
The Rosenberg Report

Vol. VI
July 2, 2002

Hello!

When July finally rolls around, the activity at the State House usually shifts from the whirlwind of late-night budget debates to the more deliberate, but also important, work of finishing up the legislative calendar. This year is no different. With formal sessions scheduled to end on July 31st, the Legislature is busy putting the final touches on a number of pieces of legislation, including the environmental bond bill and the housing bond bill, two items of particular interest to western Massachusetts. And of course, there's the fiscal '03 state budget that must be completed and delivered to the governor. I hope that the August newsletter will have information on all those items.

But in the meantime, here is a quick reminder on the budget process from here on out, and a few items that might be of interest as we start thinking about summer, especially the long Independence Day weekend.

Have a safe and happy Fourth!

Yours,



Click here tumitch@sprynet.com if you want to be removed

Click here for our on-line feedback form www.stanrosenberg.com/form.html

Forward this link to a friend www.stanrosenberg.com/issues/rosenreportreg.html

July Focus

Fiscal '03 budget briefing

Unfortunately, the latest projections are showing that state revenues are continuing to fall. As a result, acting-Governor Swift recently revised the estimate for the fiscal '03 budget downward by approximately \$550 million; the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, in its latest report, suggested that the '03 budget should be revised downward by \$600 million. We are all on the edge of our chairs waiting for the June revenue figures because there is some small hope that the revenue drops are leveling off. If that turns out to be the

case, it will finally signal that the turnaround has begun, although it will still be too early to push revenue estimates back up.

All this will make the work of the conference committee, which will work out the differences between the Senate and House versions, that much more difficult.

www.state.ma.us/legis/03budget/senate/swm.htm (Senate version)

www.state.ma.us/legis/03budget/hwm.htm (House version)

The conference committee consists of three Representatives – Ways and Means Chairman Paul Rogers (D-Norwood), John Lepper (R-Attleboro) and Nancy Flavin (D-Easthampton) – and three Senators – Ways and Means Chairman Mark Montigny (D-New Bedford), Mike Knapik (R-Westfield) and Fred Berry (D-Peabody). They will meet over the next few weeks until they reach a compromise between the two versions of the budget. This final version is called the conference report. Once the conference report is released by the committee it goes to each branch of the Legislature for a “yes” or “no” vote. Individual line items are not discussed; the full House and Senate either accepts or rejects the conference report.

When the conference report has been accepted by the House and Senate, it is sent to the governor, who has 10 working days to sign it, let it pass into law without a signature, or issue line-item vetoes. In the event of vetoes – and there are almost always vetoes – the Legislature has the option to attempt an override. All overrides require a two-thirds majority for passage, and most overrides must clear the House before being taken up by the Senate.

Noteworthy

Department of Transitional Assistance

Following a meeting in Northampton on July 1st, the Department of Transitional Assistance has agreed to keep the Northampton office open until August 16th. I am continuing to work with my colleagues and members of the community to try to find ways to prevent this office from closing. Many members of the western Mass. delegation are joining me in this effort. Below is the text of a letter, co-signed by colleagues Representatives Steve Kulik (D-Worthington), Ellen Story (D-Amherst), Nancy Flavin (D-Easthampton) and Peter Kocot (D-Northampton), and Senator Andrea Nuciforo (D-Pittsfield), that I sent to DTA Commissioner John Wagner on June 27th. I'll keep you posted as this situation develops.

June 27, 2002

John Wagner, Commissioner
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street
Boston, MA

Dear Commissioner Wagner:

We are opposed to the proposal by the Department of Transitional Assistance to close the DTA's Northampton office. We have greatly appreciated your willingness to discuss this proposal, but, after careful consideration, we must protest any action that results in the elimination of the Department's only Hampshire County office.

We understand the financial difficulties the Department faces. However, we believe that the continued operation of the Northampton office is essential because the 1,000-plus families that use this office will face extreme hardships if it is closed. Because of Northampton's size and location, travel to and from the city is relatively easy, even for people without access to public transportation. Forcing low-income people, especially those living in the rural western Hampshire County hilltowns and those who have to travel across the Connecticut River to Holyoke, or to Greenfield, where public transportation is irregular at best, will increase their isolation, reduce their employment opportunities and ultimately create more problems for the DTA.

Please know that several agencies in the area, including the Northampton mayor's office and HCAC, have offered to find alternative space in the city that would reduce the DTA's cost. It is our sincerest hope that you will reconsider the plan to close the Northampton office and allow us to join you in finding an alternative solution.

We thank you for your time and consideration and look forward to working with you on this issue.

Roundup

MSPCA award

On June 27th, the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals presented me with its 2001 Legislator of the Year award. Thank you, MSPCA!

I especially want to thank Stephanie Hagopian, Andrea Martens and Kara Holmquist with the MSPCA for their work on the two "Living with Wildlife" seminars we held June 27th in Northampton and June 29th in Amherst. About 100 people attended the Northampton event, 50 in Amherst, and I hope that everyone learned something about Black bears. Thanks also to Dr. Lynn Rogers, who came all the way from Minnesota to make the presentations, and Rob Deblinger and Trina Moruzzi from the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, who were on hand to help answer questions. Here are some links with more information.

More information on Dr. Rogers

bearstudy.org/
bear.org/index.html

MSPCA "Living with Wildlife" program

www.livingwithwildlife.org/

Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement

www.state.ma.us/dfwele/

MassWildlife
www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw/dfw_toc.htm

Road projects

On June 27th, MassHighway announced that the contract for the \$2.5 million Colrain Bridge project, over the North River on Rt. 112, had been awarded to Patricca Construction Co. of Pittsfield. The bridge will be dismantled and a temporary bridge will be installed nearby. Construction will begin later this summer and expected to be complete sometime in the fall of 2003.

Summertime

One of the many great things about living in Massachusetts, especially western Massachusetts, especially in the summer, is the wealth of art and theater right in our backyard. This is not a comprehensive list, but I've listed a few links below that might be helpful as you make your summertime plans.

Mass. Office of Travel and Tourism
www.massvacation.com/

Mass. Cultural Council
www.massculturalcouncil.org/

Hampshire Shakespeare
www.hampshireshakespeare.org/

NewWorld Theater
www.umass.edu/fac/nwt

Shakespeare and Company
Museum
<http://www.shakespeare.org/>

Eric Carle
www.picturebookart.org/

Mead Art Museum
Arts
www.amherst.edu/~mead

Mass. International Festival of the
www.mifafestival.org

Musicorda
www.musicorda.org

Pushkin Gallery
www.pushkinartgallery.com

Symphony Hall
Center
<http://www.citystage.symphonyhall.com>

UMass Fine Arts
www.umass.edu/fac/

Tanglewood
www.bso.org/armsOfBSO.jhtml?catName=Tanglewood&area=tgl

Local artist

For the past several years I have been exhibiting works from local artists in my office at the State House. The responses I've gotten from colleagues and visitors have been 100 percent positive, so I thought I would tell a little about the featured artist whenever a new

exhibit is on display. Exhibits typically run for six weeks. Anyone interested in more information about the exhibits should call Lynda Wik in my Boston office at 617-722-1532.

For the next few weeks, Ashfield artist Qian Li Holmes will have her art open to the public Mondays through Fridays from 9-5 in my Boston office. Originally from Tianjin, China, Holmes was trained in the age-old art form of Chinese brush painting in both China and Japan. As a 10-year resident of Ashfield, where she lives with her husband, Holmes has used her talent to paint beautiful images of her homeland as well as images of her New England home. The exhibit at the State House includes her barns and landscapes in a style she calls "New England Zen," her bamboo and lotus series as well as some abstract paintings and calligraphy. Her renowned artwork has found a home in many area exhibits, most recently in a Greenfield show. We are happy to have the opportunity to showcase her work!

Stan's favorites

Some of you might know that I enjoy cooking. So, I thought I'd share a recipe you might like to try when barbecuing this summer. It's not an original, but it's very good and I hope you enjoy it!

(Makes 1 quart)

2 tablespoons butter
1 medium onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1/2 cup dark brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 tablespoons Dijon mustard, such as Grey Poupon
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
2 cups ketchup
2 cups water

Heat the butter in a saucepan, and when hot, add the onion and garlic. Saute over medium heat for 5 minutes, until the onion is translucent, then add the brown sugar, pepper, salt and mustard. Stir constantly over low heat for two minutes, then add the remaining ingredients.

Bring to a boil over medium heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 15 to 20 minutes.

Trivia

The answer to last month's question -- What is the official state beverage? -- is Cranberry Juice. As a tribute to the Massachusetts cranberry industry, which grows the largest crop in the world, cranberry juice was named the beverage of the Commonwealth on May 4, 1970.

Cranberry juice is also a tribute to the University of Massachusetts because of the significant role UMass food scientists played in the creation of the beverage. Because the berries are so bitter, the food scientists at UMass were approached by Cape Cod entrepreneurs to help them develop a drink using the berries. The rest is history! Bravo to Massachusetts cranberry growers, UMass food scientists and the UMass Cranberry Experiment Station in southeastern Massachusetts. This is another example of the University fulfilling its mission to provide quality research and public service. Here are a couple links that will tell you more about UMass Food Science.

UMass Department of Food Science
www.umass.edu/foodsci/

History of the UMass Food Science Department
www.umass.edu/foodsci/histdept.html

Thanks to everybody who played along. And now the winner of the lunch and State House tour, chosen at random from the thousands (just kidding!) of correct answers is Mary R. from somewhere in cyberspace. We'll send her information on who to contact in my Boston office and we'll look forward to seeing her at the State House. Congratulations Mary!

Now to this month's question and another chance to win lunch and a State House tour. In keeping with our arts theme:

Name the composer of the official state folk song.

Submit your answer to tumitch@sprynet.com and watch this space for the correct answer and the prize winner.

Links

Here are a few links. Until next time, happy surfing!

Massachusetts State Government Home Page – <http://mass.gov/>

The Legislature's web page – <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/>

Senate's Bill Text System – <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/billsrch.htm>

Legislative Tracking System – <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/ltsform.htm>

My personal website – <http://www.stanrosenberg.com/>

The Rosenberg Report (June, 2002, edition) --
<http://www.stanrosenberg.com/issues/jun2002.html>

