



NEWS RELEASE

March 7, 2011

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LEADING MINNESOTA FOUNDATIONS ANNOUNCE STATEWIDE STRATEGY TO ENGAGE MINNESOTANS IN PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM

Effort Includes Ideas to Spark Government Innovation

Saint Paul, Minn. (March 7, 2011) – Six leading Minnesota foundations have launched a new effort to support Minnesota’s decision makers in advancing strategies to reform public services. The foundations’ collective efforts will be directed at advancing core principles that can serve as the framework for successful reform, supporting public and private efforts to evaluate and promote reform proposals and better engaging Minnesotans in the solutions that will address our state’s long-term, structural budget challenges.

“People of all political beliefs expect great public services in Minnesota – from good roads to well-educated children and safer neighborhoods,” explained Sandy Vargas, President and CEO of The Minneapolis Foundation. “But yesterday’s strategies aren’t realistic given today’s budget challenges. We want Minnesotans to Imagine Another Way and rethink how we provide public services to get the best possible outcomes for our state.”

“We know from conversations with Minnesotans, public opinion research and from watching the legislative discussion that Minnesotans want our legislators to find another way to solving our state’s budget challenges,” said Peter Hutchinson, President and CEO of Bush Foundation. “The polarized debate of raising taxes versus cutting services misses the point – there are better ways to deliver the services we have with better results. If we aren’t going to seriously consider those options this year, when will we?”

Through their community work, the six foundations – Blandin Foundation, Bush Foundation, The Minneapolis Foundation, Minnesota Community Foundation, Northwest Area Foundation, and The Saint Paul Foundation – believe that Minnesotans are united around **three key principles** for redesigning Minnesota’s public services:

- **Make Strategic Choices.** Prioritization is a critical element of government redesign, from assessing the highest public needs to evaluating the best way of providing services.
- **Innovate.** Governments need to think long-term with their budget challenges, and to be willing to toss out the old rules and try new program structures and delivery systems.
- **Deliver Better Outcomes.** Paying for processes and continuing with the current results won’t be enough. Minnesotans want their government to get the greatest possible outcome for every tax dollar they spend.

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As part of this effort, these foundations commissioned Public Strategies Group (PSG), a government-innovation think tank, to develop a series of policy and systems change ideas that could serve as examples of positive government reform. The resulting report, titled *Beyond the Bottom Line*, offers 16 ideas that have potential to save the state more than \$20 billion over the coming biennia while improving the outcomes Minnesotans can expect from public services. The report builds on a previous report, titled *Minnesota's Bottom Line*, which was released in 2009. The *Beyond the Bottom Line* report can be found at www.CitiZing.org/bottomline.

"We do not expect *Beyond the Bottom Line* to become the sole blueprint for this year's work to address our state's deficit. Instead, it's intended to demonstrate that Minnesota can address our structural deficit in a thoughtful way that continues to generate real value for taxpayer dollars," noted Jim Hoolihan, President and CEO of Blandin Foundation. "This report highlights the real potential of imagining new ways to address Minnesota's budget challenges."

Citizens are encouraged to offer their own ideas for public service reform, as well. The Citizens League hosts CitiZing!, an interactive website to foster citizen involvement in this and other public policy initiatives. This website will serve as a "virtual community" for fostering these conversations among people statewide.

"We have already been engaged in discussions with legislative leaders, Governor's Dayton's staff and key community leaders – all have indicated that they are committed to redesign strategies," said Carleen Rhodes, President and CEO of Minnesota Community Foundation and The Saint Paul Foundation. "We hope our role is to support them – offer new ideas, test their strategies and engage the public in this critical discussion."

"We understand that Minnesota's budget challenges did not develop over one month or even one year, and effective solutions will take time," said Kevin Walker, President and CEO of the Northwest Area Foundation. "But we are convinced that the best solutions will come when the public and their elected leaders start from a core set of principles that will unite us, and have the broadest range of options in front of them. Our foundations are ready to help Minnesota Imagine Another Way."

***Blandin Foundation**, Minnesota's largest rural-based private foundation is located in Grand Rapids, Minn. Its mission is to strengthen rural communities, particularly in the Grand Rapids Area, through grants, leadership development programs and public policy initiatives.*

***The Bush Foundation** was established in 1953 by 3M executive Archibald Bush and his wife, Edyth. The Foundation strives to be a catalyst to shape vibrant communities in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography, by investing in courageous and effective leadership that significantly strengthens and improves the well-being of people in these three states.*

***The Minneapolis Foundation** helps people support their community and causes they care about, and invests in efforts to ensure every person in Minneapolis has the opportunity to thrive. Established in 1915, The Minneapolis Foundation now manages more than \$600 million in assets, administers more than 1,100 charitable funds and distributes approximately \$36 million in grants each year. In addition, The Minneapolis Foundation works with other community leaders to improve the quality of life in our region and serve as a catalyst for discussion and action on critical issues.*

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Minnesota Community Foundation, established in 1949, is the statewide community foundation helping to create vibrant communities where all people can find hope and opportunity. As a nonprofit organization created by and for local residents, the Foundation helps individuals, organizations and communities fulfill their charitable giving goals and create positive change through philanthropy. Over the years, Minnesota Community Foundation has granted more than \$140 million to nonprofit organizations all over the state. From Argyle to Zumbrota, the Foundation provides charitable planning, grantmaking and investment services. For more information, go to www.mncommunityfoundation.org.

The Northwest Area Foundation is dedicated to supporting efforts by the people, organizations and communities in eight states to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable prosperity. The Foundation makes grants and promotes collaborations in pursuit of this mission. The Great Northern Railway, founded by James J. Hill, served these states. Hill's son, Louis W. Hill, established the foundation in 1934.

The Saint Paul Foundation is the community foundation for Saint Paul and surrounding areas. It connects and supports donors, nonprofits and partners to enrich lives and communities through philanthropy. Since 1940, The Saint Paul Foundation has granted more than \$600 million to nonprofit organizations contributing to the health and vitality of the community. Through community initiatives and programs such as the Community Sharing Fund, SpectrumTrust, Management Improvement Fund, Words Work! And Facing Race, the Foundation works with the community to identify and address key issues. For more information, visit www.saintpaulfoundation.org.

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