

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Funding is deserved

When it comes to state bonding money, we think local projects are worthy of the funding.

And we like International Falls Mayor Bob Anderson's thinking that funding for renovations to the Falls International Airport building — and extending sewer and a waste to energy project — should rank higher than requests for zoos and other similar projects for state bonding money.

Kudos to all involved for making our case in front of House and Senate bonding committees now on tour to research and hear support for the \$2.8 billion in funding requests that state agencies and local governments have submitted for the 2014 Legislature and Gov. Mark Dayton to consider.

Reports say that state agencies have requested \$2.1 billion for college classrooms, light-rail transit lines, roads, bridges and other projects. The largest state agency requests came from the University of Minnesota at \$233 million and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system at \$286 million. Cities, counties and other local governments seek \$682 million for convention centers, museums, sports facilities and sewer and water systems, among other projects.

Lawmakers typically hear requests for about \$4 billion and fund about \$1 billion in each two-year budget cycle.

Clearly, each community and

agency believes their request to be very important. Theaters and zoos certainly add to the quality of life in Duluth and St. Paul, respectively, and may be an economic draw to areas that already seem to enjoy many visitors.

However, the projects Borderland officials are seeking to fund seem crucial not only to our community, but to the larger region. It's hard to argue zoos and museums and their benefits outweigh a desire to ensure that the water around Minnesota's only national park is free of human waste, that an airport offers appropriate security space to handle additional planes, and to attempt to stop placing garbage in a landfill and instead create energy from it.

Like the officials touting them said, the local projects bring environmental and economic benefits that should sell them to the lawmakers and governor who will decide on money recipients.

Surely, our declining population and increasing unemployment ought to play a role in helping legislators pick Borderland among the winners in the bonding requests.

We urge members of the bonding committees to investigate these local projects, ask questions about them and consider that helping Borderland move forward on these projects will not only help boost the local economy, but also benefit many Minnesotans statewide.



GUEST COLUMN

Illegal immigrant Lobby to stage national demand

BY JOE GUZZARDI

On October 5, as part of their ceaseless demand that Congress passes comprehensive immigration reform, illegal aliens and their advocates will hold a National Day of Dignity and Respect. Their goal is to achieve immediate legal status, with work authorization, and eventual citizenship. If successful, at least 11 million aliens would compete with Americans for the handful of available jobs.

Thousands including the ACLU, the AFL-CIO and the Service Employees International Union will march in Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago as well as other major cities protesting for what they perceive as their rights.

All humans deserve to be treated with dignity and respect including two groups that in the immigration reform debate Congress has ignored, mainly American workers whose wages have been stagnant for decades and the currently 20 million unemployed or under-employed.

Behind closed doors congressional amnesty negotiations continue despite a growing mountain of economic evidence that the last thing the United States needs is to add 11 million illegal aliens to the nation's labor pool. Whatever final form immigration reform may take, the first effort would be to issue legal work permits to formerly unemployable

illegal immigrants. For native-born Americans or legal immigrants lucky enough to have a job, keeping it will be harder. Those looking for a job will have a tougher time.

Most know that the job market is awful. But few understand just how painful it is to be an unemployed American. To grasp how desperate the employment picture is and how bad it's going to remain, let's first analyze how we arrived at the troubled economy we're in.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 8.7 million jobs were lost since the December 2007 began. The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that the net new jobs created since 2009 is a paltry 5.4 million, a total slightly less than the 6 million young Americans who have graduated from high school and college in the last four years. Not only doesn't job growth keep up with populations increases, it can't even match the numbers of diplomas earned each year.

The federal autopilot policy of issuing more than 1 million permanent residency and another 700, 000 work visas like the H-1B and J-1, plus corporate overseas job outsourcing compound the crisis.

In 1983 the U.S. population was almost 234 million; today, it's more 315 million. The labor force participation rate, the employed percentage of the U.S. population, decreased last month to 63.2 percent, the lowest since August 1978. For those lucky enough to

have a job, 8 million work part-time, most of them in the low-wage service industry that rarely offers health care, paid vacations or retirement plans. Finally, the Associated Press recently reported that 80 percent of Americans have or will live at near-poverty and be welfare dependent at some time during their lives.

Analysts' best estimate is that it may take another eight years to get the unemployment rate below pre-recession levels. Little wonder than Americans over age 50 worry that they may never work again.

The non-stop amnesty lobbying effort is led by the Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic advocates and multibillionaires like Mark Zuckerberg and Michael Bloomberg. So far, Congress has been in rapt attention to their claims of a worker shortage and has steadfastly refused to take a stand against legislation that would devastate unemployed Americans.

The October 5 political theater will generate heavy media coverage. As you're watching, remember unemployed Americans' plight; some may be family or close friends. Americans deserve the first shot at jobs, if and when they become available.

Guzzardi is a Californians for Population Stabilization Senior Writing Fellow whose columns have been syndicated since 1986. This column is distributed by Cagle Cartoons newspaper syndicate.

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