

E-mail Update
12/23/05

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1. Scott "Jet Lag" LeDoux.

As reported on our web site, Anoka County Commissioner Scott LeDoux was one of three commissioners who took a taxpayer-financed trip to Hawaii recently. We have now learned that LeDoux spent an extra night in Hawaii on the taxpayer dime. The reason? LeDoux claimed that he needed to arrive early to avoid "jet lag" and avoid concerns about "not being able to fully participate in the first day's events." Excuse us? Hawaii is only four hours time difference from Minnesota. Is it that hard to sit in a chair and listen? All of this was confirmed by an email from the Anoka County Public Information Manager (how did the County ever get by without one of those?).

LeDoux is scheduled to travel to Arizona in late January on another taxpayer-financed trip. Will there be a need for an extra night to avoid another bout of jet lag?

2. Ham Lake Vikings Resolution.

After tabling the resolution at a previous meeting, the Ham Lake City Council recently passed a resolution supporting a citizen referendum regarding the proposed sales tax increase to fund a stadium. The vote was 4-0 with Councilman Paul Muenier refusing to cast a vote despite an opinion by the city attorney that he was required to vote. Ham Lake joins Oak Grove and Centerville as cities officially supporting the referendum.

3. Anoka County Spends Your Money (again).

The December 7, 2005 edition of the Blaine Banner newspaper ran a feature on what it costs Anoka County taxpayers to fund its county commissioners. Salaries, fringe benefits, travel, parking, food, and the rest were tabulated. The total for calendar year 2005 ran in excess of \$535,000.

The web site will have details shortly.

4. On the Road with Dick Lang and Danford Erhart.

The Blaine Banner report mentioned above contained a number of interesting expenditures. Among these, two in particular stand out.

First, Commissioner Dick Lang claimed an eye-popping \$4,537.08 in mileage reimbursement. By comparison, Commissioner Rhonda Sivarajah claimed \$329.25.

Where is Dick Lang driving? How is he logging mileage between home, the county courthouse, and his Ham Lake office?

In addition, it was reported that the County spent over \$34,000 for conference attendance. Commissioner Danford Erhart attended the most, eleven. Considering that the report was updated through November of 2005, Danford Erhart attended an average of one conference a month during 2005.

5. Watchdog Hero Award.

The Watchdog announces its "Watchdog Hero" award. This award will be offered periodically to recognize those people who have gone the extra mile to protect their fellow taxpayers by taking the initiative to uncover governmental waste, fraud, and abuse. The award will be given to citizens who uncover governmental waste through the uncompensated investment of their own time and resources. The Watchdog believes that these citizens honor the finest traditions of American democracy through their hard work and civic pride.

Being a fiscally conservative organization, the award entails no reward beyond the intrinsic satisfaction of a job well done.

6. The Envelope Please...

The Watchdog announces our first winner: Mr. John Lilleberg. Lilleberg is the man who has pursued the details of the Hawaii junket. He was the one who uncovered "Jet Lag Gate" and has raised other questions about the accommodation and meal expenditures of the commissioners who took the trip. John, you're a true Watchdog and champion of the taxpayer. We salute you.

Merry Christmas to all!

The Watchdog

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E-mail Update
12/29/05

In this issue:

1. House Civil Law Committee comes to Blaine;
2. Quote of the Week;
3. Referendum Gains Steam;
4. Anoka County Extends Vikings Agreement;
5. Watchdog Hero.

1. House Civil Law Committee comes to Blaine.

The House Civil Law Committee will hold a hearing regarding the use of eminent domain in light of the recent Supreme Court decision in *Kelo v. New London*. Anoka County has publicly stated that they will not rule out the use of eminent domain to seize land for the proposed Vikings stadium.

The hearing will be held at Blaine City Hall on January 11th at 2:00 p.m. City Hall is located at 10801 Town Square Drive.

The public is invited to testify. Call Dennis Virden at 651-296-6860.

2. Quote of the week.

"It takes a lot to penetrate the consciousness of the average voter."
- Anoka County lobbyist Steve Novak

Um, it isn't the voters who are thick-headed, Steve!

3. Referendum Gains Steam.

The Pioneer Press carried a great article last week regarding the momentum referendum supporters are gaining across Anoka County.

The web site has the article: www.anokacountywatchdog.com.

4. Anoka County Extends Vikings Agreement.

Many media outlets reported this week that Anoka County has extended its agreement with the Vikings to build a stadium in Blaine. The agreement was extended for six months, long enough to cover the 2006 session of the legislature. This despite the fact that both Governor Pawlenty and Speaker Ssviggum have said that the Vikings are a distant third in priority. In fact, Ssviggum has said he prefers no vote at all on the Vikings this year.

5. Watchdog Hero

Our second Watchdog hero award goes to Coon Rapids citizen Jim Hafner. Jim has spent numerous hours analyzing the stadium financing deal as well as attending city council meetings across Anoka County. He is currently pushing the Coon Rapids council to consider a pro-referendum resolution. Jim, thanks for your hard work!

The Watchdog Staff

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