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St. Paul Schools face budget woes

# University Avenue businesses brace for Central Corridor light rail construction

By JAN WILLMS

Dr. Greg Hynan of Hynan Chiropractic, 475 University Ave. W., is one of three generations of family who have worked as chiropractors on University Avenue, beginning with his grandfather in 1923.

With the anticipated construction of the Central Corridor, Hynan is not worried about his own business, but he does fear that some of the neighboring small businesses may not survive.

"I don't know whether light rail is good or bad for the area," Hynan said, "but I don't think we have a lot of options... (But) if parking is blocked in front of their business site, will customers decide not to use them? Will they be able to handle that downturn in revenue?"

Hynan said he had been on the Avenue for 28 years, and his brother joined him in 1985.

Hynan, along with 20 other individuals, has formed a steering committee through the University Avenue Business Association (UABA) to address concerns over the impending Light Rail Transit (LRT).

Hynan feels the UABA is valuable because it was formed around specific issues—LRT and the dire need for parking space once the LRT comes to the corridor.

Hynan said some University Avenue residents are extremely opinionated about LRT, some are in favor and others know nothing. "There's a significant disconnect," he claimed. He said the challenges presented by the LRT provide an opportunity to develop a great business association.

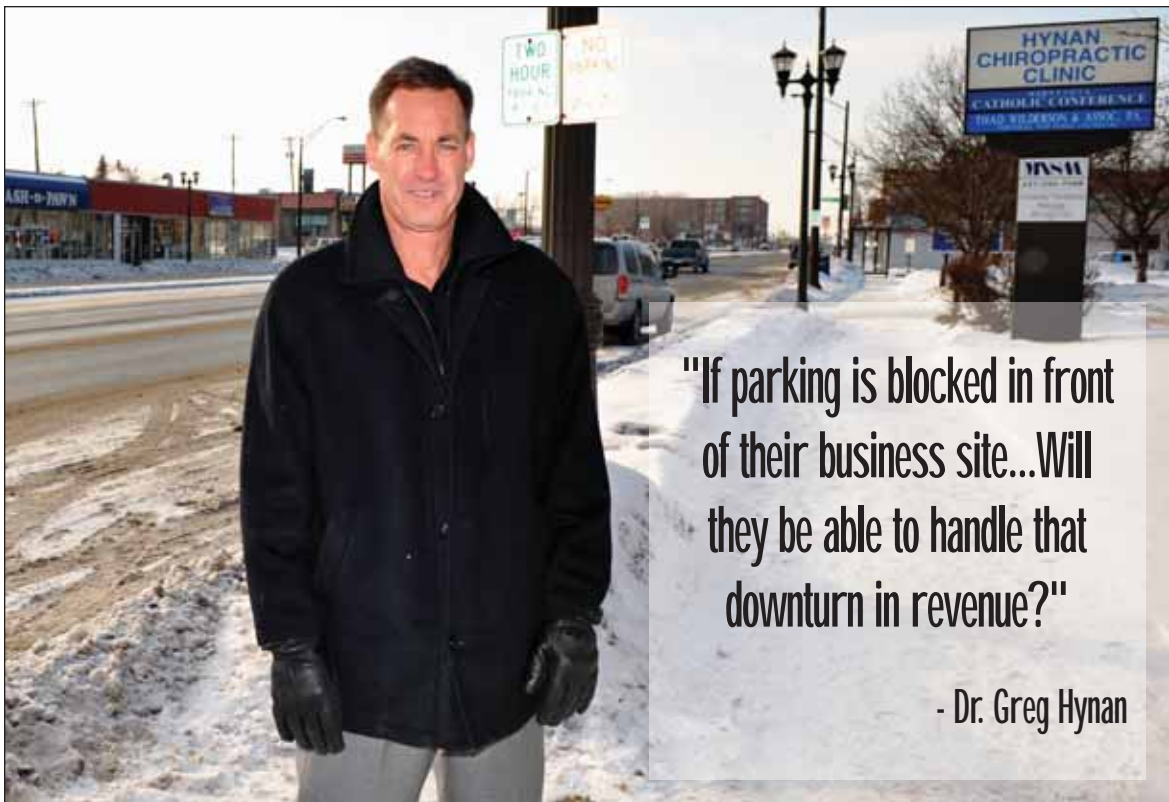
"In a nutshell, it's what we're about," he said.

He said everyone along University Avenue should be influential in some way as to how light rail develops.

Hynan said the parking situation for small businesses in the wake of light rail is drawing the merchants together.

"With housing," Hynan said, "they say Location! Location! Location! For commercial property, it's Parking! Parking! Parking!"

Linda Winsor, assistant direc-



Dr. Greg Hynan of Hynan Chiropractic, 475 University Ave. W., is one of three generations of family who have worked as chiropractors on University Avenue, beginning with his grandfather in 1923. With the anticipated construction of the Central Corridor, Hynan fears that some of his neighboring small businesses may not survive. (Photo by Denis Jeong Plaster)

"If parking is blocked in front of their business site...Will they be able to handle that downturn in revenue?"

- Dr. Greg Hynan

tor of University United and an organizer for UABA, said that parking is a critical issue, tied in with construction.

"It's projected there will be an 85 per cent loss of street parking upon completion of the LRT," she said.

UABA has been addressing the issues anticipated with the advent of light rail at its monthly meetings that have been focusing on construction mitigation for small businesses.

The impending light rail and its relationship to University Avenue merchants has not been an easy process, according to Winsor.

"There has been a lack of information in timely fashion from the Met Council, especially the Business Advisory Council, the city and county, about the LRT project," Winsor stated.

She said businesses have not been notified about the construction schedule, the scope of the project, the sequence, the traffic flow and temporary parking.

"Are sidewalks going to be torn up at the same time as the road?" she asked. She said many questions remain unanswered.

Winsor said during construction, there might be 30 to 50 per cent less revenue for retail businesses. She said owners need to know about streetscape elements, what assessments they can expect and public signage.

"The Business Advisory Council (BAC) has done nothing but hold information close to their vests," Winsor said. "Property tax information is lacking also."

Winsor expressed concern that the process has not had meaningful small business input.

"They (small business owners) are feeling like no matter what they say, they have seen no result of their input making any changes," she noted.

"As a result of these things small businesses are unable to plan for their future," Winsor said. "This might be a good time to do façade improvement or re-

modeling projects, and they all should be coordinated with LRT construction."

Hynan said a number of businesses along University Avenue are relatively young businesses, still having to struggle, and could be put in jeopardy during the LRT construction process.

"My patients will come, but that may not be true for smaller businesses," he said. "University Avenue is an unusual street. It is not Grand Avenue or Hennepin Avenue," Hynan said.

"I have watched developers get permits to build, with no access to the avenue for parking," he said. "I don't know what their plan is."

Laura Baenen, communications manager for the Central Corridor LRT Project, and Robin Cauffman, manager of public involvement under the auspices of the Met Council, feel they have made

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



# Construction

Continued from page 1

a strong effort to provide LRT information to both small businesses and residents along University Avenue.

"We have had meetings at nights, on weekends and early in the morning," Baenen said. "We have gone out to grocery stores, fairs and festivals, because we know some people do not like to attend government meetings."

She said there have been a series of business listening sessions, where the Met Council can hear what people's concerns are. Caufman said meetings have also been held in other languages, Vietnamese, Spanish and Hmong.

Baenen said that as far as the construction schedule, there are a lot of hurdles to get through and the process is too early for that information to be disseminated.

"I know everyone is chomping at the bit," she said, "but we are not withholding information. We know the concerns to the com-

## Contact information for LRT concerns:

Community outreach coordinator:  
Rita Rodriguez, 651-602-1645

Website: [www.centralcorridor.org](http://www.centralcorridor.org)

E-mail: [centralcorridor@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:centralcorridor@metc.state.mn.us)

The BAC meets the third Monday of the month at the Court International Building, 2550 University Ave. W., St. Paul.

munity, and we will be getting the word out."

Caufman said studies on traffic flow along University Avenue and downtown St. Paul are posted on the website, [centralcorridor.org](http://centralcorridor.org). The website also has information on parking concerns.

Caufman said the BAC is a standing committee that meets monthly. Twenty-five individuals, representatives from small and large businesses as well as non-profits, participate.

"You don't have to be a business owner to attend," she said. "Anyone is welcome to attend." The group has been meeting for the past two years, with an agenda set every month.

Baenen said the LRT construction will try to work around specific events.

"We would not want to be working at Snelling and University during the State Fair," she said as an example.

Regarding possible assessments for small businesses, Caufman said the \$915 million project is being funded 50 per cent by local entities, such as Ramsey and Hennepin Counties and the state. There is also the new sales tax initiated to fund light rail. The other 50 per cent is funded by federal money.

"Construction work is scheduled to start in 2010, with light rail operating by 2014," Caufman said.

Meanwhile, Winsor said that UABA has offered small businesses a chance to gather and discuss their needs. She said the group also gives elected officials and decision-makers information on what would be helpful for the small business owner.

As part of that outreach, Sen. Patricia Torres Ray is addressing the group Jan. 15. She is the author of a bill which passed 61-0 in the senate's last session that instructs the Commissioner of Transportation to study and report to the legislature on ways to help small businesses affected by construction.

"Even before I became a senator I heard complaints from small business owners about the impact of road construction on their business," Sen. Torres Ray said.

"She is passionate about small businesses and their place in communities," Winsor said. "She sees the need for University Avenue to get organized because of the real issues when under construction."

Businesses have also been asked to complete a survey, prioritizing the major issues that concern them with light rail. Those issues are to be presented at the meeting.

On Jan. 29 UABA will discuss alternatives to eliminating street parking on University Avenue.

"UABA is a very young and evolving group that is really trying to dig in and take action," Winsor said. "If we have good transportation, but empty storefronts, things are not working. We have to fight for a piece of the pie."

## Como Woodland Advisors to honor Great River School Students

On February 9, the Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom (CWOC) Advisory Committee will vote to give a Woodland Stewardship Award to Tami Limberg's class of junior high students from Great River School. During their 2008 fall semester, the students worked on a variety of activities that benefited the Como Woodland (a volunteer, environmental education project in Como Park that depends on student participation in both planning and execution). Eco Education guided the Great River School students in this community service endeavor.

In the students' own words:

"We had many ideas for helping with this project such as restoring the Joyce Kilmer Memorial or Cascades. We decided to do projects, such as, building bluebird houses, pulling buckthorn, and going out and telling people by making flyers and passing them out. We are creating a photo essay and an article for The Daily Planet online newspaper." It is with deep gratitude that the CWOC Advisors recognize the work these young urban stewards have done to improve their local communities' environment. To view a PowerPoint presentation produced by the Great River School students, visit: [www.comowoodland.org](http://www.comowoodland.org)



Sharon Shinomiya (left), a Como Park volunteer, accepts six bluebird nestboxes built and donated by Great River students. Great River student Alaena Hatting (right), along with fellow students, took action to improve various aspects of Como Park through their participation in Eco Education's Urban Stewards program.

# monitor

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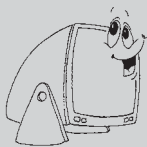
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# Central Corridor changes sent to Federal Transportation Administration this month

By JANE MCCLURE

Further changes to the Central Corridor plans will be sent to the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) in mid-January. The Central Corridor's Corridor Management Committee reviewed the project changes last month, after a series of public meetings. If the \$914.8 million light rail project wins approval, the changes could affect where trains are maintained and stored in St. Paul's Lowertown neighborhood. The changes will also be seen along the entire route, with 19 sites selected for structures that will house signal controls and power stations. Most of those sites are along University Avenue.

Last month the final Environmental Impact Statement or EIS was sent to cities and counties, cities and other project partners for a final review. Central Corridor Project director Mark Fuhrmann said that any comments on the plan have to be submitted in a week, so that any needed changes can be made to meet the January deadline.

During the first week of December about 150 people turned out for a series of meetings on the final EIS. The meetings provided information about the new location for the Lowertown operations and maintenance facility, as well as every proposed location along the route for signal bungalows and electrical power stations. The latest plan changes can be seen at [www.centralcorridor.org](http://www.centralcorridor.org)

Metropolitan Council is planning the light rail line, which will connect downtown St. Paul and

Minneapolis. Most of its route extends along University Avenue.

Under a timeline reviewed by the Corridor Management Committee, a decision by the FTA on the project is expected in May. If the go-ahead is given, final design work can begin in summer 2009. Construction of the rail line itself would start in 2010, with operations starting in 2014.

The earliest physical improvements the public would see would be the start of traffic changes around the University of Minnesota's East Bank campus, which would start in the summer. These changes would be needed when motor vehicles are detoured off of part of Washington Avenue to make way for light rail.

Utility relocation in downtown St. Paul would also begin then. Fuhrmann noted that when Hiawatha Corridor was built in downtown Minneapolis, 13 different underground utilities had to be relocated.

In downtown St. Paul, one of the challenges is working with District Energy. The utility provides heating and cooling services for most of downtown as well as the state capitol area. That means work has to be done where there is not demand for air conditioning or heat in buildings.

The biggest change is the move of the operations and maintenance facility, from Ramsey County-owned land near Union Depot to a warehouse that was part of the Diamond Products factory.

"The project just skyrocketed in costs," said Gary Erickson of the

Central Corridor project staff. Costs rose from \$47.3 million to \$100 million, then were winnowed back down to \$71.1 million before the project won Metropolitan Council approval in September. The scaled-back facility eliminated a number of features, including additional track work, site work, train washing equipment and walls and doors for the storage shed. The loss of walls and doors prompted some committee members to compare the stripped-down facility to a carport.

Project staff looked at locating the facility elsewhere in Lowertown before choosing Diamond Products, which has an estimated cost of \$65.5 million. The building eyed as a site is one of the two vacant Diamond Products buildings in Lowertown, just west of the LaFayette Bridge. Diamond Products was a spin-off of Gillette Corporation, which operated in St. Paul for many years.

Erickson said that the original operation and maintenance facility site caused a number of problems for project planners. Had the facility been located by the Union Depot concourse, physical changes would have to have been made to a Union Depot platform. Because the depot is a historic landmark, that required review by the State Historic Preservation Office.

The site also conflicts with Ramsey County's long-term plans to turn the old depot concourse area into a multi-modal transit hub, with light rail, bus, com-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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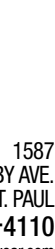
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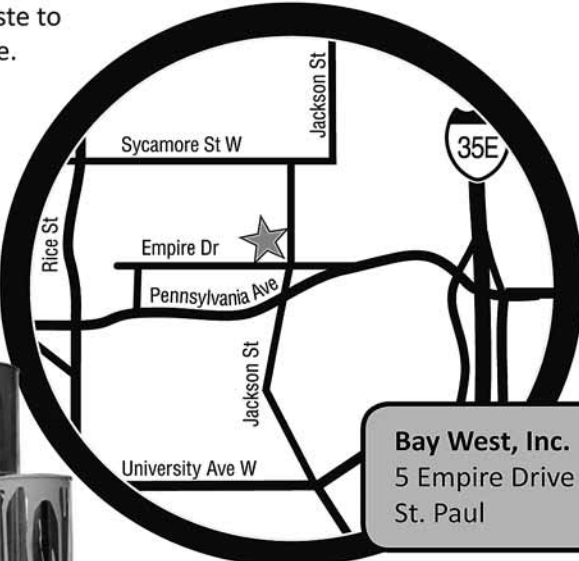
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# City, County restart budget process from scratch

By JANE MCCLURE

In the movie Groundhog Day, a man finds himself doing the same thing over and over again. That may be how local elected officials feel as they prepare to redo 2009 budgets that were adopted in December.

The St. Paul City Council and Ramsey County board set maximum levies and adopted budgets for 2009 in December but are starting all over again now as Minnesota's budget crisis and Gov. Tim Pawlenty's actions in late December to unallot Local Government Aid (LGA) to cities and program aids to counties put 2008 spending plans out of balance. For 2009, the potential for even more cuts in state dollars has local elected officials prepared for the worst.

St. Paul City Council, Mayor Chris Coleman's administration and city department heads meet Jan. 14 to start discussing more budget cuts for 2009. Last month the mayor enacted a hiring freeze and put what few new initiatives

are in the 2009 budget on hold. That means not hiring 14 new police officers and one fire fighter, not adding morning library hours and putting the brakes on any unnecessary city spending. It means not adding staff at the Oxford Community Center's Jimmy Lee Recreation Center and Oxford Pool, not hiring a bicycle-pedestrian coordinator, not hiring staff to assist with the 2010 U.S. Census and leaving other positions vacant. It takes away the Civic Organizations Partnership Program (COPP), which for years has funded the Youth Service Bureau, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services and a whole host of other programs.

Coleman has asked all city department heads to prepare budget-cutting plans for trimming up to 20 percent of spending.

What's not clear is the impact on the planned Como Park Circulator, a bus designed to transport people to and from park facilities and ease the parking crunch there.

Pawlenty had to make \$426 million in cuts to balance the current state budget. Those cuts were announced Dec. 19. Cities and counties took a hit of about \$110 million. St. Paul lost \$5.7 million. Statewide, Minneapolis took the largest LGA cut, of \$13.1 million.

Counties also took their lumps. Ramsey County sustained a \$4.3 million cut and Hennepin County lost \$10.6 million.

For most local governments that money has already been spent. Coleman said St. Paul will have to borrow money to meet basic obligations.

But the bigger cuts may be ahead. Elected officials are bracing themselves for Jan. 26, when Pawlenty presents the next state budget. State officials anticipate a \$4.85 billion deficit in the next two-year budget cycle, which is likely to mean even more difficulty cuts and choices ahead.

Local elected officials agreed it is difficult to adopt budgets when there is so much uncertainty. For

2009 cuts are inevitable as property taxes cannot be raised any more. Cities and counties have to set maximum levies by Sept. 15 for the following year. School districts face an annual Sept. 30 deadline.

St. Paul adopted its 2009 city budget and maximum levy Dec. 17. St. Paul Public Schools and Ramsey County acted Dec. 16. The St. Paul Public Schools' adopted budget for 2008-2009 is \$628.1 million. About 11.3 percent of district dollars come from property taxes. Property taxpayers paid \$102.9 million to support the 2008-2009 budget. The levy increases 3.9 percent, to \$106.9 million for the 2009-2010 budget. The school district budget year starts in July and ends in June; the city and county operate on a calendar year. Schools were held harmless in Pawlenty's December unallotment process.

City and county officials adopted their budgets just days before the unallotment decisions. Victoria Reinhardt, who chairs

Ramsey County's budget committee, said that while commissioners worked hard for several months to prepare a budget and strike a balance between competing needs, the hard tasks are ahead.

"We do have a lot of work ahead of us," Reinhardt said. "Everybody will be working on very difficult issues, during what will be a very difficult budget year."

The County Board passed its budget on a 6-1 vote with Commissioner Janice Rettman opposed. Rettman said the county should make more budget cuts now, rather than waiting.

The 2009 county budget is \$588.9 million. Of that amount, \$247.4 million is property taxes. The county is also levying \$19.9 million for its regional rail authority budget of \$32.7 million. The property tax levy for county operations and light rail is increasing 4.2 percent, from \$262 million to \$272.9 million.

The St. Paul City Council adopted its budget unanimously Dec. 17 although there was evident frustration at the last-minute scramble to make spending cuts. Actions by the council and mayor that day put about \$4.2 million in contingency. But the council also had to bring its 2008 spending in balance, allocating \$2.6 million to fill holes in this year's budget. Cost overruns in overtime and benefits in some departments, as well as overspending in several areas, left that gap to be filled.

"This feels like we got oatmeal for breakfast when we were expecting Lucky Charms," said Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen.

But Council President Kathy Lantry noted there is little the city can do. She said the city is doing everything it can to bridge the budget gap but that more pain is inevitable. In recent weeks council members have talked about everything from diverting more Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) dollars to pay for capital purchases to scaling back or even canceling the upcoming Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process. Some neighborhoods are even discussing the prospect of shuttering more recreation centers, a step the city took in 2008. Helgen said he knows of at least one neighborhood that is talking about having an older recreation center torn down and replaced with a basketball court or smaller amenity, rather than maintain a deteriorated building.

Difficult budget times are ahead, said Ward Three Council Member Pat Harris. "I think people have no idea of how bad things could get." Harris served on a council committee that made spending cuts in 2003, the last time LGA was slashed. He fears it will be much worse this time around.

The council adopted 2009 budgets of \$633 for all departments and the libraries. The combined budgets are expected to increase by 5.9 percent. The city proposes an 8 percent levy increase. The city plans to collect \$87.14 million in property taxes next year, an increase of \$6.6 million. The city will also levy \$2.1 million for the St. Paul Port Authority operations.


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# Possible MPR litigation could derail Central Corridor projects

By JANE MCCLURE

Could a war of words and litigation send the Central Corridor light rail projects off of the tracks? Minnesota Public Radio's high-profile fight against putting the rail line down Cedar Avenue in downtown St. Paul has project proponents scrambling. Some fear that MPR's threat to sue could doom the entire project.

The \$915 million light rail project, which would connect downtown St. Paul to the Hiawatha Line in downtown Minneapolis, is in the final stages of preliminary project design.

MPR has broadcast announcements stating its concern and has also detailed those issues on its Web site. The campaign has resulted in many calls, letters and emails, from as far away as Japan, in support of MPR.

The broadcaster is concerned that noise and vibrations from trains could interfere with recordings at its Cedar Street recording studios. In a Dec. 10 letter to Central Corridor officials, MPR said that the noise and vibrations could very well shut down its "highly sensitive broadcast center" and leave the broadcaster with no other option but to sue.

MPR has argued that while has been aware of the potential for LRT by its facilities for some time only recently has it been aware of what letters describe as a "significant negative impact" on the radio stations' facilities. MPR has concert facilities as well

as recording and broadcast studios. The broadcaster has also taken issue with the studies done on noise and vibrations and has questioned their adequacy.

The concerns about noise and vibrations on Cedar are also shared by two neighboring churches, Central Presbyterian Church and the Church of St. Louis. Trains will pass within less than 20 feet of the MPR facilities and the churches. The churches have raised concerns about noise and vibration, as well as access to their front doors for services and events.

Vibrations and noise are also an issue at the University of Minnesota's East Bank campus, where the rail line will travel near research labs and facilities. In December the Central Corridor project staff issued a report stating that the concerns can be mitigated there, just as they can be in downtown St. Paul.

The MPR dispute has so frustrated Metropolitan Council Chair Peter Bell, St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and other light rail supporters that a back-and-forth flurry of public statements has begun. Bell has rapped MPR for using its airwaves and Web site to rally its supporters against the Cedar Street alignment. He and other officials point out that there has been extensive testing, using Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) guidelines, and that the project planners can implement steps to mitigate vibrations and noise.

Bell and others have rejected the notion of moving the line off of Cedar Street, after so many years of planning. "Cedar Street was properly chosen for the alignment. Cedar Street remains the route," he said. He and other officials point out that Cedar has been studied as a rail alignment since the 1980s.

Bell also has stated that re-opening the decision about the Cedar alignment would cost tens of millions of dollars and would delay the Central Corridor project for at least one year.

Mayor Coleman has also sounded off on the controversy, expressing concern that the MPR concerns could kill the entire Central Corridor project. In late December Coleman, Bell and Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority Chairperson Jim McDonough issued a second statement detailing their concerns. They outlined the history of Cedar being part of the downtown LRT alignment and pointed out that not putting rail there would mean abandoning part of the line that has potentially high ridership.

The three officials also note that MPR chose to expand its Cedar facilities several years ago, while knowing that light rail would be passing by those facilities. As to MPR's claims that there is no other rail line so close to a facility like there, the three officials argued that "Rail transit

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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# St. Paul Schools faces critical time in face of budget cuts

By JAN WILLMS

Johnny will still be able to get a hot breakfast, and Mary some tutoring with reading this next school year in St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS). But other programs may suffer as education faces one of its most challenging times in recent history with extensive budget cuts.

With a shortfall of at least \$15 million predicted, SPPS is instituting a district-wide hiring freeze.

"Without a doubt, this is one of the worst times I have seen," said Lois Rockney, SPPS chief business officer.

"We are definitely seeing a shortfall because of declining enrollment," she said. "That means fewer students, and we get our money based on the number of students, so all departments will be impacted."

She said the school district is trying not to do across-the-board cuts, analyzing its budget very carefully.

"We really need to look at which programs are effective, and which are not," she said.

"We're looking at everything we spend our money on and trying to do an in-depth analysis." Rockney said the district is trying

to make changes in ways that will not strongly affect the students.

"We provide breakfast to every child in the district through a federal subsidy," she said, "and that is not going to be impacted." She added that grants, such as the three-year BioSMART grant in place at Arlington High School, will not be affected.

Rockney said SPPS can survive this difficult period.

"We have been in a budget-cutting mode for years," she said, "but enrollment is cyclical. This is the same pattern that we

saw in the early 1980s. Enrollment plateaus in three to four years, and we need to live on the revenue provided to us. Recession is cyclical, also."

Rockney added that educators will need to be very watchful of what is happening at the Legislature, also.

"It will not be easy, not in Minnesota or across the nation, but we will survive," she said.

Also casting a hopeful, if wary, eye at the New Year and budget cuts is Keith Hardy, serving his first term on the SPPS district school board.

"We are still waiting for the

forecast on the coming year," he said. He said federally funded programs would not be affected, but the budget shortfall could affect programs that develop from a federal mandate.

For example, Hardy said certain schools that fall short of requirements of No Child Left Behind are supposed to provide tutoring for students at a certain level. He said with budget cuts, the school district has to pay a tutoring organization if staff is not available, or rely on a grant or community partners for assistance.

"I just met with the director of America Reads," Hardy said. The program, through a grant provided to St. Catherine's, funds college students to assist K-12 pupils with reading.

Hardy said the program offers a good partnership, but it is available in only three St. Paul schools.

He said that this past year, Arlington and other schools have lost quite a number of staff members and that has to be dealt with.

"Capital Expenditure and Education Adequacy has been doing a study about our buildings," Hardy said. "The group has gone onto all the building sites and looked at the structure and everything associated with the building—how it is being used and what the grounds are like." He said the group is studying education adequacy by determining if each class has the right number of sections.

"Out of this study we are expecting some recommendations at our February board meeting," Hardy said. "Are we using our space appropriately? Do we have to look at mergers?"

Hardy said that different schools have different possibilities. With enrollment dropping, there may be fewer students participating in the BioSMART program at Arlington, and some of that space could possibly be used in a different way. Humboldt is making some space in its junior high buildings. Adams Spanish Immersion, on the other hand, is over-filled, according to Hardy, and some other options are needed there.

"We want to make good, efficient use of current buildings, locations and administrative sites," he said. "The tough conversation will be if we have to look at closing any schools. That is not planned now, but it could happen."

Hardy said the state legislature, at best, will be fortunate if it can hold the current funding.

"The main thing I am going to be looking at as a board member is using the money we currently have as effectively and responsibly as we can," Hardy added.

Considering the current economic picture, Hardy said he was glad there is a hiring freeze

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 7





School Board Member Keith Hardy helps with a robotics class at Highland Park Junior High. (Photo by Denis Jeong Plaster)

# Budget cuts

Continued from page 6

on right now, although he knows some positions will have to be replaced, such as Rockney's. She is due to retire soon.

Hardy said SPPS is trying to

build programs for its English Language Learner (ELL) students. He mentioned Hmong and Somali programs that are gaining in strength.

"My concern is that we keep our programs balanced," he said. "We need to keep up our Gifted and Talented program as well. We are mandated to keep special education going. We don't want to lose any particular segment of the student population."

He cited transportation

needs and magnet schools.

"We need to see what we can do to streamline programs, but we want to keep school choice an option," he stated.

Hardy said that although charter schools are also going through some difficulties, cultural and language immersion schools are the toughest competition for SPPS.

"I have some hope," Hardy said. "I am liking some of the early words of Obama's choice

for Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. He wants to fund public education, but not rely so heavily on property tax levies. I hope he follows through on that."

Hardy said that there is currently a lot of focus on E-3, but he also wants to see attention paid to grades 9-12, graduation rates and retention of students.

"We still need to keep working with the achievement gap (between minority students and

Caucasian students)," he noted.

He said St. Paul is working hard to get rid of soft bigotry and low expectations. "We need to realize that minority students are capable of taking accelerated classes," he said.

Considering the upcoming year, Hardy said he can think of three areas where the community can participate.

"First, share your ideas with us," he said. "As a board member, I need public input more than ever this year. There are only seven of us on the board, and we can't figure it all out by ourselves."

Hardy said the second greatest need is for volunteers.

"Volunteer wherever you can," Hardy encouraged. "For example, there is one whole church congregation who volunteers. There are grandmothers volunteering. We have great teachers, but there are only so many ways we can stretch them."

His third request is for people to contact their legislators.

"The transportation people and the sports stadium people are there," he said. "We need to make ourselves heard. You may feel legislators are not accessible, but most of them will respond to e-mail. Even reach out to national leaders. As a school board body, we will spend more time at the state capitol than we have in the past."

Hardy admitted things will not be easy.

"We may have to look at the sacred cow of conference sports that is usually untouched," he said. At the same time, he hopes to strengthen physical education programs, and he said he is a big supporter of theater, music and the arts.

"We'll be looking line by line this year at the budget," Hardy said. "It will be quite a year, from that standpoint."

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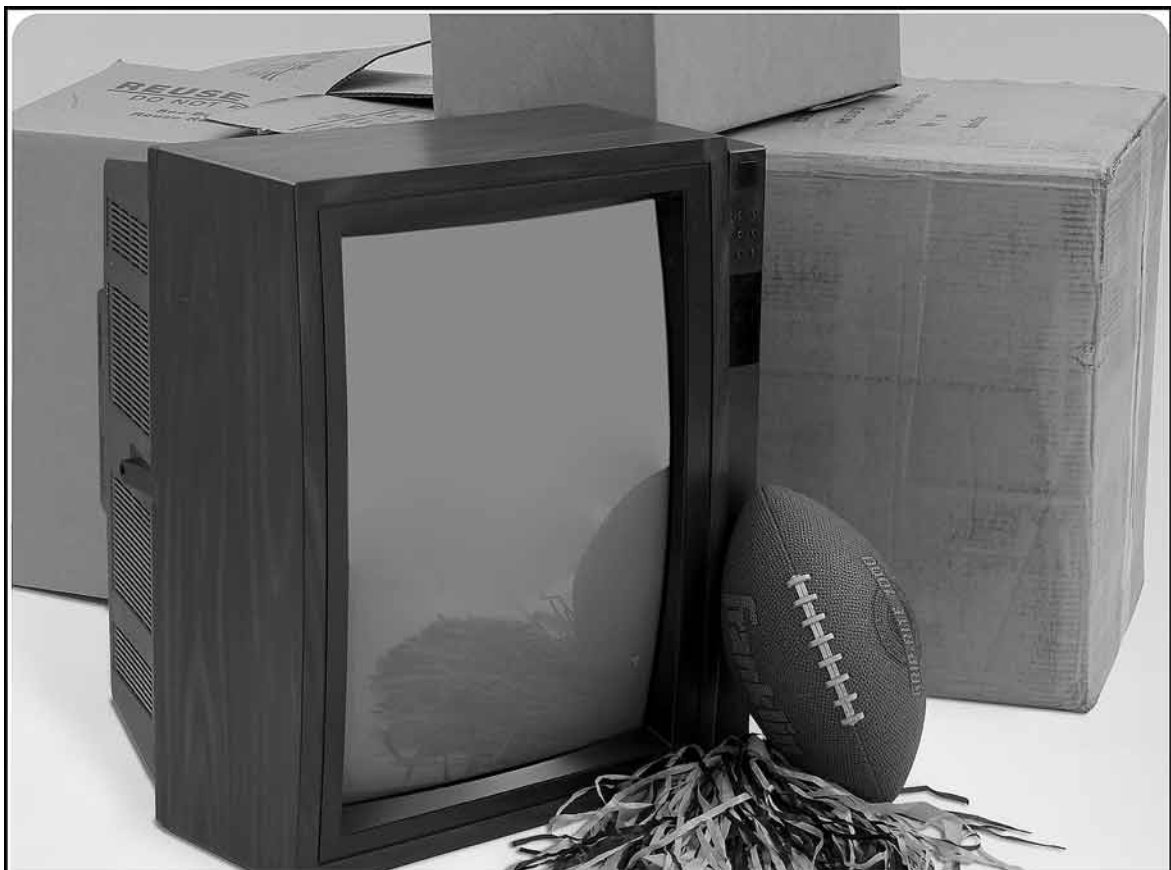


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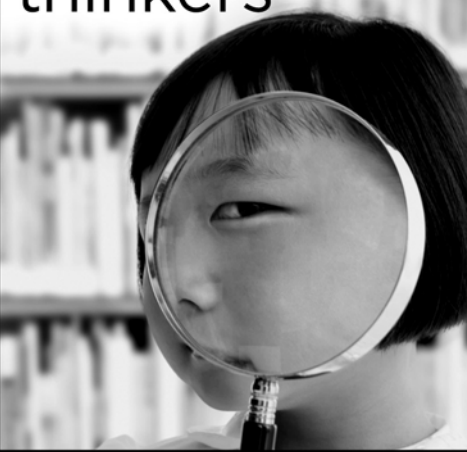
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# In Our Community

## North End holds Winter Carnival January 22-23

North End Winter Carnival and Resource Fair on Thursday Jan. 22 from 5:30-7 p.m. at North End Elementary School. All North End neighborhood residents are invited to an evening of family fun with dinner, games, live music and drawings for prizes. Win tickets to TWINSFEST 2009. Come meet the East Side Family Center and East Side Learning Center. Organized by North End Elementary School in collaboration with District 6 Planning Council. For more information go to [www.northend.spps.org](http://www.northend.spps.org) or contact Anne Gomez at [anne.gomez@spps.org](mailto:anne.gomez@spps.org) or at 651-293-8795 x250 for more information.

## Winter barn dances at Hamline Church

Hamline United Methodist Church, 1514 Englewood Avenue, will host two Community Barn Dances on Friday, January 23 and Friday, February 27.

Barn Dances are open to all ages and stages—singles, couples, and families and feature traditional American folk dancing accompanied by a three-piece Appalachian string band. Robin, the dance caller, teaches all the dances.

Dancing is from 7-9 p.m. For more information, contact the church office at 651-645-0667 or check out the Friends & Fellowship page at [www.hamlinechurch.org](http://www.hamlinechurch.org).

## District 6 takes donations

District 6 will be taking donations of canned soup and crackers for local food shelves. In this tough eco-

nomic time, food shelves are being used more often and by more of our neighbors. Please donate soup and crackers until the end of February to the D-6 office at 213 Front Avenue or to Mike's Complete Auto Care at 1174 Rice Street

Our 2008 Neighborhood Nominees for the District Council Neighborhood Honor Roll are Lynn Belgea, Ray Andresen and Herb and Brian Yoch-Do it Best Hardware. You can read their bios on our website at .

Neighborhood Plan News: There will be a Community Conditions Report for the public on Thursday, January 15th at 6:30 p.m. at the Rice Street Recreation Center, 1021 Marion Street. The Neighborhood Plan will be presented on February 19th and March 4th beginning at 6:30 p.m. Both the presentation meetings will be at St. Bernard's Parish Center, 147 Germania.

If you don't know if you are included in an existing Block Club or want to start a club with your neighbors call us at 651-488-7684 for more information on Crime Prevention, Block Clubs and ways to get involved!

There is a Block Club dinner party for those of you who live within Dale, Jessamine to Como, Edgar, Simon and Maywood Place. Please call Amy at 612-965-1489 to RSVP or the office at 651-488-7684 if you need clarification.

## Orchid Show Jan. 24-25

During the Saint Paul Winter Carnival, winter and all it's glory, snow, ice and frigid temperatures, are celebrated. One event stands out and gives attendees a way to escape to the tropics without even getting on a plane, the Winter Carnival Orchid Show at the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory January 24 and 25.

Hundreds of orchid plants owned by individual and commer-

cial orchid growers transform the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory into a tropical wonderland where instead of King Boreas, orchids rule. Besides witnessing the beautiful plants and displays, vendors will be offering plants and other wares.

The Winter Carnival Orchid Show will be held on January 24 and 25 at the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory in Saint Paul from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children 12 years and younger.

## Nova Classical Academy notes

Nova Classical Academy, currently a K-8 public charter school, will be adding grade nine in the fall of 2009 and will continue its expansion to a full K-12 school. Nova will host upcoming Enrollment Events (see our ad in this issue for dates). Interested parents are encouraged to attend one of these events to learn more about Nova and our classical curriculum, meet faculty and students and tour the school. School Day Tours for parents are also offered Tuesday through Thursday at 9:30 a.m. and Student Shadow Days Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m.-3:40 p.m. for grades 6-9 by registration. For more information please visit our website at [www.novaclassical.org](http://www.novaclassical.org).

## New Bible Studies at Jehovah Lutheran

Two new Bible studies begin in January at Jehovah Lutheran Church, corner of Snelling and Thomas in the Midway one meeting Sundays at 9 a.m. for all adults and one alternate Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Both are small group format

with interaction, DVD lecture/discussion, coffee and snack time and prayer.

The Sunday class topic for Jan/Feb is Rediscovering The Apostles' Creed, an in-depth look at each terse phrase of this universal creed stemming from the early church's crisp summary of the radical beliefs of Christ-followers. Twelve respected professors give short commentary; a companion guide provokes interaction.

The Wednesday evening class begins A Woman's Heart: God's Dwelling Place, using the Beth Moore study guide and based on a unique look at the Book of Exodus. For more information please call Dawn at the church office, 651-644-1421, or check the website at [www.jehovahlutheran.org](http://www.jehovahlutheran.org).

## Caregivers Support Group begins Jan. 20

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Being a caregiver for a loved one requires an abundance of emotional and physical energy. You can take care of others only by taking care of yourself, including talking about your caregiving journey and gathering more resources. Sessions will include a brief education component plus time to talk. By participating, you can support yourself and others in the journey of caregiving.

Coordinated by Lyngblomsten Community Wellness & Education, this Caregivers Support Group will be held on the 3rd Tuesdays of the month (starting 01/20/09) from 6:30-8 p.m. at Lyngblomsten (use the "Visitors Entrance" at 1415 Almond Avenue). The sessions are FREE. Materials and snacks included. No pre-registration needed;

come as often as you are able. For more information, contact Bonnie Connolly, MS, RN at (651) 414-5293 or [bconnolly@lyngblomsten.org](mailto:bconnolly@lyngblomsten.org).

## Readings by the Hearth at Hamline Library

The Fireside Literary Series returns for its 15th year starting January 15 at the Hamline Midway Branch Library, 1558 West Minnehaha Avenue. Warm your heart and enliven your spirits as some of Minnesota's best writers share their works during fireside readings sponsored by The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library. The programs begin at 7 p.m. and are accompanied by coffee, cookies and book signings.

The series kicks off with Julie Kramer on January 15, reading from her impressive thriller, Stalking Susan, where investigative TV journalist Riley Spartz searches for a serial killer targeting women named Susan. John Coy and Julie Schumacher join the Fireside line up to read from their new young adult novels on January 22. On February 5, acclaimed poet and memoirist David Mura reads from his debut novel, Famous Suicides of the Japanese Empire. Twelve Branches author Nora Murphy reads from her new book, Knitting the Threads of Time on February 12. The Fireside Series closes with an evening of poetry on February 19, as James Cihlar and William Reichard read from their recent collections. The Fireside Series is sponsored by The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library and Micawber's Books. For more information, contact The Friends at 651-222-3242 or visit [www.thefriends.org](http://www.thefriends.org).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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## In Our Community

Continued from page 9

### Activities at Rice St. Library

The Rice Street Branch Library has many programs and activities planned for January. Please stop in and join us!

Digital Television — Are you Ready? will be the topic of Senior

Social Time on Thursday Jan. 15, from 1-2 p.m. Learn how to convert your television to digital signals and have your questions answered about the digital conversion occurring in February 2009.

A Bilingual Spanish-English story time will be offered on Friday, Jan. 16 from 10:30-11 a.m.

On Wednesday, Jan. 21 at 6:30, join authors Lee Ann Landstrom & Karen I. Shragg as they read from their children's book *Nature's Yucky: Gross Stuff That Helps Nature Work*.

The North End Book Club will be discussing Friday Night Knitting Club on Monday January 26, from 12:45 -2:30 p.m. For more information or to register, please call Sandy at 651-293-8811. This group is offered in partnership with North End Community Education.

Would you like to help your child find books he/she wants to read? Learn the tricks children's librarians use to keep kids reading when you attend Family Read: Books Kids Want to Read on Wednesday, Jan. 28 at 6:30 p.m.

Family story times will be offered on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10:30 – 11 a.m.

Saturday Movie Matinees will be shown every Saturday at 2:00. Please stop in or call the library at 651-558-2223 to learn which movie will be shown each week.

Teens in Action will meet on Tuesdays from 4:15 -5:15. Get involved, get connected! Campfire Teens In Action hosts activities that help you make your community better. Ages 12 & up.

Teen Time will be offered Wednesdays from 3:30-5:00. Join us for a rotating roster of activities each Wednesday!

The Runescape Club will meet on Thursdays from 3:30-5:00. Each week it's nothin' but Runescape. Bring your friends!

The Rice Street Library is located at 1011 Rice Street between Lawson and Hatch. Hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 12:30-9 p.m.; Tuesday 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; and Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. The library will be closed Monday Jan 19 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

### Fish Dinner at St. Bernard's

A Fish Dinner will be held at St. Bernard's Parish Center, 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., Rice and Geranium, every Friday during Lent (except Good Friday). The cost is \$8 for adults, children 12 and under \$3.50, which includes beverage, dessert and bottomless cup of coffee. For more information call 651-488-6733.

Weekly services at 10:30<sup>AM</sup> every Sunday.

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### SUNDAYS AT CENTRAL

**9:15 a.m. Sunday School**  
 Classes for all ages

**10:30 a.m. Worship**  
 Mix of Traditional and Contemporary

**6:00 p.m. Ekklesia Ministry - Ministry to Young Adults**

**Wednesday Night Activities**  
**5:30 - 8:30 p.m.**  
**Supper 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.**  
 See website for details of Youth and Children's activities

**Daily Child Care 6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.**  
 Care for children ages 6 weeks - pre-kindergarten  
 Call 651-646-2846

## MPR

Continued from page 5

lines coexist harmoniously with noise and vibration-sensitive venues in numerous cities around the country, including Denver, Houston and Newark. Mitigation measures have been used effectively in other projects and this can be done here too."

City of St. Paul Transportation Planner Al Lovejoy said there is a "fairly substantial amount of frustration" among Central Corridor staff and consultants over the MPR issue. "We don't know what's going to happen there," he said.

Planning Commission members said they don't believe the city has been strong enough in stating their case for the project, to counter-act MPR. Commissioner Steve Gordon said the campaign he has been hearing on the radio is "very one-sided." He and others urged city staff and the Coleman administration to take a stronger stance.

Commissioner Kristina Smitten, who co-chaired a downtown land use planning task force on Central Corridor, said the city has been 'very open' to concerns throughout the light rail planning process.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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Classifieds

Continued from page 11

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Corridor

Continued from page 3

muter rail and Amtrak service. Yet another problem is contaminated and unstable soils.

The change in location of the operations and maintenance facility is not enough of a change to merit reopening the entire EIS process, according to Erickson and Fuhrmann. Project staff vetted the change with the FTA and found federal support for the idea of moving to the Diamond Products building.

Other physical changes in the final EIS include the proposed sites for the signal bungalows and power substations. There will be seven stand-alone signal bungalows, which are sheds that house equipment that operates traffic signals. The power substations provide power to run the rail line. These have to be placed within set distances of the line itself. There are eight stand-alone substations.

Al Lovejoy, transportation planner for the City of St. Paul, that the operations and maintenance facility is one of 16 issues the city is negotiating with Met Council on, that are tied to the EIS and a memorandum of understanding. The issues, which the City Council outlined in a resolution last year, include parking mitigation, property access, the three additional or infill stations, the

power substations and signal bungalows and the bus service that will tie into the rail line. The Met Council has decided that when and if a decision is made on the third station (at Hamline, Western or Victoria) that decision will be made by the city.

One issue the city has pushed for but is not likely to have included in the final design is to have University carry two lanes of traffic, one in each direction, instead of four lanes. The intent was to free up space for parking and possibly bike lanes.

"They're pretty convinced that a two-lane configuration cannot work on University," said Lovejoy. "There's just too much traffic."

The substations are about the size of a boxcar. The shed-like signal bungalows are 10 feet tall, ten feet wide and 16 feet long. At three Minneapolis sites both structures will be located together. None require the demolition of buildings, although some will take away off-street parking spaces or green space.

The final EIS process has also included studies of noise and vibrations all along the light rail route. To simulate the sound of the train horn, a horn from a Hiawatha train was mounted on the back of a pickup truck and driven along the Central Corridor route. Noise assessments were done at more than a dozen points along the light rail route.

HAMLIN UNIVERSITY

THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY AND THE AMERICAN FUTURE

Tuesday, January 20 • 11 a.m.

View the presidential swearing-in ceremony and hear a panel discussion

Join Hamline University students, professors, and staff in watching on big screen TV's as President-elect Barack Obama is sworn into office. Then stay and hear a guest panel discuss "The Obama Presidency and the American Future." Experts will speak about what they expect to see in the next four years, in terms of the economy, race relations, foreign relations, Obama's legislative agenda and the impact of public opinion.

The program will take place at the Klas Center, Kay Fredericks Room, 1531 Taylor Ave. on Hamline's Saint Paul campus on Tuesday, January 20 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The televised swearing-in ceremony will be at 11 a.m., lunch will be provided at 11:30 a.m., and the guest panel will speak at noon. No RSVP necessary. This event is free and open to the Hamline community and to friends and neighbors of Hamline.

Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Tuesday, January 20 • 4 p.m.

Hamline University invites the public to a Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration on Tuesday, January 20. The program, "The Fierce Urgency of Now: Remembering King's Dream, Realizing Ours," will begin at 4 p.m. in the Kay Fredericks Room of Hamline University's Klas Center, located at 1531 Taylor Avenue in Saint Paul. The event is free and open to everyone.

Hamline University President Dr. Linda Hanson will speak at the commemoration, as will students, faculty and staff members. There will also be musical selections by Hamline University Gospel Choir; a multi-faith invocation; audio and video clips of Dr. King, and a charge to the university community from the president of the Hamline University PRIDE Black Student Alliance.

The program is organized by the Hamline University Center for Multicultural and International Student Affairs. The center's mission is to support, assist, empower and promote the success of students of color and international students at Hamline.



