



## Legislative Notes February 22, 2008

### State Update

#### Bonding bill moving quickly

Legislators are trying to get Minnesotans back to work. Lawmakers at the Capitol are pushing for a capital budget bill to be passed soon. The bonding bill can be thought of as the state's credit card, an opportunity to begin Minnesota's projects now and pay for them later.

Chancellor **James McCormick**, Trustee **Clarence Hightower** and Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities **Al Johnson**, along with student, faculty and staff representatives, presented the \$350.2 million request to the Senate Higher Education Budget and Policy Division this week. Committee members asked thoughtful questions, including about projects that are ready to go so people can get to work. There is interest in projects that can move quickly in hopes of stimulating the economy.

As legislative action also may move quickly, it is important to tell your legislators to support the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities bonding projects. This week, the Friends Action Network encouraged members to write to their lawmakers in support of the system's request. Please join in this action and send your legislator a letter here: <http://ga0.org/campaign/bonding/>.

#### Transportation bill passes – travels to governor

New transportation legislation that would raise \$6.6 billion over the next 10 years to pay for roads, bridges and transit construction projects was vetoed today by Gov. **Tim Pawlenty**. He said the bill was an "overreaching, massive tax increase that will further burden Minnesotans during already difficult economic times."

The House and Senate passed this legislation last night. The bill included an increase in the gas tax, license vehicle fees and metro sales taxes. It is uncertain if the chambers will try an override. The outcome of this legislation affects the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and not just in the bottom line if fuel costs rise. It also will have an affect on the capital budget requests.

The governor's capital budget recommendation included many transportation projects. If these were funded through the transportation bill, more of the state's bonding authority would be freed up for higher education related projects.

## A green Minute Man

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities bonding request was highlighted on the Twin Cities Public Television's Minute Man segment this week on *Almanac*. The segment aired Wednesday and will be broadcast again at 7 p.m. tonight during *Almanac*.

To showcase the system's request, the Minute Man traveled to Minnesota State University, Mankato and met up with the "green giant" to promote the system's emphasis on green and sustainable renovation and construction projects. The 60-second segment featured a student in costume



talking with President Richard Davenport in front of the Trafton Science Center. Renovation of the

The Twin Cities Public Television highlighted the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities bonding request. The "green giant" showed up to emphasize the green aspect of buildings.

center is the No. 2 priority on the bonding request. The segment is posted here:

[http://www.tpt.org/aatc/videos/2008/02/20/almanac\\_at\\_the\\_capitol\\_february\\_20\\_2008/minute\\_man](http://www.tpt.org/aatc/videos/2008/02/20/almanac_at_the_capitol_february_20_2008/minute_man)

## Community leaders look at ways to 'Close the Gap'

The Itasca Project, composed of Twin Cities-area community leaders, provides leadership for long-term regional development and competitiveness in the metro area and encourages organizations to work together and better leverage their resources. Earlier this week, Chancellor **McCormick**, a member of the Itasca Project Socio-economic Disparities Taskforce, took part in a discussion at the State Capitol with community leaders and House Speaker **Margaret Anderson Kelliher**, DFL-Minneapolis, and Senate Majority Leader **Larry Pogemiller**, DFL-Minneapolis. The group viewed the "Close the Gap" documentary, and discussed disparities in the region and opportunities for collaboration. The "Close the Gap" documentary can be viewed on Twin Cities Public Television this spring. The schedule is as follows:

April 6, 6-7 p.m.	Close the Gap: The Case for Change (TPT 2)
April 12, 8-8:30 p.m.	Close the Gap: Making the Case (TPT 17)
April 19, 8-8:30 p.m.	Close the Gap: Race Disparities (TPT 17)
April 26, 8-8:30 p.m.	Close the Gap: Class Disparities (TPT 17)
May 3, 8-8:30 p.m.	Close the Gap: Making Change

More information about the Itasca Project's response to the metro region's growing disparities can be found at

<http://www.unitedwaytwincities.org/CommunityInfo/closethegap.cfm?CFID=1413881&CFTOKEN=29547587>.

## Federal Update

### Traveling near and far

The U.S. Senate wants students to travel abroad. That was the message that Senators last week sent by passing the Sen. Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act of 2007 out of the Foreign Relations Committee. If approved by the full Senate, the bill would provide incentives to institutions that make study abroad fit into more majors and a student's current academic plan so participants could graduate on time. For students, the legislation seeks to broaden opportunities beyond western Europe, where 60 percent of students travel, to other destinations like China, India and the developing world. Ideally, the legislation also would expand study abroad programs to students at community colleges and encourage low-income and first-generation students to participate.

### Farm bill close to consensus

U.S. House and Senate agriculture leaders are working on an agreement for a farm bill that would cost \$9 billion more than the current baseline over a 10-year period, with a separate deal for a farm disaster-aid program. A deal is expected to be announced soon. Agriculture Secretary **Ed Schafer** said today that the administration has not settled on a final budget. It is underdetermined how spending above the current baseline would be paid for, but President **George W. Bush's** willingness to sign the bill will depend on what is presented by Congress. Minnesota's own representative, Agriculture Chairman **Collin Peterson, DFL**, said, "Right now our focus is still on developing the framework, and we hope to accomplish that and move forward with the farm bill conference soon."

Congress may have to divert its focus over the next three weeks before the start of the spring recess on March 15, addressing major issues such as the Iraq war, the fiscal year 2009 budget resolution and mortgage reform.

### Here's What's Happening at the Capitol:

This schedule shows all meetings that we are aware of at the time of publication that MAY have an impact on the system. This schedule may change. Please watch the House and Senate schedules posted on the Legislature Web site ([www.leg.state.mn.us](http://www.leg.state.mn.us)).

### Monday, February 25

10:00 AM

#### House Capital Investment Finance Division

Room: Basement State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Alice Hausman

Agenda: Bonding recommendations from Finance Divisions.

Meeting will continue at 6:00 pm if necessary.

12:30 PM

**House Meets in Session**

12:30 PM

**Senate State Government Budget Division**

Room: 112 Capitol

Chair: Sen. Don Betzold

Agenda:

Office of the Legislative Auditor.

Reports on:

SEMA4 Personnel and Payroll Controls.

Internal Control Over Statewide Financial Reporting.

Information Warehouse Integrity and Confidentiality Controls.

Department of Finance: Technology budget systems review of accounting, human resources and budgeting systems(MAPS, BBS, fiscal notes and SEM4). Update on last years technology carry forward.

Department of Employee Relations: Update on merger, SEGIP overview, State Hiring freeze, and State travel policy.

3:00 PM

**Senate Education Committee**

Room: 15 Capitol

Chair: Sen. Charles W. Wiger

Agenda:

S.F. 2804-Rest: Green Products in Schools.

S.F. 2369-Rest: Coaching Background Checks.

S.F. 2597-Saltzman: Teacher Background Checks.

S.F. 2988-Olseen: Transporting Students, Licensure, Inspections.

S.F. XXXX-Dibble: Student Transportation Services Procedures and Standards.

S.F. XXXX-Wiger: Minnesota Department of Education Technical Bill.

4:00 PM

**House Education Finance and Economic Competitiveness Finance Division**

Room: 5 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: Child care is an educational and workforce issue.

6:00 PM (If necessary)

**House Capital Investment Finance Division**

Room: Basement Hearing Room

Chair: Rep. Alice Hausman

Agenda: Continuation of bonding recommendations from Finance Divisions.

6:00 PM

**House Licensing Subcommittee**

Room: 300N State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Cy Thao

Agenda: HF2399 (Thissen) A bill for an act relating to occupations; changing provisions for athletic trainers

HF1724 (Walker) A bill for an act relating to health; providing for licensing of naturopathic doctors; providing criminal penalties

**HF3247(Thao)** advanced practice dental hygienists

HF2837 (Thao) A bill for an act relating to optometrist; changing practice and licensing provisions

**Tuesday, February 26**

8:00 AM

**House E-12 Education**

Room: Basement State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Carlos Mariani

Agenda: HF3329 (Brynaert) Academic success state measures established.

HFXXXX (Winkler) Technology standards

HF2624 (Urdahl) Teacher quality improvement task force established for effectively integrating secondary and postsecondary academic and career education.

HF2623 (Norton) School district test results required to be provided by the state's testing contractor by the first week in May.

12:30 PM

**House Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance Division**

Room: 5 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Tom Rukavina

HF 3014 (Hosch) nurses loan forgiveness program clarified;

HF 2647 (Bly) Teach education and comprehensive helps program grants clarified;

HF 2387 (Haws) higher education students required to sign a waiver if they choose not to be vaccinated against meningococcal disease;

HF 1256 (Mason) providing grants for bioscience business development and commercialization

HF 3304 (Mahoney) University of Minnesota grant program established for innovative technology and economic development research;

HF 2972 (Mahoney) Minnesota Technology, Inc. renamed Enterprise Minnesota, Inc.;

1:00 PM \*Note change in agenda and time\*

**Senate Higher Education Budget and Policy Division**

Room: 123 Capitol

Chair: Sen. Sandra L. Pappas

Agenda: Governor's Capital Investment Proposal

Capital Investment Policy Language

S.F. XXXX-Cohen: Establishing a biomedical science research facilities funding program for the University of Minnesota.

S.F. 2963-Kubly: Appropriating money for dairy facilities at University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Station.

Other items may be added

2:15 PM

**House Capital Investment Finance Division**

Room: Basement Hearing Room

Chair: Rep. Alice Hausman

\*Note Change in Agenda\*

Agenda: Minnesota Department of Public Safety; Overview of statewide master plan for fire and law enforcement training facilities in Minnesota and public safety training facilities requests for Camp Ripley and Olmsted County

\*\*Presentation of omnibus capital investment finance bill has been removed

**Wednesday, February 27**

8:30 AM

**Senate E-12 Education Budget Division**

Room: 112 Capitol

Chair: Sen. LeRoy A. Stumpf

Agenda:

S.F. 3125-Saxhaug: Education and special education funding adjustment.

Presentation: Minnesota's Promise

10:00 AM

**House Biosciences and Emerging Technology**

Room: 200 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Tim Mahoney

Agenda: Presentation from The BioBusiness Alliance of Minnesota, including their system dynamics model for Minnesota's renewable energy future.

12:30 PM

**Senate Business, Industry and Jobs Committee**

Room: 123 Capitol

Chair: Sen. James P. Metzen

Agenda: Presentation by the Hormel Institute

Presentation by Bio-Business Alliance, Renewable Energy Model

**Thursday, February 28**

11:15 AM

**News conference to announce Minnesota's February Economic Forecast**

Room: Capitol G-15

Minnesota Finance Commissioner Tom Hanson, State Economist Tom Stinson and State Budget Officer Jim Schowalter

12:30 PM

**Senate Higher Education Budget and Policy Division**

Room: Capitol 123

Chair: Sen. Sandra L. Pappas

Agenda: Rigorous programs, recruitment and retention - Achieve Mpls, Power of You

**Friday, February 29**

8:30 AM

**Senate Taxes**

Room: 15 Capitol

Chair: Sen. Thomas M. Bakk

Agenda: February Economic Forecast overview

**Monday, March 3**

3:00 PM

**Senate Education Committee**

Room: 15 Capitol

Chair: Sen. Charles W. Wiger

Agenda: S.F. XXXX-Torres Ray: Narrowing the Achievement Gap Plans.

S.F. XXXX: Desegregation Rules/Legislative Auditors Report.

**Friday, March 7**

1:00 PM

**Trustee Candidate Advisory Council**

Room: 300S State Office Building

Chair: Kent Eklund

Agenda: Presentation by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Chancellor James McCormick

Selection of interviewees