John Kostouros

It's hard to have a conversation about the current shortcomings in our education system without someone pointing a finger at teacher unions as a major impediment to improvement.

The criticism has teacher union leaders struggling with how to counter the charge that their members are resistant to any changes that might lead to better student achievement. More progressive union leaders acknowledge that this is more than just a public relations problem. Privately, they concede that they often end up fighting

against reforms many of their own members would like to try.

Julia Koppich, one of three authors of a new book that envisions a different, more constructive role for teacher unions, was in the Twin Cities April 28 to discuss that vision. Koppich isn't a union basher. In fact, she used to work as an organizer for the American Federation of Teachers and currently serves as an advisor to TURN (Teacher Union Reform Network), a coalition of teacher unions

formed to explore how teacher unions can reform to meet the educational needs of the country.

Her visit came at a propitious time. Teacher union representatives were busy at the Legislature fighting the Governor's proposal to create private school vouchers, a not-dissimilar proposal by the DFL head of the Senate education committee, efforts to liberalize Minnesota's weak charter school law and further inroads into the operation of Minnesota schools by the Edison Project or other for-profit companies. They were also taking hits

Continued on page 5

## Survey finds women less negative on government

by Barbara E. Raye

Women and men apparently view government and government services differently, according to a Ramsey County survey undertaken as part of the county's strategic planning process. In fact, there is a gender gap on every question the survey asked.

Ramsey County's Home Rule Charter, which was adopted by the voters in 1990 and became effective in 1992, requires the county to develop a strategic plan and to play a stronger role in the overall coordination of delivery of services—regardless of who provides those services. Fifteen specified service and policy areas are addressed in the strategic plan.

As part of the planning process, survey respondents were asked to read a vision of the conditions each of the 15 services should produce in the next seven to 10 years. (For example, for parks and open spaces the vision states, in part, that greenways will connect open spaces.) Respondents were then asked:

- Their level of agreement with each vision;

Continued on page 6

## New manufacturing jobs, retirement, recreation bring rural population rebound

by Martha McMurtry

Rural Minnesota is experiencing something of a population rebound in the 1990s. Almost every non-metropolitan county has grown more, lost less or shifted from loss to growth. Why is the turnaround happening? Will it continue into the future? The answers to these questions have many implications for both government and the private sector.

Demographer's Office conducted case studies of 12 Minnesota turnaround counties—Otter Tail, Aitkin, Itasca, Brown, Clearwater, Todd, Sibley, Nobles, Pope, Mahanomen, Swift and Polk—that lost population between 1980 and 1990, but gained population between 1990 and 1995. These case studies used existing data sources, interviews with area informants and site visits.

Our results generally show that the reasons for the shifting population trends in rural Minnesota are complex. No single factor explains why these counties have fared so much better in this decade than in the 1980s. Clearly the Greater Minnesota economy has improved. The number of jobs grew faster than the population in all 12 counties, helping to retain residents in the area or attract newcomers. But the factors that are producing job creation appear to vary from one place to

Continued on page 7

In an attempt to arrive at a better understanding of what is going on in our nonmetropolitan areas, the



# It's time to stand and deliver real educational reform

"Show us the money." Gary Sudduth's remarks to the Minneapolis School Board on April 8 illustrated just how powerful one voice can be. Sudduth issued a searing indictment of the district's failure to educate students of color, despite spending an additional \$500 million over the past six years for the express purpose of closing the achievement gap. "I'm here tonight to tell you that time has just run out," Sudduth said. "The correlation between race and academic failure is in a downward spiral that is devastating our community...You are the people in a position to stop it."

The speech has ignited a firestorm of discussion. Some of the reactions were predictable. The Governor, appropriately, has called for a closer look into where the money went—though it seems the audit will have to go beyond the traditional sniffing out of bureaucratic slip-up and delve into the policies themselves. The school board has pleaded for more patience and more money and has promised more fervently that the district will improve. Citizens, in letters to newspaper editors, have blamed parents for laziness or indifference, although none of the letter-writers seem to appreciate the irony of their own arguments. If schools can't be held responsible for student achievement, why did we give them all that money in the first place?

The question comes down to this: Why, despite agreement about the urgency of the problem, earnest promises to solve it and abundant resources to apply to the task, has the education system been unable to produce adequate results among children of color? And more important, what—if anything—can be done to reverse a devastating spiral?

The Citizens League has wrestled with these questions for decades. We believe the answers lie not in better-articulated goals, but in prac-

tical, tangible mechanisms that can deliver on the promise of better-educated students.

The 1997 Legislature and Governor Carlson have engaged in some serious discussions that are on the right track. For instance, Senate leaders and Governor Carlson have recommended that 100 percent of compensatory revenue—the extra per-pupil revenues the state provides districts for low-income children—be allocated *directly* to the actual schools at which qualifying students enroll. The Governor and the Senate recommended that school sites explicitly be given authority to

*"If schools can't be held responsible for student achievement, why did we give them all that money in the first place?"*

decide how most money allocated for education is used.

Compensatory revenue—which lawmakers in 1971 intended to be directed at qualifying students—has by statute been paid to districts, which have had virtually unlimited discretion over how the money is allocated among schools and on what it is spent. The historical pattern suggests that compensatory revenues haven't reliably ended up in the schools where poor students are enrolled. And, as Sudduth pointed out, test scores leave little doubt that it wasn't spent on activities that mattered much for those students.

This step—making the students, not the district, the object of compensatory aid and making the school, not the district, the decision-maker—is an example of a method that holds reasonable promise of getting the job done. The Citizens League has been

urging the change for years. Other pots of money designated for at-risk students, such as desegregation aid and Limited English Proficiency aid, should also be targeted to sites, as Sudduth suggested and as the Governor recommended.

Another discussion that made headway this year has to do with expanding the education choices available to communities of color. The Citizens League has long argued that state policy should encourage plenty of alternatives for parents to choose from, including alternatives that capitalize on the special capacity of communities to

help children learn. As Sudduth pointed out, community-based organizations have shown impressive progress with low-achieving students, yet "they must beg and scrape for every dollar, with no help from the school districts...We have alternative schools that graduate the children that you cast off as incorrigible, unteachable, and those schools receive far less money than you spend on the average mainstream kid," Sudduth said.

Indeed, alternative schools, such as the Urban League Street Academy, Heart of the Earth Survival School and others on contract to school districts, provide an important education alternative, particularly for low-income students and students of color. They boost students' aspirations dramatically. A 1991 study found that after a year at the street academies, the share of students planning to graduate and go on to

postsecondary education increased from six percent to 41 percent.

Legislators, to their credit, asked good question: Why not empower these community-owned public schools to operate on an equal fiscal playing field with district schools? House leaders recommended that school districts be required to pay a larger share of education revenues (90 percent of the district's average education revenue amount) to these contract schools. Legislators have also shown themselves more willing this year to equalize funding to charter schools, which serve large numbers of low-income students and students of color and which are amassing impressive track records.

We see in these legislative debates the outlines of an evolving policy that could once again make Minnesota a national leader. There are two core ideas. First, formal education happens in schools (not districts), so the freedom to make decisions and the accountability for performance belong with schools, too. Second, communities—neighborhoods, ethnic associations, families, churches—can often provide high-quality education at lower cost because one of the critical factors influencing school performance is whether students feel valued and connected to the adults closest to them. Government has much to gain by empowering these communities as full partners in fulfilling the public's interest in education.

Sudduth is right. The time has run out on promises. The Legislature, the Governor and some education leaders are taking important steps to get past promises. Their—and our—feet should be held to the fire.

*Lyle Wray is executive director of the Citizens League.*

Continued on page 3

# Editors want tax reform, unsure on new business tax

**Red Wing Republican Eagle** said (April 30) if legislators miss the chance for property-tax

reform "it may be one of the biggest missed opportunities of all time." It said any effective new plan must offer relief, reform and restraint and said the "biggest disappointment" with any current legislative proposals is the lack of property tax reform, especially for commercial/industrial property. It called the proposal for a new business activities tax "incredible" in a year with a major surplus. It called (April 16) the proposal for the business activities tax "a slick maneuver to lower property taxes on one hand and raise them on the other...The state's treasury has a project \$2.3 billion surplus; there's no need for new taxes—period."

**Princeton Union-Eagle** said (May 1) a business activity tax "should be seriously considered as a way of getting meaningful relief from an excessive and unfairly levied property tax." **St. Paul Pioneer Press** called (Apr. 28) imposing a new business activity tax (BAT) "unnecessary and reckless," since the state has plenty of revenue available to enact meaningful property tax improvements. It recommended careful study of the BAT. **Star Tribune** said (Apr. 21) legislators should have an interim task force study the BAT.

## The Minnesota Journal

Publisher — Lyle Wray

Editor — Dana M. Schroeder

Contributing Editor — Ted Kolderie

Sketches — Ray Hanson

The Minnesota Journal (ISSN 0741-9449) is a publication of the Citizens League, a nonprofit nonpartisan Twin Cities public affairs organization, 708 S. Third St., Suite 500, Minneapolis, MN 55415, Mike Christenson, president. Articles and commentary are drawn from a broad range of perspectives and do not necessarily reflect League positions on policy questions. The Journal is published once a month. Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, MN.

Annual subscription rate for nonmembers is \$40 for 12 issues. Orders may be placed at 612/338-1121 or by mail at the above address.

Postmaster: Send address changes to The Minnesota Journal, 708 S. Third St., Suite 500, Minneapolis, MN 55415

## On Balance

*Tax softly and carry a big BAT?*

**Star Tribune** said (Apr. 28) the House tax bill that would lead to near-total state takeover of public school funding by the year 2000 is "a journey well worth beginning this year." **West Central Tribune (Willmar)** said (Apr. 18), "Now is the time to make property tax reform happen...[T]he property tax system is a complicated mess."

**Republican Eagle** said (May 1) legislators should not read too much into a Minnesota Poll that reported that Minnesotans would prefer increased government spending rather than tax cuts from the \$2.3 billion surplus. **Worthington Globe** said (May 7) the only true form of tax relief for everyone would be "for our governing bodies to spend less or run more efficiently."

**St. Cloud Times** suggested (May 7) two possible compromises for an education funding bill: for kids who are failing and would qualify for money for tutoring, allow them to use it at public or private schools; for schools whose baseline test scores go down, allow the students to choose another school, including a private one. **Pioneer Press** said (May 1) the state must not use public dollars for private school tuition. It lauded proposals

to expand charter schools and to level the financial support between charters and regular schools. **Republican Eagle** said (Apr. 24) that "Minnesota cannot be content to simply pour more money into classrooms and have blind faith that student achievement will improve."

**Star Tribune** said (Apr. 22) adding three days to the school year is the "very best feature of the House education bill." It also recommended additional learning time during the summer for students at risk of failing statewide graduation tests. It called for elimination of limits on the number of charter schools and said the Legislature should not bar profit-making schools from competing for charters. "The Duluth School Board deserves kudos, not scorn, for offering two charters this year to the profit-making Edison Project." It urged (Apr. 21) legislators to avoid tax deductions, vouchers or certificates for use in private schools.

**St. Cloud Times** said (Apr. 9) the community must think about the physical configuration of the district's elementary schools—whether larger, equal-size schools or smaller neighborhood schools will best serve children's needs. It

called (Apr. 10) a House proposal to lengthen the school year by three days "a trivial provision" and said legislators should offer incentives for school districts to adopt extended-year plans, including year-round schooling. And it recommended (Apr. 14) approving a proposal by 45 school districts to give school boards limited authority to levy taxes without having to go to voters. "Forcing school districts to go to the voters for basic educational funding is a lousy way to run schools."

**Duluth News-Tribune** said (May 1) state officials should monitor the Iron Range fiscal disparities program to see how it works and whether it should be used elsewhere.

**West Central Tribune** said (Apr. 28) a recent report on the return on state tax dollars to rural and urban areas "makes it look like rural counties are leeches on the wealth and generosity of the metro areas... But a more accurate perspective sees urban and rural areas as partners in economic and social life."

**Fergus Falls Daily Journal** urged (Apr. 8) Minnesotans to keep "cool heads" over the Mille Lacs treaty and fishing rights. **St. Cloud Times** said (Apr. 13) the court-ordered delay of a spring tribal fishing harvest "should not raise false hopes that the court will overturn Indian treaty rights contrary to all precedent."

ment and, thus, somehow, fundamentally wrong for involvement with our schools and students. The argument overlooks the obvious fact that businesses make their money by serving the customer's needs. When a business fails to meet the needs of its customers, it's no longer in business. Education should take a lesson from that example rather than reject it out of hand.

In the case of the Edison Project charter school, for the same amount of money allocated to regular public schools, each and every student will enjoy a personal computer, an extended school day, an individual learning plan and delivery of each curriculum area based on

research and best practice. If the Edison Project corporation is able to deliver all that it has promised, for the same amount of money spent elsewhere and make a profit, who loses? Certainly not the students. And certainly not the taxpayer.

Minnesota cannot afford to lose any more students to learning gaps and political arguments. We must embrace those efforts which are clearly student-centered and use the knowledge and experience gained to continue to reform the system as a whole.

*Jeanne Kling  
President, Minnesota State Board of Education*

## Kling

Continued from page 2

ject received the highest ratings of any other proposal received.

While the Edison Project is a for-profit entity, the schools themselves will not be for-profit entities. The schools are held accountable for student achievement in more rigorous ways than regular public schools and can lose their charter school status if they cannot demonstrate effective teaching and learning.

Opponents put forth the notion that for-profit businesses' primary motivation is a return on invest-

# Another view: Edison charters fit law's purpose, scope

The Minnesota State Board of Education unanimously approved the Duluth School District request to sponsor two charter schools through a relationship with a for-

profit corporation, the Edison Project. It is an important project that fits well with the purpose and scope of Minnesota's charter school laws.

The State Board of Education respected the communitywide process Duluth's school officials used to approve the Edison Project proposal. Requests for proposals

were made nationwide. After lengthy discussion by administration, teachers, community members and parents, the Edison Pro-

Continued on page 3



# Another view: Extend school day for underperformers

The news that some 91 percent of African American students in Minneapolis public schools failed the eighth-grade reading and math tests is old news. What is new is that this level of academic performance was predictable at the second grade. (See "Poverty not major factor in 8th-grade test scores," *Minnesota Journal*, Apr. 22, 1997.) What we need to learn from this is that in the absence of some drastic changes in education policy, the second grade of 1997 will, in six years, perform as badly as this year's eighth graders.

Children bring three things to kindergarten: God-given intelligence, parental inputs and time. Since God does not discriminate by race or social class in the allotment of brains and since children receive equal portions of time in school, one can assume that most of the measurable difference in kindergarten academic performance can be attributed to parental inputs.

Parents of preschool children have among their responsibilities the job of preparing their children for kindergarten. Some parents are better equipped to do this work than others. Those who are better educated and psychologically stable seem in the long run to do a better job than those who lack education and are emotionally unstable. Far too many parents fail in the task of preparing their children for kindergarten.

Teaching a child to read is a 24-hour-a-day job. It is a coaching

process, rewarding good practices and discouraging bad ones. In terms of preparing a child for kindergarten, it is a process of naming things, encouraging a child to use more words, to adopt correct speech patterns and to explore and name the world.

Parents of successful children do these things. When children lack reading and vocabulary skills, it is unreasonable to expect their parents to have them. When parents lack these skills, we need to find public resources to replace them. Time is a critical part of the equation. Teachers complain that they only have kids 20 percent of the time. Unfortunately, our commitment to integration interferes with the public's ability to teach reading and vocabulary skills to underperforming children.

Reading is a skill like shooting baskets or fixing cars. It takes time and practice to master. Before busing to achieve integration, homework was used by the teacher to extend the school day. The rules were simple: those who did not do their homework were held after school until it was done. Busing changed all that. Holding children after the buses had left created a transportation problem. When the buses left, so did the kid who needed after-school homework.

This dilemma was resolved by doing homework during class time, which reduced the amount of time available for instruction. This change in the use of class time switched the focus of the class

from pushing the top of the class ahead to making sure everyone met the minimum standards. In a classroom with large numbers of underperforming children, this change in policy was a disaster. It created an environment where kids were no longer required to stretch to catch up to their performing peers. Bright, capable, underperforming children were no longer challenged to excel. In effect, where nothing was required to ensure passage from grade to grade, the standard eroded to where only about a third of all students and only nine percent of African American students are now passing the eighth-grade tests in Minneapolis.

Along with higher standards, we need to provide underperforming children a quiet, productive place and time where they can do their work. To achieve this simple objective, I propose the following for underperforming kids:

1. Extend the elementary school day from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. This can be accomplished without adding staff by staggering the time the teachers report to work. Currently the public schools have as many nonclassroom teachers as those teaching regular instruction. By reassigning the work, all of them would remain employed. The only change would be that their efforts would be focused on improving student academic achievement.

For example, the first contingent would arrive at 7:30 and depart at 3:30. Students would arrive at 8

a.m. and be taught by these teachers until 2 p.m. The second group of teachers would arrive at 10 a.m. and depart at 6 p.m. The overlap between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. would be filled with lunch, assigned tutoring responsibilities and prep time.

At 2 p.m. the second shift would take over. In the next four hours, they would supervise organized sports, art, music and homework. All of the above would be geared to support reading, math and using English correctly. A snack would be served.

2. Abandon busing for integration. Use the money and the buses to support extending the school day and stabilizing attendance patterns. Use the buses to decrease student mobility. This could be accomplished by assigning students a home school. If a student moves any place within 20 miles of it, a bus would transport him or her back to the home school.

3. In the early grades, kindergarten through third grade, focus the entire curriculum on activities that support reading, expand vocabulary and provide the precursors to a successful math program.

By doing these three things a school is created that engages the child in constructive learning 10 hours a day, twice the time currently spent on this activity. It would also send a clear message to the community that school is important.

Larry Sawyer, Minneapolis

## Unions

Continued from page 1

the Governor about how much teachers are paid.

At the same time, the state's two major teacher unions, which are working toward a merger, are struggling to agree on what that merged union would look like and what role it would want to play in the education reform discussion.

Koppich and her coauthors argue that teacher unions have been a needed positive force in American education and that anyone who doesn't think so should study the history on how poorly paid and powerless teachers were until they joined together to bargain collectively.

Teacher unions have been so successful, in fact, that they have become the best organized and the single most influential force in American education, says Koppich. The problem is that what we need from teachers has changed dramatically as we move from the Industrial Age, and teacher unions aren't organized in a way to help teachers adjust to that change.

"Teacher unions have organized successfully the first part of education, the economic part," says Koppich. "But that's only half of the job. Teachers have been largely absent from the discussions about how to change our schools to meet the times."

The unions have become part of the bureaucratic, highly centralized and inflexible education system, even though they acknowledge that what many of their members want most is more flexibility in how they do their job and more influence over educational issues like curriculum, instruction, teacher training and school rules.

"Teachers and their unions need to be based on more than a theory of social justice," says one of Koppich's coauthors, Charles Taylor Kerchner. "They must also have a theory of learning. They must use their incredible power and influence to create a new, more flexible education system that truly meets the needs of individual students."

Koppich met with educators and others interested in reforming education throughout the day, culminating with a private meeting with teacher union leaders that included candid conversation about both the need to make unions more proactive in school-reform efforts and the obstacles to making that happen.

Koppich's book (*United Mind Workers: Unions and Teachers in the Knowledge Society*, Jossey-Bass Publishers) lays out an argument for why teacher unions should change, then offers a blueprint for how that new role might look. The main reason for change lies in what we've discovered about learning in recent years.

"We are becoming a Knowledge Society, where strategic use and manipulation of information has become as important to wealth and power as land, labor and capitol," says coauthor Joseph G. Weeves. "The teaching profession is in the forefront of this frontier. Each day teachers must rethink, react to and adapt even as they develop new knowledge and transfer skills and knowledge to the next generation."

"Teachers in this era must be trained and organized to handle these responsibilities. And schools need to give teachers the flexibility to allow them to do just that." The current system, he says, provides for neither of these needs.

Koppich and her co-authors call for a "new model of teaching." They call on unions to reorganize based on three key principles:

- Organize around quality. Unions need to assume primary responsibility for articulating and enforcing high standards for learning and teaching. These standards need to

be backed up with training, professional development and peer review systems.

- Organize around individual schools by changing the scope and nature of labor agreements. Unions and districts should slim the district contract and create individual school compacts covering resource allocation, hiring, quality assurance and how teachers take joint responsibility for reform.

- Organize the teacher labor market by modeling unions on craft norms more than the current industrial model. Unions should create electronic "hiring halls" that allow teachers to switch jobs more easily, make pension and benefits portable, create an incentive system so teachers have psychological as well as financial ownership of their jobs, and create a career ladder that allows people to enter education as classroom aides and advance through experience to teaching. The goal would be to shift the emphasis from providing job security at a specific school or district to providing career security.

And finally, teachers should be able to reap the benefits of their work by being allowed to own intellectual property rights to such products as curriculum and evaluation strategies.

Unions can't make this transition alone. State contract laws, school district operating practices—including giving schools more authority over hiring—and laws and policies concerning pensions and benefits would have to be changed. Teachers would have to assume responsibilities now left to school district administrators to remove peers who don't measure up. And they would have to embrace standardized testing and

other accepted measures of student performance to ensure quality control.

One teacher leader who heard Koppich agreed with much of what she said, saying that more progressive union leaders have been pushing for some of these changes for years. Former AFT president Al Shanker was an early supporter of charter schools, for instance. And Minneapolis and Toledo have instituted peer review systems for teachers and administrators.

As for Koppich's observation that unions have been largely absent from the national school reform discussion, one Minnesota union official replied that "If that is true, it is because we haven't been invited to the table. Many of us think this is because there is an agenda among many of the reformers to do away with unions in education, like they have in the private sector. By keeping us away from the table, the critics can then turn around and undermine us with the public by saying we don't care about reform."

"We care about reform, and we've been working on it in many ways for many years," she said.

Koppich took several questions during the day to the effect of, "Do you really think teacher unions can change like you propose?" She replied that her coauthors, while realistic about the difficulties, remain optimistic. "Remember, 35 years ago nobody thought teachers would join a union or stick together to bargain for fair salaries and benefits and more humane working conditions. But they did."

"Much of what we suggest in our report can begin tomorrow if the unions decided to end their defense of the current education system, as they have recently suggested they might," said Kerchner, referring to National Education Association President Bob Chase's recent declarations on the need for union reform. "Efforts such as peer review and the creation of standards and tests to measure them can start now."

John Kostouros is a Minneapolis education consultant who works with both school administrators and teacher unions.

## State's new welfare program requires, supports work

*Edited excerpts of remarks by Deborah Huskins, assistant commissioner of economic and community strategies at the Minnesota Department of Human Services, to the Citizens League on May 6.*

Last Wednesday the Governor signed into law Minnesota's response to the federal welfare reform challenge. This landmark legislation transforms Minnesota's welfare system from the old AFDC program to a new program designed to foster independence

and to help people work their way out of poverty.

Our legislation here in Minnesota builds on a pilot project that we've had in place for almost three years now, called the Minnesota Family Investment Program.

It expects work. Two-parent families who come onto the welfare system will be required to work immediately or to begin seeking work. Single parents will be required to do so within the first

six months of assistance.

The parents who don't comply with the requirements to work or to make progress towards work very quickly face strict sanctions. The first month of sanction is a 10 percent cut in their welfare benefit. The second month is a 30 percent cut. At that point the rent will be paid directly to the landlord by the county.

Starting this July there will be a 60-month lifetime limit on assis-

tance for families with children. This is nationwide. States can opt for a shorter period of time. Minnesota has opted for the 60-month time limit.

Families will be supported through this program until they reach 120 percent of the federal poverty level.

A more complete version of Huskins' remarks can be found at the Citizen's League World Wide Web site: <http://freenet.msp.mn.us/ip/pol/citizen>.





# Gender

Continued from page 1

- What they would add or delete from each vision; and

- How they would recommend the county get started in addressing key critical issues.

## Findings

In several key areas women and men showed statistically significant differences in their answers.

### 1. Selection of vision topic areas.

Respondents were randomly assigned two vision topics to review and were then allowed to select others. The top five most frequently reviewed vision topics were parks and open spaces (827), youth development (738), transit (694), public housing (674) and human services (625).

Males were more likely than females to select and review the topics of highways and of public buildings. Females were more likely to select the topics of human services, public and elderly housing and youth development.

### 2. Level of agreement with visions.

The overall agreement with all of the vision statements was very high (62 percent or above on each of the 15 topics)—regardless of gender, income, residency or children in the household. Women, however, were more likely to strongly agree with the visions and men more likely to disagree and strongly disagree. The gender difference regarding level of agreement is consistent for each of the visions.

### 3. Adding to or deleting from the visions.

Males were more

likely than females to have made comments suggesting additions to or deletions from the vision statements. Men were more likely to suggest additions or deletions related to the following themes: taxes, efficiency and cost effectiveness and limiting the role of government.

### 4. Getting started on critical issues.

The survey asked for suggestions on how to start to address the critical issues. In general, popular suggestions were taxes/efficiency/cost effectiveness (685); citizenship/community involvement (564); and public information and education (554). However, males were more likely to have suggestions about achieving measurable goals; about taxes, efficiency and cost effectiveness; and about limiting government. Females were more likely to comment on citizenship and community involvement and on public information and education.

### 5. Degree of achievement of vision.

When asked the degree to which we have already achieved the visions, women generally had more negative responses than men. Males were more likely to state that we had fully achieved the vision or achieved much of the vision.

This difference regarding male and female opinion of the achievement of the visions is consistent across most income levels. However, both males and females at the lowest income levels were more likely to state that we had fully achieved the vision.

### 6. Is there a strong role for citizens in the vision statement?

Females were much more likely

than males to state that the visions had a strong role for citizens.

## Implications

The Ramsey County Strategic Plan data is consistent with national data that suggest differences in values and perspective between men and women. Males and females have different interests and issues related to the future for their communities. Even when discussing the same vision topic areas, they agree with the visions at different rates. They also differ on what the focus should be for adding or deleting from the visions. In addition, they differ regarding the degree of achievement they believe has already been made and the role visions have for citizen participation.

Ramsey County males were more likely to focus on issues of cost, efficiency and the limitations of government. Women were more likely to focus on citizen participation and community education. These differences are similar across income levels for each gender.

It is important to consider several options and implications when interpreting this information.

- In some cases differences might be related to a focus, rather than an argument over content. For example, women were looking for issues of citizen participation and public education and either found them or suggested they be added. Men were looking for a reduction in government and cost savings and made sure they were added if they did not see them strongly stated. In these cases, the voice and opinion of women is a different voice and brings a new perspective that public officials should want to include more effectively.

- In some cases gender differences must surely reflect a difference of experience. Females do not experience our society as achieving its desired level of quality of life and opportunity to the same degree as males. Most data on the economic status of women would support this perception. Listening to the experiences of women will be important if we want to achieve full equality of opportunity and achievement of potential for all citizens.

- An additional implication for public policymakers is the impact women might have as voters. Their voting participation in elections over the past two decades has been higher than among males. It is likely their values will be influencing local elections and policy decisions just as they appear to have influenced the 1996 federal elections. If women are looking for a future that has more connection, more community involvement and more citizenship, they might also be the active citizens and elected officials of the future. Interestingly, for the first time in its history, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners has a majority of women.

- When seeking a community with a revitalized citizenry, women's perspectives are important to consider. They chose vision topic areas that depend more on the achievement of community, such as youth development and human services. They also sought citizen participation as an element of the vision statements and added it when they thought it necessary to do so. Their opinions of government were also less negative than males, which might influence their expectations of government's role in achieving some of the social program visions and a safety net for the poor, the young, the vulnerable and the elderly.

Women are more than ever a greater part of the work force, almost 50 percent of all small business owners and a majority of our voting population. They are beginning to place their financial and voluntary resources in things they care most about. They are also using the "harder" areas of investment, purchasing power and voting to further some of the "softer" areas of interest they have across all income levels. They just might be able to achieve the visions they have for their families and communities.

*Barbara E. Raye is director of policy analysis and planning for Ramsey County. This article is adapted from a paper delivered at the Upper Midwest Conference on Demographics for Policy Makers on April 7-8, 1997.*

# Population

Continued from page 1

the next and some of the population growth appears unrelated to employment.

## Employment gains

Nine of the twelve counties had gains in manufacturing employment, according to data from the Minnesota Department of Economic Security. In those counties that experienced growth in manufacturing, it was an important driver of job growth. While slightly more than nine percent of jobs added in Minnesota between 1990 and 1996 were in manufacturing, 52 percent of added jobs in Nobles County and 41 percent in Swift County were in manufacturing.

The added manufacturing jobs were in a variety of industries, including food processing, machinery and equipment, lumber and wood products, and electronics. Some communities attracted new industries through economic incentives, some of the growth represents expansion in established industries and some companies moved up where they are because the owner had a personal connection to the area.

Many local officials obviously did not like the population declines they saw in the 1980s and have actively intervened to bring in new jobs and growth. In individual instances, the connections between economic development efforts and industrial expansion are evident, but in the larger picture economic development activities do not provide a satisfactory explanation of the rural rebound. The trend to more positive growth is nearly universal in Greater Minnesota and has occurred in counties without much economic development activity, as well as in counties with more active efforts. And many local officials undoubtedly pursued economic development during the 1980s, but with less successful results.

## Retirement, recreation

Five of the turnaround counties, all areas with lakes and other amenities, reported an upsurge in retirement and/or recreation as a factor in growth. The aging of the baby boom appears to have

increased demand for second homes and the strong economy during this decade has resulted in a boom period for travel and tourism, creating jobs in construction, motels, retail stores, and a range of other services. Recreation is becoming year-round rather than seasonal, thanks to the popularity of winter activities, such as snowmobiling and ice fishing.

Informants pointed out that long-popular areas such as Brainerd and Alexandria are becoming more expensive and their supply of desirable properties more limited. People are choosing the next tier of counties, ones that have amenities but are not as developed.

## Other factors

In four of the 12 counties, growth appears at least partly attributable to suburbanization, as development spills over from cities in adjacent counties. For example, families have moved to Sibley County from the Twin Cities, Mankato and other regional centers.

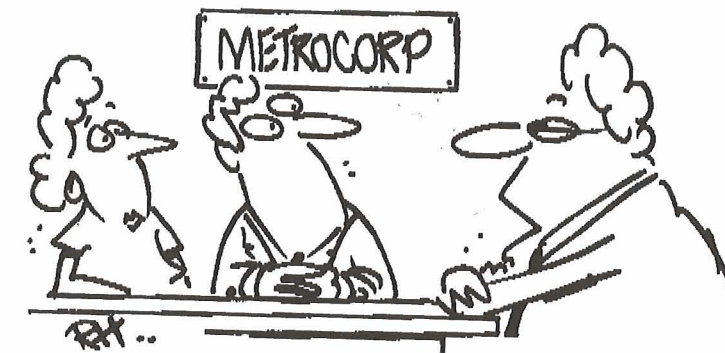
Counties with meat-packing and food-processing industries have attracted Latinos and immigrants. This is most evident in Nobles County, where the Swift pork packing plant added an extra shift. Most of the jobs at Swift have

*"If rural areas begin to retain more of their young people or attract more from elsewhere, the Twin Cities will need to recruit more workers from other states or countries."*

been filled either by Latinos from Texas and California or by immigrants from many different countries.

Other growth-producing factors include construction of a private prison in Appleton in Swift County and the merger of a Wisconsin college with Dr. Martin Luther College in Brown County's New Ulm. These two events each resulted in the addition of about 500 new group-quarters residents, resulting in a shift from population loss to population gain in the county. Further expansion of the Appleton prison will increase the number of inmates in Swift County.

Since the sources of rural popula-



*"OK...Here's the recruitment plan...We're going to hit Florida, California, Japan...and here's the tough one...rural Minnesota!"*

tion turnaround are so varied, it is difficult to evaluate the prospects for future growth. The growth in rural areas thus far in the 1990s demonstrates that turnaround is possible, but will it continue? Minnesota has enjoyed unusually robust population and economic growth in the 1990s. Many feel a return to more moderate growth is in the offing. Will a downturn affect all areas equally, or will rural areas be affected more?

Interviews with informants pointed out several potential barriers to continued rural growth. The most frequently mentioned were housing and labor shortages, with housing issues probably mentioned

remain an option, though accurate data on mobile homes are hard to come by.

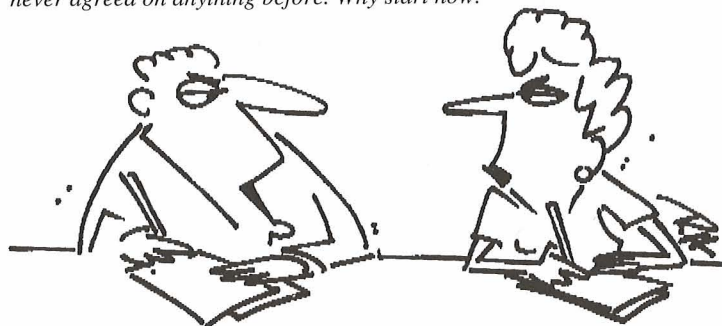
Labor shortages are also becoming a constraint on growth in some areas, though this varies by industry and job skill requirements. As a result of tight labor and housing markets, many workers drive long distances to work. Commutes of 30 miles or more are common, particularly for better-paying jobs.

Continued growth in rural populations will affect the balance between the Twin Cities and other areas of the state. Historically the Twin Cities has imported young adults, particularly the more educated, from rural areas. If rural areas begin to retain more of their young people or attract more from elsewhere, the Twin Cities will need to recruit more workers from other states or countries. The Minneapolis-St. Paul area already attracts many people from outside the state, but a stronger rural economy would strengthen this trend. The result would probably be a larger total state population, more racial and ethnic diversity and more socioeconomic balance among the state's regions.

*Martha McMurry is a senior research analyst with the Office of the State Demographer in Minnesota Planning. This article is adapted from a presentation at the Upper Midwest Conference on Demographics for Policy Makers, held April 7-8, 1997, at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul.*

So far the major means of combating rural housing shortages is to build housing for the elderly. This allows older people to stay in a familiar area, while freeing up existing housing for younger families. Many cities have also encouraged construction of apartment buildings, alleviating the shortage of rental housing. Mobile homes

*"...I'm not copying your survey answers dear.... I'm simply picking the opposite answers.... We've never agreed on anything before. Why start now!"*





# Metro residents losing confidence in our quality of life

**Not exactly** Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood: For the second year in a row, residents of the Twin Cities metro area appear to be losing confidence about the region's quality of life.

Every year, the University of Minnesota and the Metropolitan Council survey residents on their impression of life in the Twin Cities. On the surface, everything looks rosy: 95 percent of residents in the seven-county region believe the Twin Cities is a good place to live compared to other metropolitan regions.

However, those residents who believe it a "much better" place than other metro regions dropped from 56 percent in 1994 to 48 percent in 1995 to 45 percent last year. This decline was offset by an increase in people who said the Twin Cities was "slightly better" than other regions. More than one out of four survey respondents believed that the region's quality of life has gotten worse in the last year or two, while only about 10 percent said it has gotten better.

It appears that this drop in confidence is related to an increasing fear of crime in the region. For the sixth year in a row, crime was cited as the top concern among residents—more than three out of four saw it as the number one problem facing the region.—*Ron Wirtz.*

**Opponents of any new** initiatives for site-based funding and management for schools say we already have site-based management of public schools in Minnesota. In name, perhaps. But the recent experience of the Leadership Council at Southwest High School in Minneapolis—the school's site-based management group—shows that what many schools have instead is a frustrating process for nibbling around the edge of real decisions.

Southwest decided to experiment with a new schedule this year, combining the traditional six-period class schedule with two days a week of three 100-minute class periods. To monitor the response to the new scheduling, the council surveyed students, parents and teachers, presented forums at par-

ent meetings and sponsored faculty meetings.

Council member and teacher Richard Schwartz said opinions on the new scheduling clearly were split among all groups. He said after considerable study the Leadership Council recommended continuing the new scheduling next year, with some modifications and with extensive staff development to help teachers use the block periods effectively.

A model exercise in parent-teacher-student-administrator democratic decision-making? Perhaps. But it meant nothing. The faculty, citing a clause in the union contract giving them the right to vote on any scheduling change that affects their prep period time, turned down the proposal to continue the block scheduling on a 47-to-36 vote just days after the Leadership Council's vote. (A bone of contention for some faculty members was that on one block day each week they had no prep period, although on the other block day they had a 100-minute prep period.)

"If a decision affects the whole school—like this one did—isn't the council the proper place to discuss it?" asked Leadership Council cochair Denny Schapiro, a Southwest parent and long-time observer of the Minneapolis schools. "Should the Leadership Council be at the union organizing table saying *we* should be able to make these decisions?"

The lesson? Site-based management doesn't exist if the supposed decision-making body isn't given *real* authority and *real* decisions to make. Recommendations that can be voted down by the faculty are *not* real decisions.—*Dana Schroeder.*

**News item**, from the *Pioneer Press*: "A bill for a unique school voucher plan—targeted to poor students locked into the public school system—was introduced Monday in the Minnesota Legisla-

ture...Supporters of the bill believe the vouchers would force schools to work harder and teach more effectively to attract students... Limiting the plan to low-income people would eliminate a danger that has stymied most other voucher proposals—the fear that education credits would stimulate a flight of white, upper-income families from the public school system."

Lead editorial, from the *Star Tribune*: "With or without new private schools the limited voucher plan would give low-income families choices in education that only the better-off can exercise now. Perhaps not many want such choice, but unless it is offered there is no sure way to know. Nor, in principle, are there overwhelming reasons why the choice should be withheld...The Legislature should start the discussion now."

The dates of these items? March 31, 1983, and April 10, 1983, respectively. Citizens League secretary Gayle Ruther, who has a good eye for history and irony, ran into these clippings while cleaning out files last week.

The sponsor of the bill was then-Rep. John Brandl. The proposal didn't fly then. But we were impressed by the apparent openness of legislators, community leaders and editorial writers to at least consider the idea.—*Janet Dudrow.*

**What would happen** if a commercial airline crashed every two weeks with no survivors? You can bet public outcry would force some very extensive, and expensive, safety precautions on the industry. But apparently pedestrians getting run over by automobiles does not rate the same kind of scrutiny.

According to a new report by the Surface Transportation Policy Project, more than 6,000 pedestrians per year die after being struck by a car, and more than 110,000 are injured. Ironically, federal highway safety funds often have the perverse effect of making the roads more dangerous for pedestrians. Most traffic safety measures are designed to allow drivers to move at higher speeds. In fact, the Highway Capacity Manual defines a pedestrian as a traffic "flow interruption."

The report also ranks the 10 most dangerous metropolitan areas for pedestrians. Not surprisingly, most tend to be newer, sprawling areas designed for the automobile. Minneapolis ranks sixth on the list of the safest cities. That is a bit surprising since most of the rest of the 10 safest cities are older, more traditional cities that developed before widespread automobile use—Boston, New York, Philadelphia and college towns such as Columbus, Ohio.—*Phil Jenni.*

"Take Note" contributors include Minnesota Journal and Citizens League staff members.

**Minnesota Journal**  
**Citizens League**  
**Suite 500**  
**708 S. Third St.**  
**Minneapolis, MN 55415**

PERIODICALS  
POSTAGE PAID  
AT MINNEAPOLIS  
MINNESOTA





# Citizens League Matters

May 20, 1997

News for Citizens League Members

## Welcome New and Returning Members

Curt Botner  
William Brumfield  
Dionisa C. Coates  
Wayne Cox  
Sydney L. Devin  
Laura Dockery  
Waite Durfee, Jr.  
Claudia Fercello  
L. Joseph Genereux  
Mitchell Gordon  
Todd Graham  
John Healy  
Agnes Kranz  
Joanne Kutzler  
Stephanie L. Otto  
Mark Ritchie  
Art Serotoff  
Patrick Smith  
Susan Voigt  
Dennis Welsch

## Citizens League

708 South 3rd St. Suite 500  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
Phone: 338-0791 Fax: 337-5919  
citizen@epx.cis.umn.edu  
<http://freenet.msp.mn.us/ip/pol/citizen>

*The Citizens League promotes the public interest in Minnesota by involving citizens in identifying and framing critical public policy choices, forging recommendations and advocating their adoption. Suggested dues for membership are \$50 for individuals and \$75 for families.*

## CL + the Active Citizenship School = *Citizenship Matters*

We face a crisis of citizenship.

When the role of citizens in public life becomes secondary, we become a nation of complainers, consumers and special interests. We must talk about citizenship and how it applies to addressing community issues.

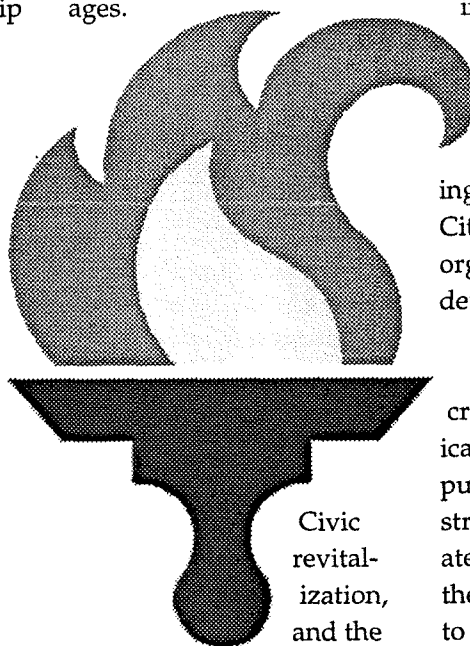
The Citizens League and the Active Citizenship School for Young Adults will cosponsor a quarterly series of four evening events to explore and discuss civic revitalization: *Citizenship Matters*.

The inaugural program, "Doing Well & Doing Good: To the Ends of the Cubicle—and Beyond," will address issues of work and citizenship.

The first session will be held Wednesday, May 28 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. It will be hosted by General Mills, located at the intersection of I-394 and Hwy 169.

Citizenship can't be a set of

fuzzy concepts. It is critical that it be defined clearly. Conversations about citizenship need to cut across generation lines and involve partnerships with people of all ages.



Civic revitalization, and the concept of

"active citizenship," provide a framework for discussion and critical thinking, and tools for action and results.

We need to emphasize the importance of "active citizenship," the belief that every citizen has the obligation to act, in every aspect of life, within the interests

of the larger good. Active citizenship is the guiding principle for how we participate and shape the world around us.

These issues are simply too important to ignore. In order to bring more attention to the idea of active citizenship, the Citizens League is uniting with the Active Citizenship School, a civic organization devoted to developing the leadership capacity of young adults in Minnesota by creating personal and political strategies to address public problems, build a strong community, and create democratic change in the institutions that matter to them.

For young adults, the workplace probably has as much influence on them as any other institution. But many young adults are ambivalent about the meaning of work. Where do democracy and capitalism work together? How can young adults become leaders in this effort? What is "entre-

*see other side*



## Citizenship Matters continued from page one

preneurial citizenship?" At the program, members of ACS will talk about their work to address citizenship issues from within their workplaces—what they're learning and what they're trying to do.

The second program of the series, "**Citizenship & Civic Involvement: An Intergenerational Discussion**," will examine how different generations relate to and perceive citizenship.

What can civic leaders from the GI generation, baby boomers and young adults teach each other? Are the

leadership responsibilities distributed "fairly" across the generations? Are the notions of citizenship different for each generation? Public leaders from across the generation spectrum will share their thoughts.

The date and time of this program will be announced. Watch your mail for details.

All four meetings in the *Citizenship Matters* series are free and open to the public. Donations are gladly accepted. The League and the ACS encourage you to bring your children or grandchildren, or your parents or grandparents.

### Catch a wave: *Ride the surf to the CL Web site*

In the course of your Web surfing, have you stopped by the Citizens League Web site yet? The site has constant features, like our link to WCCO's Channel 4000, as well as changing highlights, like transcripts of Mind-Opener meetings. This month, check out:

- The complete League research report on K-12 education, "Straight A's for Minnesota's Schools: Achievement, Assessment, Accountability."
- Transcripts of Ted Kolderie's and Art Serotoff's K-12 education presentations from the Mind-Opener series on Closing the Education Gap; and the May 6 presentation by Deborah Huskins on welfare reform.
- The League's monthly calendar of events.

Last year, the *Pioneer Press* put the League's web page on its "hot list" of "what's new, what's cool in area Web sites." We'd love to hear from you about your other favorite policy sites. You can gain access to our e-mail straight from our Web page—or fax, phone or write to us.

Visit our web page at: <http://freenet.msp.mn.us/ip/pol/citizen>

Happy surfing.

## Breakfast season ends with welfare reform

May was welfare reform month at the Mind-Opener series. The four sessions explored both the effects and effectiveness of proposed changes in Minnesota's welfare system.

"Welfare Reform: Making it Work" centered on a bill authored by **Sen. Don Samuelson** (DFL-Brainerd), the series' first speaker. The bill, which was signed into law on April 28, implements on a statewide level the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), an experimental pilot program begun in 1994. The new program will replace the federal welfare program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), which Congress abolished in August.

MFIP will take effect statewide on January 1, 1998. It limits welfare recipients to a five year lifetime limit on benefits. Under the new law, people on welfare must begin work within strict time limits.

The series concludes on May 20, with **Carole Mae**

**Olson**, Executive Director, Episcopal Community Services, who will speak about the impact of reform on current recipients and service providers.

Other speakers included **Deborah L. Huskins**, Assistant Commissioner, Economic and Community Support Strategies, MN Department of Human Services and **Marcia Keller Avner**, Public Policy Director, MN Council of Non-Profits. On May 6, Huskins discussed the

state's role in

welfare reform wraps up Mind-Opener season

helping people stay off welfare and explained the new welfare plan. (Full text of her remarks will be available on the Web.) Avner, who spoke on May 13, addressed the broad effects of welfare reform on the non-profit community.

## New intern at the League

**Lila Foldes**, a high school senior at Saint Paul Academy and Summit School (SPASS), will join the League staff during the month of May. All seniors at SPASS have the opportunity to develop their own "Senior Project," a month-long, self-designed program of internships and volunteer work. As part of her Senior Project, Lila, whose father is a member of the League, is interning at the Citizens League. At SPASS Lila is an editor of the school newspaper, the *Rubicon*. That experience is already visible in her work here at the League—she designed and wrote this month's "Matters." Lila will attend Barnard College this fall.