

# Katzenberger staffed booth at NCSL in Las Vegas

For the third consecutive year, Al Katzenberger of St. Louis staffed a Georgist booth at the annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures. This year's meeting was held July 20-24 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Three organizations, in all of which Katzenberger is an officer, assisted financially in the effort.

Public Revenue Education Council, St. Louis, of which Katzenberger is president, reserved and paid for the NCSL booth and also paid for hotel lodging as well as for literature. Common Ground-USA, of which Katzenberger is vice-presi-

dent, provided 1000 copies for distribution of CGUSA's legislative outreach brochure, "The Revenue Source Is Under Our Feet," as well as CGUSA's membership brochure. St. Louis Teachers Union AFT-CIO Local 420, of which Katzenberger is treasurer, paid the air fare for Al Katzenberger and his wife, Sandra Cothran, who also helped with unloading the eight boxes for setting up the booth. Boxes of literature were mailed in advance to Cothran's cousin, Karen Godbolt, in Las Vegas, where Katzenberger and Cothran

picked them up in a rented car just prior to the NCSL booth set-up.

Staffing the booth on the three exhibit days, though, was Katzenberger's lone effort. Prior efforts to find a second staff person for the NCSL booth were unsuccessful. "There really needs to be two persons," says Katzenberger, "because I could not talk to as many people as I could have otherwise."

Nevertheless, he distributed about 800 packets of information, which also included the "Henry George and Reconstruction of Capitalism" speech by Dr. Robert V. Andelson (printed by PREC in pamphlet form) and "Synopsis of Henry George's 'Progress & Poverty'" extracted by Katzenberger from Dr. James Busey's condensation of the 565 page original.

For the second year materials in Spanish were distributed to Central and South American persons attending the NCSL conference: "Progreso & Miseria" por Enrique George abreviado por James L. Busey, and some reprints from Centre d'Estudios d'Economica Politica Natural (Georgistes de Catalunya, Barcelona.)

"There were a large number of people from foreign countries this year," Katzenberger said, "including Germany, Canada, oriental countries, and Africa. The foreign visitors were eager to take copies of any literature, and one African brought friends back the following day to get copies for themselves.

The resolution that Katzenberger authored, "Economics Issues Concerning Public School Finance," submitted to the

1994 National AFT convention by the Missouri Federation of Teachers (see Sept.-Oct. 1994 GroundSwell) was also available at the NCSL booth, and Katzenberger made sure that especially educators and union members got copies of the resolution. (The resolution is also quoted in part in the "Revenue Source" brochure.)

Katzenberger found persons attending the NCSL conference related to three explanations he gave them.

The first explanation had to do with booth rent. The government-owned Las Vegas convention facility with booths set up compared to plots of a city. Phillip Morris' big well-appointed booth in a choice location was the high rent district. Little booths like PREC's with sparse furnishings was in a low rent district. After the NCSL booths are taken down, other booths for another convention will be set up and pay for the space. "This is the market economy, and we are here to sell ideas," said Katzenberger, and most understood the message.

Most also understood the parking meter concept. There are different values on time and space: sometimes 25 cents buys you 15 minutes, sometimes 25 cents buys you an hour, depending on location.

Another example Katzenberger used was the land value increases related to the Golden Gate bridge construction. "When government does good, it should reap the rewards," he pointed out. Studies done on the north and south side of the Golden Gate bridge before and after construction found there wouldn't have needed to be

income taxes or sales taxes on 10 miles each side of the bridge because of money generated because of the increased value of the land. Katzenberger also referred to Nobel Prize winner William Vickrey who favored land value taxation.

"We need to get Georgist speakers on the NCSL program," Katzenberger stressed. "Because we are registered as conference exhibitors, we are eligible to go to the workshops. There is, of course, an additional fee to attend the workshops. Georgist experts who could do a workshop for state legislators should contact the National conference of State Legislatures (phone 303/830-2200 or fax 303-863-8003). Georgists need to be visible to our state legislators. There were quite a few

other groups promoting concepts, like the flat tax that Forbes pushed."

The next NCSL conference will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, July 24-29, 1999. PREC has already reserved a booth for the 1999 conference. The year 2000 NCSL conference will be in Chicago, Illinois July 15-19. Interested persons can also contact Katzenberger for more information (home phone 314/727-8661 or office fax 314/781-6321.)

Nearly 7000 people attended the NCSL conference, including 1500 legislators and 1200 legislative staff. The NCSL is a bi-partisan organization created to serve the legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories. The annual meetings are educational in nature.