Reinventing the news at MPR

Public Insight Journalism®

Andrew Haeg
Senior Producer & Analyst
June 12, 2006
On any given story, someone in the audience almost always knows more than we do.
More FAA inspectors have reportedly come forward to express concerns about the safety of Northwest Airlines planes, while the airline's mechanics union is on strike. (MPR Photo/Mark Zdechlik)

The union that represents Federal Aviation Administration inspectors says more FAA personnel are stepping forward and raising safety concerns about Northwest Airlines. A Twin Cities-based inspector wrote to FAA management...
Minnesota's roads are wearing out
by Dan Olson, Minnesota Public Radio
September 23, 2004

Just over a third of Minnesota’s state maintained roads are labelled too far gone by MnDoT meaning they’re beyond preventive maintenance help and need rebuilding (MPR photo/Dan Olson)
The "working crunched" struggle despite a growing economy
by Jeff Horwich, Minnesota Public Radio
April 19, 2006

Susan and John Marsh live in a comfortable home looking north across Minneapolis' Lake Nokomis. But a string of difficulties have left them feeling far from financially secure. (MPR Photo/Jeff Horwich)

Many middle class families find themselves squeezed and feeling financially insecure. Minnesota Public...
Marketplace®

The Numbers

DOW -0.15%
NASDAQ -0.26%
S & P -0.21%

HELP US TELL THE STORY

We want your insights to help us in our reporting in these areas. Share what you know:
- Entrepreneurs
- Sustainability

What can you help with right now?
- Returning from Iraq and adjusting to life back at home
- Focus on the issues
- Growing up Indian
- Financial security — or insecurity — and personal decisions
- Design in your life
- Teens in foster care

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What should we know about what's happening at Northwest Airlines?

Share your experience with Minnesota Public Radio.

First Name:*  Michael
Last Name:*  Skoler
City:*  St. Paul
State:*  Minnesota
Zipcode:*  55105
E-mail:*  mskoler@mpr.org
Phone:

How have the Northwest labor disputes (present and/or past) affected you?

What is your relationship with Northwest? *
- [ ] Northwest traveler
- [ ] Former Northwest employee
- [ ] Travel industry professional
- [ ] Northwest employee
- [ ] Replacement Northwest employee
- [ ] Other
PIJ - MPR Regional - NWA mechanics strike - general query
(Sep 10, 2005)

How have the Northwest labor disputes (present and/or past) affected you?
I worked as a technician for 15 yrs. I have been layed off 5 times and moved 4 times to keep my
job. While working for NWA, I realized that I needed to find another career. I got a business
degree and discovered my strengths and have closed the door in my life with NWA. I am excited
about my future because I now know there are great companies out there who care about the
people they work with and the customers, which is the opposite of NWA. NWA is ONLY
concerned with short term and everything else be damned, just get a customer in that seat. SO
IF PEOPLE QUIT FLYING NWA, THEY WILL CHANGE. THEY DON'T CALL IT NORTHWORST FOR
NOTHING. ONLY THE CUSTOMERS CAN CHANGE NWA'S OUTLOOK.

What is your relationship with Northwest?
Former Northwest employee

If "Other," please explain.

Would you be willing to talk with an MPR reporter?
# The Audience Insight Repository

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**Mainstreet Survey: Food, Eating and Obesity: What shaped how you think about eating? Tell us a story about particular experiences, perhaps even from childhood, that influenced your attitudes toward food and eating.**

> As a young adult I paid little attention to my growing suit size. My grand awakening came when my doctor told me I had type two diabetes and introduced me to all of the requirements of pill taking and die...

**Balancing Minnesota’s Budget: A Postscript Import: What do you think of the debate that led up to the new budget plan?**

> umers to spend money in any zone, tax-free or otherwise, when we can’t even afford to go to the doctor.

**Focus on the Issues: Why are these issues most important to you?**

> yself an American again. I think we need to learn to keep our noses out of other people’s bedrooms, doctor’s offices, and personal business in general. We need to stop sending our troops out in the world to ...

**Budget Balancer 2 Import: What is your work title?**

> doctor

**Small Towns - Vote: Comment on this idea:**

> This is a great idea. Our problem in rural Pennsylvania is that we don’t have doctors to run our clinics. I would like to get more info on your project.

**Medical Matchmaker: What issues or topics related to health care would you like to see MPR News look into?**

> t seek into the reasons...
The Public Insight Network is a group of thousands of Minnesotans who have agreed to help us cover the news from time to time.

The Network is part of MPR News' commitment to using the knowledge and insights from our audience to make our news coverage stronger.

Thanks for sharing your story about your credit report and about credit report errors.

Your stories and insights helped reporter Jeff Horwich produce a story on credit reports, and what happens when there are mistakes.

Please feel free to contact me anytime with suggestions for news coverage, or with questions or concerns.

Thanks again for your help.

All the best,

Andrew Haeg
Senior Producer/Analyst
Public Insight Journalism
Minnesota Public Radio
# The Future of Small Towns

**Idea Generator**

**Categories**: People, Economic Opportunity, Human Services, Telecommunications, Transportation, Social/Cultural Opportunities, Education, Government & Policy, Other

## People
- Diversity makes small towns friendlier
- Encourage immigrants to move to small towns
- Small towns need focus and commitment

## Economic Opportunity
- Support your local businesses
- Encourage home-grown entrepreneurs
- Create local cooperatives

## Human Services
- Meet the needs of the aging population
- Put early childhood centers in vacant main street buildings
- Consolidate human services into outreach centers

## Telecommunications
- Build a municipally owned fiber optic network
- Formulate a Rural Broadband Act
- Bring wireless Internet to small towns

## Transportation
- Invest in high-speed transit between cities
- Create a state fund for small city transportation

## Social/Cultural Opportunities
- Make towns cheap enough for artists
- Support library

## What is this?
This is an online collaboration where you can suggest and discuss ideas for dealing with the challenges facing small towns.

To take part, click on an idea to read it, or click on a category to read all of the ideas in that area. Then rate or comment on an idea, or even take the next step and propose an idea.

Some of best ideas shared here will be discussed at the upcoming Symposium on Small Towns, June 7th and 8th at the University of Minnesota-Morris. Learn more and register here.

### Do small towns have a future?
After cresting in the 1930s and 1950s, the rural population on the Northern Great Plains has steadily decreased. Younger people moved to cities. Older people tended to stay. That process

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*Image: Minnesota Public Radio*
# The Budget Balancer

**Your Goal:** Eliminate the deficit.

## Revenue:
$30,714,000,000

## Expenses:
$31,180,000,000

## Deficit:
$-466,000,000

### Expenses

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<td>Health and Human Services</td>
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<td>State Government and the Arts</td>
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<td>Other Areas</td>
<td>$676,000,000</td>
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### Revenue

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<td>Income Taxes</td>
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<td>Sales Taxes</td>
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<td>'Sin Taxes'</td>
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Medical Matchmaker
Part of the Prescription for Change project

The Matchmaker randomly generates 12 pairs of fictional health insurance plans. Choose the plan you like most (or dislike least) and click "Continue." The Matchmaker will analyze your choices and, at the end, show you the plan type with the features that seem to matter most to you. See the glossary for definitions of key terms.

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<td>$190 individual, $650 family</td>
<td>$250 individual, $850 family</td>
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<td>Access to Specialists</td>
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<tr>
<td>No referral usually needed</td>
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<td>Paperwork</td>
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<td>You fill out claim forms only for out-of-network providers</td>
<td>You track expenses and fill out claim forms</td>
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How people join the Public Insight Network

• On-air promos for online surveys
• Targeted surveys to listservs
• “Help us cover this story” button
• Meetings & events
• Simulations & collaborative tools
• PIJ promos and online sign-up
• Presentations to community groups
Where we are now

Size of Public Insight Network: 20,000

Reach of Network: 50 states and 12 countries

Resources: 4 staff and an intern

Impact: >130 stories informed by PIJ
Why?
To avoid an evolutionary dead-end

Rise of online culture of sharing knowledge

Destruction of local coverage

Public distrust of media
Online information sharing

- 53 million Americans have put information on the Internet
- >3 billion song ratings on Yahoo
- >1.5 million entries on Wikipedia
- 7,000 add-ons for the video game SimCity 4 on fan site Simtropolis
Loss of local coverage
Public Distrust

“…we in the news media are widely perceived as arrogant, out of touch and untrustworthy.”

- Nicholas Kristof
  Op-Ed April 12, 2005
  The New York Times
  nytimes.com
“Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.”

- Thomas Jefferson

“America is facing the greatest exodus of informed citizenship in its history.”

- Carnegie Foundation “Reporter”, Spring 2005
“... news organizations large and small should bring the public... into their news gathering and news delivery... in ways that were probably unimaginable just a few years ago.”

- “Abandoning the News”
  Spring, 2005
Sharing and partnering

The Center for Innovation in Journalism
@ American Public Media

[Logos of various radio stations and networks]
Reactions and Questions?

More information at:
www.mpr.org/publicinsight