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# What's your community's effective tax rate?

## Citizens League 2005 Property Tax Survey provides a new measure of accuracy when comparing home values across communities

*by Bob DeBoer*

The Citizens League offers up its annual property tax survey for the 39th year in 2005. This year marks a significant change in how the survey compares communities across Minnesota. For the first time, the Citizens League survey will use a measure called "effective tax rate," which calculates what percent of market value an average homeowner is paying in property taxes in each community.

Effective tax rate is a nationally recognized measure that will provide greater accuracy in comparing communities across Minnesota.

To begin to see how this new measure changes community rankings, look at the columns on the left side of Table 1 (see page 4). Previous League surveys have compared the average value home for a region or a selected group of communities from across the state. This "uniform value" approach may be misleading, because it creates a specific home value that does not apply equally to all of the communities in the group.

For example, in 2005, the average market value for all homes in 112 metro communities with populations greater than 2,300 was $222,189. In some cities, such as Apple Valley, Bloomington, Oak Grove, Rogers, Vadnais Heights and Champlin, that is close to the average market value and represents an accurate idea of what many homeowners in those communities experience in terms of market value and property tax.

### Differences in market value

But in Brooklyn Center, the average market value is $147,720. In Orono, the average market value is $595,344. For those cities, the uniform value of $222,189 provides a less accurate measure for comparison. There are also significant variations among the large and small communities in Greater Minnesota. For example, the average home value in 2005 for non-metro cities with populations greater than 9,000 is $133,686. But in Hibbing, the average value is $72,127 and it's $210,953 in St. Michael (see Table 2 on page 6). For the 56 non-metro communities with populations between 3,700 and 8,999 the average home value in 2005 is $132,153, but in Eveleth it is only $51,128, and in Wyoming Township it is $233,867. (See Table 3 on page 9.) As the difference in average market values between communities has increased over the years, the uniform value approach represents fewer homes in many communities and has become less accurate. How many $220,000 homes are there in Orono? How many $134,000 homes in Hibbing? Therefore this is the last year that the Citizens League survey will include a uniform value ranking. To better measure the property tax impact on a typical homeowner in a community, the calculation of effective tax rate allows us to compare communities' uniform market value as we have in the past, but use the average-value home in each community. Since the average value is usually relatively close to the median value (representing the greatest number of homes), the effective tax rate represents a larger number of homeowners in each community and more accurately reflects what many of them are paying in property taxes.

As the property tax survey has always done, the 2005 tables will continue to show the uniform value, the amount of property tax and the ranking.

In our tables, the next columns show the

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# For a more secure future, Minnesota must address hunger

*by Newell Searle*

Hunger is an invisible tragedy that is unacceptable in a state and a nation that annually produce a surplus of food products. Although many Minnesotans make generous contributions to food shelves and to the annual Minnesota FoodShare drive, hunger is a growing problem for low income households, children and seniors. If not addressed now, hunger will have significant economic costs for the state and its communities.

## Too many hungry

The USDA Economic Research Service regularly surveys households to measure the level of hunger or, technically, food insecurity. The term refers to households which, at some time during the year, were uncertain whether they could acquire enough food to meet the basic nutritional needs of their members. The USDA estimates that 36.3 million Americans, 11.2 percent of the U. S. population, live in food insecure households. In Minnesota, some 380,000 Minnesotans, or 7.1 percent of the population, are going hungry at some point in the year. After declining for several years in the 1990s, the number of food insecure Minnesotans grew during and after the 2001 recession, and that number has not fallen since the recovery.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, hunger is not confined to the homeless, welfare recipients or inner city immigrants. There are three principle groups of food insecure Minnesotans: children, seniors and the "working poor." According to a 2001 food shelf survey, 79 percent of the households that used a food shelf had a source of income: employment (43%), Social Security or pension (21%), Supplemental Security Income (15%) or the Minnesota Family Investment Program (11%). More than 80 percent of these households had annual incomes at or below the federal poverty level ($18,400 for a family of four); 55 percent included children under the age of 18, and nearly 20 percent included seniors. Most researchers agree that this "poverty line" income is insufficient to support most families. The actual annual cost for basic needs only for a family of four is estimated at $54,000 in the Twin Cities and $36,000 in rural areas.

Low income households pay disproportionately higher fixed costs for housing, utilities, medical care and transportation. Their household food budget is the only major "discretionary" item and food insecure households often buy less food or skip meals to pay fixed expenses such as rent, utilities and medicine.

Food insecure households are found statewide; they are as prevalent in suburban and rural communities as they are in the core cities. For most food insecure households, hunger is a temporary state that is usually caused by prolonged unemployment, low wages or the compound effects of one or more catastrophic events —a major illness, the death of a spouse or a divorce. Food insecurity, if not poverty, is more common than previously thought. A long-term study of thousands of individual census records showed that half of the adults experienced a period of poverty before they reached the age of 65.

Lower income households and the elderly are getting less help from the government, too. State and federal governments have recently reduced funds for school breakfasts, subsidized health care, and other programs that helped people work their way off welfare. Reductions have shifted more of the program costs to the program users, further squeezing household food budgets, and this has increased the burden on nonprofit hunger organizations such as the six America's Second Harvest food banks that serve Minnesota along with food shelves and soup kitchens. While nonprofit agencies can supplement social programs they cannot replace the level of support required of public programs.

## Economic and social costs

The inability to provide enough food for self and family is a source of shame that prevents many people, especially seniors, from seeking food assistance. Rural seniors are particularly at risk. Many Midwestern seniors strongly resist using food stamps or food shelves believing that: "You either worked or you did without." Unfortunately, poor nutrition leads to more frequent illness, higher social costs for care and greater dependency on others.

Ongoing food insecurity also poses a serious challenge for the future of Minnesota's economy. Children make up about half of the food insecure populations and numerous studies show strong relationships between good nutrition and healthy physical and cognitive development. A study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis showed that investments in early childhood development pay the highest social and economic returns when focused on "at-risk" families with children. Providing them with social assistance furthers the development of language, motor skills, socialization and learning so that "the child is more likely to succeed in school and to later contribute to society. Conversely, without support during these early years, a child is more likely to drop out of school, depend on welfare benefits, and commit crime—thereby imposing significant costs on society." Childhood hunger, and the emotional insecurity that goes with it, can hinder physical and social development, and undermine academic achievement. Children who don't eat, don't learn. A public policy that assures all children sufficient nutrition can help to insure that children do better in school, gain life skills and reduce the costs of providing them with social services later.

## Hunger will grow

According to study by Minnesota Planning, the state's population is aging and that trend points to future hunger-related problems. Minnesota's 80 rural counties are home to 30 percent of the state's population but home to 41 percent of those 65 or older. Better employment opportunities in the seven-county metro area are drawing a disproportionate share of rural college graduates; a trend that poses significant economic and social challenges. Over the past 45 years, the ratio of persons over age 65 to the working age population (15-64) has been 18-19 seniors per 100 workers in rural areas. The ratio of elderly is projected to increase to 31 seniors per 100 workers by 2025 and Minnesota's southern and western counties will be hardest hit. Seniors usually purchase fewer goods and services than younger and middle-aged adults. In aging rural communities, a higher ratio of elderly means less demand for many services and products; fewer business customers and diminished tax revenue to support education, health care and other public services.

*Hunger continued on page 6*

# Viewpoint

## It depends on what you mean by *investment…*

*by Sean Kershaw*

Let's not do to the word invest what we did to the words vision and paradigm: take otherwise meaningful concepts and trample them through misuse—creating fodder for future Dilbert cartoons.

I'm thrilled that our series, "Show Us the Money," has sparked a debate about public investments. And this new conversation may help move us beyond the previous bang-head-on-table argument about more/less taxes and spending.

But we're not there yet.

Investment is *not* the same as spending money. And it's certainly not the same as spending *more* money. We need a richer set of expectations.

### The meaning of investment

Invest has a wonderful etymology. Wikipedia defines it as the accumulation of some kind of asset in hope of getting a future return. The Latin origin refers literally to clothing someone in the symbols of power, granting them visible public authority and recognition.

Previous generations of Minnesotans invested public resources in a world-class education system, a fantastic quality of life, and a dynamic civic infrastructure. We are richer in every sense of the word because of these investments. We place special meaning, visibility and significance on good governance, civic leadership, and the wise use of public resources. From a civic perspective, we became the best-dressed state in the country.

But the moment we equate these past investments with budget line items—or worse yet with outdated government programs—we do a disservice to the memory of past generations and to the hopes of future generations. Investment patterns, like clothes, can become worn and outdated. Our future depends on how we define investment today—and our current wardrobe needs an overhaul.

### Investing and consuming

Some public spending is for current consumption: money spent today that offers little future return. This includes spending for prisons, highway patrols, and nursing homes. Acute care in emergency rooms is consumption. Special sessions are consumption, to say nothing of special sessions about stadiums.

Some public spending is for investments, which increase our productive capacity in the future. Alzheimer's research at the University of Minnesota is an investment. So is prenatal medical care and high-quality education.

It's not that public spending on consumption is bad—at all. But we have limited resources and we need to make sure we strike the right balance. Starving real public investments to pay for consumption of privately produced goods (through tax cuts), or publicly produced current services (through misplaced public spending), will short change us in the future. To push our metaphor: winter's coming and you are on a fixed budget. Is it time for a party dress or a parka? This is Minnesota. Choose wisely.

### New rules needed

We're overdue for discussion of new ideas about public investments—and a new policy framework to support these new investments.

▲ Look at current spending first. Smart public spending requires the efficient allocation of all existing public resources—and tough choices between consumption and investment. What mix of the two do we want? Are we willing to trade some consumption for more investments? We shouldn't talk about investing more unless we've restructured existing resources first. No new clothes until we clean out the closet.

▲ Invest in what works best. Not all investment produces the same return. What is the real return on our public investments? Do we even have the data to find out? Much of our current spending has a poor rate of return—look at our health and education disparities by income/race. What does high-quality research tell us about the best cost-benefit ratio for different spending strategies? What works best?

For example, the recent Citizens League report on higher education emphasized the importance of investing in basic research. Citizens League board member Art Rolnick's research on early childhood education highlights the return on investment from high-quality early childhood education.

▲ Public investment means more than public money. Money alone will not produce the outcomes we need. Our investment policies must recognize and reward the time, knowledge, and civic leadership capacity of our citizens and communities. Are we developing these resources—maximizing their ability to solve problems and create commonwealth?

In 2008 Minnesota turns 150. Are we headed to this party invested in our best public attire, or will we be the Emperor with no clothes? MJ

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# Property tax *from page 1*

average market value home for each community and the tax on that average market value home. In previous years, the Citizens League survey would then rank the tax on these average-value homes in each community, but these rankings would restate the obvious to some degree (an owner of an average value home in Wayzata will pay a lot more in taxes than the owner of an average value home in Columbia Heights).

## Effective tax rate

We now go one step further and calculate the effective tax rate, which is done by taking the net property tax on an average value home and dividing the tax by the average market value in each community. The result is a measure of the percent of market value paid in property taxes. This creates a better relative measure between communities and essentially blends the components of our previous surveys (uniform value and average value) into one more accurate measure for comparison.

To see the difference in how communities are ranked under the previous uniform value comparison and the newer measure of effective tax rate, compare the rankings in the second column on the left (2005 Tax Rank) to the rankings in the far right column (2005 ETR Rank) in each table. We have also calculated the effective tax rate for our 2004 property tax survey to observe the changes from 2004 to 2005 using this more accurate measure.

Many of the communities that have ranked highest and lowest across the state under the uniform value approach in recent years remain in similar positions using the new measure, but there are some significant differences.

The most notable differences in the Twin Cities metro area (Table 1) between the uniform comparison and the effective tax rate comparison in 2005 are:

▲ Some of the older and lower-value suburbs dropped significantly in rank, which means that their property taxes are not as high relative to their market value as previously thought (Columbia Heights, Spring Lake Park, Norwood Young America, South St. Paul, Richfield, Lauderdale, North St. Paul and St. Paul Park). This more accurate measure also pushed cities like Brooklyn Center and New Hope out of the top five and Crystal out of the top 10.

▲ Some higher value and faster growing areas have moved up significantly in rank (Lakeville, Deephaven, Edina, Minnetrista, Plymouth, Shorewood and Wayzata). The increased accuracy catapulted Victoria into the No. 2 position in 2005 and shows that Victoria ranked No. 1 in effective tax rate in 2004, edging out Minneapolis which ranked first under the uniform value analysis.

TABLE 1: 2005 TAXES ON HOMES IN 112 METROPOLITAN COMMUNITIES*

| | $222,189 HOME** (uniform value) | | AVERAGE VALUE HOME (ranked by highest effective tax rate)*** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community (School District) | 2005 Property Tax | 2005 Tax Rank | 2005 Average MV | 2005 Property Tax | 2004 Effective Tax Rate | 2004 ETR Rank | 2005 Effective Tax Rate | 2005 ETR Rank |
| ANOKA COUNTY | | | | | | | | |
| Andover (11) | $2,149 | 85 | $232,176 | $2,262 | 0.97% | 88 | 0.97% | 81 |
| Anoka (11) | $2,337 | 59 | $172,329 | $1,729 | 1.03% | 75 | 1.00% | 70 |
| Blaine (11) | $2,242 | 73 | $191,523 | $1,882 | 0.99% | 82 | 0.98% | 77 |
| Burns Twp (15) | $1,565 | 111 | $248,895 | $1,797 | 0.73% | 111 | 0.72% | 110 |
| Centerville (12) | $2,795 | 13 | $207,273 | $2,583 | 1.25% | 21 | 1.25% | 14 |
| Circle Pines (12) | $2,724 | 17 | $173,496 | $2,045 | 1.16% | 37 | 1.18% | 21 |
| Columbia Heights (13) | $2,379 | 51 | $149,103 | $1,474 | 1.00% | 80 | 0.99% | 76 |
| Columbus Twp (831) | $2,124 | 88 | $229,690 | $2,208 | 1.02% | 76 | 0.96% | 84 |
| Coon Rapids (11) | $2,187 | 80 | $173,826 | $1,630 | 0.94% | 92 | 0.94% | 90 |
| East Bethel (15) | $1,903 | 98 | $195,463 | $1,629 | 0.86% | 104 | 0.83% | 106 |
| Fridley (14) | $2,386 | 49 | $172,961 | $1,775 | 0.98% | 85 | 1.03% | 60 |
| Ham Lake (11) | $2,018 | 90 | $246,389 | $2,278 | 0.90% | 99 | 0.92% | 94 |
| Lino Lakes (12) | $2,530 | 32 | $244,602 | $2,823 | 1.15% | 40 | 1.15% | 29 |
| Linwood Twp (831) | $2,277 | 67 | $201,219 | $2,027 | 0.87% | 103 | 1.01% | 67 |
| Oak Grove (15) | $2,008 | 91 | $221,512 | $2,000 | 0.93% | 94 | 0.90% | 96 |
| Ramsey (11) | $2,320 | 62 | $209,187 | $2,163 | 1.04% | 69 | 1.03% | 57 |
| Spring Lake Park (16) | $2,594 | 25 | $164,472 | $1,823 | 1.12% | 48 | 1.11% | 41 |
| St. Francis (15) | $2,151 | 84 | $178,477 | $1,655 | 0.88% | 102 | 0.93% | 92 |
| CARVER COUNTY | | | | | | | | |
| Chanhassen (112) | $2,754 | 15 | $303,258 | $3,895 | 1.43% | 4 | 1.28% | 9 |
| Chaska (112) | $2,442 | 40 | $235,136 | $2,606 | 1.19% | 33 | 1.11% | 42 |
| Laketown Twp (110) | $1,959 | 94 | $292,939 | $2,702 | -------- | ---- | 0.92% | (95) |
| Norwood Young America (108) | $2,400 | 48 | $152,503 | $1,530 | 1.13% | 44 | 1.00% | 69 |
| Victoria (112) | $2,891 | 8 | $339,203 | $4,609 | 1.45% | 1 | 1.36% | 2 |
| Waconia (110) | $2,432 | 42 | $216,243 | $2,357 | 1.09% | 60 | 1.09% | 48 |
| Watertown (111) | $2,324 | 60 | $176,176 | $1,766 | 1.11% | 52 | 1.00% | 71 |
| DAKOTA COUNTY | | | | | | | | |
| Apple Valley (196) | $2,270 | 69 | $226,712 | $2,324 | 1.08% | 62 | 1.03% | 61 |
| Burnsville (191) | $2,194 | 79 | $214,029 | $2,099 | 1.02% | 78 | 0.98% | 78 |
| Eagan (196) | $2,072 | 89 | $236,330 | $2,228 | 0.98% | 86 | 0.94% | 88 |
| Farmington (192) | $2,428 | 43 | $202,160 | $2,176 | 1.04% | 71 | 1.08% | 51 |
| Hastings (200) | $2,409 | 47 | $190,853 | $2,017 | 1.15% | 41 | 1.06% | 53 |
| Inver Grove Hts (199) | $1,923 | 96 | $225,875 | $1,961 | 0.94% | 93 | 0.87% | 102 |
| Lakeville (194) | $2,214 | 78 | $256,776 | $2,616 | 1.06% | 66 | 1.02% | 63 |
| Mendota Hts (197) | $1,881 | 99 | $320,065 | $2,874 | 0.83% | 109 | 0.90% | 98 |
| Ravenna Twp (200) | $1,633 | 110 | $261,041 | $1,984 | 0.85% | 108 | 0.76% | 109 |
| Rosemount (196) | $2,456 | 39 | $232,847 | $2,591 | 1.21% | 28 | 1.11% | 38 |
| S. St. Paul (996) | $2,274 | 68 | $161,368 | $1,549 | 1.10% | 58 | 0.96% | 85 |
| W. St. Paul (197) | $2,223 | 77 | $184,594 | $1,784 | 0.88% | 101 | 0.97% | 83 |
| HENNEPIN COUNTY | | | | | | | | |
| Bloomington (271) | $2,428 | 44 | $223,351 | $2,442 | 1.13% | 45 | 1.09% | 47 |
| Brooklyn Center (279) | $3,112 | 2 | $147,720 | $1,944 | 1.34% | 9 | 1.32% | 8 |
| Brooklyn Pk (279) | $2,787 | 14 | $187,135 | $2,288 | 1.28% | 15 | 1.22% | 16 |
| Champlin (11) | $2,531 | 31 | $211,273 | $2,388 | 1.16% | 36 | 1.13% | 34 |
| Corcoran (877) | $2,513 | 33 | $289,450 | $3,386 | 1.27% | 16 | 1.17% | 26 |
| Crystal (281) | $2,887 | 9 | $162,397 | $2,010 | 1.30% | 14 | 1.24% | 15 |
| Dayton (11) | $2,642 | 21 | $249,207 | $3,009 | 1.24% | 23 | 1.21% | 18 |
| Deephaven (276) | $2,354 | 58 | $539,149 | $6,243 | 1.21% | 29 | 1.16% | 28 |
| Eden Prairie (272) | $2,483 | 37 | $313,790 | $3,661 | 1.17% | 35 | 1.17% | 27 |
| Edina (273) | $2,359 | 54 | $358,866 | $4,039 | 1.20% | 30 | 1.13% | 36 |
| Excelsior (276) | $2,685 | 19 | $290,128 | $3,620 | 1.30% | 13 | 1.25% | 13 |
| Golden Valley (281) | $2,988 | 5 | $240,198 | $3,260 | 1.44% | 3 | 1.36% | 4 |
| Greenfield (883) | $2,363 | 53 | $311,319 | $3,461 | 1.27% | 17 | 1.11% | 39 |
| Hassan Twp (728) | $2,491 | 35 | $272,863 | $3,144 | 1.11% | 51 | 1.15% | 30 |
| Hopkins (270) | $2,831 | 12 | $195,859 | $2,452 | 1.38% | 7 | 1.25% | 12 |
| Independence (879) | $2,848 | 10 | $407,677 | $5,536 | 1.38% | 8 | 1.36% | 3 |
| Maple Grove (279) | $2,574 | 27 | $243,991 | $2,864 | 1.22% | 27 | 1.17% | 22 |
| Medina (278) | $1,771 | 106 | $533,328 | $4,771 | 0.96% | 89 | 0.89% | 99 |
| Minneapolis (991) | $3,122 | 1 | $180,586 | $2,467 | 1.44% | 2 | 1.37% | 1 |
| Minnetonka (270) | $2,417 | 45 | $288,650 | $3,252 | 1.19% | 34 | 1.13% | 35 |
| Minnetrista (277) | $2,252 | 72 | $454,872 | $5,001 | 1.10% | 54 | 1.10% | 45 |
| Mound (277) | $2,476 | 38 | $237,802 | $2,676 | 1.12% | 50 | 1.13% | 37 |

*continued next page*

# Property tax *from page 4*

▲ For the central cities, St. Paul's rank dropped from 41 under the uniform value to 58 under the effective tax rate comparison, but Minneapolis remained No. 1 under either approach in 2005.

The most notable differences among the 35 largest cities in Greater Minnesota (Table 2) are:

▲ Some of the lower-value cities dropped significantly in ranking (Albert Lea, Fairmont, Hibbing and Worthington). Bemidji and Cloquet were pushed out of the top five.

▲ Some of the higher value and high-growth communities moved up significantly in the rankings (Mankato, Monticello, St. Michael and St. Peter). Most notably, Elk River and North Branch moved into the top five under the effective tax rate measure.

The newest group in the Citizens League survey (communities with populations between 3,700 and 8,999) exhibits the same patterns (see Table 3 on page 9).

▲ Some communities with lower average market values (Chisholm, Eveleth, International Falls, Luverne, Pipestone and St. James) did not rank as high in property tax burden. Windom, Chisholm, Montevideo and Morris were pushed out of the top 10.

▲ Some communities with higher value and growth have moved up in the ranking (Big Lake Township, Lindstrom, New Prague, Wyoming and Wyoming Township). Cities such as Cambridge and Cannon Falls moved into the top five.

Although our analysis is now more accurate, it does not take into consideration every variable. It is difficult to compare levels of service and other amenities across communities. There are also significant differences in the way communities use fees and special assessments and pressure for lower property taxes has probably produced a greater reliance on these sources in recent years. Comparison can also be difficult due to periods in the development of a community where more special assessments and one-time fees are used. This year the Citizens League offers per capita calculations of fees and special assessments (for 2003) for the 203 communities in the property tax survey at www.citizensleague.net.

The property tax survey compares one major cost of local governments, but it is up to citizens to determine the value they receive. Although it is important to know whether or not a community has relatively high or low property taxes, it is more important that local officials provide transparent information on what citizens receive for those taxes. Then citizens can better determine what they value, and if they're getting a good value for their tax dollars.

Local governments are gearing up to

*Property tax continued on page 6*

TABLE 1 *continued*: 2005 TAXES ON HOMES IN 112 METROPOLITAN COMMUNITIES*

| | $222,189 HOME** (uniform value) | | AVERAGE VALUE HOME (ranked by highest effective tax rate)*** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community (School District) | 2005 Property Tax | 2005 Tax Rank | 2005 Average MV | 2005 Property Tax | 2004 Effective Tax Rate | 2004 ETR Rank | 2005 Effective Tax Rate | 2005 ETR Rank |
| New Hope (281) | $3,002 | 3 | $186,831 | $2,465 | 1.41% | 5 | 1.32% | 7 |
| Orono (278) | $1,833 | 102 | $595,344 | $5,536 | 0.99% | 84 | 0.93% | 91 |
| Osseo (279)**** | $2,603 | 24 | $161,641 | $1,792 | 1.15% | 39 | 1.11% | 40 |
| Plymouth (284) | $2,257 | 71 | $278,075 | $2,918 | 1.10% | 56 | 1.05% | 55 |
| Richfield (280) | $2,542 | 30 | $178,249 | $1,966 | 1.14% | 43 | 1.10% | 44 |
| Robbinsdale (281) | $2,840 | 11 | $154,293 | $1,858 | 1.30% | 12 | 1.20% | 19 |
| Rogers (728) | $2,930 | 6 | $229,357 | $3,037 | 1.33% | 10 | 1.32% | 6 |
| Shorewood (276) | $2,610 | 23 | $420,610 | $5,273 | 1.32% | 11 | 1.25% | 11 |
| St. Anthony (282) | $2,991 | 4 | $197,164 | $2,612 | 1.26% | 6 | 1.32% | 5 |
| St. Louis Pk (283) | $2,743 | 16 | $200,457 | $2,438 | 1.41% | 18 | 1.22% | 17 |
| Wayzata (284) | $2,316 | 63 | $548,217 | $6,261 | 1.19% | 31 | 1.14% | 33 |
| RAMSEY COUNTY | | | | | | | | |
| Arden Hills (621) | $2,285 | 65 | $260,131 | $2,739 | 1.13% | 47 | 1.05% | 54 |
| Falcon Hts (623) | $2,230 | 76 | $228,806 | $2,308 | 1.08% | 64 | 1.01% | 66 |
| Lauderdale (623) | $2,382 | 50 | $151,028 | $1,500 | 1.03% | 72 | 0.99% | 73 |
| Little Canada (623) | $2,322 | 61 | $193,837 | $1,978 | 1.08% | 65 | 1.02% | 62 |
| Maplewood (622) | $2,691 | 18 | $198,464 | $2,364 | 1.23% | 25 | 1.19% | 20 |
| Mounds View (621) | $2,892 | 7 | $174,019 | $2,184 | 1.25% | 20 | 1.25% | 10 |
| N. St. Paul (622) | $2,484 | 36 | $174,677 | $1,873 | 1.22% | 57 | 1.07% | 52 |
| New Brighton (621) | $2,563 | 29 | $216,992 | $2,494 | 1.05% | 26 | 1.15% | 31 |
| North Oaks (621) | $1,967 | 93 | $592,314 | $5,865 | 1.10% | 68 | 0.99% | 75 |
| Roseville (623) | $2,356 | 57 | $204,748 | $2,142 | 1.08% | 63 | 1.05% | 56 |
| Shoreview (621) | $2,377 | 52 | $233,717 | $2,520 | 1.14% | 42 | 1.08% | 50 |
| St. Paul (625) | $2,433 | 41 | $162,179 | $1,675 | 1.13% | 46 | 1.03% | 58 |
| Vadnais Hts (624) | $2,240 | 74 | $219,421 | $2,208 | 1.09% | 61 | 1.01% | 68 |
| White Bear Lk (624) | $2,301 | 64 | $195,539 | $1,981 | 1.10% | 59 | 1.01% | 65 |
| White Bear Twp (624) | $2,259 | 70 | $236,457 | $2,428 | 1.11% | 53 | 1.03% | 59 |
| SCOTT COUNTY | | | | | | | | |
| Belle Plaine (716) | $2,282 | 66 | $169,417 | $1,652 | 1.02% | 77 | 0.98% | 80 |
| Cedar Lake Twp (721) | $1,926 | 95 | $314,133 | $2,877 | 0.86% | 105 | 0.92% | 95 |
| Credit River Twp (719) | $1,870 | 100 | $337,241 | $3,031 | 0.94% | 91 | 0.90% | 97 |
| Jordan (717) | $2,636 | 22 | $176,640 | $2,019 | 1.12% | 49 | 1.14% | 32 |
| New Market Twp (194) | $1,719 | 108 | $339,822 | $2,826 | 0.96% | 90 | 0.83% | 107 |
| Prior Lake (719) | $2,570 | 28 | $244,752 | $2,869 | 1.26% | 19 | 1.17% | 23 |
| Savage (191) | $2,577 | 26 | $237,840 | $2,785 | 1.24% | 24 | 1.17% | 24 |
| Shakopee (720) | $2,236 | 75 | $206,618 | $2,054 | 0.98% | 87 | 0.99% | 72 |
| Spring Lake Twp (719) | $2,004 | 92 | $305,688 | $2,898 | 0.99% | 83 | 0.95% | 87 |
| WASHINGTON COUNTY | | | | | | | | |
| Afton (834) | $1,922 | 97 | $350,350 | $3,246 | 0.90% | 96 | 0.93% | 93 |
| Bayport (834) | $2,183 | 81 | $218,235 | $2,137 | 1.04% | 70 | 0.98% | 79 |
| Cottage Grove (833) | $2,501 | 34 | $196,659 | $2,171 | 1.19% | 32 | 1.10% | 43 |
| Forest Lake (831) | $1,857 | 101 | $230,261 | $1,938 | 0.90% | 97 | 0.84% | 104 |
| Grant (832) | $1,815 | 103 | $412,799 | $3,691 | 0.86% | 106 | 0.89% | 100 |
| Hugo (624) | $2,131 | 86 | $243,012 | $2,366 | 1.03% | 74 | 0.97% | 82 |
| Lake Elmo (834) | $1,794 | 104 | $353,160 | $3,071 | 0.89% | 100 | 0.87% | 101 |
| Mahtomedi (832) | $2,167 | 83 | $290,861 | $2,952 | 1.03% | 73 | 1.01% | 64 |
| May Twp (834) | $1,663 | 109 | $370,317 | $3,020 | 0.85% | 107 | 0.82% | 108 |
| New Scandia Twp (831) | $1,787 | 105 | $284,002 | $2,387 | 1.01% | 79 | 0.84% | 105 |
| Newport (833) | $2,683 | 20 | $181,869 | $2,129 | 1.25% | 22 | 1.17% | 25 |
| Oak Park Hts (834) | $2,127 | 87 | $200,217 | $1,880 | 0.93% | 95 | 0.94% | 89 |
| Oakdale (622) | $2,181 | 82 | $189,959 | $1,810 | 1.00% | 81 | 0.95% | 86 |
| St. Paul Park (833) | $2,358 | 55 | $157,302 | $1,561 | 1.05% | 67 | 0.99% | 74 |
| Stillwater (834) | $2,413 | 46 | $233,333 | $2,553 | 1.10% | 55 | 1.09% | 46 |
| Stillwater Twp (834) | $1,765 | 107 | $372,701 | $3,213 | 0.90% | 98 | 0.86% | 103 |
| W. Lakeland Twp (834) | $1,407 | 112 | $389,706 | $2,748 | 0.73% | 110 | 0.71% | 111 |
| Woodbury (833) | $2,356 | 56 | $259,100 | $2,810 | 1.15% | 38 | 1.08% | 49 |

* = Cities and towns in the metropolitan area with 2,300 or more in population in 2004.
** = $222,189 is the average market value of residential homesteads in the 112 cities.
*** = The effective tax rate is the percent of market value paid in property taxes.
**** = Osseo's city tax rate includes a sewer tax rate that is typically paid through fees and special assessments in other cities. The inclusion of this rate increases Osseo's effective tax rate.

To look at per capita calculations on fees and special assessments visit www.citizensleague.net.

# Property tax *from page 6*

make property tax decisions for 2006 and citizens must be partners in those decisions.

For a more complete set of data for the 203 communities in the property tax survey, visit the Citizens League online at www.citizensleague.net. MJ

TABLE 2: 2005 TAXES ON HOMES IN 35 NON-METRO COMMUNITIES*

| | $133,686 HOME** (uniform value) | | AVERAGE VALUE HOME (ranked by highest effective tax rate)*** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community (School District) | 2005 Property Tax | 2005 Tax Rank | 2005 Average MV | 2005 Property Tax | 2004 Effective Tax Rate | 2004 ETR Rank | 2005 Effective Tax Rate | 2005 ETR Rank |
| Albert Lea (241) | $1,561 | 12 | $87,104 | $887 | 1.00% | 23 | 1.02% | 19 |
| Alexandria (206) | $1,128 | 33 | $131,857 | $1,108 | 0.81% | 29 | 0.84% | 29 |
| Austin (492) | $1,239 | 26 | $87,973 | $688 | 0.78% | 31 | 0.78% | 32 |
| Bemidji (31) | $1,783 | 2 | $88,710 | $1,058 | 1.21% | 7 | 1.19% | 8 |
| Brainerd (181) | $1,229 | 27 | $97,918 | $801 | 0.71% | 35 | 0.82% | 30 |
| Buffalo (877) | $1,169 | 30 | $178,469 | $1,685 | 1.04% | 20 | 0.94% | 25 |
| Cloquet (94) | $1,775 | 3 | $103,793 | $1,295 | 1.30% | 4 | 1.25% | 6 |
| Duluth (709) | $1,339 | 21 | $129,514 | $1,285 | 1.06% | 19 | 0.99% | 22 |
| Elk River (728) | $1,603 | 11 | $198,960 | $2,568 | 1.26% | 6 | 1.29% | 4 |
| Fairmont (2752) | $1,266 | 23 | $84,431 | $662 | 0.76% | 33 | 0.78% | 31 |
| Faribault (656) | $942 | 35 | $146,376 | $1,067 | 0.74% | 34 | 0.73% | 34 |
| Fergus Falls (544) | $1,147 | 31 | $97,551 | $736 | 0.76% | 32 | 0.75% | 33 |
| Hibbing (701)**** | $1,427 | 19 | $72,127 | $472 | 0.80% | 30 | 0.66% | 35 |
| Hutchinson (423) | $1,865 | 1 | $128,104 | $1,772 | 1.49% | 1 | 1.38% | 1 |
| Mankato (77) | $1,125 | 34 | $138,530 | $1,179 | 0.91% | 26 | 0.85% | 28 |
| Marshall (413) | $1,619 | 9 | $121,997 | $1,445 | 1.19% | 9 | 1.18% | 10 |
| Monticello (882) | $1,453 | 18 | $159,874 | $1,811 | 1.20% | 8 | 1.13% | 13 |
| Moorhead (152) | $1,493 | 15 | $113,149 | $1,207 | 1.16% | 11 | 1.07% | 17 |
| New Ulm (88) | $1,683 | 8 | $106,388 | $1,263 | 1.08% | 17 | 1.19% | 9 |
| North Branch (138) | $1,610 | 10 | $174,349 | $2,214 | 1.27% | 5 | 1.27% | 5 |
| North Mankato (77) | $1,249 | 24 | $166,836 | $1,652 | 0.98% | 25 | 0.99% | 23 |
| Northfield (659) | $1,341 | 20 | $196,286 | $2,143 | 1.15% | 14 | 1.09% | 16 |
| Otsego (728) | $1,249 | 25 | $183,940 | $1,858 | 1.01% | 21 | 1.01% | 21 |
| Owatonna (761) | $1,547 | 13 | $135,446 | $1,572 | 1.15% | 15 | 1.16% | 11 |
| Red Wing (256) | $1,720 | 5 | $145,706 | $1,908 | 1.40% | 2 | 1.31% | 3 |
| Rochester (535) | $1,466 | 17 | $151,852 | $1,716 | 1.16% | 13 | 1.13% | 14 |
| Sartell (748) | $1,467 | 16 | $171,155 | $1,982 | 1.18% | 10 | 1.16% | 12 |
| Sauk Rapids (47) | $1,732 | 4 | $141,430 | $1,854 | 1.31% | 3 | 1.31% | 2 |
| St. Cloud (742) | $1,273 | 22 | $138,101 | $1,327 | 1.00% | 22 | 0.96% | 24 |
| St. Michael (885) | $1,214 | 28 | $210,953 | $2,132 | 0.98% | 24 | 1.01% | 20 |
| St. Peter (508) | $1,146 | 32 | $142,516 | $1,246 | 0.87% | 27 | 0.87% | 26 |
| Waseca (829) | $1,691 | 7 | $107,874 | $1,293 | 1.16% | 12 | 1.20% | 7 |
| Willmar (347) | $1,507 | 14 | $100,387 | $1,039 | 1.12% | 16 | 1.03% | 18 |
| Winona (861) | $1,170 | 29 | $128,938 | $1,115 | 0.82% | 28 | 0.86% | 27 |
| Worthington (518) | $1,712 | 6 | $80,516 | $883 | 1.08% | 18 | 1.10% | 15 |

* = Cities with populations of 9,000 or more outside of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
** = $133,686 is the average market value of residential homesteads in the 35 cities.
*** = The effective tax rate is the percent of market value paid in property taxes.
**** = The taconite credit is unique to the following cities in the survey: Hibbing, Virginia, Eveleth, Grand Rapids and Chisholm. Since the taconite credit reaches its maximum value close to the average value homes in these cities, its effect becomes more pronounced in the effective tax rate measure (average for each community) than it does in the uniform value measure (group average), which uses an average value that is sometimes twice the average value in the taconite cities.

# Hunger *from page 2*

Looking ahead 10 years, it is likely that rural counties will face even higher rates of food insecurity and have fewer social resources to address it.

## There's still time

Fortunately, it is still possible to develop a system that will provide all Minnesotans with food security. The state has begun to recognize the problem of hunger and to partially fund the state's food shelf network, distributing USDA surplus commodities through the state's Second Harvest food banks and, in 2005, providing funds to food banks for the purchase of milk. The next steps must include: 1) demonstrating to the larger public how the social and economic costs of food insecurity affect everyone; and 2) developing a state plan to deploy public and private hunger resources for maximum impact.

The food stamp program illustrates both steps. Each year the USDA allocates more than $200 million for food stamps through the Minnesota Department of Human Services but nearly half of the food stamp dollars go unused. When residents who are eligible don't apply for food stamps, local businesses lose an economic resource. A lack of funding for food stamp outreach is only part of the problem. The main reasons people don't participate in the food stamp program are related to widespread public stigmas about poverty, hunger and public assistance, misunderstanding about eligibility, and difficulty in applying for or accessing emergency food programs.

A recent assessment shows that the problem is greatest in rural counties where 65 to 80 percent of those eligible for food stamps don't participate in the program. In the metro area, up to 50 percent of those eligible don't participate.

Let's look at one county to see the impact. According to USDA analysis, every $5 in food stamp purchases made in Big Stone County generates another $9 in economic activity. But only 27 percent of the county's food stamp eligibility is used each month. That represents a loss for the community of $70,600 per month in potential economic activity.

One way to maximize the use of food stamps is to change the public's view of the program. Instead of seeing food stamps as a public hand out for a few individuals, food stamps could be viewed as an economic resource that benefits the whole community. The local economy gains with each household that increases its purchasing power—regardless of its revenue source. And the strongest economic gains are most likely to be felt in aging, rural communities. Rather than viewing food stamp participation solely as an issue for the social services department, increasing participation—and community purchasing power—should be an objective for Main Street and the chambers of commerce.

Eliminating childhood hunger is critical to sustaining public investments in, and reaping the long-term economic benefits from, early childhood development. As the state's population ages, providing sufficient food to Minnesota's growing senior population will help them live healthier lives and reduce dependence on social services. The key to success depends first on recognizing how food insecurity affects the bottom line for community institutions, agencies, and businesses. Then, working within public-private partnerships, the state needs to develop a state food security plan to effectively align existing and future hunger resources so that every Minnesotan has enough to eat. MJ

*Newell Searle is Vice President of External Relations, Second Harvest Heartland, Maplewood, MN. Second Harvest Heartland is the state's largest hunger relief organization and a member of America's Second Harvest—the Nation's Food Bank Network.*

# OnBalance Views From Around the State

*Cell phones and sugar beets dominated the opinion pages in high summer.*

"Unless you're out of minutes or your battery is dead, you are probably well aware that starting in 2006, Minnesota will ban people with learner's permits and provisional licenses from using cell phones while driving," quips the St. Cloud Times (7/25). But shouldn't the ban apply to all, the paper asks. "From a common-sense perspective, the answer is yes. However … there has *yet* to be enough statistical evidence to warrant an all-out ban." The editorial cites a 2002 University of North Carolina study that showed that adjusting the radio, talking with a passenger, moving things around in the car, fiddling with the heat and eating or drinking were all more likely to cause an accident than were cell phones (smoking was slightly less dangerous). While a cell-phone ban may not be very effective, the paper suggests the legislation at least raises awareness of the potential dangers. "So we ask teens, indeed all Minnesota drivers, can you hear us now? If the answer is 'yes,' we say hang up and focus on the road. It's common sense."

The Duluth News Tribune (7/16) sees things differently. "Let's see now… learner's permits are most often held by youths in their mid-teens who must be accompanied by a licensed driver. Provisional drivers are mostly young farm workers. … What does this population group have in common? For the most part, they aren't old enough to vote. So if they don't like the cell phone restrictions, they can lump it. … Talk about playing it safe politically. Talk about an out in the face of cell phone industry lobbyists opposed to such legislation." So then is the law useless? On the contrary: the *News Tribune* argues that the ban should apply to all drivers, citing a *New England Journal of Medicine* report showing that distractions created by using a cell phone while driving are equivalent to driving with a blood alcohol level of .08.

The Mesabi Daily News (7/20) also supports a broad ban. "Common sense just says that it's good to send the right message to young drivers about the danger of yakking on a cell phone and driving a vehicle. After all, traffic accidents, according to the National Highway Safety Administration, are the leading cause of deaths among teens … [but] accidents that cause injuries that involve people using cell phones are most definitely not the sole domain of teens. … So where is the law in the state banning cell phone use by all drivers while operating a vehicle?" The real value of the new law, the *Daily News* concludes, is not in protecting teens, but in illuminating the darker aspects of democracy: "The real lesson for teens to learn from the new law? Life isn't fair, especially when those your age don't have a say in the lawmaking."

The Central American Free Trade Agreement gets high marks from the Mankato Free Press (7/21) "There are those in Congress who would rather we become involved in Central American politics before we provide U.S. farmers with an opportunity to sell more products to 40 million people," the *Free Press* laments. "As the debate over approving the Central American Free Trade Agreement comes to the forefront in Congress, the doing-business-with-good-versus-evil governments story line will play out." But the agreement will be good for Minnesotans, the paper argues. "While Minnesota's sugar beet farmers have complained their industry will be harmed by an increase in low-priced sugar imports, the U.S. Department of Agriculture says the increase would amount to one and a half spoonfuls of sugar a week for the average U.S. consumer who takes in 20 spoonfuls of sugar a day. … But U.S. corn, wheat and soybean producers, as well as livestock producers, will gain more access to a market in our own backyard of more than 40 million people. … CAFTA is good for U.S. farmers, U.S. consumers and our Central American neighbors."

"Whether the Central America Free Trade Agreement would be a threat or a benefit to Minnesota depends on who answers the question," admits the Rochester Post-Bulletin (6/13). "It's accepted that CAFTA will create winners and losers." The paper notes CAFTA would expand IBM's opportunities, but Minnesota's sugar beet farmers argue that 30,000 Minnesota jobs are at stake. The paper is brutally honest in its assessment of the situation: "Quite frankly, positions at Rochester's IBM facility and other city and state technology companies are better for the state than jobs cooking beets into sugar. Still, these jobs matter. Turning one entire industry and its people to the wolves of an international free market is unfair." The *Post-Bulletin* concludes: "Protectionism doesn't work, but protections for workers who suffer from free trade induced transitions are necessary adjuncts to any policy of open markets."

And we have time for one last word from the Mesabi Daily News (7/12) on the state government shutdown. "While, for the most part, [the shutdown] was an inconvenience and an annoyance at worst for some people—it was an embarrassment, plain and simple for the entire state. But what made the embarrassment even more embarrassing was what the state workers, who were forced to take a week's vacation as determined by the shutdown rather than a decision of their own making, were labeled by the government shutdown bureaucracy. How would you like to be called a 'non-essential worker'? It's kind of like saying 'Hey, you really don't matter.' That's not exactly Minnesota-nice. … if Gov. Pawlenty can, with a straight face, call what will become a 75-cent increase in the cigarette tax a fee then he can certainly come up with a better name for a state worker than a 'non-essential worker.'" MJ

# TakeNote Policy Tidbits

**By the end of the decade, 17.5 million teens will be eligible to drive.** With the growing number of 15-17 year olds hitting the roads, more states have put safety concerns ahead of teens' desire to drive with their friends.

Forty-six states (Arizona, Kansas, Kentucky and North Dakota are the holdouts) have adopted graduated drivers licenses that extend driving privileges in steps. First, teens earn a learner's permit, then a provisional license and finally a permanent license. In the late 1990s, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety began publicizing the dangers of allowing unsupervised new drivers to receive full, immediate driving privileges. Its studies showed startling statistics: 16 and 17 year-old drivers have the highest crash rate per mile of any age group and are more than three times likely to crash than 18 and 19 year-old drivers. The crash rates multiply at night and when other teens are present in the vehicle. Consequently, several states restricted teens' driving privileges in hopes of lowering teenage driving fatalities.

Learners' permits mandate a minimum number hours of supervised driving with parents and provisional licenses restrict most risky behaviors associated with teen driving (driving at night, listening to music, carrying a full car of passengers). Nine states have also banned cell phone use for drivers with a provisional license (see OnBalance this month for commentary on Minnesota's new law). Studies seem to show that these restrictions are effective: Thomas Dee, Associate Professor of Economics at Swarthmore College, found that more restrictive policies could cut fatalities by 19 percent.
www.stateline.org

**Cities and businesses spend an estimated $11.6 billion a year taking out the trash.** New York alone ships 25,000 tons of trash a day to landfills. As an article in *Civic Strategies* asks, what would it mean if the landfill business could do more with less? The answer is clear because that's exactly what's happening. Landfills have gotten bigger and smarter since the early 1990s when federal environmental regulations caused many smaller landfills to close and municipalities to band together to build regional operations. Larger landfills had the resources and incentives to figure better ways of burying trash, from compacting it with giant machines to covering daily deposits with mulch or soaking it with water, which speeded up the decomposing process. The results are astonishing; landfills are settling more rapidly than ever before leaving, as the article says, "an unexpected glut of landfill space." www.civic-strategies.com

**Are green taxes disruptive or desirable?** Although environmentally sound taxes can be regressive and might raise gasoline prices, Brookings Institution Economic Studies Senior Fellow William G. Gale suggests that taxes that lead to a cleaner and healthier environment are only desirable. In an op/ed piece in the *Washington Examiner*, Gale argues that current tax laws miss opportunities to clean up the environment and actively lead to worse environmental outcomes. The article argues that even the mortgage interest deduction can be perceived as environmentally-unfriendly: "It may encourage people to build larger primary residencies" or build second homes in "environmentally sensitive areas."

Others agree. Craig Hanson of the World Resources Institute notes that pollution taxes—which usually allow a certain amount of pollution and companies are taxed on anything above that limit—can be more effective and flexible than many forms of regulation because they give firms incentives to improve efficiency and environmental quality. Gale argues that an environmental tax that went to alleviating existing taxes, deficit reduction and to finance new spending would be good policy for taxes, the budget and the environment.
www.brookings.edu

**Women-only police stations** have become an international phenomenon. In addition to Brazil, where more than 300 of these female-friendly stations have opened, at least 10 nations in Latin America and Asia have similar stations.

Cecilia Mac Dowell Santos, assistant professor of sociology at the University of San Francisco and author of "Women's Police Stations: Gender, Violence, and Justice in San Paulo," suggests that it is less expensive to have women's police stations than it is to set up shelters. Plus, women's police stations in Brazil highlight crimes that have previously gone underreported in a culture where the legal system offers leniency for male offenders. The women's stations are usually not located in separate buildings, but in distinct spaces in existing precincts. Although they are small and located in traditional police stations, they are usually staffed almost exclusively by women and many offer a place for children to play while their mothers give statements.

In the first year of operations, the number of charges filed by officers in women's stations was more than double the number of charges for similar crimes against women filed by the predominantly male officers in regular precincts. Staff at the women's police stations are working hard to do more than criminalize the behavior of the abusers. They are helping couples renegotiate the relationship and establish a means of mediation; they know the stations have made violence more visible and, in turn, have helped persisting efforts to increase awareness and decrease the crimes against women.
www.csmonitor.com MJ



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The Minnesota Journal
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## TABLE 3: 2005 TAXES ON HOMES IN 56 NON-METRO COMMUNITIES*

| | | $132,153 HOME** (uniform value) | | AVERAGE VALUE HOME (ranked by highest effective tax rate)*** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| County | Community (School District) | 2005 Property Tax | 2005 Tax Rank | 2005 Average MV | 2005 Property Tax | 2004 Effective Tax Rate | 2004 ETR Rank | 2005 Effective Tax Rate | 2005 ETR Rank | 2005 Rank For 2004-05 Comparison |
| Becker | Detroit Lakes (22) | $1,294 | 41 | $122,324 | $1,170 | 1.04% | 35 | 0.96% | 44 | 38 |
| Beltrami | Northern Twp (31) | $1,446 | 34 | $141,781 | $1,579 | 1.18% | 18 | 1.11% | 29 | 25 |
| Carlton | Thomson Twp (99) | $1,628 | 20 | $146,613 | $1,847 | 1.29% | 12 | 1.26% | 15 | 14 |
| Chippewa | Montevideo (129) | $1,965 | 6 | $70,523 | $902 | 1.38% | 8 | 1.28% | 12 | 11 |
| Chisago | Wyoming (831) | $1,479 | 29 | $187,097 | $2,249 | ------ | ---- | 1.20% | 20 | ---- |
| Chisago | Lindstrom (2144) | $1,448 | 33 | $182,535 | $2,142 | ------ | ---- | 1.17% | 24 | ---- |
| Chisago | Wyoming Twp (831) | $1,205 | 46 | $232,867 | $2,407 | 1.09% | 30 | 1.03% | 35 | 30 |
| Cottonwood | Windom (177) | $1,867 | 8 | $70,564 | $850 | 1.34% | 11 | 1.20% | 19 | 17 |
| Crow Wing | Baxter (181) | $1,179 | 48 | $164,665 | $1,560 | 0.86% | 43 | 0.95% | 45 | 39 |
| Crow Wing | 1st Assess Unorg (181) | $778 | 56 | $168,201 | $1,092 | 0.56% | 49 | 0.65% | 54 | 48 |
| Dodge | Kasson (204) | $1,542 | 26 | $132,421 | $1,545 | 1.13% | 26 | 1.17% | 25 | 21 |
| Douglas | La Grand Twp (206) | $950 | 53 | $195,454 | $1,584 | 0.78% | 45 | 0.81% | 50 | 44 |
| Douglas | Alexandria Twp (206) | $869 | 54 | $188,203 | $1,396 | 0.71% | 47 | 0.74% | 52 | 46 |
| Goodhue | Cannon Falls (252) | $1,857 | 12 | $153,370 | $2,215 | ------ | ---- | 1.44% | 4 | ---- |
| Houston | La Crescent (300) | $1,546 | 25 | $142,009 | $1,689 | 1.13% | 27 | 1.19% | 21 | 18 |
| Isanti | Cambridge (911) | $1,854 | 13 | $145,436 | $2,078 | 1.45% | 5 | 1.43% | 5 | 4 |
| Isanti | Isanti (911) | $1,862 | 10 | $137,725 | $1,956 | 1.36% | 10 | 1.42% | 7 | 6 |
| Itasca | Grand Rapids (318) | $1,487 | 28 | $108,887 | $1,108 | 1.10% | 28 | 1.02% | 37 | 32 |
| Koochiching | International Falls (361) | $1,469 | 30 | $59,616 | $539 | 0.87% | 42 | 0.90% | 48 | 42 |
| Le Sueur | Le Sueur (2397) | $1,450 | 32 | $123,599 | $1,332 | 1.07% | 33 | 1.08% | 31 | 27 |
| McLeod | Glencoe (2859) | $1,679 | 18 | $124,421 | $1,559 | 1.28% | 13 | 1.25% | 17 | 16 |
| Meeker | Litchfield (465) | $1,592 | 23 | $101,240 | $1,132 | 1.09% | 31 | 1.12% | 28 | 24 |
| Mille Lacs/Sherburne | Princeton (477) | $1,860 | 11 | $124,998 | $1,739 | 1.45% | 4 | 1.39% | 8 | 7 |
| Morrison | Little Falls (482) | $1,842 | 14 | $101,871 | $1,335 | 1.15% | 24 | 1.31% | 10 | 9 |
| Olmsted | Byron (531) | $1,691 | 17 | $147,078 | $1,924 | 1.17% | 22 | 1.31% | 11 | 10 |
| Olmsted | Stewartville (534) | $1,636 | 19 | $140,927 | $1,769 | 1.18% | 20 | 1.26% | 16 | 15 |
| Olmsted | Marion Twp (535) | $1,132 | 51 | $157,944 | $1,426 | 0.94% | 39 | 0.90% | 49 | 43 |
| Pennington | Thief River Falls (564) | $2,517 | 2 | $69,732 | $1,183 | 1.58% | 3 | 1.70% | 2 | 2 |
| Pipestone | Pipestone (2689) | $1,796 | 15 | $56,108 | $646 | 1.63% | 2 | 1.15% | 26 | 22 |
| Polk | Crookston (593) | $2,739 | 1 | $59,600 | $1,111 | 1.69% | 1 | 1.86% | 1 | 1 |
| Polk | East Grand Forks (595) | $2,082 | 4 | $99,312 | $1,472 | 1.42% | 6 | 1.48% | 3 | 3 |
| Redwood | Redwood Falls (2897) | $1,985 | 5 | $90,229 | $1,237 | 1.37% | 9 | 1.37% | 9 | 8 |
| Rock | Luverne (2184) | $1,321 | 39 | $77,341 | $618 | 0.85% | 44 | 0.80% | 51 | 45 |
| Scott/Le Sueur | New Prague (721) | $1,595 | 22 | $171,214 | $2,177 | 1.24% | 15 | 1.27% | 14 | 13 |
| Sherburne | Zimmerman (728) | $1,614 | 21 | $141,887 | $1,760 | ------ | ---- | 1.24% | 18 | ---- |
| Sherburne | Big Lake (727) | $1,489 | 27 | $160,098 | $1,882 | 1.18% | 19 | 1.18% | 23 | 20 |
| Sherburne | Becker (726) | $1,259 | 44 | $168,142 | $1,703 | ------ | ---- | 1.01% | 38 | ---- |
| Sherburne | Big Lake Twp (727) | $1,173 | 49 | $208,931 | $2,071 | 0.99% | 36 | 0.99% | 41 | 35 |
| Sherburne | Livonia Twp (728) | $1,166 | 50 | $215,187 | $2,132 | 0.98% | 37 | 0.99% | 42 | 36 |
| Sherburne | Becker Twp (726) | $1,075 | 52 | $216,091 | $1,994 | 0.91% | 41 | 0.92% | 47 | 41 |
| Sherburne | Baldwin Twp (477) | $844 | 55 | $185,273 | $1,332 | 0.77% | 46 | 0.72% | 53 | 47 |
| St. Louis | Chisholm (695) | $2,257 | 3 | $56,533 | $667 | 1.14% | 25 | 1.18% | 22 | 19 |
| St. Louis | Rice Lake Twp (709) | $1,451 | 31 | $133,404 | $1,468 | 1.22% | 16 | 1.10% | 30 | 26 |
| St. Louis | Hermantown (700) | $1,312 | 40 | $169,008 | $1,782 | 1.18% | 21 | 1.05% | 33 | 29 |
| St. Louis | Virginia (706) | $1,413 | 36 | $64,080 | $389 | 0.61% | 48 | 0.61% | 55 | 49 |
| St. Louis | Eveleth (2154) | $1,388 | 37 | $51,128 | $237 | ------ | ---- | 0.46% | 56 | ---- |
| Stearns | Sauk Centre (743) | $1,957 | 7 | $109,924 | $1,565 | 1.40% | 7 | 1.42% | 6 | 5 |
| Stearns | Waite Park (742) | $1,418 | 35 | $128,343 | $1,366 | 1.17% | 23 | 1.06% | 32 | 28 |
| Stearns | St. Joseph (742) | $1,324 | 38 | $131,355 | $1,314 | 1.05% | 34 | 1.00% | 39 | 33 |
| Stevens | Morris (769) | $1,866 | 9 | $88,674 | $1,130 | 1.26% | 14 | 1.27% | 13 | 12 |
| Wabasha/Goodhue | Lake City (813) | $1,220 | 45 | $132,345 | $1,223 | 0.92% | 40 | 0.92% | 46 | 40 |
| Wadena/Otter Tail | Wadena (2155) | $1,756 | 16 | $73,553 | $824 | 1.20% | 17 | 1.12% | 27 | 23 |
| Watonwan | St. James (840) | $1,558 | 24 | $70,490 | $684 | 1.09% | 29 | 0.97% | 43 | 37 |
| Wright | Delano (879) | $1,260 | 43 | $181,646 | $1,871 | 1.08% | 32 | 1.03% | 36 | 31 |
| Wright | Albertville (885) | $1,196 | 47 | $191,941 | $1,905 | 0.96% | 38 | 0.99% | 40 | 34 |
| Wright/Hennepin | Rockford (883) | $1,279 | 42 | $181,500 | $1,896 | ----- | ----- | 1.04% | 34 | ---- |

* = Cities with populations from 3,700 to 8,999 outside of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
** = $132,135 is the average market value of residential homesteads in the 56 cities.
*** = The effective tax rate is the percent of market value paid in property taxes.