

Dick Bernard
6905 Romeo Road
Woodbury MN 55125-2421
651-334-5744
dick_bernard@msn.com
www.outsidethewalls.org/blog
www.chez-nous.net
www.amillioncopies.info

June 14, 2014

Gordon Sprenger, Chair
Minnesota Orchestral Association

Dear Gordon:

Thursday, I ordered tickets for Pixar on June 22, for myself and two grandsons, both Middle School band members. Apparently there were few or no childrens rate seats, so I'm out \$165. We can afford that on occasion, but how many kids can afford to come?

In recent days, I've been following with great interest the downtown elation in securing the 2018 Super Bowl, with the key actors, apparently, Richard K. Davis and Marilyn Carlson-Nelson, both key actors, both very influential on the Minnesota Orchestra Board, present and/or past. (Full Disclosure: in my 49 adult years in the Twin Cities/MN, I've been to a single NFL game, and that was over 40 years ago.) Everything I know about the Super Bowl suggests it is a big party for the national high and mighty, with the bills and inconvenience paid in various ways by we locals, with very dubious short or long-term benefits.

So be it, I guess. That game is played in a different league from me.

In all my previous years as a subscriber I never paid much mind to who was on the Orchestra Board. In fact, the only person I knew, very, very slightly, from hearing her speak once at an event, was Marilyn Carlson-Nelson. The others of you were out of sight, out of mind, until the time of the lockout. No more.

My lockout file continues to grow, and now includes the Super Bowl.

And, of course, I pay close attention to what I see in the STrib.

I see no evidence that the MOA Board has learned anything at all from the past years.

Compared to its annual budget, for everything, including the kitchen sink, the Orchestra has an immense investment fund (which it apparently considers barely adequate, if adequate at all.) I know the rationale. Less and less, do I buy the rationale.

How much "savings" is enough? We know only what you release to the public, but everything is close to the vest.

The May 10 STrib article says that *"total investments including trusts are \$147 million"*. Most likely that is Aug. 31, 2013 final; August 31, 2014 final will probably not be announced till after your annual meeting in December. Compare investments against

Total Expenses August 31, 2012 (see enclosed). I know there is a fancy dance that can be done with any financial numbers, but what is pretty obvious is that is that if you (theoretically) would freeze everything in place (figuratively, put all the Orchestral Association money in a coffee can in the backyard), and not charge a nickel, nor raise a nickel, and provide program as before, you wouldn't run out of money for four years. Of course, this is just for argument, but possible, and the overwhelming majority of us do not have this kind of luxury. We are the ones who were left out in the cold while you cried poverty.

Of course, I don't know anything for certain, because I am, after all, just an audience member. I'm told what you want me to know - that is all.

It will now be interesting to know the process you follow to replace your departed Board members; whether you'll replace yourselves with yourselves ("*Sprenger has begun soliciting names*" May 10 STrib); whether you'll amend your own bylaws to allow open election of independent representatives from outside Board members, at minimum from amongst those who actually come to your concerts in your hall.

I won't hold my breath on having true public participation in what appears to operate like a privately held corporation.

You can identify me as, still, a loyal orchestra goer, but very angry member of your "base", the audience.

Sincerely,

Dick Bernard

PS: This letter and attachments will be included at the end of my "filing cabinet" at <http://www.outsidethewalls.org/blog/2013/08/30/>

Art, money key as orchestra rebuilds



JERRY HOLT • jerry.holt@startribune.com

By GRAYDON ROYCE • graydon.royce@startribune.com

5/10/2014
MPLS STAR-TRIBUNE

Fans of the Minnesota Orchestra have every reason to breathe easier these days. Osmo Vänskä is back as music director, eager to rediscover the orchestra's virtuosity.

"Collaboration" is the new mantra among board leaders. The community has rarely been this focused on the 111-year-old orchestra and all stakeholders — still feeling the trauma of a 16-month lockout of musicians — appear to have the will to rebuild.

Yet financial realities that extend from ticket sales to fundraising to endowment health remain issues for an organization that also needs a new CEO.

"This is like a thousand-piece puzzle we all must put together," Vänskä said recently, as he talked about getting to work.

The orchestra has reported three straight years of deficits (including last year's abnormal results during the lockout). Balanced budgets in previous years were the result of extraordinary draws from a \$58 million endowment that is slowly being rebuilt (total investments including trusts are \$147 million).

See **ORCHESTRA** on A6 ▶

COLLABORATION: Now that conductor Osmo Vänskä has returned, observers say, musicians, management and audiences must all work in concert.

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STAR TRIBUNE Mini
Volume XXXIII • No. 36 • May

Orchestra's challenge: Work together for a

◀ **ORCHESTRA** from A1

Lee Henderson, a Minneapolis attorney who became an opinion leader for orchestra fans during the labor dispute, said that the quality of the orchestra clearly will get better and better, "but that doesn't solve the economics that were there at the beginning and haven't gone away."

"The greatest challenge is to get all this enthusiasm focused in a positive direction," said Paul DeCosse, co-founder of the citizen group Orchestrate Excellence. "If we don't create common ground, the danger I see is that we could charge off in different directions."

Contributed funds, comprising about 30 percent of

the annual budget, saw a small spike following the rehiring of Vänskä. However, several key corporate leaders left the board after CEO Michael Henson was eased into a resignation. Whether those leaders have taken their money with them — and whether it can be replaced — will not be known until the fiscal year ends in August.

Mark Stryker was rather unsparing as he hit the Tweet-Deck recently.

"Osmo Vänskä returning to the Minnesota Orchestra is by no means a panacea," the Detroit Free Press music writer posted on Twitter. "The challenge for the orchestra is not how to sound great at Carn-

"We have the main bricks in place — a settlement, a contract and Osmo back as music director. Now that those issues are resolved we can look forward to putting Humpty Dumpty back together again."

Cellist Marcia Peck

egie Hall but how to create a sustainable orchestra that best serves the needs of the Twin Cities."

Stryker is somewhat better positioned than other 140-character warriors to offer opinions on the orchestra. He has watched the Detroit Symphony rebound over the past three years, following a six-month strike.

That ensemble took the approach that business as usual would not improve the conditions that led to the work stoppage. Detroit got out into neighborhoods, played reduced-price concerts, developed audiences and replaced an air of distrust with a sense of respect and commitment.

Classical vs. pops

The orchestra is nearly five months behind in announcing its next season. Meetings between Vänskä, musicians and staff have resulted in a draft for the 2014-15 season that emphasizes a stronger diet of classical concerts.

"We're going to test to a high degree the appetite of the community to buy tickets for classical concerts," said board mem-

ber Ron Lund, who has sat in on planning sessions. "A lot of people have felt classical music won't sell, and I think that was probably behind the decision to diminish classical in the past and enhance pops concerts. We're now beyond that."

Box-office results from the 23 classical concerts the orchestra has played since returning Feb. 7 offer both hope and caution.

On one hand, the orchestra has achieved its attendance goal for the truncated season, with 12 more dates through the end of July.

However, average attendance of 1,600 per concert is essentially the same as it was in 2011-12, the last full season in Orchestra Hall. In the new hall's configuration, that figure represents 77 percent of capacity.

"We're very pleased with the community response," said Cindy Grzanowski, director of marketing for single-ticket sales. "In terms of capacity being flat, that's a tremendous achievement, because we're up against a lot of unknown odds."

That is true, but rarely has attention been more fixed on

the orchestra than

Looking ahead, the challenge is to manage a season-ticket campaign once provided the orchestra's ear. In the past five years, the shift to single-ticket sales has accelerated. The orchestra can't start selling for 2014-15 until announced, probably by the end of this month or early next.

Back in the community

The orchestra is bringing this week's concert to the Common Chord.

Small ensembles, a Hibbing senior center, hospitals, a Salvation Army band, a full orchestra performing at Hibbing High School on Friday night.

Cellist Marcia Peck was there, said the mood is very positive.

"We have the main bricks in place — a settlement, a contract and Osmo back as music director," Peck said. "Now that those issues are resolved we can look forward to putting Humpty Dumpty back together again."

Four months after the contract was settled, the orchestra has kept their promise. The Minnesota Orchestra's website opened.

They actually had recent concerts that were part of the Auditorium's recent season. They continue to maintain a community and school outreach program.

Some board members privately have grumbled about the separate organization, which represents a separate interest. Why the need for a separate organization with its own programs and public effort, they ask.

Board chair John Sprenger did not have concerns in a statement. He said the Northrop Foundation has been committed

Challenge: Work together for a common goal

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That is true, but rarely has attention been more fixed on

the orchestra than it is now.

Looking ahead, the challenge is to manage the erosion of season-ticket buyers, who once provided the backbone of the orchestra's earned revenue. In the past five years, the move to single-ticket decisionmakers has accelerated. Marketers can't start selling subscriptions for 2014-15 until the season is announced, probably at the end of this month or early June.

Back in the community

The orchestra was in Hibbing this weekend as part of the Common Chords program.

Small ensembles played at a Hibbing senior-citizen residence, hospitals, schools and a Salvation Army center. The full orchestra performed at Hibbing High School on Friday night.

Cellist Marcia Peck, who was there, said the musicians' mood is very positive.

"We have the main bricks in place — a settlement, a contract and Osmo back as music director," Peck said. "Now that those issues are resolved we can look forward to putting Humpty Dumpty back together again."

Four months after the contract was settled, the musicians have kept their independent Minnesota Orchestra Musicians website operating.

They actually produced the recent concerts with Vänskä that were part of Northrop Auditorium's reopening, and they continue to make community and school appearances.

Some board members privately have grumbled that the separate organization represents mistrust and a competing interest. Why is there still a need for a separate musicians' organization with its own programs and public-relations effort, they ask.

Board chair Gordon Sprenger did not indicate those concerns in a statement that said the Northrop concerts had been committed to before the

labor dispute ended.

"The board's intent is that musicians will play an integral role working with board and staff to plan Minnesota Orchestra programs and projects, with all constituents working together," Sprenger said.

Miles to go

Seven months ago, in the wake of Vänskä's resignation during the lockout of musicians, several bloggers more or less declared the orchestra dead. If it broke apart, this argument went, then something new might be able to grow up in its place.

Lund recalled those assessments last week as he expressed surprise at the organization's resiliency.

"There's a lot of healing to be done, but in terms of the orchestra walking out and performing, the recovery is more rapid than I thought it would be," he said.

Board leadership has turned over, and Henson will leave in August. Sprenger has begun soliciting names and retaining a search firm to find Henson's successor. He did not suggest a timetable.

Henderson, looking in from the outside, wonders if there are governance problems the board needs to examine.

"There is no way you come through something like this and not find the need to rebuild in a lot of places," he said.

Regardless of the answers, everyone seems to agree that the effort will not succeed without a new ethic of collaboration among all the stakeholders.

"The institution won't make it without musicians, board, executives, music director and donors all committed to the same path of reinvention," Stryker tweeted. "They've got a lot of work to do."

Graydon Royce • 612-673-7299

Staff writer Kristin Tillotson contributed to this article.

summary of financial position

(ROUNDED TO NEAREST \$000)

	AUGUST 31 2012	AUGUST 31 2011
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$2,384	\$2,066
Contributions and Other Receivables	3,681	5,575
Prepaid Expenses and Other	1,101	1,190
Hall Renovation Pledges and Receivables	15,705	1,902
Total Current Assets	22,871	10,733
Long-Term Pledges and Receivables	2,696	4,096
Long-Term Hall Renovation Pledges and Receivables	3,984	5,615
Total Long-Term Assets	6,680	9,711
INVESTMENTS		
Endowments	59,036	69,012
Beneficial Interest Held in Trust		
Oakleaf	58,252	60,199
Building for the Future	8,281	3,122
St. Paul Foundation	1,212	1,278
Hall Maintenance Fund	7,790	7,056
Hall Renovation	-	19,244
Other Investments	2,733	2,555
Total Investments	137,304	162,466
Hall Renovations	9,792	3,303
Hall Renovations Funds Held in Escrow	32,946	-
Capital Assets, Net of Depreciation	5,432	5,735
Leasehold Improvement Asset, Net of Depreciation	514	-
Other Assets	545	567
TOTAL ASSETS	\$216,085	\$192,515

	AUGUST 31 2012	AUGUST 31 2011
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$2,224	\$2,317
Line of Credit	-	-
Deferred Concert Revenue	2,758	3,556
Long-Term Liabilities		
Long-Term Debt	10,940	10,940
Pension Liability	8,761	7,509
Leasehold Incentive Liability	514	-
Hall Renovation Accounts Payable	5,225	-
Hall Renovation Construction Debt	11,400	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$41,821	\$24,321

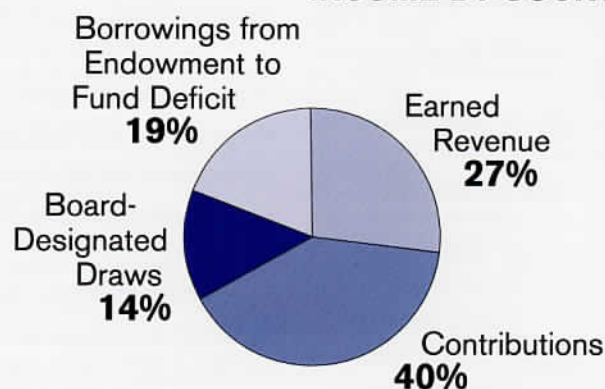
Unrestricted Net Assets		
Pension Plans	(\$8,761)	(\$7,509)
Operations	(23,160)	(17,187)
Total Operations and Pension Plans	(31,921)	(24,696)
Hall Financing, Capital Assets and Charitable Annuities	14,013	12,865
Board-Designated Endowment	3,953	1,521
Total Unrestricted Net Assets	(13,955)	(10,310)
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	42,301	35,747
Permanently Restricted Net Assets	145,917	142,757
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$174,264	\$168,193
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$216,085	\$192,515

summary of operating results

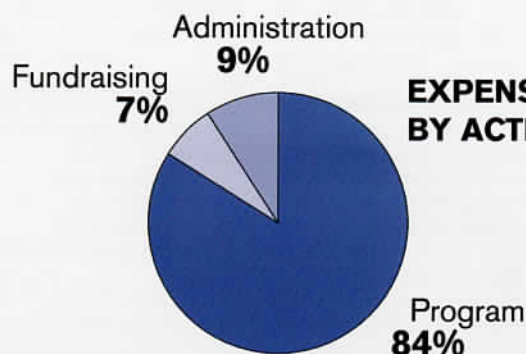
	YEAR ENDING AUGUST 31 2012	YEAR ENDING AUGUST 31 2011
REVENUE, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT		
Operating Revenue		
Ticket Sales and Service Income	\$6,550	\$6,882
Tour Revenue	433	353
Other Revenue	1,548	1,964
Total Concert and Other Operating Revenue	8,531	9,199
Contributed Revenue		
Contributions and Gifts	8,134	7,743
Tour Funding	400	485
Oakleaf and St. Paul Fdn. Distributions	3,066	3,042
Symphony Ball	958	1,057
Total Contributed Revenue	12,558	12,327
Board-Designated Draws for Operations	4,471	6,018
TOTAL REVENUE, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT	\$25,561	\$27,544
EXPENSES		
Salaries	\$22,834	\$21,887
Direct Concert Expense	3,933	3,586
Tour Expense	482	325
Advertising and Promotion	1,580	1,543
Symphony Ball	327	299
Interest and Financing	515	645
General Administration and Facility Operations	1,862	2,166
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$31,533	\$30,451
NET OPERATING ACTIVITIES	\$(5,972)	\$(2,908)

financial overview

INCOME BY SOURCE



EXPENSE BY ACTIVITY

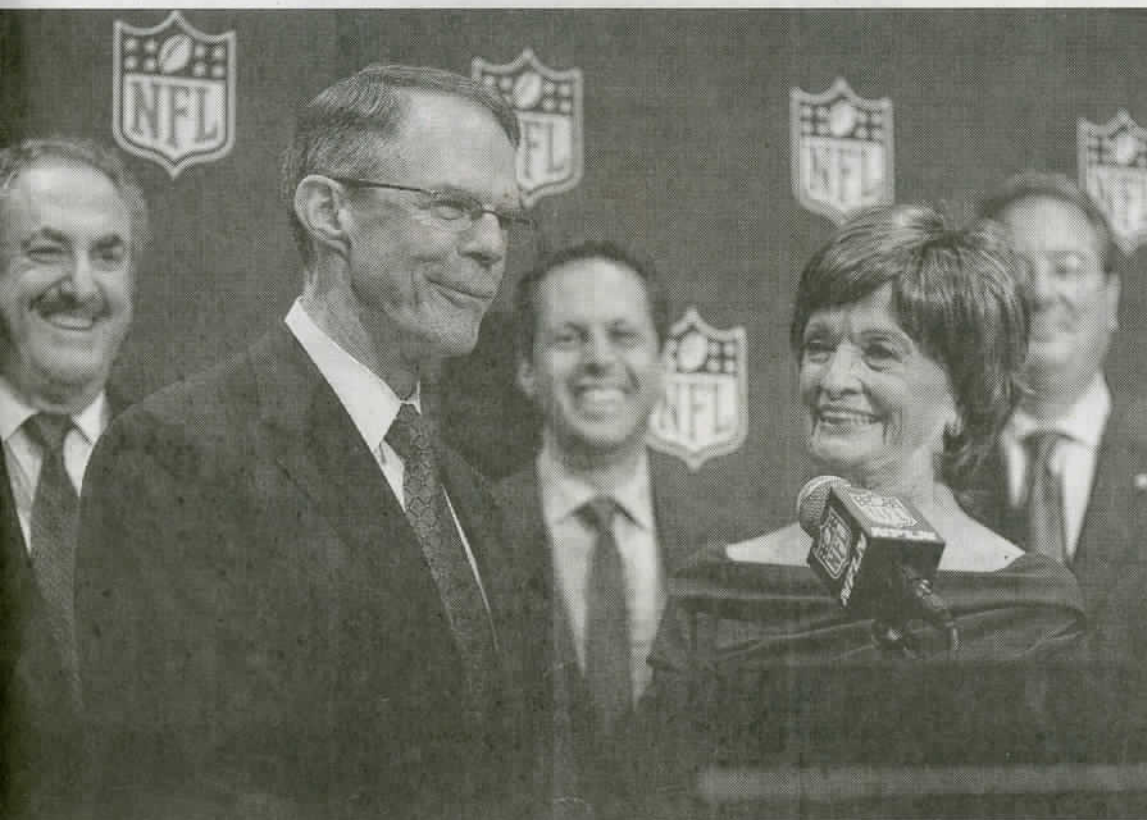


Opinion Exchange

THE ISSUES OF THE DAY AT STARTRIBUNE.COM/OPINION

MINNESOTA WILL SUIT UP FOR THE 2018 SUPER BOWL

Advertising analysts see a “pinnacle moment” to define or dispel myths about state and metro area.



DAVID GOLDMAN • Associated Press

Minneapolis bid committee co-chairs Richard Davis, left, CEO of U.S. Bancorp, and Marilyn Carlson Nelson, right, spoke in a news conference after Minneapolis was selected as the host of the 2018 Super Bowl. At left is Vikings owner Zygi Wilf.

ota winter.

It's a smart approach. Authenticity matters in marketing, and more than anywhere in the metro region in America, it seems to me the Twin Cities concurrently celebrates and enjoys winter.

But branding the Twin Cities couldn't begin and end with winter, as the city has long been known for its four seasons. Michael Hart, co-founder of Olson, an ad agency housed in Minneapolis' Uptown neighborhood

a weather-centric part of what defines us and makes us Minneapolis, I think is a missed opportunity. I'd rather people be left thinking, 'I had no idea how great the arts community is.'

Artistic vitality is just one of the many amenities that deeply impressed John Partilla when he moved from New York to be CEO of Olson, an ad agency based in Minneapolis.

"People don't have broad aware-

incredibly impressed."

Many members of the media hail from New York City, too. Their voices — already influential — will be amplified further, Fruechte said, by social media, which didn't exist in 1992, the last time the Super Bowl was played in Minneapolis.

Another factor Fruechte cited came from research Colle+McVoy conducted for Explore Minnesota Tour-

earth' and ' Fargo,'" she said.

When asked what word would best define the reality, Partilla and Hart independently identified "progressiveness."

"It's a word that captures the heart of where this state is and where it is heading," Partilla said. While some may overly associate "progressive" as a political term, Partilla seemed to mean it more broadly.

"People who are progressive are continually advancing on many fronts," he said, citing economic, artistic, social, educational, humanitarian and infrastructure fronts as examples.

Said Hart: "I would hope they perceive us as a progressive city — not necessarily liberal, but historically we've had some of the most progressive thinking."

Partilla added: "The notion of progressiveness is what every city would like to be thought of." Many cities, he said, "their history speaks to where they have been as opposed to where they are going."

Minneapolis, all three believed, is going places. Like the new Vikings stadium, it's still being built, but the civic, business, artistic, educational and social infrastructure is solid.

"Increasingly, it's Minnesota's moment because Minnesota has laid much of the hard foundational work that has created a very exciting path forward," Partilla said.

To impress, that path will need to be cleared of snow, which will be just one of the fundamental details requiring logistical precision. What often impresses outsiders most about Minnesota is just how well things work. Combining that competence with confidence — but not overcompensating — will bring branding results from the Super Bowl.

John Barch is a Star Tribune editorial writer and

ST. PAUL
PIONEER
PRESS

nCities.com ID
SUNDAY, MAY 25, 2014

Real World
Economics

Bowl will be super for us — for a day



Edward
Lotterman

The Super Bowl is coming to Minnesota. Depending on how important football is to you, that may or may not be a big deal. But what does it mean for the local economy as a whole? Is it also a big economic deal, a real bonanza for local businesses? Or is this effect as hyped as the big game itself?

More broadly, what are the economic effects of big sporting events, such as soccer's World Cup or either summer or winter Olympic Games? Is it good for a city or country to land these mega-events? And within the area affected, who wins and who loses?

Evidence suggests that a much-hyped but one-time event like the Super Bowl has moderate net economic benefits for the city chosen. These benefits seldom are as great as promoters claim, but probably are not a net loss. Moreover, there is no net gain to any broader overall economy — not holding the Super Bowl would not cause any measurable impact on U.S. GDP, just as abolishing the Olympics or World Cup would not reduce total global output.

The Olympics and World Cup tournaments probably were net economic pluses for

the hosting venues, but over the past couple of decades they've grown to a grotesque scale and now are a net economic loss to whichever location "wins" them. These events can generate the benefits of national pride and international visibility, particularly for emerging nations such as South Africa, China and Brazil. Whether this is worth the economic cost is subjective. And as frequent news about corruption in preparation for the Sochi Winter Games or ineptitude in Brazil's organization of both the 2014 soccer championship and 2016 Summer Games shows, the "reputational effects" on a nation can be negative as well as positive.

Let's consider economic costs and benefits. The primary benefits of a major sports event to the hosting locale stem from spending by attendees and the army of media workers who come to town. Hotels fill more rooms, restaurants sell more meals, taxis have more fares and clubs and other providers of recreation see more business. Indefatigable shoppers among the attendees may hit local stores. And, to the extent that sales of "memorabilia" related to the event itself flow to local businesses, the affected businesses have some very good days.

There is an employment boost, although largely of temp workers for very short terms.

For one-off, multi-day events like the Olympics and World Cup, construction of new facilities is a major factor, one that has burgeoned in recent decades. These also present major opportunities for corruption. Construction is a minor factor for the Super Bowl or for World Series and Final Four-type playoffs, where the venues are determined in advance by committee or on short notice by the success of participating teams, as in baseball.

There may be some refurbishing of existing facilities and erection of some minor or temporary structures, but nothing like the work for global events planned years in advance. (Notwithstanding the new construction of the

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> Lotterman

Vikings stadium to land the Super Bowl; while the stadium would have been built regardless, the old Metrodome would not have been a candidate venue).

Boosters, who usually include local elected officials, stadium operators and the hospitality industry, often make grand claims about the extent of the bonanza in both sales and employment. These claims often depend on projected "multiplier effects" of secondary spending and hiring. Such economic multipliers are real, but they are notoriously hard to quantify and provide fertile opportunities for exaggeration.

Moreover, boosters seldom subtract any lost business activity. People who otherwise might visit the venue city for non-sports activities are scared away by the prospect of crowds of game-goers. Who is going to come to the Twin Cities for a weekend at the Guthrie, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts or the Minnesota Zoo if they know that the airport, restaurants and hotels all will be jammed with sports fans? Yes, estimated extra sales by hospitality businesses net this out. But no one counts the slow weekend at theaters, museums, the zoo and so forth.

This was a particularly severe problem during the London Olympics in 2012, during which many traditional tourist businesses saw drops in traffic because of the prospect of dealing with Olympic crowds. The same was true to some extent for Sydney and Athens in 2000 and 2004, respectively, and probably will be true for Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

There also are costs to local government, even for events that require little new construction. Overtime for policing and traffic control is one such expense. Cleanup of trash near the venue is another.

Going back at least to Montreal in 1976, organizers often tout how new sports venues and "Olympic Villages" will be put to productive use once the games are over. Actual

performance in this regard is dismal. A quick Internet search on "abandoned Olympic venues" will produce myriad photos of derelict infrastructure dating from Berlin in 1936 to Beijing in 2008.

Boosters also hail the intangible benefits of showcasing their cities to the rest of the nation or world. Visitors from out of town and televisioners elsewhere will see how entrancing and vibrant the host city is.

Not only will many move it to the top of their list for future tourism, but business owners will open new plants and offices. This effect may be real, but it usually is much smaller than touted. For every attendee who says, "Gee this is a great town, let's come back next summer," there are several who say "Well, now we have seen Gotham City and we can cross it off our list."

And depending on the weather in February 2018, Minnesota's Super Bowl might just have a negative impact in that regard.

Unspoken but tangible political benefits may accrue to local leaders. Having a nationally or globally reported event in one's city generates excitement and local pride. This is true for the Super Bowl. But for mega-events like the Olympics, it is turning into a two-edged sword. The amounts of public funds spent on World Cup and Olympics preparations have rankled many Brazilians and the net effect, at least in the run-up, has been negative for that country's government.

Like attracting new factories with government subsidies, bringing the Super Bowl to our town simply diverts spending here from some other part of our nation. There is no net increase for the country as a whole. But there are local benefits, even if they are much-hyped, and there are not the ongoing costs of longer-term incentives. So this week's announcement is, on balance, good economic news, for our area. But the day after the game, economic life will go on pretty much as before.

St. Paul economist and writer Edward Lotterman can be reached at stpaul@edlotterman.com.