



STATE SENATOR TOM NEUVILLE

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RICE, LE SUEUR, SIBLEY, AND SCOTT COUNTIES

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Senate Takes Next Step Toward Final Passage of 2005 Bonding Bill *Early action on state bonding package good news for Mill Towns Trail, says Neuville*

(St. Paul) Today the Minnesota Senate took up a bonding bill to fund \$976 million in projects throughout the state. The bill, approved 56-9, received the 60 percent of votes necessary to pass.

State Senator Tom Neuville (R-Northfield) strongly advocated for the inclusion of Rice County's Mill Towns Trail in this year's Senate bonding package. Under the bill passed by the Senate, \$750,000 in funding would be allocated for the project.

"Today's vote is the first step toward moving the Mill Towns Trail project forward," said Neuville. "This support is a first step toward funding. Citizens should now write to their State Representative to keep this important funding in the House version of the bill.

The Mill Towns Trail will benefit our community for many years to come. I will continue to work to ensure its inclusion in the final bonding bill passed by the Legislature this year."

This year the Governor has proposed a \$744 million bonding package, while the bill passed by the Senate today contains a total of slightly less than \$976 million in projects. The House has yet to release the details of its bonding bill, though it is expected its total pricetag will be less than either of the two proposals currently on the table.

The bigger ticket items in the Senate bill include:

- \$192 million for University of Minnesota projects;
- \$182 million for MnSCU projects;
- \$71.3 million for the expansion of the Faribault prison;
- \$40 million to replace local bridges throughout the state;
- \$37.5 million for the Northstar Corridor Rail Line;
- \$30.6 million for various wastewater grants;
- \$23 million for Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) easements;
- \$21.7 million for a Mayo Clinic/U of MN biotechnology facility;

The House is expected to take up its own bonding bill following the release of the February forecast. Once passed, differences between the House and Senate bills will be worked out in a conference committee. The compromise bill that comes out of that committee will then head back to both bodies for final approval, upon which the bill will be sent to the Governor.

While bonding is commonly viewed as a measure approved by the state legislature during even-numbered years,

until the 2004 session a bonding bill had been approved every year since 1983. The state currently owes over \$3 billion to bondholders for general obligation bonds.

State Senator Tom Neuville is serving his fifth term in the Minnesota Senate. He encourages and appreciates constituent input, and can be reached at (651)296-1279, by mail at 123 State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155, or via email at sen.tom.neuville@senate.mn.

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