The 2014 National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) held their Legislative Summit in Minneapolis, Minnesota, at the Minneapolis Convention Center, August 19-22, 2014. This year's theme was "1,000 Ideas From The Land Of 10,000 Lakes."

I drove the Avenue of the Saints from St. Louis to St. Paul and arrived at the Minneapolis Convention Center late in the afternoon when the convention center marshaling yard and dock to the exhibit hall were empty. I did not have much difficulty in getting the exhibit materials to Public Revenue Education Council's (PREC) exhibit booth #928. PREC had a corner booth with two open sides. The exhibit table was placed at an angle to allow a small triangular space in front of the table to allow visitors to step out of the two busy aisles to look at Georgist literature displayed on the 2 foot by 6 foot table. The surface of the table was extended by placing four 20 inch by 30 inch foam boards, providing about five square feet more of table display space. The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation graciously sent 130 pounds of various Georgist literature to my home that I took to display and give to the summit attendees. While in Minneapolis my wife called and said six more heavy boxes of Georgist literature was delivered. PREC was easily seen from the main entrance, the dining hall and near the busy 2015 Seattle booth.

I noticed a lot of subtle changes at this year's summit. There were only 187 exhibitors listed, down from the 250 or more at past summits. There were fewer attendees. The summit in Boston was over 9,000, this year was a little over 5,000. Many of the attendees were more focused on their portable communication devices than on summit activities. NCSL did not encourage the legislators to visit the exhibitors. It was noticeable that more visitors to the PREC booth recognized Henry George. The exhibit time has been reduced to two and a half days: 6 hours Wednesday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM and the same Thursday and Friday from 9:00 AM to Noon, for a total of 15 hours.

We gave away all 200 of the new Georgist webpage cards created by Nadine Stoner (Common Ground-USA) listing 13 Georgist webpages and a Georgist YouTube video. We also had some of the older cards and gave several of them away. We had Spanish literature and an easy to see sign saying "Literatura en Español." At past NCSL summits attendees would come from the Organization of American States and take whatever Spanish literature we had. This year only 5 or 6 people took the Spanish literature. The Georgist Registry was very popular with the foreign visitors, especially those from Africa. We had the old 2007-2009 copies and handed out about 60 copies with checkmarks inside showing where their countries were listed.

You can learn more about NCSL by going to http://www.ncsl.org/ and www.ncsl.org/summit.

The Tax Foundation was near the PREC booth and I gave them a big sampling of Georgist literature. In return I received a fortune cookie saying, "You will suffer a great loss on April 15" and Rich Nymoen's fortune cookie stated, "Wait a year to eat me so I'll be a long-term capital gain!" I also learned that we Georgists were the only unpaid exhibitors in the exhibit hall. All the other exhibitors were lobbyists, employees of a company, foundation or an advocacy group or a person from a government agency sent to help at the current and future host booths.

I was asked by a few people about the age of some of the materials displayed and I told them if it is good literature like the Bible the print date makes no difference. We had some old copies of "Revenue Under Your Feet" produced by Nadine Stoner listing Georgist activities in various states. More than a few legislators asked if we had Georgist information related to their state. Yes, we need one of the Georgist webpages to seek out and keep posted updated Georgist information happening in each state.

This year PREC had the help of Rich Nymoen and Mike Iacono, both who helped man the exhibit booth and speak with those who visited the booth about Georgist goals. They had local data showing how LVT would work in Minneapolis. They also were helpful in reloading my car with remaining Georgist literature and exhibit booth displays. After a busy day at the exhibit hall Rich and I went to the St. Paul riverfront and ate dinner at Vic's restaurant while Rich told me the history of the area. Mike was able to speak to the benefits of site-value related to public transportation needs. Mike also went with me to next years booth selection meeting. PREC's number was 32 out of over 200 at the meeting. We ended up being number 27 because some exhibitors did not get to the meeting on time. At the NCSL Seattle summit PREC's booth will be a second spaced booth from the front entrance to the exhibit hall. PREC is requesting the help of the Georgists near Seattle to man the exhibit booth August 3-6, 2015. The 2005 NCSL summit was in Seattle and PREC had the help of David Giesen.

On the way back home I stopped at Fort Madison, Iowa, the first United States military post on the Upper Mississippi River, and near the fort I saw the largest double dicer swing span bridge in the world open and close as Mississippi tugboats pushed huge barges down the river. Also nearby was a 708,000 pound Santa Fe steam locomotive. Fort Madison was once known as "Pen City" because of the Sheaffer Pen factory in town. It has sadly been reduced to a museum by Asian manufacturers using cheap labor.

I got back home and was welcomed by my loving wife Sandra and dog Freeze and a lot of mail and all the additional Georgist literature from the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation that is ending up going to Seattle in 2015.

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