



*Common ground. Common good.*

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**CITIZENS LEAGUE LAUNCHES 'MINNESOTA'S AGENDA'  
TO CELEBRATE STATE'S 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

***'MAP 150' will identify, promote Minnesotans' common values, goals***

If the observance of Minnesota's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of statehood were being held today, it may look more like the birthday party of a dysfunctional family than the celebration of a state once widely recognized for its innovations. Today, citizens and policy makers increasingly find themselves unable to reach consensus on the most important challenges facing the state.

Minnesota celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in two years, May 11, 2008. In celebration of the sesquicentennial, the independent, non-partisan Citizens League today announced an initiative that will honor Minnesota's past by building a new citizen-directed forum for the future.

The Citizens League project is called MAP 150 or Minnesota's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Project. The project's first phase -- beginning this summer -- will enable Minnesotans to share their viewpoints and experiences in town hall meetings, through partnerships with civic and community associations and in one-on-one interviews. The conversations will help define the common values and goals of Minnesotans. The themes that emerge will be used to develop a comprehensive survey of Minnesotans that begins to identify the issues that are most important to Minnesotans.

Findings from the survey and citizens discussions will be translated into an achievable agenda of key issues and the first steps toward solutions that Minnesotans can take between now and May 11, 2008.

"The starting point for MAP 150 isn't a policy agenda being advocated by one interest or another. MAP 150's starting point will be conversations with Minnesotans about the values and goals we share," said Tom Horner, chair of the Citizens League board of directors. "MAP 150 will focus on what joins us, not where we have differences. MAP 150 isn't creating a Citizens League agenda. It's creating a Minnesota agenda."

"The issues that are important to most Minnesotans will be complex, in need of long-term solutions," said Sean Kershaw, executive director of the Citizens League. "We believe that by identifying common values and aspirations, we can identify some of the first steps Minnesotans are willing to take over the next two years."

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MAP 150 starts with the premise that citizens have become disconnected from policy-making, impeding Minnesota's ability to get things done, said Kershaw. "We believe citizens want to help solve these problems. They are just looking for meaningful ways to participate."

MAP 150 is being launched today -- the 148<sup>th</sup> anniversary of statehood -- because the next two years include critical policy and policy events, said Kershaw.

"The governor and every state legislative seat are up for election this year. We go right from these elections to the 2007-08 legislative session where legislators will be asked to tackle a range of tough issues, including education, economic development, health, older adult services and transportation. We can't leave the elections and the next legislative session to agendas set by a few insiders. We want to put citizens back in the driver's seat," said Kershaw.

"We believe that by starting with the public, the MAP 150 agenda will be based in solutions that are practical, that include actions from individuals, the private sector and government, and that can achieve some real success by 2008. MAP 150 will call on Minnesotans to make hard choices, but will result in real priorities," said Horner.

"To us," said Horner, "MAP 150 is nothing less than proving that when citizens are engaged as co-producers of the common good, the common good can actually happen."

Those interested in working with the Citizens League on MAP 150 should contact Kershaw at 651-293-0575, extension 14, or by email at [map150@citizensleague.net](mailto:map150@citizensleague.net).

The 1,900-member Citizens League was founded in 1952 and its mission is to build civic capacity in Minnesota. The independent, non-partisan League is recognized as one of the nation's premier citizen-based "good government" and public policy organizations. The organization is distinguished by its pioneering process that involves citizens in studying public issues, developing creative and effective policy solutions, and then working to implement these solutions.

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