



JOURNAL

A Public Policy Monthly from the Citizens League



Court decision creates new urgency for Clean Water Legacy Act

Coalition asks the Legislature for \$80 million annually to assess and clean up polluted waters

by Dennis Ozment

For the past two legislative sessions state Senator Dennis Frederickson and I have promoted the Clean Water Legacy Act (CWLA) as a top environmental priority for Minnesota. This legislation, the work product of a diverse group of organizations concerned about the future health of Minnesota's environment and economy, is an absolute necessity for Minnesota.

The federal Clean Water Act requires all states to determine whether their lakes and rivers meet water quality standards. If a lake or river does not meet standards, it is considered "impaired," and the state must develop plans to determine the sources of pollution and reduce overall pollution to a level that allows the water to return to a healthy condition. To date, Minnesota has identified 199 rivers and 916 lakes as impaired. Assessment and monitoring over the last two years have led the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to recently propose adding 97 rivers and 166 lakes to the polluted waters list.

The CWLA provides funding and a framework for local communities to clean up the state's contaminated lakes, rivers, and streams. Developed by an unprecedented partnership of business, local governments, conservation/environmental organizations, and agricultural interests known as the G-16, the Clean Water Legacy Act calls for \$40 million for FY2007 and \$80 million per year for the next decade to assess the state's waters, determine pollution causes and sources,

and fund clean-up. This will be seen as a good faith effort to implement the federal Clean Water Act requirements in Minnesota and to restore our impaired waters to meet quality standards and protect our waters from further impairment.



Unless Minnesota takes steps to clean up its waters, commercial, industrial and residential developments, along with our sensitive ecosystems, are threatened in all corners of the state. Numerous community development projects could be derailed, or, at minimum, face delays and higher costs—unless Minnesota has a plan to

clean up impaired waters as required by the federal Clean Water Act. The abundance of this state's waters is an aesthetic value to our citizens, offering priceless recreational opportunities and a quality of life that few other states enjoy. Clean water is essential to our existence.

While the 2004 and 2005 legislatures heavily discussed the CWLA, they did not enact it into law. Since the 2005 session's end, a key court case has changed the nature of the discussion of impaired waters.

Annandale/Maple Lake court decision

During testimony on the CWLA over the past two legislative sessions, representatives from the G16 regularly cautioned that while Minnesota had not yet seen the federal Clean Water Act directly affect development, it was simply a matter of time. That time came in August 2005 when the Minnesota Court of Appeals reversed a

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CONNECTIONS

Building a League of Citizens



Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page speaks at a recent Citizens League Mind-Opener at the University of St. Thomas School of Law. More than 100 Citizens League members, law students and lawyers attended the talk on *Partisan Endorsements and an Independent Judiciary*.

In Memorium: Bob Teetshorn

Bob Teetshorn, an active Citizens League member for many years, passed away unexpectedly on January 6.

Bob served on a number of study committees, including those that produced the reports "Compete Globally, Thrive Locally: What the Public Sector Should Do to Help the Greater Twin Cities Region Prosper" (1996) and "Seniors with Disabilities in 2030: Getting Ready for the Aging Boom" (1999). He most recently served on the Citizens League Study Committee on Transportation (2005).

Bob's contributions to the Citizens League and to Minnesota were great. He will be deeply missed.

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The Community Connections Calendar is your one-stop shop for public affairs events in the Twin Cities.

List of new members, donors, and recruiters

Individuals and families

Bonnie Anderson
Nancy and Thomas Beck
Amy Bergquist
Terri Bonoff
Christine Bronson
Josh Colburn
Howard Day
Randy Demmer
Norma Jean Falink
Steve and Bonnie Francisco
Lee Friedman
Darrell Gerber
Joyce Hoelting
Terry and Ann Huntrods
Paul Jensen
Margaret Kelly
and Chris Krumon Kelly
Matthew Knopf
John and Nancy Lindahl
Maggie Lockner
Traci Lundquist
Rajean Paul Moore
Lorinda Pearson
William and Eleanore Pederson
Larry Piumbroeck and
Kathleen Connolly-Piumbroeck
Laurence Reszetar
Raymond Robertson
Jodi Sandfort and Steve Marchese
Michael Schmitz
Matt Smith
Tracy Smith
Kerry Stone
Michael and Michelle VanKeulen
Lee Wallace
Mark Wilson

Organizations

Flannery Construction, Inc.
Macalester College
Minneapolis Association of
Realtors
Minneapolis Urban League
The Beowulf Group

Sponsorships

Halleland Lewis Nilan
Et Johnson, PA
Wellington Management

Recruiters

Deb Bednarz
Duane Benson
Victoria Ford
Sean Kershaw
Dee Long
Kathy Mock
Gretchen Sabel
Dawn Simonson
Nena Street
Emily Anne Tuttle

Thanks to our volunteers

Amy Brendmoen
Ron Lattin
Michael Schmitz
Bob Scroggins
Eric Schubert
Amy Stenson
Nena Street
Tom Teigen

Peggy Gunn & Donna Zimmerman join Citizens League Board of Directors

Peggy Gunn and Donna Zimmerman were appointed to the Citizens League Board of Directors on February 21. Gunn, Communications Consultant with Wells Fargo, and Zimmerman, Vice President of Government and Community Relations for HealthPartners, will serve one-year terms.



A new Mission... *Possible!*

Building a Citizens League with the capacity to succeed

by Sean Kershaw

The famous civil rights song "Eyes on the Prize" includes its namesake lyric in every chorus: a continual reminder of the final destination—the promised land. But what's often forgotten is the verse that reminds us to "keep your hands on the plow" in order to reach the destination.

People may perish without a vision, but they won't achieve their vision unless they have the skills and the capacity to plow forward: to cross the landscape they find before them.

In Minnesota we haven't lost the will to do great public policy work; we've lost the way. Sometime after the famed "Minnesota Miracle," a series of public policy breakthroughs initiated by Citizens League reports, the world changed. Everything got bigger and faster and our old ways of doing civic business no longer work well enough. Our current frustrations with public policy are not fundamentally because citizens and public leaders don't care. We lack the capacity to achieve the outcomes we want in this new civic landscape.

It's time to put our hands back on the plow (or perhaps the steering wheel of a GPS-guided tractor) and to build the capacity that will enable us to leave a legacy as great as the one we've inherited.

A new mission: building capacity

Recognizing this, the Citizens League Board of Directors has approved a set of fundamental guiding principles and an exciting new mission statement:

The Citizens League builds civic capacity in Minnesota by:

- Identifying, framing and proposing solutions to public policy problems;
- Developing new generations of civic leaders who govern for the common good; and
- Organizing the individual and institutional relationships necessary to achieve these goals.

We need to learn *how* to till new soil—how to solve policy problems in this new civic and political landscape.

Long-time Citizens League members may understand that, at its best, this is what the Citizens League has always done. We're not changing course, but focusing our direction forward.

In order to achieve a civic vision for Minnesota that embraces both a high quality of life and shared economic growth and success, we need to learn *how* to till new soil—how to solve policy problems in this new civic and political landscape. It isn't sufficient to endlessly describe problems, repeatedly reciting the mantra of "health-care, education and transportation," or to paint rosy pictures of a future promised land where every citizen is healthy, smart and home in 20 minutes or less.

How, who, and where

In order to build civic capacity (the ability to govern and solve public problems), the Citizens League must achieve the goals outlined in this new mission.

- **How:** We must identify the fundamental causes of public policy problems, and the real choices involved in addressing these causes. (And we should do so in keeping with our fundamental principles.)
- **Who:** We have to identify and nurture the individual civic leaders in each generation and across all institutions who have the vision and skills to govern and to guide us in this effort.
- **Where:** We have to build and sustain a non-partisan base of individual and institutional relationships in all sectors to do this work.

Mental health: An early success

We haven't waited to implement this mission, and are even now seeing some of its first fruits of success.

In late February, Gov. Tim Pawlenty proposed a dramatic overhaul of the public mental health system: \$109 million in funding (including \$51 million in new funding!) to implement recommendations based on the work of the Minnesota Mental Health Action Group. This Action Group was convened by the Citizens League in 2003 and its work exemplifies the power and potential of this new mission to address tough issues such as mental health reform.

- Based on a shared set of principles, the Action Group identified not just the fundamental causes of our mental health crisis (e.g. the public payment model), but proposed a detailed "roadmap" showing how to revise this payment model.
- The Action Group would not have succeeded without the courageous leadership of its members, and especially co-chairs: Human Services Commissioner Kevin Goodno and former Citizens League Board Chair Gary Cunningham. They were models of integrity and political skill.
- The primary role of the Citizens League was simply to convene and organize the wide range of stakeholders in mental health. As obvious as this seems, these stakeholders had never before come together as a group.

This new mission and this initial policy success are just the beginning. But knowing where we are going is the right start. It's now up to all of us to till this new landscape: to make this mission possible.

Sean Kershaw is the Executive Director of the Citizens League, and can be reached at skershaw@citizensleague.net or 651-293-0575x14.

Read our new mission and principles and find links to the Mental Health Action Group's work at: www.citizensleague.net.



Meet the Citizens League's new, and not-so-new members

By Tom Teigen

The Citizens League's membership recruitment drive is approaching its goal of 250 new members. They are coming to the Citizens League from a variety of sources: events, recruitment parties, referrals and the great unknown ("unknown," in fact, is the single largest category).



Laurence Reszetar, a third-year law student at the University of Minnesota, is among the newest members. A Maryland native, Reszetar wasn't familiar with the Citizens League until last fall. He heard about the Citizens League through Common Grounds, an initiative at the University that aims to bring together students from the

Carlson School of Management, the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and the Law School. It's a group of students with a natural affinity for the Citizens League.

His studies kept Reszetar from attending the first Policy and a Pint event, featuring Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page. But he made it to the sold out February P&P, "Strapped: Why America's 20- and 30-Somethings Can't Get Ahead."

"I was impressed by the turnout. The audience was actually the people for whom the program was about," Reszetar said. "It was clear that they came in with a mindset to discuss solutions, to solve problems, to work at making the situation better."

His interest in public policy and making things better attracted Reszetar to the Citizens League. "One of the frustrations that people in my generation have is that government at one time was about solutions and risk taking," he said. "Now government has become so overwhelmed by the debate that it's become more about posturing than policy. We need to get beyond that."



Lissa Jones followed a different route to the Citizens League. Jones, the executive director of African American Family Services, sat on the Citizens League's 2004-05 High School to Higher Education Study Committee, which focused on St. Paul Public Schools. "The work was great," Jones said. "The group was fantastic. Very

diverse. Very representative of the St. Paul School District."

Impressed with the process, the people, and the final report, "A New Vision for Saint Paul Schools: Preparing All Students for Success in Higher Education," Jones joined the Citizens League during the membership drive.

The inclusive nature of the Citizens League drew her to the organization. "The fact that the League is working willfully to reach out and attract people from all backgrounds is vital," she said. "The most important thing the League can do is to continue to inform people and set the citizenry on fire in order to make this democracy a democracy."

University of Minnesota President Robert Bruininks

was surprised to learn that he was a "new" member of the Citizens League. His relationship with the Citizens League dates back to the early 1970s when he participated in a number of groundbreaking study groups related to education funding, taxes, and the economy. "It was really the organization to be involved in," he said.



But, as was the case with too many Citizens League members in recent years, Dr. Bruininks' membership lapsed at some point. The Citizens League, however, kept going. The *Minnesota Journal* kept coming. And Dr. Bruininks had no idea he wasn't a member. That is until he responded to a membership solicitation and was called for this article.

The interest in bipartisan public policy discussions, Dr. Bruininks noted, was much greater 30 years ago than it is today. But he's excited to see coalitions of people and organizations coming together, groups like Common Grounds, the Itasca Project and a reinvigorated Citizens League.

"The League has always played a very important role in framing the issues, conducting public discussions and actually influencing public opinion on matters that are essential to Minnesota's long-term future," he said. "This sort of public dialogue is extraordinarily important." ●

Tom Teigen is Communications Director for the Minnesota Business Partnership and is currently serving as co-chair of the Citizens League membership drive.

Clean Water Legacy Act

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decision of the Citizen Board of the MPCA and denied the cities of Annandale and Maple Lake a permit for a new wastewater treatment facility.

The appeals court denied the permit because the discharge from the proposed facility would add to the phosphorus discharged into the watershed of Lake Pepin, a lake found to be impaired. The cities of Annandale and Maple Lake were not the only ones affected by this ruling, however; approximately 70 cities and industries have been notified by the MPCA that because of the court ruling, the state will not be able to issue permits for their projects.

The appellate court ruling also prohibits the MPCA from claiming that a pollution increase needed at one facility can be offset by a decrease in pollution at facilities elsewhere in the watershed, unless that trading is specifically part of a federally approved plan to clean up the affected water body. The Minnesota Supreme Court has accepted a request for appeal of the decision from the state, Annandale, and Maple Lake, but the case might not be heard and decided until later this spring.

The cities of Annandale and Maple Lake were not the only ones affected by this ruling, however; approximately 70 cities and industries have been notified by the MPCA that because of the court ruling, the state will not be able to issue permits for their projects.

In the meantime, Annandale has put residential development plans on hold and it appears likely that other Minnesota communities will begin to see effects on their plans for growth and economic development.

Total Maximum Daily Load

To issue permits in areas where water is impaired, the state must complete a scientific analysis of the pollution sources and develop a plan for reducing the total pollution to a sustainable level. That plan is referred to as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). Until a TMDL is complete, the Clean Water Act prohibits the state from issuing permits for any new or expanded source of pollution if that discharge would cause or contribute to a known impairment of a lake, stream, or river.

A TMDL requires significant time and effort. First, local stakeholders must decide how they want to proceed with the TMDL for their area. Next, sound scientific information must be gathered over time to determine water quality in different weather and flow conditions; accurate computer models for the watershed need to

be developed; and it's necessary to determine which sources are contributing to the problem, and where and at what level pollution load reductions can be made.

Once a draft TMDL is prepared, public hearings are held and it must be found adequate by both the MPCA Citizen Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Once approved, new facilities may be allowed as long as they meet the limits set in the TMDL, which could include allowing one facility in a watershed to reduce pollution in exchange for allowing another facility to increase pollution.

CWLA Provisions

The majority of Clean Water Legacy funding would go to local units of government and local stakeholders for on-the-ground work to protect and restore lakes, rivers, and streams. In addition, other revenue would be available to state agencies to perform critical activities associated with the assessment, protection and restoration of Minnesota's waters. The initiative involves the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture, the Public Facilities Authority, and the Pollution Control Agency.

First, the bill provides funding for assessing, monitoring, and studying the quality of our water to make certain that only water that is actually impaired gets listed as such with the federal government. The bill also provides significant additional funding to complete the TMDLs needed for each impaired water body in the state. Adequate funding of these studies ensures that sound scientific principles will be used to make sure that new regulatory requirements are justified. That testing will also ensure that as lakes and rivers recover, they are removed from the impaired waters list, eliminating the permitting restrictions on those areas as long as the water continues to meet standards. This comprises approximately 15 percent of the CWLA budget.

Second, a great amount of planning has gone into the proposed CWLA to ensure that cities and businesses do not bear the entire burden of cleaning up the water. Most agricultural non-point pollution sources are not issued permits by state or federal governments, so their help in cleaning up impaired waters will be on a voluntary basis. To get additional federal funding from the Farm Bill and to direct existing state resources to fix pollution problems in specific watersheds, the bill provides an increase in the technical support available to private property owners to help them decide what they can do, what will actually have a positive influence on water quality, and what funding is available to assist them. Thirty-four percent of the CWLA expenditure are directed to these sources and will leverage an estimated \$40 million in new funding from private, local, and federal sources.

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Clean Water Legacy Act

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Finally, 51 percent of the CWLA resources will be devoted to funding for cities to deal with the regulatory requirements of the Clean Water Act. The proposal creates two new programs and provides additional resources to the State Revolving Loan Fund:

- A small communities wastewater treatment program to replace failed septic systems, to be distributed as 50 percent grant and 50 percent loan.
- A phosphorus reduction grant program for cities to provide a 75 percent grant to cover the cost of adding phosphorus treatment infrastructure to municipal wastewater treatment facilities. Grants would be available to both new construction and retroactively to phosphorus treatment infrastructure added since March 2000. This new fund addresses an environmental mandate that currently is completely unfunded.
- Additional funds will be sent to the State Revolving Loan Fund to generate \$45 million annually in new subsidized loan funding for municipal wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water infrastructure.

Numerous community development projects could be derailed, or, at minimum, face delays and higher costs—unless Minnesota has a plan to clean up impaired waters

Revenue source changed to general fund

This year, groups supporting the CWLA are advocating that part of the anticipated general fund surplus be used to fund the initiative's \$80 million annual price tag. The groups recommend that the Legislature allocate \$40 million of general fund money from the budget surplus for the next year to start paying for the assessment and scientific work needed to complete TMDLs, and to pay for clean-up technical assistance and project funding. They are also asking the Legislature to include the full \$80 million per year of identified funding needs in the state's base budget for the 2007-08 biennium.

The Clean Water Legacy is the first of its kind initiative in the nation, and for good reason. Minnesota's shoreline miles are second only to Alaska. Such bold cleanup actions are necessary if we are to protect one of the nation's greatest resources and ensure that Minnesota's economy can continue to grow.

Further delay in enacting this plan will result in higher costs for all Minnesotans. ●

Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount) chairs the Agricultural Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee in the Minnesota House of Representatives.



Working together to clean up impaired waters

The number of groups working for passage of the Clean Water Legacy Act has increased since the last legislative session now includes:

- Association of Metropolitan Municipalities
- Association of Minnesota Counties
- Board of Water and Soil Resources
- Builders Association of the Twin Cities
- Clean Water Action Alliance
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Department of Natural Resources
- League of Minnesota Cities
- Metropolitan Council
- Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts
- Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
- Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
- Minnesota Farm Bureau
- Minnesota Farmers' Union
- Minnesota Lakes Association
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency



Preserving Minnesota's lakes for our kid's kids

Minnesota needs localized solutions to protect water quality and preserve the state's fisheries

by Larry Baker

Every Minnesotan with a fishing pole, a canoe or a lake cabin, in other words, nearly every Minnesotan, should be alarmed about the future of our lakes. The number of shoreline houses on many lakes has doubled over the past 30 years and there is concern that we are "loving our lakes to death." When a 1999 study conducted by the University of Minnesota's Sea Grant Program asked about trends in overall lake quality, water quality, and scenic quality, participants responded by a 2-to-1 margin that things had "worsened" rather than "improved." For fishing, the ratio was 4-to-1 and for "keeper-size" fish it was 11-to-1.

Projected Population Growth Rate 2000-2030

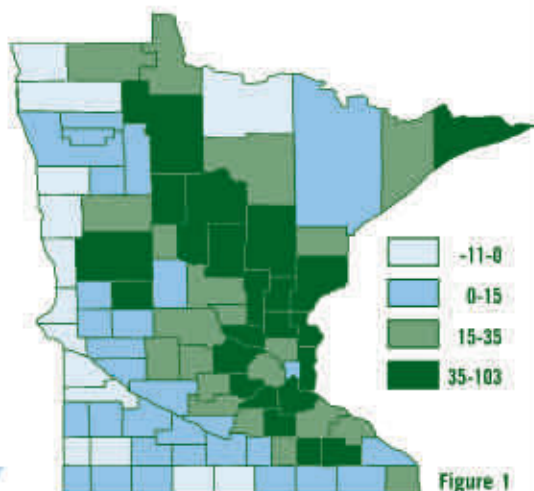


Figure 1

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

Hard-nosed scientific assessments are equally gloomy. According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, nearly half of the assessed lakes in the state are impaired or threatened. There are more than 800 lakes with mercury-contaminated fish populations. The Minnesota Health Department now advises pregnant women, women who may become pregnant, and children to eat no more than one walleye of less than 20 inches in length per month, and not to eat any walleye more than 20 inches in length, to avoid mercury contamination.

MPCA also reports that 39 percent of the 535,000 septic systems in the state are failing or pose imminent threats. Exotic invasive species such as water milfoil are spreading, and zebra mussels were reported in several lakes for the first time last year. We have lost half of our historical wetlands, the "kidneys of the landscape," and losses are continuing despite a no-net loss policy. Worst of all, catches of trophy-size bass, northern pike and muskie have plummeted!

But if things are bad now, what will they be like in the future for our kids and their kids? According to the state demographers office, the population of many lake-rich counties will skyrocket over the next 30 years (see Figure 1). Will all of our lakes be completely surrounded by homes, with lawns mowed to the water's edge? If fishing is had now, what will we be catching in 30 years? Will current residents be displaced entirely, as the value of lakeshore property—and property taxes—skyrocket? When will the last fishing cabin be displaced by a McMansion?

We have a responsibility to the next generation to preserve our environmental heritage. The U.S. Constitution spells out rights "for ourselves and our posterity." Minnesota's Constitution is more explicit: "Hunting and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage that shall be forever preserved for the people and shall be managed by law and regulation for the public good." In the 1999 Sea Grant survey, 95 percent of respondents agreed that "Minnesota lakes must be taken care of, so that we can pass them along to future generations for their enjoyment." Noble words, but are we really up to the task of preserving lakes for our kid's kids?

Six principles for good management

Our current lake policies are outdated and inadequate to face the challenge of rapid development. New policies should be built around six overarching principles:

Non-degradation. It is cheaper and more effective to prevent degradation of lakeshores than to restore damage after it has occurred as the result of poor management. As obvious as this seems, new development is often done in an adrenaline rush, with developers pushing hard to develop quickly, and county commissioners eager to increase property value. However, once the shoreline is developed, it's hard to change.

Human ecosystem. Humans are an integral part of shoreline ecosystems. Human actions alter ecosystems, and these alterations impact human well-being—either positively or negatively. Nowhere is this clearer than on a lakeshore.

Consonance. Ecological integrity and human well-being are not incompatible. Policies that promote ecological integrity (e.g., improve the quality of fish habitat) will generally enhance the well-being of lakeshore homeowners by improving aesthetics, increasing property value and reducing social friction.

Tailored management. Management policies tailored to specific local environments are likely to be more effective, fairer, and less expensive than generic one-size-fits-all policies. Modern scientific knowledge and tools can be used to develop policies that are tailored to specific lakes, or even parts of lakes.

Cumulative impact. Degradation of the shoreline needs to be considered as a *cumulative impact*. In many cases it is not a single stressor, but the combination of multiple stressors, that causes degradation of lakeshores.

Democracy. Good environmental policy not only achieves a utilitarian goal—a specific level of water clarity for example—but enriches the democratic process along the way. Policy developed with broad public support is more likely to be successful than policy imposed from the outside.

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Preserving Minnesota's lakes

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New policies needed

What are the critical policy needs? The first is improved shoreline zoning, because once something is built, it's there for a long time. New approaches for shoreline zoning include specifications for shoreline vegetation buffers and limitations on the amount of impervious surface, but these are not widely used. Preliminary research indicates that people prefer some degree of natural shoreline vegetation, and it may even enhance the value of homes. There is good scientific reason to believe that shoreline regulations should be tailored for specific types of lakes, or even parts of lakes with particularly high quality habitat.

Improved management of nutrients, particularly phosphorus, is a second critical need. Current efforts lack a holistic framework. Many Minnesota lakes are already impaired due to phosphorus enrichment. The problem may become worse because we now know that phosphorus accumulates in watershed soils until it reaches "saturation," and at that point it starts to bleed into lakes. Remember those 535,000 septic tanks? There is now conclusive evidence from Canadian studies showing that old septic leach fields may release a plume of phosphorus into groundwater. We do not know how many septic systems are leaking phosphorus into groundwater in Minnesota, but if it is widespread, it could be

a serious problem for lakes. We need to manage "whole watershed" phosphorus balances to effectively reverse the phosphorus accumulation process, but we are not doing this yet.

A third need is for appropriate governmental structures to deal with lake and shoreline management in the outstate area. In most lake-rich counties in the outstate area, counties are the basic unit of government for managing water. Counties are inherently inappropriate for managing water issues because their boundaries rarely coincide with watershed boundaries. Also, they often do not have the technical and financial resources to address lake development issues properly. State law provides for the formation of watershed

Will all of our lakes be completely surrounded by homes, with lawns mowed to the water's edge? If fishing is bad now, what will we be catching in 30 years? Will current residents be displaced entirely, as the value of lakeshore property—and property taxes—skyrocket?

districts, which allow governance of water issues within the natural boundary of a watershed and provide a tax base for supporting technical expertise, but lake-rich regions have been reluctant



to form them. It may be that the current regulations for outstate watershed districts are inadequate; if so, they should be rewritten to be compatible with local needs.

Fourth, local governments need to envision growth. What do citizens in a given watershed want their future to look like? The first task is to develop scenarios for growth and to select the appropriate vision based on citizen participation, rather than simply waiting for it to happen.

I've argued in favor of locally tailored policies, but I've also noted that local units of government often lack technical resources. They need new tools, in the form of model codes, evaluation metrics, databases, and methods manuals. A great example is the statewide lake clarity maps developed at the University of Minnesota (<http://water.umn.edu>), but this type of tool is a rarity. We are now envisioning new tools. A series of discussions regarding lake management, held over the past year with participants from the University and several state and federal agencies, led to the concept of a "Toolkit to Inform Lake Policy." This concept recognizes that a high level of expertise and new research is needed to develop these tools, but the tools themselves should be broadly useable by local units of government to develop tailored policies. It also recognizes that county commissioners need different tools from water quality planners. Many state regulations already allow flexibility in lake and shoreline regulation; the Toolkit concept would allow them to harness that flexibility to develop tailored policies using the best biophysical and social science tools available.

But first we need to embrace a vision, a vision of future lakes with clear water, with lush shorelines teeming with wildlife, lakes that are tranquil for meditation, lakes with an abundance of fish. It is not a practical vision. It is not a vision for technical bureaucrats because their goals are always narrowly circumscribed, but a collective vision of citizens. It will take decades to bring the vision even close to reality, and by then many protagonists of this vision will be dead. It is not for us. It is a vision for our kid's kids, a vision in our mind's eye for our progeny. ●

Larry Baker is a Senior Fellow at the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center and a member of the Citizens League Policy Advisory Committee.

FACTS UNFILTERED

Traffic congestion in the Twin Cities

Q What is traffic congestion?

A Congestion is what happens when road use demand exceeds road capacity. If a glut of vehicles claims lane-space lanes become clogged: Traffic cannot move at posted speeds—and the number of vehicles the road can accommodate and travel speeds fall dramatically.

Q Can't I just take an alternate route?

A Congestion has become chronic across too much of the Twin Cities metro freeway system. Traffic backs up first at the worst bottlenecks, and then spreads along the affected artery, on to intersecting roads, and perhaps on surrounding "alternate routes."

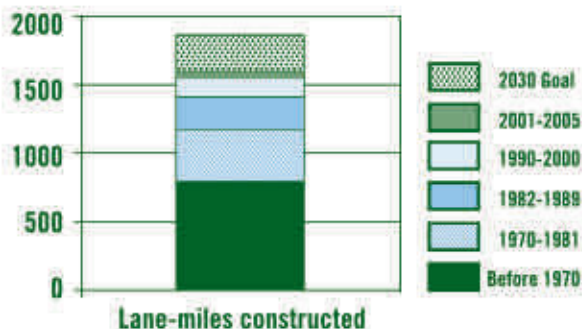
The Texas Transportation Institute estimates that 65 percent of Twin Cities freeway lane-miles are affected by rush-hour congestion—and that the average rush-hour commuter's trip is taking 34 percent longer than it would with free-flow conditions. Put another way: assume 34 minutes of delay per 100 miles traveled.

Over the course of a year, all this adds up to 57.5 million person-hours of delay and \$975 million in wasted fuel consumption (37 million gallons), wasted time, and delayed freight.

Q This wasn't a problem in the past—what happened?

A Demand has grown fast, spurred by regional prosperity, development patterns, and travel behavior. Meanwhile, the capacity of the freeway and road network hasn't kept up. Travel consumption (the number of vehicles multiplied by miles traveled) increased 18 percent between 1990 and 2004. During roughly the same time period (1990 to 2003), freeway capacity increased by only 9 percent.

Lane-Miles of Freeway in the Metro Area



Source: Met Council, Transportation Policy Plan

Q How much will it cost to fix and how much money is available?

A Numerous groups have estimated the cost of backlogged transportation projects—projects needed or planned, but in a holding pattern for lack of funds. MnDOT estimates \$26 billion in investment is needed in highway construction by 2030 to hold congestion at recent levels.

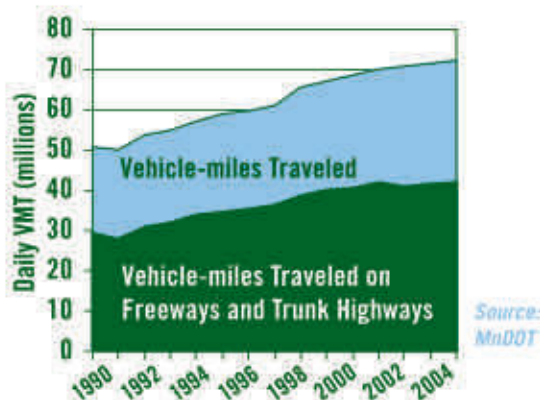
The Metropolitan Council estimates current revenue trends will bring just \$6.2 billion for new highway construction from federal funds, state bonding and the state's highway fund (fuel taxes and part of motor vehicle sales taxes). Most of this funding is dedicated to operating and maintaining current roadways.

Q So what are government leaders doing?

A The Met Council's Transportation Policy Plan states: "The first priority for highway improvements must be to maintain the existing metro highway and roadway system." Other priorities include multi-modal solutions, transit-ways, and livable mixed-use development. Highway construction and expansion are characterized as a "third priority." Many transportation planners doubt that aggressive road construction alone can solve congestion.

Governor Pawlenty has advocated an additional \$2.5 billion (2007-2017) in additional statewide funding to be split between the metro area and Greater Minnesota. However, the proposal depends on a new constitutional dedication of motor vehicle sales tax (MVST) revenues to the Highway Fund. (MnDOT.)

Highway and Total Roadway Demand in the Metro Area: 1990-2004



Source: MnDOT

Q If we can't build our way out, then what?

A Some demand-side solutions include: higher-density development, local street grids with better connectivity, closer proximity of homes and jobs, and more people per vehicle-trip through carpooling or increased transit use. Unfortunately, all of these solutions require a break from systemic practices and behaviors.

A 2005 *Metro Residents Survey* asked Twin Cities commuters about likelihood of trying new commuting solutions: Only one-quarter said they would be "very likely" to try traffic-reducing solutions like transit, commuting with other riders, working closer to home, or moving closer to work. (Met Council.) ●

Links to all of the source material are available on the Citizens League blog at www.citizenleague.net.

Each month, Citizens League members and staff will collaborate to select a timely policy topic, then ask the important—and sometimes uncomfortable—questions and dig up the answers. Just the facts, unadulterated and unspun.

Questions, comments, corrections? We need more Facts Unfiltered volunteers! If you are willing to roll up your sleeves and dig into the facts, if you have suggestions for a future Facts Unfiltered policy topic—or if you just think we got something wrong—email us at factse@citizenleague.net.

TAKE NOTE

Innovation Spotlight

Cities seek to fuel economic development with college scholarships for public school graduates

Last November, the superintendent of the Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) made a big announcement to the Board of Education: All students who graduate from KPS, reside in the district, and have been students for four or more years will receive a scholarship to pay for college tuition and mandatory fees. The program, dubbed the Kalamazoo Promise, covers between 65 and 100 percent of tuition and fees. The percentage depends upon how long the student has attended school in the district (students who attended fewer than four years—ninth through twelfth grades—are not eligible for the scholarship).

The program is funded by an anonymous group of citizens “interested in economic strength and the quality of life in the city of Kalamazoo,” according to a KPS press release. The program was originally promoted as an economic development plan. “There is no doubt in my mind,” said KPS Superintendent Janice Brown, “that this will spur housing sales, attract new business development, and add to an already solid quality of life in Kalamazoo.”

Early anecdotes suggest the Kalamazoo Promise may be having the desired effect. Within days of the initial announcement, the Kalamazoo Public Schools received hundreds of emails and phone calls from interested families. And in February, the district, which has seen enrollment decline for years, signed up 44 percent more students during daytime kindergarten orientation than last year.

Kalamazoo Mayor Hannah McKinney has created a task force to study how the city should react to the potential influx of new students and families. “We’re going to have more budget cuts next year, but now we have to cut in a way that still plans for future growth,” McKinney told the *Kalamazoo Gazette*. “We’re going to grow, and now the budgeting process has to look at parks and recreation, different kinds of policing, and things like sidewalks. We want to be the right city for all of these new people.”

Other regions are taking notice. Development officials in Newton, Iowa announced the Newton Promise in February. The initiative is very similar to the Kalamazoo Promise, and includes the same restrictions on residency and length of attendance in the school district, except for one significant detail: The Newton Promise calls for a combination of tax incentives and public and private funds.

The *Des Moines Register* wrote a glowing editorial in support of the program and called on state leaders to think as big as their municipal counterparts.

“You’ve got to hand it to the city’s civic leadership for thinking big. Indeed, maybe state leaders should be thinking that big, too. Relieving families of the worry about how they’re going to pay for their kids’ college would make Newton an enormously appealing community in which to live.”

Not everyone is equally enthusiastic. A commentary in the *Kalamazoo Gazette* asked, why families who home-school or send their children to private schools should be penalized when KPS education cannot meet the needs of everyone? “Most parents choose among the options according to what best accommodates many different considerations: physical disabilities, learning deficits or differences, varied academic emphasis, finances, and religious convictions.”

In Newton, families and civic leaders have expressed similar concerns. Levi Pence, a board member of the Newton Christian School, a private K-8 school, told the *Register*. “We’re part of the community, we pay taxes, and our families are taxpayers and business leaders.” But because Newton Christian School students spend kindergarten through eighth grade in private schools, they would only be eligible for 65 percent tuition scholarships.

In a public online forum hosted by Michigan community newspapers (www.miive.com), critics voiced other concerns: Why are the Kalamazoo Promise philanthropists paying the college tuition of wealthy students (there are no income restrictions on the scholarships)? Is it fair that all Kalamazoo students—including those who have low grade point averages and test scores—get scholarships, when excellent students in nearby cities get no support?

In Kalamazoo, where the Promise is funded by private donors, these questions have been left unanswered. But in Newton, where the city is asking taxpayers to fund part of the bill, officials are considering tweaking the proposal to respond to community concerns. In both cases, however, the idea has gotten the attention of city and state officials nationwide; if these two cities are successful we might see a surge in similar proposals around the country. ●

Links:

Des Moines Register: www.desmoinesregister.com

Kalamazoo Gazette: www.kalamazoo-gazette.com

Kalamazoo Promise: www.thekalamazoopromise.com

Kalamazoo Public Schools: www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

Newton Community School District: www.newton.k12.ia.us

THE BOTTOM LINE:

School officials in Kalamazoo, Michigan and Newton, Iowa are promising to provide public school graduates with scholarships covering up to 100 percent of college tuition and fees.

SUPPORTERS:

The scholarships will attract families and economic development.

CRITICS:

Students who attend private school or are home schooled will be excluded.

We are always on the lookout for community and government innovations around the world. If you see something you think we should be covering, forward the link to info@citizensleague.net.



Latino business owners invest in Minnesota's future

New Latino Scholarship Fund "untaps" talent and encourages civic engagement

by Jennifer Godinez

The Latino Scholarship Fund of Minnesota is a program of the Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC). This scholarship concept began to form more than 10 years ago as organizers and community members in South Minneapolis envisioned their economic development opportunities along Lake Street and throughout Minneapolis. Community members knew that developing immigrant-owned businesses would not only bring wealth and assets to individual families, but could also bring capital to community needs—such as communitywide job creation, housing, and education. The Latino Scholarship Fund, therefore, shares its origins with the development of the Mercado Central, the Plaza Latina, and other economic development projects across the city built with immigrant talent and creativity.

The board of the scholarship fund is made up of Latino leaders committed to "untapping talent" in the Latino community for innovation and community development. Latino high school graduation rates are dismal, due to limited information outreach to Latino students on the part of educational institutions about the steps needed to apply for college, and especially with regard to finding resources to attend expensive higher education institutions.

Education and community empowerment

LEDC's original board made a decision to keep the interest of its members at the core of programming—which includes technical assistance for business development as well as the scholarship fund, built with the philanthropy of Latino business owners.

The founders of the scholarship fund are immigrant entrepreneurs who believe in education as a key to community empowerment. As immigrant policies are debated in the political sphere, the Latino leadership and others who support the Latino Scholarship Fund believe that immigrant talent spurs prosperity and greater civic

engagement. This immigrant energy, in fact, spurred much of the innovation that has occurred in U.S. history. Economist Richard Florida notes a key point in history that exemplifies this point: "A century ago, Pittsburgh was a center of industrial innovation and entrepreneurship and a huge cauldron for immigrant talent.

others can make up the solution to limited public resources for education. Names such as Page and Wallin have been investors in this state when it comes to funding talented students. The Latino Scholarship Fund is a model that shows that names such as *Rodriguez* and *Lopez* are just as invested in the preparation and talent cultivation of

Names such as Page and Wallin have been investors in this state when it comes to funding talented students. The Latino Scholarship Fund is a model that shows that names such as *Rodriguez* and *Lopez* are just as invested in the preparation and talent cultivation of Latino students in the state of Minnesota.

Immigrants like Andrew Carnegie built the region's steel industry." It is no mystery that the sons and daughters of the first waves of immigrants to this country went on to become educated and active civic leaders. Latino immigration in Minnesota will produce the same civic leaders for this era in American history—and the scholarship fund is the community's catalyst for spurring civic engagement.

The funders of the scholarship fund will hear more about education issues impacting Latino students, Latino scholars will be required to volunteer and serve in the community, and overall the community will learn more about this engine driving civic engagement activities by the Latino community.

There has been much talk recently about the increasing cost of higher education in the 21st century. The Latino Scholarship Fund is a model that proves that private investors, businesses, and

Latino students in the state of Minnesota. The Latino Scholarship Fund is a model that other immigrant groups can emulate. I strongly believe it is moving the issues of education into the forefront of community development and spurring the next generation of civic leaders and future members of groups such as the Citizens League. ●

Jennifer Godinez is Chair of the Latino Scholarship Fund of the Latino Economic Development Center, Associate Director of the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership and Director of the Minnesota College Access Network.

To learn more about LEDC or the scholarship fund, go to www.ledc-mn.org Or call 612-724-5332 in Minneapolis, or 651-552-0725 in St. Paul. Or call toll-free within the United States at 1-877-724-LEDC.

04/20

Save The Date

Policy and a Pint: The Future of Minnesota's Environment.

Varsity Theater, Dinkytown. Doors at 5:30, program at 6:30. Taking reservations now at www.citizensleague.net

10/23

Citizens League Annual Meeting.

Save the date now for the Citizens League's biggest event of the year. The Depot, downtown Minneapolis.

Reception at 5:00

For more information or to register for these events, click to www.citizensleague.net/events. Find more events like these on the Community Connections Calendar: www.pointclickengage.org.

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