



Public Affairs Update

May 2, 2013

Introduction to the Public Affairs Update

Dear Greater Mankato Growth Member,

As Greater Mankato Growth continues to implement our new public affairs strategy, we are focusing our efforts on two areas: 1) improving awareness among our members, the community and elected officials about public policy matters affecting the Greater Mankato region; and 2) raising the visibility of our regional center and its importance to the state, particularly with state leaders and centers of influence.

Our efforts are most effective when our business and community leaders are engaged in issues that are of importance to them. GMG will continue to strongly advocate for our key community priorities (Verizon Wireless Center Bonding and Hwy. 14) and provide consultation to members on public affairs issues affecting their business or industry. Additionally, GMG will strive to provide you with information and opportunities to be advocates on your own behalf on issues affecting business. The purpose of the GMG Public Affairs Update is to disseminate timely and balanced information that will allow you to get engaged in policy matters that are important to you. This new resource will also include information on future public affairs events and update members on GMG activity on public affairs issues.

The GMG Public Affairs Update will be refined over time and we welcome your suggestions on improvements that would make this resource more

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Public Affairs Events

- DNR holding an open house on **May 9** to plan for the Minnesota River State Trail between Franklin and Le Sueur

[View more events](#)

GMG Staff Contact

Patrick Baker

useful for you. The initial plan is to send this email weekly or every other week as needed.

The mailing list for this inaugural email includes all GMG member contacts. Should you prefer to not receive this email in the future, or any public affairs updates, you can simply hit the "unsubscribe" link below. Your other GMG email subscriptions will not be affected. If you, or any of your colleagues, would like to be added to the public affairs email list, please send a subscribe request to pbaker@greatermankato.com.

Regards,

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Get Engaged

To further GMG's efforts to provide you with the information and opportunity to be an advocate on your own behalf on issues important to you, GMG has created a new [webpage](#) to help you get engaged on key policy topics that are actively under consideration before local, state or federal government. The webpage lists active policy issues selected by GMG staff that have broad-based impacts on business or are of special concern to the Greater Mankato area. Each issue is summarized in a factual and neutral manner and links are provided to relevant articles or bill texts when appropriate. GMG members are welcome to review the information presented and, if they are so inclined, [contact their elected officials](#) to make their views known, pro or con, on the issue.

The new webpage currently contains information on the following issues:

- Tax Omnibus Bills
- Transportation Finance Omnibus Bills
- Minimum Wage Bills
- Economic Development Proposals
- Funding for Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota

GMG Priorities Legislative Update

Civic Center Bonding

Bonding packages proposed by both Governor Dayton and the House Capital Investment Committee would provide the full \$14.5 million the City of Mankato is requesting for improvements and expansion of the Verizon Wireless Center. The Senate remains elusive on its bonding plans. Last week the Senate Tax Committee moved to pay cash, rather than bond, for improvements to the state capitol building. This move is being taken as a sign that the Senate may not be

interested in forwarding a bonding proposal this session. For more information, check out this article:

- [Senate's move on Capitol renovation complicates bonding outlook](#)

Also be sure to check out GMG's Verizon Wireless Center [webpage](#) for more information and the latest news.

News to Know

[The Fine Print: Minnesota Budget Bills Contain Little-Noted Provisions](#)

Politics in Minnesota: One-party government moves quickly. Minnesota Capitol regulars have been struck by how fast major budgeting bills have moved through committees and to the floor in the DFL-controlled Legislature. And with each of those bills come hundreds of lines of fine print. Traveling in the House and Senate budget bills are dozens of little-discussed provisions that could become sticking points in final negotiations. They include fees and surcharges peppered throughout the proposals, scant funding for special education, a provision that would prevent another government shutdown, and the makeup of a board that will oversee the multibillion-dollar Mayo expansion in Rochester.

[States Back Away From Renewable Energy Mandates](#)

Capitol Report: More than half the U.S. states with laws requiring utilities to buy renewable energy are considering ways to pare back those mandates after a plunge in natural gas prices brought on by technology that boosted supply. Sixteen of the 29 states with renewable portfolio standards are considering legislation that would reduce the need for wind and solar power, according to researchers backed by the U.S. Energy Department. North Carolina lawmakers may be among the first to move, followed by Colorado and Connecticut.

[Minnesota Senate Passes Education Bill That Ends High-Stakes Tests](#)

Star Tribune: The Minnesota Senate approved its version of the \$15.7 billion education funding bill on Thursday, sparking a sharp debate over changes in testing standards that appear headed for approval. The Senate voted 35-28 to approve the bill, which funds public education in the state for the two-year period beginning July 1. The House approved its version on Tuesday. Like the House, the Senate bill calls for funding for statewide all-day kindergarten and scholarships for low-income families for pre-school programs.

[Workers' Comp Bill Moving in Both Chambers](#)

Politics in Minnesota: Relatively late in the legislative session - and long after policy committee deadlines have passed - state lawmakers are introducing a workers' compensation proposal that business and labor leaders alike regard as the most significant change to the system in 18 years.

GMG Public Affairs Quick Takes

Transportation Commissioner Visits Mankato

MnDOT Commissioner Charlie Zelle was in Mankato last week to meet with business and public stakeholders from the Greater Mankato area on transportation issues. GMG President & CEO Jonathan Zierdt provided opening remarks highlighting the need for transportation infrastructure to keep pace with business growth in the region. The Commissioner discussed a new strategy that MnDOT is embarking on to raise the visibility of transportation needs across the state and generate public support for infusions of new transportation revenues. [more info](#)

Greater Mankato's Visibility is on the Rise

- Since March 1, GMG has generated at least 15 media stories on public affairs issues. (e.g. Chairman Hornstein Luncheon, Hwy 14 and civic center testimony, commissioner and governor visits)
- In the past month and a half, Greater Mankato has had visits by the Governor, DEED Commissioner (twice), Transportation Commissioner, House Transportation Finance Cmte. Chair as well as the House Minority Leader and his deputies.

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