

MINNESOTA Journal

A PUBLIC POLICY MONTHLY FROM THE CITIZENS LEAGUE

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In 2001, the metropolitan area produced 3.3 million tons of solid waste, enough to fill nearly 127 million 30-gallon trash bags, or 362,734 garbage trucks, which—if parked bumper to bumper—would form a line from Saint Paul to Los Angeles.

—Ramsey County
Commissioner Susan Haigh

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A shared vision for a vital region

by Ted Mondale

Whenever I read about the problems plaguing other metro areas, I'm always struck by how much the people of this region value what they have, and how successful they are at making it better. You see the results all around—in our efficient public services, our excellent parks and trails, our strong economy.

You see it, too, in the vision and hard work of local leaders and citizens to make their cities more livable and vital, with a stronger sense of community, with a real sense of place. Let me offer a few examples by way of illustration:

St. Louis Park, an older, first-ring suburb, is transforming its outdated commercial area into a town center, with a town green, housing, retail, entertainment and offices—all connected by transit circulators.

Maple Grove, a newer, third-ring suburb, has created a "Main Street" because its residents wanted a community focus and a place for city celebrations.

In rural Carver County, Chaska has fostered the Clover Ridge community, which offers various types of homes around a neighborhood center and school, complementing the look of historic Chaska.

All these efforts are expressions of energy, drive and aspirations that originated from the communities themselves. They signal a new spirit in the region that's leading citizens and their leaders to embrace new ways to make their communities more livable and to promote their economic vitality.

We have the results of the most recent Twin Cities Area Survey to confirm it. The survey



shows overwhelming support—90 percent or better—favoring a range of transportation options, including both roads and transit; favoring neighborhoods with a mix of homes, shops, offices and parks so people can more easily meet their everyday needs; and favoring housing that accommodates people at various stages of their life and different income levels.

The Metropolitan Council has heard this message loud and clear. We want to be able to give communities the tools they need to make the kind of neighborhoods they want, the kind of housing they want, the kind of transportation alternatives they want and the kind of protections they want for their natural areas and open space.

The framework for the Council's efforts will be Blueprint 2030. The guiding principle of Blueprint 2030 will be a shared vision, a vision that everyone has an opportunity to shape—communities, citizens, business leaders, non-profit organizations, environmental groups and others. The strategies to carry it out will be based on partnerships with all who have a stake in the outcome.

Underlying Blueprint 2030 are seven objectives:

- ▲ Increase lifecycle and affordable housing.
- ▲ Preserve and protect natural resources.
- ▲ Support rural communities and preserve agricultural lands.
- ▲ Provide greater transportation choices linked to development patterns and jobs.
- ▲ Reinvest in fully developed and older communities.
- ▲ Invest in new, developing communities.
- ▲ Focus growth and redevelopment in urban and rural centers and along corridors.

Let's talk trash: Costs of our throw-away society keep climbing

by Susan Haigh

Garbage. Do you ever think about the garbage you produce each day and where it goes? Most of us carry our trash bags to the curb or the alley and never give another thought to where those bags end up. Garbage rarely takes the spotlight in environmental debates and many of us think we have solved our "garbage problem" because we recycle some of our cans, bottles, office paper and newspapers.

In the mid-80s, a wave of consumer activism jump-started local recycling programs. In the mid-90's, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down flow control, allowing haulers to dispose of garbage in surrounding states. In the late 90's, the steady growth in garbage generation became apparent. Recent trends strongly suggest that it is time once again to pay close attention to garbage.

How much garbage do we produce?

In our growing metropolitan area, there are more of us each year and we keep producing garbage at increasingly higher rates per capita. Plainly stated, we just produce too much trash. I chair the Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board (SWMCB) for the six-county metropolitan area and we measure the garbage we produce. In 2001, we produced 3.3 million tons of solid waste. Here's what we did with it:

- ▲ 38% recycled (46% with yard waste credits)
- ▲ 36% processed into energy
- ▲ 25% landfilled
- ▲ 1% managed as a problem material

How much is 3.3 million tons of garbage? It would fill 362,734 garbage trucks, which, parked bumper to bumper, would form a line 1,924 miles long, stretching from Saint Paul to Los Angeles. It would fill a volume of 33 acres, 100 feet deep; or it would fill nearly 127 million 30-gallon trash bags.

In the last nine years, the per capita generation of waste in the metro area has grown by 20 percent. Within 15 years, our region will be generating in excess of 5 million tons of garbage each year. Economic growth, over-consumption and wasteful consumer choices fuel this garbage growth. The convenience offered by over-packaged and disposable goods is

precisely why combating waste generation is one of government's greatest challenges. The bottom line is that the growing amount of garbage represents a tremendous waste of our natural resources.

Isn't recycling enough?

Recycling grew steadily in the 1980's. Then, it flattened out in the 1990's. In fact, between 1997 and 2001, the region's recycling rate actually dipped from 49 percent to just 46 percent of the total solid waste stream (this includes credits for yard waste composting and waste reduction). Recent garbage sort studies show that 45 percent of the solid waste going to landfills or being processed could be recycled and an additional 25 percent could be used in organic composting facilities. Clearly, we can do a much better job of reducing the waste we process or send to landfills.

If we diverted one-half of the region's food waste and non-recyclable paper (e.g., pizza boxes) to composting, we could produce 6 million, 40 lb. bags of compostable material. If we recycled just one-half of the corrugated containers, newspapers, office paper and mixed mail that we now throw in our trash, our region could save 3.5 million trees.

To put this in perspective:

If we diverted one-half of the region's food waste and non-recyclable paper (e.g., pizza boxes) to composting, we could produce 6 million, 40 lb. bags of compostable material.

If we recycled just one-half of the corrugated containers, newspapers, office paper and mixed mail that we now throw in our trash, our region could save 3.5 million trees.

If we recycled just one-half of the aluminum cans we are still throwing in our trash, we could save enough energy to provide electricity to 28,000 homes.

Processing waste into energy

While reducing and recycling are preferred ways to manage solid waste, processing waste for resource recovery by composting it or burning it for energy is the next best thing for the environment. There are three resource recovery facilities serving the metro area, in Minneapolis, Newport, and Elk River. Together, these facilities burn enough solid waste to generate energy to power over 75,000 homes.

In recent years, waste that could be processed at these facilities to produce energy has been diverted to landfills. Waste diverted to landfill is growing at a rate of 2 to 3 percent each year. Metro counties struggle with a long-term plan to ensure that solid waste is processed into energy to the fullest extent possible.

Most of the growth in garbage ends up in landfills

Most of the growth in the solid waste stream is disposed of in landfills because this is the cheapest option for private haulers. In the early 1980's, Minnesota discovered that landfills were major polluters, and legislators put state laws in place to prevent future problems. There are 102 closed landfills in Minnesota. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has estimated that cleaning-up these old sites will cost the citizens and businesses of Minnesota \$500 million over the next 20 years. The U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency has found that the barriers that line today's landfills deteriorate over time. As a result, our groundwater resources are at risk of contamination. And our waste generators, both businesses and citizens, are at risk of even greater liability for clean-up costs.

What can we do together?

Our goal as counties is to protect public health, safety and the environment in a cost-effective manner. One option to achieve this goal is to change the overall approach to solid waste collection and management, such as public collection,

'Trash continued on page 7

Reporting on best practices in e-government

by Lyle Wray

On April 30, the Office of the Legislative Auditor issued two best practices reviews, one titled "Local E-Government" and the second "Managing Local Government Computer Systems." These two reports outlined sound planning and operational practices, both for deciding whether to put public services on the Web, and for managing the local government computer systems that are a key foundation for well-run modern governments.

E-government—the use of advanced information, computing and telecommunication technologies to make government more efficient, effective and responsive—is accelerating at local, state, national and international levels. Making e-government work at the local level is particularly important in the United States because so many direct services to citizens go through local governments.

The best practices report on e-government offered seven recommendations. First, local governments begin by assessing whether to offer electronic service delivery to citizens. In order to assess this, governments must identify the potential users of e-government and what their needs are, and then identify resources as a part of a strategic plan for the development and

implementation of an e-government system. A sound second step is to look for other sites with which to collaborate, share expertise and conserve resources. The report advises local governments to develop a detailed implementation plan, which would include an analysis of the resources required to start up and maintain e-government services, and to assign a point person for the initiative.

The greatest concern associated with the development of this type of system is security, for the information transmitted and for the security of the system where the information is stored. Governments need to conduct a risk assessment, and then develop security policies based on the results, and implement "firewalls," and other protections to reduce e-government's vulnerability to attack from outside or unauthorized access to non-public information. The report also recommends the development of a policy framework to guide e-government in areas such as privacy, employee use of websites, and access for persons with disabilities or with limited English. To function optimally, websites should follow sound practices on visual style to minimize clutter and confusion, and sites should be fine tuned as experience accumulates. Finally, e-government should be evaluated to determine how well it meets the goals of the program, the requirements of the government and the usefulness of the intended users.

Local government computing systems are the backbone, or nervous system, of modern government, and as such, they need to operate effectively. The second report, "Managing Local Government Computer Systems," makes four recommendations as to how local governments can manage their computer systems effectively. First, local governments should begin by making sure that information technology has the support of top officials, that staff members have the ability to estimate the total information technology costs and to effectively manage contracts, that services to be offered are clearly iden-

tified, that there are plans for the replacement of technology, and that there is an understanding of where information technology fits within each organization.

The second recommendation suggests that when determining whether computer systems are managed by in-house staff, by an inter-governmental collaborative, by outside vendors or some combination of these, the starting point should be an analysis of whether a particular option has complete inventories of equipment, set standards for software and hardware, follows clear protocols for day to day operations, and communicates and monitors policies and procedures for operations.

The third recommendation calls for ongoing training to build staff expertise and training and support for other computer users who utilize the local government computer systems. A fourth and final recommendation calls for trained professionals to assess security risks to computers, and to develop relevant security policies, and manage security and disaster recovery strategies for the computer system.

Taken together, these two reports provide valuable guidance, which is especially helpful for smaller units of government who lack large staff in mapping out their computer and e-government strategies. Jody Hauer, who served as project team leader and is a former Citizens League staff member, and her team are to be commended for a job well done. As a society that has come to expect online services, and one that is entering a 20-year labor shortage, these two reports will assist local decision makers in moving forward with digital government in Minnesota.

View the e-government best practices review on the web at <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/2002/pe0208.htm>. The managing local government computer systems report is at www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/2002/pe0209.htm. MJ

Lyle Wray is Executive Director of the Citizens League. He can be reached at 612-338-0791 or at lwray@citizensleague.net

The Minnesota Journal

Publisher—Lyle Wray

Editor—J. Trout Lowen

Contributing Editor—Ted Kolderie

Sketches—Ray Hanson

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OnBalance

Views From Around the State

The use of the tobacco endowment is heating up debate across the state

"Tapping into the endowment may offer short-term fiscal benefits and political benefits for the next election, but keeping the fund intact will save the state hundreds of millions of dollars in the long run," argues the **Mankato Free Press (3/28)**. "It may be easy to raid the tobacco endowment because it's a program that doesn't have a high profile and doesn't directly affect political constituencies. But that doesn't make it right. Lawmakers need to find another way to fix the state's budget woes."

The **West Central Tribune (4/3)** agrees. "Unfortunately, this tobacco endowment solution does nothing to fix the current budget deficit in Minnesota or any other state. The deficit problem of overspending is still there and the budget problem is only delayed until next year... Tobacco smoking and addiction costs the state significantly every year. Investing the tobacco endowment in smoking prevention and smoking cessation activities helps reduce the number of smokers as well as their related health care costs."

The **Bemidji Pioneer (4/21)** believes there should be more control over the tobacco endowment money given to the Minnesota Partnership for Action Against Tobacco (MPAAT). "As a non-profit group created and funded by public funds, MPAAT's role should have been narrowed to that of information and referral and as a promoter of anti-smoking research and methods. By becoming politically active, and secretive, it instead has driven a wedge into anti-smoking efforts and has lost the public trust. Moving the original goals of the funds to the University of Minnesota and the state Department of Health is a solid move toward restoring that public trust and in making anti-smoking programs a health priority."

There is support across the state for requiring the Governor and others to disclose their outside income.

The **Rochester Post-Bulletin (4/22)** thinks income disclosure is needed to gauge

how much time elected officials are devoting to their work. "Beyond the issue of influencing investment policy, the total income from salary, fees and contracts is important as a gauge of how much time and effort the governor—or other [State Board of Investment] member—is devoting to outside employment... The people of Minnesota have a right to expect that their top elected leaders are devoting primary attention to their official duties, not to various outside jobs that are far more lucrative."

The **Brainerd Daily Dispatch (4/17)** thinks elected officials should disclose income information voluntarily. "The point we'd raise is that a governor, particularly one who prides himself on his candor, doesn't need a law to do the right thing. Gov. Ventura can and should disclose such information voluntarily. Disclosure doesn't cost him anything and it allows citizens to make up their own minds on whether the moonlighting is appropriate."

Two papers call for a disclosure law that includes legislators.

"If legislators want to shine light on the governor's outside income, they have to be willing to open the windows on their own outside earnings," argues the **Duluth News Tribune (5/1)**. "Legislators, too, have the authority to make, recommend, or vote on major decisions regarding the expenditure or investment of public money. That's their job. The public has a right to know what economic interests are in play in these decisions."

"The logic behind the bill is this board oversees the investment of roughly \$53 billion in state pension money. And disclosing their personal finances will make sure its members do not have conflicts of interest in making those decisions," states the **St. Cloud Times (5/1)**. "There is legitimacy in that logic, but it should be applied to all state lawmakers. After all, legislators make countless decisions every day about what to do with taxpayer dollars. If the governor is asked to disclose his finances, certainly legislators should disclose theirs if they are to vote on

how Minnesota tax money is spent."

The transportation debate rages on.

"Investment in transportation through an increase in the gas tax is long overdue. It has been nearly 15 years since the last increase, and road construction is continuing to fall further behind the need. Every year there has been less revenue to invest in the state's transportation system," argues the **West Central Tribune (4/19)**. "Minnesota's roads and bridges need repair and improvement now, not five or 10 years down the road... Transportation projects are critical to the future of west central Minnesota. A transportation investment through an increase in the state gas tax is just as critical."

The **Duluth News Tribune (4/16)** believes a commitment to transportation is essential for the state's non-metro cities. "A modern transportation system is essential for the state and for regional hubs, such as Duluth. We cannot afford to let our transportation system stand still or deteriorate... The fact is, Minnesota's transportation needs have changed since the gas tax was set at 20 cents in 1988. Proposals to increase the gas tax to update and modernize our transportation system in the past 14 years have been defeated. The result: Highway spending has stagnated and new money for transit/multimodal transportation has been virtually nonexistent."

"Between 1975 and 1988, Minnesota's gas tax increased six different times. It hasn't budged since. The result is the same 20-cent tax set 14 years ago has the buying power of 12 cents today," opines the **St. Cloud Times (4/12)**. "Approve a one-time gas tax increase this session, making sure the state and local governments provide residents with a list of projects it will help fund. Then come back in 2005-06 and decide whether governments did what they said they would do. If the answer is yes, index the gas tax to inflation. If the answer is no, then leave the tax as is." **MJ**

Citizen Corps offers new opportunities

Volunteers provide disaster aid and homeland security

by *Charlie Weaver*

Minnesotans take pride in our civic commitment and readiness to volunteer on behalf of others. Since September 11, citizen involvement in our communities has become more important than ever.

One of the most common examples of citizen involvement is neighborhood block clubs. Citizens organize in partnership with their local police departments to rid their neighborhoods of crime. The block clubs work. The results include better, stronger neighborhoods, with decreased opportunities for any criminal activity.

This same commitment can have a huge impact in other public safety activities as well. Alert citizens, while going about their daily lives, who inform law enforcement about suspicious or unusual events, behavior or activities create adverse conditions for those who would commit crimes or perpetrate acts of violence against one person or many people. This is one of our most important tools in the war on terrorism.

The seeds of Citizen Corps

There are additional, proactive steps that citizens can take to better prepare their towns to respond to acts of terrorism, crime and other large-scale disasters.

In his State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush urged all Americans to commit at least 4,000 hours over their lifetimes to serving others. The President is working to support these community-based efforts through the Citizen Corps, an initiative designed to channel volunteers into new and existing programs based on their skills and interests.

In Minnesota, the state Office of Homeland Security and the Division of Emergency Management—in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—have begun laying the groundwork for communities to create their own Citizens Corps programs.

The state Office of Homeland Security has invited directors of state agencies and leaders of volunteer organizations, law enforcement associations, and local municipalities to participate in a state Citizens Corps Council, which will facilitate local initiatives and provide a link to

federal resources. Council members will help expand opportunities for volunteer service that will support emergency preparation, prevention and response.

Other council duties include developing a statewide strategy for increasing first responder and volunteer coordination, matching Citizen Corps training needs with existing opportunities, and ensuring that Citizen Corps communities receive consideration for grant funding.

The likelihood of a major terrorist attack within the United States seemed negligible until April 19, 1995 when the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City took the lives of 168 people.

Preventing the impossible

Preparing for emergency situations will save lives. Preventing such incidents—when possible—could save an entire community.

The likelihood of a major terrorist attack within the United States seemed negligible until April 19, 1995 when the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City took the lives of 168 people. The events of September 11 confirmed that terrorism in American need not be committed by American citizens, and that oceans are no longer adequate barriers.

A new Citizens Corps, which will become effective in August 2002, will help citizens report suspicious activity and assist law enforcement personnel in preventing acts of terrorism. The Terrorist Information and Prevention System, or Operation TIPS will provide millions of American truckers, letter carriers, train conductors, ship captains, utility employees, and other workers with a toll-free number and hotline that routes calls to appropriate law enforcement agencies or emergency responders. Operation TIPS will begin as a pilot program in 10 cities.

Building on success

Existing programs currently included under Citizen Corps—Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service—have already been proven successful in communities across Minnesota. In addition to their original objectives, these programs are being adapted to increase preparedness for threats that have come to light since September 11.

The Burnsville Fire Department, which adopted the CERT program last year, is training residents to take active roles in emergency management planning in their neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces, and to prepare themselves and others for disasters, whether caused by acts of nature or acts of terrorism. FEMA developed the CERT program—following a major 1987 earthquake in the Los Angeles area—as a means of training civilians to assist emer-

gency personnel without putting themselves in danger. With an emphasis on transforming fear into preparedness, the Burnsville program teaches participants skills such as how to turn off gas leaks, put out small fires, set up triage areas, and how to lift heavy objects without injury.

Since 1999, the Moorhead Police Department has relied on citizen volunteers to conduct a range of activities, including clerical functions, investigative projects, writing parking citations, and monitoring residents' homes while the owners are out of town. Relieved of these activities, police officers have more time to conduct critical enforcement activities. Volunteer resources will have an even greater impact in the Moorhead area as local police officers replace departing National Guard units at the regional airport—a new security priority since September 11.

An expanded Neighborhood Watch program will incorporate terrorism prevention and education into its existing crime prevention mission. In neighborhoods all across Minnesota, residents have already seen the positive effects of grassroots crime-

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Shared vision *continued from page 1*

Those objectives are what we're working toward. The how will be partnerships, incentives and regional investments.

The starting point for Blueprint 2030 is the good planning work that communities have already done. Virtually every city and county has prepared a comprehensive plan that expresses that community's unique vision for the coming decades. Together, they form the basis for developing an overall regional growth strategy.

As it has for the last three years, the Council will align regional investments to better support the efforts of communities striving to improve their livability as they change and grow. These investments include outlays for highways, transit, wastewater facilities, regional parks and open space, water quality protection, and our Livable Communities grants for affordable housing, polluted site cleanup and model redevelopment.

This region's success depends on the involvement of local officials, business leaders and citizens to ensure that the regional vision reflects the values and priorities of our communities. That's why we've created so many opportunities for citizens to be heard as Blueprint 2030

comes together.

A series of workshops in March drew citizens and stakeholders who talked about how much the region is expected to grow, and what they valued most about their communities and wanted to nurture and enhance. A second round of workshops explored tools and strategies for strengthening communities as they change and grow.

In June, the Council will host a series of community dialogues for citizens and community leaders to view and comment on various regional growth and development scenarios. You are cordially invited to attend. Just let us know you're coming by calling 651-602-1844 to register, or RSVP at the Council's website www.metrocouncil.org.

If you can't make it to the community dialogues, you will be able to log onto the Council's website in June and respond to proposed regional growth scenarios from your computer. The Council will also host a concurrent online forum, led by elected officials and community leaders.

When completed at the end of 2002, the Blueprint will spell out goals and clear priorities for action. Setting and car-

rying out the priorities will depend on active participation of citizens, local governments, the private sector and community organizations.

Developing the regional vision is an inclusive process, as will be the process of carrying it out. The Council is committed to working with communities and others in a partnership that relies on incentives and investments to pursue common goals that enhance our communities' livability and our regional competitiveness.

After all, the competition is no longer between central city and suburb or between the metro area and Greater Minnesota. This region is in competition with other metro areas, like Atlanta and Denver, Milan and Taipei. Our region needs to make a unified effort to create a collaborative vision that will ensure stronger more livable communities and make sure that our metropolitan area is among the top places to live, work, raise a family and do business. **MJ**

Ted Mondale is Chairman of the Metropolitan Council

Citizen Corps *continued from page 5*

prevention initiatives. In Minneapolis, members of more than 1,300 block organizations, in cooperation with local police, walk their streets, distribute information to neighbors, and meet to discuss ongoing problems. These networks of concerned citizens, which are the foundation of many communities, may become building blocks for safer cities and a more secure nation.

Increasing the value of volunteerism

Cooperative relationships between volunteer agencies and emergency management organizations are essential in disaster situations. This was particularly apparent in the days following the World Trade Center attack when firefighters, police officers, and other emergency responders worked side by side with scores of volunteer agencies with the unified mission of saving lives.

The same spirit of cooperation is typical

in Minnesota. When natural disasters strike, volunteers and donations are plentiful. The challenge often lies in managing these resources: distributing supplies, feeding and housing volunteers, and making the best use of those who want to help.

Among the benefits of long-term commitment to volunteerism is the opportunity for advanced training and experience. Experienced volunteers increase their effectiveness with each event, making an even bigger contribution to relief efforts.

Volunteers with special skills are highly valued. One of new programs established under the Citizens Corps program is the Medical Reserve Corps. The program creates a niche for volunteers with medical skills. The Medical Reserve Corps will coordinate volunteer health-care professionals in large-scale emergency situations. Medical reserves will assist emergency response teams, provide care to victims

with less serious injuries, and attend to other duties so physicians and nurses can work more effectively.

Citizen Corps continues to expand its programs in many different areas. In addition to the five programs currently included in Citizen Corps, the program will continue to create more ways for citizens to volunteer their time and share their knowledge and skills.

As we intensify efforts to secure our nation, many options will be pursued. Millions of dollars will be spent on sophisticated technology, state-of-the-art equipment, and additional law enforcement personnel and emergency responders. But let's not forget that our most powerful weapon in the war on terrorism is an informed and engaged citizenry. **MJ**

Charlie Weaver is Minnesota Commissioner of Public Safety

which is being examined by Ramsey and Washington Counties. Public collection is when a city, township or county arranges for the collection of solid waste through private haulers. The private haulers would agree to dispose of solid waste in ways that protect the environment and our health. Every community would have the ability to design their own system, which could include incentives for waste reduction and recycling. Many cities and townships have done this for years.

Ramsey and Washington counties recently completed a study of public collection, which included an extensive public involvement process. The public's response was split. Those that support public collection do so for various reasons: because it would address garbage truck traffic; because it would be more efficient; because of experience elsewhere; because it could cost less; or, because it supports environment, health and safety goals. Likewise, those that oppose public collection do so for various reasons: concern with increasing government involvement; desire to retain choice in selecting a garbage hauler; concern for small businesses; a perception that costs will increase; belief that there is no problem; and, disagreeing with environmental goals. The report also included a series of specific recommendations, which can be viewed at <http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/recovery/>.

We have decided not to move forward with public collection at this time, but instead we will work with the haulers to change how we collect funds for solid waste management by creating a hauler collected service charge tied to the amount of garbage produced by our citizens and businesses. A volume-based service charge collected by the haulers will reward those citizens and businesses that generate less garbage by paying less in solid waste management charges. Realigning the economic incentives for waste generators will raise awareness of the true costs of the solid waste system and encourage consumers to reduce the amount of garbage they throw away.

Getting the message to citizens

Another way to solve the problem is to empower citizens to create change. Specifically, public, private and nonprofit organizations need to engage citizens in garbage issues. In 2001, the SWMCB sponsored a Citizens' Jury on metro solid waste. The jury, comprised of 18 citizens representing the region, learned about the current hierarchy of preferred solid waste management practices, as well as alternatives for addressing solid waste issues, including the environmental, economic and behavioral implications of each proposal. The jury then deliberated to develop recommendations about strategies for managing the region's solid waste.

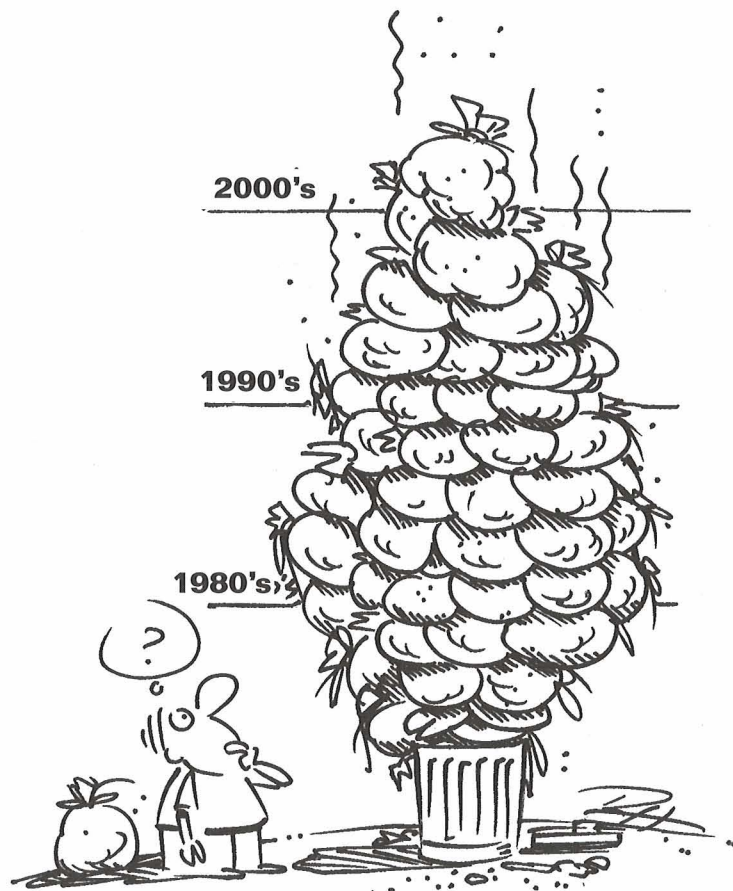
The jury conveyed a deep commitment to environmentally sound solid waste management and recommended education as a key component to implementation. The jurors believed that a fully informed citizen would make the right decision to protect public health and the environment by choosing waste reduction, recycling, composting, and resource recovery over landfilling. The SWMCB is currently

exploring options to implement the Citizens Jury's vision for more education.

What does our future hold?

Some may define the last 20 years as the recycling boom, others may focus on the escalation of out-of-state landfilling, and others may recall the tremendous growth in solid waste generation. Ultimately, we each must make conscious choices about what we consume and what we throw away. Our "throw-away society" comes with a hefty price tag. While it's important to remember the past, it is time to get serious about the future. Waste reduction, increased recycling, increased composting and growth in processing must define the next 20 years. This will call for a solid partnership among government, private industry, community organizations, and citizens. Our environment, health and safety depend on it. **MJ**

Ramsey County Commissioner Susan Haigh chairs the Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board, Metropolitan Area



TakeNote

Policy Tidbits

Opinions, observations and calculations to ponder.

National employment rates are continuing to fall for black males who haven't attended college, *USA Today* reported (April 25, 2002). In 1979, the employment rate for black male high school graduates was 72.7 percent. That rate fell to 68.8 percent in 1989 and to 63.7 percent in 1999/2000. Employment rates for black males who drop out of high school are even lower. In 1979, 53.4 percent were employed compared with just 37 percent in 1999/2000. According to "A Failing Grade for School Completion," a Citizens League report released last August, the four-year graduation rate for black students in the two core city school districts was 46 percent in Saint Paul and 33 percent in Minneapolis. —*Scott McMahon.*

U.S. graduate schools ranked. The April 15 issue of *U.S. News and World Report* ranked America's best graduate schools in the five most popular post-graduate programs: business, education, engineering, law and medicine. The University of Minnesota tied for 24th place out of 49 business schools listed, and University of Wisconsin-Madison tied for 46th. Among law programs, Minnesota tied for 18th and Madison ranked 25th. In the other three programs, the University of Madison-Wisconsin outpaced the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Madison ranked 6th in education and Minnesota ranked 12th. Madison ranked tied for 15th in engineering and Minnesota tied for 21st. In medicine, Madison tied for 31st and Minnesota ranked 36th. The rankings were based on expert opinion about program quality and statistical indicators of faculty, research and performance of students. —*Lyle Wray.*

The Indiana Department of Education has created an "e-accountability" system for citizens to use when evaluating school performance. The program, called the Accountability System for Academic Progress (ASAP), is a computer-generated statistical database where users can access information about an individual school or make comparisons between institutions. The information is broken into eight categories: academic standards; accountability; accreditation; best practice; professional development; school data; school

improvement plan; and state aims and goals. The database is available at www.asap.state.in.us. —*S.M.*

The Minnesota Supreme Court in early May unanimously upheld the Iron Range Fiscal Disparities Act. The legitimacy of tax base sharing on the Iron Range has been in question since a district court ruling in September 2000 struck down the law as unconstitutional, largely based on the argument that communities on the range are not interconnected in the same way as metro-area cities. The Iron Range Fiscal Disparities Act requires local governments within the seven-county taconite tax relief area to share 40 percent of their growth in commercial industrial tax base since 1995. —*Kris Lyndon Wilson.*

A recent report by Brandeis University titled "What a Difference an Interpreter Can Make: Health Care Experiences of Uninsured with Limited English Proficiency" showed that hospital patients with low English proficiency who are not given an interpreter run a far greater risk of misdiagnosis or medical error than patients who receive interpreters. The report concluded that 27 percent of patients who do not have language help leave the hospital without understanding the instructions for their medication. When an interpreter is provided, that number drops to 2 percent. —*S.M.*

Fewer wrinkles than some. A recent study by the United Nations finds that there are about 63 million people aged 60 or older worldwide and projects that number will grow to 2 billion by 2050. Italy, where about

one in four residents are over age 60, has the highest percentage in the world. The U.S. ranks 14th in the world with about 16 percent of its residents age 60 and over. —*L.W.*

Fifth state looks at statewide e-learning. Colorado may be the next state to develop an e-learning program statewide. The Colorado E-Learning Task Force say the cost of developing the program could reach \$2.5 million, but it would reach all 176 school districts. Implementing an e-learning program could help decrease program development costs in education. As Libby Black, a task force member commented, "...taxpayers are paying for 10 AP (advanced placement) calculus courses to be developed instead of one. I'd rather pay to build one high-quality course that any kid in Colorado could take instead of paying for 10 courses of what quality I don't know." Statewide programs are already available in California, Florida, Illinois and Michigan. —*S.M.*

Correction to an April Take Note. Due to a production error in the March 2002 *American Demographics*, a Take Note in the April *Minnesota Journal* incorrectly listed the earning power for people 25 and older. The correct household earning averages for 2000 are: less than a high school diploma, \$29,400; high school diploma, \$45,400; some college, \$56,000; associate degree, \$60,300; bachelor's or higher, \$91,100; graduate degree, \$104,200. The average household income for all households was \$58,300. —*S.M.*

Take Note contributors include Minnesota Journal and Citizen League staffers and former League staff member Kris Lyndon Wilson.

The Minnesota Journal
Citizens League
708 S. Third Street, Suite 500
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708 South 3rd St. Suite 500
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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.

The Citizens League is an open membership organization. Suggested dues are \$50 for individuals and \$75 for families. Please call 612-338-0791 for more information.

The '70s: Growth and a new direction

Last month we looked at the developments of the Citizens League during the 1960s and the rise of national attention.

In the 1970s the League began to stress the importance of having a clear understanding of the nature of problems, not just solutions, and to consider not just the structure of policy institutions but also the problems in the operation of government.

In a seminal report entitled "Why Not Buy Service," the League concentrated on the question of productivity in the public sector and challenged conventional wisdom that raising taxes or cutting services was the only recourse for a financial crisis. Instead, the League urged a redesign of public services.

The report was actually the result of the Policy Planning Task Force appointed by the League Board of Directors in June 1971. The charge to the Task Force was to seek an understanding of what government was doing and what it should be doing, what the private sector was doing and what it should be doing and what the League should cover in the next five years. **Charles Clay** chaired the committee and its report was approved by the Board of Directors on September 20, 1972.

The report asserted that the concept of public responsibility

was extending broadly across areas traditionally regarded as private. The Task Force recommended that government and businesses in the Twin Cities undertake an examination of the concept of purchase-of-service.

Information Services Project: This project improved the League's efforts to monitor and evaluate information and trends on major issues for the Twin Cities area.

The Task Force found that the public sector encompassed more than just government and that public problems should not necessarily lead exclusively to governmental provision or operation of solutions. In effect, the League said government should buy results.

At a time when most of the political discussion still revolved around "new programs," the League's report advocated "new arrangements" for delivering and producing government services.

Ted Kolderie felt this report was the most significant organizational achievement in his term as Executive Director. "Why Not Buy Service" established a new direction for the League, a direction it maintained throughout the 70s and 80s and into the 90s.

Midway through the decade the League also reorganized its internal operations. It restructured its standing committees and established the

Program Committee, chaired by **Wayne Popham**, and the Operations Committee under **Peter Heegaard's** leadership. The Community Information Committee continued monitoring legislative issues and coordinating the League's legislative agenda.

In 1975, the League launched the "Information Services Project," which included Public Service Options. This project improved the League's efforts to monitor and evaluate information and trends on major issues for the Twin Cities area. Public Life, a new Citizens League newsletter, shared the information with League members and other community leaders. The project was funded by a two-year grant from the Minneapolis Foundation.

The League also worked during the 1970s to expand its membership base to reflect its metropolitan focus and to ensure adequate resources to support its expanded program focus areas. Scores of League volunteers helped recruit new business and individual members. Aided by a four-year challenge grant from the St. Paul Foundation, business memberships in the League reached an all-time high of 550 contributors.

Next month: the League tries to plan for the '80s through the report "Enlarging our Capacity to Adapt: Issues of the '80s".

After a 20 year hiatus, Cal Clark rejoins the League staff as a volunteer

Cal Clark, who staffed 11 League studies and did the League's development work in the 1970s, is back on the League staff again. This time, Cal came out of retirement to help as a full-time volunteer, working on the League's development needs. He brings a passion for funding to the League based on his personal experience as a League staffer for 11 years, his re-connecting with League members while working on the League's endowment development which started seven years ago, and his serving on the Citizens League board for the past six years.

"I believe that the most important thing in life is to do what we can to make the world a little better place to live," Cal explains, "... for our family ... for our friends ... and for our community. It is very important to me that I invest my resources as wisely as I can in order to get the greatest community benefit from my time and money." "Fortunately for me," Clark notes, "my experience with the Citizens League over the years has shown how incredibly effective League resources are utilized to positively impact this metropolitan community's greatest needs and opportunities."

Cal's exposure to the Citizens League goes back to the mid 1960s. While working for a national non-profit organization that focused on improving the rules, procedures and organization of the 50 state legislatures, Cal did a study of which states were doing the best job of addressing urban issues in a creative way. Two states stood out in Cal's study: California and Minnesota. Further inquiry

found that California's leadership was based on a progressive heritage and their having a full-time, highly staffed professional legislature. In Minnesota, Cal traced its creative leadership to a progressive heritage, and the implementation of ideas developed by a group called the Citizens League.

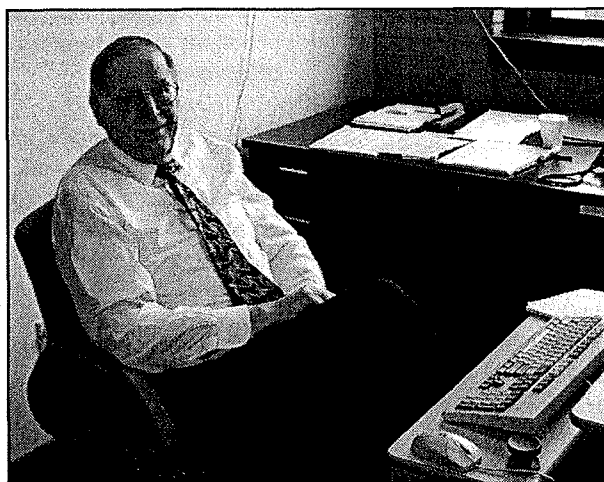
Cal's positive impression of the Citizens League was reinforced two years later when he assisted the League as a resource person for the League's 1968 study of the Minnesota Legislature. "At the time, I was working with blue ribbon citizen study committees in 15 states trying to improve their state's legislative process. They were all doing good work, but it was clear to me the quality of the Citizens League analysis was superior to the others," Cal relates.

"Then In 1969, when Ted Kolderie called to encourage me to move from Kansas City to the Twin Cities and join the League staff, I jumped at the opportunity." Something Cal notes he has never regretted. Cal takes pride that "each and every one of the 11 studies I staffed resulted in the taking of significant positive steps, based on the League recommendations, on a matter of considerable importance to our metropolitan community and the entire state."

Cal feels that he is doing a person or firm a favor when he

asks them to support the League. "First, I feel I am doing them a favor by helping the donor utilize their limited charitable resources in a highly effective way... with exceptionally great community benefit derived for the dollars spent." "Second," Cal explains, "giving to a worthy cause makes us feel good about ourselves."

"Former Minnesota Governor Elmer Andersen once told me," Cal relates, "you should never ask someone to give until it hurts, but you should always encourage them to give until they really feel good about themselves." "I really feel good about what I am able to do for the Citizens League," says Cal, "and you can be sure that I will be doing my very best to extend that good feeling as widely as possible among current and potential League members."



Above: Cal Clark returns to the League office after being absent for 20 years. His first tenure on the staff lasted from January 1, 1970 to December 31, 1980.

League special support continues to grow

Last month we reported that 118 of 131, or 90%, of the current board members, former board members and other close friends of the Citizens League that we contacted had responded to a special appeal with contributions totaling \$108,810. Since that last *CL Matters*, the special contributions to keep the doors open and the lights on have increased to 136 gifts totaling \$131,545, with the total response rate now up to an incredible 94% having made pledges or payments.

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Are you wondering if the Citizens League has ever issued a report on metropolitan governance, or what the League thinks about transportation issues or education?

You can find League study topic sections on the homepage, and some reports are even on-line. Log on today to www.citizensleague.net