Pilots’ strike idled increasingly noncompetitive airport

With 70 to 80 percent of their commercial air service grounded by the recent Northwest Airlines pilots’ strike, many Twin Citians found fresh reason to resent the Eagan-based carrier’s dominance in the Minnesota travel market. No longer is it just a matter of allegedly over-priced tickets or customer-reviled service. Now it’s the damage that a Northwest shutdown can inflict on the state’s economy.

The strike also raised new concerns about the degree to which the Twin Cities area finds itself served by an increasingly noncompetitive airport. Northwest’s work stoppage might have given other airlines a rare opportunity to expand their Twin Cities service or even enter the market.

But with 53 of the 70 gates at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) leased to Northwest, competing airlines had few places to park additional flights during the strike, even though most of Northwest’s gates stood idle and unused. So the airport remained largely closed down for the duration of the strike.

Gate availability is clearly a major consideration for any airline seeking to enter a new market or expand at an existing one. Thus, when Metropolitan Airports commission (MAC) officials recently tried to lure Southwest Airlines into the Twin Cities market by offering the use of five new gates, the airline demanded 10. But even when MAC increased its offer to 10 gates, Southwest balked. Gate access may be important, but it’s obviously not all-important.

Nor is Northwest’s apparent stranglehold on gates at MSP necessarily as unbreakable as it might now feel. To be sure, the exclusive long-term gate leases in effect for all but based carrier’s dominance in the market. One way to keep a gate “in use,” of course, is to park a strike-grounded jet on its tarmac—which Northwest is doing. Still, a MAC

Citizen interest keeps government accountable

Editor’s note: The following article is a response to Citizens League Executive Director Lyle Wray’s “Viewpoint” column, “Moving beyond the Minnesota Miracle—without a crisis,” in the June 16 Minnesota Journal.

by Stacy Becker

In 1973, Governor Wendell Anderson beamed from the cover of Time magazine. The feature story announced, “Minnesota: A State that Works.” In his bid for governor, Anderson had taken a gutsy stand by supporting an imagina-

tive tax system proposed by the Citizens League. The tax reforms, now known as the Minnesota Miracle, have become legendary. But the true sensation was the support of voters, who agreed to raise some taxes in exchange for the promise of overall long term benefits. As Time put it: “Part of Minnesota’s secret lies in people’s extraordinary civic interest.”

Through the years, the glow of the tax reforms has faded, while the real Minnesota Miracle—civic participation—burns on. Tax-reform

Latimer: Better housing means better outcomes

by Dana Schroeder

George Latimer is no stranger to the complexities of providing affordable housing.

Latimer, distinguished visiting professor of urban studies at Macalester College in St. Paul, former mayor of St. Paul and former advisor to the secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, chaired a task force a year ago that examined the Livable Communities Act targets for affordable and life-cycle housing in sub-

urban Twin Cities communities. As incoming president of the Citizens League, he is one of the moderators for the League’s upcoming Mind-Opener breakfast series, “Thinking Outside the Box: Innovative Solutions to the Affordable Housing Crisis,” which begins Sept. 29.

Latimer sees “a much diminished commitment to housing by government at all levels” compared with 20 years ago—largely driven by the federal withdrawal from housing.

“City after city has backed away Continued on page 5
State population will age, grow more slowly by 2025


By the year 2025, Minnesota’s population will be about 5.3 million, compared to 3.6 million in 1995.

More than half the population will be over 40.

Roughly 17 percent of Minnesota’s population will be African American, Asian, American Indian or Hispanic.

Editor: Outstate air travelers victims, not customers

On Balance

The skies may have been quiet, but the editors were not.

Ferguson Falls Daily Journal (Aug. 21) cites Ferguson fell’s change from a "snowbird" to " breaking a "snowbird" to "snowbird" experience. It requires leadership sympathetic to the principle of total legitimacy to carry the weight. Developing a greater vision for the regional economic base, including the current structure and operation of the Metropolitan Council, was giving that body more concern and a larger area of jurisdiction. It did not seem connected that such steps would truly help the region create the vision and strategies it needs.

But there are ways to get the important vision work underway.

We must question going about it in a way that is increasing the consumption of farmland per person in new development, producing a very low-density environment not suited to affordable mass transit. The current policies for small and growing and school failure rates in our core cities are scandals.

The Advisory Council was unable to reach consensus on several other issues it considered, including the most important: the need for urban and transportation development to serve the metropolitan area and its citizens, and most importantly, the need for outstate development to make the region more self-sufficient and primarily funded and comprised of an institute of governance reformation.

The Advisory Council said at concluding the report: "Currently, this is a most important area lacks a clear and common sense of priorities. It questioned the like-minded of local governments or the state in developing this vision and strategies to achieve it. It also said "the council is concerned it will not be able to adequately plan for the Twin Cities region, since development is occurring beyond the council’s jurisdiction. But what the Advisory Council said was recommended, good government for the future." What is the current structure and operation of the Metropolitan Council, was giving that body more concern and a larger area of jurisdiction. It did not seem connected that such steps would truly help the region create the vision and strategies it needs.

We need an elected Metropolitan Council—with associate members from the metropolitan counties—making up the "real" region—to progressively advance a regional vision. Without embarking on the arguments for and against an elected regional government, creating a vision for the future with genuine regional leaders, and the then-threatened strike have made outstate Minnesotans "more akin to a group of outstate commuters than to the state," according to the Minneapolis Star Tribune (Aug. 27), as the strike deadline at 5 p.m. approached the following day. The legislature and management should consider their long-term strategy before letting a strike happen. It says the union "needs to bargain with its best interests at heart." The legislature's action "reflects the real region." In transit, land use and environment, what else needs to be done at the regional level and how?

The Advisory Council on Local Government has time to carry out a comprehensive, the state Board of Education said the council needs to be reorganizing the state's education system. It requires reasonable.

The total number of residents living in the 13 metropolitan counties is expected to decline from 3,536,600 in 1980 to 3,297,300 in 2020, a decrease of 8 percent. The 85-and-over population, who constitute about 2 percent of the state's population, will increase from 5 percent in 1990 to 10 percent in 2030, a 2.5-1 increase. The median age of Minnesota in 1995 was 33.8, up from 32.2 in 1990. By 2025, the median age will be 37.4.

Another age-relate milestone by the year 2025: The percentage of the population will be 11.5 percent in 1995, according to the County Population Projections, 1995-2025.

As the baby-boom generation ages, the number of older people will increase sharply after 2010. By 2025, the state will have 8 percent of its population 65 years old or older. The number is expected to climb from 341,000 in 2010 to 516,000 in 2020, a growth of approximately 50 percent.

Another 85-and-over population will continue to expand, but most of the growth will occur in the next 15 years. The number of people age 85 or older is expected to grow from 75,100 in 1990 to 116,000 by 2020, an increase of about 57 percent.

In 1950, the number of people age 45 and older was 25 percent.

The median age of Minnesota in 1995 was 33.8, up from 32.2 in 1990. By 2025, the median age will be 37.4.

Another age-relate milestone by the year 2025: The per...
How should Minnesota’s public leadership—which includes the government, business and civic leaders—address the issue of Minnesota’s labor shortage?

A group of Citizens League members has been pondering this question for the past six months. The committee met in its work with a special three-part Mind-Opener series in March and met another 17 times before approving a draft report on September 22, just in time for the Labor Day holiday.

The committee’s report was reviewed by the League’s Executive Committee on September 8. Next, the report will be considered by the full Board of Directors at its meeting on September 22.

If the Board approves the report it will become official League policy and be released to the media, other stakeholders and the public shortly thereafter.

Any special Citizens League 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’s study committee process for many participants is the graduate school quality of the “instruction” provided by resource guests. The labor shortage committee was the recipient of the wisdom of the following resource guests:

- Morrie Anderson: chairman, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
- Bernhard Brommer: Minnesota AFL-CIO
- R. Jane Brown: commissioner, Minnesota Department of Economic Security
- Candace Campbell: principal, CDC Associates
- Emmett Carson: president and CEO, Minnesota Foundations
- Lori Christiansen: director, GenNext
- Neer Dajia: executive director, Minnesota Trade Office
- George Garnett: vice president, Minnesota Department of the Treasury
- Tom Gilliay: Minnesota State Demographer
- Karin Glead, dean, Graduate School of Education, Hamline University
- Kristine Jacobson: executive director, Minnesota Veterans Affairs
- Kenneth Keller: senior fellow, Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
- Jacques Koppell: president, Minnesota Technology, Inc.
- Rick Krueger: president, Minnesota High Technology Network
- William Lueken: human resources manager, Garli, Inc.
- Daniel Luthringerhausen: vice president, international development, Medtronic, Inc.
- Carlos Mariani: executive director, Minnesota Higher Education Partnership
- Lee Munnich: director, slate and State Local Policy Project, Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
- Arthur Nordberg: professor, Program in the History of Science and Technology, University of Minnesota
- Gino Piccolo: assistant commissioner and director, Office of Lifework Development, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning
- Hazel Reinhardt: president, Reinhart Consulting
- David Rhees: executive director, The Falkon Library and Museum
- Susan Selten: owner, Work & Family Connection, Inc.
- Bruce Steinernagel: research associate, JOBS NOW Coalition
- Tom Stimson: Minnesota State Economist

In addition, several committee members also acted as resource guests and shared their expertise with the entire committee. They included:

- Jim Bartholomew: Minnesota Human Papilloma Virus
- Wendy Brover: Director, Disability Institute
- Bob Fennes: MINNORC Industries
- Todd Graham: Minnesota Department of Economic Security
- Beth Kadoen: Minnesota Business Partnership
- Bob Stratton: job training program, City of Grand Forks
- Liz Tempel: University of Minnesota Extension Service

Editor: On Balance, travelers victims, not customers

The skies may have been quiet, but the editors were not.

Ferguson Falls Daily Journal said (Aug. 21) the skies of Ferguson Falls should be "skeptical" because they have been "mixed." A "fuller" of air, given the past experience with an "afforadable" fare increases, "deteriorating service and labor unrest." It noted Northwest’s "bargaining round and the then threatened strike have made outflaunt Minnesotans" more "aerially" than ever before.

Star Tribune said (Aug. 28), as they have been for a while, that the airline company is "threw down the gauntlet." They said that “the airline needs to work with the union to "embrace the challenges associated with the industry's "dependency on the airline industry." They noted that "the airline is forced to return to the negotiating table "with a new, more determined spirit." It said any obligations to Minnesota taxpayers coming from the 1991 state financial assistance will be "owed" to both sides in this strike.

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Minnesota’s American Indian, Eskimo and Aleut population is expected to grow from 61,300 people in 1995 to about 93,000 in 2020, a gain of more than 50 percent.

The white population is expected to grow by only 8 percent between 1995 and 2025.

The number of Hispanic-origin Minnesotans is projected to rise from 85,100 in 1995 to about 206,000 in 2025.

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Met Council plan won't be adequate plan for region

By Charles W. Flesperson


In the course of 18 meetings, the advisory council informally inventoried the responsibilities of different levels of government and discussed which functions required more coordination between local and regional government. The council focused its attention on transportation, but with an eye toward solutions that could be drawn for other service areas.

A key theme in the advisory council’s discussion was the growing interdependence of the seven-county metropolitan area and a group of Minnesota and Wisconsin “ring” counties surrounding the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The council made six recommendations:

1. The Legislature should acknowledge that the expansion of the Twin Cities metropolitan and regional governments and tasks the reality of a broader zone of metropolitan influence, requiring more coordination between local and regional governments and organizations.

2. The Legislature should direct the Metropolitan Council to offer voluntary, nonvoting affiliate status to the counties surrounding the seven-county area encompassed by the Metropolitan Council.

3. State and local governments should use fiscal incentives and other regulatory powers directed at both governments and individuals to encourage compact development and redevelopment patterns that use existing infrastructure, reduce dependence on automobiles and highways, and provide alternative modes of transportation.

4. Expanding the role of the Transportation Advisory Board to provide the administrative screening of regional transportation activities, including highways and transit, and incorporate the Transportation Advisory Board into Department of Transportation’s systems planning process.

5. Creating more flexibility in the use of the Highway User Trust Fund.

6. Having the state take over county functions that it mandates and primarily funds.

The advisory council’s review of the panel’s recommendations and regional governments in the Twin Cities region revealed key themes:

- Communities across the region are undeniably interdependent.
- Many vital urban services demand a regional view, regional cooperation and, in some cases, regional solutions.
- The best definition of the region is the area of issue or challenge at hand.
- The Twin Cities region is growing beyond the seven-county jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council and Commission.
- Urban sprawl in the metropolitan area, decrease in public transit and automobile use.
- People care about quality of schools and cost, as well as who deliver services.

The advisory council discussed, but did not agree to recommend, target funding and state aid and homestead and agricultural credit payments based on household income, reduce local dependence on rural properties and ensure public participation in metropolitan area and surrounding ring counties where development is occurring, but has not been performed.

Instead, the council intends to discuss the idea over the next year.

The functional metropolitan region, defined by the council as significant and meaningful to the Twin Cities, has grown beyond the seven-county area encompassed by the Metropolitan Council.

Currently, this larger metropolitan area divides a common set of priorities. In the long run, the problems associated with unbalanced growth in the region will worsen unless the metropolitan area develops a common vision and strategies to achieve the vision. There are three options for doing this. First, they rely on existing local governments and other organizations to develop this vision and strategies. But these governments and organizations are not engaged to do effective work. Having the state to seek state action, but the Legislature has many regional divisions and therefore will not focus adequately on the needs of the metropolitan region. The third approach is to create a new regional structure that would coordinate the expanded functional metropolitan region.

The current regional structure—the Metropolitan Council—has engendered controversy. The council’s efforts to develop a regional transportation agenda have been impeded and representation added from the counties adjacent to the seven-county metropolitan area as currently defined.

Another suggestion is that major local companies could contract for airport gate space. The contract foreign airlines.

“port” that the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport has gained was not the only result of competition. The airport has increased the number of gates.

The airport has also been able to compete in the market by adding more gates to accommodate the expansion of the airline industry. The airport has been able to improve its service by increasing the number of flights and reducing the time between flights.

This has allowed the airport to attract more passengers and support the airport’s policies, including its financial stability and ability to provide necessary services.

The airport’s success has been due to its ability to compete in the market and attract passengers, which has allowed the airport to continue to grow and expand its operations. The airport’s success has been beneficial to both local and national economies, as it has helped to attract businesses and create jobs in the region.

Charles W. Flesperson was recently retired as an editorial writer for the Star Tribune.
The "Minnesota Miracle" works because of civic participation and watch dogs like you.

"The good news is that affordable housing is really gaining some currency again," he said. "The issue is no longer one that's pushed from the public consciousness. He thinks part of the reawakening is from people seeing their children get good jobs, work hard and be unable to really manage their rent they're forced to pay. It's kind of reality setting in," he said.

"A yawning gap" Latimer said the Liveable Communities Housing Task Force concluded that from the Metropolitan Council estimates of the 300,000 new jobs in the next 15 years, almost half will pay less than $22,000 a year. He said there's a need for some of the 67,000 housing units in the city over the next 15 years to be made for $22,000 a year. "There simply is no public support and obviously the market does not.

Latimer continued from page 6

"...and the money families have available.

Continued on page 7

Affordable housing is like magic... It makes everything better!"
While local housing values seem to be going through the roof lately, it only takes a bit of historical data to put things in perspective. In a recent analysis of housing prices from 1984 to 1996 by the State Demographic Center, only two of 33 cities in the Twin Cities with a population of 20,000 or more saw double-digit increases in their median sale price for existing homes (in constant dollars). Lakeville’s median sale price increased 14 percent and Andover’s increased 11 percent.

Of the remaining 31 metro cities, 23 cities saw real-dollar declines in median sale prices, while just eight cities experienced modest real increases of one percent to six percent. With an 18 percent decline in median house sale prices, St. Paul saw the biggest decline, followed closely by Minneapolis and Brooklyn Park at 17 percent.—Ron Wirtz.

The new Gallup Poll for the Kappan shows public support rising rapidly for having the government pay part or even all of the cost of a student’s education in private school. It’s hard for so establishment an organization as Phi Delta Kappa, the magazine’s publisher, to say, but:

- Support for letting kids choose a private school, with the government paying the full bill has risen in just five years from 24 percent to 44 percent; opposition has dropped from 75 percent to 50 percent.
- Support for the government paying part of the bill has risen since 1996 from 43 percent to 51 percent; opposition has dropped from 56 percent to 45 percent.
- The groups most in favor of choice—of private and of public schools—are blacks, young people, public-school parents, people in blue-collar occupations and in rural areas and women. It’s clear choice is a coming issue inside the Democratic constituency.—Ted Kolderie

Love dat dirty money: In the 1998 legislative session, the Legislature passed significant new spending for contaminated cleanup. Recent figures from the Metropolitan Council’s cleanup efforts show this might be a truly high-leverage investment of public resources. In 1997, the Council approved 11 grants for $8 million to assist in the cleanup of 120 acres of contaminated land in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Roseville and Fridley. While final returns on this public spending are far from completed, this cleanup is expected to leverage $164 million in private funds for development of previously polluted land, increasing the net tax capacity by more than $4 million and producing 2,700 new jobs, paying an average of $10 to $11 an hour.—R.W.

Don’t figure to hear much more about mediating the education lawsuits brought by the Saint Paul district and by the NAACP in Minneapolis. The issues these raise will now come up first in the Legislature, rather than in trial.

Mediation was probably always a device to avoid their coming up in trial, where someone wins and someone loses. In mediation or in the legislative process, there can be a compromise, so both sides get something. Compromise was pretty clearly the attorney general’s interest and in lawsuits against the state, the attorney general calls the shots.—T.K.

The annual Twin Cities Area Survey showed that crime remains easily the single biggest concern among residents. However, area residents uniformly rate their neighborhood safety as good, safe places to live. Nine out of 10 survey respondents said their neighborhood is “above average,” and 96 percent said they always or usually felt safe in their neighborhood. On average, however, suburban residents felt more safe than their central city peers, with 91 percent of Minneapolis residents and 85 percent of St. Paul residents saying they always or usually felt safe.—R.W.

A new team of health and law-enforcement experts and victim’s advocates is developing a best-practice protocol for responding to sexual assaults in Ramsey County. Dramatic changes since the 1970s, when women’s rights groups pushed sexual assault up on the public agenda, have prompted the fresh look at how well the entire system responds to these assaults.

For many years St. Paul-area police routinely steered victims of alleged sex assaults to Regions Hospital (formerly Ramsey, long the county hospital) for evidence exams and medical treatment. With large numbers of patients and a close relationship with the County Attorney’s office, Regions became expert at handling sexual assaults.

Now that most metro-area residents are covered by HMOs, victims—unless they’re severely injured—are likely to go to their own health plan’s emergency department or urgent-care center. But those providers, each of whom might see only a few assault victims a year, might not have the expertise of a Regions.

Another development: Growing numbers of non-English speaking immigrants in Ramsey County. Sexual assault carries such a powerful stigma in some cultures that victims may be reluctant to seek medical care or report the attack.

The project team includes representatives from United Hospital, HealthEast, Regions Hospital, the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office, St. Paul Police Department, Sexual Offense Services of Ramsey County, CLUES, Hmong Peace and several other organizations serving communities of color.

Their product will be a step-by-step guide for 911 operators, emergency medical care providers, police and others who respond to assaults. Their hope: to make a horrible experience less horrible for the victim and improve the chances of locking up the bad guys.—Janet Dudrow.

Buried among the many benchmarks tracked by Minnesota Planning in the annual Minnesota Milestones is one that might not make news headlines any more, but should: fewer than half of the state’s African American, American Indian and Hispanic students graduate from high school on time.—R.W.

Metro Transit will add five new “hybrid” buses to its fleet this year that use a combination of diesel and electricity and should raise a few eyebrows of interest if they live up to expectations. These buses use smaller diesel engines that run at a constant speed. When brakes are applied, motors attached to the wheels store the resulting friction energy and this energy is then used during acceleration.

According to the Met Council, these hybrid buses not only produce lower emissions, but cost less to operate, to boot. Particulate emissions from hybrid buses are just .06 grams per mile, while the standard diesel bus emits 1.32 grams.

Hybrids are estimated to cost 14 cents per mile to operate ($4,650 annually) versus 17 cents for the diesel bus ($5,640)—a savings of 18 percent.—R.W.

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