

State Representative District 55A

# LEON LILLIE

## CAPITOL UPDATE



You Can Reach  
State Representative  
**LEON LILLIE**

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*Dear Neighbors,*

*As the New Year approaches, I want to take the opportunity to wish you and your family a happy, healthy 2006.*

*This has been a year with many tragedies at home and around the world, giving us all much to reflect upon. There has also been an outpouring of genuine care, concern and action to help those in need. I know there were countless examples of people in our area who have gone the extra mile to raise funds, gather supplies and to lend that helping hand or shoulder for our neighbors here and around the world.*

*While there are so many national and international tragedies, local needs still remain. It's been an honor to work with and for the residents of Maplewood and North St. Paul to address the concerns of our communities. I'm thankful as 2005 draws to a close for the opportunity to serve District 55A in the Minnesota House.*

*Sincerely,*

### State Budget Surplus Should Go To Property Tax Relief

The November budget forecast released recently shows the state budget in a \$1 billion surplus after several years of deficits. It's great to see the state's finances back on track. But to get there, the Governor has insisted on shifting the bills to local units of government and property taxes have sky rocketed. As a former city council member, I don't think that's an honest way to balance the state budget.

In Maplewood and North St. Paul, property taxes will go up 10% to 18% on average this year. Many seniors and young families simply can't afford these double-digit property tax increases. I am hopeful that some of the state surplus can be directed to property tax relief.

Under current law, the state surplus will mainly go to fixing past budgeting gimmicks and shifts. Around \$700 million is set to go to schools to reimburse aid payments the state delayed in recent years in order to balance its books. Once the shifts are paid off, property tax relief for homeowners should be the top priority.



## ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR A PROPERTY TAX REFUND?

I encourage residents, including renters, to find out if they are eligible for one of the state property tax refunds. The Regular Refund is based on your household income and the amount of property tax you pay. The Special Refund is not based on income. To qualify for the Special Refund, your net property tax must increase by at least 12% and \$100. Renters may be eligible for a property refund based on your household income and on the property taxes paid on your principal place of residence. For more information or to determine if you are eligible for either of these refunds, read and fill out Form M1PR. Forms and instructions are available from the State of Minnesota:

[www.taxes.state.mn.us/taxes/prop\\_refund/forms.shtml](http://www.taxes.state.mn.us/taxes/prop_refund/forms.shtml)

You may also call the Department of Revenue at:  
**(651) 296-3781**

## Enrollment Begins for New Senior Prescription Drug Benefit

If you, your parents or a disabled relative is on or qualify for Medicare, now is the time to educate yourself on whether to enroll in the new Medicare prescription drug plan, and if so, which plan to choose. Enrollment began November 15, and will extend, penalty-free, to May 15, 2006.

Luckily, there are resources for help understanding the new Part D benefit:

### **Minnesota Senior LinkAge Line, 1-800-333-2433**

The LinkAge Line is the State Health Insurance Assistance Program for Minnesota. Counselors will make home visits. Beneficiaries and their families can call the line and speak to a specially trained staff person from 8 am to 7 pm Monday through Friday, and from 8 am to noon on Saturdays.

### **Medicare, 1-800-633-4227** (open at all times)

### **Minnesota Senior Federation, (651) 645-0261**

10 am to noon, 1-3 pm weekdays

If you are connected to the Internet, you can compare plans online at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

Please feel free to contact me at the Capitol at (651) 296-1188, or by e-mail at [rep.leon.lillie@house.mn](mailto:rep.leon.lillie@house.mn) if you have any further questions.



Winter is a great time to visit the State Capitol, especially now with holiday decorations up. I invite you to come take a free tour – I'll even take you on one myself. Call my office at (651) 296-1188 for more information, or call the Minnesota Historical Society tour desk at (651) 296-2881.

Information about State Capitol tours can also be found online at:

[www.mnhs.org/places/sites/msc/](http://www.mnhs.org/places/sites/msc/)

