

March 2006

**A Publication for the
Members of the
Marshall Area
Chamber of Commerce**

MVST amendment critical to improving safety, congestion

Phase-in would boost transportation funding by \$300 million per year

Companies and individuals alike demand less congestion and safer travel on our state's transportation system. Minnesotans have an excellent opportunity to boost funding for highways and mass transit on a permanent basis by passing the proposed state constitutional amendment.

The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce is among the leaders of a broad-based coalition promoting passage of the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) ballot question. If approved by voters in the November election, the amendment will trigger a five-year transfer of the sales tax collected from all motor vehicle sales from the general fund to transportation purposes. When the phase-in is completed in 2011, transportation funding would be boosted by more than \$300 million per year.

Transportation funding has stalled in the Minnesota Legislature for more than two decades, and yet infrastructure needs escalate. The state needs to invest at least an additional \$1.7 billion per year to meet performance targets, according to the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Legislators gave Minnesotans an opportunity to break the impasse by advancing the proposed the constitutional amendment in the 2005 session, and Gov. Tim Pawlenty is on record in support of the measure. The amendment requires final approval by voters.

The idea to dedicate 100 percent of MVST revenues to transportation is not new. In fact, promises have been made for 25 years to dedicate all MVST proceeds to transportation. But the fund has been consistently tapped for other programs and services due to shortages in the general fund.

At present, only 54 percent of the MVST

dollars are used for transportation. Since 1981, the state's highway and transit systems have lost more than \$6 billion due to the diversion of MVST revenue to nontransportation services. As a result, many sound and necessary projects across all sections of the state remain at risk.

Legislative history shows us that the MVST amendment is likely a one-time opportunity to inject significant dollars on a permanent basis into statewide transportation needs – highways and transit. A “no” vote will send the message that Minnesotans are satisfied with transportation. It could be several years before the Legislature would seriously consider another proposal for substantive transportation funding.



David Olson

The state holds a higher threshold for amending the Constitution. Passage requires a “yes”

vote by a majority of everyone who goes to the polls, even if individuals skip the specific ballot question. In other words, a “non” vote is counted as a “no” vote. Since a portion of voters usually leave constitutional ballot questions blank, it's estimated that passage will require a “yes” vote of approximately 65 percent of those individuals who do mark the question.

The Minnesota Chamber and transportation interests have been trying to increase transportation funding for several years. A “yes” vote on the existing amendment will be a significant step toward improving highway safety in rural Minnesota and reducing congestion in the Twin Cities.

David Olson is the President of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

The Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has approved support of the MVST Amendment, but will continue to work to improve additional funding alternatives to benefit rural Minnesota.

**Marshall Area
Chamber of
Commerce**

The Chamber serves 430 members and has been helping the Marshall area prosper since 1930.

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The Chamber Perspectives is published twelve times each year by the Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce as a service to our members. Comments and contributions are welcome. Please call us with corrections or additions to our mailing list.



Business After Hours

Mailboxes & Parcel Depot

Monday, March 27

5:30 to 7 PM

1000 E Southview Drive

Our March Business After Hours host will be Mailboxes & Parcel Depot, located at 1000 E. Southview Drive. Mailboxes & Parcel Depot is a one-stop shipping, packaging and business services center. Whether you prefer to ship by UPS, DHL, Fed Ex, Fed Ex Express, or the US Postal Service, M&PD can assist you with your small business shipping needs. Services also include a full range of packing and shipping supplies --- from envelopes, packing peanuts, and bubble wrap, tape and more.

BAH will be held from 5:30 to 7 PM. Plan to attend!

This event is free and open to all MACC Members, their employees and guests. Please plan to attend!

Mark your calendars now.....

April's Business After Hours will be hosted by

Marshall Area Fine Arts Council

Monday, April 17, 2006