



## Smart Signals economic reform proposed in Minnesota

The Minnesota Planning Environmental Quality Board's report, *Smart Signals: Economics for Lasting Progress*, was issued in early December 1999. Composed of "five citizen members and heads of 10 state agencies that play a vital role in Minnesota's environment and development, the board develops policy, creates long-range plans and reviews proposed projects that would significantly influence Minnesota's environment. The Environmental Quality Board coordinates the Minnesota Sustainable Development Initiative, a collaboration of business, government and civic interests to promote policies, institutions and actions that ensure Minnesota's long-term environmental, economic and social well-being."

Of special interest to Georgists and of special joy to Minnesotan John Burger is the report's recommendation for site value taxation (also called split-rate taxation). Burger formerly served as a Minn. State Rep. and ran for Governor in Minnesota. He was active in 1973 in the workings that culminated in the 1973 Minnesota Tax Study Commission recommendation findings that are quoted in the Nov. 1999 *Smart Signals* report. Burger, now retired in Spring Park, MN, worked with Mark Haveman, the lead for the "Making the Property Tax Work for Smart Growth" chapter in *Smart Signals*. Burger is a director of Common Ground-USA. Another Common Ground-USA member, Dr. William Batt, did two-rate research

for the Smart Signals chapter on "Making the Property Tax Work for Smart Growth."

Besides Minn. Planning's Environmental Quality Board Project Team Leader Mark Haveman and Dr. William Batt of Central Research Group, Albany, NY, other contributors to the property tax chapter were: Clark Rieke, Commercial Appraisal and Consulting Group; Bart Lossing, Hennepin County Assessor's Office; Tom Clark, Minnesota Department of Revenue; Jack Pasternacki, City of Bloomington Assessor's Office; and Phil Wheeler, Rochester/Olmsted County Planning

Department. Rolf Nordstrom and Jonathan Hubschman helped with overall project design and development.

Quoting from the [www.mnplan.state.mn.us](http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us) web page headed "Study Says Tax Laws, Economic Incentives Send Mixed Messages": ... "*Smart Signals* found a number of state tax and spending policies that work at cross-purposes. For example, government spending for affordable housing is neutralized by the property tax and tax code treatment of housing. Without addressing such economic distortions, housing affordability will likely be a chronic

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## Two Dozen Days in Taiwan

by Jeffery J. Smith, Portland, OR



At the dawn of the new millennium in Taiwan, the presidential candidate ahead in the polls is Ah-Bian of the Democratic Progressive Party (and still is as of mid-January, according to *Business Week*). The recent mayor of Taipei, Ah-Bian centers his campaign on the issue of "black gold", the graft wrung out of real estate deals by the current regime and its cronies. Ah-Bian has yet to specify a solution, but he counts among his advi-

sors three academics dedicated to "geonomics" which is the collection of ground rent for social betterment. How best to inject geonomics into this escalating political campaign was the topic of talks held by these academic advisors with Geonomy Society President Jeffery Smith, who spent much of December touring Taiwan.

The Taiwanese Green Party hosted Smith for three weeks in December and for two days in the new millennium. The TGP activist who organized Smith's itinerary, Linda Gail Arrigo, Ph.D., did a phenomenal job. Waiting for Smith at the airport late one night was Stephen Chung, successful devel-

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