



Minnesota Journal

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Volume 8, Number 21
November 19, 1991

Teacher bargaining poses legislative quandary

Strikes—real or threatened—get the headlines. But strikes are unlikely to be the issue presented to the Legislature in 1992 by the 1991 round of bargaining over teacher salaries.

What this bargaining round is bringing to the 1992 session, rather, is an increasingly urgent, very basic, question about the way pub-

by Ted Kolderie

lic education in Minnesota is organized and financed.

This is because of the way the politics of the 1991 session pushed the question of school finance out to the school districts.

Gov. Arne Carlson opened low in terms of additional money for education, perhaps assuming the Legislature would up the ante (as it typically had). The DFL Legislature decided, however, that education should live with Carlson's recommendation. The teacher unions protested. But the session ended with the state adding only about 1 per cent a year to the formula.

The unions naturally carried their demands out to the districts. This has produced a tough bargaining round, in the middle of a recession. As of Nov. 7, some 45 districts had

settled, compared with 66 in 1989. There may be a serious pileup about Christmas. A strike was a real possibility in Anoka-Hennepin, and may be in Winona and Rochester. Minneapolis teachers may vote on a strike authorization in early December.

Districts are, however, coming up with money—probably 7 or 8 per cent in total compensation over the two years. The issues come out of their decisions about how to raise the extra money.

Some districts can pay for a year or two out of reserves. Some will cannibalize the staff, continuing a practice of accepting larger classes in return for higher salaries. "The system eating its young," says Tom Nelson, the former commissioner of education. Some will turn to their local voters for the money.

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Metro cities unit opposes Met Council water control

By Vern Peterson and Roger Peterson

The Metropolitan Council has released a report suggesting a need for a regional approach to controlling water supply in the metropolitan area. The impetus for this report was the 1988-99 drought that created low flows in the Mississippi River.

that water is an important resource and its unchecked use in the metropolitan area could produce undesirable results. The AMM acknowledges that extended periods of drought could alter the quality and quantity of this necessary element of life and living.

The Association of Metropolitan Municipalities (AMM) recognizes

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Regional radio system for governments studied

Local government radio communications are reaching a crossroads in the Twin Cities area. Many radio systems that allow local governments to respond to police, fire and medical emergencies are out-moded and at full capacity. The region needs to explore the feasibility of building a region-wide radio communications system.

Local governments can't get along without radio communications

by Dirk deVries

technology today. Needs extend beyond emergencies to include such things as two-way radio communications for public buses, school buses, city snowplows, water department trucks and building inspectors.

Since two-way radio became available to local governments shortly after World War II, it has

proliferated in urban areas nationwide. In fact, all the very high frequency (VHF) and ultra high frequency (UHF) capacity on the radio spectrum has been allocated. If a local government wants to start a mobile radio system today, there is only one "band" where it can get radio frequencies. That is the 800-megahertz frequency made available relatively recently.

("Megahertz" means one million radio-wave cycles per second.)

Last year, a number of local officials approached the Metropolitan Council and asked us to look into the feasibility of a region-wide communications network that all communities could use. Last spring, the Council created a task force of local government officials

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Our emphasis on process leaves something out

I think it was Tom Triplett's remark at a recent meeting that got me going on this. At a large gathering of government staff who do policy analysis, Triplett said he fears we'll spend more money on process than we will on what government should be doing.

We should not write off his remark either as rhetorical tactics or mere impatience. Reflecting back on a nearly uncountable collection of commissions appointed by governors, mayors, and other high officials over recent years makes one wonder whether process has replaced purpose.

Like its Minnesota culture-cousins—access and equity—process seems a ready substitute for results.

Think that's too harsh? I invite you to take notepad in hand and catalog what's said in public presentations about important issues. Write down the percentage of time taken to describe who did what, where they did it, when it happened and how they felt about it. Note how little time goes to engaging the issue at its roots.

In the newly feverish concern to make every group representative, overdue as that is, what's happening increasingly is that "representativeness" is all that's achieved. You're left feeling that the process was more important than the purpose.

Sometimes the process produces answers. When it does, here's the usual scenario: First, pressure

Free Estimate

by Curtis W. Johnson

builds politically for change. So policymakers blow up the existing arrangement, inventing a new one often complete with new terminology (the old words being now tainted and laden with baggage); there are new names and new rules.

It's best at this point to keep the champagne chilled but corked. This is the point to look for the lifeboat, on which you'll likely spot all those who were threatened by the changes in policy. As they float to safety, wrapped in grandfather (parent?) clauses or protected by exceptions, these designated survivors are the best evidence that while everything now looks different, nothing's really changed.

Remember the Latimer Commission's work on tax policy? Watch what happens with the Ladd report on the system of state aids to cities. People will tell you about the process—and maybe the flaws they see in the process. Process reports always go down better than the unwelcome news about the inconvenience of change. Ask about expected results and listen carefully.

Sometimes the answers are actually adopted. Notice how rare it is to see them implemented right away. Big change needs long lead time, or so we assume. To be fair, sometimes the long lead time is a care-

fully staged plan for step-by-step action with flexibility to work out the kinks.

But more often, you'll notice, the plan to implement something four years from now means that it's out there as a target for the next three. You get the feeling the new policy has pen pals but no close friends.

Question: what do these efforts at policy reform have in common with the recent Clarence Thomas hearings? Answer: They're all Greek tragedies: Everybody dies—metaphorically, at least—while the troublesome issue we gathered to tackle lives on.

So what's the answer? Has the time come to suspend our worship of process for a season and yield to an era of activism? Let leaders lead. Let purpose prevail. Is that the way?

That's the way we're headed with the nearly desperate "do something!" the politicians are hearing on everything from higher education to health care.

Ironically, the problem with our practice of process may not lie in its excesses, but in its limits. We've

had process aplenty, but for too few. Commissioners and advisory committees can agree on an erator in Dakota County, but that's not an answer for lots of other folks. Engineers, planners and marvelously persistent politicians have said, "Let us have rail," but a majority constituency has not developed around any transit plan.

Whether it's more Citizens League meetings, or Jefferson Center juries, or computer-based civic conferencing, Center of the American Experiment papers, or plain, old town meetings, the cure for Minnesota process probably lies in the patience to spread it around. And in the imagination to see incentives for people to participate.

It's not political power we need to make a community congenial about hosting the region's airport or to overhaul or close marginal educational institutions—it's patient, purposeful process. Policy process that develops enough owners so that it won't need to be sold to anyone later, because it will have turned into acceptable politics.

In a world where costs are rising every front, we must report that the foregoing commentary is the final Free Estimate. After four dozen of these polemics and prescriptions, the publisher is making good on his promise to leave even what's not well enough alone.

Term limits hit as undemocratic, wrong answer

Mankato Free Press said (Oct. 11) that limits on terms of legislators would be opposed because they are not a democratic form of government for our state's highest governing body."

Minnesota Daily said (Oct. 17) term limits fail to address the deeper problems of campaign financing. Legislators should "do the smart thing by voting themselves out of money and leave it to the voters to decide whom they want in office."

St. Cloud Times supported (Oct. 11) putting a term-limit proposal on the election ballot and asked, "Could it be the critics (of term limits) are worried that voters are finally fed up with a system controlled by elected officials whose primary mission seems to be hanging on to a cushy job?"

Worthington Globe said (Oct. 3) the state's Independent-Republican Party made a mistake in not striking the word "Independent"

from the party's name. It said Minnesota politicians are "considered outcasts" by their counterparts elsewhere because of their unconventional party names.

Red Wing Republican Eagle described (Oct. 7) as alarming the appearance of two public-sector lobbying groups, the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities and the Association of Minnesota Counties, on the list of top 10 lobbyists in the state. "We especially abhor the practice of one unit of government paying professionals to lobby another level of government for more money."

Star Tribune said (Nov. 2) racist acts by some Hibbing residents against black football players at Hibbing Community College are

"deplorable." But it added that recruiting of those athletes from distant areas signifies "ill-conceived overemphasis on athletics" at the school.

International Falls Journal said (Oct. 30) Minnesota's "alternative minimum tax" on businesses should be repealed. It said the tax penalizes businesses suffering legitimate losses.

Free Press praised (Oct. 10) the action of the Department of Natural Resources in banning mineral prospecting in a corridor around the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Star Tribune said (Nov. 8) the National Park Service should not allow development of a permanent snowmobile trail through the Kabetogama Peninsula in Voyageurs

National Park. It said 40 percent of the park is already open to snowmobiles.

Worthington Globe welcomed (Oct. 11) the possible return of former Gov. Rudy Perpich to the Minnesota political scene, decrying Gov. Arne Carlson's "urban bias and misguided logic."

Hibbing Tribune said (Oct. 31) Hibbing should pursue creation of an aircraft mechanics school as part of Hibbing Technical College even if the deal to build a Northwest Airlines maintenance base falls through. It said the three Minnesota schools now offering such training don't turn out enough graduates to meet demand.

Republican Eagle said (Oct. 10) the Public Utilities Commission should put pressure on Congress to find a place to store nuclear power plant wastes rather than penalize Northern States Power Co.'s Prairie Island plant by limiting storage there.

Teacher

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Others will ask the Legislature to bail them out next session.

This is what forces the question: Who should come up with the money? What will decide how much goes to salaries and how much to improving program? How can the Legislature keep salary increases from eating up program if the districts cannot?

The present arrangement grows out of two decisions in the 1970s. First was the decision in 1971 to equalize the funding for K-12 education and to increase significantly the state share. The second was the decision, after the DFL took full control in 1972, to shift to the private-sector model of employee bargaining.

g teachers the right to strike had several effects. Strikes appeared, but soon dropped off. There were 35 in 1981 but only 10 the next three rounds and none in 1989. Settlements slowed. In 1981, only 16 per cent of the con-

tracts remained unsettled six months later, but by 1987 this figure had climbed to 70 per cent. (The Legislature drove this back down to 30 per cent in 1989 with a \$25-per-pupil-unit penalty for not settling by Jan. 15.)

Most important, the excess levies became a much more important part of the school-finance system.

In the big equalization in 1971, wealthy districts had persuaded the Legislature to leave open a local "right to go beyond" the amount up to which the state would equalize. Allowing them to spend their own money for extra program, they argued, would make them a beacon lighting the way for better education.

But something else happened. After the fiscal crisis of 1980-82, excess levies came to be used more to fund salaries, less to improve program. Because districts differ in property wealth and so in their ability to raise local revenue, disparities reappeared. The result was another cry for more equalization. By 1988, there was a suit challenging Minnesota's system of school finance. (A decision is expected from the trial court soon.)

By the late 1980s, school boards,

believing themselves increasingly disadvantaged in the bargaining process, and watching families become increasingly dependent on the schools for child care, had apparently concluded they could never win, and so should never take, another strike. Boards had never been very aggressive with demands of their own. Their new decision made them even less likely to fight for program improvements in return for the salary increases they agree to.

Superintendents saw the implications for them: endlessly raising salaries and cutting program, then lobbying the Legislature and pleading with the voters to restore the cuts. They dream about the Legislature repealing bargaining. More realistically, they would like to get their districts out of it.

Largely because the MEA had the same idea, "regional" bargaining was considered in the late 80s. But it never moved ahead.

Legislators are not unsympathetic to the teachers about pay. But they worry about raising taxes. And they do want better school and student performance and do not seem persuaded that raising the jockey's pay will make the horse run faster.

So the Legislature is steadily moving for control over finance.

It is putting the brakes on referendum levies. It now requires these to come up at a general election. It has limited them to five years. It has introduced the notion of a cap on their size. It prohibited referenda in 1991 for taxes payable in 1992. And in last session's tax bill, it made these harder to pass in districts with lots of business property.

It is also requiring that monies voted for program do in fact get spent on program rather than on salaries, with the idea of "reserved revenues" now used to protect, for example, money for class-size reduction and for staff development.

The growing state role could lead to statewide bargaining of salaries. Or policy could move salary setting "downward," if Minnesota is serious about moving decisions to schools.

Some change seems to be coming, perhaps speeded if the two unions merge. (See *Take Note*, Page 8. "We're on the other side of something very different," Commissioner of Education Gene Mammenga says. "But at the moment I can't see what it is."

Church as partner

From The Church as Partner in Community Economic Development, by T. Williams, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

As an institution, the church has a special role to play in community economic development. Economic development alone often fails to develop community unity or to empower the people who live there. Because of its deep ties to the community and its role as a source of values and moral guidance, the church can fill a role that other institutions can't play by providing the unifying force, the inspiration and the leadership to bring people together to raise or address issues and to help them develop the political power and motivation to create

lasting community change...

Churches also have access to the human resources necessary for successful community development...

Another way to empower communities and build partnerships is to make the community's will clear to institutions or political representatives whose support is needed, but who are reluctant to work with the community. One example is providing local banks with lists of church members holding accounts there. This can transform lenders' attitudes from one of turning down a community's loan application to working with the community as a partner in community development projects...

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685.			
Title of publication: Minnesota Journal.			
Publication No.: 114-180.			
Date of filing: Sept. 17, 1991.			
Frequency of issue: 12 times per year.			
No. of issues published annually: 12.			
Annual subscription price: \$40.			
Mailing address of known office of publication: 708 S. Third St., Suite 500, Minneapolis, MN 55415.			
Mailing address of headquarters of general business offices of the publisher: Same as above.			
Publisher: Curtis W. Johnson, 708 S. Third St., Suite 500, Minneapolis, MN 55415.			
Editor: Stephen Alnes, same as above.			
Managing editor: Stephen Alnes, same as above.			
Owner: Citizens League, same as above, no stockholders, nonprofit organization.			
Officers of the Citizens League: President Becky Malkerson, First Bank System, P.O. Box 522, MN 55402; Secretary Beverly Propes, United Way of Minneapolis, 404 S. Eighth St., Minneapolis, MN 55404; Treasurer Daniel Peterson, Piper, Jaffray & Hopwood, P.O. Box 1139, Minneapolis, MN 55440; Vice President John Brandt, Humphrey Institute, 237 Humphrey Center, Minneapolis, MN 55455.			
Known bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None.			
The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during the preceding 12 months.			
	Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. of Single Issues Nearest to Filing date
A. Total no. copies (net press run)		4,011	4,000
B. Paid and/or requested circulation			
1. Sales through dealers & carriers, street vendors & counter sales		None	None
2. Mail subscription		3,665	3,660
C. Total paid and/or requested circulation		3,665	3,660
D. Free distribution by mail carrier or other means, samples, complimentary, & other free copies		241	241
E. Total distribution		3,665	3,660
F. Copies not distributed			
1. Office use, leftover, unaccounted, spoiled after printing		346	340
2. Return from news agents		None	None
G. Total		4,011	4,000
I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.			
Signed, Curtis W. Johnson, publisher.			

Radio

Continued from Page 1

and radio users from police, fire, emergency-medical and public-works services to study the issue.

Our 30-member task force discovered five major problems: lack of channel capacity, limited communication across jurisdictions, limited geographic reach, potential for chaos in a major disaster, and potential duplication of equipment and costs as communities upgrade.

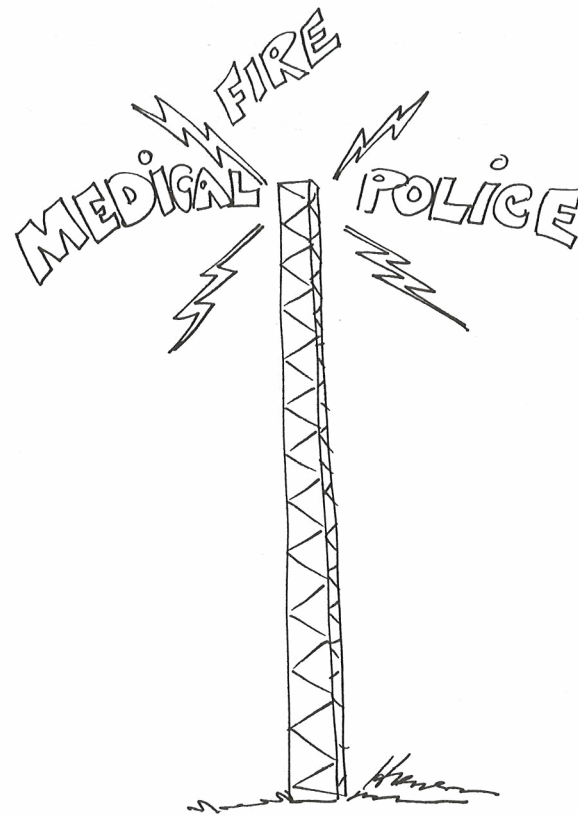
Capacity: Lack of channel capacity is the most critical radio communication problem jurisdictions will face in years to come. Lack of capacity means jammed frequencies, difficulty getting access to channels and interference from private radio users. Common problems, according to the Metropolitan Area Fire Chiefs Association.

First, the more than 200 VHF and UHF frequencies in the bands allotted to the region's public-safety services and local government have all been spoken for. Second, there is no way to coordinate or reallocate UHF or VHF channels that are not fully used by local governments. Third, as needs grow, the scarcity of available channels will become more acute. Individual jurisdictions like Bloomington that seek to address pressing needs by buying new equipment today increase the likelihood of regional incompatibility and duplication tomorrow.

Communication across jurisdictions: Incompatibility in radio communications is spreading. Metro counties and suburbs generally operate on VHF frequencies, which means they can communicate with one another. But Minneapolis and St. Paul agencies generally operate on UHF. This means that, while the two central cities can generally communicate with one another, they cannot handily communicate with the counties and suburbs.

In 1990, use of the higher frequency 800-megahertz radio system began in the metro area. Eden Prairie has it, Minnetonka has installed it, and Bloomington is buying it. Unfortunately, its users cannot communicate with users of the other two frequency bands.

Range: Local government radio



"800 Megahertz"

systems have a relatively limited range. For example, a Minneapolis radio loses reliable communications beyond the loop formed by I-494 and I-694. This could be a problem during a high-speed chase passing through several jurisdictions.

A major disaster: Given current radio communications, a local major disaster could be chaotic. Assistance of many agencies would need to be coordinated quickly in a major plane crash or a chemical spill upstream in the Mississippi River. A tornado touchdown in an urban area, for example, would require quick communication to many services, including ambulance, fire, police, medical examiners, Red Cross, news media helicopters and the electric and telephone utilities.

Duplication: Most local governments will need to expand, replace or implement new radio systems in the next 10 to 20 years. This may result in duplicating equipment, services and costs that could be shared region-wide. The task force believes a region-wide network can give equitable service, compatible systems, cost efficiencies and improved communications.

The system we are talking about is an 800-megahertz regional "trunked" radio system.

"Trunked" means radio communications would be routed to one or more control computers—the "brains" of the system. The computer would then route the calls to the first open channel, with priority for emergency calls.

Such a system would be designed to have more than enough capacity to handle current communication demands and be capable of responding to a region-wide crisis.

The biggest barrier to a region-wide system is not technical. It's political. Some people believe, for example, that a regional system would remove local control and autonomy. This is an understandable concern. Homeowners rely on their local fire and police forces, and local officials are naturally skeptical of a bigger entity that may appear to compromise local control.

However, we can assure local governments that autonomy will be preserved. Homeowners would perceive no change in service, and local governments would gain expanded communications flexibility.

Some people fear that a region-wide system might be controlled by jurisdictions with the most financial resources. The task force believes that a system run by one

jurisdiction or agency is not acceptable. Governance must be region-wide and include local input.

A region-wide system would have both regional and local components. The regional component would be a "backbone" network, including the system's control computer and software, transmission towers and telecommunication links. Only these components would be governed by a regional body. The local component—dispatch centers and portable and mobile equipment—would continue to be governed and financed locally.

The biggest benefit of a regional system is that financially strapped local governments can control costs by sharing the system's backbone, its most expensive part.

Several trunked 800-megahertz systems are now in use throughout the country. The size and complexity of a system proposed for the Seattle area comes closest to what our needs may be. Seattle would finance building its system with a \$50 million bond issue.

I believe Twin Cities area communities can cooperate to build a coordinated radio communication system. We did it in building an emergency 911 phone system, and we can do it for this.

The Metropolitan Council started planning for 911 in the early 1970s, helping to fund county planning efforts for the system. The Council also helped the counties form a separate body, the Metropolitan 9-1-1 Telephone Board, to implement the system.

The task force is studying options for the design, function, management and performance of a radio communication system. We could not recommend building a system unless we found a feasible option in each of these areas.

The Council plans to report the findings of its task force to the Legislature in December 1992. If the task force recommends building a system and the Council agrees, the Council will propose to the Legislature a way to govern and finance it. The go-ahead to build and fund a region-wide trunked radio system would have to come from the Legislature.

Metropolitan Council Member Dirk deVries chairs the 800 Megahertz Regional Trunked Radio System Task Force.



November 19, 1991

News for Citizens League Members

Citizens League Matters

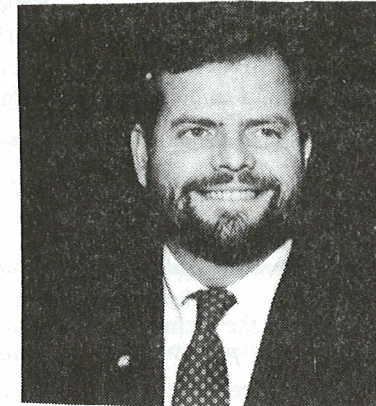
Welcome new members

- Pam Aasen
- Joan Alevizos
- Karen Anderson
- Elizabeth Balsanek
- John Blackstone
- Patricia Borchert
- Craig Branham
- Charles Brennecke
- Patti Brennecke
- Jane Christian
- Cynthia Clish
- Cynthia Colson
- Denise Devaan
- Gail Dorn
- Beatrice Eichten
- W. Bruce Erickson
- William Gaulke
- Sara Gavin
- Shannon Genereux
- Harry Green
- Karin Gustafson
- Diane Hellie
- Eugene Hippe
- Ann Holloran
- Kris Hulsebus
- Greg Ingraham
- David Irwin
- Jodelle Ista
- Vickie Jensen
- Vernon Johnson
- Earl Johnston
- Linda Kjerland
- Joseph Konietzko
- Dorothy Lambertson
- Jeanne Larsen
- John Mauriel
- Jane Nakken
- Ruth Nelson
- Susan Nielsen
- Susan Omoto
- Jodi Polzin
- Kenneth Reddick
- Rochelle Rubin-Ness
- Martin Schafer
- Paul Hans Strebe
- James Taylor
- John Toren
- Eileen Troseth
- Jonathan Wayne

Board appoints Lyle Wray as executive director

Wray brings varied experience to League; will assume new position in 1992

The Citizens League Board of Directors announced that Lyle Wray has accepted the position of executive director of the organization. Wray will be the League's fifth director in its 40 year lifespan. He is replacing Curt Johnson who is stepping down after serving 11 years as the head of the League.



Wray said he was attracted to the League because the timing is right for the League to have an impact on issues that affect the community.

Wray has been a member of the Citizens League since 1982. He chaired the League's research committee that studied state mandates for health insurance.

He also actively participated in the League's studies of health care for the uninsured in 1986 and the financing and management of state and local services in 1990. He has been working with the League committee studying the delivery of local government services since its

startup in October.

Wray comes to the League with considerable experience in a variety of public affairs issues. For the past four years he has served as administrator of Dakota County. Wray worked for two years as that county's director of human services. Before that he was the director of quality assurance and protective services for the Minnesota Department of Human Services. He also served as federal court monitor for the landmark Welsch case.

Originally from Canada, Wray has lived in Minnesota since 1979. He currently resides in Falcon Heights.

Health care issues are costs and access

Mind-Openers to feature proposals to legislature

Elected officials increasingly hear cries about the rising cost of health care. Added to the furor is the concern over lack of coverage for those who cannot afford health insurance. In 1992 the Minnesota Legislature will face at least four health care initiatives. These are the subject of the next Mind-Opener breakfast series, held on Tuesdays, at the Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

On November 19, Mary Jo O'Brien, assistant commissioner in the Minnesota Department of Health, will describe the

governor's plan for the uninsured.

On November 26, Bob Johnson, vice-president of the Insurance Federation of Minnesota, will speak on the Federation's plan and the costs of the other major proposals.

Jan Malcolm, vice-president of public policy and development at Group Health, Inc., will speak on December 3 about the HMO Council's proposal.

Closing out the series on December 10, Rep. Paul Ogren, DFL-Aitkin, will discuss the legislation vetoed by Gov. Carlson that would create a statewide health plan.

Johnson will advise governor on post-secondary education

Curt Johnson, executive director of the Citizens League since 1981, accepted a position as senior advisor to Gov. Carlson on higher education. Last June, Johnson announced he would leave the executive director post at the end of 1991 to pursue work with nationally-syndicated columnist Neal Peirce on a proposed nationwide newsletter on state and local government. Although the planning is underway, the newsletter will not be launched until 1992. Consequently, Johnson agreed to advise the governor's office on how the reorganization of post-secondary education should proceed in Minnesota.

The east side stories: St. Paul plays the starring role

The Citizens League is sponsoring a special forum on the development of the city of St. Paul and its prospects for the future.

On Monday, November 18, St. Paul Mayor **Jim Scheibel** will describe his vision of St. Paul as a center for the arts, education and government. Next a panel will discuss the role the state plays as a tenant of downtown office space. Included on this panel will be: **Dennis Spalla** of the Property Management Bureau of the Minnesota Department of Administration, **Robert Sprague**, director of the St. Paul Planning and Economic Development Department, and **Jim Miller**, a real estate consultant with Rollins & Associates.

A second panel will focus on how St. Paul has developed

since the turn of the century, highlighting the vision of St. Paul articulated by St. Paul architect Cass Gilbert, perhaps most widely known as the architect of Minnesota's state capitol. The panel, moderated by **David Lanegran**, a professor of geography at Macalester, will review the Gilbert vision. Panelists are:

This special forum will examine the history and future of the capital city.

Larry Millet, the architectural critic for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, **Gary Grefenberg**, the executive secretary of the Capitol Area Architecture and Planning Board, and **Christine Podas-Larson**, president of Public Art St. Paul.

On Thursday, November 21, the focus will be two-fold:

First is the ongoing struggle over balancing the needs of neighborhoods in St. Paul with citywide interests. **Roy Garza**, director of Community Services for St. Paul, will moderate the discussion. Panelists are: **Kathleen H. Corley**, a member of the St. Paul Charter Commission, **Ron Pauline**, a member of the

Hutchinson, a consultant with Armajani Hutchinson & James Inc., will identify the pros and cons of changing public-service delivery. The invited panelists are: **Robert Pulshcer**, who chairs the Ramsey County Local Government Study Commission mandated by the 1991 Legislature, **Tom Hennessey**, with Council 14 of the Association of Federal, State, County and Municipal Employees, **Dick Wedell**, mayor of Shoreview, and **Ken Peterson**, St. Paul Mayor's office.

Both seminars begin with registration at 5:15 p.m. and refreshments at 5:30 p.m. in the Chapel Lounge of the Weyerhaeuser Chapel on the campus of Macalester College. The program begins at 6:00 p.m. and concludes at 7:30. The cost is \$5 per evening. Register by calling the Citizens League at 338-0791.

Aurora-St. Anthony Block Club, **Ray Faricy**, an attorney with Faricy and Dunn, and **Susan Omoto**, a community organizer with Dayton's Bluff Community Council.

Second is redesigning the ways local government services have customarily been provided. A panel moderated by **Peter**

Palkert is one of the best

League member **Lorraine Palkert**, a teacher in the South St. Paul school system, received two awards recognizing excellence in her profession. In 1991, Palkert received the National Applied Economics Teacher

of the Year award from Junior Achievement. In 1990 she was named one of 12 educators in the country to receive Continental Cablevision's Educator Award. Congratulations Lorraine!

MN Milestones meets in metro area

Persons interested in *Minnesota Milestones*, Gov. Carlson's effort to develop long-term, measurable goals for the future of Minnesota, can participate by attending any of several meetings set up for this purpose: Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2:30-5:00 p.m., St.

Paul Technical College; same day, 7:00-9:30 p.m., Humboldt Secondary Complex, St. Paul; and Thursday, Nov. 21, 2:30-5:00 and 7:00-9:30 p.m. at the Sabathani Community Center in Minneapolis. Call 296-3985 for more information.

CIC creates two subcommittees

The Community Information Committee, chaired by **Ellen Brown** and **Jean King**, formed subcommittees on AIDS and health care access. Each will update past League reports on these subjects. They will make reports to the CIC in November and January.

League's telecommunications report contributes to governors' conference

The Citizens League's 1989 report *Wiring Minnesota: New State Goals for Telecommunications* provided a major contribution to a study featured at the Great Lakes Governors' Conference held in Milwaukee October 29 and 30. The theme for the conference was telecommunications in the states surrounding the Great Lakes, particularly in rural areas. **Allan Baumgarten**, associate

director of the League, attended the conference and had assisted the research for the study on state regulations that serve as incentives or obstacles to effective telecommunications. Copies of *Wiring Minnesota* were distributed to conference participants, and included representatives telephone companies, state regulatory agencies, academia, library networks, and economic development agencies.

New group to challenge single-occupant vehicle

by Robert L. Bach

The continued growth in use of single-occupancy cars poses the biggest challenge to metropolitan transit in the coming years. The Metro Transit Leadership Group was formed this past summer with a primary objective to develop an effective approach to major transit issues confronting the region, particularly including light-rail transit.

The founders of the group were a public-private partnership of business people, environmentalists, public-spirited citizens interested in transit, legislators, county commissioners, city council members and public agency employees.

The Metro Transit Leadership Group does not want California to serve as the model for the future transit problems in the Twin Cities and will seek to promote transit alternatives. Light-rail transit is seen as one of the more critical issues

that needs to be addressed by our community and the Legislature. An objective of our group is to develop a coordinated approach, bringing together diverse groups, including transit providers such as the Metropolitan Transit Commission, to speak with a unified voice.

To that end, the Metro Transit Leadership Group has been divided into four groups with the following objectives:

1. Issues: To develop and frame the issues related to transit funding and implementation.

2. Outreach: Disseminate information to the public on alternative modes of transit, funding and implementation of those services.

3. Incentives: To recommend incentives (as opposed to disincentives)

Just as each city possesses unique characteristics that distinguish it from another community, so, too, a city's water-supply requirements would differ.

Where the AMM and Metropolitan Council staff disagree is who should have control and to what degree the Council should be able to impose its will unrestricted on local governments. The AMM is concerned that a complete regional water-supply system might not be cost-efficient. The AMM is also concerned about equity issues if financing is done on a regional basis.

The AMM believes there should be a partnership in planning, with the Metropolitan Council providing necessary background and technical data and advice and with cities structuring local solutions to fit their needs. The Council staff has suggested making water management a fifth "regional system"—as delineated in the 1976 Metropolitan Area Land Planning Act—that would give the Council total control over what a city can or cannot do. (The four existing regional systems are sewers, transportation, parks and open space and airports.)

The problem, the report and the conclusions by Council staff seem to run contradictory courses. The initiative for the original study was low flow in the Mississippi, which

tives) to reduce single-occupancy commuter trips.

4. Financing: To recommend sources of funding for mass transit.

We firmly believe that a modern, efficient transportation system is vital to the economic strength and growth of our region. Adding more freeway lanes is not the answer.

We believe the public has not been adequately educated to understand the total cost of more freeways, as opposed to the cost for developing such a system as light-rail transit.

None of the choices facing this state on transit alternatives is simple or inexpensive, but decisions must be made to adequately prepare for the future. Light rail is one of those issues that must be resolved. Currently, there are 18

provides 75 percent of the metro area water supply. The problem was not lack of water supply for Minneapolis and other cities but the low-flow impact on Northern States Power Co. electrical generating plants.

The Council staff's major discussion centers on the use of groundwater aquifers and how future suburban growth may affect that usage. However, most suburban users of the groundwater supply did implement conservation measures, and the adequacy of that supply was never in question.

Finally, the resolution for Council control is based primarily on groundwater-need arguments, which were not the problem in the first place.

The "systems" designation as currently defined in law would allow the Council to stop new growth and development unless a city did exactly as told as well as control all future growth through the comprehensive plan. Council staff members indicated they do not intend to control growth through water supply, but it would be legally possible should water supply become a fifth system.

The AMM first does not believe that the Council has shown that there is a physical crisis of a nature requiring the radical solution proposed. In fact, at the present rate of

metropolitan areas in this country that have fixed-rail systems and 22 metropolitan areas that are building or are planning to build a fixed-rail system for mass transit. The Twin Cities is the largest metro area in the U.S. without such a system planned or in place.

Minnesotans have had a reputation as leaders in this nation on many issues of public policy. We believe Minnesota is falling behind in addressing transit issues. The Metro Transit Leadership Group hopes to assist the Legislature and the governor in this next legislative session in developing mass-transit alternatives that will allow Minnesota to be a leader around the nation and foster economic growth in a rational and environmentally sound way.

Robert L. Bach, an attorney, is chair of the Metro Transit Leadership Group.

growth and usage, the water supply—by the Council's own data—will still exceed twice the demand by 2010.

There also is not a threat of costing the metro area billions of dollars in unnecessary extension or construction of facilities such as sanitary sewers and roadways due to unchecked urban sprawl, as was the case when the current law for "systems" was developed.

Finally, no alternatives to the "ultimate solution" have even been suggested, much less tried and failed.

Therefore, AMM firmly believes that, before we take a huge leap causing what could be a significant battle between city officials and the Metropolitan Council, we first attempt to solve the problem through a united partnership approach.

We agree that there is a problem and there is a need for action, but we believe that the Metropolitan Council working cooperatively with cities and towns as partners is a more promising solution than the "big brother" syndrome which is inherent in the "system" designation approach.

Vern Peterson is executive director and Roger Peterson is director of legislative affairs for the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities.

High cost of higher education drives change

Excerpts from October Citizens League Mind-Opener speeches on higher education and the law requiring merger of the State University, Technical College and Community College Systems.

Sen. Roger Moe, DFL-Erskine, majority leader and chief sponsor of the merger legislation: During the 1980s...Technical College System...appropriations went up almost 86 percent at a time when enrollment dropped 2 percent. The University of Minnesota...appropriations went up 108 percent...when enrollment dropped over 14 percent. The State University System...appropriations went up 134 percent...when...enrollment grew by 24 percent. And the Community College System...went up...almost 172 percent...when enrollment grew by about 44 percent...We were able to do that...because of the economic picture that we had...

From the mid-70s and before...we confused access with quality. Our notion was that if we could have a campus within X number of miles of everybody, we're going to have a good system...With...average-cost funding, which is enrollment-driven, we (saw) the emergence of advertising and marketing and competition for students between and within systems...To a certain degree, the enrollment has not been driven by the quality of the system but...by this competition for more bodies...The economists...advise us...that during...the 90s...our average economic growth...is going to be a little bit over half of the 80s...

(One) option was doing nothing...You would continue to have each system basically pursuing its independent approach...You would continue to see talk of coordination and cooperation, but I don't think you would see very much of that happening...You would continue to see campuses, either within systems or competing systems, compete for students. And you'd continue to see...this disproportionate distribution of students vs. the campuses...

The merger...is the law. Some people in higher education absolutely somehow refuse to recognize reality. But it's the law. And we intend to stay that course...

Some suggested the reason I was proposing this was that it would be

easier to close campuses. That's not my idea...And some are proposing that what this really is is an attempt to kind of homogenize those three systems of higher education...This is not an attempt to merge missions. It is an attempt to merge the systems, the administrative structures...

Right now, you really don't have coordination and cooperation between the systems backed up with administrative muscle. And if you have a single board...and a single administrative team looking over these three systems, you in fact can back up the need for coordination...Study after study lays out a significant overlap in our higher-education systems...

We have enormous capacity...Why not utilize the capacity of that system? And that's basically where I see the major impact of the merged system...What I'm suggesting is that it doesn't make good fiscal sense to continue to allow the crowding of students onto perhaps a dozen to 15 campuses in this state when you've got capacity in the other 50 campuses...And I would then suggest that we seriously look...at enrollment caps at certain campuses and force the enrollment back into the capacity of the system...You know something? It's exactly the same distance from Bemidji to St. Paul as it is from St. Paul to Bemidji...

Rep. Connie Morrison, IR-Burnsville, member, Appropriations Committee Education Division: The House...decided...we had to prioritize spending. Money that would go for one thing, say teachers salaries, if we were to reorganize the system, would it be better spent on libraries?

We developed a task force to re-evaluate the funding formula. The emphasis now is to find a formula that creates incentives to quality while maintaining access...We're looking for something better than...average-cost funding, which encourages recruitment. And we use state aid to encourage students to attend full-time...We clarified the HECB role and strengthened its power to...approve or disapprove...existing programs...and sites. I happen to think we have a great resource in the HECB, and we ought to encourage their strong participation in more than an advisory role...

We attempted to organize the sys-

tems by what we called a master-planning commission. This was our answer to the megaboard...And I still think that ours made more sense...

The reason we think our solution is better than the megaboard is (the estimated) \$150 million biannual... (cost) of bringing the teachers' salaries equal, working conditions equal...And it's...non-ending, it's in the base...and that's why we opposed Roger Moe's proposal...I would say the chances are pretty good that something that isn't supposed to take place until 1995 will get rethought...

We need to regionalize our systems...If a student goes to Normandale Community College, the cost of training that student is less than \$3,000. If they go to Worthington, the cost is close to \$6,000. So I say, why don't we say that educating a student is X, and we will with student aid provide X, and if the student wants to go to a school that costs XY to go to, tuition makes up the difference and see how it long it takes students to decide they want to go where it cheaper and the systems to decide that they can provide less expensive education by regionalizing...

Connie Levi, president, Greater Minneapolis Area Chamber of Commerce and chair, Governor's Commission on Postsecondary Education: The Governor's Commission on Postsecondary Education is a...group of citizens...appointed by the governor to develop a vision and a mission for higher education...

The one thing that the commission is not going to do is...get into other people's job descriptions. We are going to be meticulously careful not to try and superimpose our ideas of what a merger ought to look like...There is a board that has that responsibility. We are not going to devise a new funding formula. There is a committee...established for that purpose...But I would venture to say that the commission is going to recommend what a funding formula shouldn't look like. It ought not to encourage expansion where there is already over-capacity in the system...

What I saw during the legislative session (on) the merger bill was a great deal of...frustration over a lack of ability to get your hands around something that is not seeming to be manageable. And in visiting with a number of the legisla-

tors...that perception has been confirmed that this might not be the best answer, but it's something that will stir the pot...It will bring people together around issues that need to be discussed...

In asking whether or not Roger Moe was frustrated and was trying to do something for his area or whether or not the merger bill was a result of statesmanship, I would come down on the side of statesmanship. I believe that Roger understands the seriousness of a higher-education system to the future of the state...

I really can't stress enough the role that I believe higher education plays in determining to what standards K-12 will teach...If we were to ensure that our higher-education systems did not have the highest remediation rate in the country and that the responsibility for ensuring that students were prepared in order to access various components of the system, the impact on school districts across the State of Minnesota I think would be measurable. Blasphemy in some circles...

Duane Scribner, president, Higher Education Coordinating Board: By July 1995, provided things...as the legislation plans, the Minnesota State University Board, the Minnesota Community College Board and the Minnesota Technical College Board...will no longer exist. The state's public postsecondary education will have two major systems, two major leaders...The Higher Education Board will manage educational programs serving nearly two and one-half times as many students as the University of Minnesota Regents manage...(and) will have the vast majority of however many local campuses and local higher education presidents or other leaders remain of the 60 campuses or so that now exist...

The legislation does not anticipate that the separate thrusts of technical education, what we call community college education and state university education will disappear...We would, if it's successfully completed, have a...new merged system, with broad geographical reach, campuses probably in every senate district...or close to it, and leaders at the local level...It seems to me that that in itself suggests that there will be political clout in the new system, even though it may seem to those who are going through the process that they are the victims of political clout...

NWA deal cut; Carlson proposes health plan

Gov. Arne Carlson proposed a health-insurance package that would raise about \$75 million a year from cigarette taxes to subsidize premiums for low-income people. The plan would seek to enroll 70,000 uninsured children in the first two years.

Agreement was announced on a financial package of some \$740 million in public financing to enable Northwest Airlines to build maintenance bases providing 1,500 jobs in Duluth and Hibbing. Legislative approval is needed. **Northwest Airlines** also won approval to buy bankrupt Midway Airlines for \$175 million.

Gov. Carlson and Independent-Republican legislators proposed constitutional amendments limiting legislators to 10 consecutive years in office and governors and other constitutional officers to eight consecutive years and cutting the size of the Senate from 67 to 35 and the House from 134 to 105.

Gov. Carlson said the 1992 Legislature could face a budget gap of \$200 million.

Budget cuts slated at the University of Minnesota would eliminate the Humanities and Linguistics Departments, slash 70 jobs from the Extension Service, drop 13 to 17 faculty positions in the College of Liberal Arts and 16 to 20 in the Institute of Technology, reduce faculty positions in the College of Education and raise tuition for most undergraduates by about 9 percent with higher increases in some schools.

The Minnesota Revenue Department said most state taxpayers pay approximately the same proportion of their incomes in state and local taxes—around 9.1 percent. Those in the lowest 10 percent—below \$4,151 in income—paid 16.7 percent in taxes.

The Metropolitan Council projected regional population growth of 12.3 percent, to 2,571,000, by 2000.

Unemployment in the Twin Cities rose to 5.2 percent in September from August's 4.6 percent.

A French firm, Intelmatique, will join US West's Community Link in offering a home computer-based information-retrieval and transaction service.

Keeping Up

Dabs of reflecting material marking the centerline of Minnesota's public-policy highway.

Much of the Minnesota River is not safe for swimming and fishing because of pollution, according to state and federal studies.

The **Mankato Free** became a morning newspaper.

Minnesota Board of Education approved the consolidation of the Pine River and Backus School Districts. **Independent School District 710** School Board in St. Louis County voted to close the Toivola-Meadowlands School.

A developer said he will ask the Minnesota Municipal Board to shift his 93-acre residential subdivision from Lake Elmo to Oakdale. The Board has approved two previous transfers of land from Lake Elmo to Oakdale.

Northern States Power Co. received tentative approval of the Public Utilities Commission for a \$53.5 million rate increase. The company had asked \$98.1 million. **Blue Earth County** granted NSP a license to operate an incinerator ash site after the Minnesota Supreme Court decided against hearing an appeal on the case.

Five Worthington financial institutions created a \$500,000 financial pool to attract industry to the area.

Stearns County rejected a proposal to start a regional rail authority to acquire 94 miles of abandoned track between Avon and Fergus Falls.

First Bank Systems and St. Paul Ecumenical Alliance of Congregations announced a \$50 million program to buy and rehabilitate homes in the St. Paul inner city.

Crow Wing County Board adopted an assessment fee against all property to pay for landfill closure costs and solid-waste management. **Fergus Falls** City Council approved a garbage collection fee that charges residents according to how many cans of garbage they fill. **Koochiching** County Board decided to charge residents for garbage collection based on how much they generate. **Crow Wing** County opened a new state-of-

the-art landfill. **Minnesota Pollution** Control Agency fined the city of Fergus Falls \$60,000 for violating pollution rules at its garbage incinerator.

Blue Earth County signed a joint-powers agreement with Brown and Nicollet Counties for a juvenile-detention center.

The Minnesota Valley Regional Library Board in Mankato decided to close its libraries for a week to balance its budget.

Mary E. Rieder, director of Winona State University's Rochester Center, was named interim chancellor of the new Higher Education Board that will plan merger of three college systems. **Curtis W. Johnson,** who resigned as executive director of the Citizens League, will become adviser to

Gov. Carlson on higher education. **Cyndy Brucato,** former TV newscaster, was named Carlson's press secretary. **Lou Burdick** resigned as Carlson's chief communications strategist. **David Beaulieu** is the first American Indian to be named human rights commissioner; he succeeded Frank Gallegos. **Thomas Frost** was appointed commissioner of public safety to succeed Ralph Church. **Lyall Schwarzkopf,** former Carlson chief of staff, was named director of research and planning of the Metropolitan Council, succeeding Roger Israel, a 20-year Council veteran.

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Some election results

School Bond Referenda Defeats

Sauk Rapids-Rice, \$19.1 million. **Melrose,** \$12.5 million.

School Excess Levy Approvals

Burnsville-Eagan-Savage 191, \$3.2 million for five years. **Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan 196,** \$3.5 million for five years; also \$36.5 million in bonds for school buildings. **North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale 622,** \$3 million for five years. **Mahtomedi 832,** \$389,000 for five years. **Hastings 200,** \$1.2 million for five years. **Madelia,** \$145,000 for five years. **Mapleton,** \$125,000 for three years. **Amboy-Good Thunder,** \$100,000 for five years. **Tracy,** \$116/pupil unit for four years. **Zumbrota,** \$190,000 for five years. **Goodhue,** \$120,000 for five years.

School Excess Levy Defeats

New Ulm, \$580,000 for five years. **Marshall,** \$531,000 for four years. **Montevideo,** \$170/pupil unit. **Sauk Rapids-Rice,** \$700,000. **Holdingford,** \$127,000. **Big Lake,** \$350,000 for five years. **Mountain Iron-Buhl,** \$300,000 for five years.

I-394 express lane shows it can move people

Without fanfare, Twin Cities transit these days is getting a large boost through a real-world, on-the-ground project.

It is Interstate Hwy. 394 west of downtown Minneapolis, where, for example, the reversible express transit lane for high-occupancy vehicles (buses and multi-occupant cars and vans) already is moving nearly 40 percent of the people the freeway is carrying east of Hwy. 100 in the 7-to-8-a.m. rush hour.

Also, buses using the transit lanes from the Metropolitan Transit Commission's park-and-ride lot at County Rd. 73 are getting downtown a minimum of 10 minutes (and up to 18 minutes) ahead of cars using the regular freeway lanes during the peak hours. —Pete Vanderpoel.

How do the campaign contributions to DFL candidates for the Minnesota House differ from those of IR candidates? In 1990, both DFL and IR candidates received relatively small amounts from their respective parties, about 4 percent of their total contributions on average. And both DFL and IR candidates received roughly equal shares of contributions from individuals who gave more than \$100 (an average of about 6 percent of total contributions), and similar shares from public financing

Take Note

Another foray into the obscure in pursuit of the immaterial.

(about 30 percent of all contributions).

The biggest difference is in the DFL candidates' reliance on major contributions (greater than \$100) from political committees and funds. These are the PACs, special-interest groups, and committees set up specifically to raise money to help out individual candidates, such as the "Friends of Jane Doe Committee."

About 27 percent of contributions received by DFL candidates, on the average, came from these political committees and funds. This amounted to \$667,400 for all House DFL candidates in 1990. IR candidates, on the other hand, received from these sources an average of about 15 percent of all their contributions; this total was \$309,600, less than half the amount going to DFLers.

IR candidates relied more heavily than DFLers on contributions under \$100. These small contributions produced an average 41 percent of the IR candidates' total contributions; they made up about 34 percent of contributions to DFL candidates.

As might be expected, in both parties the *incumbents* clearly had the advantage in receiving major contributions from political committees and funds. Among DFL incumbents the median share of contributions from these sources was 30 percent of all contributions; for DFL non-incumbents it was 19 percent. For IR incumbents the median share of contributions from political committees and funds was 20 percent; for IR non-incumbents, 10 percent. —Jody A. Hauer.

Minnesota might have only a single teacher union by the next bargaining round in 1993. Competing for members has been a drain on both the Minnesota Education Association and the Minnesota Federation of Teachers. This year when the dust settled from about 10 contests the MEA had picked up Spring Lake Park from the MFT but had lost South Washington County to the MFT.

Even more important, perhaps: The legislative decision last session to remove the technical colleges from the K-12 districts threatens to drain members and dues from the MFT. In September, the MEA board formally offered the MFT a window, open until next March, to negotiate a merger. Days later, MFT President Sandra Peterson wrote her members she had accepted the offer to talk. Dis-

cussions have begun. —Ted Kolderie.

What was known as the Urban Coalition of Minneapolis has been broadening the geography of its scope for more than a year. Now calling itself just the Urban Coalition, it has taken offices that virtually straddle the Minneapolis/St. Paul boundary. It has a St. Paul address and a Minneapolis telephone number. Along with dramatically lower rent, this looks like a winning combination. —Curt Johnson.

Given St. Paul's resurgent interest in the vision of the city as a cultural and political center, we take note of a 1906 report to the honorable Common Council of St. Paul written by Capitol architect Cass Gilbert and three colleagues.

They cite the experts of their day in urging the city to implement the grand design of parks and sweeping boulevards. How could it be paid for? They claimed that the "conversion of lands to parks and boulevards [would] increase the value of surrounding property in the cities from 300 to 500 percent ...thus raising the taxable valuation."

And you thought tax-increment financing was a modern idea? —Phil Jenni.

For those of us who tend to think that AIDS is far removed from our lives, consider this: AIDS is the fifth leading cause of death among Minnesota men aged 20 to 64, according to University of Minnesota Prof. Charles Backstrom. —J.A.H.

State approach to AIDS

From The Minnesota Response to AIDS, Charles Backstrom and Leonard Robins in the CURA Reporter, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota, October 1991.

All levels of (Minnesota) government and most influential private sector groups have adopted a proactive, liberal approach to HIV/AIDS. In our judgment, Minnesota's response to HIV/AIDS has largely been caused by two things: Minnesota's political culture, and the conceptualization of HIV/AIDS as primarily a public-health issue...

Policymakers in Minnesota have come generally to want to have a strong information base before launching into new ventures. When HIV/AIDS appeared, this

state had a core of respected health professionals that were called upon for advice, and they were able to lay the base for action.

Minnesota has mounted a very substantial, carefully thought-out government response to attacking HIV/AIDS, but major additional efforts are needed to get the other half of persons who carry HIV/AIDS to be tested...

Despite its best efforts, Minnesota will not be able to completely prevent new HIV/AIDS infections. Understandably, this leads people to search for more dramatic ways to combat it. The great question in Minnesota concerning HIV/AIDS policy is whether the state can persevere in making decisions on the basis of public-health professionalism.

**Minnesota Journal
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