



Senate version of construction bill out Monday

ST. PAUL — More than most cities, Mankato looks nervously toward Monday morning's release of the state Senate's list of construction projects.



DAN LINEHAN
The Free Press

A final bill it is not, but a strong showing would reinforce the area's success in the House version, which includes more than \$102 million in area projects. Those include \$14.5 million for the Mankato civic center, \$5 million for a South Central College renovation, \$17.2 million for Minnesota State University's clinical sciences

building, \$56 million for the Minnesota Security Hospital, \$7.4 million for the Minnesota Sex Offender Program and \$2.4 million for the Rapidan Dam.

Chair: Basics first

The chair of the Senate's bonding committee is LeRoy Stumpf, a Democrat from the northwest Minnesota town of Plummer. Though he didn't say which projects were in his bill, he did say what it will emphasize.

"We prefer roads, bridges,

clean water, wastewater," he said. "A lot of our communities are hanging on by a thread in terms of those kinds of basic infrastructure."

Economic development projects, housing projects and higher education were other focuses, he said.

When asked about the Mankato civic center's eighth attempt for state money, he said "My personal feeling is that civic centers are important for those regional centers that have a need for serving part of the state that normally small

communities wouldn't do. And, really, it's an economic driver."

The size of his overall bill, though "not as big as I'd like," will be about \$845 million in borrowing and about \$200 million in cash from the surplus, Stumpf said.

GOP hesitance

As demonstrated by former Gov. Tim Pawlenty's three line-item vetoes of the Mankato project, Republicans have reservations about borrowing to expand civic centers. And they have pull

here because bonding bills require a three-fifths vote for passage; the Democratic majority can't pass the bills by themselves.

On Minnesota Public Radio last week, Dellwood Republican Matt Dean, his party's lead in the House bonding committee, suggested that Minnesota's civic centers don't only compete with Wisconsin, Iowa and South Dakota.

"They're also in competition with each other, so we need to be very mindful of the fact that when we are using tax dollars to help one city's economic development, that might be at the

cost of another city's bottom line," he said.

That said, Dean doesn't support picking out a few civic centers and ignoring the rest, as has been done in the past.

"When we're looking at helping one, we're going to probably help all of them to keep it fair," he said. "It's kind of like picking your favorite kid. It's very difficult."

That bit about inter-city civic center competition — is it true?

Mankato City Manager Pat Hentges allowed that it is partly true, but each civic

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BRIEFS

ExOne donates 3-D printer to MSU

MANKATO — The ExOne Company, a global provider of three-dimensional printers and printed products, recently donated an X1-Lab printer to Minnesota State University's Department of Automotive and Manufacturing Engineering Technology.

The \$100,000 3-D printer is being used for teaching and research.

The X1-Lab is a breakthrough in additive manufacturing equipment. "Designed especially for research and educational customers, the X1-Lab is an excellent tool for developing powdered metal and glass materials and processes, as well as training the next generation of manufacturing engineers and powdered metal scientists," according to a news release from MSU.

The Free Press

Authorities ID body found in rental RV

WINONA — A group of men on their way to the Kentucky Derby for a bachelor party made a gruesome discovery after they pulled their rented RV over in Winona: a body was inside the vehicle's storage compartment.

Authorities say Saturday that the body belongs to 22-year-old Kevin Casserly of Anoka, who has been missing since November. His death is being investigated. Authorities did not plan to release any additional updates Saturday.

Officials say the men rented the RV from a private party in Anoka County.

Senators make beer bet over hockey

CHICAGO — U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk says he's looking forward to an ice-cold Minnesota beer when the Chicago Blackhawks win the Stanley Cup.

The Illinois Republican and Democratic Sen. Al Franken of Minnesota made a friendly wager over the outcome of the National Hockey League playoff series between the Blackhawks and the Minnesota Wild — a six-pack of craft beer from the loser's home state.

The best-of-seven series began Friday in Chicago.

The Associated Press

Spring in Mankato gets a little

SQUIRRELY



Photo by Pat Christman

One of two baby squirrels under Dave Guth's care crawls up his shoulder at his Mankato home. Guth found the pair, along with three others that didn't survive, abandoned under a pile of leaves in his back yard.



Photos by Pat Christman

Above, Guth feeds the squirrels kitten formula five to six times a day.

Below, The pair of squirrels under Guth's care about 5 weeks old.



Mankato man nursing newborn squirrels back to health

By Pat Christman
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There is a war going on right now in backyards across Minnesota, a war between squirrels and the owners of backyard bird feeders. The squirrels invade the feeders looking for food. Bird enthusiasts shoo them off in the hopes of feeding blue jays and

cardinals instead of the squirrels.

The squirrels, at least a pair of them, have a new ally in Mankato resident Dave Guth.

Guth found a litter of five baby squirrels buried in the leaves of his backyard this spring. When the mother never returned, Guth took the little bundles of fur in. Three

of the five didn't survive the first week but the two largest ones have, thanks to Guth's care. He figures the pair around five weeks old.

"These two little rascals are unique little guys," Guth said.

Guth started out feeding them goat's milk with a small spoon. Once the milk ran out, Guth took a

trip to Pet Expo to figure out what to feed them. He returned home with kitten formula, which he feeds them five to six times a day.

"I get up two or three times at night to feed them," Guth said.

Guth hopes to release them back to the wild once they are old enough to eat on their own.

Visit Mankato to honor ambassadors

By Free Press Staff

MANKATO — Several Mankato "ambassadors" are being honored by Visit Mankato in connection with National Travel and Tourism Week.

The honorees are:
■ Monica Stephanie, the general manager of Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham. Stephanie will receive the Hotel Travel and Tourism Award "for acting as a safe haven during tumultuous winter weather by offering a

'freeze over' rate for when travel is not advised," according to a news release by Visit Mankato.

■ Julie Brewer, visitor experience manager of the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota. Brewer works with staff to "ensure positive visitor experience is the top priority" for the museum, according to Visit Mankato. She will be awarded the Attraction Travel and Tourism Award.

■ Terry and Karen Johnson of Scheels. They will be given the Retail Travel

and Tourism Award for providing "great customer service" to runners and others in the shoes and athletic departments; for their involvement with Mankato Marathon; and for being active in the Mankato running community.

■ JoeRae Galli Storm, owner of Dairy Queen West and The Pita Pit. Storm will receive the Restaurant Travel and Tourism Award "for her dedication to her employees and the visitors of her restaurants," the news release states. "She

All recipients will be honored at the Visit Mankato 30th Anniversary Celebration 4-6 p.m. Thursday at Mankato Place.

represents the community of Mankato with a smile on her face and a conversation ready for any visitor she meets."

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For more information, visit www.visitmankatomn.com.

Ask Us

Pohl Road rattles coffee drinker

Q: I wonder if Mister Pat Hentges has any plans to improve the road crossing at Stadium Road and Pohl Road. When you are crossing Stadium from Pohl either traveling north or south, the road is similar to driving over a set of railroad tracks. If you're lucky, you won't spill your coffee all over yourself or have a mess in your cup holder in your car. It is apparent that he does not travel it.

A: There's a stretch of Pohl Road just north of Stadium that has bad soils underneath and needs to be rebuilt, said Mister Pat Hentges, who also is known as Mankato City Manager Pat Hentges and, occasionally, Lord Hentges.

So that spot on Pohl where the coffee-stained driver is talking about. Stadium itself, which is a Blue Earth County road, is also rough and needs an overlay in the next couple of years. The city can encourage the county to do that project, but the timing is ultimately the county's decision, Hentges said.

Most likely, the city will wait to do its fix to coincide with the county's eventual work to spiff up Stadium.

"That will be the same time we attempt to fix that one section of Pohl," he said.

As for the implication that the road hasn't been fixed because it's not regularly used by the city manager ...

"Mr. Pat Hentges does, in fact, drive there almost daily," Hentges said.

Q: I travel to work at MSU each weekday by driving up (south on) Warren and then bearing to the right up the Val Imm hill. I have been driving this route for more than eight years and regularly encounter a safety concern. About at the spot where Glenwood connects to Warren and Warren begins to curve to the right, I find I must have my hand at the ready on the horn. If there is someone in the left lane who is continuing on Warren (rather than turning onto Glenwood), that person almost always veers across the white line and into the right (my) lane. There is no shoulder there, just the curb and sidewalk, so those of us in the right lane have nowhere

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Tired of yo-yo dieting?



Free information session about weight loss and bariatric surgery

- What weight-loss options are available?
- Is bariatric surgery right for you?
- How much weight can you lose?
- Can your Type 2 diabetes be resolved?

Tuesday, May 13, 5:30 p.m. or Thursday, May 15, 7 p.m.
Mayo Clinic Health System in Mankato