



Senate District 54 DFL Newsletter

January 2009
Vol. 17 No. 4

Gem Lake . Lauderdale . Little Canada . Roseville . Shoreview . St. Anthony . Vadnais Heights

Celebrating our 100th issue

On behalf of the SD54 Newsletter, we wish to recognize the contributions of so many people who have supported the newsletter throughout the past 17 years and for the positive comments that we have received throughout this journey and recently, as we approached this, our 100th issue. We are humbled and yet very proud that the SD54 Newsletter has achieved this milestone and we realize that it is the involvement of many volunteers who have made this achievement possible and meaningful to SD54.

Norm Hanson and Julianne Johnston, SD54 Newsletter Committee

Communication is essential to any community. We have all chosen to be part of this community, bound by our ideals, our ideas, and belief in good governance. Key to this is support of candidates who agree with us and carry all of our community with them. Without communication, we are individual voices. As a community that shares knowledge, we can work together to become one voice with many thoughts and ideas. That is why we must continue to have a newsletter that keeps us in contact with each other and helps grow our community.—*Beth Lareau, SD54 Newsletter Committee member, DFL mentor and guru*

I have often held up the SD 54 newsletter as an example of the best in the state—it's informative, it's thoughtful, and it's easy and enjoyable to read. That you have published it for so long is doubly commendable. Congratulations on your 100th issue! And I look forward to the next hundred. Keep up the good work.—*Brian Melendez, Chair, Minnesota Democratic Farmer Labor Party*

I am honored to contribute a congratulatory message. The SD54 newsletter has become the gold standard for the DFL. Many districts have appreciated Julianne and Norm sharing their expertise to help create and improve DFL newsletters. Keep up the great work!—*J.P. Barone, Chair, 4th Congressional District*

When I go to any DFL event, I am invariably reminded how lucky I am to be the chair of SD54. “Your district is so organized, active and well informed.” Nothing SD54 does would be as successful without the newsletter. Like any DFL political organization, every two years SD54 holds precinct caucuses and endorsing conventions. We also have our rituals—Third Thursday meetings to get the work done, the Picnic to meet and greet fellow DFLers and hear from our candidates, and the Holiday/Victory Party to celebrate and thank our volunteers. All of these bring us together. The newsletter keeps us together, a constant reminder of why we are DFLers: our diverse ideas but common purpose, the critical issues we face, what needs to be done, and how to help. It's how SD54 says we care, come join us, together we can make things better. And we can... Congratulations on the 100th issue!—*Michele Courneya, Chair, SD54*

During my short tenure as SD54 Chair, I could always count on the support of many dedicated and committed volunteers, serving on various committees and in other capacities. At the top of the list was the SD54 Newsletter Committee, masterfully guided by Norm and Julianne. I NEVER worried about the committee getting out an insightful issue on time. Big kudos to them, especially Norm and Julianne, on their 100th issue. The newsletter would not have gotten this far without their tireless hard work and dedication and the team of volunteers around them.—*Todd Anderson, Former Chair, SD54*

When I decided to get involved in the local DFL in the 2004 election season, I had no idea what I was doing, but knew I had to do something. I went to a precinct caucus not knowing anything. The first person I met was Julianne Johnston, who asked me what precinct I was from. I was so excited that I had looked it up that I boldly stated, “Senate District 54!”

Julianne kindly explained that *everyone* there was SD54. With my precinct promptly found (as Lauderdale has only one precinct), I traveled on my merry way through the caucus and convention process and eventually found myself at the state convention. When I got back (surely not wanting to miss an opportunity to pull in a new, eager volunteer such as myself), the Newsletter Committee promptly asked me to write an article about my experiences there. It was the sure-fire way to bring me into the process. With that article, I met some people, started to learn the process, and can proudly say this is all the Newsletter Committee’s “fault” that I am involved with our Senate District 54 activities.—*Andi Moffitt, SD54 Secretary and Volunteer Coordinator*

Congratulations to the editors and volunteers on the 100th edition of the SD54 DFL News! The volunteers involved in producing it are also involved in political campaigning and many other volunteer activities, yet regularly devote the time to produce this excellent publication. Thank you for your dedication to it! As an elected official, I find it valuable as a means of communicating with supporters, and a good way to keep in touch. The SD54 newsletter is a labor of love, and I join all the other readers in saying thank you, and congratulations on a job well done.—*John Marty, State Senator SD54*

Our Senate District 54 newsletter started about the time I was a new candidate for the Minnesota House. I strongly believe that our many active district members and campaign volunteers—the envy of most other districts—correlate highly with the sense of community fostered in our district by our exemplary newsletter. Thanks to all who have led and worked on it, and here’s to the next 100 issues!!—*Mindy Greiling, State Representative SD54A*

I remember very clearly an evening in 2002, a meeting with Julianne Johnston and others in the Roseville Library coffee shop. I had decided to run for state representative in SD54B. Since the re-districting of 2002 pulled my area of Little Canada from SD53 into SD54, I was unknown in the new district. After I discovered the impact of the SD54 Newsletter, I would never be the same politician again. It gave such clear insight into the issues of the area and helped me tremendously as I formulated my platform for this new constituency. Being included in the newsletter “family” was a welcoming opportunity as I began work with district voters. Although I lost the election of 2002 after the Wellstone Memorial Service, I was energized by the family of the SD 54 Newsletter, and continued my campaign without hesitation until my election in 2004.

Communication means everything to political campaigns, and I continually hear from other legislators who have heard about our newsletter, and wish that their districts could produce such a great communications tool. They just don’t know how to start, and I tell them that they have to begin the very hard work like our committee did. It doesn’t just happen; it comes from the heart and soul of many dedicated volunteers. Thanks from the bottom of my heart for all that you have done for the-residents of SD 54.—*Bev Scalze, State Representative SD54B*

After Wellstone’s tragic death, I felt I had to do something to get involved in the political process. Though I wasn’t certain that I could be of much service since I don’t have much political savvy, Julianne Johnston helped me fit into my current role as newsletter copy editor. I feel fortunate to have found a way to serve SD54 and to be a part of this dedicated team.—*Anne Frenchick, newsletter copy editor*

Having been active in politics for a long time, I have found the SD54 Newsletter to be helpful in keeping connected to what is happening in SD54, especially the information from the legislators. That is why I got involved in working on it.—*Mary Jo Rourke, political activist, Newsletter Committee member*

The SD54 Newsletter reminds me that the officers we elected at the last SD54 convention are working for you and me: helping our candidates, keeping SD54 visible as leaders in volunteerism, and commenting on the issues of the day. I have been fortunate to be able to make my contribution to the Newsletter and to the district as a director, secretary, and contributing member of the Newsletter Committee.—*Georgiana Sobola, community activist*

The Senate District 54 *Newsletter* is published six times a year to inform and educate interested parties of the happenings within SD54 DFL. The *Newsletter* provides opportunities for readers to submit articles for publication on various subjects of interest to this audience. The Newsletter Committee reserves the right to edit articles as appropriate to meet these goals and space restrictions

Newsletter Committee

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
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What's News in SD54

Ivor Matz, SD54 Associate Chair

Well, the election season is almost over. By the time you read this, the Senate election (hopefully) will have been decided and we can take heart in the knowledge that our hard work and sacrifice on behalf of Al Franken has put a fellow Democrat back in the U.S. Senate seat the late Senator Paul Wellstone once held. If not, we still can be proud that Democrats delivered Minnesota for the Obama-Biden ticket and we helped return U.S. Representatives Betty McCollum and Keith Ellison to the U.S. House and State Representatives Mindy Greiling and Bev Scalze to the Minnesota House for another session!

Those of you who attended the Post-election/Pre-Holiday Party at Cedarholm Golf Course on November 20 no doubt are aware of the hard work and dedication so many in SD54 put into this year's campaigns and events. We had around 60 attendees and a beautifully varied spread of delicious foods that were enjoyed by all. If you've never attended this event, you really should put it on your calendar for next year. It's a great way to meet and learn from other DFLers in our district and an opportunity to make new friends, whose primitive political views won't embarrass and confound you.

That said, there is much work yet to do and it begins again in earnest at the regular meeting of the SD54 Central Committee on January 15, 2009. The executive committee is asking all precinct chairs and associate chairs to attend. If neither is able to attend, we're asking the precinct chairs to designate a representative from your precinct to learn about SD54 plans and activities for the coming year, to join our elected officials in a legislative discussion forum, and to provide proxy votes on several of the following important matters.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the January 15 Central Committee meeting at the Roseville Fire Station #1, City Hall Campus, 2701 N. Lexington Avenue, Roseville, MN. Parking access is from Lexington Avenue. Call to order is in the Basswood Room at 7:00 p.m. sharp. See you there!

Fundraising Plans As some of you are aware, the DFL has consistently lagged behind the opposition in terms of fundraising which takes advantage of the Minnesota Political Contribution Refund (PCR) program. Enacted by the legislature to encourage participation in the election process, the state will reimburse an eligible voter for a maximum annual contribution of \$50 per individual or \$100 per married couple to a qualifying candidate or political organization. In fact, for every year since

its inception in 1990, the GOP has out-performed our party in funds received from contributors who were later reimbursed by the state PCR program. For example, in 2006 the state refunded a total of \$3,252,822 to contributors to all political parties. Contributors to the GOP received \$2,322,721 in PCR refunds, while DFL contributors received \$904,399. Put another way, the opposition took in the lion's share, or 71 percent, of total state reimbursements in 2006, while the DFL took in only 28 percent. In short, we were out-performed by a factor of 2.6 times! That's not what I call a horse race. Since 2000, the GOP has received contributions of over \$2 million *every year* from contributors who were later reimbursed by the state, while the DFL received over \$1 million *only once*, in 2004, under the PCR program which reimbursed those contributors.

This disparity is really unbelievable when you consider that there are far more Minnesotans who self-identify as Democrats than Republicans and given the fact that a *PCR contribution is really only a short-term loan*. About six weeks after submitting the appropriate forms to the state, you get your money back.

Apparently the difference is that the opposition party has spread the word to its supporters of this "no-cost" opportunity to contribute and has been more willing to pursue PCR contributions as a funding source than we have been. *Money is the life-blood that drives effective campaigns!* So it hurts that the opposition outspends us on party-building activities and campaigns by a factor of 2.5 times, and that this spending comes from funds that are reimbursable to the contributors!

So DFL State Chair Brian Melendez has made it a priority for our party to achieve a much better result in PCR contributions in 2009. We in the SD54 Executive Committee wholeheartedly agree. At the January 15 Central Committee meeting, we'll kick off a major effort to maximize PCR contributions for our district.

This effort begins with the PCR Response Envelope attached to the hard copy issue of the newsletter. Email recipients of the newsletter should contact Robert Venters, SD54 Treasurer at (651) 523-0993 to obtain the envelope with all the details and information that needs to be completed to receive a refund. Better yet, bring your contribution to the January 15, 2009 Central Committee Meeting and Forum announced at the end of this 100th newsletter. Actually, your contribution can be given any time in 2009 to receive the refund, but we really want you to come to the January meeting as well.

About six weeks after submitting the Political Contribution Refund Application Form and receipt to the state, **you**

will get your money back! How cool is that?!! Pretty doggone cool, my friend ...

January Forum The SD54 Central Committee meeting in January also will be dedicated to a legislative discussion forum, where Senator John Marty, Representative Mindy Greiling and Representative Bev Scalze will be discussing the state budget crisis and legislative agenda for 2009. As of November 2008, the state projects a budget deficit of \$4.8 billion for the 2010-11 fiscal biennium. There is an immediate revenue shortfall of \$426 million for the current fiscal biennium. Between now and June 2011, the tax revenue shortfall in our state is expected to be nearly \$5.3 billion and could go as high as \$5.9 billion. Obviously, dealing with this kind of deficit is going to require truly hard choices in spending cuts, as well as real legislative leadership to see our citizens through some very difficult times. The January Forum is your opportunity to hear from our elected officials about the

nature of the problem and what they will be doing to try to resolve it.

100th Issue of the Newsletter!! The SD54 newsletter achieves a major benchmark with this, the January 2009 issue! This is the 100th issue of a newsletter that stands as an example of excellence to other districts throughout the state. At the January Forum, we'll be taking the opportunity to formally recognize the SD54 Newsletter Committee for its hard work and service in producing this publication six times a year for the last 17 plus years. During that time, our elected officials have expressed sincere appreciation for the the role the newsletter serves in keeping party members and constituents informed about committee work, legislation, issues, and similar important matters.

On behalf of the SD54 Executive Committee, our sincere thanks and congratulations to the Newsletter Committee for all its efforts and continuing service.

—SD54 Legislators Report—

Senator John Marty

Facing the Budget Deficit Wisely. As we receive the sobering news that Minnesota faces a deficit of close to \$6 billion, it is clear that the 2009 session will involve difficult decisions.

Unfortunately, the options in this situation are poor—raise revenues, cut funding, or both. Although we cannot prevent such downturns in the economy, we could have prevented this deficit by preventing problems that drive government spending.

If Minnesota had invested in prevention ten years ago, our economy would be stronger and our deficit smaller, despite the national economy.

Imagine if we had invested the budget “surplus” of 1999 wisely instead of using it for regressive tax cuts—if we had aggressively invested in parenting education in Head Start and Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), making it affordable and accessible to all families—if we had used some of the money to invest in visiting nurses making house calls on pregnant women and mothers—if we had addressed chemical dependency and mental health problems in troubled families.

Imagine if we had provided support and nurturing for at-risk children through Foster Grandparent and Big Brother/Sister programs—if we had expanded the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) child nutrition program to cover all families in need—if we had provided extensive job training and support for people on welfare, and sliding fee child care to any parents who would work if they could afford child care.

Now, ten years later, we would be enjoying the benefits of those investments. We would have children coming to school healthy, adequately fed, and ready to learn, reducing special education costs, and helping all children succeed. We would save money from fewer costly out-of-home placements. We would sharply reduce crime, and domestic violence, saving massive amounts in law enforcement and prison budgets. And we would break the cycle of violence, in which one generation's abuse victims become the next generation's abusers. Drug use, gang involvement, and teen pregnancies would drop, cutting crime, medical assistance and welfare costs.

Unfortunately, we didn't make those wise investments ten years ago. As a result, we face growing problems in our families, our schools, our workplaces, and on our streets. We face a budget deficit of almost \$6 billion!

Governor Pawlenty talks about the explosive growth in human service spending, and says it is unsustainable. He's right that it is unsustainable. But Pawlenty's solution—deep cuts in health and human service budgets—will make the problem worse, not better. He fails to recognize that the cause of the growth in those budgets is untreated social problems.

Pawlenty's budget cuts in 2008 have not resulted in money savings for taxpayers. Instead, the problems have escalated, and the costs continue to rise. Worse yet, our health, safety, and quality of life are falling.

As we face the current state budget deficit, we need to recognize the importance of investing in prevention. Failure to do so will simply increase the scope of the problem, assuring ever deeper budget problems in the future.

Political Note. As you may have heard, upon the encouragement of some colleagues and DFL activists, particularly people involved in health care reform, I recently formed a committee to explore a campaign for governor in 2010. People are tired of politicians telling us that universal health care will never happen, or that decent wages for workers are unrealistic, or that adequate funding for schools isn't feasible. People are looking for a governor willing to work with them to make things happen. I am confident that I can provide that leadership, and will be working to earn your support in the coming months. Check out my website at johnmarty.org.

Mindy Greiling, State Representative SD54A
Our State Budget Deficit. Because our state budget deficit is so very large—nearly \$6 billion and counting—the challenges in balancing the budget this session will be huge. But because it is so large, there will also be more than usual opportunities to question current expenditures and consider doing things differently. I also believe that the magnitude of the problem will help legislators muster courage to support a tax increase as part of the solution. Whether any Republicans will join Democrats remains a large question, however, and without them the governor's promised veto would stand.

If it were a small or middle-sized deficit, the temptation would be to muddle along with small fixes, as usually has been happening with deficits recently. That sort of thinking contributed to one-third of the current problem, because previous budgets were not honestly balanced. Inflation was legislated away by magic and one-time funds were used for ongoing expenses. Now it is time to pay the piper.

The deficit also reflects the dramatic decline in our state and national economy. In Minnesota that decline has manifested itself in tens of thousands of lost jobs, home foreclosures at near record highs, and a crisis of consumer confidence that has squeezed every sector and reduced state revenue collections. Our state economist, Tom Stinson, says we are in uncharted territory and that it may take five years to recover. Clearly, elected officials cannot leave the deficit to shifts and gimmicks and hope for the best with that scenario on the horizon.

In the K-12 Education Finance Division that I chair, we will examine our total budget with an eye to lopping off any non-essential line items. Already often mentioned are aids to nonpublic schools, for example. We will look to any reforms that will streamline and save funds. A good example of this is a special education task force, composed of equal numbers of school staff and parent representatives, that is reviewing areas where Minnesota exceeds federal requirements. The Bureau of Mediation person staffing the group said they are taking the job seriously and there will be regulatory relief next year that should save money and focus time on the actual education of special education students.

We will not be able to reform and cut our way out of this problem, however. I believe the budget solution must also include a tax increase and I am most favorable to increasing the top tier income tax, so that those earning the most pay at least the same percent as the middle class. Sales tax on clothing and services are the next most-mentioned tax increases on the table.

Finally, I believe that—as folks are planning in Washington, D.C.—we must also make strategic investments even in this time of deficit. We have a responsibility to do the things that will make our state stronger and more prosperous. Tom Stinson, our wise state economist, says that the key to productivity is education, so we should start there. We are bleeding jobs and our best resource to attract and keep companies is our educated workforce.

Thanks to those of you who have already sent suggestions and I welcome more.

Bev Scalze, State Representative SD54B
The Great Recession of 2008. All of our financial lives will be affected by this 2008 recession, the second one in eight years and the deepest one since World War II. With 44 states experiencing deficits because of lack of revenue, this is not a local problem. The states that aren't affected are the energy-producing states with resources like coal and oil, and all taxpayers in other states will be facing

great hardship as they trim their budgets to make up their financial deficit. This is a national and worldwide problem. The causes are many, but in 2008 the \$1.5 trillion costs of the Iraq War and the deregulated financial/banking greed bailout will affect us all for years to come.

As we begin the 2008-09 legislative session, we are faced with a \$5.9 billion deficit. In the 2003 recession, the state shifted many costs to local governments—cities, schools, and counties—that were paid by property tax increases. Our governor has pledged not to raise taxes, so the only avenues available will be program cuts, shifts and changes in governmental operations, and fee increases such as in 2003. Our state budget is still in continuing structural deficit because of lack of needed long-term change. In Minnesota we have “balanced the budget” using one-time revenue shifts like the \$1 billion taken from the tobacco fund. We have also continually budgeted lower funding for higher education, resulting in tuition increases which limit accessibility to college for our middle-class students.

Our governor and legislators will need to be very creative and have every option “on the table” to solve our budget deficit problem, assuming job losses continue into 2009. We have the deficit in the current year to solve first, then the projected deficit for the coming biennium. The governor will announce his proposal, and the legislature will do its work when the session begins on January 6. The financial report due at the end of February will determine the projected numbers with which we will create the budget by the end of the session in May.

Since the state’s revenue stream is dependent upon incomes growing and people willing to spend their money, this national recession is limiting Minnesota revenue because of job losses (10,500 in November) and fears of what the future holds. The baby-boomers, who had previously been the prime buying group, are now the prime saving group. According to Tom Stinson, Minnesota chief economist, Minnesota’s additional job losses in 2009 are projected to be 77,000. Some economic experts believe that each job loss eventually costs the state \$10,000. Dr. Stinson believes that the states will need to receive Federal block grants from the proposed stimulus package being formulated by President-elect Obama to get the state’s economy moving again.

This deficit we face presents challenges and opportunities to run our state as efficiently and effectively as possible. Since none of the cities in District 54B are dependent upon Local Government Aid, cuts in LGA will not be felt by its local communities. We need every creative idea, and hope constituents will contact us with their comments as we do our work.

Save energy, Save money Get a tax credit too !!!!!!!

Peter Berglund
Check out this website: www.energystar.gov

Energy Star is a joint program of the U.S. EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy helping us all save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices. Products and even homes that are Energy Star rated will use less energy, and therefore reduce your energy costs over time.

Please take a minute and look over the home page for Energy Star and you’ll find much useful information. Purchasing an Energy Star rated product or appliance may cost a little more up front, but it will save energy and, depending on the item, it may save water, too. This means less greenhouse gases being emitted into the environment.

At the bottom of the Energy Star home page, you’ll also find information regarding tax credits for 2009, for home improvements (insulation, windows, and doors) and certain products, such as cars, solar and wind energy systems—plus more. For some of these items, the tax credit is a set percent of the expense, up to a stated dollar maximum.

Check through the information, and possibly talk with a tax expert. This tax credit is an extension of an earlier program, but the website indicates that improvements need to be made in 2009, and that improvements made in 2008 may not qualify. Please confirm for your own situation.

Save some green for you, while putting out less green(house gas), and maybe even get a tax credit.

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SD54 Calendar January 2009

Note: Mark your calendars now!!! Due to circumstances beyond our control, the U.S. Post Office may not always deliver the *Newsletter* in advance of the events scheduled. For speedy email delivery, please contact us at (651) 484-8926 or (651) 486-7120 and request to be put on our email list.

January 15	Thursday	SD54 Central Committee Meeting, Basswood Room in Fire Station #1, 2701 Lexington Ave. in the Roseville City Hall complex, 7:00 p.m.
January 17	Saturday	Minnesota DFL Inaugural Event—Graves 601 Hotel, Minneapolis, 6:00 p.m. Contact MN DFL office for more information at (651) 293-1200.
January 20	Tuesday	Inaugural Celebration in Washington, DC, 12:00 noon
January 24	Saturday	Blue State Ball 7:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m. Contact MN DFL office for more information at (651) 293-1200.
February 5	Thursday	Newsletter Planning Committee Meeting, Georgiana Sobola's home, 1961 Hamline Ave. N., Roseville, 7:00 p.m.
February 19	Thursday	SD54 Executive Committee Meeting, Basswood Room in Fire Station #1, 2701 Lexington Ave. in the Roseville City Hall complex, 7:00 p.m.

—SD54 Legislators—

Senator John Marty

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—Attention Readers—

This newsletter is an important asset to SD54, but there are costs as well! You can help maintain this service and cut production costs by switching from paper copy to email copy. Please do so starting today. Contact Norm Hanson (651) 484-8926 or Julianne Johnston (651) 486-7120 to make this change.

The Newsletter Committee also needs new members who are willing to learn how the newsletter is produced and become critical members of the newsletter production so as to keep this valuable district asset going. We are looking for people in all positions. Contact Norm or Julianne to find out how you can become more involved.

**DEMOCRATIC
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State Central Committee**

SD54 Central Committee Forum Announcement

January 15, 2009 - 7:00 p.m.

*Senator John Marty
Representatives Mindy Greiling and Bev Scalze
will discuss the state budget crisis and
the legislative agenda for 2009*

**Basswood Room in Fire Station #1
2701 Lexington Ave. in the Roseville City Hall complex**

All City of Roseville buildings are handicapped accessible