

# Senate Media Services

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Entering 20<sup>th</sup> year of managing the department

# Senate Media Services

Nonpartisan public information office of the Minnesota Senate

Charged with producing television programs, photographic services and multimedia products to raise public awareness of the Senate and legislative activities.

# Senate Media Services

Department produces for broadcast

- Senate Floor Coverage

- Committee Coverage

- Press Conference Coverage

- Weekly PBS-distributed public affairs show

- Issue segments

- Historical features

- Civic education videos

- Broadcast news pool feeds

## ■ Floor Coverage

*Committee Coverage*

*Anchored Updates*

*Press Conference  
Coverage*

*Special Events*

*Weekly Broadcast  
Public Affairs Program*

*Issue Features*

*Historical Features*

*Civic Education Videos*

# Senate Media Services

## Floor Coverage

# Senate Media Services

“Producing” means decision making

- Events to be covered and length of coverage

- Camera angles, reaction shots determined

- Graphics to be included

- Topics for studio programs

- Guests to be invited

- Video clips to be used in packaged segments

# Senate Media Services

Minnesota Senate Leadership and Secretary of the Senate decided best to leave executive producing decisions with one individual

Secretary of the Senate wanted someone who knew the institution and process, moreso than television production

# Senate Media Services

Unlike other states, we are not a broadcast or cable network

## Deliver Programming through Partnerships

- Twin Cities Public Television (community licensed)

- Minnesota Public Television Association

- Greater MN Cable Stations

- State Administration Department for webcasts

- Comcast for closed-circuit cable service

# Senate Media Services

Department began in 1985 with initial investment around \$500,000

Today, about \$3 million dollars of capital investment into department, but has averaged \$265,000 per year over 17 yrs

Operating costs total about \$1.5 million per year



# Senate Media Services

## Viewership is topic driven

According to Nielsen, during session 2008, some floor debates reached between 8,500 to 12,000 households.

Previous years sustained 4,000 to 6,000 households throughout the day, with peaks reaching 18,000 households.

# Senate Media Services

Provide video pool feeds to broadcast news stations to reach larger audiences

2008 Webcast and Archive Events – In 2008,  
46,000 visits for live webcasts  
12,000 visits for archived events

# Senate Media Services

States have shaped legislative coverage differently, according to best fit for the state

Congress and city councils have opened their chambers to television coverage, and legislatures are following.

Digital Television providing new opportunities

# Senate Media Services

## Challenges for the future:

Reduce operating costs through internal partnerships with other Senate departments and House public information departments

Diversify distribution to adjust to digital age