

February 26, 2010

**TO: MAFMIC BOARD OF DIRECTORS, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE AND MANAGERS**

FR: MARCUS MARSH, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS MANAGER

RE: WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The week saw various parliamentary maneuvers as it relates to the Bonding Bill where the House and Senate leadership pulled the bill back from the Revisor's Office before it was delivered to the Governor. So now the House and Senate Conference Committee will reconvene to work with the Governor on a bill he can sign.

Also, the Governor's veto of the GAMC Bill (General Assistance Medical Care) was not going to have a veto override attempt according to the House and Senate leadership. But they changed their mind and on Thursday the Senate voted to override so likely next week the House will vote.

The Senate Commerce Committee heard S.F. 1886 Chief Author Kathy Saltzman (D-Woodbury) which is the bill to limit some of the actions of roofing companies (storm chasers) most of which are from out of state. The bill was first embraced by Senator Mary Olson (D-Bemidji) then she stated language in the bill needed to be changed so insured's could negotiate with the contractor to pay the policy deductible. Senator Olson is a trial lawyer whose practice is suing insurance companies. The bill passed and was sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

A coalition of fire fighter groups held a news conference last week in regards to the Premium Tax Surcharge, which is used for fire fighter training and equipment. Last Legislative Session the money was stolen from that dedicated fund and the Governor is proposing to take it again for the remainder of the current budget cycle. The House Committee that oversees state agencies held a hearing this week on the issue. Testimony by state officials was disappointing to say the least. Comments included that a precedence has been set (half of the money from the surcharge on auto insurance to help fund county attorney's to prosecute car thief's was taken a couple of years ago and continues today) so they saw nothing wrong with taking the dedicated funds to fire fighters.

A hearing was held in Senate Tax Committee on the Department of Revenue Technical Bill S.F. 2696 Chief Author Tom Bakk (D-Cook). The bill is unclear as to which year of the State two year fiscal budget (that ends June 30th every other year) that Premium Taxes needs to be paid as the change is being made from a calendar year. We are trying to get clarification from non-partisan Senate Research.

A bill was passed in the State House to change the date of the primary election to the second Tuesday of August, which is August 10 this year from the second Tuesday in September. Primaries for federal offices was changed by Congress to be no later than August so Minnesota will comply with all elections having this primary date. This will insure ballots for the general election can be prepared and sent to military personal in time to be counted in the general election. This change is needed because in the 2008 election military personal ballots from those overseas did not arrive in time to be counted in the 2008 general election. This is one issue everyone in the Legislature and the Governor can agree on so this legislation will become law.

There have been some members of the State Senate who have announced they are not running for re-election. So far it is Senator Jim Vickerman D-Tracy, Senator Steve Murphy D-Red Wing, Senator Pat Pariseau R-Farmington and Senator Steve Dille R-Dassel. We will miss all four of these Senators as they have supported MAFMIC in votes against the trial lawyers on the Senate floor.

Bills continue to be introduced at a fast pace in the House and Senate and we are reviewing several as to their impacts.

If there is any news stories or comments by your Representative or Senator in your districts you think I should know about please give me a call on my cell phone at 320-249-4442.