



Minnesota Journal

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A publication of the Citizens League

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Average taxes up slightly, despite strong value growth

Property taxes increased slightly in 1999 for the average homeowner in the seven-county Twin Cities area—increasing by \$12, or 0.6 percent, to \$1,884. Taxes grew at a slower pace than the average home value, which increased by \$7,368, or 6.3 percent, to \$124,406.

Property taxes also increased slightly this year for the average homeowner in the nonmetropolitan Minnesota counties. Taxes increased by an average of \$7, or 0.9 percent, to \$813. Nonmetro

by Dana Schroeder and Lynn Reed

average taxes also grew at a slower rate than the average home value, which increased by \$4,823, or 7.0 percent, to \$73,903.

The slower pace of tax growth, despite healthy increases in average home values, was largely due to legislative changes—increased state aid to schools, an increase in the education homestead credit and a lowering of the class rate for figuring the taxable value of homes.

Specifically, the changes included the following:

- A reduction in the rate at which homes valued above \$75,000 are taxed. In 1998, a home's taxable value (tax capacity) was one percent of value up to \$75,000 and 1.85 percent of value over \$75,000. In 1999 a home's taxable value is one percent of value up to \$75,000 and 1.7 percent of value over \$75,000. This moderates the tax

effect of an increase in value of homes worth more than \$75,000 and places more of the property-tax burden on lower-valued homes.

- A reduction in the rates at which commercial-industrial property and other nonhomestead property is taxed. These changes mean that higher-value homes do not receive as much relief as they otherwise would have and that more tax burden is shifted to the first \$75,000 of home value.

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It's tale of two cities in differing education approaches

The Citizens League's September Mind-Opener series, "Cities and Schools," highlighted the two different approaches being taken by the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul to improve student achievement in the public school system. In both communities, the mayor and superintendent appear to be working together, focusing on what they believe is the answer for their city.

St. Paul: Raising expectations

Both Mayor Norm Coleman and Superintendent Patricia Harvey stressed the importance of raising expectations—for students, teachers and parents. We know what works, they said, now we've just got to do it.

by Kris Lyndon Wilson

"In K-12 for a lot of years [the kids] just cruise through," said Harvey. "Every year they move you along; keeping the five year-olds with the five year-olds and the seven year-olds with the seven year-olds...Then all of the sudden they graduate from high school and reality hits them.

"You can't walk into the University of Minnesota or any other fine university and say 'Here I am, I'm 18 years old. Put me with all the other 18 year-olds.' You have to know something. You have to have the skills that they think are necessary in order to be admitted to the university. That's a hard lesson for many of our kids....We have let

them believe that you don't have to have rigor."

"We have vast numbers of kids who leave urban schools without the tools or the ability to read and write and comprehend; without the ability to spend eight hours on the job and come back the next day; without the capacity to understand the importance of lifelong learning," said Coleman.

"The good news is that we really do know what works," said Coleman. "For example, elements such as clear vision, effective leadership, and a caring, competent and unified teaching staff with truly high expectations for all students. We

cannot lower expectations because of economic status or because of race or because of the neighborhood in which you live. All students must meet high expectations."

In St. Paul, the expectations are about to change, promises Harvey. "We are no longer giving them the message that it's not important what you know. We are eliminating social promotion and our kids are going to have to demonstrate mastery."

Harvey is confident that St. Paul students will live up to these expectations. "We've got to raise the expectations for our kids. They are ready," she said. "All kids want to

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ABCs: Firm foundation for property-tax, spending reform

Taxation—its levels and forms—is a fertile nexus for politics and technical expertise in how to raise public revenues. This meeting place is now in flux, with rising antitax sentiment, a graying cohort of baby boomers seeing the end of their income growth, record state budget surpluses and the perception that taxpayers are being “overcharged.”

The Ventura administration has rekindled the property-tax debate that has been smouldering in Minnesota for some time. The administration deserves credit for trying to make the system more transparent to citizens at large. It commissioned a Citizens Jury, which recently completed its work on property-tax reform. Of course, it is good to see citizens engaged in the debate. But policymakers need to find productive ways to channel that engagement into ideas that transform the debate and create action.

Getting real change accomplished in the property-tax system is no simple task. The property-tax reform debate is soaked in complexity, as the Citizens Jury found. There are many different competing criteria for any “reform” of property taxes. Fairness, simplicity and efficiency might each require incompatible changes to be made to the system.

Not only is the property tax a complex field, it is a very touchy one with taxpayers, local government officials and legislators. The attention our annual property tax review, included in this issue of the *Jour-*

Viewpoint

by Lyle Wray

nal, draws is testament to that. Property taxes, unlike a number of other taxes, are highly visible to taxpayers. Once a year they get a large lump-sum property-tax bill in the mail. Just try increasing the property taxes on a \$150,000 home by \$100. Sales tax, by contrast, is extracted pennies at a time in the fine print of myriads of transactions. The passage of a half-percent sales tax a few years back produced barely a ripple.

There is also a larger context for property-tax reform. Property-tax reform must do more than increase or decrease the tax take from property taxes or shift property-tax burdens from one class of payers to the other. True reform should nudge us toward producing better value for public money spent and then toward making information available to citizens on costs and quality of services across local governments. This is well underway in some parts of the country and in a number of other countries. Spending-side reform, in sum, needs to accompany reforms in the raising of revenues.

Where to start seems a daunting task. The Citizens League has repeatedly studied property tax reform, most recently as part of a study on reforming state spending, when the League came up with the ABC proposal for property-tax

reform. The ABC reform plan attempts to simplify and standardize many features of the property-tax and aid system, to increase accountability, to use state funds more efficiently and to raise the state’s share of K-12 funding and other state mandates.

The core of the proposal is to clarify state and local responsibilities for different services. A central feature of the plan is that services defined as state-level responsibilities are funded by state-level resources of various types. The plan is built on a standard categorization of state and local funding responsibilities for cities, counties and school districts.

A-level basic services. These basic services are 100 percent state-funded with statewide revenue sources, including a possible statewide property tax. A-level services are those that the state determines to be of such compelling state interest that the state funds them to a level based on best-practice cost estimates of a basic package of services.

B-level categorical funding. This spending relates to certain cost factors outside of the control of local governments that raise the cost of providing a basic package of services. For example, cost factors for schools may derive from attributes of students in the school system.

These factors are used to provide level B categorical aid to supplement the simpler formulas of the A-level services. Funding here, too, would be from state sources, including reallocations of existing spending.

C-level local preferences funding. These are local add-on services that are funded 100 percent from local property taxes and other sources. These reflect desires of the local community that are not of compelling state interest. These might be much higher levels of service than provided by levels A and B or they might be other types of services. These level C funds should be raised from local property taxation without classification—levies would be directly on market value to enhance local accountability for such spending.

Property taxes are a complex, visible and touchy revenue source. Clarifying who does what, who pays for what, who is responsible for increasing taxes and whether we’re getting our money’s worth should increase citizen trust and engagement. The ABC system would eventually simplify the current maze of regulations and choruses of finger pointing over who really raised the taxes. While the system would need to be phased in, it should form a solid foundation for further reform of Minnesota’s property-tax system.

Lyle Wray is executive director of the Citizens League.

Property tax

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● A significant increase in the education homestead credit, which was first introduced in 1998. In 1999 it is computed as 66.2 percent of the state’s general education levy amount, up to a maximum credit of \$320 per home. The changes in the education homestead credit resulted in the state’s paying an additional \$145 million of homeowners’ school tax bills this year.

● \$59 million in additional state education funding to lower the share that falls on property taxes.

These are among the findings of the 33rd annual homestead property-tax survey of Minnesota communities over 2,500 population, conducted jointly for the seventh year by the Minnesota Taxpayers Association and the Citizens League. (See page 5 for an explanation of the various tax comparisons in the analysis.) Other major findings:

● **Lauderdale** replaced New Prague (which dropped to third place) as the top-ranked metro community and **Staples** remained the top-ranked nonmetro community this year in a comparison of taxes on a similarly valued home. This year the comparison is on a home assessed for tax purposes at

\$125,000 in the metro communities and at \$75,000 in the nonmetro communities.

● St. Paul moved up slightly in the rankings in the comparison of taxes on a similarly valued home, moving up from 15th to 13th place. (The comparison was on a \$125,000 home this year and a \$115,000 home last year.) Minneapolis, in contrast, dropped from sixth to 11th place. School taxes on a \$125,000 home dropped by 26.5 percent in Minneapolis and by 13.9 percent in St. Paul.

● Responsibility for high taxes in top-ranked communities is shared among taxing jurisdictions, with

city, county and school taxes playing a strong role in both top-ranked metro communities and top-ranked nonmetro communities.

It’s important to note that this comparison looks only at property taxes, not at other possible sources of income for local governments, such as fees or special assessments. Some communities rely on these other sources of income to a higher degree than others. Those that do would tend to have lower property taxes than other communities.

\$125,000 metro homes
Ramsey County’s **Lauderdale**, in school district 623, moved from

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Bigger impact likely from bus spending than from LRT

From Understanding Urban Travel Demand, Report #2 in the Series, Transportation and Regional Growth Study, Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota, August 1999.

What mass transit does well...is hauling many people at once, with short headways and infrequent stops. Rush-hour express busses mostly have these characteristics. It is probably not coincidental that these are the only busses that attract significant number of non-transit dependent people.

What mass transit doesn’t do well is haul small numbers of people with long headways and frequent stops...Not only is such service not attractive to the rider, it fails to capture the other advantages of transit. A 50-foot bus with two passengers takes up more space on the road and produces more pollution than would be used by hauling the two people in cars...A final disadvantage is that such off-peak, low-occupancy service is not profitable for the transit agency.

Despite the current popularity of the LRT option, it is not clear that this technology really solves any of the problems faced by bus transit. LRT could certainly be an efficient way to move people during peak hours, but busses already do this pretty well. The environmental disadvantages of running nearly empty buses during off-peak hours could be lessened somewhat since

LRT produces less pollution, but so would using vans (or cleaner busses) during off-peak hours.

LRT might run slightly faster than busses, but this is because it has dedicated right-of-way, not because it is a train. Spending money increasing bus frequency through-

out the system, rather than building tracks on one line, is likely to have a much bigger impact on overall transit use.

LRT may, like other policies, play a useful role in the future transportation system of the Twin Cities. The problem...is that no

convincing vision has yet been offered as to what this role might be, and why a limited rail service rather than a greatly expanded bus service is the best way to serve this role. In other words it is not enough to say that people prefer rail to bus. Rail is far more expensive, so it obviously must provide some benefits. The relevant question is not whether these benefits exist, but whether they are larger than would be obtained by spending the same amount of money improving the bus or other public transportation service.

Another view: Hollman role clarified

Your September 21 issue included an important mistake in the article “Supply crisis exists in affordable housing in Twin Cities” [excerpted from CMAL Affordable Housing Study, Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues of Women Voters, May 1999]. The article states that “[i]n North Minneapolis, 770 units of public housing were demolished.” In fact, only the 350 Sumner units and the 66 Olson units have been demolished at this point. Also, many of these units (roughly 75, I believe) had been condemned and vacated due to structural problems, so they were already off the market prior to the Hollman lawsuit.

At a more general level, it is not accurate to portray Hollman as a cause of the affordable housing supply crisis. Hollman includes one-for-one replacement of all units, so, given the fact that many of the units were uninhabitable and boarded-up, Hollman will increase the supply of affordable units. Also, Hollman created 900 new Section 8 certificates, increasing the number of units affordable to people with low incomes.

Sam Magavern, Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis

Editor’s Note: Due to space constraints, the “On Balance” roundup of editorial opinions will not run this month. It will return in November.

Property tax

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second place last year to first place this year for the highest metro-area tax bill—\$2,311—on a home assessed for tax purposes at \$125,000. However, taxes on a hypothetical homestead in Lauderdale valued at \$125,000 in both 1998 and 1999 dropped by 4.9 percent this year, reflecting the legislative tax system changes.

Homeowners whose tax statements list an estimated market value of \$125,000 should find their 1999 taxes similar to those listed here. However, depending on the accuracy of assessment practices in each community, the actual selling price for such a house could differ from

community to community—ranging from \$133,690 in Anoka County’s Columbus Township to \$148,104 in Norwood Young America.

The other four highest metro communities in the \$125,000 home comparison are (school district numbers in parentheses):

Newport (833), \$2,301; **New Prague** (721), \$2,256; **Brooklyn Center** (286), \$2,228; and **Waconia** (110), \$2,218. Newport, Brooklyn Center and Waconia were new to the top five ranking this year, moving up from 24th place, 11th place and 20th place last year, respectively.

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The Minnesota Journal

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Schools

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know is what the rules are, what the expectations are. And then they'll move forward."

"We know what works! What we haven't been able to do is find the political will," said Coleman. "We know what works and we're not making it work for far too many kids... This is no longer acceptable in St. Paul."

Minneapolis: Letting teachers teach
In Minneapolis, the message of both the mayor and the superintendent focused more on addressing the external factors that are hampering student achievement. They highlighted efforts to reduce crime and truancy, provide one-stop shopping for city services and address inadequate health care and immunization rates.

"Our schools must be able to focus on learning," said Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton. "When you talk to a teacher or an administrator they will tell you that the problems and issues that come through the door sometimes prevent them from being able to perform their basic task and that is to educate our children."

The mayor pointed to the fact that

the city dedicated \$22 million in 1999 to various strategies that promote strong and healthy families. "The objective of each one of these strategies is to improve educational outcomes for our children," she said.

"In order for our teachers to focus on academic achievement, we absolutely must have the rest of the

"We know what works and we're not making it work for far too many kids... This is no longer acceptable in St. Paul."
—St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman

community doing its job," said Superintendent Carol Johnson.

Johnson also outlined what she believes we know for a fact in regard to student achievement, highlighting student attendance, parental responsibility and competent and caring teachers.

"Here's what we know—attendance matters," she said. "We know that we need parents involved and engaged... That means getting their kids to school, every day, on time. Then kids have to engage and take responsibility for their own learning."

"We are willing to guarantee every student in Minneapolis that is in

attendance 95 percent of the time, is engaged in school and is well behaved at least a year's growth for a year's instruction," said Johnson.

Importance of public schools
While the two cities appear to be taking different approaches on the issue of how to improve student achievement, they are clearly on

the same page regarding why. Both mayors stressed the overall importance of having quality public schools in our cities. Not only is this important for the future of our cities, they said, but for the economic health of our cities today.

"If you don't figure out ways to keep the middle class in an urban center, you're in trouble. Cities that become places with few 'haves' and many 'have-nots' are in trouble," said Coleman. "You've got to have the people who can afford to leave decide to stay. And that is ultimately where education comes in."

"No city can remain strong and vital without a quality public school system," said Sayles Belton.

In terms of the overall health of a city and its quality of life, Coleman stressed that the quality of our public schools is one area the city can do something about. "The lack of quality urban education may be the single biggest, the single most preventable cause of social injustice in the United States," said Coleman.

He noted a national trend of cities' increasing involvement in public schools, which in some cities has led to the mayor taking over control of public school operation.

Because many citizens mistakenly hold a city's mayor accountable for the quality of its public schools and because school quality strongly influences the location choices of both families and businesses, Coleman said he understands many mayors' desire to have more control over the issue.

"How many people here can name the majority of members of their local school board?" Coleman asked. "Think about it, these are the people responsible for the most important factor in [families'] choice of location, the people who spend 50 cents on every property tax dollar—and you don't know who they are."

Kris Lyndon Wilson is a research associate with the Citizens League.

● On county taxes Waconia (Carver County) ranked second of 19 different county tax rates, Brooklyn Center (Hennepin) ranked sixth, New Prague (Scott) 11th and Newport (Washington) 14th.

● On school taxes Newport ranked fourth of 55, Waconia seventhth, New Prague ninth and Brooklyn Center 25th.

Using data compiled by the Minnesota Taxpayers Association that looked at budgeted operating spending per capita, Lauderdale ranked 76th out of 86 metro cities on city spending, but second of seven on county spending and fifth of 48 on school district spending. (School spending is reported per pupil unit).

According to Lauderdale's city administrator, Rick Getschow,

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Property tax

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Lauderdale has mostly lower valued homes. The Legislature's decision to lower the class rate to 1.7 percent for home values above \$75,000 put a higher burden on Lauderdale's lower valued homes. With higher valued homes in other communities contributing less to the county and school tax base, county and school tax rates tend to increase.

Among the other cities in the top five:

● Newport jumped from 24th to second place in 1999, mainly due to a 10.2 percent increase in school district taxes caused by a \$6.8 million operating referendum. Its city portion of taxes has been high for several years, due to a very high public safety budget, according to Larry Bodahl, Newport city administrator, and increased by 5.5 percent this year. Special district taxes increased by 16.5 percent and county taxes showed a small increase.

● New Prague's story is the same in past years: It is in a rapidly growing area on the southern edge of the metro area and has a relatively small amount of commercial-industrial property to help shoulder the property-tax burden. It has undertaken infrastructure investments in both the city and in its

school district, District 721.

● Brooklyn Center moved from 11th to 4th place mainly because its school and county taxes did not drop as much as in other communities.

● Waconia moved from 20th place to fifth, according to City Administrator Bruce Eisenhower, because the school district passed a middle-school facilities levy and the city is building reserves for an expansion of the city hall and library so the tax load doesn't hit all at once.

St. Paul ranked 11th for city taxes, second for county taxes, 38th for school taxes and 33rd for special district taxes. Minneapolis ranked sixth in city taxes, 12th in county taxes, 28th in school taxes and 22nd in special district taxes.

The five *lowest* tax metro communities in the \$125,000 home comparison include four townships:

May Township (834), \$1,340; **Burns Township** (11), \$1,376; **West Lakeland Township** (834), \$1,377; **Grant** (834) \$1,456; and **Ham Lake** (11), \$1,473.

May and West Lakeland Townships and Grant are in Washington County; Burns Township and Ham Lake are in Anoka County.

The bottom five communities rank among the lowest in municipal taxes, in the bottom half in county

taxes and in the bottom half in school taxes.

\$75,000 nonmetro homes Staples—located in Todd County and in school district 2170—is again the top-ranked nonmetro community in taxes on a hypothetical home, valued this year for tax purposes at \$75,000, with taxes of \$1,383.

Homeowners whose tax statements list an estimated market value of \$75,000 should find their 1999 taxes similar to those listed here. The analysis shows that, depending on assessment practices, the actual *selling price* for such a home could actually range from \$69,791 in Worthington to \$84,848 in Caledonia.

The other four *highest* tax nonmetro communities in the \$75,000 home comparison are:

Thief River Falls (564), \$1,313; **Cambridge** (911), \$1,240; **Princeton** (477), \$1,234; and **Long Prairie** (2753), \$1,179. Long Prairie moved up to the top five this year from a rank of 13th last year.

The average of taxes on a \$75,000 homestead in the 131 nonmetro communities with populations over 2,500 was \$868.

Three of the five top-ranking tax communities are in the bottom 20 in average-value homesteads. Staples (at \$36,089) is second lowest of the 131 nonmetro communities.

Thief River Falls (at \$52,721) is 16th lowest and Long Prairie (at \$55,067) is 20th lowest.

The average homeowner in Staples, then, is paying significantly lower taxes than on the \$75,000 home in the comparative example. Taxes on the average-value home in Staples are \$632, which ranks 106th among the 131 communities.

Four of the five top cities are in the top 20 in city taxes; four of the five are in the top seven in county taxes (of 107 county rates); two of the cities are in the top 10 percent in school district taxes and one has special district taxes in the top seventh.

● City taxes ranked first in Staples, third in Cambridge, 13th in Thief River Falls and 19th in Princeton.

● County taxes ranked third in Long Prairie (Todd County), fourth in Princeton (Mille Lacs), fifth in Staples (Todd) and seventh in Thief River Falls (Pennington).

City taxes in Staples accounted for 45.9 percent of total taxes on a \$75,000 home, well above the average of 27.3 percent for all the nonmetro communities. According to City Administrator Gerald Brever, the city has a very high debt load from infrastructure investments made several years ago, so 48 cents out of every dollar of city spending is for debt service. The city's oper-

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Property tax

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Minneapolis (1), at \$2,137, ranked 11th and **St. Paul** (625), at \$2,115, ranked 13th.

The average of taxes on a \$125,000 home in the 107 metro-area communities was \$1,854, down by 7.7 percent from what it would have been last year. Only seven communities would have seen an increase in 1999 taxes on a home valued at \$125,000 in both 1998 and 1999.

The average home values of two of the five highest-tax communities ranked at the bottom among the metro cities, with Brooklyn Center bottom at \$81,920 and Lauderdale third from the bottom at \$85,228. Newport, at \$100,743, ranked in the bottom fifth; New Prague, at

\$101,561, ranked in the bottom fourth; and Waconia, at \$121,855, ranked in the bottom half. St. Paul ranked fourth lowest at \$87,196; Minneapolis, at \$96,453, ranked 13th from the bottom.

In contrast to its top ranking in the comparison of \$125,000 homes, taxes on the average-value homestead in Lauderdale (\$1,326) ranked 85th out of the 107 metro communities. So the average Lauderdale homeowner is paying significantly lower taxes than in the \$125,000 comparison. That's because Lauderdale's high tax rate applied against its relatively low-valued homesteads produces relatively low taxes.

Taxes on the average-value homesteads in the other communities in the top five \$125,000 comparison ranked as follows: Newport, \$1,678, 63rd; New Prague, \$1,633,

64th; Brooklyn Center, \$1,192, 96th; and Waconia, \$2,124, 37th.

All five of the cities were in the top third in city taxes, four of the five were in the top 10 (of 55) for school taxes and three of the five were in the top six (of 19) for county taxes.

● Lauderdale had the highest school taxes on a \$125,000 home, \$986 (out of 55 different metro school tax rates); the fourth highest county tax, \$752 (out of 19 county tax rates); the 35th highest city tax, \$464 (out of 107 cities) and the 35th highest (out of 65) special district taxes, \$108.

● Among the other cities in the top five, Newport ranked second highest of 107 in city taxes, New Prague ranked third, Brooklyn Center ranked seventh and Waconia ranked 19th.

What do the rankings mean?

\$75,000 and \$125,000 comparisons. To arrive at a constant value for comparing taxes among communities, we computed the average home values in all metro and nonmetro communities of all sizes.

The \$125,000 home approximates the metro average (\$124,406), while the \$75,000 value approximates the nonmetro average (\$73,903).

A high ranking in this comparison shows that a community has relatively high taxes per dollar of homestead property—a high tax rate and little or no offsetting tax relief, such as the taconite homestead credit available to Iron Range communities. High tax rates indicate high government spending—by cities, schools, counties or spe-

cial districts, like hospital districts or watershed districts—*relative* to a community's property-tax base. The analysis ranks taxes by these various levels of government, as well as total taxes. This comparison does *not* account for differences in communities' assessment practices.

Average-value homes. We calculated the average estimated market value for each community and compared taxes on these average-value homes. This analysis gives a better sense of what homeowners in various communities actually pay in property taxes.

But because the analysis reflects differences in tax rates *and* differences in value, a high ranking can mean that a community either has a high average home value, a high

tax rate or both.

Likely selling price. The survey includes a way of accounting for differences in assessment practices. Using the state-calculated sales ratio for each community, a "likely selling price" has been figured for each community—that is, the price at which a home valued for tax purposes at \$125,000 (metro) or \$75,000 (nonmetro) would likely sell for on the market. The sales ratio is the ratio of homes' actual selling prices to the value placed on the homes by the assessor.

For example, in the top-ranked nonmetro community, Staples, which has a sales ratio of 87.2 percent, the likely selling price of the hypothetical \$75,000 home would be \$86,009. Taxes on that home, if

it were assessed at full value, would still rank first. Eveleth, which has the lowest nonmetro sales ratio, 81.1 percent, would have a likely selling price of \$92,478; its tax ranking would jump from 114th to 44th.

The likely selling price rankings are included in the full report available from the Citizens League or the Minnesota Taxpayers Association.

None of the analyses account for the special targeted property-tax refund intended to help offset large increases in taxes, since homeowners must specially apply for that refund, nor for the circuit breaker refund, which is dependent on homeowners' incomes.

TABLE 1: 1999 TAXES ON HOMES IN 107* METROPOLITAN COMMUNITIES																							
\$125,000 HOME**						AVERAGE VALUE HOME						\$125,000 HOME**						AVERAGE VALUE HOME					
Community		1999	Estimated		% Change		Community		1999	Estimated		% Change		Community		1999	Estimated		% Change				
(School District)	Tax	Rank	Market	1999	Tax	in Tax	(School District)	Tax	Rank	Market	1999	Tax	in Tax	(School District)	Tax	Rank	Market	1999	Tax	in Tax			
			Value	Tax	Rank	'98-'99				Value	Tax	Rank	'98-'99				Value	Tax	Rank	'98-'99			
ANOKA COUNTY																							
Andover (11)	\$1,555	97	\$132,871	\$1,711	60	-0.3%	Mound (277)	\$1,924	45	\$126,803	\$1,967	46	6.1%										
Anoka (11)	1,711	83	97,600	1,125	102	-6.7	New Hope (281)	1,955	35	106,856	1,543	75	-3.6										
Blaine (16)	1,675	88	100,925	1,165	99	-3.0	Orono (278)	1,782	70	308,996	5,890	3	7.8										
Burns Twp. (15)	1,376	106	136,802	1,586	70	1.7	Osseo (279)***	2,005	27	93,928	1,325	86	1.7										
Circle Pines (12)	2,002	29	101,506	1,428	82	1.8	Plymouth (284)	1,865	50	164,882	2,759	20	1.4										
Columbia Heights (13)	1,899	47	83,506	923	107	-14.7	Richfield (280)	2,108	15	99,976	1,475	79	4.0										
Columbus Twp. (831)	1,720	82	133,800	1,910	50	3.7	Robbinsdale (281)	1,968	31	87,283	1,174	98	2.2										
Coon Rapids (11)	1,576	95	99,268	1,063	105	-8.7	St. Anthony (282)	2,166	8	111,219	1,810	56	-0.9										
East Bethel (15)	1,618	91	109,229	1,295	89	-2.4	St. Louis Park (283)	1,841	58	112,384	1,552	73	-4.4										
Fridley (14)	1,750	74	98,715	1,175	97	-9.0	Shorewood (276)	2,051	20	242,377	4,963	7	1.3										
Ham Lake (11)	1,473	103	131,513	1,595	69	0.5	Wayzata (284)	1,960	34	297,999	6,024	1	5.1										
Lino Lakes (12)	2,008	26	142,342	2,433	28	9.6	RAMSEY COUNTY																
Linwood Twp. (831)	1,510	100	112,272	1,265	91	-7.8	Arden Hills (621)	\$1,817	65	\$150,618	\$2,385	29	-3.5%										
Oak Grove (15)	1,683	86	125,140	1,686	62	-4.3	Falcon Heights (623)	2,107	16	134,747	2,348	31	3.9										
Ramsey (11)	1,560	96	123,965	1,540	76	-1.0	Lauderdale (623)	2,311	1	85,228	1,326	85	0.2										
St. Francis (15)	1,796	68	101,996	1,281	90	-2.4	Little Canada (623)	2,214	6	107,298	1,756	58	-1.1										
Spring Lake Park (16)	1,808	67	94,480	1,118	103	-6.6	Maplewood (622)	1,935	43	111,105	1,607	67	2.4										
CARVER COUNTY																							
Chanhassen (112)	\$2,127	12	\$182,401	\$3,601	11	-5.2%	Mounds View (621)	1,951	39	101,355	1,435	81	-5.4										
Chaska (112)	1,854	52	133,837	2,056	42	-6.0	New Brighton (621)	1,836	59	126,947	1,880	51	-5.8										
Norwood Young America (108)	2,004	28	89,810	1,141	100	-11.8	North Oaks (621)	1,644	90	339,499	6,010	2	-0.1										
Victoria (112)	2,037	22	202,983	3,971	8	0.5	North St. Paul (622)	1,845	56	99,881	1,314	87	3.1										
Waconia (110)	2,218	5	121,855	2,134	37	3.0	Roseville (623)	2,153	9	117,014	1,952	47	1.6										
Watertown (111)	1,870	49	96,883	1,219	93	-2.7	St. Paul (625)	2,115	13	87,196	1,219	92	2.9										
DAKOTA COUNTY																							
Apple Valley (196)	\$1,730	80	\$134,038	\$1,924	49	-4.4%	Shoreview (621)	1,830	61	136,015	2,076	41	-2.2										
Burnsville (191)	1,811	66	125,240	1,816	55	-3.4	Vadnais Heights (624)	1,835	60	126,270	1,863	53	-6.9										
Eagan (196)	1,582	93	134,844	1,778	57	-6.9	White Bear Lake (624)	1,848	54	110,436	1,524	77	-6.3										
Farmington (192)	1,953	37	111,124	1,622	66	-0.1	White Bear Twp. (624)	1,819	63	132,867	1,994	45	-5.3										
Hastings (200)	1,965	32	107,608	1,543	74	5.8	SCOTT COUNTY																
Inver Grove Heights (199)	1,852	53	119,449	1,729	59	-1.0	Belle Plaine (716)	\$1,890	48	\$98,447	\$1,303	88	-4.3%										
Lakeville (194)	1,729	81	144,714	2,151	36	4.0	Credit River Twp. (719)	1,490	102	169,576	2,320	32	1.5										
Mendota Heights (197)	1,532	98	185,154	2,692	21	-6.3	Jordan (717)	1,789	69	90,221	1,088	104	-11.3										
Rosemount (196)	1,939	42	129,870	2,054	43	-5.1	New Market Twp. (194)	1,745	75	180,923	2,954	18	3.8										
South St. Paul (6)	1,739	77	88,485	1,019	106	0.6	New Prague (721)	2,256	3	101,561	1,633	64	-2.7										
West St. Paul (197)	1,600	92	104,159	1,208	94	-6.5	Prior Lake (719)	2,100	17	144,297	2,579	23	0.4										
HENNEPIN COUNTY																							
Bloomington (271)	\$1,741	76	\$131,118	\$1,872	52	0.9%	Savage (191)	1,952	38	132,424	2,130	39	-1.8										
Brooklyn Center (286)	2,228	4	81,920	1,192	96	2.7	Shakopee (720)	1,842	57	112,044	1,573	71	-9.0										
Brooklyn Park (279)	2,167	7	101,585	1,602	68	-0.9	Spring Lake Twp. (719)	1,580	94	165,290	2,370	30	-0.3										
Champlin (11)	1,848	55	112,833	1,570	72	-4.1	WASHINGTON COUNTY																
Corcoran (877)	1,775	71	156,461	2,475	27	-1.3	Afton (834)	\$1,530	99	\$200,938	\$2,985	17	-0.2%										
Crystal (281)	1,943	40	89,556	1,197	95	-1.1	Bayport (834)	2,144	10	124,585	2,133	38	6.9										
Dayton (11)	1,821	62	137,762	2,109	40	2.3	Cottage Grove (833)	2,020	24	108,558	1,625	65	10.9										
Deephaven (276)	1,942	41	290,545	5,856	4	1.6	Forest Lake (831)	1,767	73	107,360	1,379	83	-2.4										
Eden Prairie (272)	2,036	23	180,498	3,396	12	-2.0	Forest Lake Twp. (831)	1,490	101	143,583	1,845	54	4.2										
Edina (273)	1,971	30	200,145	3,723	10	3.1	Grant (834)	1,456	104	222,648	3,250	13	1.6										
Excelsior (276)	2,109	14	155,835	2,892	19	1.6	Hugo (624)	1,655	89	142,745	2,019	44	-2.7										
Golden Valley (270)	2,041	21	134,853	2,285	34	0.7	Lake Elmo (834)	1,703	84	188,038	3,027	16	0.1										
Hassan Twp. (728)	1,818	64	157,940	2,552	24	13.0	Mahtomedi (832)	1,775	72	163,657	2,609	22	0.2										
Hopkins (270)	2,054	19	110,285	1,687	61	-2.0	May Twp. (834)	1,340	107	195,063	2,542	25	0.3										
Independence (278)	1,955	36	202,325	3,824	9	9.4	New Scandia Twp. (831)	1,677	87	155,119	2,311	33	1.9										
Maple Grove (279)	2,015	25	134,381	2,241	35	-1.1	Newport (833)	2,301	2	100,743	1,678	63	14.7										
Medina (278)	1,734	79	276,760	5,046	6	8.4	Oak Park Heights (834)	1,696	85	115,632	1,500	78	-5.8										
Minneapolis (1)	2,137	11	96,453	1,458	80	-0.8	Oakdale (622)	1,734	78	106,290	1,345	84	0.7										
Minnetonka (276)	2,068	18	171,519	3,230	14	2.1	St. Paul Park (833)	1,862	51	88,782	1,134	101	11.8										
Minnetrista (277)	1,932	44	261,581	5,178	5	7.6	Stillwater (834)	1,908	46	126,248	1,937	48	-2.3										
*The 107 communities in the seven-county metropolitan area with populations of 2,500 or above, plus Excelsior.																							
**A hypothetical home in each community with an assessor's market value of \$125,000.																							
***Taxes for Osseo exclude the sewer district. Taxes would be \$2,301 and rank second highest if the district were included.																							
SOURCES: Minn. Dept. of Revenue, Abstracts of Tax Lists and Assessment; Calculations by Minnesota Taxpayers Association																							

Property tax

Continued from page 5

Operating expenses per capita ranked 1 out of 90 nonmetro cities reporting. Todd County is one of the highest-tax nonmetro counties, yet its per capita operating expenses ranked 54th out of 74 counties reporting.

Interestingly, the tax for the Staples-Motley school district (2170) ranked 93rd out of 113 nonmetro school district rates. But on a per pupil basis, the school district's spending ranked third of the 99 nonmetro school districts reporting.

Among the other cities in the top five:

●Thief River Falls had a five percent levy increase last year, according to City Administrator Roger De Lap, and has low property values for the spending needed. It is also located in a high-tax county, Pennington County.

●Cambridge ranks high on city taxes (third) because it has been taking care of previous debt problem in recent years. Its city operating spending is very modest, 68th out of 90. City Administrator Gordon Heitke thinks the city has "turned the corner" and its taxes should start to go down.

●Princeton's interim city administrator, Steve Johnson, attributes Princeton's high ranking to its low

tax base and low state local government aid. Mille Lacs County has a lot of exempt land, which contributes to its high rank for county taxes.

●Long Prairie's high ranking is pushed by high school district taxes, following the Long Prairie-Grey Eagle district (2753) adding a new high school recently, and high county taxes in Todd County. Also, while its city taxes rank very low (99th out of 131), they increased by 26.5 percent this year, with the addition of a bond for public improvements of more than \$36,000 per year for 10 years.

The five *lowest* tax nonmetro communities in the \$75,000 comparison are:

Grand Rapids Township (318), \$455; Harris Township (318), \$479; Crow Wing County's First Assessment Unorganized (477), \$516; Becker Township (726), \$520; and Baldwin Township (477), \$594.

Grand Rapids and Harris Townships are in Itasca County; Becker and Baldwin Townships are in Sherburne County. Harris and Grand Rapids Townships qualify for the state-paid taconite homestead credit, which reduces taxes by half or more in those communities.

Average-value homes
Taxes on average-value homesteads went up in 51 of the 107 metro communities and down in the other 56. They went up in only

TABLE 2: 1999 TAXES ON HOMES IN SELECTED* NONMETROPOLITAN COMMUNITIES

	\$75,000 HOME**		AVERAGE VALUE HOME		% Change	
Community (School District)	1999	Estimated	Market	1999	Tax	in Tax
	Tax	Rank	Value	Tax	Rank	'98-'99
Austin (492)	\$ 824	79	\$60,480	\$588	109	-17.7%
Bemidji (31)	1,164	8	53,881	764	90	7.1
Bemidji Township (31)	1,063	15	70,856	909	60	0.5
Cambridge (911)	1,240	3	89,970	1,615	9	-1.2
Crookston (593)	1,130	11	52,121	727	97	3.3
Duluth (709)	925	46	71,308	817	77	-8.4
Faribault (656)	897	54	85,895	1,025	49	-7.4
Glenwood (2149)	1,094	12	54,649	735	95	-11.5
Granite Falls (2190)	1,177	6	57,315	823	74	0.2
Long Prairie (2753)	1,179	5	55,067	795	84	4.4
Mankato (77)	780	95	86,903	917	58	-10.1
Montevideo (129)	1,088	13	54,872	738	94	-0.3
Moorhead (152)	913	48	75,869	833	71	-13.8
Northern Township (31)	1,067	14	88,534	1,325	23	10.3
Owatonna (761)	809	85	93,932	1,089	42	-8.7
Princeton (477)	1,234	4	70,065	1,085	43	-9.9
Rochester (535)	944	39	89,338	1,168	37	-6.4
Roseau (682)	1,161	9	62,687	\$881	65	-4.3
Saint Cloud (742)	925	45	85,250	1,043	48	-1.1
Staples (2170)	1,383	1	36,089	\$632	106	-3.6
Thief River Falls (564)	1,313	2	52,721	\$863	68	3.9
Wadena (2155)	1,173	7	48,285	\$695	101	-5.7
Willmar (347)	897	55	76,572	\$826	73	-11.1
Windom (177)	1,134	10	52,033	\$727	98	13.4
Winona (861)	795	92	81,272	\$805	80	-11.3

*The survey includes 131 nonmetro communities with populations of 2,500 or more and significant numbers of year-round homes. For space reasons only 25 communities are included in this table: the top 15 nonmetro communities in total tax ranking, plus the 10 largest nonmetro communities. See note at end of article for information on availability of the complete table.
**A hypothetical home in each community with an assessor's market value of \$75,000.

33 of the 131 nonmetro communities and down in 98.

Property tax bills for owners of average-value homes went up by 10 percent or more in five of the metro communities and down by 10 percent or more in three metro communities. In contrast, taxes on average-value homes went up by 10 percent or more in eight nonmetro communities and down by 10 percent or more in 39 nonmetro communities—and down by more than 25 percent in four of these communities

Dana Schroeder is editor of the Minnesota Journal and Lynn Reed is research director of the Minnesota Taxpayers Association (MTA). The MTA did the data preparation and analysis for the property-tax survey. Copies of the complete tables reporting the analysis and of the methodology for the analysis are available from the Citizens League at 612-338-0791 or the MTA at 651-224-7477. The methodology and the complete Table 2 listing all nonmetro cities over 2,500 are available online at www.citizensleague.net.

TABLE 3: 1999 TAXES IN SELECTED METRO AND NONMETRO CITIES*

METRO CITIES (\$125,000 home)													
Community (School District)	Total Tax Rank	City Tax	Rank	% of Total	County Tax	Rank	% of Total	School Tax	Rank	% of Total	Spec. Dist. Tax	Rank	% of Total
Lauderdale (623)	1	\$464	35	20.1%	\$752	4	32.6%	\$986	1	42.7%	\$108	35	4.7%
Newport (833)	2	\$795	2	34.6%	\$480	14	20.9%	\$914	4	39.7%	\$112	32	4.8%
New Prague (721)	3	\$757	3	33.6%	\$623	11	27.6%	\$854	9	37.9%	\$21	65	0.9%
Brooklyn Center (286)	4	\$670	7	30.1%	\$656	6	29.4%	\$753	25	33.8%	\$149	10	6.7%
Waconia (110)	5	\$539	19	24.3%	\$764	2	34.4%	\$878	7	39.6%	\$37	64	1.7%
Minneapolis (1)	11	\$680	6	31.8%	\$590	12	27.6%	\$739	28	34.6%	\$128	22	6.0%
St. Paul (625)	13	\$615	11	29.1%	\$686	5	32.4%	\$703	38	33.2%	\$111	33	5.2%
Totals, Averages**	107	\$406	107	21.5%	\$599	19	32.4%	\$754	55	41.0%	\$96	65	5.7%
NONMETRO CITIES (\$75,000 home)													
Community (School District)	Total Tax Rank	City Tax	Rank	% of Total	County Tax	Rank	% of Total	School Tax	Rank	% of Total	Spec. Dist. Tax	Rank	% of Total
Staples (2170)	1	\$634	1	45.9%	\$562	5	40.6%	\$186	93	13.5%	\$1	75	0.0%
Thief River Falls (564)	2	\$390	13	29.7%	\$558	7	42.5%	\$349	11	26.6%	\$16	11	1.2%
Cambridge (911)	3	\$571	3	46.0%	\$407	34	32.8%	\$260	58	21.0%	\$2	57	0.1%
Neton (477)	4	\$357	19	29.0%	\$583	4	47.2%	\$292	40	23.7%	\$2	59	0.1%
g Prairie (2753)	5	\$162	99	13.7%	\$599	3	50.8%	\$417	3	35.4%	\$1	75	0.0%
Totals, Averages**	131	\$241	131	27.3%	\$357	107	41.2%	\$263	113	30.8%	\$6	77	0.7%

Trips in Twin Cities longer but faster, 'U' study says

Unspeakeable congestion?

According to *Understanding Urban Travel Demand*, a study by the University of Minnesota's Center for Transportation Studies, average miles per trip increased from 1958 to 1970 by 122 percent and another 33 percent by 1990. But the average *time* of Twin Cities trips actually *declined* by 15 percent from 1958 to 1970 and another eight percent by 1990. Trips in 1990 were actually five minutes shorter on average (20 minutes in 1958 to 15 minutes in 1990). Travel surveys are done here about every 10 years; the next one will probably be fall 2000-spring 2001. It will be interesting to see what those numbers say.

The same study evaluates the effectiveness of various proposals for reducing single-occupant auto use. It's worth reading what it has to say about bus and rail. (See report excerpt on page 3.)—*Phil Jenni*.

Minnesotans for an Energy Efficient Economy has released a revised edition of their report, *Playing With Fire: Global Warming in Minnesota*, which describes a number of impacts heightened greenhouse gas levels could have on Minnesota's forests, farms and lakes. The report argues that unabated global warming will be particularly harmful to Minnesota, because the state is "a land of ecological edges," where different ecosystems meet each other. Some of the hazards cited in the report include the disappearance of northern boreal forestlands, the spread of agricultural pests and the disappearance of habitat for sportfish. The full report is available on the web at www.me3.org.—*Dave Chadwick*.

As this Journal goes to press, Congress is still in a partisan brawl over the big spending bills for fiscal 2000. One of the political dynamics has to do with the 1997 Balanced Budget Amendment, which imposed spending caps on many budget items, including Medicare reimbursements. While many pols in both parties agree that the 1997 caps were too draconian, neither Republicans nor Democrats are eager to be the first to propose they be lifted.

It's a debate with big repercussions

Take Note

Crisp tidbits for crisp fall days.

for Minnesota's teaching hospitals. Medicare is one of the major sources of funding to cover the costs of graduate medical education (GME), the on-the-job training for new doctors just out of medical school. Medicare made \$7 billion in payments to America's teaching hospitals in 1997, in the form of an extra percentage added to the usual patient care reimbursement.

Under the Balanced Budget Act, that extra percentage has already been reduced two years in a row, and there are three more years of cuts to come. The Association of American Medical Colleges says that by 2002, the education cuts will result in \$14.7 billion in lost revenue for America's teaching hospitals.

Some of the finest teaching hospitals in the country are going deep into the red. Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston will lose \$60 million this year. Georgetown's hospital last year lost \$62 million, the University of Pennsylvania's lost \$90 million and the teaching hospitals at Harvard lost \$150 million.

At Rochester's Mayo Clinic (and its two satellites in Arizona and Florida), the cuts to GME add up to \$178 million dollars over five years. Those cuts come on top of the already deep cuts to patient care reimbursements. At the Mayo Clinic, the 1997 cuts altogether will result in \$411 million dollars in lost revenues over five years.

Why should taxpayers worry? Academic health centers account for only two percent of the nation's hospital beds, but they conduct 42 percent of all health research and development. They also provide 44 percent of all the charity care, a third of all trauma units and other highly specialized services that aren't profitable in the private market.

We might find the partisan posturing over the budget distasteful, but we shouldn't envy the choices our representatives must make.—*Janet Dudrow*.

A new report by the Milken Institute examines the role high-technology industry clusters play in the nation's major metropolitan areas, ranking regions based on their concentration of high-technology industries and their share of total national high technology production. Rochester, Minn., topped the list of high-technology concentration, with high technology making up 51 percent of the metropolitan area's gross output.

However, Rochester only produces about 0.35 percent of the nation's total high-technology output, placing it considerably lower on the ranking of the region's share of the national high-technology economy. As a result, the city ranked 16th on the overall ranking of "tech poles," which were identified by combining the two dimensions into a composite score. The Twin Cities came in at 32nd place on the combined ranking and 22nd on the ranking of the region's portion of total national output. It did not make the top 50 in terms of high-technology concentration.—*D.C.*

While the Metropolitan Council and others are talking locally about reducing sprawl, the state of Minnesota, trying to attract people here to answer all the "Help Wanted" ads, is taking a different tack. The *Economist* magazine recently ran a photo of a billboard in California showing a lovely wooded area and saying: "In California it's a park; in Minnesota it's a back yard."

If the state economic-development wizards really want to promote Minnesota they might do something to break the notion that "climate" is simply temperature. The Twin Cities area got knocked way down recently in one of those dumb Where-to-Live studies that academics and consultants do periodically to attract attention. The measure was simply variation above and below 65 degrees.

Our own newspapers contribute to this with their colored temperature-based weather maps. Can't somebody come up with some measure, and map, to make it clear that -10, white snow and blue sky is a whole lot "more comfortable" than +30, freezing mud and cold rain, as in the Ohio Valley?—*Ted Kolderie*.

In the debate over property tax reform, the business community typically advocates for the elimination, or at least compression, of property tax classifications, arguing that commercial/industrial property is over-taxed, while property taxes for homeowners are kept artificially low. A recent League of Minnesota Cities' report on property taxes provides some insight into this debate. In 1999, homesteads accounted for 67 percent of the market value of a city's land and 41 percent of the city's tax capacity. Meanwhile, commercial-industrial property accounted for 20 percent of the market value and 36 percent of tax capacity.—*Kris Lyndon Wilson*.

"Take Note" contributors this month include Minnesota Journal and Citizens League staff members and Janet Dudrow, policy analyst at Dorsey and Whitney.

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PERIODICALS
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MINNESOTA



Citizens League Matters

October 19, 1999

News for Citizens League Members

Welcome

New and returning members

Norm Coleman

Patricia Harvey

Carol Johnson

David P. Kostik

Sharon Sayles Belton

Evan R. Stanley

Russell H. Susag

Board retreat sets League agenda for the year

The Citizens League Board of Directors reaffirmed the League's core values, discussed trends facing the organization and set forth several initiatives for the coming year at its annual fall planning retreat at Macalester College on October 7.

Facilitator Kent Eklund began the session by asking Board members to consider the principles that animate the organization. The Board re-affirmed the following four core beliefs that are the basis of the League's study process.

Regular citizens are capable of developing an in-depth understanding of sophisticated policy problems. Citizens commonly underestimate their ability to understand public issues. Those who invest the time and energy often find they can understand even complicated-sounding policies.

Information and reasoned analysis should be brought to bear on public problems. While there is a time and place for personal stories and emotions, as well as the compromise and give-and-take of the democratic

process, at some point, all good public policy must be subject to reasoned analysis.

Ideas matter. The quality of ideas matter. The League doesn't believe in engaging in citizen participation just for its own sake. Bad ideas that emerge from an open and participative process will do little to solve the community's problems.

Democracy depends on "free spaces" — places where citizens from all walks of life can come together for candid discussion about public concerns.

The Board continued with a discussion about some of the trends effecting the League, including larger societal issues like the impact of technology, the global economy and changing demographics.

Other issues discussed included: competitors for funding, attention and time; the rise of well-financed single issue advocacy groups; giving trends in philanthropy; and the challenge of being a good government organization in a time of mistrust and disillusionment with government.

At the same time, there are many opportunities for the League in the current environment. There is a hunger for engagement in the political process that isn't just business as usual.

At the same time, many of the rules of the game have changed. One of the League's greatest strengths is its process which depends on in-depth analysis. But that strength can become a weakness if people don't have or don't take the time to commit to the League's generalist process.

The Board decided that they would spend considerable time in the coming year examining the current League "product" mix, outreach to different communities and diversification of revenue sources.

The Board agreed that the League should continue to conduct at least one regular study committee at all times. But they also pledged to create other participation opportunities that fit with some of the current trends. Finally, members decided that the Board should meet more often in order to continue the conversation begun at the retreat.

CITIZENS LEAGUE

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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 for membership are \$50 for individuals and \$75 for families. Please call 612-338-0791 for more information about membership.

Workforce training committee completes its assignment

What steps should Minnesota take to address the shortage of skilled labor and keep the state and region competitive in a changing global economy?

The League's Committee on Workforce Training has been meeting since last April to identify ways that policy-makers can address this dual challenge.

After spending the first few months on resource testimony, the committee devoted most of August and September to reviewing and discussing draft reports.

The committee's final report will be considered by the Board of Directors at the end of October. Following approval by the Board, the report will become official League policy and be released to the public.

Workforce development is already shaping up to be a major issue in the next legislative session. Committee Chairman **Roger Hale**, former CEO of the Tennant Company and currently the Chair of the Governor's Workforce Development Council, is enthusiastic about taking the ideas generated by the committee to the Capitol and seeing that they are included in the upcoming legislative agenda.

Thank you resource speakers

Any successful Citizens League study committee depends on the cooperation of those people in the community who have special expertise on a subject. In fact, one of the great attractions of the League study committee process for many of the participants is the graduate school quality of the "instruction" provided by resource guests. The Workforce Training Committee was the recipient of the wisdom of so many metropolitan leaders; including:

Duane Benson, executive director, Minnesota Business Partnership

James Burroughs, vice president, chief operating officer and general counsel, Summit Academy

Bill D'Amour, school-to-career coordinator, Minneapolis Public Schools

Terry Egge, assistant vice president for community affairs, Reliastar

Patrick Fitzgerald, administrator for guidance and related services, Saint Paul Public Schools

Sandy Flynn, director, Thomson University, West Group

Barbara Habegger, work-based learning specialist, Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning

Thomas Harens, marketing and product manager, Executrain, Inc.

David Hirschey, managing director, Personnel Management, Inc., and vice president of programs, Twin Cities Human Resource Association

Tom Horak, president, Normandale Community College

Roger Hughes, executive director, Minnesota Job Skills Partnership

Ken Keller, senior fellow, Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

Jim Korkki, assistant commissioner, Minnesota Department of Economic Security

Rick Krueger, president, Minnesota High Technology Association

Lynne Osterman, workforce development coordinator, Employers Association

Karen Pike, director of TRIO programs, Century Community and Technical College

Shelly Ryan, coordinator, Get Ready! program, Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Joe Sertich, Ph.D., president, Itasca Community College

Frank Starke, president, Dunwoody Institute

Maureen Steinwall, president and chief executive officer, Steinwall Inc.

The workforce development report is a follow-up to the League's 1998 report *Help Wanted: More Opportunities than People*, which brought attention to the state's long-term labor shortage. Developing the state's capacity to invest in and train workers is a central part of addressing the labor shortage while keeping Minnesota competitive in the rapidly evolving, high-tech, information-based economy.

MIND-OPENER POLICY FORUMS

The 1999-2000 Mind-Opener season is off to a good start. The September series, "Cities and Schools" drew an average crowd of 75 people to each of four meetings and the October series on unicameralism drew approximately 65 people to each of two meetings.

If you missed the "Cities and Schools" sessions with Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton and Superintendent Carol Johnson you can catch both presentations on upcoming editions of "Inside Paragon," a public affairs program that airs on Paragon Cable, Channel 32 in Minneapolis.

Mayor Sayles Belton's presentation can be seen any Tuesday evening in October at 6:30 p.m., while Dr. Johnson's presentation will be part of the program aired Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. in December. As always, audio tapes from all Mind-Opener sessions are available from the League office for \$8.00.

Watch your mail for information about the next Mind-Opener series which will begin in November.

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