

39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
JUN 12 2005

Sun Current
(Eagan Edition)

6-23-2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771

14

XC
XX....

Mailbag

120004

Transportation investments needed

To the editor:

After the governor vetoed the transportation bill at the end of the regular session, there was a lot of justifiable concern. Citizens recognized that our transportation system needs new investments in order to improve maintenance and fight congestion. However, there is one important part of the transportation bill that the Governor couldn't veto: the dedication of Motor Vehicles Sales Tax (MVST) revenue to transportation. That provision alone could send millions of much needed dollars into the system.

The provision couldn't be vetoed because it is a proposed constitutional amendment. That also means that it won't be enacted unless the voters approve it in a referendum in November 2006. If they do, the state constitution will require that 100 percent of money raised from the MVST go toward transportation uses, with at least 40 percent going to transit and the rest for highways.

This is an important change. The Metro area is growing quickly, both in terms of population and size, and that is leading to serious traffic problems. In addition, MNDOT is running a large deficit that is slowing needed maintenance. We can't expect a strong regional economy with a transportation system that is out of date and deteriorating. We need to improve our highways and expand our transit options so we can get our commuters and products moving again.

It must be said that the money from the MVST is not nearly enough to solve these problems, but it is a step in the right direction. I want to congratulate and thank all of the legislators who gave the dedication their support, and I urge the voters of Minnesota to approve this amendment next year.

Rep. Rick Hansen •
South St. Paul

39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
APR 24 2005



663 .51771
.y....

14 XC
XX....

120004
Rep. Hansen to host tours of the Capitol

To the editor:

39A

One of my top priorities here at the Legislature has been to make state government more open and accessible to all of the people in our district. I've worked to solicit opinions from as many people as possible and to keep residents informed of the work that is happening here. I also want everyone in Minnesota to feel ownership of the Legislative process, and that can start with familiarity with the Capitol building.

This historic monument belongs to the people of Minnesota, but many people have not been to the Capitol since grade school. This year marks the building's 100th anniversary, so it's an excellent time to come back. I hope that you will join me on Sunday, May 1, when I'll be hosting an open house and tours of the Capitol for residents of District 39A: South St. Paul (Precinct 1), West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Mendota, Lilydale and Eagan (Precinct 1).

The tours will include the chamber of the House of Representatives and even the golden horses on the top of the building (the Quadriga). I'm also very interested to spend some time discussing the issues that concern you and ways for citizens to influence the legislative process. We will meet at the State Office Building, across the street from the Capitol. The event will start at 1 p.m. and finish at 4 p.m., with tours leaving at 1:30 and 2:30 p.m.

I truly hope that you will be able to come. We'll have a chance to get to know each other, and I can promise that it'll be both interesting and fun.

Rep. Rick Hansen
South St. Paul

39A

Mailbag

Optimism at session's midpoint

To the editor:

The most impressive aspect of the Legislative session so far has been the significant bipartisanship that has been displayed. With the session half over, there have been no long, drawn-out battles on divisive issues. Instead, both sides deserve credit for working together to get the job done for the people of Minnesota.

One of the biggest achievements of the first half of the session was that both the House and Senate have already passed bonding bills that are now being reconciled. While differences remain, the most striking thing about the process was the overwhelming bipartisan support that the bills received.

The bill included several significant projects for northern Dakota County. Funding was provided for classrooms at Inver Hill Community College, where the number of students has grown by 37 percent since 2000. Money was also made available to reclaim the former Port Crosby landfill in South St. Paul and turn it into parkland. Finally, grants were established for open space preservation and flood mitigation along the Mississippi in Inver Grove Heights.

For the most part, the bipartisanship and pragmatism that have characterized the bonding process have been the rule for the whole session. The Legislature has been focused on education, transportation, health care and jobs: the issues that Minnesotans say are the most important to their lives.

Making the situation easier is that the economy in Minnesota is finally showing signs of renewed growth after several tough years. Last year the state created 25 percent more jobs than were expected, and the February budget forecast showed state revenues over \$200 million ahead of earlier estimates. While this is all encouraging, there are signs of weakness. The state lost 5,600 jobs in January, and the budget deficit is still \$1.1 billion if inflation is included. The Legislature needs to stay focused on the key issues our state faces and make the investments we need in order to ensure that our economy continues to recover.

The second half of the legislative session is likely to be dominated by the issue of the state budget, and there are good reasons to be optimistic that the collaborative spirit will continue. We have been able to work with people on both sides of the aisle on the central issues that we have been stressing this year: education, health care and jobs. We are hopeful, therefore, that the upcoming state budgeting process will be used as an opportunity to make the right investments for the state of Minnesota and that the budget will not be held hostage by bickering and partisan rhetoric.

2
Rep. Joe Atkins •
Dist. 39B

Rep. Rick Hansen •
Dist. 39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
MAR 27 2005



B BurrellesLuce

663.51771

.y....

14

XC

XX....

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN

WEEKLY 22,993

SEP 11 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771

.y....

14

XC

XX....

Mailbag

1200DU

Local schools show progress on state tests

To the editor:

Minnesota students have reason to celebrate. The state Department of Education released reading and math test scores for five grade levels last week, showing big gains in student achievement. I was pleased to see that local schools made significant improvements. In District 197 (West St. Paul/Mendota Heights/Eagan), Friendly Hills Middle School and Heritage Middle School made significant progress and have been taken off the list of schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

These gains are even more impressive given that schools in our area have struggled over the last several years under flat state funding and back-to-back budget cuts. Teachers and school administrators deserve our thanks for their commit-

ment to boosting student achievement, even under difficult circumstances.

The education bill passed by the Legislature this year should provide welcome relief to school budgets. The 4 percent yearly increase in per pupil funding authorized this session is an excellent first step toward reversing the trend of flat or declining state support for education. As a new member of the Minnesota House, I was proud to work with legislators of both parties to pass this bill.

I look forward to meeting school groups as they come to celebrate the State Capitol's 100th Anniversary this year. Best wishes to parents, teachers and students for a successful and safe school year.

Rick Hansen

State representative

39A

39A

X-2

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
MAY 29 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771 XC
.y.... 14 XX....

1200DU

Investment in conservation needed

To the editor:

On Thursday, May 5, the House passed its Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources bill. This bill continues to cut funding for the key conservation programs that protect Minnesota's outdoor heritage, and as three representatives from very different parts of the state, we joined many others to vote against it. We need to be doing more, not less, to protect our natural resources.

Minnesota's efforts to preserve our great outdoors have become weak in recent years. In 2003, the state spent only 1.35 percent of our general-fund dollars on conservation and natural resources, the lowest level since 1982. Now the governor and the House Leadership want even further cuts.

The bill passed by the House would cut \$46 million out of general fund spending on natural resources, a drop of over 14 percent. This includes major cuts to the Pollution Control Agency, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, and \$16 million in cuts to the Department of Natural Resources, 8 percent less than the current DNR funding level. The bottom line for this bill is there will be fewer foresters in the woods, less money to restock our lakes, and a loss of waterfowl habitat. This means there will be less conservation on the ground.

In addition, the bill makes dramatic changes to the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources to allow the Governor to appoint all of the members of the Commission. This gives any governor even more control over environmental funding and politicizes an agency that should be working for the benefit of all Minnesotans.

We joined with a bipartisan group of legislators seeking to improve this part of the bill by proposing a citizen commission with input from both political parties, all parts of the state, and both houses of the Legislature. Unfortunately, the bill's sponsors were able to defeat us after three attempts, and the final bill gave the governor complete power over the commission.

Minnesotans are united by their love of the outdoors, whether it is hunting, snowmobiling, or just going for a walk in the woods. However, our outdoor tradition is being threatened as our streams and lakes become polluted, habitat is lost and our state parks decline. If we want our children to be able to enjoy hunting, camping, fishing and canoeing in our lakes, prairies and forests as much as we do, we need a serious effort to reinvest in our natural resources. This bill does not do it.

Rep. Rick Hansen •
Rep. Frank Moe •
Rep. Andy Welti •

39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
MAY 29 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771 14 XC
v XX....

Boodu

Fighting identity theft

To the editor:

Due to recent budget cuts, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) recently left a door wide open to identity theft. The Web site used by many Minnesotans to make payments to the Department for license tabs had such weak security that the data it contained was easily available to any hacker on the Internet. Worse still, the Department doesn't know whether the site was hacked or not and if so which records were stolen.

This is a big problem. When the government deals with personal information, it has a responsibility to keep it safe, and quickly repair any breach. While DPS has corrected the problem with the Web site, it has not made any effort to address the past problems.

In response, I co-authored an amendment to the transportation bill with Rep. Davnie that would require the Department to figure out if any data had been stolen, and to notify citizens whose information had been compromised. This would correct the past problems, by allowing people whose data was taken to protect themselves. The amendment passed unanimously.

This breach at DPS should serve as a warning to everyone in state government that we need to take serious measures to protect the safety of private data. I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure that all state agencies are bound to tighter rules on data practices and have the resources they need to properly protect our citizens.

Rep. Rick Hansen
South St. Paul

39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
NOV 27 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771 XC
.v.... 14 XX....

Daddy Walking for affordable health care

To the editor:

On a windy, gray morning in November, Sue Eichstadt stood on the corner of Smith Avenue and Dodd Road on St. Paul's West Side. Sue, a factory worker at the Toro Company plant in Windom, Minn., was about to complete the final leg of her 154-mile walk to the State Capitol to bring attention to a proposed constitutional amendment to make health care a right for every Minnesotan. Starting out in the district I represent, I joined Sue for that final five-mile walk.

Sue was inspired to walk by the struggles of her elderly parents to afford prescription drugs. We all have friends or family members who have been pushed to the edge by high medical bills or lack of coverage. In Sue's town-hall meetings along her route in Windom, St. James, Mankato, St. Peter, Belle Plaine, Apple Valley and St. Paul, residents gathered to share their stories and sound out their growing worries over the rising cost of health care.

As I pushed my 18-month-old son Evan in his stroller on the five-mile walk, we picked up more and more supporters, ending at the Capitol with a crowd of nearly 100 people.

Sue has reminded legislators that health care is the number one concern of the average Minnesotan. Our goal for the 2006 session is to advance solutions that bring all Minnesotans quality, affordable health coverage.

Rep. Rick Hansen, .
District 39A

39A

PIONEER PRESS JUL 7 '05 Link politicians' pay, performance

If state offices are closed, shouldn't we also lock down the Legislature? If state workers can't work then the Legislature should be locked in until it comes to a decision. When we'd see how quickly it could work.

I know many are guilty in this shutdown, but Gov. Tim Pawlenty has failed as a leader. He wanted to be governor and was voted in by the citizens. With a shutdown, he failed us all.

I am a state worker and am proud of what I do. If I were not doing my job, I wouldn't still be employed. So why is it that the Legislature and the governor can't do their jobs, but continue to hold their jobs? Why are the other state workers and I going to lose our paychecks while they take their time making decisions but are still getting paid?

We need to change some rules. If the Legislature and governor can't do their jobs right and on time, we shouldn't pay them.

LAURIE O'BRIEN
Oakdale

I hope that the people of Minnesota realize that only one thing held up the state budget: Gov. Tim Pawlenty's absolute refusal to consider an income tax increase.

The governor wanted to stick to his "no new taxes" pledge,

regardless of the harm it caused the citizens of our state. A 10-year-old could see that we can no longer afford the tax cuts given to the wealthiest Minnesotans in the last few years. Restoring this tax revenue was an obvious solution and the taxes imposed won't really be "new," because they existed before. It's time for the governor to put the needs of the state ahead of his personal political aspirations.

ROBIN RAYGOR
Shoreview

Minnesota's government is shut down. In Washington, our national Legislature can agree on nothing but (maybe) what day it is. As we watch this, we also watch our government over in Iraq helping them set up a government. Go figure.

BOB STEINER
Vadnais Heights

I don't think I'll vote in the next state elections. I have concluded that there are no politicians from either party who are intelligent enough to figure out how to get the work done in time. They not only lack intelligence, but an inability to determine what is best for the people of this state. In addition, it seems they are willing to let the leadership go play weekend warrior so the remainder can sit on their hands, costing us \$1.4 million a day.

There's no reason to vote for anyone who considers party ideology more important than the people who elected them.

STEPHEN M. JUDD
Roseville

Like many Minnesotans, I am disappointed and dismayed that state government services have suffered a partial shutdown. Although there are important philosophical differences, we should not have shut down. I voted three times in three days alongside members of both parties for a "light on" bill to keep services that help Minnesotans

working while the details of a final budget negotiation were brokered. Unfortunately, this bill was defeated and the shutdown ensued.

There is good news. Minutes before state parks were to close their gates for the Fourth of July weekend, the House and Senate passed the jobs, environment and agriculture-funding bill. I worked nonstop with both sides of the aisle in both the Senate and the House to see this bill pass, allowing Minnesota's economy, tourist attractions and 6,300 public employees to keep working.

I truly appreciate hearing from so many citizens of District 39A. Please contact me with any ideas, opinions or suggestions on making Minnesota work. I will do everything in my power to bridge the bitter partisan divide and reach a budget deal for the people of Minnesota.

✓ **REP. RICK HANSEN**
South St. Paul

The writer represents District 39A in the Minnesota House.

Gov. Pawlenty didn't want to raise taxes and our state Legislature couldn't agree on a budget. So in a sense, we had no government. On the first day of the shutdown, MTC bus service was cut and fares raised.



Gov. Tim Pawlenty

Is this "no new taxes" plan really paying off? If raising taxes isn't the answer to our dilemma, maybe our state needs to establish a new emergency government body, similar to a shadow government that can once and for all agree on a budget.

Pawlenty is afraid that raising taxes would keep businesses away from Minnesota, but who would want to move to Minnesota now?

JERRY T. JOHNSON
Bloomington

L60.109 B30.4 - M70.22

FRONT PAGE

Rep. Hansen adjusting to new role at Capitol

BY
Seth Loy

news editor

39A

Visitors to newly elected state Rep. Rick Hansen's office can get a good sense of who he is just by looking around the room.

There's his 10-month-old son's baby blanket draped across a couch, numerous birthday cards from friends and relatives, a large-scale environmental map above his desk (he used to work for the DNR) and a picture of him and his son, Evan, on the floor of the House of Representatives.

A family man with a strong interest in the environment, Hansen, 41, seems to be fitting into his new role at the Capitol just fine. When he's not in session or serving on one of two committees (Environment and Regulated Industries), he's doing paperwork and meeting constituents.

"I've been up here as a local elected official, and I've been around politics," said Hansen during an interview at his office last week. "Every day something weird or strange happens; you never know what's going to happen."

Like other freshmen legislators, he's still adjusting to the hectic day-to-day lifestyle of a state representative, with countless committee hearings and debates scheduled throughout the day, and meetings with constituents and local



Linda E. Andersen/Review

Rep. Rick Hansen (Dist. 39A) of South St. Paul is described as a 'hard-working' freshman legislator who cares strongly about the environment.

tour groups. His district, 39A, includes West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Mendota, Lilydale and the northern portions of South St. Paul and Eagan.

Despite the lack of nearby snack machines (a mini-fridge suits its purpose nicely) and a preponderance of stairwells at the Capitol, he's already managed to gain 15 pounds in his short legislative career.

Background

A former supervisor for the state Department of Agriculture, Hansen quit his job in January when he was sworn in as a state representative (to avoid any conflict of interest). His wife, Suzanne, is working on her Ph.D. in conservation biology.

When the session ends, Hansen will turn his attention to what for the past three months has been a side business: selling Amish furniture over the Internet. His company, Harmony Cedar, specializes in handcrafted furniture and gifts.

But for now, there's still plenty of work to do, the least of which is balancing the state budget and addressing important issues like education, transportation and the environment.

"I think part of the job is listening to everyone who has an interest at stake," he said. "I learn things every day, and I plan to learn a lot from folks."

Rep. Joe Atkins (District 39B), who sits behind Hansen in the House of Representatives, said that Hansen's work ethic is "beyond comparison" and that he's already become one of the "hardest-working legislators" at the Capitol.

"You can't avoid Rick," Atkins joked. "He's there from sunrise to well past sunset."

see **Legislator** on page 5

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
MAR 27 2005

39A

Legislator...

continued from page 1

Atkins, who has known Hansen since his time as a soil and water conservation supervisor (he also used to live in Inver Grove Heights), said that his colleague's strong work ethic isn't that surprising.

"Because of his background, he's been able to hit the ground running, unlike a lot of freshmen legislators," Atkins said. "He's already been recognized as someone who's knowledgeable on environmental issues."

Environmental steward

Hansen, who now resides in South St. Paul, earned his master's degree in soil management from Iowa State University. He said he got involved in environmental issues from an early age. His family is originally from Freeborn County (near Albert Lea) in southern Minnesota, and he owns a farm south of Niagara Cave in Fillmore County.

He served as a supervisor for the Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District for eight years and also co-chaired the county's successful Natural Area and Farmland Protection referendum in 2002.

The Environmental Committee that Hansen serves on is currently looking at a bill that would dedicate a portion of the state's sales tax to the DNR, to help pay for the Heritage Enhancement Fund and the Clean Water Legacy Act.

Last week, Hansen introduced an amendment to the bill that would have made the DNR director — who is currently appointed by the governor — an elected position. Although the idea was turned down, he plans to reintroduce the legislation in the future.

Hansen feels that having direct accountability for government programs and positions is important.

"If we're going to raise the sales tax and dedicate a portion to the environment, it should be transparent and have oversight of how the money is spent," he said.

He's also been appointed to a small, bipartisan group looking at ways to keep up with the federal Clean Water Act, by establishing a policy framework and a funding mechanism to deal with the state's impending water quality woes.

Balancing the budget

The biggest issue before the Legislature, of course, is balancing the state's budget — and fixing a \$466 million deficit hole. However, Hansen is against the governor's proposal to expand gaming and build a casino in the Twin Cities in order to generate more revenue for the state.

"I'm less supportive of casinos. Our founding fathers didn't say, 'In order to form a more perfect union, we should set up casinos in order to pay for it.'"

Still, Hansen believes a gaming proposal, in one form or another, is likely to pass.

"I know many voters who support some form of expansion of gaming, and others who don't, and I'm hearing from both sides," he said. "I'm very cautious about putting

government in the business of gaming, and I don't know where it's authorized in the (state) constitution."

The deadly school shooting in Red Lake last week, which Hansen called "tragic," seems to have heightened interest in the casino issue, as the impoverished Red Lake Indian Reservation and other northern tribes could benefit from such a deal.

Education funding

Hansen is proud to have helped secure funding this session for both Dakota County Technical College and Inver Hills Community College, for building upgrades and expansion.

But he's worried about funding shortfalls for early childhood/family education and the steep tuition hikes at state universities, which are "pricing out the college experience."

"In higher education, what I'm hearing from folks is, it's not just a four-year degree anymore — it's five to six years, (because) students are also working to support themselves."

Hansen supports using state

income tax revenue for education, though as a "fresh-faced legislator" he admits he's "not going to push for higher taxes right away."

"I think (citizens) want us to tackle the hard solutions and make bi-partisan decisions," he said.

Like many Democrats, he is critical of the governor's budget proposal, saying that it "doesn't even get education funding back to the levels of four years ago," when Gov. Jesse Ventura was in office.

"The shifts for an increase in funding still are not enough," Hansen said. "What the governor has proposed still isn't keeping up with the educational needs of programs. It's moving in the right direction, but we need more."

Getting used to day-to-day life at the Capitol hasn't been easy, Hansen admits, and he and his wife often find themselves looking forward to June, July and August, when they can focus more on family and their other jobs — especially his furniture business.

But he enjoys his newfound legislative role and wouldn't trade it for the world.

39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
APR 3 2005



B BurrellesLuce

663.51771

14

XC

XX....

12/04
39A

Property tax credits often go unclaimed

• **Rep. Rick Hansen** is encouraging Minnesotans to apply for the property tax assistance program when they file their taxes. This program allows certain residents to take an income tax credit to offset high property taxes. This can give substantial tax relief to many people.

"This is an excellent program and it can be extremely helpful," Rep. Hansen said. "We have had a lot of large

property tax increases in our communities, and this can help people deal with that."

The property tax credit affects taxpayers whose home-
stead property taxes rise suddenly in any single year by more than 12 percent and by at least \$100 or if their property taxes are high relative to their income. To apply, the homeowner needs to fill out an M-1PR form. That form is available from area libraries and wherever tax forms are distributed or from the Minnesota Department of Rev-

enue at 296-4444. The application is due Aug. 15, and refunds are sent out in October.

"As a first term legislator I feel that it is an important part of my job to educate people about this program. I want to make sure that every person who is eligible takes advantage of it," Hansen said. "Of course, what we really need is for the state to stop passing its problems along to our communities so that we can have real property tax reform."

39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
APR 17 2005



B BurrellesLuce

663 .51771 XC
.y.... 14 XX....

1200DU

39A

Bonding bill passes House and Senate

With the push of the green "Yes" button, Representative Rick Hansen was one of 115 representatives from both parties to vote for passage of a final bonding bill for the governor's signature.

Hansen was chief author of a bonding measure allocating \$2.5 million for the Port Crosby Project. Another \$500,000 was committed for the Metro Greenways, and the state also made important education investments in the

area, providing over \$7 million to Dakota County Technical College and over \$6 million to Inver Hills Community College.

"After all of the hard work that went into this bill, I'm very glad to see that we were able to overcome the politics that threatened to hold it up," Rep. Hansen said. "Our community is waiting for these projects to begin, and I'm happy to say that we can now move ahead with

them."

Rep. Hansen also led the House of Representatives in allocating funding for conservation. He co-authored a measure to provide \$23 million for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and \$600,000 for Wildlife Management Area Development within the bonding bill.

"Among our most important assets in Minnesota are our education system and

our natural resources, and it is a very good sign that so many of my colleagues joined me in strongly supporting them through this bill," Rep. Hansen said. "I'm glad that we were able to get the job done here, so that other folks can get their jobs started building these projects. The people of Minnesota and this district have been waiting too long for this already."

39A

39A

Legislative group to address mental health issues

In an effort to improve the delivery of mental health treatment and encourage innovation and efficiency, State Rep. Rick Hansen of South St. Paul recently joined the bipartisan Mental Health Caucus, a first-in-the-nation effort to draw attention to mental health issues as they affect criminal justice, employment, education, health care and legislative policy. Hansen is one of more than 60 members starting this caucus.

"The group was formed because there is a growing concern here at the Capitol that mental health has taken the brunt of the state's budget cuts over the past two years and that we're doing long-term damage to our mental health care system," Hansen said. "There's also a concern that the cuts we've made are costing us more in prison costs, court costs and health care. With our current budget situation, we need to make sure we're spending every dollar as wisely as we can, and better and earlier mental health treatment can help to do that."

Hansen said the group, which is made up of senators and representatives from both the DFL and Republican parties, is interested in uncovering innovative programs and treatments, as well as improving the delivery of mental health services that we know work. He added the group would focus on four key areas: the criminal justice system, employment, children's health and the results of a Minnesota Mental Health

Action Group study initiated by the governor and the Citizens League.

"Mental health issues affect so many other issues here at the Capitol," Hansen said. "For example, our criminal justice system has become the defacto system for dealing with the mentally

ill. Not only is that incredibly inefficient and costly, it's also cruel. This group will help provide a needed perspective and focus on these kind of issues and eventually help strengthen and improve our mental health system here in Minnesota."

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
FEB 20 2005



BurrellesLuce

663 .51771 XC
.v 14 XX....

39A

X-1

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
MAR 6 2005



B Burrelles Luce
663.51771 14 XC
.y.... XX....

1200DU

Atkins sponsors bill to stop spam

Seeking to stop the flood of unwanted e-mails into Minnesotans' inboxes, Rep. Joe Atkins introduced a bipartisan measure that would create stiff criminal penalties for spammers in Minnesota. Other legislators, including Rep. Rick Hansen, immediately expressed their support.

"The sixth largest spammer in the country is based right here in Minnesota," Rep. Atkins said. "And I think that most Minnesotans would be surprised to learn that there are currently no criminal penalties for this highly offensive nuisance activity. Spammers operate using deceptive and intrusive tactics, and we need to stop it."

The measure, called the "Minnesota Spam Control Act" would impose tough criminal penalties against the most egregious spammers who use tactics of fraud and deceit to get spam into the e-mail inboxes of online consumers.

The bill creates misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor and felony levels of crime, and imposes jail time and monetary penalties.

The flood of unwanted e-mails accounts for over half of Internet traffic, by some accounts. In addition to annoying consumers, this also imposes significant costs, as providers need to pay for additional capacity in order to accommodate the additional traffic spam creates. This has led Internet service providers (ISPs) to sue spammers under existing laws, but these civil actions have proven ineffective in deterring spam production.

"We all know that these e-mails can be offensive and even obscene," Rep. Hansen said. "But the worst of it is that we all subsidize this activity through higher costs made necessary by this behavior."

Media and Internet giant America Online has thrown

its support behind the bill. America Online Executive Vice-President and General Counsel Randall Boe said, "Tough, new state anti-spam proposals like the one being supported today can have a tremendous impact as part of a comprehensive, multifaceted effort that includes a combination of corporate litigation, online industry collaboration, new anti-spam technologies, enhanced tools and features placed at the fingertips of our members, and stronger spam filtering at the e-mail server level."

The bill outlaws five practices common in the deceptive distribution of spam. The bill also leaves open the possibility of further suits against spammers by the attorney general.

If enacted, the Minnesota Spam Control Act would work hand-in-hand with the tough criminal provisions of the new federal law — the 2003 CAN-SPAM Act. It would also give

Minnesota residents and officials added enforcement tools to combat spam with criminal and civil penalties. The Minnesota junk e-mail proposal was also crafted in a way that would allow it not to be preempted by the new federal anti-spam law.

The Minnesota junk e-mail proposal is an updated version of Virginia's anti-spam law, which went into effect on July 1, 2003, and has already been successfully used by state law enforcement officials to file criminal prosecutions against two spammers widely-known to industry groups and ISPs. Other similar anti-spam laws have been passed in Ohio, Maryland and New Jersey.

Sen. Dan Sparks of Austin is the chief author of the Minnesota Spam Control Act in the Senate. Atkins observed, "The only good Spam comes in a can from Hormel in Sen. Sparks' hometown."

39A

x-1

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
FEB 27 2005



B Burrelles Luce

683 .51771 XC
.y.... 14 XX....

FLOODU

FRONT PAGE

A busy session so far

House bonding bill includes funding for local projects

Seth Loy
news editor

An already busy legislative session kicked into high gear last week as the Minnesota House of Representatives passed its bonding bill, including much-needed funding for several local projects.

Rep. Joe Atkins, a sophomore DFL legislator from Inver Grove Heights, said he is happy with how the session has progressed so far. This year stands in stark contrast to last year, he said, when partisan bickering pre-

vented real progress on a number of issues.

"There's not a lot of pork," Atkins said of the bonding bill. "It's been a very good session so far. Sens. Jim Metzen and Sharon Marko have done a great job on the Senate side, and Reps. Katie Sieben, Rich Hansen and I have just tried to do our best."

The House bonding bill, which must go to conference committee for final approval (and comparison with the Senate version), includes \$500,000 for Port Crosby, a former landfill in South St. Paul the city is

converting into park space, and \$4.5 million for Inver Hills Community College, for additional classroom space and remodeling.

"They've experienced a 37 percent increase in their student population in the last four years, so they've got students hanging their heads out the door," Atkins said.

First-year Rep. Rich Hansen, a South St. Paul DFLer, stressed the importance of funding for Port Crosby and the Metro Greenway. The Senate passed its bonding bill last month, and these projects were both included in it as well, making their inclusion in the final package likely.

The bill also includes funding for flood mitigation along the Missis-

sippi River in Inver Grove Heights and money for preservation of open space, including the Pine Bend Bluffs in Inver Grove.

"These projects each represent a significant investment by the state that will help create jobs and improve the quality of life for people in our district," Hansen said.

Besides the bonding bill, legislators are tackling a host of other important issues this year — education funding, a possible gas tax and a statewide smoking ban. Atkins believes a smoking ban will pass, though it may end up applying only to restaurants and not bars.

"The level of bipartisanship is 100 percent better," Atkins said of this year's session.

39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
DEC 11 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771 14 XC
v YY

120054

Rep. Hansen gets award for work with mental health caucus

State Rep. Rick Hansen of South St. Paul was jointly awarded the Legislator of the Year Award from the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota (NAMI-MN) with other charter members of the Minnesota Mental Health Legislative Caucus.

The Mental Health Caucus is a first-in-the-nation effort to draw attention to mental health issues as they affect criminal justice, employment, education,

health care and legislative policy.

"The formation of the Mental Health Legislative Caucus was truly groundbreaking," said Sue Abderholden, executive director of NAMI. "The caucus addresses issues that go beyond committee jurisdictions and presents the opportunity to more fully learn and solve the problems faced by both children and adults with mental illness."

"I'm proud of the work the Mental Health Caucus has done to draw attention to these critical issues," Rep. Hansen commented. "I look forward to working with the Caucus in 2006 to advance legislation that improves mental health diagnosis and treatment in Minnesota."

"This is an award that is truly deserved," said Abderholden.

NAMI-MN is a grassroots statewide nonprofit organi-

zation that provides education, support and advocacy for children and adults with mental illness and their families. The organization, founded in 1977 by a group of dedicated family members of persons with mental illness, works to affect positive changes in the mental health system, and increase the public and professional understanding of mental illness.

39A

SUN CURRENT (INVER
GROVE HEIGHTS&SO. ST.
PAUL ED)

INVER GROVE HEIGHTS, MN
WEEKLY 13,500
JUL 28 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

385 .22196

14 XC
XX06..

Rep. Rick Hansen, DFL-39A

Hansen sees his primary job at the Capitol as advocating for his constituents and on that basis he sees a lot of success in the session.

He authored two laws during the session to address issues constituents brought to him: one concerning disability benefits and another one legalizing the use of motorized bicycles on city streets.

The session also saw results when it comes to other issues facing Dakota County residents, Hansen said.

"I also pushed hard on two big issues, bonding and property tax relief, with encouraging results for our area," he said. "The bonding bill provides \$2.5 million to finish converting the Port Crosby landfill site along the Mississippi in South St. Paul into a park. Funding was also provided for metro greenways, for which Pilot Knob is eligible, and area colleges."

Hansen said he also worked to restore local government aid, taking pressure off cities to raise property taxes and giving cities more money for services like police and firefighters.

But perhaps the biggest effect of the session is an education funding package Hansen called a "first step."

"This year's education funding package is a first step toward returning to the Minnesota tradition of strong investment in public schools," he said.



Thanks to increases in the per pupil funding of 4 percent in each of the next two years along with expanded referendum ability, South St. Paul will see a \$2.6 million increase in its 2006-2007 revenue, District 197 a \$4.4 million increase and District 196 a \$21.6 million increase.

Hansen also co-authored a bill that compensated District 197 for buses it purchased that were later proven unsafe. The law allows the district to levy \$30,000 per bus to replace the vehicles.

As a member of the Regulated Industries and Environment committees in the House, Hansen played a part in delivering a compromise on the issue of wind energy transmission.

"This new law represents a bi-partisan solution that will allow small utility investors to bring renewable, domestic wind energy to market more quickly and efficiently," he said.

"My interest in the environment began because as a sportsman, I want to make sure that all Minnesotans can enjoy our state's natural resources as much as I did growing up."

Hansen said having to go to a special session was disappointing, but the final results netted the education funding package, transit funding and other beneficial legislation. During the special session, he also declined to accept the per diem.

"Without special session, we would not have the excellent education funding package," he said. "And without special session, the 27,000 working Minnesotans the governor proposed cutting off of health insurance would today be uninsured."

However, he said he remains committed to preventing such special sessions in the future by working across party lines and pushing for changes in rules and procedures.

39A

X-1

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
JUL 17 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771 XC
.y.... 14 XX....

12/20/05
Legislative session ends, finally

Local schools receive large funding increase

Seth Loy
news editor

They just can't keep the lights on at the Capitol these days.

Power at the Capitol building went out during a floor debate last Wednesday, as legislators wrapped up the special session and put to bed several important funding bills.

"All the lights went out in the Capitol," said DFL Rep. Rick Hansen. "We had just done the tax bill, and were in the middle of the health and human services bill, when all of the computers shut down and there were no lights."

Hansen, a freshman legislator from South St. Paul, said the power outage actually helped break some of the tension at the Capitol. The

education, health and human services, taxes and transportation bills that passed Wednesday were the product of a final budget agreement reached July 8.

"The key to ending this session was compromise, compromise, compromise," Hansen said. "The session lasted far longer than any of us would have wished, and was sometimes very frustrating. At the same time, I believe the outcome was a good one. This was made clear today by the wide bipartisan majorities by which each of these bills passed."

This year's education funding bill provides the biggest increases to schools since the 1980s: South St. Paul (District 6) is expecting to receive a \$2,623,720 increase; West St. Paul/Mendota Heights/Eagan (District 197) - \$4,357,660 increase; and Inver Grove Heights (District 199) - \$3,018,000 increase. The funding increases are based primarily upon the number of students

enrolled in each district.

Another positive result of the compromise was \$48 million in additional local government aid (LGA) funding, including increases for most cities in northern Dakota County.

"The (partial government) shutdown was not anybody's idea of fun, but the overall outcomes were terrific," said Rep. Joe Atkins, DFL-Inver Grove Heights. "We passed the largest funding increase in education in several years, a great bonding bill that is terrific for us locally, flood mitigation legislation. ... We passed the toughest meth bill in the state."

In fact, the number of methamphetamine labs in the state has tripled in the last two years, Atkins said, and is one of the fastest-growing areas of crime in Dakota County. Just last week police made a large meth lab bust in West St. Paul.

Atkins said he received some

calls from constituents upset about the need for a special session and the partial government shutdown. The public outcry helped lead to an "uprising" among some of the younger legislators, who started reaching their own compromises outside of talks by senior leadership.

"The state can simply not afford to go through this kind of gridlock again," Hansen added. "The citizens expect better of us. I am committed to changing the system so that democracy works for the people of Minnesota."

With the special session and the first-ever government shutdown finished, Hansen is setting out to work with other legislators to ensure that this type of impasse doesn't happen again.

"I think folks were angry," Hansen said. "I feel that part of our responsibility as legislators was to take that frustration and use it to change the system."

39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
JUL 10 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771
V.....

14 XC
XX....

120004

New bill keeps 6,300 public employees working

On June 30, Rep. Rick Hansen joined an overwhelming majority of the House and Senate to pass a bi-partisan Jobs, Environment and Agriculture Bill.

The bill passed with enough time to avert a shut-down of these state services and keep Minnesota's economy, tourist sites and 6,300 public employees working.

State Rep. Rick Hansen was a leading contributor to this legislation.

"I worked non-stop over the last few weeks with both sides of the aisle and both the Senate and the House to see this bill through," Hansen said. "I am thrilled that we were able to work bi-partisanly to pass a consensus bill we could complete in time to keep parks, job services, and sites like the Sibley House in Mendota running."

Several key provisions

offered by Hansen were included in the final bill. One component is the first bill dealing with public drainage systems in over 25 years. In particular, it will study the use of grass buffer zones along drainage ditches. Water quality, wildlife and wetlands are important issues with this study.

Hansen also co-authored an amendment to help fight the meth epidemic afflicting suburban and rural communities. The amendment requires the Department of Agriculture to study strategies for preventing anhydrous ammonia fertilizer theft for meth production.

Another provision authored by Hansen was in direct response to the needs of a disabled constituent. The bill will create an opportunity for a former Department of Natural Resources (DNR) employee to apply

for disability benefits for an injury he incurred while working for the state.

Finally, Hansen co-authored a bill to fund the Displaced Homemaker Program, a service to help former homemakers who have been divorced or widowed re-enter the workforce.

The Jobs, Environment, and Agriculture Bill funds a wide array of state government services, including the Department of Agriculture, the DNR, the Science Museum, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Explore Minnesota Tourism and the Historical Society.

"This bill is an improvement over original House funding levels," Hansen said. "It proves that when members of both parties work respectfully together, compromise is possible."

39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
JUN 26 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771
.y.....

14

XC
XX.....

1000021

Rep. Hansen proposes bill to keep government accountable

Legislation by Rep. Rick Hansen was formally introduced Thursday, June 16, that will strengthen the ability of the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) to evaluate the finances of important government agencies.

The Office is currently facing funding cutbacks and staff shortages and has found itself unable to maintain appropriate audit coverage. Hansen's legislation would address this problem by allowing the Office to keep some of the audit fees it currently charges for its services.

"It is important that we have strong watchdog agencies guarding the taxpayers' money," Rep. Hansen said. "This is a common sense way to ensure that the Office of

the Legislative Auditor has the funds it needs to be as effective as possible."

The Office of the Legislative Auditor is an investigative and evaluative agency for the Minnesota Legislature. It reviews state agencies and other select programs to ensure high standards of financial management. It is separate from the state auditor, who focuses on reviews of local governments and programs.

Currently, among the agencies audited by OLA are the Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District, the Metropolitan Sports Facilities

Commission, and the State Fair. OLA receives approximately \$100,000 total per year from these four agencies for providing this service, and that money is currently deposited into the General Fund. Rep. Hansen's proposed legislation would allow OLA to keep this money to ensure that these four agencies can continue to receive this service from OLA.

"If OLA is going to charge a fee for a service they provide, then that money should be used to support that service," Rep. Hansen said. "This will promote good management of these four agencies and good government in general."

FRONT PAGE

MH to preserve historic Pilot Knob site

Seth Loy
news editor

The longtime battle over Pilot Knob, a Native American burial ground in Mendota Heights once slated for residential development, appears to be over.

The City Council last Monday paved the way for the acquisition of an 8.5-acre portion of the site for a public preserve. A final vote on the purchase will take place at the council's first meeting in November.

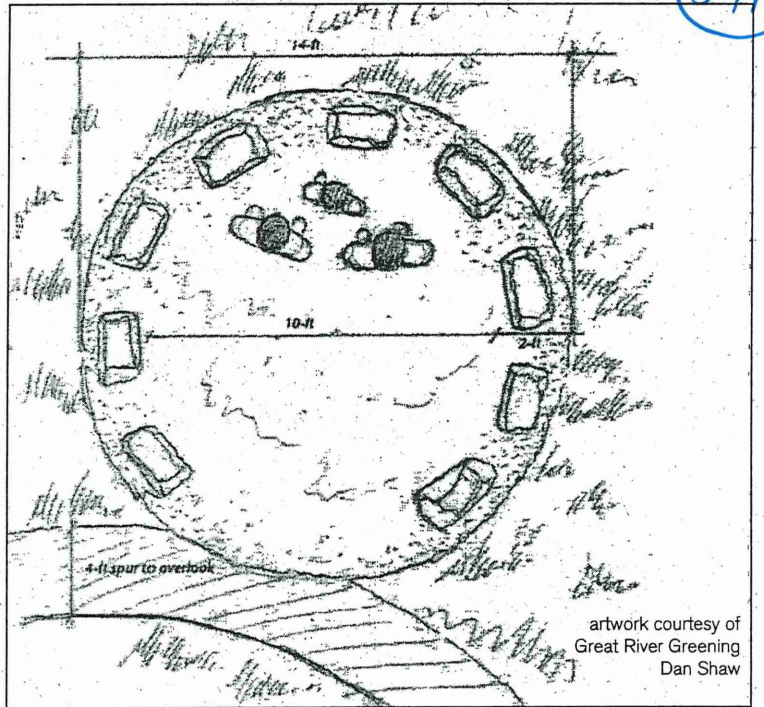
Pilot Knob, which overlooks the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers, is more than a prominent hill with a

scenic view. The site marks the signing of the 1851 Treaty of Mendota, which ceded Native American land to the U.S. government and allowed for non-natives to settle west of the Mississippi River.

"Pilot Knob's location at the end of the Mendota bridge was proposed for development into townhomes two years ago," said City Administrator Jim Danielson. "We asked [the property owners] to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement [on the site], and instead they sued us."

The city came out the victor in

see **Site** on page 5 **A**



39A

Site... **A**

continued from page 1

the lawsuit, and the property owners eventually agreed to sell the land. The Department of Natural Resources, Great River Greening and other non-profit groups have stepped forward with funding for the project. The city is expected to contribute about \$1 million toward the purchase of the site.

Dr. Fred Harris, with Great River Greening, said his group is "thrilled to be assisting the city on such an exciting site." He presented an artist's rendering of a proposed circular "overlook" featuring seven to nine sitting stones.

The overlook is low-maintenance and provides the best views of the greater Minnesota and Mississippi river valleys, the Minneapolis skyline, Fort Snelling and the international airport. It also provides a space for teaching school children that minimizes impact to the natural setting.

Past disturbances at the site, including the development of a gas station and a

motel, left few native plants and a thicket of invasive and exotic weeds that is extremely difficult to walk through. Estimated costs for basic native prairie and savanna restoration are \$140,000, including site prep and seeding (years one and two), plant establishment (years three to five), and maintenance (years six to 10). Volunteer contributions are expected to reduce some costs.

"A lot of people have been working a long time on this effort," said state Rep. Rick Hansen. "I remember when I was working on the farmland and natural area protection referendum ... Mendota Heights had the highest voting percentage in favor of the referendum than any other community in Dakota County. I think the folks of Mendota Heights really care about protecting open space."

Local resident Wally Kuntz said he was in favor of the City Council's plan, but he had concerns about future management of the site.

"I have a pet peeve," he said. "I don't feel people in the [parks and recreation] department are doing their

job. Nothing gets done unless someone is on them all the time. I saw a little park just fall by the wayside. ... I just hope if we preserve Pilot Knob, it gets some maintenance, so it's well-taken care of."

Maggie Hill, a Minneapolis resident, said the council has "an opportunity to be real visionaries" by preserving the site for future generations.

"It seems to me that a small, limited group of people win if the site is developed," Hill said. "I think you have a real opportunity to let the public enjoy it. It also works hand-in-hand with tourism over at Fort Snelling."

The council members seemed wholeheartedly in favor of the plan. In fact, Council Member Ultan Duggan read aloud a poem about the site.

"I feel privileged to be a part of this discussion," said Council Member Mary Jeanne Schneeman. "I feel this is a terribly important acquisition — not just for Mendota Heights, but in the whole history of the United States. It has a ton of historical significance."

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
OCT 23 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771
.y....

14 XC
XX....

39A



As a swarm of lobbyists and members of the public jostle for amendments and data sheets, Rep. Rick Hansen, DFL-South St. Paul, testifies before the House Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resource Finance Committee April 28 on possible funding sources for the impaired waters initiative.

Minnesota's response to federal Clean Water Act is seen as cloudy at the capitol

by T.W. Budig
Capitol reporter

The future of the impaired waters initiative at the Capitol is cloudy.

With scant weeks left in the session, lawmakers have been unable to agree on how best to fund the \$80 million clean water initiative — Minnesota's response to the federal Clean Water Act.

A consensus exists that something needs to be done — that things are even urgent, said Rep. Dennis Ozment, R-Rosemount, House Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resource Finance Committee chairman and impaired waters bill author.

"But nobody wants to fund it," said Ozment, speaking after a committee meeting April 28.

The so-called toilet tax, a proposed \$36 sewage fee, doesn't have any support in the Legislature, according to Ozment.

Rep. Rick Hansen, DFL-South St. Paul, agrees. "I don't think that's going to happen. I hear from my constituents — they don't like it," he said.

Hansen, who was asked by Ozment to serve with a group of lawmakers to

explore funding options, presented several alternatives to the Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resource Finance Committee.

Hansen proposes using a slice of the state lottery sale tax proceeds — constituents are incredulous this isn't done already, he said — to fund the waters initiative.

The funding, about \$8 million, would be deposited for use for water assessment.

It would also punch a hole in the general fund.

Further, Hansen proposes counties charge a \$36 fee per transaction on the recording of a mortgage and an additional \$36 fee for the registration of a deed.

Statewide, it's estimated the fees could generate about \$25 million a year.

The funding would be deposited in a water pollution control revolving loan fund.

Hansen said the deed and mortgage proposals are less regressive — he's concerned about the elderly in South St. Paul on fixed incomes.

Further, the fees would be spread over

decades and be tax deductible.

"I think it's a key piece we can use," Hansen said.

Hansen also proposes to allow watershed districts to levy for local impaired waters restoration projects, but points out that watershed districts are not found statewide.

Rep. Al Juhnke, DFL-Willmar, said putting anything on the property tax was problematical, but he thought the deed "tax" made sense and should be explored.

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) offered a funding proposal in which counties would charge for septic system assessments.

Depending on the age of the system, one-time fees would range from \$50 to \$200 for residents.

As proposed, counties would keep 85 percent of the assessment fees.

Jim Mulder, AMC executive director, said local government is cynical whether dollars sent to St. Paul would ever return to help them locally.

"There will never be enough money from the state of Minnesota to do all

this stuff," he said.

Other funding proposals are floating round the Legislature.

Several weeks ago, Ozment proposed an impaired waters fee based on property market values.

Lawmakers are also looking to passage of a proposed constitutional amendment that would dedicate a portion of the state sales tax to natural resources as a funding vehicle.

A successful lawsuit filed under the Clean Water Act law could halt development and result in a special session, he said.

There needs to be bridging funding until 2008, according to Ozment.

Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson, DFL-Willmar, flatly said there is no general fund money at this time for impaired waters.

He believes some funding should be found — it would be helpful, he said.

But he questioned whether there was \$80 million in the "cigar box," said Johnson.

T.W. Budig is at tim.budig@ecm-inc.com

ANOKA COUNTY UNION

ANOKA, MN
WEEKLY 5,100
MAY 6 2005



Burrells Luce
10 .25844 XW
.v.... 14 XX01..

South-West
Review

2-6-2005

SUN CURRENT (MENDOTA^{X-2}
HEIGHTS & WEST ST.
PAUL EDIT)

MENDOTA HEIGHTS, MN
WEEKLY 10,000
FEB 10 2005



B BurrellesLuce

69 .27042 XC
.V.... 14 YY06

12000U
**Town meeting
deemed a success**

To the editor:

I was pleasantly surprised by the turnout for the recent town meeting I hosted along with Rep. Atkins and Rep. Hansen. We had hoped to see about 30 or 40 people, and we had more than double that number come to the West St. Paul library to ask questions and offer opinions. While some meetings suffer from a lack of attendees, our biggest problem was finding enough chairs.

When we hear reports that Americans are becoming more apathetic and less likely to get involved in government, the reporters apparently are not talking to the families and neighbors in our communities. For someone who's taken pride in being a voice of the people at the state Capitol for a few years now, it was heartwarming to see so many people willing to offer their views on the direction we're heading as a state.

If there were people unable to attend, or if there are questions that weren't answered, I hope people know that my door is always open and I'm always willing to help where I can. It's an honor and a pleasure to represent our communities in the state Senate, and I thank you once again for the great turnout.

Sen. Jim Metzen
South St. Paul

39A

39A

x-1

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
APR 10 2005



Burrelles Luce
663 .51771 XC
v.... 14 XX....

Mailbag

Thank you for electing Rep. Hansen

To the editor:

I just wanted to take a moment to thank the voters of District 39A for sending Rick Hansen to the Minnesota House of Representatives.

Rick has brought common sense and a "can-do" approach to the Capitol. He brings people together to get the work done. One example is that just 12 weeks into this session a bonding bill has already passed, something we couldn't get done at all in the last two-year session. Included in that bonding bill is \$24.2 million for projects in northern Dakota County, including \$2.5 million for the Port Crosby Project.

Representative Hansen already has earned a reputation for his work ethic. While Rick and I don't agree on everything, I can't imagine anyone working harder for the people he represents. Best of all, with his background and experience, he was able to hit the ground running at the Capitol and be effective immediately.

Again, thank you for electing Rick Hansen.

Joe Atkins
State Representative
Inver Grove Heights

39A

x-1

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
APR 3 2005



B BurrellesLuce
663 .51771 14 XC
.y.... XX....

12.00 DM
**Atkins' '2020' group
looks to the future**

Joined by a bipartisan group of a dozen senators and representatives, Rep. Joe Atkins announced the formation of the "2020 Caucus," whose objective is to look for long-term solutions to issues like education and transportation funding, controlling health care costs, long-term care, and job growth.

"Too often, the vision of elected officials is too short, looking only for short-sighted solutions to get them through to the next election," Atkins said. "Our group is committed to finding answers for the long run."

By the year 2020, the face of Minnesota's population will change dramatically. For example, the average age will go up significantly as baby boomers move into retirement. For the first time in state history, senior citizens will outnumber school-age children. Likewise, the state is expected to face an unprecedented decline in school

enrollment.

"The impacts on health care costs and education funding will be mammoth," noted Atkins. "We need to anticipate these changes and plan ahead, rather than just react."

Atkins explained that the state's need to plan for the future is similar to the need for a typical family to do the same. "It's the same as a family's need to plan for retirement or plan for their child's education beyond high school; we need to look ahead to situations we will face down the road and be ready for them," he said.

Representative Rick Hansen is also expected to play an active role in the group, particularly on conservation issues. "The changes occurring in our state will require policy shifts of some kind," Rep. Hansen said. "This group intends to plan ahead and meet the challenge now so that we can prevent a crisis in the future."

39A

**Rick Hansen,
communicator**

PIONEER PRESS JUL 8 '05

I was astonished to read Larry Sachi's June 27 letter, "Don't threaten me, pal." I have been a registered nurse for 28 years and a certified registered nurse anesthetist for 18 years and have been politically active. I have never encountered a legislator who has communicated as well as Rick Hansen. I do utilize e-mail in my communication with my many legislative colleagues. Maybe Sachi doesn't have e-mail access, thus his lack of communication with his elected officials.

GAYLE CRABTREE-PERGOLI
Mendota Heights

39A

Taking on the issues

Hansen's background perfect for diverse constituency

By LEE ANN SCHUTZ



Rep. Rick Hansen

The day before the legislative session was to begin, Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul) sat at his desk, studying last year's bonding bill. If he could have introduced the first bill of the session, that would have been it, he said. "It is unfinished business, and at least to the people I represent, it is important."

But when it comes to concerns in his district, the bonding bill is outranked by concerns over affordable health care and maintaining a quality public education system. This shouldn't come as too much of a surprise, Hansen said. For his district, that includes Lilydale, Mendota, Mendota Heights, West St. Paul and parts of Eagan, and South St. Paul,

is diverse in economics, ethnicity and age.

The district has a large number of seniors, with whom the cost of health care is an immediate concern. But there is an equally large number of what he calls the "sandwich generation" — adult children taking care of their children and elderly parents.

Hansen knows all about these struggles. He is a new father and recently had to deal with making decisions about nursing homes and assisted care facilities for his own parents. He has introduced legislation asking for a study on how public and private institutions and workplaces are dealing with the issue.

From his farming roots in rural Freeborn County and his work with the Department of Agriculture, to his new ventures in e-commerce selling Amish-made furniture, Hansen believes he is well suited to represent his constituency. He was drawn to the idea of running for the House because of his dedication to

DISTRICT 39A

2002 population: 36,532
Largest city: Eagan
County: Dakota
Top concerns: Affordable health care, quality education

Hansen has introduced legislation asking for a study on how public and private institutions and workplaces are dealing with issues faced by the "sandwich generation."

public service and feels honored to have been elected.

On the day that Hansen was sworn in, he resigned from a job at the Department of Agriculture where he worked for 17 years on pesticide issues. Hansen could have retained his position, but felt that ethically he could not vote on legislation that affected the department. "But I won't forget my work in public service, and I bring that to the table," he said.

Natural progression

A culmination of experience led Loeffler to the House

By BRETT MARTIN

Rep. Diane Loeffler (DFL-Mpls) has spent a good part of her career working with budgets, and in one instance, it had a very interesting outcome.



Rep. Diane Loeffler

Several years ago, when the Minnesota Board of Environmental Education was facing budget woes, it held an auction to raise money. Loeffler bid, sight unseen, on help to perform some home improvements. The board member who offered the service is now her husband.

"Demanding times can sometimes result in creative solutions," she said of the auction.

Loeffler has an eclectic background. She interned at the Department of Administration, which used to handle state budgeting. She has worked in education policy research, local government, employment, human ser-

vices and health care, focusing primarily on budgets and analyzing policy. This all served as a catalyst to run for the House seat.

"One of the things I bring to the job is experience on a wide range of issues," she said, adding that her background will be invaluable on her committees: Commerce and Financial Institutions and its Technology, Bioscience and Medical Products Division; Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs; and Rules and Legislative Administration.

Loeffler would like to see more funding in education.

"We need to increase the state investment in education — in pre-k through university education," she said. "The state has to assure that every child, no matter where he or she is born, receives a quality, publicly paid education."

If she could have introduced the first bill of the session, it would have been equal quality education for all children in the state.

"If you look at what the state is responsible for providing, education is a key responsibil-

DISTRICT 59A

2002 Population: 36,715
Largest city: Minneapolis
County: Hennepin
Top concerns: Adequately funded education, health care needs

"The state has to assure that every child, no matter where he or she is born, receives a quality, publicly paid education."

— Rep. Diane Loeffler

ity," Loeffler said. "Education is a core Minnesota value. If you have a good education, it opens up so many doors later in life."

She is also concerned with keeping a lid on property tax increases.

"There are a lot of young homeowners and elderly people on fixed incomes who are being strangled by property tax increases," she said.

Having spent part of her career in the health care field, she realizes the importance of affordable health care.

"I want to ensure quality health care is available for everyone," she said.

MEET THE FRESHMEN

PIONEER PRESS MAR 6 '05

Editor's note: These are part of a series of profiles of the seven first-term lawmakers in the Minnesota House from the east metro.

✓ HOUSE DISTRICT 52B

Matt Dean

Home: Dellwood

Age: 38

Family: Wife, Laura; three children, Marta, 8, Jack, 7, and Jane, 2

Occupation: Architect

Party: Republican

District 52B:

Includes Hugo, Mahtomedi and Stillwater

What do you think are the top legislative concerns for the east metro area? "Strengthening the economy is the No. 1 priority. Funding our priorities, but doing so within our means so that it ties into the budget process. From the campaign and also carrying on into this session, that's the No. 1 priority."

What issues do you want to focus on this session? "The bonding bill is coming up. I'm on the Capital Investment Committee, so we're looking for a good bonding bill to get a lot of the maintenance work for buildings and construction projects on track."

What in the bonding bill would be specifically for District 52B? "The Stillwater prison — the expansion of the (desegregation) unit — and flood control (for downtown Stillwater) are the two major pieces that I'm working on."

How are you trying to make an impact as a first-term legislator? "This is a relationship business, so I'm getting to know folks on both sides of the aisle and understanding how the process works. I'm also introducing



Matt Dean

ing the bills that are important and represent our area. One bill has to do with education for spending authority for classroom teachers. I want to give teachers direct spending authority so they can buy the curriculum materials that they need. It's an idea that I got from my daughter's teacher. Health care reform is also an area that takes up a lot of my resources, it's very important because that's where all the budget dollars are coming from and so that's where I'm spending a lot of time."

What are your hopes about this year's Legislature avoiding the partisan gridlock of last year?

"The message from last year that I heard loud and clear was get the job done. That's the No. 1 thing, to get the job done, get the bonding bill done, get the budget done. We're trying to work with folks on the other side with some civility and avoid what we saw last year and with the Senate up for re-election as well, I think we're going to have a lot more success."

How will Sen. Michele Bachmann's decision to run for Congress change your plans? Have you considered running for her Senate seat if that were to become available?

"Right now, I got hired to do this job and that's what I'm focused on. There's so much to learn so quickly that I'm really just focused on the job I got hired for. I'm not really focusing on that. It's going to be a very busy political season in 2006. There's a lot of movement and a lot of discussion about the 6th (Congressional District), the (U.S.) Senate and potentially the local Senate. Right now, I'm just focused on 52B. As you can see, I haven't even got my pictures on the wall yet. That's scheduled for next week."

— Mary Divine

✓ HOUSE DISTRICT 39A

Rick Hansen

Home: South St. Paul

Age: 42

Family: Wife, Suzanne, and one son, Evan, 10 months

Occupation: Since 2001, president and CEO of Harmony Cedar Inc., which sells Amish furniture online

Party: Democratic-Farmer-Labor

District 39A: includes all of West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Mendota and Lilydale as well as parts of South St. Paul and Eagan

Do you have any legislation you're excited about? "I'm getting my first hearing on drainage ditch buffers — changing the definition to have a required buffer of 16½ feet. It will reduce erosion, improve water quality and provide wildlife habitat. It will be controversial. It takes agricultural land out of production." (The bill passed out of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee last week after this interview, and now moves to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee.)

In your district, what's going on with Port Crosby in South St. Paul? Will there finally be enough money — \$5 million — to clean that 80-acre industrial dump and convert it to a riverfront park?

"There's \$500,000 in the House [bonding bill] and it's \$5 million in the Senate. We're going to come somewhere in between. The half-million dollars is the starting point. I'm confident we're going to get more than that."

Why did you quit your job as a supervisor with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture? "I didn't have to. I did it because I did not feel comfortable voting to fund the agency where I was employed."



Rick Hansen

That was my ethical choice. I just didn't feel that would be right."

So you are a full-time legislator?

"I still have my Internet business. But we've hired an employee who's doing that. So my contact and work there is fairly light during the session. After the session, I'll be working on that more."

Are you planning to be the 39A representative for a long time?

"I've had a number of groups come to the Capitol ... college students from the district who go to private colleges. ... I told them, 'I'm just renting; maybe in the future you'll be here.'"

You replaced the popular Tom Pugh, who got elected in 1988 before quitting last year to join the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Are you in his shadow?

"Sometimes I'm introduced as the 'new Tom Pugh.' He has a lot of credibility and a really good reputation. (People) ask: 'Where's your district? Who are you?' The easiest way I'll say is, 'I'm the new Tom Pugh.' It's a good way to get recognized. That will go on for a couple of terms, until people recognize you. I'm just focusing on the first term and making sure I do the best job I can."

Is bipartisan cooperation better because Democrats picked up more House seats in the last election? Or are both parties really trying to get along?

"I'm not sure. The closeness of the (DFL-Republican) margin helps. Maybe it's the fact that people lost who were here, so there's a strong desire not to fall victim to the same consequences of not getting stuff done."

How are you getting along with the other freshmen?

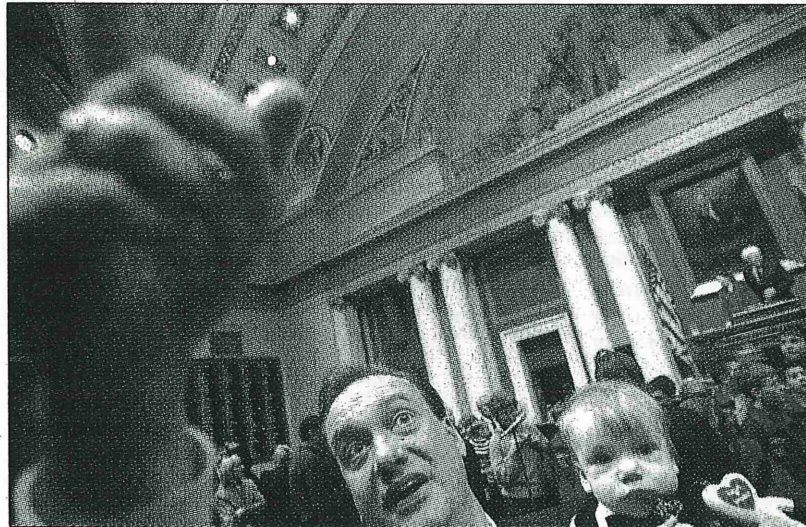
"The freshmen continue to go out to eat with each other. We were at a restaurant near the Capitol and the governor showed up and had a beer with us. We rolled up the shirtsleeves. It wasn't really politics. It was more of a social type of event. It was fun."

— Brian Bonner

THE 2005 LEGISLATURE

L60.101 L60.28 L60.58 G34.6

Amity is brief as Legislature opens



Richard Tsong-Taataril/Star Tribune

DFL Rep. Rick Hansen of South St. Paul showed son Evan, 8 months old, the sights on the House floor. "I have to pinch myself to see if it's real. I'm really hopeful that we can work together," said Hansen of his first official day at work.

Narrowly divided House squabbles over organization and rules; speaker narrowly reelected.

STAR TRIBUNE, JAN 5 '05
By Conrad deFiebre,
Mark Brunswick
and Dane Smith
Star Tribune Staff Writers

Calls for bipartisan cooperation on Day One of the 2005 Legislature were quickly trumped Tuesday by cross-aisle bickering, party-line votes on rules and organization and the closest election of a House speaker in years.

Rep. Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, won a fourth straight term as speaker of the House on a vote of 87 to 64 over Minority Leader Matt Entenza, DFL-St.

Paul. But with tough battles ahead over another state budget deficit, transportation funding, gay marriage and more, this is shaping up as Sviggum's most trying session yet.

First elected to the top House post in 1999, he is on track to become the second-longest-serving speaker in Minnesota history. His victory Tuesday was expected after Republicans held onto a slim majority in the November elections, but both he and Entenza suffered defections in the speakership vote from protesting conservatives in their caucuses.

And that was only the first of the fractures to appear between and within the caucuses, which are as narrowly divided as they have been since 1979.

SESSION continues on B4:
— Senate's start more collegial.

HOUSE

"What holds us together is much greater than anything that divides us."

✓ **Steve Sviggum,**
speaker



SENATE

"We will do a better job if we're willing to sit down and have a cup of coffee."

✓ **Dean Johnson,**
majority leader



(over)

394

House is unanimous only in naming new chief clerk

The House was evenly split at 67-67 that year.

"We're going to have a lot of very close votes," Entenza said after an unusually long, 2¼-hour opening session. "The speaker was barely elected, and it creates a lot of opportunities to work together. All it takes is a few members on either side to create a new majority."

Sviggum, meanwhile, emphasized the positive — "What holds us together is much greater than anything that divides us," he told the House — at least until he was asked about long DFL-sparked floor fights over committee and staff assignments. They ended with Republicans prevailing on party-line votes of 68 to 66.

"I was really disappointed in the Democrats," Sviggum said. "They turned it into a partisan political show, and it was completely inappropriate with members' families here. But the House will rise higher than their actions."

If Sviggum, a 53-year-old farmer and former teacher who entered the House in 1979, survives the next two years as speaker, his tenure will be second only to that of Lawrence M. Hall, a St. Cloud Republican who was speaker for five terms beginning in 1939.

Day One in the House, usually devoted to quiet organizational votes, had one moment of unanimity Tuesday: the

election of Albin Mathiowetz, a 34-year veteran of the House staff, to succeed Ed Burdick as chief clerk. Burdick, 83, retired this week after 38 years as the House's chief administrative and parliamentary officer.

But such accord didn't extend far. Rep. Bruce Anderson, R-Buffalo Township, denied Sviggum a clear majority vote for speaker when he abstained in protest over the GOP caucus' acquiescence as Joyce Peppin of Rogers, the wife of a caucus aide, unseated six-term Rep. Arlon Lindner, R-Corcoran.

And DFL Reps. Al Juhnke of Willmar and Mary Ellen Otramba of Long Prairie withheld their votes from their caucus leader, Entenza, to underscore their opposition to abortion.

Senate harmony

In the Senate, its makeup little changed from last year because members were not up for reelection in 2004, attitudes were much more collegial, with the DFL majority and Republican minority promising at least the beginnings of cooperation.

"We will do a better job if we're willing to sit down and have a cup of coffee. We need to visit more than we did last year," said Majority Leader Dean Johnson, DFL-Willmar, who talked of the need to reach consensus on better schools, a better transportation system, a

more competitive environment for business and agriculture and health care "that watches out for all citizens."

Minority Leader Dick Day, R-Owatonna, pledged to cooperate, although acknowledging that he has a tendency to "get on top of the desk and shout."

"There's 31 Republicans who want to move this state forward," he said. "We're off to a good start."

In that spirit, Senate committees moved quickly to recommend full Senate confirmation of several of Republican Gov. Tim Pawlenty's appointees. Administration Commissioner Dana Badgerow ripped up her prepared statement and faced no questions before getting unanimous approval from the State and Local Government Operations Committee. Metropolitan Council appointee Mary Krinkie was asked only one question before getting unanimous approval from the same panel.

Altogether, the hearing consumed less than 11 minutes. Meanwhile, another committee took little more time to green-light confirmation of Public Safety Commissioner Michael Campion. Johnson said the full Senate could vote on all three appointees Monday.

Mondale pep talk

In a surprise visit to the DFL House caucus before the session convened, Walter Mondale, former vice president and DFL godfather, congratulated the newly reinforced crew and urged them to "build back Minnesota's edge in the nation and the world."

Decades of DFL leaders pushing for investment in education, health care and transportation transformed Minnesota into a quality-of-life success story, Mondale said, and DFLers' successes last fall showed that voters "endorsed the ideas of a Minnesota that works together, moves on and invests in the future."

Alluding to the claims of moderation and compromise that many winning DFLers emphasized, Mondale also stressed that DFLers should employ "civil ways, positive ways" to get their job done.

A similar theme was sounded Tuesday by organizers of a conference set for Thursday and Friday at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and titled "Beyond Bickering and Gridlock: Your Role in a Changing Legislature."

Sen. Sheila Kiscaden of Rochester, the Legislature's only Independence Party member, is cosponsoring the conference with the Humphrey Institute and the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Topics to be discussed include building trust with your colleagues, improving skills to resolve differences, disagreeing with others without being personal, and promoting a civil legislative environment, Kiscaden said in a news release.

According to her office, at least 70 of the Legislature's 201 members have signed up for the workshop.

The writers are at cdefiebre@startribune.com, mbrunswick@startribune.com and rdsmith@startribune.com.

DFLers push Lake Superior protection

394
1200du

ENVIRONMENT: Minnesota lawmakers call for state action against exotic species in ship's ballast water.

BY JOHN MYERS

NEWS TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

The proposal would be similar to a new Michigan state law and would require ocean-going ships to have a permit certifying ballast water had been treated and inspected to state laws regulating the ballast of ships entering Minnesota's waters of Lake Superior.

Attorney General Mike Hatch and two DFL lawmakers on Tuesday called for new state laws regulating the ballast of ships entering Minnesota's waters of Lake Superior.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency would administer the program.

BALLAST | Enforcement may be difficult on Great Lakes

From Page 1B

Rep. Rick Hansen, DFL-South St. Paul, said they'll push the proposal during the 2006 Minnesota legislative session that begins in March. If adopted, their plan would take effect in 2008. A similar Michigan effort, signed into law in June, will become law in 2007.

"We need to act quickly and sensibly to save our state's waterways and protect our quality of life," Hatch said in a statement announcing the plan.

Supporters say the federal government has so far failed to take decisive action to keep exotic species out of the Great Lakes and even ocean harbors. Congress has stalled on proposed ballast action, although environmental groups have won a federal lawsuit that will — if upheld — require the federal Environmental Protection Agency to regulate ballast under the Clean Water Act.

Efforts to battle exotic species after the fact, such as keeping zebra mussels off water intakes and structures, cost billions of dollars each year. And their environmental damage so far hasn't been measured. In some areas of the Great Lakes, zebra mussels have wiped out native clams and drastically reduced

the number of small invertebrates that small fish eat.

The proposed Minnesota law also calls for better cooperation with other states and Canada at solving the exotic species problem.

Several ballast treatment methods are being tested, including in Duluth, such as using chlorine, ultra-violet light and filters to catch and kill exotic species.

But critics say ballast water treatment efforts aren't practical or affordable for ship owners and that regional and state laws will turn away business from Great Lakes' ports.

They also argue that ongoing efforts to flush ballast at sea, where most of the freshwater creatures perish, already are removing most exotic species.

Ray Skelton, government and environmental affairs director for the Seaway Port Authority of Duluth, could not be reached for comment Tuesday. In April, he said legislation requiring ballast treatment any time soon would be unenforceable.

It's an effort to try to limit the number of new exotic species that come into the state riding in the ballast tanks of freighters from faraway ocean ports.

At least 187 foreign species — most notably zebra mussels, goby, ruffe and spiny water fleas — now are in the Great Lakes, including two dozen in the Duluth harbor and St. Louis River estuary. Many are believed to have entered the lakes riding in water as they take on cargo. That release sometimes sends along species from distant oceans and river systems that wreak havoc on local fish and other native creatures.

A new invasive species, typically imported from Europe or Asia, is discovered in the Great Lakes on average every eight months, according to Minnesota Sea Grant experts. Ships take on ballast water when empty to maintain balance and then release the

Hatch, a DFLer running for governor, assistant Senate Majority Leader Ann Rest, DFL, New Hope, and state

See BALLAST, Page 3B

DULUTH NEWS-TRIBUNE
DULUTH, MN
WEDNESDAY 45,444
NOV 23 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

88 3246
y.c. 136
XX...p
KK

Lawmakers want state inspections of ships

Sen. Ann Rest and Rep. Rick Hansen say the state should be responsible for inspecting ocean-going ships for non-native fish species because the federal government isn't doing the job.

BY CHARLEY SHAW
Legal Ledger Staff Writer

Minnesota officials are hoping to join other Great Lakes states in an effort to stop ocean-going ships from dumping invasive species in state waters.

Sen. Ann Rest, DFL-New Hope, and Rep. Rick Hansen, DFL-South St. Paul, plan to introduce legislation that will require the state to inspect ships in Lake Superior for zebra mussels, Eurasian Ruffe and other species that harm the state's aquatic ecosystems.

Rest and Attorney General Mike Hatch discussed the issue at a state Capitol news conference last Tuesday.

"Given the fact that the current ballast water discharge contains invasive species that continues to pollute and destroy Lake Superior's ecosystem, and the fact that the federal government is slow to take action to protect our Great Lakes, the state of Minnesota needs to step in and inspect ocean going ships to stop the spread of the invasive species at their origin," Hatch said.

The Duluth harbor and St. Louis River are now home to



Attorney General Mike Hatch and state Sen. Ann Rest, DFL-New Hope, say the state needs to take action to stop the spread of invasive species in Minnesota. Legislation will be proposed that requires inspections of Lake Superior ships that carry non-native fish in their ballast water. (Photo by Charley Shaw)

more than two dozen foreign fish, invertebrates and parasites. The Eurasian Ruffe is now the most common fish in the 12,000-acre harbor.

The presence of non-native species brings a cost to bear on the public. For example, utilities must pass along the cost of cleaning water pipes to their customers, Hatch said. Tourist

and sport fishing industries are hurt when fish are deprived of their food sources by non-native invaders.

Zebra mussels alone have caused more than \$2 billion in damage in the Great Lakes.

Ballast water dumped from the ships accounts for 77 percent of the new plant and fish species that find their way into Lake

Superior and the other Great Lakes. Ships use ballast water for stability during long trips. An empty vessel may dump up to 2 million gallons of water into the Duluth harbor before it takes on grain or other cargo, according to background information provided by the officials.

By January 2008, ships in Lake Superior capable of discharging ballast water, under the proposed legislation, must obtain a permit from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in order to discharge ballast in Minnesota waters. The permits would require that vessels have ballast water treatment methods to "remove or destroy non-native aquatic nuisance species," according to the release. This can be done through filtration or by exposure to heat, chemicals, ultraviolet light, ozone or other methods to kill the foreign species, the release said.

Rest, a member of the Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes Legislative Caucus, said, Michigan passed a similar law that goes into effect in 2007. Wisconsin and other Great Lakes states are considering the legislation.

39A

X-3

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
MAY 8 2005



B Burreles Luce

663 .51771 14 XC
.y.... XX....

1200 DU

Rep. Hansen commemorates Arbor Day

• **Rep. Rick Hansen** was one of four Representatives who commemorated Arbor Day at the Legislature this year by speaking about conservation issues on the House floor and distributing balsam fir trees to each member of the House.

The bipartisan group of representatives spoke about the history of Arbor Day and the importance of trees to conservation and the environment. In addition to Rep. Hansen, the group included Rep. Loren Solberg, Rep. Denny McNamara and Rep. Dennis Ozment.

“Arbor Day is an important time for us to come together across party lines to recognize how important trees are in our efforts to preserve our soil, air and water,” Hansen said. “By giving each of our colleagues a tree, we are urging them to contribute to that effort, just like the

pioneers who started Arbor Day over 130 years ago.”

Arbor Day is celebrated on the last Friday of April each year as the nationally recognized holiday that encourages the planting and care of trees. It was started by J. Sterling Morton in Nebraska in 1872, who was one of many pioneers then settling the state. These pioneers were concerned about the lack of trees in their new land, and Morton organized Arbor Day to encourage the foresting of the state. It is estimated that over a million trees were planted in Nebraska on the first Arbor Day.

The balsam fir grows to a height of 60 feet, and prospers in cold climates such as Minnesota. It is the most aromatic of all firs and is one of America’s most popular Christmas trees.

39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
MAY 1 2005



B BurrellesLuce
683 .51771 XC
.y.... 14 XX....

1200 DU (39A)

Hansen helps make officials' salaries public

An amendment proposed by Rep. Rick Hansen, requiring that the three highest-paid employees of each state agency make their salaries public, passed the House of Representatives on Thursday, April 21, as a part of the Omnibus State Government Finance Budget Bill. It was passed on a voice vote with no audible nays.

"Many of our top public ser-

vants are making six-figure salaries," Hansen said. "At this level of compensation, the people of our state deserve to know who is making what, so that they can decide whether the money is well-spent."

Hansen said that the last election showed that the public demanded more access and accountability from their government. He also addressed

the concern, voiced by some, that some top agency positions have recently been distributed as a reward for political allegiance, rather than expertise.

"We need to pay top experts competitive salaries in order to attract them into public service," Representative Hansen said. "At the same time, we want accountability so that the people of Minnesota can

ensure that those receiving these large checks really are the best people for the jobs."

39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
MAY 15 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771 XC
.y.... 14 XX....

39A
12/20/04

Rep. Hansen's bill to streamline county government

A measure authored by Rep. Rick Hansen to streamline county government passed the House of Representatives today on a voice vote with no audible opposition.

"It's important that we take practical, common-sense steps to simplify government whenever possible," Rep. Hansen said. "County government is

responsible for many of the quality of life, nuts-and-bolts aspects of life, and we want it to be as efficient and straight-forward as possible."

The bill allows counties to decide against setting up a separate board to deal with noxious weed appeals. Instead, the county can decide to allow its board of adjustment to deal with these

issues.

"This might seem like a very small change," Rep. Hansen said. "But every time that we can make a change like this we give government more flexibility and we make it easier for citizens to deal with. We were sent here to be effective and get the job done, and measures like this show that we are."

39A

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
OCT 16 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771 XC
.y.... 14 XX....

1260D4

On Oct. 13, Audubon Minnesota presented Rep. Rick Hansen of West St. Paul an award for exemplary leadership in protecting bird habitat. Hansen was the co-author of the National Audubon Society's Centennial and the State Office's 25th anniversary state senate resolution. The resolution commemorated Audubon's 100 years of conservation excellence in the United States and 25 years in Minnesota.

According to the group, Rep. Hansen has demonstrated considerable commitment to protecting wetlands, prairies and forests during his first legislative session of his first term in the State House, where he serves as a member of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

'Tour de Sprawl' finds the good

Group says bike trip shows best land uses

BY BRIAN BONNER
Pioneer Press

11 22 06
9-16-05
The Sierra Club puts the spotlight on northern Dakota County and St. Paul's West Side for its 10th annual Tour de Sprawl. The bike-ride event is designed to call attention to what the environmental group considers to be good and bad development of land.

This year, the areas targeted are mainly examples of good urban planning, said Joshua Houdek, land-use and transportation organizer for the Minnesota North Star Chapter of the national organization.

The Sierra Club (<http://northstar.sierraclub.org>) likes to see a combination of high-density development along with preservation of open space.

The group is "opposed to auto-centric suburbs that have 4- or 5-acre plots for every house on it," said Frank Jossi, co-chair of the Sierra Club's land use and transportation committee. "We're opposed to the kind of development that can't be connected that easily to sewer lines, that has to be on septic tanks, that doesn't create any

real community at all."

Development should take place "closer to the city, where you can create transit lines and reduce commuting times," Jossi said. "I think we don't have to sprawl so far."

The 19-mile bike ride starts at 10 a.m. Saturday on Raspberry Island, below the Wabasha Street Bridge, in downtown St. Paul. It is open to the public for a \$15 fee and free to students. Registration is at 9:30 a.m.

Four stops will be made along the way.

The first project to be spotlighted is on St. Paul's West Side, at a 74-acre parcel south of the Mississippi River and north of East Fillmore Avenue, between South Robert Street and U.S. 52.

That's the scene of a development controversy. Developer Jerry Trooien wants to build the \$1.5 billion Bridges of Saint Paul, which his Web site, at <http://thebridgesofsaintpaul.com>, touts as "a spectacular mixed-use retail, entertainment, residential, and hotel development. ...

"When completed, the project will exceed 2,000,000 square feet with 450,000 square feet of

retail space including a major multiscreen cinema complex, restaurants, cafes, shops, 400,000 square feet of world cultural attractions, 335,000 square feet of offices, a hotel and 1,150 residential units."

Some residents are opposed to the proposed building heights, which could rise to 25 to 30 stories along Fillmore Avenue and 10 stories along the river.

While the Sierra Club likes to tout development that combines residential, commercial and retail on the same pace, the Minnesota chapter is "not taking an official position" on The Bridges proposal, Houdek said. "We just want to bring attention to the concerns the citizens have about height and footprint."

Some, however, do take a position regarding high-density development. Some residents of Inver Grove Heights, Sunfish Lake and Lake Elmo — among other places — have consistently resisted high-density residential developments, sewage systems or rollbacks on acreage size.

A former Sunfish Lake mayor, Francis Tiffany, expressed the sentiment: "We're an island of green space in a burgeoning metropolitan area. We want to keep it that way. We don't want ... higher-density developments."

The second stop on the tour

"We like trails.

They preserve open space and offer people another transportation choice."

Joshua Houdek, land-use and transportation organizer for the Minnesota North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club

is the Village at Mendota Heights, a \$60 million retail-housing-office project (www.villagemh.com) under construction on 23 acres of the northeast corner of Minnesota 110 and Dodd Road.

"We think, all in all, it's a really great thing," Houdek said. "It's mixed-use development in an area that could have been or would have been another strip mall in the middle of Mendota Heights. It's creating a new downtown center that's pedestrian friendly for the citizens of northern Dakota County and Mendota Heights."

Mixed-use development is an efficient use of land, Houdek said. Unfortunately, Houdek said, communities have all too often opted to zone land for single uses only.

"We don't have a lot of mixed-use zoning," Houdek said, noting the preference of cities to create separate residential, commercial and industrial districts. "That makes creating a community-friendly environment all that more challenging."

But Houdek said rising gas prices and growing traffic congestion are helping spur demand for more intensive development so that people are not so dependent on cars.

The third stop on the tour is West St. Paul, where the 320-acre Dodge Nature Center (www.dodgenaturecenter.org) will be touted for its long-standing commitment to preservation and environmental education. But the actual stop will take place in Marthaler Park, across from West St. Paul City Hall.

At the park, speakers are expected to express support for a \$2 million state-funded study, backed by state Sen. Jim Metzen, DFL-South St. Paul, and state Rep. Rick Hansen, DFL-South St. Paul, to study South Robert Street as a possible corridor for expansion of the light-rail network.

Houdek said the early success of the Hiawatha light-rail line has helped create "a tremendous shift" in support for mass transit. The study that Metzen and Hansen back is a "crucial step" to determining whether South Robert Street is the best place for a light-rail or a high-speed-bus route, Houdek said.

The fourth stop is in South St. Paul, where progress in creating paved recreational trails along the riverfront will be applauded.

"We like trails," Houdek said. "They preserve open space and offer people another transportation choice."

Brian Bonner can be reached at bbonner@pioneerpress.com or 651-228-2173.

THE HOUSE | SWING GROUPS

X-10

In the end, power may lie in the middle

Two House groups – moderate Republicans and new DFLers – could tip the balance.

STAR TRIBUNE, JAN 3 '05

By **Dane Smith**
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Two groups of Minnesota House members could hold the balance of power during the 2005 session. They are:

► About a dozen Republicans in the razor-thin majority who, if not exactly moderates on all issues, have nonetheless broken with the dominant conservative faction in their caucus on particular issues and voted with DFLers.

► The 17 incoming DFL members, 11 of them women and all but one from suburban or outstate districts. The new DFLers generally describe themselves as moderates rather than liberals. Some say they hope they can form a bond with moderate Republicans to force compromises and break the logjams of last year.

For the Republicans, the designation as moderate or independent can be traced to established voting records. For the new DFLers, it remains to be seen exactly what they mean when they say they are moderates.

Herewith, introductions to some of the key members in each swing group:

Republicans in middle

Dan Dorman, Albert Lea: This tire dealer from southern Minnesota stood out in the last two years as one of the loudest critics of his caucus' budget-cutting, especially the reduced subsidies to property-poor outstate cities under the Local Government Aid program.

"It's probably right that the

House will have a more moderate product but only because the bills out of our side won't be as extreme," Dorman said. "The narrowness [of the majority] will force our caucus to function more as a team and we will have to put bills together that appeal more to people like me."

Dorman added: "An awful lot of people are backing away from absolutely no tax increase."

Bud Heidgerken, Freeport: His ID could be "R-Lake Wobegon." Garrison Keillor sometimes mentions Heidgerken in his monologues as the fellow who represents the central Minnesota dairy region on which his mythical village is based. Heidgerken actually ran for the House as a DFLer in 1988. He got the GOP caucus' lowest ranking from the conservative Taxpayers League, and he is proud of it.

"I have a hard time voting against things that we are obligated to do, like take care of the elderly and schoolchildren." When the majority was bigger, he said, "I'd fight for more reasonable things within my caucus, and they'd say, 'Don't worry, you won't have to vote for it,' and I'd say, 'But we need better legislation.'"

Heidgerken said he likes being an independent who will be heavily courted by both sides. "If I see something I don't like, I'm sorry, I'm not voting for it," he said. "I don't care where it's coming from."

Kathy Tingelstad, Andover: Tingelstad, a backer of the proposed Northstar commuter rail line and proponent of a gas tax increase to improve highways, did 3 percentage points better than President Bush in her



David Brewster/Star Tribune

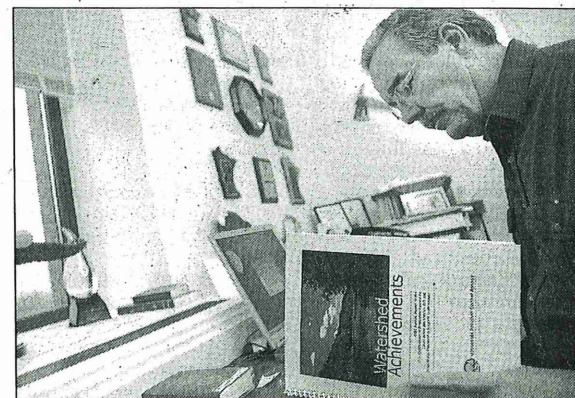
Reps.-elect Denise Ditttrich of Champlin and Melissa Hortman of Brooklyn Park, back to camera, are among 17 new DFL members of the House. All but one of the 17 are from the suburbs or outstate, 11 are women and most describe themselves as moderates.

north suburban district in November. She attributes that to "just listening to the voters." A neighboring Republican legislator who had a hand in blocking progress on the Northstar was defeated, she noted. "I think we will see some unique coalition building," she said. "You will see some Republican votes on the DFL side and you will see moderate and conservative DFLers, Iron Rangers, on our side of bills."

Steve Smith, Mound: He represents the western shore of Lake Minnetonka, one of the most affluent and heavily Republican districts in the state, but his mother was a worker in the old Tonka Toys factory and Smith often has parted with his caucus on matters such as increasing the minimum wage, which he favors. "Not everybody is in lock step on the issues," he said. "Compromising and reaching across will have to

work both ways. There will be issues that the minority will bring up in amendment form that will be attractive."

Dennis Ozment, Rosemount: This retired Minneapolis firefighter has been the GOP caucus' leading environmentalist, often siding with DFLers on bills aimed at protecting air and water or enhancing parks and wilderness. He says the state needs to invest \$1 billion over the next 10 years to clean up its lakes and rivers and groundwater, 80 percent of which has been determined by federal authorities to be polluted or "impaired" in some way. Ozment said the Pawlenty administration is "working on the issue," and he said he thinks he has a record of working with Senate DFLers for good compromises on environmental legislation. "We've got to come to the table with reason and logic to resolve these things," Ozment said.



Renée Jones/Star Tribune

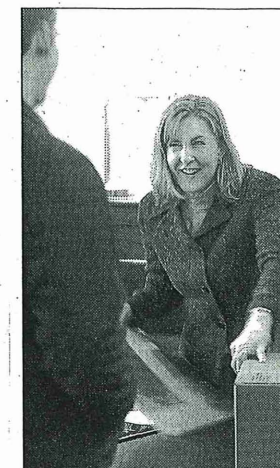
Rep. Dennis Ozment read a report on watersheds in his legislative office as he prepared for the start of the 2005 session.

New breed of DFLers

Melissa Hortman, Brooklyn Park: An attorney and owner of a family car-parts store, Hortman was a college intern for

both John Kerry and Al Gore in Washington, D.C. She said she won in November because "vot-

BALANCE continues on next page



David Brewster/Star Tribune

Rep.-elect Melissa Hortman of Brooklyn Park is one of the newly elected DFLers setting up shop at the Capitol complex.

BALANCE continues from previous page

ers were very unhappy about the gridlock, and they value productivity over partisanship." Her opponent "had been an employee of the Republican caucus and after being elected she continued to behave as if she were an employee. I will be an employee of neither [GOP House Speaker Steve] Sviggum nor [DFL Minority Leader Matt] Entenza. ... I will not be voting the party line. ... There might be a strong bipartisan middle that will hold sway on transportation and education issues."

Rick Hansen, South St. Paul: A supervisor for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Hansen said the message of the election was that "people are tired of the dogfighting and wanted to move beyond that. I would assume that Republicans had to be hearing the same things." His priorities will be environmental protection, schools and transportation. He owns an Internet company that sells Amish furniture, considers himself a moderate and says he and other newcomers are "committed to working across the aisle. ... We have a strong desire to make things work, whatever it takes, because if we don't, we won't be back."

Denise Ditttrich, Champlin: A longtime parent activist and advocate for the Anoka-Hennepin School District and a recent board member, Ditttrich said she is "absolutely a moderate" and "close to conservative" on many issues but will push for increases in public school funding and the Northstar project. "I would say that people in Champlin don't want politicians, but people who can represent their area ... real people who understand their communities and their needs."

Larry Hosch, St. Joseph: He is a super-achieving owner of a small construction contracting firm, mayor of his central Minnesota town (until he steps down to take his legislative seat), holder of a master's degree in social work, and he is only 27 years old. He is also an abortion opponent, a distinct minority in the DFL caucus, and a fiscal moderate. What does that mean? "That means long-range conservatism, and we've been going for short-term conservative solutions with these spending cuts. Early childhood family education is an immense return on the dollar and cuts in in-home elderly care will cost us a lot more in the long term."

Maria Ruud, Minnetonka: She is a nurse practitioner whose husband is a small-business owner, and her victory in a solid Republican district was one of the most shocking of the DFL upsets. Ruud's campaign slogan was "finding common ground," and she thinks she won in part because Republicans treated the voters and the district like "an entitlement." She describes herself as a moderate and defines that label as "being open-minded, listening to the other side and being prepared not to have it all your way." Her three school districts have been hit hard by funding cuts, resulting in larger class sizes and fewer courses, and her top priorities are more money for education, health care and highway congestion relief. But Ruud acknowledges that she doesn't know where that money will come from, given the state's budget shortage.

"I don't want my taxes raised, my husband's a small-business owner, it should always be a last resort ... But I can't rule anything out; I did run on finding common ground."

39A

Ocean freighter inspections to deter killer shrimp?

By T.W. BUDIG
Capitol Reporter

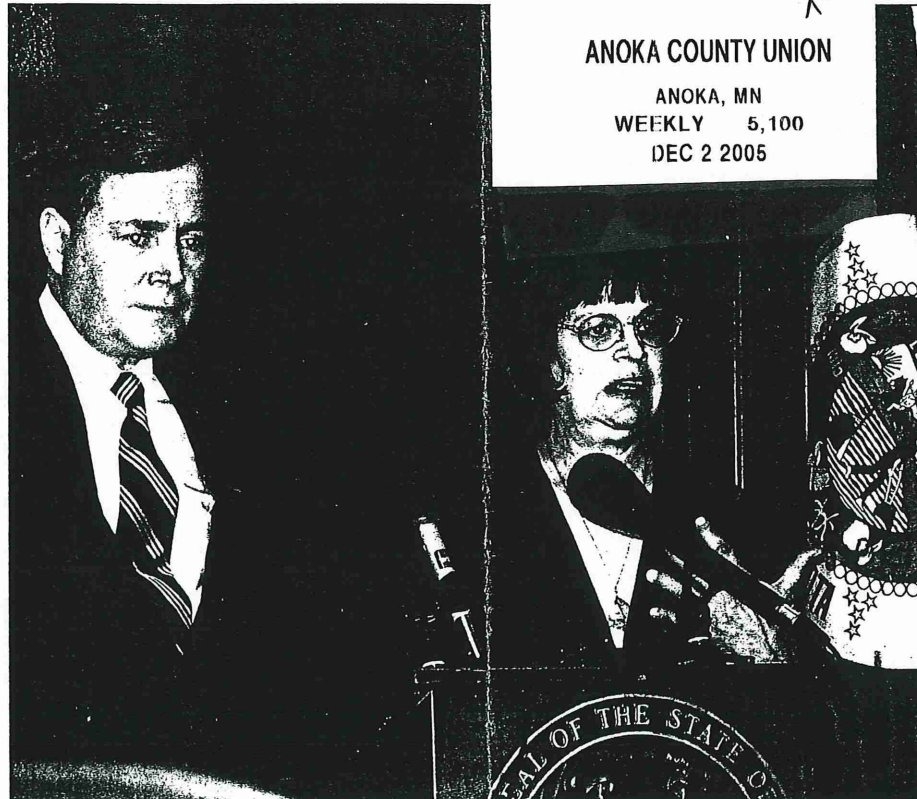
at the capitol

Alarmed by the prospects of killer shrimp or other exotic stowaways being pumped into the Great Lakes, Minnesota DFLers are proposing inspections of ocean-going freighters plying Lake Superior.

Attorney General Mike Hatch and Assistant Senate Majority Leader Ann Rest, DFL-New Hope, are pursuing legislation to require that all ocean-going ships capable of discharging ballast — water carried for stability and sometime amounting to millions of gallons — in Minnesota waters must have a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) permit.

The permit, issued by MPCA or the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), would be granted after officials make sure the ships have treatment methods to destroy or remove non-native species from their ballast.

This could include fil-



ECM Photo by T.W. Budig

Attorney General Mike Hatch and Assistant Senate Majority Leader Ann Rest, DFL-New Hope, are pushing for legislation that would have state officials inspecting the holds of ocean-going ships on Lake Superior for proper ballast control methods to prevent the spread of exotic species. The proposed legislation will be carried in the House by Rep. Rick Hansen, DFL-South St. Paul.

tration, heat — getting down in the ship's bilge and shoveling out sludge, according to Hatch, who as a young man worked for a time on a Great Lakes freighter.

"This is an easy one — at least I think it's an easy one," said Hatch of passing the legislation, modeled after a bill passed by Michigan in 2005.

The DFLers propose their legislation be effective in 2008.

Hatch and Rest said they didn't know whether additional MPCA or DNR staff would be needed to carry out ship inspections, but Hatch said the cost for additional staff, if needed, could be paid for out of inspection fees.

Minnesota waters extend 50 miles out into Lake Superior.

There's need for the legislation, according to the DFLers.

One Canadian study lists Duluth Harbor as one of the hotspots for invasive species in the Great Lakes, they said.

More than two dozen foreign aquatic species are found in the harbor, including the prolific zebra mussel — an exotic recently discovered in the Upper Mississippi River — with one non-native fish, the Eurasian Ruffe, the most common fish in the vast harbor.

It's believed that dumping ballast water out of the holds of foreign, ocean-going ships introduced three-quarters of the 187 exotic species into the Great Lakes, the DFLers said.

According to the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, the port is visited by more than 1,000 vessels a year — only a fraction of these are foreign vessels, though.

Among potential new invasive species scientist are worried about, according to DFLers, is an exotic shrimp, a "killer shrimp," known for its limitless appetite.

Another is a herring native to the Caspian Sea, which takes over habitat and reduces the number of native fish.

• Rep. Rick Hansen, DFL-South St. Paul, will carry the inspection legislation in the House.

He couldn't be reached for comment.

• Rep. Tom Hackbarth, R-Cedar, chairman of the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee, said in his three years of chairing the policy committee no DNR or MPCA official had ever mentioned inspecting ship's ballast.

"I'm interested in learning more about it," he said.

In July, Hatch along with five other Great Lakes attorney generals wrote to the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee in opposition to a ballast water management bill, arguing the bill, among other things, preempts state's rights to enforce laws pertaining to ballast.

T.W. Budig is at:
tim.budig@ecm-inc.com

Rep. Hansen recognized for environmental stewardship

Rep. Rick Hansen recently received a scholarship from the National Conference of Environmental Legislators to participate in the organization's Midwest Conference in Chicago. Hansen is highly regarded for his expertise and vision with respect to important environmental issues.

Hansen will travel to the conference to discuss strategies to halt the spread of invasive species, as well as other regional environmental priorities. Other issues that will be discussed at the conference include children's environmental health, mercury pollution and energy issues. The conference will educate and inform legislators from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin and examine possible solutions.

Rep. Hansen is particularly concerned about the threats posed to our local environment and economy by the invasion of non-native species. The zebra mussel, for example, was once found only in the Caspian Sea in Central Asia, but today is choking out native mussel species and young fish in parts of the Mississippi River and inland Minnesota lakes. The confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers is located at Mendota, part of the legislative district Hansen represents.

"Invasive species like the zebra mussel threaten our lakes and rivers, our ability to fish and our tourism industry," Rep. Hansen explained. "We need to work with our neighbors, across party lines and state lines, to protect our environment and our economy."

Hansen will chief author legislation in 2006 to require ocean-going ships to take the simple measures needed to remove invasive species like the zebra mussel when they enter Lake Superior. Similar legislation was signed into law in Michigan last June.

The National Conference

of Environmental Legislators is a national non-partisan, organization that seeks to network, educate and inform participants around current and emerging state and national environmental issues.

The cities of West St. Paul and South St. Paul recently entered a joint-powers agreement to consolidate their fire services into a single full-time department.

A board of directors comprised of two current council members from each community and a fifth "public member" will govern this new "South Metro Fire Department."

Current board members include Chris Lehmann and Dan Niederkorn from South St. Paul and Dave Wright and Mark Tessmer from West St. Paul. The public member will be appointed by collective action by the two city councils in a manner prescribed by the joint-powers agree-

ment.

The joint-powers agreement places certain limitations on who may serve as the "public member." The appointed individual may not be "an employee of either city or of the fire department, nor have been employed in the fire service of any governmental unit."

The South Metro Fire Department now seeks qualified applicants for a two-year term on its Board of Directors, as the "public member." Desirable qualifications and personal traits include familiarity with municipal governance and the communities of South St. Paul and West St. Paul; leadership and managerial experience; enthusiasm and assertiveness; collegial and consensus-building personal style; personal support and commitment to the purpose, goals and successful evolution of the South Metro Fire Department; and a willingness to spend the time and

effort necessary to launch this new, cooperative enterprise.

Interested individuals are encouraged to submit an application by 4:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 30. The selection process will be completed in January 2006. For more information or to obtain and return applications, please contact:

Shelly Anderson, executive secretary
City of South St. Paul
125 Third Ave. N.
South St. Paul, MN 55075
554-3203
shelly.anderson@southstpaul.org

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
DEC 4 2005



MINNESOTA CLIPPING SERVICE

663 .51771
.y....

XC
14 XX....

Rep seeks Ditch Law changes in state ditch law

By Tim Spielman
Associate Editor

St. Paul — The best news, say conservation leaders tracking legislation that would change rules regarding drainage ditches, is that wildlife in Minnesota would see improved habitat.

But that's just one of the reasons Rep. Rick Hansen, DFL-South St. Paul, has introduced changes to the ditch rules. Hansen said by clarifying language regarding buffers along agricultural drainage ditches — then implementing those regulations — water quality would improve, erosion would decrease, and costs associated with ditches would be reduced.

Buffer rules for ditches — where tile water from farm fields often drains — are ambiguous regarding a "one-rod of buffer" rule, Hansen said.

(See Ditch Law Page 6)

(From Page 1)

"We need to clarify and estimate where to start the measurement," he said.

When ditches are dug, what's scraped from the trench is placed next to the ditch (the spoil bank). The proposed language would likely extend the grass buffer along that bank. It states "the 16½-foot permanent grass strip shall be measured from the crown of the leveled spoil bank away from the ditch slope ..."

Hansen, who represents northern Dakota County, said there are no drainage ditches in that county, "but lots of hunters and fishers who care about water quality." Hansen also is a former board member for the local Soil and Water Conservation District.

He said the Minnesota Farm Bureau has indicated opposition to the bill, primarily because changes could result in reduced crop production.

Several of the drainage ditches in Minnesota today were in place prior to more restrictive rules that came to pass in the 1970s, according to Ron Harnack, director of the Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources.

"There's a lot of speculation that the buffers that are in place aren't consistent with state law," he said. "But that's not the case. Many (ditches) have been in place for many, many years."

Only since 1978, he said, did new ditches or those being improved need to meet the one-rod buffer (16½ feet of grass, not noxious weeds) rule.

Harnack said he doubts the proposed changes would result in improved water quality, but definitely would aid wildlife.

Many landowners, he said, are now signing up for programs authorized under the federal farm bill that pay them to put buffers in place, including the Conservation Reserve Program,

Outdoor News

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, and continuous CRP for buffers. During these typical 10- to 15-year contracts, Harnack said, landowners could donate the ditch to the county or watershed ditch authority for long-term maintenance; the owner has potential costs of upkeep alleviated, and the ditch authority can take steps that over time reduce their overall costs.

If extensive buffers already are in place, he said, landowners wouldn't qualify for some aspects of the federal programs.

Greg Roiger, supervisor for the Brown County SWCD, provided written testimony for the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee. He said the resolution to address where the one-rod buffer started (now in the House bill) was endorsed by the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

"The conservation and wildlife benefits of a buffer are undeniable," Roiger writes. "There are currently almost 40 districts that are expending district funds to sell voluntary buffers. They are helped in these efforts with financial support from the DNR and Pheasants Forever. (The federal Natural Resources Conservation Service) considers buffers to be of such importance that they have a continuous signup available for anyone willing to maintain one.

"We have a one-rod buffer rule in our ditch regulations," he

A bill in the Legislature aims to improve buffers along agricultural drainage ditches for better water quality and wildlife habitat. Photo courtesy of

Greg Roiger, Brown County SWCD

wrote. "It is time we recognize it and get the protection on the ground by passing this bill."

Roiger wrote that "with the advent of the clean water initiative and increased public awareness, it is only a matter of time that all ditch systems will be treated as any other tributary to our stream and river system."

The current bill language would apply just to new or improved drainage ditches in the state. Hansen's bill was scheduled to be heard by the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee on Tuesday. A companion bill is sponsored in the state Senate by John Hottinger, DFL-Mankato.

Harnack said there are an estimated 27,000 miles of constructed drainage ditches in Minnesota that drain into other waterways, primarily the Mississippi and Minnesota river systems.

39A

STAR TRIBUNE MAR 28 '05
Vote for DNR chief?

39A

It's often said that the Department of Natural Resources is one of the most intensely political state agencies. Its constituents are often at odds with each other — all-terrain vehicle users vs. environmentalists, for instance — and all manner of interests groups compete for DNR money.

Given the public pressures on the agency, Rep. Rick Hansen, a rookie DFLer from South St. Paul, wants the DNR commissioner, now appointed by the governor, to be an elected constitutional officer such as the attorney general or state auditor. "The environment and the outdoors are part of being a Minnesotan," he said. "I realize it's a big step, but I'm serious about it."

Anti-steroid bill arriving at Capitol

STAR TRIBUNE FEB 13 '05

The issue of sports and steroids is headed for the Legislature.

Penalties for illegally selling the performance-enhancing drugs in Minnesota would increase significantly under a bill to be introduced Monday by Rep. Voe Atkins, DFL-Inver Grove Heights.

"The last couple of weeks has just magnified the issue that steroid use is rampant in professional sports," said Atkins, referring to former slugger Jose Canseco's book telling of widespread steroid use in baseball.

Atkins and Rep. Tim Wilkin,

R-Eagan, are proposing that most of the steroids illegally sold in Minnesota be recategorized to Schedule 3 drugs, which will increase maximum penalties to 15 years in prison and a fine up to \$100,000. If the steroid was sold to a minor, the penalty would increase to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Currently, most steroids are classed as Schedule 4 and dealers have been getting off lightly because of discrepancies in federal and state laws, Atkins said.

Atkins wants to use the new law to educate young people,

too. He coaches Little League baseball and youth basketball, and many youngsters, he said, believe steroids are a part of the pro sports landscape.

He said he is considering future legislation that would link steroid prevention, education and testing to any Twins or Vikings stadium bills that may arise this spring.

"When someone comes to ask for a couple hundred million dollars, it's not too much to ask that these [athletes] be clean and not chemists," said Atkins.

Jay Weiner

SUN CURRENT (MENDOTA HEIGHTS & WEST ST. PAUL EDIT)

MENDOTA HEIGHTS, MN
WEEKLY 10,000
JAN 27 2005



39A

Hansen gives statute books to schools

Newly-elected state Rep. Rick Hansen of South St. Paul has donated to local schools some of the older state statute

books that were left behind in his office.

"I saw this as an opportunity to give area students a closer look at what we do at the Capitol," Hansen said. "Most of the time, the statute books are sent to recycling and destroyed. But these books provide a unique history of the issues and bills that are passed in any given year."

Hansen, the former chairman of the Metro Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, was sworn-in Jan. 4 as the state representative for District 39A, which includes parts of South St. Paul, all West St. Paul, Lilydale, Mendota and Mendota Heights, and a portion of Eagan.

So far, South St. Paul Schools has re-

ceived a set and School District 197 (West St. Paul and Mendota Heights) has received two sets

SOUTH-WEST REVIEW

NORTH ST. PAUL, MN
WEEKLY 22,993
JAN 23 2005



BurrellesLuce
663 .51771 XC
.y.... 14 XX....

Rep. Hansen donates statute books to schools

While other new members were scrambling to move into new offices and find their way around the State Capitol, newly elected State Representative Rick Hansen, of South St. Paul, took time to make a symbolic act with some of the older state statute books that were left behind in his office by offering them to local schools.

"I saw this as an opportunity to give area students a

closer look at what we do at the Capitol," Hansen said. "Most of the time, the statute books are sent to recycling and destroyed. But these books provide a unique history of the issues and bills that are passed in any given year."

Hansen, the former chairman of the Metro Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, was officially sworn-in last Tuesday

as the State Representative for District 39A, which includes parts of South St. Paul, all of West St. Paul, Lilydale, Mendota and Mendota Heights, and part of Eagan.

"With the state facing a \$1.4 billion deficit, I think it's important that we do everything we can to use our resources wisely," Hansen said.

So far, South St. Paul

schools have picked up a set and School Dist. 197 (West St. Paul and Mendota Heights) has picked up two sets.