DANGER DOWNSTREAM: MINNESOTA’S THREATENED RIVERS

Part 1 of 3  •  Story by JOSEPHINE MARCOTTY  •  Photos by AARON LAVINSKY  •  Star Tribune staff

By ERIC ROPER and JESSIE VAN

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3 МIGHTY MISSISSIPPI AT PERILOUS BEND

Twin Cities’ tax hikes loom large

By BETH WENTWORTH and RONALD MARSH

Minneapolis and St. Paul each want new taxes to keep up with urbanization, Which could add to the price of living in both cities.

Minneapolis is seeking sales tax increases next year. St. Paul is adding an additional 2% sales tax on top of the current 7.25% tax rate.

Financially, the city is in a bind - it needs more money from property and sales taxes to keep up with urbanization and to maintain its services.

As of now, St. Paul is looking into a second tax, which could add to the price of living in both cities.

It is not certain at this point how much revenue city will get from property taxes, but it is expected to be at least $28 million.

Minneapolis is looking into a new property tax, but it is not certain how much revenue it will get from that source.

MINNESOTA'S THREATENED RIVERS

MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI AT PERILOUS BEND

A sweeping transformation of the land is taking place along the Mississippi, where the state faces the threat of losing one of its greatest natural treasures.

The river is being transformed in large part to cover the rising costs of $50,000 to $100,000 per year.

“Turf baffle” was added to the Straight River at sunset. “I'm registered, but I don’t know that I feel strongly enough,” says new voter Aalayha Robb.

To understand why Democrat Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign is making such a push to capture new business, you need to consider one key factor.

MILLENIAL VOTERS KEEP OPTIONS OPEN

By JENNIFER CARNHOLM  •  Photos by GLEN STUBBE  •  Star Tribune staff

In the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, political analysts say the key to winning the youth vote is to talk to voters like Andrea Rolf.

Rolf, a 21-year-old college student, divides her time between work, school and volunteering.

As she sees it, the younger generation is more open to political discussions.

In Minnesota, there are few ways to prevent such major changes from happening.

We all know that the growth of electronic medical records makes it easier to coordinate care.

The data bank, which covers thousands of patients, is expected to be a major factor in the October 2016 elections.
NEW THREATS ARE CHOKING THE MISSISSIPPI

Rice, Minn., left their fields to help pay the bills. "We have been mistreated over and over. They gave us a foreign language," said Peter Rice, who was born and raised near the Brainerd airport. "They gave us a foreign language," he said, violated the spirit of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund, which he said "was a promise to the people." Rice, who is now in public service, said, "We have lost the government's trust."

The mighty river is facing battles over land use and water quality, tested by a series of events that have raised concerns about the health of the Mississippi River, which flows through Minnesota for about 400 miles. The river is a vital water source for millions of people, providing drinking water, irrigation, and recreation opportunities. But it is also a hotspot for pollution, with agricultural runoff, industrial waste, and other contaminants contributing to the river's degraded condition.

In 2014, the city of Toledo, Ohio, ordered residents to boil their tap water after pollution from a local water treatment plant created toxic algae. In addition, the city's drinking water became contaminated with lead due to corrosion in the pipes.

The expansion of agriculture in the Red River Valley has led to increased nitrate concentrations in drinking water, posing a significant health risk. Nitrate levels are rising in the Pineland Sands Aquifer, which supplies water to a large portion of Minnesota. The aquifer is covered — and under threat — by sensitive aquifers and river valleys.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been working to address these challenges, but the agency's ability to protect the environment is limited by the state's political climate and budget constraints. The DNR has been working to reduce nitrate levels in the Pineland Sands Aquifer, but the challenge is significant.

In addition to studying the effects of agriculture on water quality, the DNR is also working to protect the Mississippi River from other threats. For example, the agency is monitoring the impact of climate change on the river, and has been working to reduce the impact of drought and other extreme weather events.

The DNR is also working to protect the river's natural habitats, which are under threat from development and pollution. The agency has been working to restore wetlands and other key habitats, and has been working with local communities to develop sustainable land use practices.

In short, Keeler said, "What we do to our land, we do to our water. We can see it coming and still not be able to do something about it."