

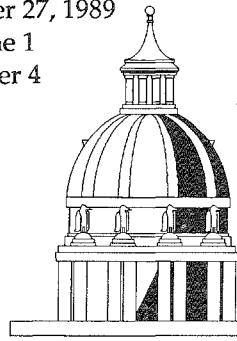
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Southwest Minnesota
Mini-Session (October 18 - 20)

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New Committee Chairs

October 27, 1989
Volume 1
Number 4



Interim Report

Minnesota House of Representatives

Worthington

'Let's talk turkey'

Worthington, a city of 10,335 founded over a century ago on the shores of Lake Okabena, has made a name for itself in more ways than one.

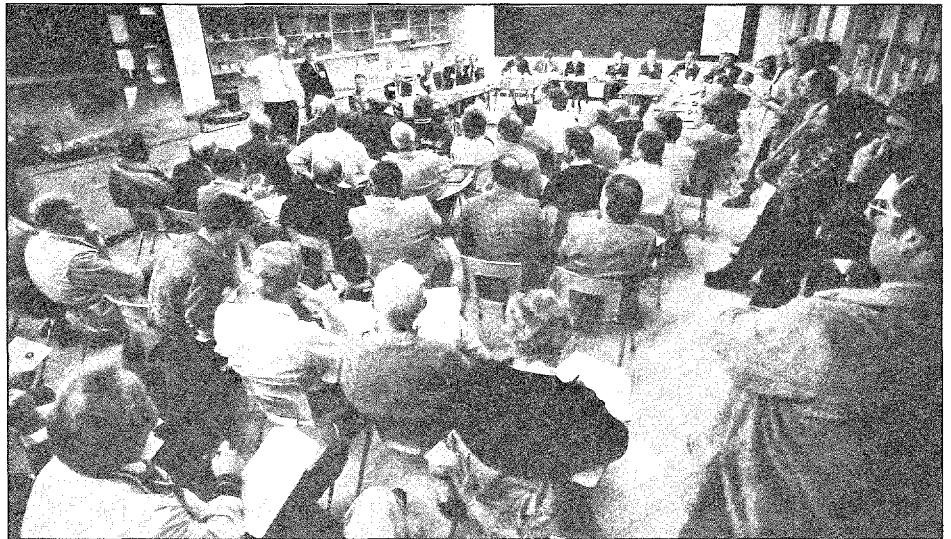
Recognized as the Turkey Capital of the World, the city has celebrated King Turkey Day annually since 1939 when it began its climb out of the Depression. Then, turkey hatching, raising, and processing offered local farmers a chance for quick and substantial profits.

In 1938, while traveling through Cuero, a town in southern Texas, O.E. Olson, a turkey processor, came across an unusual festival called the Turkey Trot. Flocks of turkeys marched down the street ahead of the festival parade. The festival's promotional aspects intrigued Olson, who brought the notion back to Worthington. Local business people liked the idea of regular fall festivals as a way to thank farmers for their patronage.

Worthington residents adopted the features of the Cuero festival, and added a few of their own: free pancakes to all and speaking invitations to political leaders. King Turkey Day guests have included Hubert Humphrey, Jesse Jackson, Richard Nixon, and Nelson Rockefeller.

In 1958, Worthington became a World Brotherhood City with a sister city, Crailsheim, Germany. The city flies the flags of United Nations countries on the Peace Avenue of Flags between Memorial Day in the spring and King Turkey Day in the fall.

In 1986, the Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development named Worthington a Star City.



Ron Nargang, director of the Department of Natural Resources' Waters Division, tells a capacity crowd at an Agriculture Committee hearing about water conditions around the state. The committee met in Worthington on Oct. 18.

Highlights

Town meeting

Health care costs, township mutuals, charitable gambling, and laws governing wetlands are among the topics southwestern Minnesotans discussed with House members at a town meeting following a pork dinner at the Fulda VFW on Oct. 18.

Minnesota holds its state primary too late in the year, said one resident. House Minority Leader Rep. Bill Schreiber (IR-Brooklyn Park) agrees.

"...people with a high name identification have a huge advantage [in September] because of the time it takes to go from a primary to a general election campaign," according to Schreiber. Other states hold primaries before September. He says it's possible that Minnesota could do the same before August of 1990 without disrupting the political process.

However, House Speaker Rep. Robert Vanasek (DFL-New Prague) says that

with an earlier primary, Minnesota may face the issue of party registration. He warns that the issue could be controversial.

A proposed math and science high school also drew audience attention.

One resident asked lawmakers to consider appropriating funds equally throughout the state for math and science saying it would benefit all students rather than just a few.

The state doesn't have funds for a math and science school, says Rep. Bob McEachern (DFL-Maple Lake), Education Committee chair. But, he says, we should upgrade the state's summer institutes to encourage the subjects.

Legislators and residents continued talking in smaller groups after the meeting.

Workers' compensation

There's a big difference between workers' compensation costs of Minnesota businesses and those of border-state businesses, according to several Worthington area business people. They testified at a Labor-Management Relations Committee meeting Oct. 18 in Worthington.

Workers' comp costs six times more at his Pipestone plant than at his Howard, South Dakota plant, says Ken Ellison from Howard Beef Processors in Pipestone.

Jim Streiff of the Toro Company in Windom says workers' comp costs at their Windom plant are almost twice as high as those at their Tomah, Wisconsin plant. And George Hanson, Monfort Processing Plant, Worthington, says his Worthington costs are about four times as high as his costs in Iowa.

The high cost of workers' compensation is a serious economic issue for small businessmen in outstate areas, says Glen Gust from Luverne's Food Store. Those costs hinder plant expansions and often prompt businesses to move to border states. They also rob employees of raises, bonuses, and other economic benefits, and drive small businesses into bankruptcy.

Divorce study

Mothers in Minnesota receive sole physical custody of their children in 81 percent of divorce cases, and fathers receive custody in 10 percent, according to the University of Minnesota's Department of Family Social Science.

The department conducted the study entitled "Economic Consequences of Divorce for Men, Women, and Children in Minnesota" to provide factual information about financial decisions people make at the time of divorce, and to examine the consequences of these decisions on their economic well-being. Legislators considered the study Oct. 18 at a meeting of the Judiciary Committee's Criminal Justice Division in Worthington.

Researchers collected data from more than 1,000 court case records in 10

Minnesota counties representing 10 state judicial districts, according to Lois Yellowthunder, project manager for the study. The cases studied represent 19 percent of more than 6,000 divorces involving minor children in Minnesota in 1986.

Yellowthunder, citing information from the study, told legislators that the majority of those studied were:

- families having one or two children;
- couples married approximately 9 to 10 years; and
- couples aged 32 (women) to 35 (men).

Data included information on custody, child support, property, and income and health protection for children. Results suggest that children and mothers are economically less well-off after divorce compared to husbands and fathers. The courts awarded child support in 76 percent of divorces, which fathers alone pay in 70 percent of the cases, and mothers alone pay in nearly 4 percent of the cases.

The McKnight Foundation funded Phase I of the study; the Bush, St. Paul, and Bigelow foundations are funding Phase II. Those results will be available early next year.

Community stabilization

Local communities and their workers deserve protection from plant closings and layoffs following corporate takeovers, says Norm Larson, a retired farmer from Worthington. He spoke in favor of HF631 (Clark, DFL-Mpls), the community stabilization bill, at a meeting of the Economic Development Committee's Community Stabilization and Development Division in Slayton Oct. 18.

When a large number of workers get laid off in a small town, the lost wages and purchasing power of those workers can devastate a local economy, says Rep. Todd Otis (DFL-Mpls), co-author of the bill. This bill would require government and business to be more accountable when using public economic development dollars to pay for community projects.

For example, when a company takeover occurs through an acquisition, the bill would require the former em-

ployer to pay benefits to the community and laid-off workers. The former employer would have to repay any public assistance it received over the previous five years, and provide planning grants to the communities to study ways to create new jobs. In addition, the bill would require the former employer to pay for emergency services, wage subsidies, severance, and health care coverage for laid-off workers.

Further provisions of the bill would require local governments to study expected job growth and potential for worker displacement related to a development project. If workers lose their jobs to a public economic development project, the local government would have to provide necessary benefits such as retraining, relocation, and health insurance expenses.

Finally, the bill would provide grants to local governments or labor organizations to study alternatives to a plant closing. The study would report on the current and potential profitability of a plant and any alternative uses for a closed plant.

Three House committees considered the bill during the 1989 Regular Session. It awaits further action in the Appropriations Committee.

Ambulance services

More than one-half of the ambulance providers in Minnesota are volunteers who serve rural residents. Some of these volunteers attended an Oct. 17 meeting of the Rural Emergency Medical Services Task Force in Frost to discuss the challenges facing rural emergency medical services.

Many speakers said they're concerned about a new law that requires ambulance drivers and attendants to have a current emergency medical care certificate beginning in 1994. To earn an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certificate, an individual will have to complete at least 110 hours of training. Current standards for an Advanced American Red Cross First Aid certificate require only 60 hours of training. Ambulance service personnel say the law will reduce ambulance service in the state and cause volunteer dropout.

Volunteers must experience growth, recognition, and personal satisfaction to make the time commitment worthwhile, according to a 1988 *Minnesota Medicine* article. The speakers agreed, telling lawmakers and health officials that program participants need the motivation of recruitment tools and incentives.

The article also affirms that the delivery of prehospital medical care should be under medical control regardless of whether the individual provider is from a fire department, public safety office, private business, municipal government, or hospital.

Currently, the Department of Health's Emergency Medical Services Section is developing a re-entry program for individuals having EMT certification that expired as of Dec. 31, 1988. The department is also working on a mechanism to recognize prior advanced Red Cross training and ambulance service experience.

GMC

The Greater Minnesota Corporation (GMC) and its successful programs have gained national attention, says Terry Montgomery, GMC chief executive officer and president. He spoke to the Appropriations Committee's Agriculture, Transportation and Semi-State Division Oct. 19 in Worthington.

GMC success led to regional cooperation on agricultural research with North Dakota and South Dakota. Ohio is considering forming its own such corporation and wants to use the GMC as a model. Montgomery says he received an invitation to speak at a conference in Ohio.

The federal government has also recognized the GMC's work. Congress recently approved a 100 percent increase in funding for the GMC Agricultural Utilization Research Institute and is considering funding for another GMC program, the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centers.

Montgomery says the GMC will continue to pursue projects in applied research and technology, manufacturing, and agriculture to promote long-term economic growth in the state.

Children at risk

To help identify at-risk and health-related problems and concerns among grade school and high school students, the governor directed the Criminal Justice Policy Task Force in 1986, under the leadership of Public Safety Commissioner Paul Tschida, to coordinate implementation of the federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986. The law makes federal money available to schools and their communities to provide drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs for children and adolescents.

In the spring of 1989, more than 90,000 students in grades 6, 9, and 12 from 390 of Minnesota's 433 public school districts took part in the Minnesota Student Survey. All but one of the state's 87 counties are represented in the anonymous, self-administered questionnaire.

During an Oct. 18 Education Committee meeting in Jackson, lawmakers heard survey results that covered topics such as sources of happiness and worry, general health, religion, and self-esteem.

Connie Eggers, a drug education coordinator, told the committee that emphasizing cocaine and other illicit drugs won't curb student use of alcohol and tobacco. She cited study results that indicate the most common reasons for early drug usage among students include seeking pleasure, escape (i.e., escape from personal problems), and peer influence.

The survey also indicates the most common reasons students don't use drugs. The lack of desire to use alcohol or drugs, danger associated with drug use, and parental objection top that list.

"We need to make sure children's needs are met on a family level, and make certain they're comfortable on a school level," says Doug Jardine, a psychologist from the Red Rock Ridge Coop. He told the legislators that children can achieve success if adults deal with basic issues in their [the children's] lives.

International trade

The Minnesota Trade Office (MTO) actively encourages state businesses to enter international trade markets, says Executive Director Dr. Richard Bohr. He spoke to the Economic Development Committee's International Trade and Technology Division in Slayton on Oct. 19.

Currently, the MTO has eight overseas offices that work with state exporters. Bohr says the staff in these offices work as field representatives determining what kind of market exists for a product and contacting potential buyers of Minnesota products. By the end of the year, four more offices will open—two in Japan (Osaka and Tokyo), one in Canada (Toronto), and one in Costa Rica (San José).

The MTO can also provide financial assistance to exporters through the Minnesota Export Authority. Glen Boerboom, an MTO export promotion counselor, says the office maintains a computer database with information on more than 700 agricultural product exporters and their on-hand supply of goods. The information allows him to quickly connect buyers with sellers to facilitate sales.

The MTO targets potential buyers with advertisements for certain products, according to Paul Hansen, an MTO representative. For example, the office advertises Holstein cattle in a Latin American magazine because many developing countries are interested in Holstein cattle. On the other hand, the Japanese seem more interested in Black Angus cattle, so that's what the office promotes in Japan.

Economic development

Usable but idle buildings exist in rural communities. People and businesses are leaving for metropolitan areas and other states. Rural communities need help to reverse these trends, says Jackson County Commissioner Milford Gentz. A good tool would be HF71 (K. Olson, DFL-Sherburn), which would allow counties to

establish economic development authorities (EDAs) to promote business development. Gentz testified at the Economic Development Committee hearing Oct. 20 in Jackson.

Rural communities compete with border states for new businesses. And these states offer incentives for businesses to move. Gentz told lawmakers that without some kind of counter incentive, rural areas can't attract businesses. If counties could establish EDAs, he says they could attract industrial development which could provide long-term benefits.

Economic development programs have helped Worthington keep several industries, including a meat packing plant, manufactured home company, and animal vaccine company, according to Joel West, Worthington Economic Development and Planning.

In 1986, the Campbell Soup Company, which employs about 550 people in the community, considered moving out of Worthington. The company shipped in poultry for their soups, and thought about moving to an area where a supply of poultry existed. West says Worthington's EDA loaned about \$2 million through area banks to farmers to raise a supply of poultry for Campbell Soup. As a result, the company stayed in Worthington and created 50 new jobs.

Although many larger cities in rural counties have EDAs, some rural counties don't have a city large enough to qualify under current law, county officials told the committee. The bill would allow counties and small cities to create an EDA. However, before a county EDA could exercise its powers in a city, the city would have to give its permission.

The bill awaits further action in the Taxes Committee.

Breakfast chats

Homemade cinnamon rolls, freshly brewed coffee, and golden brown pancakes—all were part of the Southwest Minnesota mini-session menu. The House of Representatives held the second of three legislative mini-sessions Oct. 18-20 in Worthington and surrounding areas.

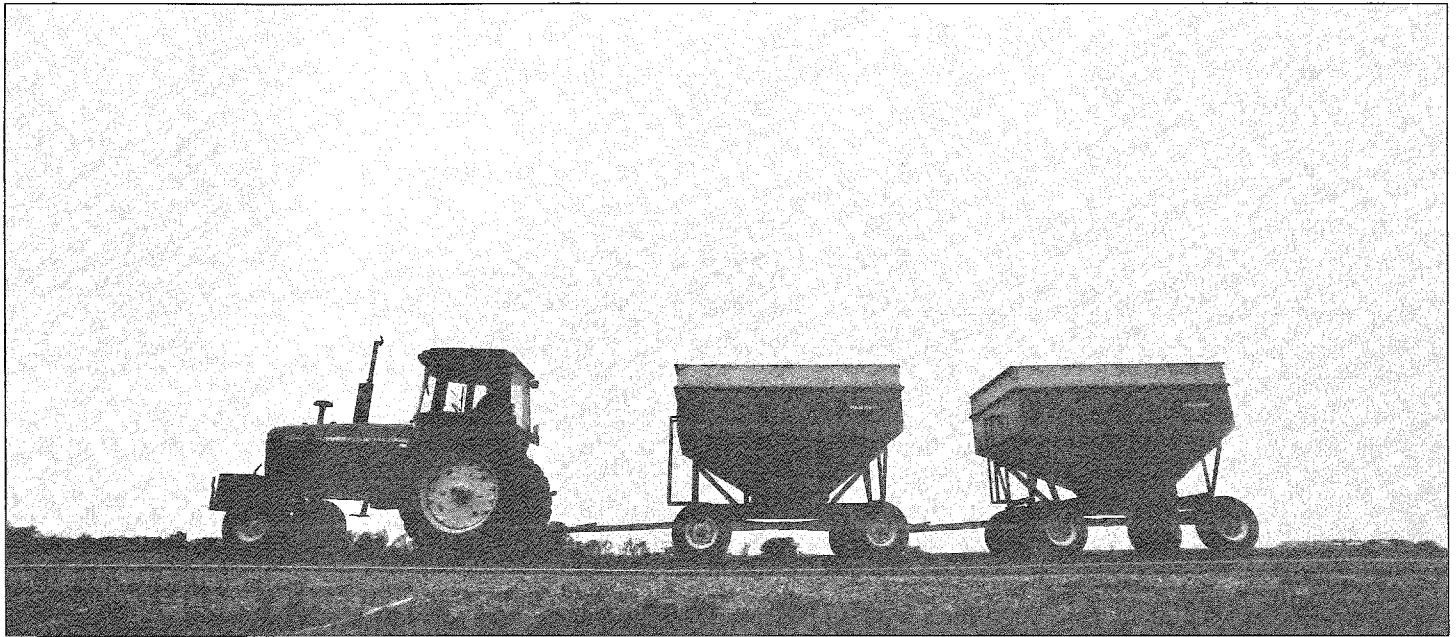
Mini-sessions help bring state government out of the Capitol to residents who otherwise wouldn't have the chance to participate in the process.

As part of the Winona mini-session held in September, residents had the opportunity to invite lawmakers to their homes for dinner. Worthington area residents got together with them each morning for breakfast at restaurants, where they could chat about issues and concerns before committees met.

Restaurants hosting breakfasts included: Gannon's, the Villager Cafe, Lange's Cafe, and the Calumet Hotel Coffee Shop in Pipestone; the Mint Cafe and the Country Host Restaurant in Slayton; Mom's Kitchen and the Corner Cafe in Windom; and the Pantry in Luverne. Other dining sites included Bob and Jan's and the Southwestern Technical College Cafeteria in Jackson.

Southwest Minnesota

Where agriculture is industry



Fall harvest was in full bloom during the House of Representatives' mini session in Southwest Minnesota Oct. 18-20. Here, farmers transport their crops to local grain elevators.



Veterans listen to a status report on the proposed Luverne Veterans Home. They attended a joint meeting of the Health and Human Services Division of the Appropriations Committee and the Veterans Affairs Subcommittee of the General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Gaming Committee on Oct. 18 in Luverne.

In the southwestern part of the state, the soil is rich, the climate mild, and the farming industry diverse. Farmers grow mainly corn and soybeans, but wheat, oats, and alfalfa are also major crops. Livestock farming and production rank high in the area, with beef and pork produced in large quantities along with poultry and sheep. And, of course, there is dairying. Farms are largely family operations, many of which have been in the same family for more than 100 years.



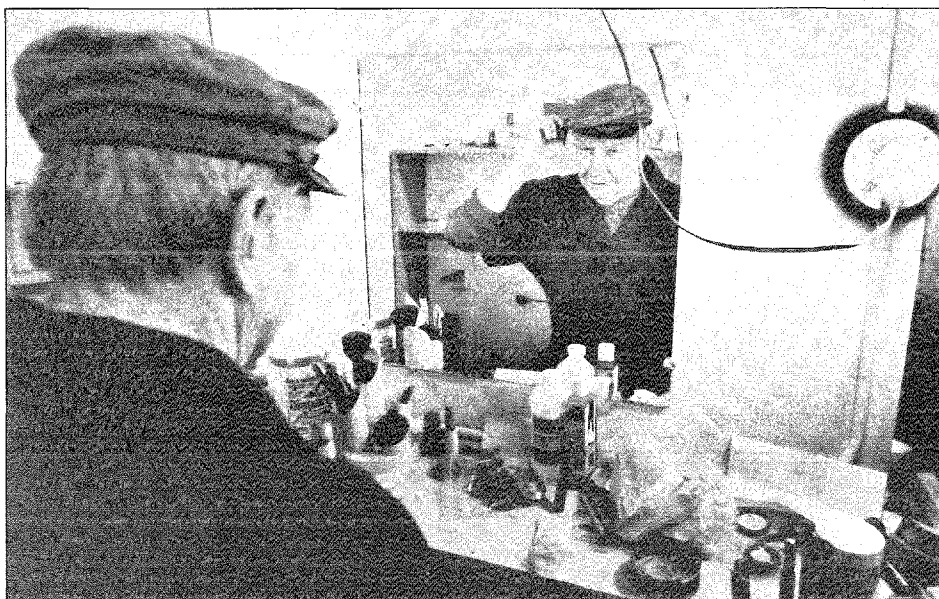
Some 300 people from around the region attended the town meeting in Fulda on Oct. 18.

Photo right

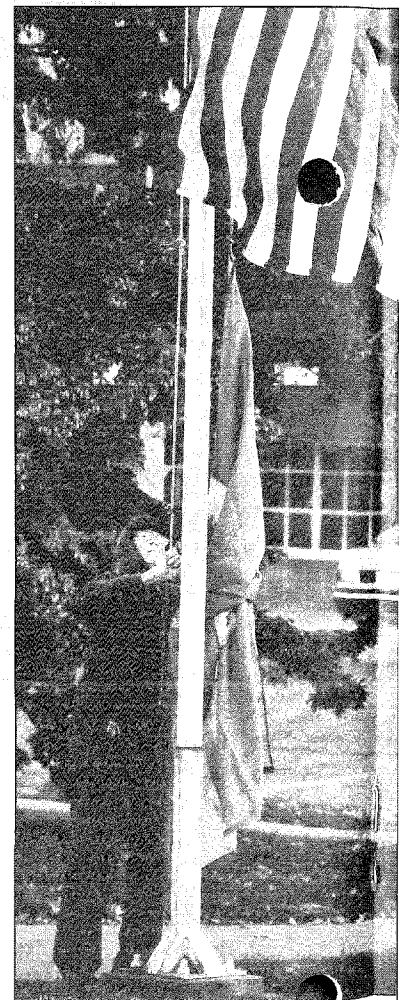
Dressed in pajamas, 2-1/2-year-old Jacob Lasala accompanied his father, Dr. Frank Lasala of Madison, Minnesota, to a meeting of the Appropriations Committee's Health and Human Services Division. The hearing, held in Windom on Oct. 19, focused on rural physician recruitment.



Jeffers Petroglyphs. As hunting peoples moved over the land, they carved nearly 2,000 symbols on these rocks perhaps as long as 5,000 years ago. Site manager Ruby Winters pointed out how the prairie has been restored to its original state as she took members of the Agriculture, Transportation & Semi-State Division of the Appropriations Committee on a walking tour Oct. 18.



Surprise performance. Rep. James Rice (DFL-Mpls) prepares backstage for his walk-on role as the newspaperman in *Wally's Cafe*. House members and staff attended the special performance at the Palace Theatre in Luverne on Oct. 19.





Rep. Sandy Pappas (DFL-St. Paul), *foreground*, chatted with Heron Lake residents Mike Fest, *right*, and Jeff Freking, *left*, at an Oct. 18 breakfast get-together. House members and local residents gathered at the Corner Cafe in Heron Lake.



Photo left

Eighty-six-year-old Bennie Thompson, a Cottonwood County Courthouse custodian since 1935, raised the flags over the grounds as members of the Appropriations Committee's Health and Human Services Division arrived in Windom for breakfast at Mom's Kitchen on Oct. 19.



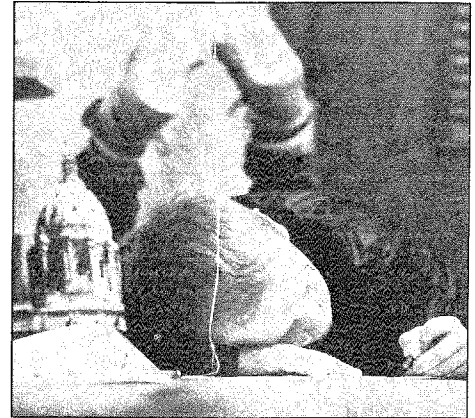
Band instruments remain silent as members of the Criminal Justice Division of the Judiciary Committee hear testimony on "Divorce: Why Kids Don't Profit." The division met Oct. 18 in the Worthington Community College band room.



Kids played "Pin the Tie on the Speaker."



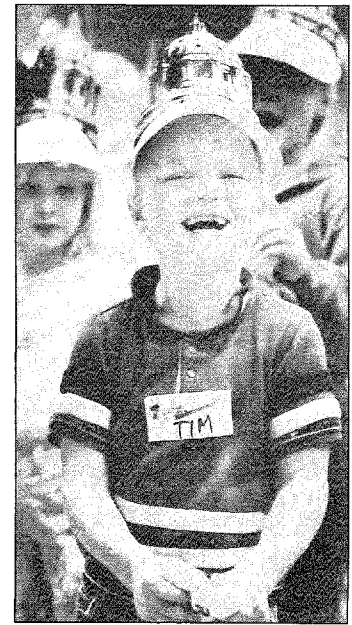
Kids downed "yummy" ice cream in dixie cups.



Kids concentrated on winning the "Coloring Contest."



MINNESOTA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
KIDS' PARTY



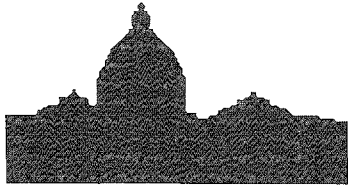
Kids tried to "Get the Bill in the Hopper" by tossing a bean bag labeled "bill" into a bucket labeled "hopper."

Teachers' meetings meant no school for Minnesota students on Oct. 19 and 20. So the House of Representatives staged an afternoon party for kids at the Worthington Community Center Oct. 19.

House staff sent party invitations to area schools and daycare centers; more than 100 children showed up. The youngsters' parents talked with House members who came to the party, while staff members entertained their children.



Kids fished for prizes at the "Fish Pond."



Committee Action

AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, Oct. 18 (Worthington)
• Heard an overview on federal milk marketing issues; discussed HF31 (Marsh, IR-Sauk Rapids) that would prohibit further draining of wetlands in Minnesota.

Agriculture Finance & Farm Programs Subcommittee
Thursday, Oct. 19 (Pipestone)
• Heard an overview of the Rural Finance Administration Loan Program.

APPROPRIATIONS

Agriculture, Transportation & Semi-State Division
Wednesday, Oct. 18 (Jeffers)
• Toured the Jeffers Petroglyphs; heard a request for funds for a new interpretative center.

Thursday, Oct. 19 (Worthington)
• Heard a Greater Minnesota Corporation presentation concerning its efforts to promote economic development in rural areas. (See Highlight)

Friday, Oct. 20 (Luverne)
• Toured the Rock County Courthouse and other Luverne historical sites.

Education Division
Friday, Oct. 20 (Jackson)
• Received capital requests for technical and community colleges.

Health & Human Services Division
Joint meeting with Veterans Affairs Subcommittee/General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Gaming
Wednesday, Oct. 18 (Luverne)
• Reviewed the status of the proposed Luverne Veterans Home.

Thursday, Oct. 19 (Windom)
• Discussed methods to increase recruitment of physicians to southwestern Minnesota.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Friday, Oct. 20 (Jackson)
• Heard testimony on HF71 (K. Olson, DFL-Sherburn) relating to county economic development authorities. (See Highlight)

Community Stabilization & Development Division
Wednesday, Oct. 18 (Slayton)
• Heard testimony on HF631 (Clark, DFL-Mpls) and other issues relating to local economies and job loss. (See Highlight)

International Trade & Technology Division
Thursday, Oct. 19 (Slayton)
• Heard a Minnesota Trade Office presentation on international trade promotion. (See Highlight)

EDUCATION

Wednesday, Oct. 18 (Jackson)
• Heard testimony on children at risk and results from the 1989 Minnesota Student Survey. (See Highlight)

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Wednesday, Oct. 18 (Worthington)
• Toured the Herlein-Boote Wildlife Management Area.

Thursday, Oct. 19 (Heron Lake/Lakefield)
• Toured the Heron Lake restoration project; heard project accomplishments and needs.

Thursday, Oct. 19 (Worthington)
• Discussed solid waste reduction and recycling issues and local water management and landfill issues.

GENERAL LEGISLATION, VETERANS AFFAIRS & GAMING

Elections Division
Thursday, Oct. 19 (Worthington)
• Heard testimony from local government officials concerning creation of a uniform municipal election day.

Veterans Affairs Subcommittee
Joint meeting with Health & Human Services Division/Appropriations
Wednesday, Oct. 18 (Luverne)
• Reviewed the status of the proposed Luverne Veterans Home.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Thursday, Oct. 19 (Worthington)
• Heard testimony on HF1198 (Simoneau, DFL-Fridley) relating to public employment and defining equitable compensation relationships. Heard presentations from the Commission on the Economic Status of Women and the Department of Employee Relations.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Friday, Oct. 20 (Pipestone)
• Heard testimony on health care issues in rural areas and the effects of costly insurance rates on rural residents.

INSURANCE

Thursday, Oct. 19 (Luverne)
• Heard an overview and update on the Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association (MCHA) and public testimony on health insurance.

JUDICIARY

Criminal Justice Division
Wednesday, Oct. 18 (Worthington)
• Heard results of a divorce study that provided factual information concerning financial decisions people make at the time of divorce and the consequences of these decisions. (See Highlight)

Civil Law Subcommittee
Thursday, Oct. 19 (Worthington)
• Heard overview of task force findings on: access to the legal system for women; courtroom environment; and treatment women receive from judges, attorneys, and courtroom personnel.

Facilities Assessment Subcommittee

Thursday, Oct. 19 (Nobles County)

- Toured the Nobles County Jail; discussed juvenile detention requirements.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

Wednesday, Oct. 18 (Worthington)

- Heard opinions from local business people regarding the Minnesota's workers' compensation system. (See Highlight)

REGULATED INDUSTRIES

Thursday, Oct. 19 (Pipestone)

- Discussed updating telephone party line services in several Southwest Minnesota exchanges; heard an update on the Gopher State One-Call Program.

TAXES

Tax Increment Finance Round Table

Wednesday, Oct. 18 (Pipestone)

- Toured tax increment financed projects in Pipestone.

TRANSPORTATION

Thursday, Oct. 19 (Windom)

- Discussed regional transportation concerns and the need for volunteer drivers and public transit; heard testimony on the effects of the Highway 60 construction and how it will bring in commercial business.

Friday, Oct. 20 (Luverne)

- Discussed railroad service to rural communities; discussed the difference between state subsidies for rail operation versus truck operation, and the most cost effective method to move goods and commodities.

Air Transportation Subcommittee

Thursday, Oct. 19 (Worthington)

- Discussed the economic impact of the Worthington Airport on the local economy.

RURAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES TASK FORCE

Tuesday, Oct. 17 (Frost)

- Discussed the roles and responsibilities of rural emergency services staff volunteers, volunteer recruitment methods, and training guidelines. (See Highlight)



Interim Report is a publication of the Minnesota House of Representatives

Public Information Office. During the 1989-90 interim period (the time between sessions), each issue reports legislative activities, covers mini-session meeting schedules and actions, and provides other information.

The publication is free to interested constituents. Contact:

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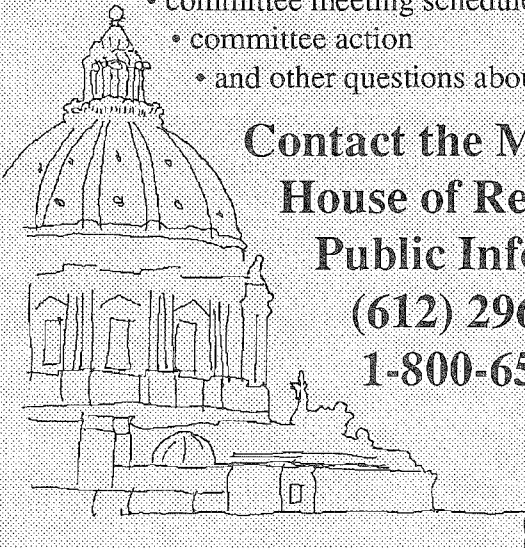
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