

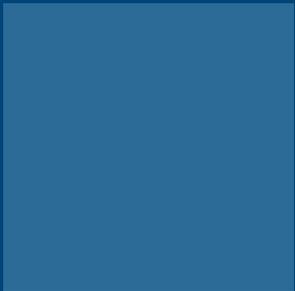
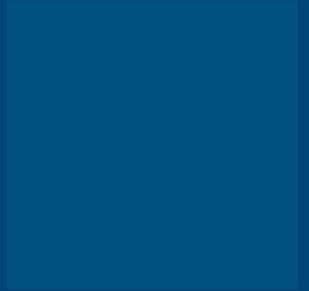
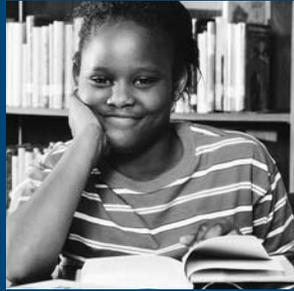
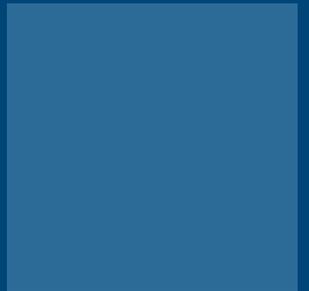
'99



# CURA UPDATE



Center for  
Urban and  
Regional  
Affairs



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



# **CURA UPDATE '99**

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Center for Urban and Regional Affairs

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

A publication of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota,  
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1999

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# Introduction

The twentieth century is now almost 100 years old and CURA has been in place for the last third of this century. Since the *CURA Update* is published every two years this will be the last edition for this century. While the *Update* describes CURA's recent programs and projects, maybe it's not inappropriate to reflect a little about the past century and the issues of interest to CURA.

CURA was established in the late 1960s to help get the University's resources—its faculty and students—involved with and working on issues that, at that time, constituted something we called the “urban crisis.” The 1960s version of the “urban crisis” as a major topic of public and political concern has drifted into history, but most of the specific concerns remain because they are all part of the process of urbanization that began in earnest in the nation and in Minnesota just before the end of the last century.

They include concern for the vitality of the local and regional economy and for those who do not prosper as the economy changes. They include the development of the means of transporting goods, services, people, and ideas from place to place. They include issues associated with population growth and movement such as the provision of housing, energy, education, health care, clean water and air, public safety, and recreation. They include a wide range of issues associated with changing and often conflicting uses of the land. They include tensions between the old-timers and new arrivals.

At the beginning of this century we thought these issues were confined to the big cities. We reaffirmed that belief during the Depression when, among other things, we began to build subsidized public housing as the first of a long line of federally funded urban programs. We focused again on cities at the time of the urban crisis of the 1960s. Since then we have come to realize that the issues outlined above are all part of the social, economic, and political processes associated with an urbanizing society. They are found in one form or another in any community—large or small, city, suburban, or rural township—wherever people and economic activity are concentrated.

And we have learned that nothing stays the same. In many ways the cities at the turn of the nineteenth century were not much like the urban regions of the year 2000. On the other hand, many of the basic characteristics and issues have not changed despite important differences in the details. In 1900 the economies of the state's largest cities, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth were dependent primarily on natural resources, timber, grain, and iron ore. Today these economies are based more on manufacturing, trade, finance, services, and transportation. Then, the internal combustion engine and automobiles were rare and mostly a novelty; private transportation was powered by feet or horses. Inter-city railroads were growing rapidly and intra-urban horse-drawn or steam engine propelled rail cars already operated along some city streets. Today, ironically, modern light rail is reminiscent of the first electric streetcar line which began operation along Fourth Avenue South in Minneapolis in December, 1889.

In the early twentieth century most new arrivals to the state were from Southern and Eastern Europe; now they are from Southeast Asia, Mexico, and Africa. In 1900 the built-up Twin Cities urban region consisted of the two central cities and six or seven contiguous incorporated towns—the term “suburb” was not widely used then. Today the seven-county metropolitan area includes (in addition to the counties) 188 cities and townships, 41 school districts, and 22 special purpose districts. The Census Bureau, in fact, includes six more surrounding counties in its definition of the metropolitan region.



Urbanized life is different now from what it was in 1900 partly because of large increases in the numbers of people living here. Minnesota had 1.75 million people in 1900 and today there are more than 4.5 million. The Twin Cities metropolitan area alone has one-half million more people than the state did in 1900. Life is also different now because of changes in the work that people do. It is different because of the automobile. Minnesota has more than 3.7 million registered motor vehicles—roughly seven vehicles for every nine people of all ages. And it is different because of changes in the work force. Seventy percent of working age women in Minnesota are in the workforce—the highest proportion in the nation. These are but a few of the factors that make life different from what it was in 1900.

Where we came from over the past 100 years shapes where we are today. The projects described here (roughly 300 projects that CURA has worked on over the last two years) give some indication of what has been important at the end of the twentieth century. We have worked with twenty to twenty-five state and local government agencies in this two-year period, and with seventy-five to eighty community organizations. Our projects have involved twenty-five University of Minnesota faculty from fifteen to twenty different departments and one hundred and seventy-five to eighty students from at least twenty different graduate programs.

As we approach the year 2000 it is impossible to anticipate all that will evolve by the end of the twenty-first century, but we already know much of what is of concern now and will shape CURA's programs and projects in the next few years. We know that the issue of urban sprawl is back on the public agenda with a vengeance and that in Minnesota it now affects those in Rochester, St. Cloud, Mankato, and other regional centers as well as the Twin Cities. We know that a broad range of work force issues—education, training, and availability—are increasingly critical to our economic vitality. We know that issues associated with poverty, race, and ethnicity remain with us. And, concern for the preservation and protection of natural resources is once again gaining strength and controversy throughout the state.

CURA's role in the next few years, as in the past third of a century, will be to help support specific community-based and University projects addressing these issues. Those interested in further information are invited to call CURA at 612/625-1551 or visit our Web site at <http://www.umn.edu/cura>.



Thomas M. Scott

Professor and Director  
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs

CURA connects University faculty and students with the organizations and public institutions working on significant community issues in Minnesota. CURA helps: faculty and students produce more relevant research on critical issues; students strengthen their education through practical experience; government agencies and community organizations get the assistance they request; and the University of Minnesota fulfill its land grant and urban missions.

# Communities and Neighborhoods

## THE WIRED COMMUNITY

Grand Rapids has established a community electronic network—GrandNet. What effect will it have on the community? Will it help resolve disparities between this rural community and other urban centers? A professor of psychology and a professor of political science teamed up to assess the effects on Grand Rapids and a comparison community that doesn't have an electronic network, Detroit Lakes. They used a CURA Faculty Research Grant (see page 37) to create a baseline survey of the two communities and to conduct interviews and focus groups in Grand Rapids. Their study will continue to monitor the effects of GrantNet. The baseline results were published in the *CURA Reporter*.

## PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION IN FROGTOWN

In 1995 the Frogtown Action Alliance began implementing a comprehensive action plan to revitalize this St. Paul neighborhood. Last year the McKnight Foundation funded CURA to evaluate their progress on the plan, the effectiveness of their processes, and their future plans. The evaluation was carried out with a team approach in order to transfer evaluation skills to the alliance's staff. Community residents and businesses were surveyed. Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. Focus groups were formed with people who had been involved in preparing the action plan around six areas: economic development, housing, employment and training, crime and drug activity, youth services, and health. Neighborhood demographics and statistics were reviewed as well as documents from the alliance and its four organizational partners. The evaluation found that strong leadership had brought a collaborative vision and some new leaders to the neighborhood. Ninety crack houses were shut down over four years, but the number of crimes remains about the same.

Recommendations include more work to involve the community, a focus on job creation and workforce participation, and a look at racial tensions in the community.



## HOW COMMUNITY GROUPS USE MAPS

CURA has been involved in numerous efforts to supply maps and geographic information systems to community groups. For a change we looked at this from the demand side, the community perspective. CURA's Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR)—see page 39—supported a professor of geography and a graduate student who scanned all the available literature and interviewed fifty community organizations in the Twin Cities who used maps for some purpose. They found that maps and geographic information were used by community groups to improve administrative efficiency and effectiveness, to identify key strategic issues facing the community and useful ways of addressing them, to transform plans into tactical actions, and to organize

members of the community. Audiences for these actions included the organization itself, its surrounding community, those with resources and power, those willing to

form coalitions, and the general public. An article about the study was published in a professional journal.

## NEIGHBORHOODS ON THE INTERNET

Neighborhoods in the Twin Cities have been online and connecting with each other through much of the 1990s as a result of NPCR's (Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization) work of assisting neighborhoods in getting hooked up and learning how to use e-mail, listserves, computer conferencing, and web-sites. (See page 39 for more on NPCR.) The European organization COST held an international workshop in Lyon, France on Groupware for Urban Planning in early 1998. Because of NPCR's work, CURA was invited to attend and represent this country at the meeting. A professional

journal article was published based on CURA's contributions to the conference and an article about Twin Cities neighborhoods and the Internet appeared in the *CURA Reporter* in 1998.

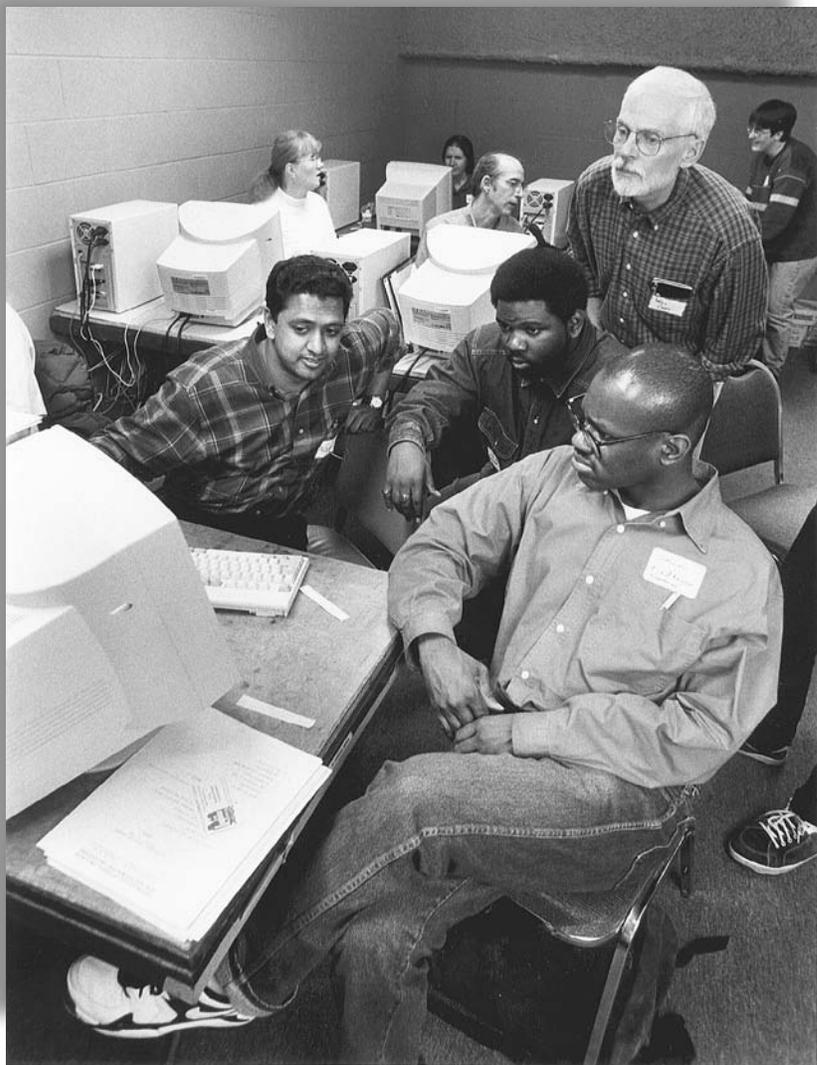
## **TRAINING FOR NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZERS**

Neighborhood organizations need skilled organizers and to meet this challenge CURA has been training neighborhood organizers for a good part of the 1990s. The Minneapolis Training Program for Neighborhood Organizers (MTPNO) began in the summer of 1994 by creating internships to train people from the community as skilled organizers. Today the program works with organizers already in place in various Minneapolis neighborhoods and has expanded to include a few St. Paul neighborhoods as well. The program has been so well received by neighborhoods that they are largely responsible for sustaining it. Additional assistance comes from the McKnight Foundation, the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program, and the Minneapolis Community Development Agency.

Building the capacity and commitment of neighborhood groups takes many years. One of the fruits of MTPNO's work is the relationships that have developed among organizers and the strong flow of ideas, support, and even alliances that have formed. In 1998-99 the program consisted of three major components plus a catch-all of other projects.

### **—In-Depth Training for Current Organizers**

Thirty-seven organizers from twenty-one neighborhood organizations were trained in the nuts and bolts of organizing. After a one-month intensive training, most continued with weekly individual training sessions for another six months. The training included building leadership, running effective meetings, recruiting under-represented groups, recruiting volunteers, fundraising, finances, identifying issues, researching issues, and developing strate-



gies for issues. A number of neighborhoods worked on projects, such as stopping net housing loss, community-based policing, going after houses of prostitution, and building coalitions.

### **—Monthly Trainings for Organizers and Leaders**

A series of two-hour evening seminars were conducted on topics ranging from using the Internet to foundation fundraising to how should the Neighborhood Revitalization Program be continued. Over 800 people have participated.

### **—In-Depth Training for Neighborhood Leaders**

MTPNO worked with six neighborhoods to help them develop and carry out their own leadership training.

### **—Other Projects**

A revised version of *Personnel and Organization Management Manual for Minneapolis Neighborhood Organizers* was prepared. An initiative to set up archives and save documents from neighborhood organizations was begun. A monthly lunch for "veteran" organizers was created.

## **UNIVERSITY-NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK (UNN)**

Linking neighborhood projects with academic classrooms, UNN is unique in creating research opportunities for university faculty and their students by connecting them with neighborhood organizations in need of their skills. In the past two academic years UNN has linked fifty-seven neighborhood organizations with twenty-five academic classes at three schools. The

projects described here are only a sampling. For more information about UNN see page 39.

#### —Welfare Reform

The Summit-University Planning Council in St. Paul was worried about how welfare reform would affect their services and clients. A third of their community lives in poverty. A professor at the University of Minnesota was teaching a graduate class in social policy. Linked through UNN, the professor incorporated background and speakers from Summit-University into her class. Six students researched the reform act and how Minnesota was responding to it. They explored how welfare reform would affect the children of Summit-University and discovered a child care gap in the community. A report was prepared and a community meeting held to prepare local agencies for the changes.

#### —Spanish Service-Learning

A third-year college Spanish class combined advanced language instruction with service in the Chicano/Latino community. Students worked three hours a week with various community organizations speaking Spanish at least half of that time. Students could choose among a number of opportunities, which included: welcoming new Spanish-speaking residents to Powderhorn Park and explaining services and resources available to them, conducting a survey of Spanish-speaking homeowners in the Phillips neighborhood, helping produce six half-hour cable television programs in Spanish for the St. Paul Neighborhood Network, and working with community organizers in the Bancroft and Longfellow neighborhoods to involve more Chicanos/Latinos in community events and projects.

#### —Geographic Information Systems

Students in a graduate course in urban geographic systems worked with seven St. Paul community organizations to inventory and analyze neighborhood data. They provided maps that the organizations could use in analyzing various problems and programs. In one neighborhood con-

tract-for-deed sales were mapped to show how they related to ethnicity. In another, house purchases by people who had received home ownership counseling were mapped, showing their successes in neighborhoods that had previously experienced significant mortgage denials.

#### —Race and Ethnicity

A professor of sociology at the University of St. Thomas teaches a course on race and ethnicity and wanted her college students to explore an urban core neighborhood. She worked with two Minneapolis neighborhood organizations—in Powderhorn Park and Phillips—to



introduce her class to African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, American Indian, Somali, and Southeast Asian groups in these communities. Students conducted interviews, shared their learnings with the class, and created something of value to give back to the community, such as donation boxes for a day care center, a flier for an African American business, and a brochure for the American Indian community.

#### —Housing in Beltrami Park

The Beltrami Park neighborhood in north-east Minneapolis was concerned about the condition of its housing stock but had

little data about actual conditions or how they compared with other neighborhoods. They were paired with an undergraduate course on housing and community at the University of Minnesota. Students conducted a windshield survey of the housing stock in the neighborhood, including assessment of housing that had received Neighborhood Reinvestment Program funds. The students analyzed the data along with neighborhood demographics and current property values and compared the neighborhood with surrounding communities. A report was prepared for the neighborhood with the findings, problems that had been noted, and recommendations.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION (NPCR)

NPCR brings research assistance to community-based organizations. Three of their many projects in the last two years related to communities and neighborhoods in the Twin Cities are presented here. Reports from all NPCR projects are available online at <http://tcfreenet.org/>

<http://tcfreenet.org/npcr/reports2.html>. For more information about NPCR see page 39.

#### —Cedar-Riverside Resource Directory

Cedar-Riverside is one of the most socially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods in the Upper Midwest. Because of the complex mix of residents, successful communication in the neighborhood depends on how well information is delivered to the community and by what means. An undergraduate student identified various social, fraternal, and civic organizations in the neighborhood; compiled information on their membership base, language,

contacts, and cultural characteristics; and identified potential communication barriers. The information was assembled into a resource directory to be used by the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Program Committee when involving community members in the neighborhood planning process.

#### —Increasing Bus Ridership

The East Harriet Farmstead neighborhood of Minneapolis wanted to know how they might increase bus ridership by neighborhood residents and people that work in the neighborhood so that traffic and parking congestion would be reduced.

A graduate student researched the current use of the bus in the neighborhood through a survey and interviews. He analyzed congestion problems, gathered information on local and national efforts to increase bus ridership, and presented in his report to the neighborhood association a number of options that might help, including a more efficient bus service, better information about bus schedules, and more imaginative marketing.

#### —Profiles Project

The Aurora/St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation in St. Paul after focusing on crime and safety and then housing for many years is now focusing on youth in the community. An undergraduate student helped them create “Profiles of African Americans in Our Communities.” The summer program paired neighborhood youth with successful African Americans from the community. The youth (also paired with a senior community member to assist them) interviewed and photographed these role models. Quotes and photos were displayed at the Urban Market (University and Dale) and printed on T-shirts and posters. The project is being used as a stepping stone for an entrepreneur program and a mentoring program for youth.

#### DEVELOPING BIKEWAYS

Local officials and citizens in northeastern Minnesota are preparing to develop paved bikeways in Duluth and the surrounding areas. The Center for Community and Regional Research (see page 38) is co-sponsoring the project with the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission. The project is coordinated by a professor of geography at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. Local bicyclists are being surveyed, a twenty-two-member steering committee has been formed, and existing bikeway data are being digitized.

#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

A graduate student in geography wanted to learn about the value of information technologies (including geographic information systems) for neighborhood organizations, so she spent substantial time working in the Powderhorn Park neighborhood of Minneapolis. She found that the technologies can help neighborhoods do more comprehensive planning and problem solving, and can facilitate attempts to build connections and coalitions within and outside the city. At the same time, the technologies present challenges to neighborhood groups because they are very cost and labor intensive. An article detailing her study will appear in the *CURA Reporter*.

#### FOLK LEGENDS

Through folk legends we explore our own communities—their past and their values. A professor of anthropology at the University of Minnesota-Duluth collected stories about unusual things found in places around Minnesota: a statue on a grave in New Ulm, a family grave plot on a farm near Granite Falls, a doll in the window of a house in Janesville, and the High Bridge in Stillwater. The stories came to her through her students at the University. A grant from the Center for Community and Regional Research (see page 38) allowed

her to organize the stories and analyze them. In an article for the *CURA Reporter* she showed how the tales often serve as warnings as well as explanations of untimely deaths. Some are “legend trips” in remote and dangerous sites that are part of the lore of Minnesota teenagers.

#### COMMUNIVERSITY PERSONNEL GRANTS

Grassroots organizations in the community receive student assistance on small projects through CURA’s Communiversality program. During the past two years Communiversality has sponsored forty-three projects in Minnesota communities. The two projects described here are only a sample of the projects directly related to communities and neighborhoods. For more information about Communiversality see p. 38.

#### —Reducing Gun Violence

Violence is the number one public health problem affecting youth today. Preventing access to guns has become a priority. A student, working with the Initiative for Violence-Free Families, researched what strategies other than gun control legislation have been tried in the United States and Canada. He also conducted focus groups with more than seventy youth who live with guns every day to get their perspectives. Two reports resulted from the study. The intern organized a press conference resulting in both newspaper and TV coverage. Presentations were made to a number of local agencies and foundations and two community meetings were held on the issues.

#### —News Reports from the Legislature

KFAI is a community-based nonprofit radio station staffed mostly by volunteers. A student covered about half of the legislative session for the station. He conducted in-person interviews with various legislators and produced and narrated weekly broadcasts based on the interviews. The student has since become a volunteer at the station.

# Economic Development and Employment

## CHARACTERISTICS OF POVERTY

Poverty increased in Minnesota as it did across the nation during the 1980s. A professor of human resources and industrial relations analyzed the poverty data for the decade and showed that by 1989 about one in ten Minnesotans lived in poverty. The vast majority were white, but whites as a group had the lowest poverty rate of all races, about a fifth the rate of

series *What the 1990 Census Says About Minnesota*. A shortened version also appeared in the *CURA Reporter*.

## MARKET SURVEY FOR PHALEN SHOPPING CENTER

The NorthEast Neighborhood Development Corporation in St. Paul is rebuilding the Phalen Shopping Center. Originally built on a wetland, they are restoring the natural hydrology of the area and recreating Ames Lake. They wanted to know if it was viable to retain the grocery store still operating in the shopping center and if other commercial or retail businesses might be attracted to the area. A graduate student prepared a market survey for them, exploring the purchasing power in the neighborhood and what kind of market there was for various commercial and retail businesses. He looked at possible industrial uses and housing as well.

His report established that a grocery store would be viable and a surprise outcome was the interest of a multi-family developer in building townhouses in the area. They are going up this year.

## MAIN STREET IN MINNESOTA

The Main Street program was developed in the 1970s and 80s in response to the rise of shopping malls and discount stores, which were devastating the market potential and historic character of Main Streets across the country. The program created

an economic development strategy based on historic preservation that has been widely used. CURA has recently completed a study of the history and impact of the Main Street program in Minnesota, designed specifically to aid in the current debate about whether or not to revive Minnesota's Main Street program. The report of the study details both qualitative and quantitative information about how Main Street worked in the past in Minnesota.

## IMPROVING ECONOMIC FORECASTING

Businesses, schools, and many individuals rely on economic forecasts for planning and for allocating their resources. A professor of electrical and computer engineering and an advanced graduate student used a CURA Faculty Research Grant (see page 37) to explore how new nonlinear modeling techniques might be used to improve the accuracy of economic forecasting in Minnesota. They worked with two government offices, analyzing the relationship between education levels and productivity in manufacturing and predicting employment for general building contractors and for people working in electronic equipment manufacturing. The improved accuracy of their predictions came from the process of selecting one or two meaningful predictor variables before the new modeling methods were applied. An article on their methods appeared in the *CURA Reporter*.

## COMMUNIVERSITY PERSONNEL GRANTS

Grassroots organizations in the community receive student assistance on small projects through CURA's Communiversality program. During the past two years a number of projects have focused on economic issues. The two described here are only a sample of these projects. For more information about Communiversality see p. 38.



American Indians and a quarter the rate of African Americans. The keys to avoiding poverty are clear: work and productive attributes, such as education and English language proficiency. Some Minnesota households are more likely to be poor than others, particularly single-mother households. It would take about seven-tenths of one percent of state income to move all Minnesotans out of poverty, a figure significantly lower than it was a decade earlier. The analysis was published as the fifth and final report in CURA's

—**University and Raymond Business Survey**  
St. Anthony Park Business Association felt the University/Raymond area was at a crossroads as Northern Clay Center prepared to leave. The area might either decline or improve depending on market and other forces. Parking was seen as a major challenge. A graduate student designed and conducted a survey of small businesses, artists, nonprofits, and property owners in the area. The results of his data from 250 local people and his analysis were presented to the association in a written report.

—**Resource Center for Business Incubator**

Neighborhood Development Center, Inc. has started more than 160 businesses in targeted neighborhoods in the Twin Cities. They needed to create a resource center that would provide business guidance and technical assistance for the new businesses. A student intern helped the center get started by identifying the needs of the new businesses and developing a directory of where such information could be found, whether it was from libraries, information centers, people who could act as contacts, or workshops.

**DEVELOPMENT SITES FOR INTERNET MARKETING**

The Arrowhead Regional Development Commission wanted to know where in northeastern Minnesota it would be best to promote specific economic development efforts. A professor of geography at the University of Minnesota, Duluth

coordinated a project that used PCArc/Info GIS software to perform a laborshed analysis of several potential development sites. The analysis determined the education level, age, and job qualifications of the population as well as distance between their residences and the potential sites. The analysis also showed site characteristics such as cost, buildings, and size of development parcel. The project was supported by the Center for Community and Regional Research (see page 38).

**METP EVALUATION**

The Minneapolis Employment Training Program (METP) assists disadvantaged and dislocated adults and youths in preparing for jobs. The program contracts with community-based organizations to deliver specific programs and services. CURA and the Department of Work, Community, and Family Education (College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota) evaluated the program's operations and

services. A key question was, Are there new strategies being used in other agencies that might be appropriate for METP? The study showed that METP is effective and efficient; that private sector partnerships should be enhanced; that they should maintain their decentralized, community-based delivery system; that emphasis on the "harder to employ" should be expanded; and that the program should be moved to the Minneapolis Community Development Agency.

**ECO-INDUSTRIAL PARK**

CURA continues to support the Green Institute's creation of an eco-industrial park in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis. Two CURA interns prepared a base-line study of the fifty or sixty businesses in the Phillips area. The purpose was to map the flow of materials within the area. Gaps in the use of waste materials such as wood and paper were identified and the availability of this waste material was used to induce businesses from outside the core Twin Cities area to become part of the eco-industrial park. Construction of the new building for the park is in progress and should be completed this summer.

**CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY WAGES**

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry needed to determine the prevailing wage in the construction industry for bids on state construction projects. CURA supported a graduate student through its Graduate Interns for State Agencies program (see page 38) who assisted with the survey of the construction industry across the state.

**NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION (NPCR)**

NPCR brings research assistance to community-based organizations. Three of their thirty-three projects related to economic development in the last two years are presented here. Reports from all NPCR projects are available online at





<http://tcfreenet.org/org/npcr/reports2.html>. For more information about NPCR see page 39.

**—Powderhorn Park’s Commercial Nodes**

The viability and future direction of commercial areas in Powderhorn Park is a high priority to the neighborhood as it tries to stabilize and increase its economic base. A graduate student inventoried four neighborhood commercial nodes, including interviews with local businesses and property owners about their future plans. His report to the neighborhood included an analysis of current economic conditions and options for the future in the four nodes. The report was presented at a workshop which involved city officials discussing city policies for neighborhood commercial areas.

**—East Side Commercial Space**

One strategy of St. Paul’s East Side is to maintain current business districts along Payne Avenue and Arcade Street by assisting new businesses with finding commercial building space. A graduate student identified vacant and underused commercial buildings and created a database about these properties. She also assessed potential and desirable commercial uses for these buildings and prepared marketing information that might be used to attract prospective businesses.

**—Employment Survey in Phillips**

People of Phillips was seeking to broaden economic opportunities within the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis. To begin, they needed to better understand and then evaluate the existing jobs and businesses in the community. A graduate student worked with them to survey jobs, salaries, training required, and unions in Phillips. A report and a database were prepared and made available to the community.

**TOURISM AND THE INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER**

The International Wolf Center opened in Ely, Minnesota in 1993, seeking to educate the public about wolf ecology by attracting tourists to its programs and displays. CURA supported a graduate student who surveyed visitors to the center and visitors to Ely to see what kind of success the center is having. He found that the center is drawing new tourists to the area and added about \$3 million dollars to the local economy in 1995. His report, published in the *CURA Reporter*, included suggestions for increasing the center’s ongoing popularity.

**GASOLINE RETAILING IN ST. CLOUD**

How are our decisions about where we buy a product and what we pay for it related? A graduate student in geography

mapped consumer choices of where to purchase gasoline in St. Cloud, Minnesota. The study, published in the *CURA Reporter*, showed that price and location were the most important factors in consumer choices, that higher prices were charged in more remote locations, and that individual consumers may have choices significantly different from their neighbors.

**WOMEN, WORK, AND THE CITY**

How do women’s travel patterns between home and work differ from those of men, and what does this imply? A graduate student in geography performed a detailed analysis of the gender differences in employment and travel in the Twin Cities area. He found that women work closer to home than men. The difference in commuting time, however, varies widely across the metropolitan area. Women’s commuting patterns affect regional travel patterns, labor markets, and the way we perceive



the city. A report of his study appeared in the *CURA Reporter* along with detailed maps showing the geography of women’s work and men’s work in the large metropolitan area.

## CHANGES IN THE MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

A new British faculty member in marketing arrived in Minnesota in 1997 and became fascinated with the Minnesota State Fair. It is so obviously consumer-oriented, yet its roots lie in supporting agricultural farm production. With help from CURA, the professor studied the historical records of the State Fair's official body, the



Minnesota State Agricultural Society. He compared data from 1883 to 1995 on prize money paid to producers vs. money paid by fair-goers for food and other goods and services. He found that prize money dominated or was equivalent until after the Second World War when consumers

began to dominate. A report of his findings has been submitted to a professional marketing journal and a more popular report will appear soon in the *CURA Reporter*.

## TELECOMMUTING EVALUATION

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) recently established a telecommuting center in Cambridge, Minnesota. This center allows

employees working in the far northern edge of the metro area to avoid the long trip to downtown St. Paul. The department asked CURA to evaluate the effectiveness of this program and we recruited a professor of industrial relations who interviewed both employees and their supervisors to determine its impact. He interviewed the two groups before and after the employees began working at the Cambridge facility. He found both groups were happy with the change. However, commuting time saved went into personal time rather than into increased work time. Partly as

a result of this evaluation, MNDOT has decided to close the center.

## IDLE YOUTH

Are large numbers of youth idle in Minnesota—not in school, not working, not in the military, and not looking for

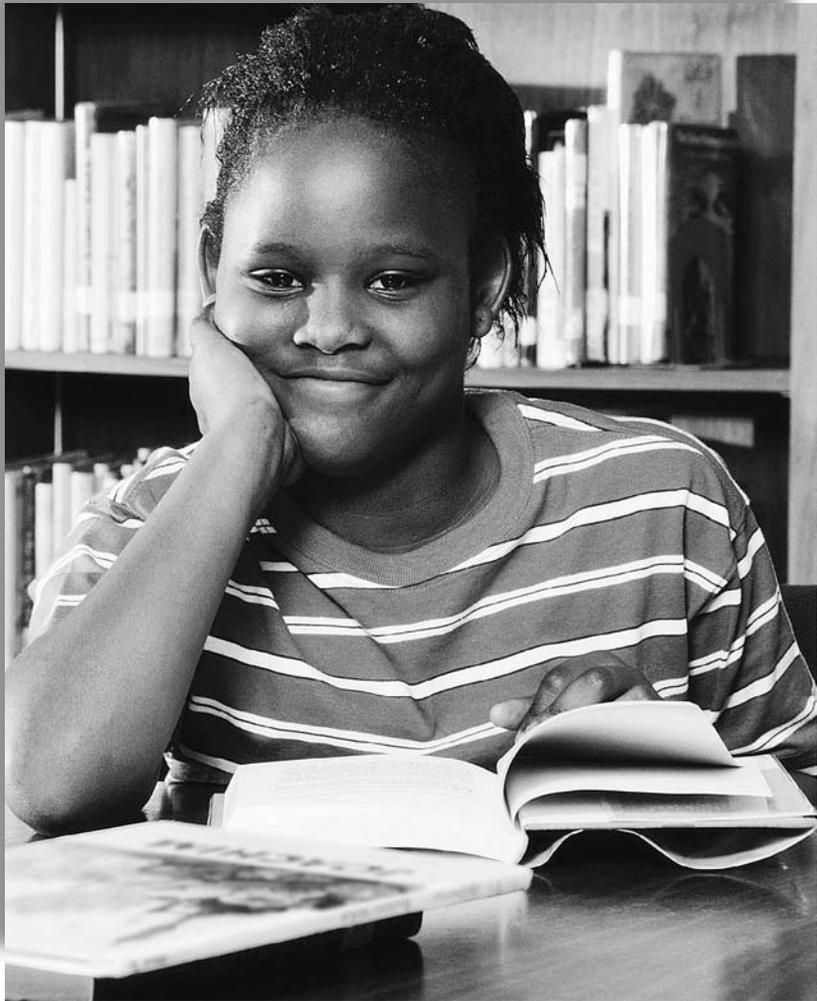
work? A professor of human resources and industrial relations analyzed 1980 and 1990 census data and discovered that the number of idle youth dropped from 9 percent to 6 percent over the decade. An article in the *CURA Reporter* detailed the factors he found to be associated with idleness. Subsequently the professor received a \$250,000 grant from the Northwest Area Foundation to study the factors affecting the educational success and economic well-being of young adults in St. Paul.



# Education

## EDUCATING HOMELESS CHILDREN

Homelessness among children in Minnesota and nationally has increased dramatically over the past decade. What happens to school success for the children when a family becomes homeless? A professor in the Institute of Child Development used a CURA Faculty Research Grant (see page 37) to examine the relationship between the amount of risk homeless children experience, other protective factors, and their success in school. An article in the *CURA Reporter* detailed results of the study. School is clearly important to both children and parents, but well over half the homeless children in this study fell into the bottom quartile on standard achievement tests, though some maintained good achievement. Parental involvement and closeness was clearly an important factor. Special tutoring-advocacy programs for homeless children improved the relationships between these children and their classroom teachers. The study suggested that better outcomes for homeless children can be fostered by focusing on reducing risk, boosting resources, and creating protective relationships with competent adults.



## KIDS MOBILITY PROJECT

Families experience moving in many different ways but it is often children who are affected the most. In 1996, a group of planners and researchers explored the impact of residential moves on students in the Minneapolis public schools, where one in five students experience frequent moves. The study was divided into three parts: the relationship between mobility and student achievement, the literature on student mobility, and how parents view mobility and its impact on their children. CURA supported a graduate student who conducted the interviews with parents as part of her Ph.D. dissertation. She found that limited housing options are a reason

for frequent moves, that there are different types of mobility, that sometimes moves are positive, and that it's difficult to separate the effects of mobility from other adversities that a mobile family may be experiencing. Overall the study showed that mobility does affect children's school attendance, which, in turn affects their learning. Results of the study were presented to the Minnesota legislature, which put aside one million dollars to help families threatened with homelessness. Results of the study were published by the Minneapolis schools and an article on the parents' views of mobility was published in the *CURA Reporter*.

## AMERICA READS

President Clinton challenged the country to make independent reading possible for every child by the time they enter third grade. He called for 30,000 reading specialists, 11,000 AmeriCorps members, 100,000 college Work Study students, and RSVP senior volunteers to tutor children in reading. CURA was one of the partners in the initial pilot year of the University of Minnesota's America Reads Initiative. Over one hundred undergraduate and graduate Work Study students tutored or provided training for tutors who worked with grade school students at fifty-seven sites in the community. The project was

spun-off to the College of Education and Human Development, where it continues.

### CENTER FOR SMALL TOWNS

The Center for Small Towns is a community outreach program housed at the University of Minnesota, Morris. The



center is developing applied learning and research that can make important contributions to surrounding communities in west-central Minnesota. Ongoing activities include student internships, service learning, technology transfer, and faculty-led student research projects. CURA has helped support the work of the center along with other University units, including University College and the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The center has recently received a major grant from the Blandin Foundation to expand its activities.

### SOUNDSCAPES

A professor of art at the University of Minnesota, Duluth worked with the Tweed Museum of Art to create an interactive exhibit exploring sound as an environmental component that shapes human perception and responses and provides creative social potentials. A three-month-long seminar also explored sound as a creator of various virtual reality and real landscapes. Regional and international

artists participated. The project, titled “endeavor, I ask you,” was sponsored by the Center for Community and Regional Research (see page 38) and generated ideas that are being incorporated into course curricula in environmental studies as well as a pregraduate art major with emphasis in arts, media, and technology.

### JANE ADDAMS SCHOOL

In a hundred-year-old settlement house in West St. Paul, a collaborative effort has established Jane Addams School for Democracy. The school brings together Latino and Hmong families with students and faculty from the College of St. Catherine and the University of Minnesota. Begun as a way to teach language skills and prepare immigrants for citizenship, the school operates without hierarchies, using learning circles and one-to-one conversations. CURA supported a student who evaluated the school to see if it was offering people what they wanted and if it was generating creativity and new activities. The evaluation found some areas where improvement would help, but overall a vital school with an emphasis on relationships that helps it flourish. An article about the school will appear in the *CURA Reporter*.



### DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT

Shortly after President Mark Yudof arrived on campus, he joined with Governor Arne Carlson to host a Digital Technology Summit attended by over 500 people. One track of the summit focused on spatial data technologies. CURA worked with others to organize that track, which attracted over 100 people and led to an agenda of necessary research and organizational tasks that would continue Minnesota’s lead in this area. One result of the summit is President Yudof’s new strategic initiative in digital technology at the University of Minnesota. This includes the addition of new faculty and the conversion of Walter Library to the new Digital Media Center.

### UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AS COMMUNITY PARTNERS

CURA worked with University of Minnesota Extension Service to prepare and publish a report that would help extension educators understand how students can provide help in responding to community needs while expanding their own learning. The report illustrates the kind of services students can offer by detailing six projects and how students were involved in them. The report also

lists programs that provide students for various community projects. A number of CURA's programs are included in the list.

### **COMMUNIVERSITY PERSONNEL GRANTS**

Grassroots organizations in the community receive student assistance on small projects through CURA's Communiversality program. During the past two years several projects have focused on education. The two described here are only a sample of these projects. For more information about Communiversality see p. 38.

#### **—Evaluation of Study-Abroad Programs**

The Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA) is a consortium of nineteen Midwest colleges which offers innovative programs focusing on social issues. A graduate student surveyed sixteen of the colleges to learn whether the existing study-abroad programs were adequate. The survey led to an understanding of the current landscape of study-abroad programs and helped the HECUA board see the areas where program development was needed. HECUA is now exploring and testing new programs.

#### **—Tracking System for Upward Bound**

Upward Bound is a college preparatory program that works with low income and immigrant high school students. The program's mandate has changed from successful high school graduation and enrollment in a postsecondary school to successful graduation from a postsecondary school within six years of high school graduation. The program needed a way of tracking their graduates to determine their success in postsecondary schools. A graduate student surveyed other programs for tracking methods, designed a tracking system, and developed all the elements needed for its implementation. The system is now up and working.



### **HIGHER GROUND ACADEMY**

African American and other children of color are increasingly subject to negative expectations about their intellectual capabilities, though research has shown that high expectations produce high results. CURA has worked to help create a new charter school in St. Paul based on the premise that all children can "get smart." The K-9 school will open this fall immediately west of the Concordia University campus and add a grade a year until it is a full K-12 school. It will operate year-round and use Efficacy Principles of teaching as developed by the Efficacy Institute in Massachusetts. The curriculum will focus on experiential learning and will be interdisciplinary. It will include community service and peer mediation. Upper grade students will tutor younger students in reading, writing, and mathematics. The academy will collaborate with Concordia's Teacher Education Program and with a number of professional graduate programs at the University of Minnesota. One of the goals of the academy is to train and attract more children of color into the professions.

### **MIGRANT WORKERS AND COAFES**

A recent graduate of the University of Minnesota's College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences (COAFES) was eager to establish courses related to Minnesota's migrant farm workers in that college. CURA supported a background study to provide resources, research projects, and migrant contacts. A survey of more than 210 families asked about issues the workers were facing and ways that the University might support them. Meetings with migrant-serving agencies helped to better understand their needs. A freshman honors seminar was offered this spring for the first time that incorporates learning directly from the migrants themselves. A preliminary curriculum for use with graduate students has also been developed, along with a list of research projects. A migrant community center is being planned, Centro Campesino, for the Owatonna area. The center will help Minnesota institutions better appreciate migrant workers and their contributions to the economy while providing direct support to migrant communities.

# Environment and Energy

## RECREATION IN THE ST. CROIX RIVER ISLANDS

The lower St. Croix River's pristine beauty and diverse biota have come under increasing pressure as the river has become part of a rapidly growing metropolitan area and as recreational use of the river has escalated. A consortium of federal, state, and local agencies are looking for better ways to manage the river. A professor of landscape architecture, with the support of a CURA Faculty Research Grant (see page 37), worked with the management agencies to document changes in recreational use of the islands north of Stillwater and assess what part these changes are playing in the degradation of the river. He also surveyed boaters and hopes to make recommendations for management practices that will preserve the islands while keeping boaters happy. An article about the study will appear in the *CURA Reporter*.

## SUSTAINABLE LAKES

Lakeshore development, agricultural runoff and fishing can bring changes to a lake in less than a generation or two. CURA is working with the Minnesota Lakes Association to develop comprehensive plans for five pilot lakes in Minnesota: one in the Arrowhead region, one in north-central Minnesota, one in western Minnesota, one in central Minnesota, and one in the metropolitan fringe area. Based on a framework of sustainable development, the plans involve members of five lake associations and the surrounding local governments in balancing economic activities, environmental safeguards, and the social needs of people so that they can plan for the future of their lake. A format package will be developed based on the pilot lake plans so that other lake associations can use a similar process to develop their own plans. It is hoped that the project will stimulate planning for sustainable lakes across the state.



## METROPOLITAN MOSQUITO CONTROL

A controversy about when and where mosquito-killing chemicals should be used led the Legislative Audit Commission to order an evaluation of the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District. CURA supported a graduate student who worked with senior researchers on the evaluation. She researched mosquito control programs in other states and analyzed their programs, reporting back on the use of chemicals and other scientific control methods as well as their internal management structures. The final report of the audit found that the district's treatments pose little or no harm to public health and recommended that several public members should be added to the district's board. The student's work was supported through CURA's Graduate Interns for State Agencies program (see page 38).

## SAVING SHOVEL POINT

Shovel Point is a popular but ecologically fragile cliff area in Tettegouche State Park on the North Shore of Lake Superior. Concern that rock climbing and hiking in the area may be damaging the cliff has

led state park officials to work with a professor of health, physical education, and recreation at the University of Minnesota, Duluth to document the behavior of rock climbers and hikers at Shovel Point and their impact on the ecology of the park. The project, sponsored by the Center for Community and Regional Research (see page 38), will determine the effectiveness of current trail management policies and develop interpretive signage for Shovel Point as well as orientation and registration information to educate visitors about the point and the need to protect it.

## REUSING BROWNFIELD SITES

Vacant industrial lands that are contaminated (brownfield sites) are a major challenge for today's cities. A graduate student in geography focused on the Twin Cities in examining the underlying causes of brownfield sites, determining their impact on the community, and evaluating the prospects for clean-up and redevelopment. He found that both deindustrialization and environmental contamination are key ingredients that create brownfield sites. Brownfields cause cities to lose their tax base and destroy neighborhood livability—a burden borne primarily by

low-income residents. Eliminating them reduces the pressure for greenfield development and makes better use of urban land and infrastructure. Minnesota is a leader in creating funding and incentives for brownfield clean-up and redevelopment, though funding focuses almost exclusively on commercial reuse, even in sites that are better suited for residential development or where commercial redevelopment is neither feasible nor desirable. An article on the study will appear in the *CURA Reporter*.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION (NPCR)**

NPCR brings research assistance to community-based organizations. Three of its twelve projects in the last two years that related to the environment are presented here. Reports from all NPCR projects are available online at <http://tcfreenet.org/org/npcr/reports2.html>. For more information about NPCR see page 39.

—**Southport Industrial Park Clean Up**  
St. Paul's West Side Citizens Organization wanted to clean up its riverfront industrial area along the old Barge Channel Road. An undergraduate student helped with its environmental assessment and clean-up plan. She collected public data on soil, noise, water, and air pollution. She researched models in other cities where neighborhoods have succeeded in cleaning up industrial areas with ecologically sound projects. She investigated possible funding sources for clean up and redevelopment and assessed the long-term clean-up requirements. Her report serves as a baseline from which West Side citizens can proceed with their plans.

—**Automobile Recycling**  
When the building of a metal shredder was proposed for the West Side of St. Paul on property next to the Mississippi River, NO SHAMS! (Neighbors Organized to Stop the Hazards of All Metal Shredders!) was created—an offshoot of the West Side

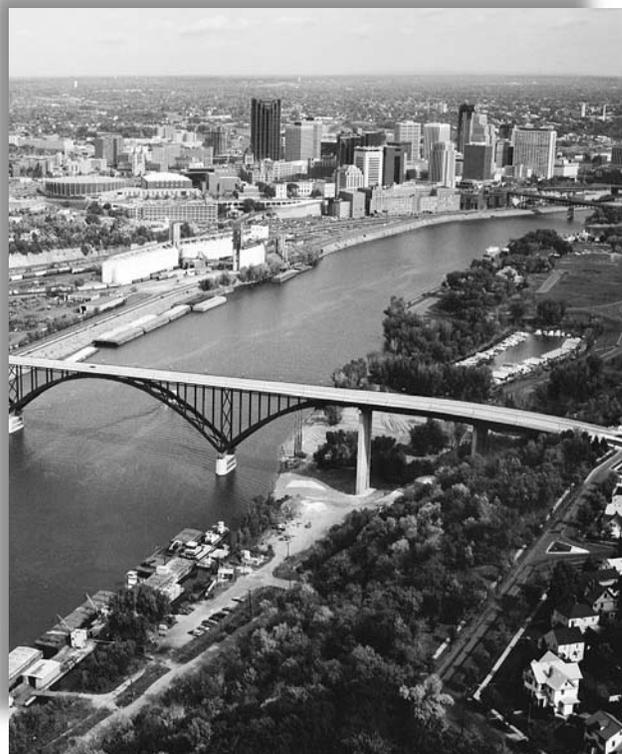
Citizens Organization's environment committee. They were successful in getting a city ordinance passed requiring a moratorium on metal shredders and asking for further study. To continue their work NO SHAMS! wanted to know more about alternatives to shredding. A student identified sources of information and pursued them in order to learn what alternatives to shredding are possible which are less polluting. She provided a detailed overview of the automobile recycling industry in her final report, including promising developments in Europe.

One American company was identified that has eliminated shredding by using a state-of-the-art dismantling system. The student's report is being used as the basis for NO SHAMS! continuing education efforts about automobile recycling.

—**History of Diamond Lake**  
The Hale-Page-Diamond Lake Association was concerned about maintaining the ecological viability of Diamond Lake and wanted to educate the community about what was needed. An undergraduate student compiled a history of the lake which included the legislative and regulatory standards for using and protecting the lake as well as what actions could be taken by the neighborhood to insure the future of the lake.

**BRIDGING THE RIVER**  
Cities along the Upper Mississippi are working hard to reconnect with the river that gave them life, but it has been hard to learn from the successes and failures of

each other. This CURA project, with support from the McKnight Foundation, is working to build communication bridges that will connect the river communities. A web-based directory of projects (see [www.missriver.umn.org](http://www.missriver.umn.org)), a listserv for interested participants, and a series of face-to-face conferences in river cities are ongoing and will be continued. Partners in this work include Augustana College (Rock Island, Illinois), Washington University (St. Louis, Missouri), and the St. Paul Riverfront Corporation. One



outgrowth of the improved communication is a tentative plan to create an Upper Mississippi River Trail that would allow a bicyclist to travel from Bemidji to St. Louis on scenic backroads.

**BALLAST WATER SURVEY**  
The ruffe is an exotic fish that is threatening to disrupt fisheries in Lake Superior. The Center for Community and Regional Research (see page 38) co-sponsored a study with the University of Minnesota

Sea Grant program that examined the patterns of ballast water intake and discharge from ships in the Duluth/Superior harbor. A professor of geography at the University of Minnesota, Duluth coordinated the study. All ships that visited the harbor for a year were surveyed. The results confirmed that the ruffe are being spread through ballast water, but also suggested that measures taken to restrict ballast water contamination have at least slowed



the spread of the species to other locations. A summary report on the project was published by CCRR.

### **COURSES ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

The University of Minnesota offers many classes related to environmental studies. CURA has published course guides to these classes since 1976. The most recent guide, done in cooperation with the College of Natural Resources, covers courses through 1999, when the University converts to a semester system. In addition, it includes descriptions of academic programs that offer degrees related to environmental issues and a section describing special centers and libraries that deal with the environment.

### **LAWN FERTILIZERS AND URBAN LAKES**

Phosphorous in lakes and streams causes algae to grow and promotes the process of eutrophication which leads to water degradation. CURA has supported a number of studies examining the effects of lawn fertilizers on phosphorous build-up in metropolitan lawns and soils and its run-off into area lakes. Test plots in 1995 and 1996 showed that fertilizing lawns with phosphorous does not add to the color, density, or uniformity of a lawn. Twin Cities soils already hold an excess of phosphorous and most lakes contain too much phosphorous as well. The study, that will soon be published in the *CURA Reporter*, urges homeowners to use fertilizers that contain no phosphorous.

### **WATER, WILD RICE, AND WATERFOWL**

The effects of cultivating wild rice on waterfowl and on water quality were examined during a three-year study at a series of wild rice paddies along the Clearwater River in northwest Minnesota. The paddies provided sago pondweed as well as wild rice seed to eleven major species of migrant waterfowl. Analysis of the breeding success of eight different duck species in the paddies showed that duckling production was good and matched or bettered records from several other wetland areas. The paddies were also attractive to a number of non-game birds. River water samples showed that during the wild rice growing season some parameters increased (including

fecal coliform and suspended solids) while others decreased (pH and dissolved oxygen), yet river water values were all within the standards set by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The study was conducted with support from a CURA Faculty Research Grant (see page 37) and an article about it appeared in the *CURA Reporter*.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS CALENDAR**

Many environmental events occur on campus at the University of Minnesota and around the Twin Cities. It is easy for people to miss speakers or events that would interest them. CURA began preparing a weekly calendar of environmental events in the fall of 1992. It was sent to subscribers by email and was also available on CURA's Web site. The project was spun off to the College of Natural Resources in



the fall of 1997. To receive the environmental events calendar send your name and email address to envcalen@umn.edu. The calendar is no longer available on the Web.

### **SURFACE WATER AND GROUNDWATER INTERACTION**

As concern for Minnesota's water resources has intensified, so have efforts to monitor the water quality of the state's lakes and rivers and their interactions with the groundwater flowing in underwater aquifers. Computer models of groundwater movements are helpful. With the aid of a CURA Faculty Research Grant (see page 37), a professor of civil engineering and two graduate students developed an improved modeling formula for measuring groundwater and surface water interactions. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency was able to put the new formula to immediate use. An article about the new model was published in the *CURA Reporter*.

### **URBAN GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Expanding urban areas often threatens the environment. Environmental reviews are required, but in urbanizing areas many contiguous projects may need to be

reviewed, creating a fragmented review process. The city of Savage on Eagle Creek used a new approach—the Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR). A biology professor, an aquatic ecologist, and a graduate student in conservation biology followed the AUAR process with the help of a CURA Faculty Research Grant (see page 37). Their analysis found that though the scope of the environmental review was fine, more depth would have been useful in specific areas. Involvement of citizens in the process was higher than in most public

decision-making, but a more genuinely collaborative process would have produced the most easily sustained decisions. Beginning the review earlier in the development process could make a considerable difference. They recommended that the AUAR follow ecological boundaries (watersheds, perhaps) instead of political boundaries. An article about the process appeared in the *CURA Reporter*. The City of Savage presented an award to the student for his work on the project.



# Housing

## HOLLMAN EVALUATION

In 1992 some residents of public housing in North Minneapolis filed suit against the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Minneapolis Housing Authority, the City of Minneapolis, and the Metropolitan Council claiming that they were being discriminated against by being placed in



segregated housing in an area of concentrated poverty. The suit was one of about two dozen similar law suits that have been filed around the country. The Minneapolis case, known as Hollman v Cisneros, was settled out of court in 1995 by a consent decree. The Family Housing Fund and the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency awarded the contract for evaluating the implementation of the consent decree to CURA. The evaluation will look at each of the elements in the decree: 1) The impact of redevelopment on the north side site

where over 700 units of public housing will be torn down. 2) The relocation of families from these units. Where do they go? To what type of housing are families relocated? How do they feel about the new neighborhoods? 3) The impact of changes in Minneapolis' Section 8 housing to increase location choices for those receiving assistance. 4) The impact of 900 new "mobility certificates" to move public

housing families out of areas of concentrated poverty and racial segregation into non-concentrated parts of the metropolitan neighborhood.

Where do they go? How do they like the new neighborhoods? What impact does the move have on their income and employment? 5) The impact of replacement housing built in non-concentrated parts of the metropolitan area, usually suburbs. Does this have an adverse impact? What do the neighbors think? Do property values change? Is there

an increase in criminal activity? The evaluation project is part of CURA's new Housing Initiative (see page 39).

## PUBLIC HOUSING POLICY AUDIT

New policy directives about public housing from both state and federal governments have led planning departments in Duluth and St. Louis County as well as the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission to examine their housing plans. The Center for Community and

Regional Research (see page 38) supported a professor of political science at the University of Minnesota, Duluth who is assisting local authorities in adjusting to the new directives. A team has been assembled to study the issues and many of their preliminary recommendations have already been incorporated into the St. Louis County Planning Department's five-year plan. A \$27,000 grant has been secured from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to fund three student interns each term to work on local housing and public planning issues.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A 1989 analysis of affordable housing in the Twin Cities showed that 83 percent of renters and 87 percent of homeowners spent 30 percent or more of their income on housing. The Family Housing Fund of Minneapolis and St. Paul contracted with CURA to analyze the new data for 1993. The analysis showed a shortage of 37,700 rental units for very-low-income households, more than two households in need for every one unit available in a price range they could afford. Data showing the dramatic increase in the need for affordable housing from the 1970s to the 1990s were published in the Housing Fund's 1996 annual report and helped put the need for more affordable housing before the public and those working in the area of housing.

## DISCRIMINATION IN MORTGAGE LENDING

As federal aid for housing decreases, it is more important than ever for private sector institutions to intensify their efforts to lend to underserved populations. CURA supported a study conducted by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition that compared mortgage lenders in each of the twenty largest metropolitan areas of the country from 1994 through

1996. The study compared the number of loans given to people of color and to low- and moderate-income households with their numbers in the metropolitan populations. The results, published last May,

ated under the act. CURA worked with MICAH (Metro Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing) to provide an independent analysis of the Livable Communities Action Plans. A coalition of

Relationship between Housing, Education, and Segregation,” “The Loss of Federal Subsidies for Low-Income Housing,” and “Recycling the First Ring Suburbs.” Call 612-625-1551 to be added to the mailing list to receive notices of future meetings.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION (NPCR)**

NPCR brings research assistance to community-based organizations. Four of their eighteen projects related to housing in the last two years are presented here. Reports from all NPCR projects are available online at <http://tcfreenet.org/org/npcr/reports2.html>. For more information about NPCR see page 39.

#### **—Alternative Responses to Vacant Housing**

There are three possible outcomes for an abandoned home in St. Paul: it can be demolished, reoccupied by the owner or a new tenant, or it can be rehabilitated. The costs of each of these alternatives need to be weighed when limited funds are available. St. Paul’s Houses to Homes Program rehabilitates abandoned houses. When its funds were cut in half in 1996, the St. Paul Coalition for Community Development, the group that implements the program, asked NPCR to sponsor a study examining the real cost to the city of rehabilitating vacant housing. The NPCR study, also part of CURA’s new Housing Initiative, showed that the fiscal benefits of renovation—taxes, stabilizing neighborhood property values, growth of private investment, sales tax on building materials, fewer maintenance and security costs, and avoidance of property foreclosure—returned roughly half of the up-front renovation costs to the city. And if all government units are considered, a restoration actually produces a net gain in public benefits. As a result of the study, St. Paul in 1997 restored most of the cuts it had made to the Houses to Homes Program. CURA published a summary of the study in the *CURA Reporter*.



showed that lenders were relatively successful in offering loans to Black and Hispanic households and that their performance improved over the three-year period. Lenders did not perform well, however, in providing loans to low- and moderate-income households. Lenders still vary widely in how well they meet their legal obligations, under the Community Reinvestment Act, to extend credit to all communities. The study results are being used across the country to convince lenders at the bottom of the rankings to adopt the strategies used by the lenders at the top of the list.

### **REVIEW OF LIVABLE COMMUNITIES ACTION PLANS**

The Livable Communities Act was passed in 1995 to encourage more compact development, affordable housing, and redevelopment of the urban core. The act, however, gave no enforcement authority to the Metropolitan Council, charged with carrying it out, nor did it provide for any independent analysis of the plans cre-

organizations concerned about affordable housing and headed by George Latimer, former mayor of St. Paul, concluded that the new act wasn’t vigorous enough and that it probably wouldn’t accomplish the goal of creating more affordable housing in the Twin Cities suburbs. The plans being generated concentrated on the higher end of the affordable range and ignored the poorest people. Extensive publicity on their report served to heighten public awareness and understanding of the problems of affordable housing.

### **HOUSING FORUM**

As part of CURA’s new Housing Initiative (see page 39), a Housing Forum has been established which meets monthly during the academic year. Professionals working in the area of housing in the community and housing researchers meet to hear presentations and discuss current topics related to housing. Recent forums have included “Neighborhood Early Warning System” (how to intervene before housing is abandoned), “Examining the

### —Predicting Housing Abandonment

One of the biggest challenges faced by Minneapolis' Central neighborhood is the problem of vacant and boarded housing. The neighborhood wishes to reverse the cycle of decline that has set in. A graduate student reviewed studies of housing abandonment in other cities and worked with the Central Neighborhood Improvement Association to identify the indicators that predict which housing will be abandoned. Through interviews with residents and case studies a list of six early warning signals was developed. A mappable database of the neighborhood's housing characteristics was also created to help in identifying where neighborhood action is needed.

### —Accessing Housing Data

The Rondo Community Land Trust is expanding quality housing and owner-

ning, developing, and evaluating housing improvement programs.

### —Safety in Deconstruction Work

Deconstruction is the process of recovering materials that can be reused from a building that is being demolished. It is a relatively new activity and little is known about the health and safety hazards involved. A graduate student surveyed the literature on deconstruction and on government regulations that might be applicable to deconstruction. The student also visited deconstruction sites where the Green Institute was salvaging materials, to assess the hazards involved. The project was carried out with the help of the University of Minnesota's Department of Environmental Health and Safety. Several technical and consumer-oriented reports were prepared.

need and CURA helped provide an intern who worked with the fund on this issue. She produced summary tables for 1998 documenting the needs for new construction and rehabilitation of existing housing. Her analysis pointed to an unmet need for approximately 7,000 new units annually to provide rental and ownership housing for communities in Greater Minnesota.

### IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING

The Minnesota Fair Housing Center needed information on the impediments fair housing was facing in the state. CURA supported a graduate intern who collected reports from various jurisdictions and then analyzed and compared what was being done by these various jurisdictions. Her final report was widely distributed and a panel presentation was also arranged to present the results to the community. The report supports changes in rules that HUD is considering.

### CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

Residential cluster development is a way of preserving open spaces or agricultural land and protecting the environment and its natural eco-systems. Instead of dividing the land into equal lots with one house on each lot, the same number of houses are clustered together on part of the land leaving the rest free as common space or productive farming. To make this type of development possible, local zoning and subdivision ordinances and comprehensive land use plans need to be rewritten. Technologies other than single on-site septic tanks can be applied to protect ground water quality on a long term basis. A professor of planning and public affairs worked with an interdisciplinary team at the University of Minnesota to develop a series of fact sheets about cluster development, which are serving to introduce the concept and changes needed to local officials.



ship options for residents of the Summit-University and Lexington-Hamline communities in St. Paul. Their housing assessment and planning functions have been hampered by the lack of timely and accurate housing data. A graduate student identified public data sources and access requirements. Recommendations were made for integrating publicly held property data and making it more readily available for neighborhood use in plan-

### HOUSING NEEDS IN GREATER MINNESOTA

The Greater Minnesota Housing Fund was created to assist in production of affordable housing for working families outside the Twin Cities area. It provides gap financing for both rental and home ownership housing in Minnesota communities that have unmet housing needs and where there is an acute shortage of qualified people in the labor force. They need assistance to update their estimates of

## **SURVEY OF MOBILE HOME RESIDENTS**

The All Parks Alliance for Change seeks to organize residents of mobile home parks and work on issues that residents identify as problems. Through one of CURA's Communiiversity Personnel Grants (see page 38) they hired a graduate student to work with them in designing a survey that could be used at any of the ninety



metro-area mobile home parks. The survey was tested in two parks before it was conducted at a mobile home park in the northern part of the metro area. In addition to demographic information, it asked about quality of life in the park, safety, management, relationship to the community outside the park, and interest in forming a residents' organization. Results of the survey at Castle Towers Park were prepared as a report.

## **GREATER MINNESOTA HOUSING FUND EVALUATION**

CURA was retained by the board of the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund to conduct an evaluation that addressed two questions: How successful has the fund been in participating in the production of new housing units? and What impact has this activity had in communities where this investment has occurred? The evaluation, conducted by a professor in planning and

public affairs, will be presented to the board in early summer of 1999.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES IN PUBLIC HIGHRISES**

Hennepin County and the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority created a pilot project in two highrise projects to integrate and expand on-site social services. The program operated through a core

team of residents, housing authority personnel, county staff, and social service providers. They hoped to increase the quantity and quality of social services in the highrises, improve resident satisfaction and their sense of self-sufficiency and empowerment, and increase the sense of community among residents. CURA was brought in to evaluate the effort. The evaluation, part of CURA's new Housing Initiative (see page 39), found that despite persistent difficulties and delays in implementing the program a moderate level of success was achieved. Mixing several systems that had little history of cooperation provided some challenges, but residents became more aware of the services and some were used more heavily. Residents who became aware of services increased their sense of community and self-sufficiency. Increases in satisfaction and a sense of safety were more widespread. As improvements in the model are made, these impacts should increase.

## **MINNESOTA'S HOUSING**

It is in our homes and our neighborhoods that society reproduces itself, and if things begin to go awry at home or in the neighborhood, we correctly sense that trouble is brewing for society at large. Shifts in the housing landscape often parallel changes in the direction of our society. A report profiling selected features of the Minnesota housing landscape—a landscape we have created over the years, and that is now shaping our lives—was prepared and published as part of CURA's series *What the 1990 Census Says About Minnesota*. The report, *Minnesota Housing: Shaping the Community in the 1990s*, was prepared by a professor of geography and public affairs and an advanced graduate student. It is part of CURA's new Housing Initiative (see page 39). A summary version was also published in the *CURA Reporter*. Excerpts presented there look at the affordability of housing in Minnesota, changes in the concentration of foreign-born residents, the housing patterns of Minnesota's minority populations, and the growth of non-family households during the 1980s.

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE TWIN CITIES**

A professor of housing at the University examined how the Livable Communities Act (LCA) was being implemented to see if it was expanding housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income families, as had been intended. His analysis showed that affordable housing is actually being reduced under the LCA program. CURA published the full report of this study—*Losing Ground*—as well as a *CURA Reporter* article as part of its new Housing Initiative (see page 39). The report suggests a number of recommendations that could reverse the drain on affordable housing.

# Human Services



## **CHILD PROTECTION LEGISLATION**

The federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 shifted policy emphasis from preserving the family to the safety of children and swift case decisions in placing children from high risk families into permanent adopted families. Minnesota enacted laws to come into compliance with the federal mandates. Two graduate students joined with a professor of social work to survey child protection workers on how they were responding to the new legislation. They analyzed ninety-six cases where endangered children were placed with new families and their blood parents' rights were terminated. They also prepared a literature review. Consultations with the state Department of Human Services and legislators were held to clarify the intention of the legislation. A proposal for development of a risk assessment matrix for poor prognosis families was submitted to the McKnight Foundation and funded. The matrix is now being tested with child

protection workers throughout the state. The matrix will be submitted to the state Department of Human Services and recommended for training, preparing case files, and court petitions. Papers are also being prepared that interpret "palpable unfitness," profile high risk families and prospects for family reunification, and interpret the concept of "permanency."

## **DOMESTIC ABUSE IN RURAL MINNESOTA**

A professor of mathematics at the University of Minnesota-Morris worked with Ottertail County Public Health and Region 4 Council on Domestic Violence to produce the first major study of domestic violence among rural women. One thousand six hundred and ninety-three women were surveyed in health care settings across nine counties. The study found that rural women are experiencing abuse just as often as urban women and that important indicators that abuse might be present are age, marital status, and a

recent change in marital status. The study looked at how familiar women were with the help they might receive from the Region 4 Council on Domestic Violence. The work was funded by the Allina Healthcare Foundation and one of CURA's Faculty Research Grants (see page 37). An article about the study in the *CURA Reporter* concluded with a number of suggestions for health care and social service providers, schools, and the Council on Domestic Violence in west-central Minnesota. Local workshops with judicial, legal, and social service representatives have discussed the survey results and major changes in how domestic abuse is treated are expected.

## **MEDICAL CARE UNDER WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

The Minnesota legislature introduced several cost containment programs to reduce increasing costs of medical care under workers' compensation. The Minnesota Department of Labor and

Industry used two graduate students, through CURA's Graduate Interns for State Agencies program (see page 38), to evaluate certified managed care organizations that deliver workers' compensation services. One student did a utilization review of certified managed care organizations, while the other developed a database for managed care organizations that will be updated regularly in the future. This information will be helpful in future utilization reviews. A report was prepared and press releases issued.

### **TOBACCO INTERVENTION**

A professor of nursing at the University of Minnesota, Duluth coordinated a survey of health care providers in northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin about their attitudes toward tobacco, tobacco education, and intervention strategies. The survey included chiropractors, dentists, physicians, public health nurses, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. The survey provided a regional snapshot of tobacco attitudes and practices. Significant differences and inconsistencies were found among provider groups and as a result region-wide training sessions are being developed for health care providers on tobacco intervention. The project was co-sponsored by the Center for Community and Regional Research (see page 38) and the Bridge to Health Collaborative, a coalition of seventy health-related organizations (including state and local health departments, hospitals, physician clinics, tribal health services, health planning agencies, and health provider education institutions in sixteen rural counties in Minnesota and Wisconsin).

### **CASH GRANTS FOR THE DISABLED**

In 1995 the Minnesota legislature established a program that provides direct cash grants to the disabled to do their own hiring of persons needed for their long-term care. The program lowers administrative costs and empowers the disabled, but raises questions about health and safety, accountability, and liability. Using a CURA Faculty Research Grant (see page 37), a

professor of public affairs is researching how similar programs in other states work and developing a model framework for the new program in Minnesota. It will include ways to assist the disabled as they make the transition to doing their own hiring. It will also include a survey of the disabled in the new program and community organizations that might help them, and tools for evaluating the program. Results of the project will appear in the *CURA Reporter*.

### **GAMBLING AND THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED**

How often is gambling a problem with adults who are developmentally disabled? The Center for Community and Regional Research (see page 38) is supporting a professor of sociology who is working with the City of Duluth and the Northland Foundation to find out. The project is surveying seventy-five people with developmental disabilities and screening those who gamble to see if there is "problem" gambling. Findings will be used to inform and improve a gambling prevention and intervention effort.

### **TRANSITION FROM WELFARE TO WORK**

Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis are working jointly to implement welfare reform and their employment training and assistance departments are using community-based organizations to help individuals with the transition from welfare to work. Early experience, however, indicates that some eligible individuals are not taking full advantage of services such as job searches and readiness training, child care, and transportation that are available to help make a successful transition to the workforce. The county and city asked CURA to organize a faculty research team to identify why some programs are underused and provide suggestions for changes. Results of the first phase of the project indicate that several improvements can be made in the structure of the work and training programs in order to fit the needs of clients more closely and that greater resources for child care, reliable transportation, and

health care are needed to strengthen the welfare to work program.



### **COMMUNITY PERSONNEL GRANTS**

Grassroots organizations in the community receive student assistance on small projects through CURA's Community program. During the past two years quite a few projects focused on human services. The five described here are only a sampling of those projects. For more information about Community, see p. 38.

#### **—Services for Low Income Families**

Low income families in Washington County have problems obtaining housing and services. They are often isolated. The East Metro Women's Council (EMWC) sought to improve things for these families, especially in Cottage Grove. A student intern worked to organize residents of the Parkside Apartments to deal with solving their own multiple problems. She was so successful that EMWC contracted with her to continue her work. A collaborative of police, schools, early childhood education groups, county services, family violence workers, and health clinics now use an apartment in the complex as an office where they bring their services to the residents. The project is considered a model of what can be accomplished.

### —Child Care for Low Income Workers

Welfare reform legislation means that many people on welfare will need child care when they go back to work. JOBS Now Coalition explored the feasibility of a public-private partnership to develop child care. A student collected statistics on the number of people on welfare, the number of jobs available, and the expected competition for these jobs. Statistical tables and a report were used as backup to document the need for child care.

The data contributed to the Minnesota Legislature's decision to increase funding for child care.

### —Treatment for Chemically Dependent Women

Wayside House in St. Louis Park provides treatment and social services for more than 300 women and children each year. Over the last few years they developed a comprehensive program evaluation system, based on the work of an earlier Communiternity intern. They sought a second intern to do an in-depth analysis of recent findings from the evaluations. The student tracked Wayside clients at three, six, and twelve months to identify the most critical elements in the clients' achieving their goals. A demographic analysis of social and clinical characteristics was also done to determine which clients are most likely to succeed in Wayside's programs. The analysis helped Wayside document the effectiveness of their programs and the student based her master's thesis on the material she developed at Wayside House.

### —Impact of Welfare Reform

Children's Defense Fund exists to provide a strong and effective voice for children through research, public education, and advocacy. They used the services of a graduate student to design a survey that they are now using to monitor the effects of welfare reform on low income people across the state. The student developed the methodology and questions to be asked of human service providers in a sample of Minnesota counties. The



providers are interviewed four times each year. The student conducted the first round of interviews and prepared a report. The results provided the Children's Defense Fund with guidance in their legislative efforts.

### ARTHRITIS AMONG INDIANS

A professor of medicine at the University of Minnesota, Duluth examined the prevalence of arthritis among the American Indians of the Lac Courte Oreilles Band living near Hayward Wisconsin. Interviews, focus groups, and voluntary

medical chart reviews revealed a very high rate of arthritis and related limitations on the daily lives of the population there. Possible links to Lyme's disease and other tick-borne diseases were suggested as well as genetics. The study also suggested implications for health planning, housing, and community activities. Findings were presented to the residents, the health center, and tribal planning groups. The project, supported by the Center for Community and Regional Research (see page 38), was co-sponsored by the Duluth Clinic Foundation and Lac Courte Oreilles Band Community Health Center.

### CHILD PROTECTION

Child protection systems are run by counties in Minnesota. The Minnesota legislature requested a review of the procedures each county was using. CURA supported a graduate student through its Graduate Interns for State Agencies program (see page 38) to collect data from the counties on their child protection procedures. The intern worked with a team of senior researchers in the Office of the Minnesota State Legislative Auditor. Their report has received considerable attention both in the legislature and in various state departments.

### RETHINKING CHILD WELFARE

Can the community accept the burden of Minnesota's policy for assuring the safety of maltreated children? A one-day symposium held at the University of Minnesota examined this question, looking at the eroding of public child welfare services during a period of severe budget cuts. A standard child protection response has been the "funnel" effect that reduces voluminous reports of maltreatment to a trickle of cases opened for service. Partnerships between public authorities and the informal and formal resources of communities are providing promising experiments in changing the system. Evaluations of what works and what doesn't work are sorely needed, but these partnerships provide the most recent hope for improving the lives of families and chil-

dren. CURA published a summary of the proceedings and a paper based on them was also published in a national journal.

### **FINANCING CHILD CARE**

The Development Corporation for Children (DCC) was concerned that Minnesota lacked sufficient child care centers and needed private financing to develop more. CURA supported a student intern who gathered information from centers around the state about the demand for more child care. This information provided proof that the need existed and laid the groundwork for DCC's statewide roundtables, including representatives from banks and child care centers across the state. The roundtables led to a bill passed by the legislature that formed a public/private partnership for developing child care centers. The state provided a million dollars and the private sector another half million for loans to new child care businesses. DCC created First Children's Finance, which administers the loan fund.

### **OJIBWE FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM**

The Community University Health Care Center wished to foster family literacy among its clinic patients who were Ojibwe Indians. The clinic hired a reading specialist to conduct reading classes for two hours each day. CURA supports an intern who interviews people in the clinic's waiting room to see if they might succeed in the literacy classes. The intern continues to identify candidates and refer them to the reading program.

### **CONCURRENT PLANNING FOR HIGH RISK CHILDREN**

Federal law now requires that a concurrent planning process begins when a young child is placed in foster care, and that after six months a "permanent decision" must be made. This means that plans for permanent adoptive homes are prepared at the same time that services are made available to try and reunite children with

their birth families. The idea is to curtail long delays in adoption if it turns out to be needed and to establish a permanent home for each child as soon as possible. Sequential planning, where adoption plans are developed only after attempts at reunification have failed, has been the standard practice until now. A symposium on the new concept was held at the University of Minnesota in December 1997 and highlights from the symposium were published by CURA with the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare.

### **DIRECTORY OF ASIAN AMERICAN YOUTH PROGRAMS**

Asian Americans are the fastest growing population in Minnesota, and nearly half are under age eighteen. A directory of programs targeted for Asian American youth was compiled by Asian American Renaissance and published as a joint venture with CURA. The directory presents detailed information on forty-eight prevention, intervention, and recreational programs sponsored by nonprofit organizations and mutual assistance groups in the Twin Cities area that are "by, for and about Asian Americans." Indexes to the ethnic groups represented and to the type of programs available are also included.

### **GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION**

CURA has continued to provide financial assistance to the Center on Aging so that they can sponsor a student paper competition each year which awards research grants to the best graduate student projects submitted. In the past two years eleven students have received funds for their projects. Projects selected have come from nine different University departments—from Kinesiology to Pharmacy to Family Social Science. Some of the topics studied include fatty acids in older Minnesotans, the effects of inactivity and exercise in older populations, and the impact of prescription drug coverage for Medicare recipients.

### **YOUTH PROGRAMMING IN LANDFALL**

Family Service St. Croix wanted to evaluate its community development program in Landfall, near the East Side of St. Paul, and asked CURA for assistance with the evaluation. They were especially interested in how the youth program they had conducted for five years was being received. A graduate student worked with them to prepare questions and then conducted interviews with half of the registered youth participants and 15 percent of their parents. Focus groups were also conducted with twenty adolescents. The evaluation provided a solid affirmation of the value of the youth programming and provided guidance for the resources needed to continue it.

### **FOSTER CARE WITH KIN**

More and more foster children are being placed with relatives. In fact, placement with relatives is now preferred by law. But how successful are these placements? Supported by a CURA Faculty Research Grant (see page 37), a professor of social work examined records in Hennepin County in order to compare placements with relatives and with non-relatives. The research, part of a study begun for the Minnesota Department of Human Services, involved multiple phases and included comparisons of case files as well as interviews with child welfare professionals, birth parents, and foster parents. It found that payment disparities in different types of foster care need to be addressed; that data collection and coordination across county and state lines needs improvement; and that changes are called for in the services, support, and training available to foster parents who are kin. An article on the project appeared in the *CURA Reporter*.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION (NPCR)**

NPCR brings research assistance to community-based organizations. Two of their many projects related to human services

in the last two years are presented here. Reports from all NPCR projects are available online at <http://tcfreenet.org/org/npcr/reports2.html>. For more information about NPCR see page 39.

#### —Impact of Welfare Reform in Phillips

The Phillips Neighborhood Economic Justice Committee was concerned with how welfare reform would affect people in the community. A graduate student, using demographic information from the 1990 U.S. Census and the 1995 Hennepin



County database on economic assistance recipients, analyzed what would happen under the new laws. She concluded that income would increase for some families while for other groups—especially immigrants, children placed in poor quality day care, and difficult-to-employ people—things will get worse. The Phillips neighborhood has relatively large numbers of people in these categories. Decreases in income may affect housing stock, crime, and local businesses. The final report made six recommendations to the neighborhood association.

#### —Youth Programs

Youth between the ages of twelve and fifteen are often disinterested in the after-school and summer programs offered for them, yet they are too young to work in paid positions. Four neighborhoods in St. Paul—Macalester-Groveland, Summit-University, Highland, and Frogtown—collaborated in an effort to create better summer and afterschool activities for this age group. An undergraduate student investigated what types of activities would appeal to youth and identified the elements of

successful youth programs both locally and nationally.

#### AN INTEGRATED HEALTH NETWORK

The medical system of care for elderly residents in nursing homes is often fragmented. The Fairview Foundation in Minneapolis received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to implement an integrated clinical care model in a three-year demonstration proj-

ect. The underlying goals of the project were to improve on-site primary care in fourteen nursing homes, to reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, and to lower acute care costs. To do this many changes in the underlying financial and organizational models were needed. CURA was brought in to lead in the evaluation of the project. Many nurse practitioners were used and a philosophy of patient-centered care was established. A comparison of nursing home residents in the program with those not enrolled showed fewer deaths and a dramatic drop in hospitalizations. In addition, the network made a substantial profit, proving that a partnership among organizations operating in a competitive environment can succeed and that primary and acute care can be integrated within the nursing home itself. After three years,

Fairview Partners had expanded to fifteen nursing homes and began serving community-dwelling seniors as well.

#### REPARATIONS FOR CRIME VICTIMS

Victims of violent crime are often in great financial need immediately after the crime has been committed, yet many are not aware that financial help is available to them until months later when the economic crisis has passed or caused permanent damage. While Minnesota state law requires that law enforcement agencies advise victims of reparations and aid programs, this notification has for some reason proven ineffective. CURA supported a graduate student through its Graduate Interns for State Agencies program (see page 38) to work with the Minnesota Crime Reparations Board (now Crime Victims' Services) researching the most effective way to get information about its reparations program to victims. The intern developed an outreach and communication plan for enhancing general awareness of the program and personally visited many police stations, hospitals, funeral homes, and a variety of agencies. There was a marked increase in the number of claims made.

#### EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOL-LINKED SERVICES

For more than a decade schools and social service systems have been searching for ways to collaborate so that children will receive the social services they need to enter their classrooms ready to learn while parents get the targeted help they need to support their children's education, health, and growth. In September 1995 a conference was held at the University of Minnesota to examine how various partnerships between schools and social service systems were working. Have models emerged? Do schools have what they need? Do social services have what they need? What are the problems? What works? A summary of the conference proceedings was published by CURA and the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare.

# Land Use and Population

## REDUNDANT FARMSTEADS

Since 1935, the peak year, the number of farms in Minnesota has dropped by roughly 125,000. Assuming that each farm has a farmstead, what has happened to all these farmsteads? A professor of geography and an undergraduate student explored the past and present uses of redundant farmsteads along U.S. 12 between Maple Plain and Montrose and in the eastern half of Cottonwood County. They found that “elbowroomers” have eagerly recycled redundant farmsteads along Highway 12, near the Twin Cities, but many farmsteads in distant Cottonwood County have been abandoned. Farmland is still being used, often rented, but the uses have changed. An article about their study appeared in the *CURA Reporter* and has been picked up quite widely by the media.



## MINNESOTA LAND USE MAP

It has been thirty years since Minnesota had a census of land use across the state. The Minnesota Legislature funded a series of projects in the 1990s that collected data using aerial photography and satellite imagery. By 1998 the inventory was com-

plete, but only in computer files. CURA worked with the Association of Minnesota Counties, the state Department of Natural Resources, and the Science Museum of Minnesota to produce a stunning 45”x52” wall map showing eight types of uses. Thousands of maps have already been distributed to government officials, schools, and individuals. The map is available from the Science Museum.

## CHANGING TRADE CENTER HIERARCHY

In 1990, CURA Associate Director Tom Anding published an historic study about the trade center hierarchy in the Upper Midwest. The study showed changes in size and function since the towns and cities were last studied in 1960. The results proved useful to the Minnesota Department of Transportation which



with 20,000 or more population becoming stronger in retail and other activities. The current analysis suggests that a good portion of the growth in these cities of modest size and larger appears to be at the expense of even smaller places in Minnesota’s trade center hierarchy. These findings point to continuation (and perhaps even acceleration) of a trend identified in the 1990 study. An article detailing the analysis will appear in the *CURA Reporter*.

## NEW LANGUAGES IN MINNESOTA

According to the 1990 Census, 80,000 Minnesotans “did not speak English very well.” Most were new immigrants to the state, refugees from war-torn countries or people looking for better economic opportunities. Communication with these new Minnesotans sometimes demands translation and interpretation services. But what languages? And where are the services most needed? Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) asked CURA for assistance in estimating the nature and location of foreign language speakers around the state. Data from the public schools about languages spoken at home indicates that the number of people not speaking English doubled from 1990 to

1995. Among school children, Hmong is the most popular language and three other Southeast Asian languages are in the top five. Spanish is the second largest group among school children, although it is still the largest group among adults across the state. African and Eastern European languages are growing at the most rapid rate. Most immigrants settle in the Twin Cities or in Olmsted County. An article on the findings appeared in the *CURA Reporter*. Subsequent analyses showed these growth rates continuing into the late 1990s.

### FARM SPECIALIZATION

What is driving farm specialization? Is it the economics of scale as farms become larger or is the amount of capital involved the major factor? A graduate student in



applied economics analyzed data collected annually from farmers by the Southwestern and Southeastern Minnesota Farm Business Management Associations. A single compatible database was created going back to 1977. The analysis gave only cloudy indications of what is driving specialization, perhaps because much of the specialization happened earlier. No move toward specialization appeared in the data set that was studied. Results are available in a completed dissertation.

### COURSES IN GIS

Geographic Information Science (GIS) was pioneered at the University of Minnesota thirty years ago. The initial research project involved faculty and

graduate students from many disciplines and that tradition of many fields continues to this day. A course guide, developed by CURA and the Department of Forest Resources, was prepared to aid faculty and students in locating classes on the Twin Cities campus that are related to GIS. The guide is available on-line ([www1.umn.edu/cura/gis.htm](http://www1.umn.edu/cura/gis.htm)) as well as in print form.

### MINNESOTA LAND IN CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Land held in conservation programs influences land management decisions by private landowners. A graduate student worked with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to analyze data that had been collected about lands in various conservation programs. She worked with staff in local governments, regional development commissions, water conservation and DNR offices, and the federal Conservation Reserve Program helping them with maps as well as digital database files and showing them how to use the files and apply the data to their specific projects. The student's

work was supported by CURA's Graduate Interns for State Agencies program (see page 38).

### METRO GIS

Governments and other groups often need to share data. Variations in pricing and in data standards make this kind of sharing difficult. CURA has joined with the Metropolitan Council and the seven metropolitan area counties and other groups to form Metro GIS. CURA staff played a major role in helping focus energies on the data which are most important and on where cross-jurisdiction sharing is required. CURA has received a federal grant to study the benefits of Metro GIS.

### LAND USE FOR THE BOIS FORTE TRIBE

The Bois Forte tribe in northern Minnesota needed a plan to guide their use of the reservation land near Nett Lake and a policy for pricing the use of the land. CURA provided two graduate interns who worked with the reservation planner. One created a GIS database that provided an inventory of current land uses, natural resources, development, and land ownership. The tribe is still using this database. The other provided research on taxation. The material she gathered is being used by the tribe's attorney in studying tax issues.

### MASTERS DEGREE IN GIS

GIS is a growing field, but there are few ways to get a rounded education that provides the skills and the credentials that professionals need. CURA worked with the University's Department of Geography to create a new degree program, Master of Geographic Information Science, the first of its kind in the country. The first class entered in fall of 1997. Some thirty students are now enrolled, including both full-time students and working professionals. For more information see [www.geog.umn.edu/degrees/mgis.htm](http://www.geog.umn.edu/degrees/mgis.htm).

### GIS MEETINGS IN MINNESOTA

The University of Minnesota was a founding member of the University Consortium for Geographic Information Science (UCGIS) and CURA's assistant director was its second president. The group has created an effective forum for developing research, education, and public policy agendas for its membership (over sixty top institutions) and the nation. The University of Minnesota hosted the 1999 annual meeting in June as it focused on defining needs in a range of application areas. For more information see [www.ucgis.org](http://www.ucgis.org).

## DEMOGRAPHICS FOR POLICY MAKERS

Things have changed a lot since the 1990 federal Census told us about out-migration from rural areas and a deteriorating job market. Demographers need innovative approaches to accessing and analyzing other data sources that will support informed decisions by policy makers. With leadership from CURA, the University of Minnesota has developed an annual Upper Midwest Conference on Demographics for Policy Makers, drawing over 100 participants each year. Conference sponsors include universities and state data centers from Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, South Dakota and North Dakota. The acting director of the U.S. Census Bureau, the luncheon speaker at the 1998 conference, applauded this effort, saying we are the first such regional effort in the country. The first two conferences were in Minnesota, the 1999 conference will be in Iowa.

## GIS BENEFITS IN DAKOTA COUNTY

Few studies have actually documented the benefits of implementing GIS in local government. Most cities and counties know intrinsically, as studies have shown, that automation of basic mapping functions is cost effective. Working with the county staff, a CURA study sought out the deeper benefits of Dakota County's \$2.2 million effort to establish a GIS in conjunction with eleven of its cities and the electric utility. A CURA intern found dozens of unexpected benefits, from more equitable fees paid for land acquisition to ease in siting new libraries, from resolving zoning issues to improving service in transit rides for the disabled. Results were given to the county and published in a national trade magazine and in the newsletters of the Association of Minnesota Counties and League of Minnesota Cities. The study also made recommendations to the county on how to make its system even more beneficial to its users.

## REUSING THE ARSENAL

With the end of the Cold War, the U.S. military began closing unneeded bases. In 1991 the U.S. Army declared the arsenal in Arden Hills unneeded and a process for returning its four square miles to community use began. Portions of the land are highly contaminated with toxic chemicals while other sections have been relatively undisturbed and retain upland forests, wetlands, and prairie that are home to



some wildlife and waterfowl now rare in the Twin Cities. A number of municipalities and community groups developed plans for the reuse of this land. CURA, the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, and Minnesota Extension Service created a collaborative project using a multidisciplinary team of graduate students who worked directly with people from the community to assure that their ideas would be heard and considered as plans for this large area of urban land were formulated. An article about the arsenal project appeared in the *CURA Reporter*.

## GIS VIDEOCONFERENCE

Periodically the University of Wisconsin produces a videoconference on GIS for local government. The videoconference is distributed by satellite for a fee, allowing participants around the country to

view and ask questions by telephone. Minnesota is one of the few states that pays for its distribution statewide and publicizes its availability to local governments. CURA was a leader in arranging this. In 1997, we cooperated with the Governor's Council on Geographic Information, MetroGIS, and the Minnesota Counties Computer Cooperative to distribute a videoconference on metadata to 120 people in fourteen sites around Minnesota.

## TREATY RIGHTS AND LAKESHORE PROPERTY VALUES

Will the restoration of hunting, fishing, and gathering rights to the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe cause property values to plummet on Mille Lacs Lake? A study of lakeshore property values on four Minnesota lakes—Mille Lacs, Leech, Borden, and Smith—between 1990 and 1995 demonstrated that property values had increased with almost identical changes for the lakes involved in the Treaty of 1837 (Mille Lacs and Smith) as for those not involved (Leech and Borden). It seemed that larger market forces than the treaty rights debate were affecting the value of lakeshore property. An article in the *CURA Reporter* based on the project reported that local assessors believed baby boomers buying recreational land were driving the market.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GIS

Academics have worried about the impact of GIS on society, especially groups on the margin. CURA helped organize a specialist meeting about how community organizations are using GIS to their advantage. This meeting was supported by the National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis with funding from the National Science Foundation. Papers were presented describing current activities around the country and the world. An agenda was defined of work that needs to be done to expand the positive aspects of public participation GIS. A report is available at [www.ncgia.ucsb.edu/varenius/ppgis/PPGIS98\\_rpt.html](http://www.ncgia.ucsb.edu/varenius/ppgis/PPGIS98_rpt.html).

# People of Color and Disadvantaged

## DISCRIMINATION IN PUBLIC CONTRACTS

Programs that set aside jobs for people of color and women were abandoned after 1989 when the Supreme Court ruled in its *Crosorn* decision that a program in Virginia



had violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. To establish such programs again, communities need to show that there is a significant disparity between the number of able, willing contractors of color or women contractors who are available and the number of contracts awarded to them. Anecdotal and historical evidence must also point to a climate of discrimination. CURA served as the administrative home for a disparities study that was initiated in St. Paul in 1993. The study, summarized in an article in the *CURA Reporter*, looked at discrimination in public contracts in Ramsey County, St. Paul, and Independent School District #625. It found that both passive and active discrimination existed in all three jurisdictions. Almost all of the report's recommendations for remedial corrective actions were adopted by Ramsey County

and Independent School District #625. Less than a third were adopted by the City of St. Paul.

## NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS OF COLOR

Since its inception in 1991, CURA's *Directory of Nonprofit Organizations of Color in Minnesota* has proved to be very popular. The third edition, published in 1997, lists over 700 organizations and includes a brief description of each group and their main activity. Organizations listed are all controlled by persons of color and/or primarily serve persons of color. Religious organizations and tribal governments

are included, but for-profit groups and state offices are not. Organizations are categorized as African American/African, American Indian, Asian American, Chicano/Latino, or Multicultural. Mailing label matrices are provided for each community of color. The directory is also available on-line at [www1.umn.edu/cura/npocwww2.htm](http://www1.umn.edu/cura/npocwww2.htm). Plans for a fourth edition are underway.

## AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS AND THE SCHOOLS

Many of Minnesota's American Indian students have serious problems with school. Fifty-seven percent fail to complete high school as compared to 40 percent of Indian students who drop out nationally. What is behind the high Indian drop out rate? A professor of education at the University of Minnesota-Duluth used a CURA Faculty Research Grant

(see page 37) to interview Indian students about their experiences in school, what has helped and hindered their education, and how they think the schools could be improved to help educate American Indians. He found that the students like active, experiential learning; that they are sensitive to racism in the school curriculum and in the classroom; and that different types of schools are needed for different types of Indian students. An article about the study will appear in the *CURA Reporter*.

## UNIVERSITY ACCESS FOR THE COMMUNITY (U-ACT)

Designed to establish stronger links between the University of Minnesota and community organizations of color, U-ACT makes the research or technical assistance of graduate students at the University available to organizations of color for short-term projects. During the past two years twenty-two projects received CURA support. The projects described here illustrate the range of projects undertaken by U-ACT. For more information about the program see page 40.

### —KMOJ News Department

KMOJ radio, a community station for African Americans in the Twin Cities area, wants to create a viable news department. A graduate student from the University's School of Journalism investigated how three other community radio stations gather news, structure their news department, and select what will be broadcast. Based on this background the student recommended how KMOJ should set up their department. Training requirements for interns and how they might be used were also spelled out. A partnership between the School of Journalism and KMOJ was established to help in guiding the station as it creates a newsroom and to provide internship opportunities for journalism students.



**—Hispanic Education Fair**

A graduate student assisted in planning, implementing, and overseeing the fifteenth annual Hispanic Education and Career Fair, sponsored by the Minnesota Hispanic Education Program. The fair, held at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, attracted over 300 high school students and more than forty colleges, universities, and technical schools. Designed to encourage Latino youth to pursue postsecondary education, the fair featured exhibits by the various schools, career workshops, information and timelines about the college admissions process, and workshops on preparing for college as well as workshops for high school counselors on Latino high school performance issues. The U-ACT intern recommended that the fair be expanded from a half-day to a full day or more in the future.

**—History and Impact of the Thomas-Dale Block Club**

A graduate student prepared a history

of the Thomas-Dale Block Club. Fifty-two people were interviewed and police records were also examined. In her report, the U-ACT intern concludes that the block club has changed the outlook of the entire community and helped turn the tide in a rapidly declining neighborhood. The report recommends that the block club work on including the growing Asian community in their organization and compile documentation showing the major decline in the number of drug houses and the incidence of crime during the 1990s after the block club was formed.

**—Youth Entrepreneurship Classes**

The St. Paul Urban League wanted to expand its successful Youth Entrepreneurship program, which helps high school students who are considered at risk to create their own jobs and prepare for the world of work. A graduate student observed the instruction of three Youth Entrepreneurship classes, team-taught three classes with a certified

instructor, and solo-taught six classes. The student also participated in an assessment of the course.

**—Wind Energy for White Earth**

The White Earth Land Recovery Project (WELRP) is seeking to rebuild a sustainable community on the original land base of the White Earth Indian Reservation in northwestern Minnesota. Part of their goal is protecting the environment. This project explored harvesting wind energy for the reservation community. Two potential sites in Mahnommen County were monitored for wind energy power. Various production possibilities were explored. Current federal and state energy production deregulation was researched. Links with organizations and individuals active in promoting renewable energy production were made in Minnesota, nationally, and internationally. During the course of the project, WELRP received a \$37,000 federal grant to continue wind energy development at the reservation.

The U-ACT intern now serves as WELRP's representative to the Sustainable Energy for Economic Development (SEED) Project coalition.

### —Participatory Evaluations

When CURA's U-ACT program began, one of the earliest requests from organizations of color was for training in learning how to do evaluations. In response, U-ACT has been working with individual agencies on their evaluation needs as well as training staff at these agencies. The training, designed to empower the staff by teaching them how to conduct their own evaluations, includes: planning, how to set up goals and objectives, how to do surveys, how to design questionnaires, how to conduct surveys, and how to organize and analyze the data from surveys. U-ACT has worked with staff from CLUES (Chicano Latino Unidos en Servicio), Model Cities, the St. Paul Urban League, Ramsey Action Program, Summit Academy OIC, La Oportunidad, Women of Nations, Center for Victims of Torture, and the Somali Women's Association.

### RACIAL STEREOTYPES

Minnesotans pride themselves on being free of stereotypes, but a survey by the Minnesota Center for Survey Research indicated that we hold racial stereotypes as deep as those of the rest of the country. Minnesotans think members of most minority groups are lazier and more prone to violence than whites. With few exceptions these views are uniformly held across the state and across various demographic groups. All ethnic and racial groups, however, were rated better than average. Whites were simply viewed as more above average than others. Results of the survey were published in the *CURA Reporter*.

### HMONG ODYSSEY

A documentary history project at the University of Minnesota, Duluth culminated in the theatrical production of "Hmong Odyssey," a chronicle of Hmong immigration and settlement in various parts of Minnesota. The project was coordinated

by a professor of theater at the University and co-sponsored by the Center for Community and Regional Research (see page 38) and the Indianhead Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The production was designed to increase cross-cultural understanding in Duluth.

### AMERICAN INDIAN CAPACITY BUILDING

In 1996 it was discovered that a significant communication gap exists between social service agencies and the American Indian community in the Frogtown and Summit-University neighborhoods of St. Paul.

CURA supported a student intern to help the American Indian Research and Policy Institute search for Indian solutions to the problems in this depressed area of the city. The project sought to identify Indians in the neighborhoods, conduct focus groups (or talking circles) with them, and identify potential leaders who could develop an action plan. The project discovered that American Indians were moving to the East Side of St. Paul. The focus was shifted to include East Side Indians as well. Leaders in the Indian community were identified. A number of new initiatives in the St. Paul Indian community show promise. The intern on this project is now the Commissioner of Health and Human Services for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

### COMMUNIVERSITY PERSONNEL GRANTS

Grassroots organizations in the community receive student assistance on small projects through CURA's Community program. During the past two years Community has sponsored forty-three projects in Minnesota communities. The four projects described here are only a

sample of the projects that relate directly to people of color. For more information about Community see p. 38.

### —City Songs

City Songs provides an after-school program for 50-100 disadvantaged youth of color each year. Its choruses are directed by well-known professional singers. No auditions are needed and all members get a chance to be soloists, announcers, or dancers. The program, for grades three through eight, uses music to address problems that interfere with healthy youth, family, and community development. It is



located on the East Side of St. Paul and performs in local churches. The program needed to find a meaningful way to evaluate itself. A student built a theoretical framework for evaluation. The musical services that City Songs provides are easily measured, but whether the program impacts on the lives of these youth in a way that improves their lives may be impossible to measure.

### —Hmong Participation in Public Life

The Hmong are underrepresented in citizenship, voting, and politics. The Minnesota Alliance for Progressive Action (MAPA) used a Community student to work with them in conducting a survey of the St. Paul Hmong community, collecting information about citizenship, voter

registration, and public participation. The project built MAPA connections in the Hmong community. The student became a member of the MAPA board of directors. And the Hmong community began to get involved in public life. A voter education drive, for example, was conducted at Hmong soccer matches the following summer.

### —Mexican Immigrants in Rural Minnesota

The Latino population in Minnesota is growing and many are Mexican migrant workers settling in rural areas. Both the communities and the Mexican settlers are facing new challenges. CURA supported a student intern who worked with the Resource Center of the Americas to research how five rural communities were dealing with the new population. The student also organized a one-day workshop in the Twin Cities on culturally competent social work with people of Mexican descent. People from social service agencies throughout the state attended. The social workers who attended these workshops are already coming to realize they must change their Eurocentric point of view and develop culturally-inclusive policies. This project was originally funded through CURA's Communitarity program, but then extended through additional funding from the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The student went on to lead twenty-hour workshops ("The Many Faces of Mexico") in a number of rural communities attended by Extension educators, public school teachers, and local Latinos. Community-based action projects are beginning to develop in some of these communities. The student intern has been hired as a staff member of the Resource Center of the Americas.

### —African Americans in Science

The Science Museum of Minnesota is hosting an exhibit on Africa from Chicago's Field Museum. A student helped them gather information on historic and contemporary African and African American scientists to be added to the exhibit. The student researched the

legacy of African science and the work of African American scientists, past and present; interviewed scientists chosen for the exhibit; worked on developing the exhibits; and participated in meetings of the African Advisory Group. The museum hopes that the exhibit will dispel the notion of science as a white domain and encourage young African Americans to consider pursuing science as a career. The exhibit serves as a prototype for a small new exhibit that will recur annually at the Science Museum in its new location.

### LATINO RESEARCH

CURA continues to support HACER (Hispanic Advocacy for Community Empowerment through Research), a community-based research organization within the Latino community. In 1998, with CURA's assistance, HACER produced their first research publication, written in both Spanish and English. *Realidades Latinas* reported on their



study of the thriving Latino community in south Minneapolis. A similar study of the Latino community in Dakota County will be forthcoming in 1999. HACER is now housed in CURA's offices so that closer ties may be developed with the University research community.

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

How can one be sure that announcements and advertisements will reach people of color or other disadvantaged people in Minnesota? CURA has prepared a directory that gives detailed information about newspapers and magazines whose primary audiences are African American, American Indian, Asian, Chicano/Latino, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender, people with disabilities, seniors/older adults, veterans, and women. First published in 1991, a new edition was printed in 1997. The directory is also available on-line at [www1.umn.edu/cura/equal.html](http://www1.umn.edu/cura/equal.html). *A Minnesota Mailing List for Equal Opportunity Announcements and Advertisements* includes mailing labels in the back of the book.

### THE RISE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN POVERTY

During the 1980s there was a dramatic rise in concentrated poverty among African Americans living in the Twin Cities. The Twin Cities became one of the most ghettoized metropolitan areas in the country. A professor in public affairs, with the help of a CURA Faculty Research Grant (see page 37), examined the change in the Twin Cities as it compared to similar changes in other cities. He attempted to explain the current situation, concluding that in the Twin Cities it is largely a result of increased migration of low income people from out-of-state and from other countries. In an article about the study in the *CURA Reporter*, he concluded that because it is mostly newcomers, the prospects for the future are promising.

## **BUILDING COMMUNITIES ACROSS CULTURES**

Building on relationships already established in the American Indian community, a special grant came to CURA from the University of Minnesota Extension Service to continue projects relating to the Indian communities in the state and to become a resource for organizations seeking a greater understanding of Indian issues, particularly issues related to tribal sovereignty. A number of projects were carried out under this grant which began in December 1996 and runs to the end of this year.

### **—Indians and the Land**

A class was developed in the University's Department of Landscape Architecture which explored American Indian perceptions of the environment from traditional beliefs as recalled by elders through present day experiences. Many tribal speakers were included in the class which focused on lifeways and spirituality as they relate to the environment, resource use and management, and environmentalism. Offered in the spring of 1997 and 1998, the class was co-taught with a member of the Red Cliff reservation in Wisconsin who was a student at the time. His participation helped make the class a dynamic success.

### **—Housing in Phillips**

There has been increasing concern about the future of the rapidly changing American Indian community in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis. Two University of Minnesota students worked on preparing initial demographic data on the Indian community in the neighborhood. Face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and other ways of identifying the growing concerns around housing in the neighborhood will be the next step.

### **—Tribal Sovereignty**

There is a widespread need both within and outside the Indian community for people to understand the concept of tribal sovereignty. A graduate student studied the legal and historical background of

tribal and United States government relationships. She prepared a four-page brochure that provides a basic understanding of the sovereign status of American Indian tribes. Five thousand copies were printed and distributed through the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. A forum was also held for the Indian community on sovereignty.

Minnesota Extension educators near Grand Rapids in the spring of 1997. Mills uses his life as a way of illustrating the importance of goal setting, positive attitude, and teamwork. The talk was so well received that three organizations whose members attended it have since arranged for Mills to come and speak with their groups.



### **—Tribal Leadership**

Long before Europeans came to this country Indian tribes were using complex and dynamic means of government. The diverse tribes had many systems of traditional leadership, no two alike, but all quite different from the form of governance that has evolved in the United States. A graduate student prepared a report on the differences between traditional Indian leadership and U.S. governance. The report was used as the basis for a two-day leadership forum at St. Thomas University and has been received with great interest in both the Indian and White communities.

### **—Billy Mills Speech**

Billy Mills is a Lakota Sioux from the Pine Ridge reservation. He is the only American to win the gold medal in the 10,000 meter race in the Olympics. He spoke to a group of teachers, police officers, county commissioners, and

### **—Landscaping Design for the American Indian Center**

Anishinabe Wakiagun is a home for Indians who are chronic alcoholics. It was built by the American Indian Housing Corporation just behind the American Indian Center in Minneapolis. There have been some problems with activities at the home interfering with activities at the center. The center wanted ideas for a landscape design between the two buildings that would help articulate the two differing communities. Landscape design students from the University created several design alternatives that might work. The plans were well received and have been presented to the Minneapolis City Council. As soon as money has been raised for the project the new landscaping will be put in place.

# Policy and Government

## FEDERAL CUTBACKS AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

America is moving toward an economic and social system in which the federal government will have a smaller presence. Cuts in federal spending mean that state and county governments have larger responsibilities. In 1996, two professors of applied economics and a research fellow analyzed how the cuts in federal spending would affect Minnesota. Local impacts depended on which programs were cut and how large the cuts were, but the impact varied from county to county. Profiles of current federal spending patterns were prepared county-by-county for a wide variety of programs—from retirement and disability payments to Medicaid to low income housing assistance. The financial outlook for local governments was sobering, but not calamitous. An article in the *CURA Reporter* helped to warn counties that

formulating policy solutions, and deciding how to vote on a bill? A professor of political science used a CURA Faculty Research Grant (see page 37) to investigate the role of Minnesota's public affairs community in supplying policy ideas to the legislature. Her surveys of legislators and their staff revealed that legislators rely largely on sources close at hand for policy ideas—themselves, their constituents, and their staff. Staffers cast a wider net relying largely on professional peers. The public affairs community appears to have only marginal influence. The study included a citation study in addition to the survey and a ranking of the ten most important laws of the past decade. Results were published in the *CURA Reporter*.

## A NEW RESPONSE TO URBAN CRIME

A demonstration project of how inner city neighborhoods can reduce street crime and build community is drawing considerable attention because it is the first neighborhood-based restorative justice program in

the country to deal with urban crimes committed by adult offenders. NPCR (Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization), see page 39, is largely responsible for the creation of the new Community Conferencing program operated by four urban core neighborhoods in Minneapolis. An article describing the program and how it brings offenders, vic-

tims, and community volunteers together appeared in the *CURA Reporter*. The conferences allow time for all concerned



to discuss the crime and develop a formal plan of reparations to victim and community that will help heal injuries and integrate the offender into the community. The program gives citizens a key role in restoring their community to health.

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FOR JUVENILES

Restorative justice is an emerging, new way of understanding and responding to crime. Instead of the traditional retributive model which focuses largely on the offender with a “trail’em, nail’em, and jail’em” philosophy, restorative justice focuses on restoring harmony between victims, offenders, and the community. It gives support to victims, brings offenders face-to-face with victims, holds offenders accountable, and supports their reintegration back into the community. The practice of victim offender mediation is one of the clearest expressions of this new model of justice. The juvenile justice systems in Dakota and Washington Counties are making a major commitment to restorative justice, including the practice of victim-offender mediation. Local community members serve as volunteer mediators. A professor of social work who is director of the Center for Restorative Justice and Mediation used a Faculty Research Grant (see page 37) to evaluate the two counties’ new initiatives with restorative justice for juveniles. A survey was developed to



they needed to start planning. This project was supported by CURA, the University of Minnesota Extension Service, and the Agricultural Experiment Station.

## POLICY IDEAS IN MINNESOTA

Where do Minnesota legislators get their policy ideas? What sources of information are used in identifying public problems,

assess victim satisfaction. The survey is now being used in other counties and has become the prototype for the entire state. Several reports document the evaluation and a *CURA Reporter* article about the study will soon be published.

### **LOCAL OPTION TAXES**

The Minnesota Department of Revenue was concerned about the difficulties with the state's property tax and local government aid system. A graduate student, available through CURA's Graduate Interns for State Agencies program (see page 38), helped them study local option taxes that could be used to offset property tax. He developed spreadsheets to analyze property tax data in considering various tax reform ideas. As a result of the study the idea of using local option taxes was abandoned. The intern is now employed at the Department of Revenue.

### **TWO HARBORS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

Working with the Vision and Heritage Commission of the City of Two Harbors, a professor of geography at the University of Minnesota, Duluth surveyed the community for a vision of where they should go in the next century. The survey, supported by the Center for Community and Regional Research (see page 38), assisted local authorities in setting future policy priorities for the city's services, infrastructure, housing, schools, recreational and cultural resources, and economic development.

### **TRANSPORTATION AND REGIONAL GROWTH**

In 1996 the Metropolitan Council proposed a growth management strategy for the seven-county Twin Cities region that included recommendations for regional sewer and transportation policies. The council and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN/DOT), both of which will play significant roles in shaping the metropolitan future, asked the University to assist them in carrying out appropriate planning processes by providing them with more knowledge and a keener

understanding of the complex relationships between transportation and regional growth. CURA is helping the University Center for Transportation Studies oversee the project, which involves several faculty and graduate students and addresses such research issues as Twin Cities housing, local government, and land use growth dynamics; passenger and freight travel demand; full transportation costs analysis; transportation financing alternatives; transportation and urban design; and

the process. The CURA intern worked with Crystal planners on models for two main projects: beefing up a commercial strip and scattered site redevelopment of a two-block residential area. The background work done with the assistance of the intern enabled the city to get a grant from the Metropolitan Council to fund the projects. The projects also gave the city's Community Development Department models they could use in other areas of the city.



institutional and political processes associated with regional growth. Several of the initial study reports have been completed and published by the Center for Transportation Studies.

### **PLANNING INTERNSHIPS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Communities needing help on specific issues apply to CURA for research or technical assistance supplied by graduate students from the Humphrey Institute's Planning Program. The best proposals are chosen. For more on the program see page 37. In the past two years, the following communities received a planning intern.

#### **—City of Crystal**

Crystal is an aging neighborhood now prime for redevelopment. They needed a planning model to guide them through

#### **—Forest Lake**

The Town of Forest Lake and the City of Forest Lake were considering a possible merger. It was a sensitive political situation with a great deal of mistrust between the two groups. The CURA intern worked with the Joint Merger Committee. The committee developed questions and the intern gathered information in response and presented it to the committee. Through this process the elected officials became able to talk with each other and the citizens on the committee learned to listen and discover shared goals among people they had distrusted. Bridges have been built between the two communities though no decision about the merger has been made.

### —City of St. Paul

St. Paul's planning department resources were significantly reduced and they needed technical help with a number of community task forces. The CURA intern worked on three projects. He put land use and zoning data into a GIS database for the Department of Public Works. He helped with the planning process for housing policy. And he worked on the St. Paul Community Development Agenda (a consortium of the school district, the county, the city, and other agencies) which created a consensus document that is already changing things in St. Paul.

### —Carver County

The county expects tremendous growth over the next twenty years. It was involved in a major planning effort to create a 2020 comprehensive plan and needed extra help. The CURA intern worked with Parks and Open Space, a subcommittee of the Transportation Committee, making many contributions to the plan, which will be submitted to the Metropolitan Council this spring.

### —City of Cottage Grove

The city needed to update its ordinances to correspond with the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area plan. The CURA intern assisted planning department staff in this effort. He studied anticipated impacts of wetland ordinances for things such as grading and steep slopes, working also with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Inventory. He worked on drafts of city plans and wrote ordinances that have already been approved and implemented.

### —St. Paul Public Schools

The St. Paul Public Schools have defined student achievement as the main component in the district's accountability program. The CURA intern prepared background information that can be used in program evaluations. He collected data about programs in each school in the system. His work helped define what programs exist and how they are doing. A follow-up survey has been prepared based on the data.

### SCOTT COUNTY INTERNSHIPS

Scott County is growing rapidly and needs to develop programs and operations to meet its changing needs. They asked CURA to create student internships that would provide students with practical experience in public policy research and analysis while exposing county management to progressive ideas and management philosophies. Internships were created in the Humphrey Institute and five interns worked in a number of areas. They helped develop county performance measures, a one-stop service concept in finance, needs assessment and coordination for a general ledger and human resources package system, mission and goals for Scott County Family Net, analysis of costs in the justice system and feasibility of a diversions program, survey of leaders and officials about issues facing the county and coordination of meetings of the Scott County Leadership Forum, and creation of the Scott County Economic Development Coalition to address labor shortages in the county. Two of the interns went on to jobs with the county after they graduated.

### REDEFINING METROPOLITAN AREAS

Since 1950, when the U.S. government began designating official "metropolitan areas," the boundaries between urban and rural areas have become more and more blurred. Meanwhile the Office of Management and Budget and the Bureau of the Census have been besieged with demands that specific areas be given metropolitan designation. They are now wondering if they should even continue to define metropolitan areas and if so, how. The intricacies and dilemmas of defining metropolitan areas were revealed through a study of the situation in Minnesota by a professor of geography and his graduate assistant. In an article prepared for the *CURA Reporter*, they proposed that the method of definition be changed to a simple criterion of population density. This would be calculated at the county level, with values based on a population index

calculated from both state and national scales. Regions would then be defined by actual similarity rather than by geography or politics. A presentation was made to the Upper Midwest Conference on Demographics for Policy Makers and the work was also shared with the U.S. Bureau of the Census as part of their review of metropolitan area definition standards.

### STATEWIDE SYSTEMS PROJECT

A graduate student worked with a team of people from the Minnesota Legislative Auditor's office in evaluating the state's new computer system for accounting and personnel. His internship was made possible through CURA's Graduate Interns for State Agencies program (see page 38). The intern interviewed people in various state agencies, exploring who made the decisions about the system and its scope, what is really needed, and what people would like to have in the system. A report of the team's findings was prepared.

### WOMEN'S VOICES

The Minnesota Women's Foundation was concerned that women were not being heard when public policy was discussed and made. CURA joined with a number of other organizations in supporting their multi-method survey of women throughout the state. A phone survey was augmented with focus groups and individual written responses. The survey showed that three issues are paramount in the minds of Minnesota women: crime and physical safety, economic insecurity, and the challenge of balancing work and family life. Results were published in two reports, presentations have been made to numerous groups, and the entire project served as the theme for the Fourth Annual Celebration on International Women's Day this year. The project increased the visibility of the Minnesota Women's Foundation and raises issues that need to be discussed in policy-making circles, the philanthropic community, and the academy.

## **BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

No one likes to contribute to urban sprawl, but local governments on the urban fringe often don't understand the dynamics of sprawl, its consequences, or the tools available for them to control it. With help from CURA and others, a



professor of public affairs undertook a three-year study of sprawl on the edge of the Twin Cities—often looking at pairs of municipalities, such as Cottage Grove and Denmark Township in southern Washington County, where one municipality accepted urbanization and the other did not. He documented the details and hopes to show local officials how they can take control of their own destinies. A summary of the project will appear in the *CURA Reporter*.

## **MEDICAID ESTATE PLANNING**

Medicaid is taking an increasingly large bite out of government budgets and the bulk of Medicaid money goes to pay for nursing home care. Medicaid estate planning is a practice of intentionally transferring wealth to others in the family so that the elder qualifies for Medicaid coverage and avoids paying the long term care costs of a nursing home. How prevalent is this practice? What family resources are being used to meet the needs of elders with chronic illnesses like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's? A professor of family social science, with the aid of a CURA Faculty

Research Grant (see page 37), studied family decision-making about financing nursing home care through in-depth interviews with elders, their families, and the professionals who advise them. She found that most elders do not plan for extended illness. She examined the goals that families have when dealing with a chronic illness, how care needs are being met, and how nursing home expenses are being paid. The public policy implications of the findings were explicitly laid out in a *CURA Reporter* article, and in the full study, also published by CURA.

## **METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT**

The Metropolitan Council was created

in 1967 to guide the growth of the Twin Cities metropolitan areas and assure that the necessary public facilities would be in place to serve it. A visiting scholar (see page 40) from Bethel College examined the thirty-year record of the council to learn what has been accomplished in the realms of land use and housing. His book on the subject—*Growth Management in the Twin Cities Region* (published recently by CURA)—reports that the system's achievement has been impressive in the national context although not meeting the expectations of all observers. He finds that the Metropolitan Council operates in the midst of a web of political influence that both supports many of its current efforts and restrains them.

## **OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING**

Regulation of who can practice in certain occupations has grown dramatically in recent years. A professor of industrial relations used a CURA Faculty Research Grant (see page 37) to study the growth of occupational licensing from 1950 to 1990. Licensing, by creating standards, is meant to protect the consumer from unscrupulous vendors. It also allows vendors to

control recruitment, fix training requirements, and charge more for their services. In an article in the *CURA Reporter* he asked if we are licensing too many occupations and suggested a number of reforms that might benefit the public.

## **LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

The Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women is responsible for studying state policy affecting children, youth, and families. Their staff is too small to develop initiatives for legislation. CURA supported a graduate student, through its Graduate Interns for State Agencies program (see page 38), who studied issues related to family law and domestic abuse. She also attended legislative and state agency hearings on the issues and made recommendations to the commission's staff. In addition, the intern developed the commission's website: <http://www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/commis/abtlcesw.htm>.

## **METROPOLITAN WATERSHED PLANNING**

Under new state legislation, management of water is to be carried out by watersheds. The new policy requires extensive coordination between local governments and local and state offices since watershed management entails not only surface waters, but the lands that run into the waters, their flora and fauna, and the development on the landscape. Under a joint powers agreement among Minneapolis, Lauderdale, St. Paul, Falcon Heights, and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, new management plans are being developed for the Middle Mississippi River Watershed (MMRW). Through CURA, two student interns made significant contributions to the new management plan. They worked closely with the citizens advisory committee to the MMRW Management Organization and with city staff to extract ideas about management and put them into a cohesive plan. The plan is now being used as a criterion for judging various projects that are proposed within the watershed.

# Special Programs



## **FACULTY RESEARCH GRANTS**

Beginning in the summer of 1984, CURA and the University's Office of the Vice President for Research (originally, with the Academic Vice President) have jointly sponsored a competitive program supporting interactive research between University of Minnesota faculty and the community. The purpose of the program is to encourage University faculty to carry out research projects that involve significant issues of public policy for the state and that include interaction with community groups, agencies, or organizations in Minnesota. Projects have an applied orientation as well as serving the more basic research interests of the faculty member. Appropriate subjects for research might involve the state's economy, education, employment, energy, environment, ethnic groups, housing, poverty, social services, or transportation.

The program provides summer support for faculty on nine-month appointments

and graduate student research assistance. The results of these research projects are published in the *CURA Reporter*. Projects completed since 1996 have been described in earlier sections of this *Update*. Five new awards were made in 1998.

**Environmental Justice.** Three professors of geography are using geographic information systems (GIS) to assess the environmental hazards faced by people of color living in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis.

**Welfare to Work.** A professor in human resources and industrial relations is collaborating with the Minnesota Department of Human Services to assess what psychological factors will help predict which people move successfully from welfare to work.

**Encouraging Children to Learn.** A professor of educational psychology is studying African American, American Indian, Hispanic, Asian American, and Somali perspectives to discover how families of color encourage their children to learn.

**Hog Production.** A professor of applied economics is studying the impact of different sized swine operations in ten Minnesota counties.

**Traffic data.** A professor of computer science is exploring how data from thousands of sensors installed on Twin Cities highways can be used through data mining and visualization methods to improve transportation policy decisions.

## **PLANNING INTERNSHIPS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Local government planners are helped while they provide hands-on learning experiences for graduate students in the Humphrey Institute's Master of Planning in Public Affairs Program. The best proposals from local governments in the Twin Cities metropolitan area are chosen each year to receive an intern. Costs of funding the student are divided equally between the agency and CURA. The agency chooses the intern, who works with them for up to one academic year. This program began

in 1990 and has served twenty-six cities and counties. In the past two years six governments received planning interns:

*City of Crystal*

*Forest Lake*

*City of St. Paul*

*Carver County*

*City of Cottage Grove*

*St. Paul Public Schools*

Brief descriptions of the projects are given under Policy and Government in this *Update*.

### **GRADUATE INTERNS FOR STATE AGENCIES**

This program fosters opportunities for graduate students to work outside the University while providing technical assistance and research skills to state agencies. In even numbered years the grants are for the summer. In odd numbered years they



are for up to one academic year. Projects are selected on the basis of importance to the state and value of the learning experience for students. Agencies supervise the students and share costs equally with CURA. In the past two years, nine projects were undertaken with:

*Legislative Auditor's Office*

*Minnesota Department of Revenue*

*Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry*

*Minnesota Crime Victims' Reparation Board*

*Legislative Committee on the Economic Status of Women*

These projects are described earlier in this *Update* under various topic headings.

### **COMMUNITY PERSONNEL GRANTS**

This program assists grassroots, nonprofit agencies and organizations in Minnesota to initiate projects requiring short-term personnel assistance. Priority is given to groups serving diverse communi-

ties. Applications are received twice a year. If a grant is awarded, CURA supports the extra personnel needed, usually an advanced graduate student. Student positions are posted at the University of Minnesota and the agency that receives

the grant chooses the student. Projects range from staff development to research to evaluation to short-term technical assistance. Programs that serve American Indians, African Americans, Chicanos and Latinos, and Asian Americans are given priority. During the past two years forty-three such projects have received CURA support. A

number of these projects are described in earlier sections of this *Update*.

### **CENTER FOR COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL RESEARCH (CCRR)**

Located on the Duluth campus of the University of Minnesota, the center's base funding is provided by CURA. It encourages and supports social, scientific, and humanities research in northeastern Minnesota. In the last biennium, CCRR supported or published findings from eleven projects that are described in earlier sections of this *Update*.



CCRR projects link faculty and students with community agencies on research projects of local and regional significance. The community agencies are normally expected to pay at least half of the project costs. Projects provide an opportunity for UMD students to become actively involved in their community while learning specific research skills and general principles of planning, participation, and evaluation. Students work closely with faculty members who are ultimately responsible for the success of the project. Major student involvement is essential for project funding.

Project proposals come from UMD faculty. Many have been working with community organizations and see CCRR as a way to tackle important problems. The director and staff of the center encourage these relationships and often direct an inspired professor toward an appropriate agency (or vice versa).

### **UNIVERSITY-MIGRANT PROJECT**

The University-Migrant Project began in 1994 when concerned Latinos and others initiated conversations among people at the University of Minnesota, migrant farmworkers, and the various agencies that serve migrant communities concerning issues that affect the state's approximately 20,000 migrant farmworkers. The project became a part of CURA in late 1995. An advisory board made up of former migrants; migrant-serving agency person-

nel; and University students, staff, and faculty provide direction and guidance to the project staff.

The project focuses on educating the University community and the public about migrant and seasonal agricultural workers and issues affecting their lives. It also seeks to improve migrant farmworkers' living and working conditions. As part of this effort, the U-Migrant Project supports the activities of the Farmworker Action Network, a volunteer group that develops educational outreach programs and legislative advocacy for farmworkers.

On the University of Minnesota campus, the U-Migrant Project consists of three main components: a graduate-level interdisciplinary class "The Migrant Experience in Minnesota," a summer internship and research program that places students with agencies serving migrant workers, and collaborative activities that link University faculty and students with migrant-serving agencies to help meet critical needs of migrant workers. The U-Migrant Project is supported by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Executive Vice President and Provost, Minnesota Extension Service, the Office for Special Learning Opportunities (OSLO), and CURA. Several projects stand out in the last two years of the U-Migrant Project:

**Dental Clinics.** A collaboration of the School of Dentistry, Migrant Health Service, Inc., and Tri-Valley Migrant Head Start set up dental clinics in various western and southern Minnesota communities. Faculty members in dentistry, dental students, and dental hygiene students provide dental care to migrant children. The program provides dental students with an opportunity to work on an age group not usually available to them.

**Paid Internships.** The project continues to support University of Minnesota students who work on internships with agencies serving migrant workers or with policy and advocacy organizations. The students contribute to a final project that either educates the public or serves the

farmworkers community. This year the program is expanding to include college students in other schools who come from farmworker families.

**Economic Impacts.** Research continues on the economic impact of migrant workers on Minnesota's economy.

**Curriculum and Certificate Program.** A new twelve-credit program is being developed to train people who work with migrant farmworkers on issues that farmworkers face. The program was developed because of requests from the community.

### HOUSING INITIATIVE

Research projects related to housing are conducted under CURA's newest program, the Housing Initiative. They may originate with either faculty or students or by request from community organizations. A number of initiative projects are detailed in the Housing section of this *Update*. A central element of the initiative, also described in the Housing section, is the CURA Housing Forum, which brings faculty, students, and community members together to discuss housing issues.

### NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION (NPCR)

Since 1993, NPCR has assisted neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis. And in 1996 it expanded to include St. Paul neighborhood organizations and community development corporations as well. NPCR supports student research assistants to carry out neighborhood initiated and guided projects. The program involves nine colleges and universities within the Twin Cities area. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), St. Paul Companies, St. Paul Foundation, Local

Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), the McKnight Foundation, the Minneapolis Foundation, and CURA.

Applications for projects are received three times a year. In the last two years NPCR completed ninety-five projects. A number of these projects are described in earlier sections of this *Update*. A special issue of the *CURA Reporter* in April 1998 depicted many of NPCR's projects and accomplishments.

Besides focusing on the needs of individual neighborhoods, NPCR uses workshops and conferences to share information more broadly across neighborhoods. Workshops have led to continued cooperative efforts among many Twin Cities neighborhoods. In addition, NPCR created the University-Neighborhood Network in 1997 (see the following description).



### UNIVERSITY-NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK (UNN)

Neighborhood projects are brought into university classrooms through this program which links neighborhood activists with students and faculty to solve real community problems. Through UNN, a project of NPCR, faculty offer their students the chance to complete neighborhood projects for course credit. Neighborhood organizations develop and direct a project that fits into a university course. Students choose or are assigned

a project. Since its beginnings in 1997, UNN has linked fifty-seven neighborhood organizations with twenty-five academic classes at three schools. A few of the projects are described under Communities and Neighborhoods in this *Update*. An article giving more detail about the program appeared in the April 1998 *CURA Reporter*.

### **UNIVERSITY ACCESS FOR THE COMMUNITY (U-ACT)**

U-ACT seeks to establish stronger links between the University and community organizations of color. The program began in the fall of 1996 and is modeled after the Commiversity Personnel Grants and CURA's NPCR program. U-ACT awards personnel grants to organizations seeking help with applied research, program development, evaluation, or other issues identified by the organizations. Each student hired for the program has both a faculty and a community mentor. Students are given the chance to make a significant contribution while organizations gain technical or research help for an extended period of time (one University quarter or longer). Information about other University resources is shared on an ongoing basis with the participating community organizations. In the last biennium U-ACT completed twenty-two projects. A sampling of these projects is described in the People of Color and Disadvantaged section of this *Update*. U-ACT has also created a training program in evaluation at the request of a number of communities of color. It is described in the same section. U-ACT is a cooperative effort of the College of Education and Human Development, the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, Minnesota Extension Service, and CURA.

### **VISITING SCHOLARS**

For more than a decade CURA has served as a temporary home for incipient projects and visiting scholars. Typically they receive outside funding and work on projects concerning public policy in Minnesota. CURA

provides office space and an environment that supports their project. CURA often publishes the results.

In 1996-97 William Johnson, a political scientist at Bethel College, wrote a book about the Metropolitan Council's experience with growth management, noted in the section on Policy and Government in this *Update*. CURA published the book in 1998. Previous visiting scholars have included Phil Wichern, a political scientist who studied metropolitan government in

planning and development, evaluation, and other short-term projects in southeastern and south-central Minnesota.

Communities apply to the program with a project that will benefit from student skills and expertise. Projects that are approved provide a student stipend and sometimes travel and other related costs. Early pilot projects have included agri-tourism, city park planning, land use planning, youth leadership, restructuring county services, and economic analysis. The program is



the Twin Cities; Oliver Byrum, who wrote a book about planning strategies for mid-sized cities; Ron Kroese, who researched how agriculture became an industry following World War II; Charlie Warner, who developed data on the vanishing stock of low-income housing in Minnesota and helped create the Minnesota Housing Partnership; and Howard Mielke, who created the Lead Toxicity Project, which produced an analysis and maps of the lead content in Twin Cities soils.0

### **RURAL COMMUNITY ASSISTANTSHIPS**

In a new University program, partnerships with rural communities are fostered by bringing applied research help to Greater Minnesota. The program offers student assistance with applied research, program

supported by a grant from the McKnight Foundation and it is a partnership effort of the University of Minnesota (through its Rural Development Council), the Initiative fund of Southeastern and South Central Minnesota, and local communities and organizations. CURA serves as the fiscal agent for the project as a member of the University's advisory committee.

### **MINNESOTA CENTER FOR SURVEY RESEARCH (MCSR)**

MCSR provides survey research skills and services to people both inside and outside the University of Minnesota. Outside clients typically come from state and local government or from nonprofit organizations. All of the outside clients, and many of the University clients, are working on issues of public policy in Minnesota.

In the past two years, MCSR conducted forty-two major surveys and collected data from over 34,000 citizens and organizations. In addition, MCSR provided partial services for another twenty-one surveys. In total it served seventy-six clients (thirty-one from the University and forty-five from outside the University).

Each year MCSR conducts two omnibus telephone surveys: one of 800 households in the metropolitan area and one of 800 households across the state. Omnibus surveys keep costs low by allowing government and nonprofit organizations each to ask a few questions as part of a larger survey. In the past two years seventeen clients were served by the Minnesota state survey, and ten by the metropolitan survey.

Although MCSR is self-supporting and charges for its services, as part of CURA and as part of a land grant university it also provides some free survey consulting to individuals and organizations. During the last two years, MCSR provided 116 hours of unpaid consulting to ninety-three individuals and organizations (fifty-two hours to government and nonprofit organizations, and sixty-four hours to individuals at the University of Minnesota). As an additional service, MCSR awards a free question on each of its omnibus surveys to the faculty member with the most important public policy question.

A few of the newer surveys are described briefly:

**Racial Integration.** The University's Institute on Race and Poverty conducted a survey of racial attitudes to learn whether integration is dead or whether people still want to make it work. MCSR conducted telephone interviews with 507 residents of the Twin Cities metropolitan area, including an oversample of more than a hundred African Americans. People answered questions about the importance of several factors when looking for housing: the quality of the neighborhood, its racial composition and the ideal racial composition,



tion, the academic standards of neighborhood schools, and their racial composition and ideal racial composition. The study showed that there is still hope for integration advocates: most residents would prefer to live in integrated neighborhoods and to send their children to integrated schools.

**Employment of Persons with Disabilities.** The Minnesota Department of Employee Relations is responsible for setting goals for the state related to hiring persons with disabilities and needed to determine the number of people sixteen and older who have a disability, whether they were currently working or in the process of looking for work, and what barriers to employment they had encountered. MCSR screened thousands of households for disability status, and conducted 424 telephone interviews of persons with disabilities. Survey results were used to adjust the state's hiring goals and to target barriers to employment that were identified.

**University of Minnesota Administrative Surveys.** The University of Minnesota often needs to collect information for

administrative and planning purposes. MCSR conducted three surveys as part of University 2000, the plan to further improve the student experience at the University. The 1997 Student Experiences Survey was completed by over 2,500 currently registered students, and included an overall assessment of the University, as well as questions about campus services, coursework, campus experiences, future plans, and expectations. The 1998 U of M Graduates Survey assessed the impact of the University on its 1996 graduates. Questions about their education, career, and how well the University prepared them for it, educational activities since graduation, professional activities, and life skills were completed by 1,730 individuals. A third survey, about the working climate of the University, was completed by about 5,100 employees.

**Vaccine for Pneumonia.** Staff at the Minnesota Department of Health wanted to know whether senior citizens were aware that they could be vaccinated against pneumonia. MCSR screened households in three metropolitan counties for age eligibility and conducted 353 telephone interviews. People answered questions about vaccines, the seriousness of pneumonia, awareness of the vaccine, the importance of a doctor's recommendation, and costs. The results are being used to design outreach activities that will increase immunization rates.

**Evaluating Judges.** Every two years the Hennepin County Bar Association asks its members to evaluate current judges of the Fourth Judicial District who will be listed on the election ballot. Performance categories include: fairness, lack of bias, and judicial demeanor; legal expertise in civil and criminal cases and in specialty court; and case management skills. Members are also asked to consider whether judges should be retained in office. Of the seventeen judges listed in the 1998 survey, fifteen received retention ratings of 85 percent or higher.

# Cura Publications and Reports

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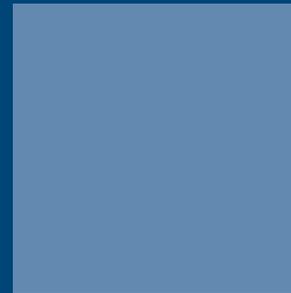
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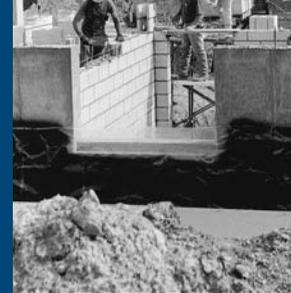
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