**BOOTH AT NCSL HOSTED IN CHICAGO**

by Al Katzenberger, St. Louis, MO

The National Conference of State Legislatures’ 2000 Annual Meeting and Exhibition was held in Chicago from July 15 to July 20. The theme was "Building Legislatures of the Future." This was the fifth NCSL Exhibition that Public Revenue Education Council has attended as a booth host. Al Lubin and Al Katzenberger of PREC have briefly spoken to more state legislators than anyone else in the Georgist Movement. This year Lubin and Katzenberger had the help of Charles Metalitz from the Henry George School of Chicago. This was "Chuck" Metalitz’s first NCSL Exhibition, and he took the time to visit every exhibition booth in the convention center and, where appropriate, gave Georgist literature to the persons attending the booths. There were about 300 booths, so this was quite a task and Metalitz really seemed to enjoy visiting the other booths and helping at the PREC booth.

The PREC booth was a work of art in simplicity. PREC is very frugal. The corner booth worked well by being able to stop people coming and going in two directions. The usual signs "The BEST Way to Pay for Government" in English and Spanish were displayed. "Would Voters Like A 15% Property Tax Reduction With No Revenue Loss Or Other Tax Increases?" is still an attention getting sign. Lubin suggested next year that PREC have a banner stating, "We are the ONLY booth not selling a service or a product!" The booth was also decorated with big American flag bows on loan from the Jefferson Barracks Chapel Association in St. Louis. Thank you, JBCA. Candy to attract legislators and others to the booth was donated by Pat Lubin, Al’s generous wife. To rent a "skirt" for an eight foot exhibition table cost $70.00. Sandra Cothran, Al Katzenberger’s loving companion, donated a plastic table skirt for $7.00, and no one noticed the difference. Thank you, Pat and Sandra. The St. Louis Teachers and School Related Personnel Union, Local 420, loaned an easel for one of the signs, thereby saving PREC $28.25, the cost to rent an easel. Thank you, Local 420.

PREC continued to hand out the pamphlet from Common Ground-USA called "The Revenue Source Is Under Our Feet." When giving it to the legislators, they were informed that it was an updated publication showing the continued growth and improvement of the two-rate site value method of taxation. The Center for the Study of Economics provided a generous supply of Steven Cord’s "44 Objections & Responses" booklet. PREC provided copies of Dr. Robert Andelson’s booklet, "Henry George and the Reconstruction of Capitalism." Twelve copies of the booklet were given to twelve visiting legislators from Russia. The foreign visitors from China, Africa, Canada, and South America eagerly took all the information offered. The only group that showed any resistance came from Germany. They just marched by the booth, often not even returning a greeting of welcome or responding to "It’s FREE useful information."

If you ever work a booth at an exhibition, you want Al Lubin in the booth with you. Lubin is an excellent backup and authority on the Georgist concepts. The new phrase he stressed at the booth was "tax shift." He repeatedly said, to not say "tax reduction" or "reduced taxes." Most of the legislators heard, "All we are asking you to do is simply "shift the taxes" from the improvement to the location. Then watch for the positive effects you will witness from such a simple tax shift." (continued on page 13)
BOOTH AT NCSL (continued from page 1)

Across the aisle from the PREC booth was the American Legislative Exchange Council which stresses many urban growth issues to its members. Other neighboring booths were the International (Building) Code Council and the National Association of Home Builders.

Since PREC has attended five conferences, legislators are returning to the booth. Some continue to ask us why aren't we on the program giving a workshop to the legislators. We tell them they have to ask for us to be on the program. So for next year, if you know a friendly legislator who attends the NCSL meetings, have them call the NCSL and ask that Georgist organizations be allowed to have a workshop at the NCSL annual conference in San Antonio, Texas.

The Texas delegation at the Chicago conference was promoting the San Antonio conference by giving out signed copies of the 581 page historical novel, "The Gates of the Alamo" by Steven Harrigan. Al Katzenberger walked up to the booth and explicitly stated, "I am not a legislator. I am a teacher. I will read this book. They will not. May I have a copy?" Katzenberger received a FREE copy. Thank you, Texas. (Katzenberger has read the novel and promises Common Ground a review.) The 2001 NCSL conference in San Antonio will be August 12 to 16.

The President of the Missouri Federation of Teachers, Luana Gifford, invited Lubin and Katzenberger to a reception hosted by the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association and the Center for Policy Alternatives to honor California State Senator Jim Costa as the new President of NCSL. At the very same time down the hall at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers, Governor George W. Bush was having a $1,000 a plate ($3,000,000) fund raiser. Back on the other side, Lubin and Katzenberger were being introduced to Mary Estes-Benward, the Director of the Missouri Joint Committee on Administrative Rules. This powerful committee reviews all proposed and existing rules of the executive divisions and departments of the state government. What a wonderful person to know. Missouri State Representative David Reynolds was also at the table. Katzenberger warns, do not eat "bologna sliced watermelon" at a reception. He cleaned the seeds off the top of the slice and placed it in his mouth. The second it touched his tongue a seed stuck to the bottom of the slice shot down his throat with the juice squeezed out of the watermelon. His choking necessitated a quick exit from the reception and he was too embarrassed to return.

Missouri State Representative Cindy Ostmann stopped by the PREC booth and stated she was assigned to a committee to study the needs of the City of St. Louis. She asked for all information available. More will be mailed to her. PREC is constantly providing Georgist information to anyone willing to request it. Any visitor to Katzenberger's union office will not leave without some Georgist information. The World Wide Web Georgist Home Pages postcard listing seven home pages is very popular. Chuck Metalitz provided copies of an article by Walter Rybeck that appeared in the Chicago Tribune Sept. 23, 1988. The article, "A Two-Rate Tax System Increases Affordable Housing," was very popular with the NCSL delegates from Illinois. Thank you, Chuck.

PREC is a very hard working group of volunteers who need your encouragement and financial support. PREC is struggling to stay active and be a voice for the Georgist movement in the St. Louis area. Jefferson City, the capital of Missouri, and at the NCSL annual conferences. Any financial support you can give PREC, please send it to: PREC, 6228 Pershing Ave., St. Louis, MO 63130. Thank you,

Generous Georgists.

July-August 2000, Groundswell Page 13