


SESSION WEEKLY

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VOTER ID GETS ITS DAY
IS THERE A PAGE IN THE HOUSE?
THE STATE'S CONNECTIVITY
'MIRACLE' MAY TAKE A LEAP OF FAITH
WEIGH IN ON BUDGET WOES

HF584 - HF782

SESSION WEEKLY

Session Weekly is a nonpartisan publication of Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Services. During the 2009-2010 Legislative Session, each issue reports House action between Thursdays of each week, lists bill introductions and provides other information. No fee.

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On the cover: Perpich Center for Arts Education dancers, *clockwise top right*, Andria Melin, Davente Gilbreath and Megg Johnson perform "Trio" in the Capitol Rotunda Feb. 9. The student performances, as well as exhibits, were to show the tangible presence of the Golden Valley school in arts education, professional development and research.

— Photo by: Tom Olmscheid

Accountability funding for all

A 'New Minnesota Miracle' requires a leap of faith

By KRIS BERGGREN

Does more money deliver a better education? Many Minnesota schools are already doing more — or at least treading water — with less.

Consider the Minnewaska school district in rural Pope County. It has posted some admirable academic results, including 2007 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment scores “significantly higher” than the state average. Also, it has a 99 percent graduation rate, despite a 43 percent free and reduced-cost lunch eligibility — a marker of poverty often linked with barriers to academic proficiency.

But the district has struggled to stay afloat, says Superintendent Greg Ohl, who calls himself a “fiscal conservative.”

The district pulled out of statutory operating debt in 2007 by cutting staff, programs and extracurricular activities. Ohl pulled triple duty last year to save money, serving as superintendent, district business manager and a site principal. After four attempts, a levy referendum was passed last year to buy new textbooks, fund all-day kindergarten and reduce class sizes.

A 32-year educator and district leader, Ohl says the “rollercoaster” of funding surges and deep cuts that have worsened since the 1980s is simply failing to meet actual needs, much less prepare his students to compete in a global economy.

He is among those endorsing the “New Minnesota Miracle,” a bill before the House to reform education funding — even if it takes a tax increase to enact.

“Because we do need to invest in education; it’s the best way to stimulate our economy,” said Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), the bill’s sponsor. “Education is the key to productivity, according to Tom Stinson, our state economist.”

Looking for a miracle

The “New Minnesota Miracle,” or HF2, would return the bulk of education funding responsibility to the state as constitutionally required, and relieve taxpayers of funding local operating levies. It would also minimize competition among districts for a fixed amount of funding and build the education budget from the ground up based on actual needs.

If enacted, parents, students, teachers and administrators could see significant funding changes over time.

School districts forced to shift around their line items to cover things like special education and transportation would see relief in dedicated funding components.

Reine Shiffman, a board member of the West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan school district, told the House K-12 Education Finance Division on Feb. 10 that her district had to shift \$4.5 million last year from its general education revenue to compensate for special education, transportation and English language learner programs.

As numbers of non-English speaking students and those in poverty rise — as is projected in every corner of the state — districts could nip the achievement gap in the bud as early childhood education and all-day kindergarten would be funded through the bill.

First Reading continued on page 4



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Superintendent Michael Lovett, right, and Board Member Lori Swenson from the White Bear Lake Public Schools examine runs of potential funding levels for school districts as part of a proposed new education funding framework. They attended the Feb. 10 meeting of House K-12 Education Finance Division, where the “New Minnesota Miracle” was presented.

First Reading continued from page 3

Supporters of the bill say it is more transparent to the public.

Currently the process is so complicated that as Ohl put it, “When you talk about a proration of a proration it’s hard not to see farmers’ eyes glaze over at a truth in taxation hearing.”

Almost every legislator, school superintendent, school board member or principal in urban, rural and suburban districts alike finds something to like in the proposal, and many are willing to hold their noses and put up with what they don’t like.

But the plan would cost \$2.5 billion to fully implement, although it’s designed to be scalable, or phased in over time with any amount of new revenue.

“The current formula is totally busted. This [bill] absolutely is a step in the right direction. It’s absolutely an improvement,” said Rep. Pat Garofalo (R-Farmington). He likes the location equity index feature, and the change in how compensatory funding for children in poverty is dealt out, aspects that would benefit his largely suburban district.

“But the big problem is the cost. And that’s the part we really can’t get over. You can’t count on five billion Obama bucks coming into our state or whatever it is paying for it,” he said.

Advocates say the new formula would be worth the investment, even in these hard times. They know it could require a general tax increase — but most Minnesotans are already paying more taxes to fund education through school operating property tax levies, according to Mary Cecconi, executive director of Parents United for Public Schools, who said 91 percent of school districts have passed levy referenda.

But Garofalo argues that even if a tax increase raised \$3 billion, the Legislature would still be forced to make program cuts. “I wish I could suspend the laws of mathematics and make this possible, but this is a session where we have to be coming up with creative ideas to spend less, not more,” he said.

“Money isn’t everything,” Greiling said. “There are always things districts can do to change their culture and their philosophy and how they’re doing things with their existing

money. But in the end you still have to pay for things you care about and show your values that way.”

Greiling credits a statewide coalition of education organizations and parent groups, PS Minnesota, with creating the bill’s blueprint — and that coalition “is the gift that PS Minnesota gave us.”

“They all support — every type of school district supports — this bill. They all have to plug their nose and not like parts of it. My district hates the levy referendum offset. If you have a large levy referendum you’re going to lose \$500 of it. But it will be paid for by the state so you get property tax relief. ... Some other

districts would like to get rid of the location equity index. So there’s just plenty of things in here that everybody doesn’t like, but everybody agreed the total is worth it, and that when they benefit, everybody benefits. There are no losers in this bill.”

‘The stability of a republican form of government depending mainly upon the intelligence of the people, it is the duty of the legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools. The legislature shall make such provisions by taxation or otherwise as will secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools throughout the state.’

— Article XIII, Section 1,
Minnesota Constitution

CHINCHILLIN’



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Several hands, including those of Emily Johnson, left, and Rachel Farber, reach out to touch a chinchilla during the Minnesota Zoo’s “Zoo Day” in the Capitol Rotunda Feb. 10. It was a way for zoo leaders to thank legislators for their continued funding support.

AGRICULTURE

Cows up, but profits down

Sadie Frericks is just the sort of person the dairy industry hopes to keep attracting.

She and her husband are young, educated, from dairy farm backgrounds, and they now maintain a 50-head herd on their farm near Melrose.

They also received help from two state programs designed to promote the dairy and livestock industry — programs that are poised to receive a substantial cut in Gov. Tim Pawlenty's budget at exactly the wrong time, dairy industry supporters say.

After four years of profitability and an increase in the number of cows and dairy farmers in the state, several factors are colliding that could be devastating to the industry's future.

Pat Lunemann, president of the Minnesota Milk Producers Association, brought Frericks to the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Finance Division Feb. 10 as an example of how well the Livestock Investment Grant and the Dairy Profitability Enhancement Program work, and why full funding should continue.

"We are in a crisis at the moment created by a perfect storm," Lunemann told division



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Pat Lunemann, left, president of the Minnesota Milk Producers Association, and Sadie Frericks, a dairy farmer from Melrose, speak to the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Finance Division Feb. 10 about the state of the Minnesota dairy industry.

members on Dairy Day at the Capitol, the traditional time set aside for legislators to be updated on the dairy industry.

Milk prices may be up for consumers, but to the producer they are down to levels they haven't seen since 2002, while the cost of production is on the rise. The international banking crisis compounds the problem, Lunemann said, because purchasers can't get the credit to stock their inventories.

Curt Zimmerman, livestock supervisor for the Agriculture Department, said Minnesota is the fifth largest exporter of milk products in the nation.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar), division chairman, promoted his idea to fund the two dairy programs through the governor's \$50 million small-businesses grant proposal. "Agriculture is one of the few things that is working in the state. ... We want to keep you strong."

— L. SCHUTZ

ARTS

Arts Board could become a nonprofit

The Minnesota State Arts Board could be turned into a nonprofit, if Gov. Tim Pawlenty has his way.

Weigh in on budget woes

The Minnesota House of Representatives and Senate plan to hold hearings across the state to hear from Minnesotans on Gov. Tim Pawlenty's budget recommendations. The schedule of town hall meetings follows. Those who wish to testify can sign up by going to www.house.mn, look for the brown banner near the top of the page and click on Town Hall Meetings.

Thursday, Feb. 19

Mankato – 6 p.m.
Mankato Intergovernmental Center–Mankato River Room
10 Civic Center Plaza

Rochester – 6 p.m.
Rochester Community and Technical College–Heintz Center Commons Area
1926 Collegeview Road S.E.

St. Cloud – 6 p.m.
St. Cloud City Hall–Council Chambers
400 Second St. S.

Willmar – 6 p.m.
Kennedy Elementary School
824 Seventh St. S.W.

Friday, Feb. 20
Albert Lea – 10 a.m.
Albert Lea City Hall–Council Chambers
221 E. Clark St.

Alexandria – 4 p.m.
Alexandria City Hall
704 Broadway

Bemidji – 3:30 p.m.
Bemidji State University–American Indian Resource Center Gathering Place
1620 Birchmont Drive

Brainerd – 10:30 a.m.
Washington Educational Services Building–Board Room
804 Oak Street

Duluth – 9:30 a.m.
Duluth City Hall–Council Chambers
411 W. First Street

Little Falls – 9:30 a.m.
Morrison County Government Center–Garden Level Meeting Room
213 First Ave. S.E.

Marshall – 2:30 p.m.
Southwest Minnesota State University Lecture Hall
1501 State St.

Moorhead (Senate Tax Committee) – 12:30 p.m.
Minnesota State University Moorhead–Comstock Union
1104 Seventh Ave. S.

Virginia – 1:30 p.m.
Mesabi Range Community and Technical College–Small Auditorium
1001 Chestnut St. W.

Winona – 3:30 p.m.
Winona City Hall–Council Chambers
207 Lafayette

Worthington – 10:30 a.m.
Worthington City Hall–Council Chambers
303 Ninth Street

Monday, Feb. 23
Woodbury – 6 p.m.
Central Park Amphitheater
8595 Central Park Place

Tuesday, Feb. 24
Bloomington – 7 p.m.
Bloomington City Hall
1800 W. Old Shakopee Road

Minneapolis – 6 p.m.
Minneapolis Park Board
2117 West River Road

Wednesday, Feb. 25
Burnsville – 7:30 p.m.
Fairview Ridges Hospital
201 E. Nicollet Blvd.

White Bear Lake – 6:30 p.m.
White Bear Lake High School–South Campus
3551 McKnight Road N.

Thursday, Feb. 26
Coon Rapids – 7 p.m.
Coon Rapids City Hall
11155 Robinson Drive

Forest Lake – 6:30 p.m.
Forest Lake City Hall
220 N. Lake St.

Plymouth – 7 p.m.
Plymouth City Hall
3400 Plymouth Blvd.

St. Paul – 6 p.m.
West Minnehaha Recreation Center
685 Minnehaha Ave. W.

The House Cultural and Outdoor Resources Finance Division heard its share of the governor's proposed budget Feb. 9. Presented by Minnesota Management and Budget, the governor has proposed a \$23.4 million cut from the 15 accounts overseen by the division.

"The governor is faced with very hard decisions with this budget situation," said Ryan Baumtroug, a budget officer with Minnesota Management and Budget.

One recommendation involves transitioning the arts board into a private nonprofit organization, with board funding phased out. No state funding would be available beginning with fiscal year 2012.

Concerns arose about the board's administration of grants, federal funding and competition with its partners.

Mike Roelofs, budget division team leader for Minnesota Management and Budget, said the transition to a nonprofit could reduce federal funding. They would still be able to administer grants, but because of funding, those grant amounts would be less.

Some of the governor's other recommendations include:

- eliminating all state funding to the Humanities Commission;
- an across-the-board cut of about 5 percent for the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, Council on Black Minnesotans, Chicano-Latino Affairs Council and Minnesota Indian Affairs Council;
- a 72 percent cut to the Amateur Sports Commission;
- no change in funding for the Minnesota and Duluth children's museums; and
- a 11.4 percent cut to the Minnesota Historical Society.

In addition, \$118.2 million expected as a part of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy constitutional amendment passed last November, would be split between the Department of Agriculture, Board of Water and Soil Resources, Department of Health, Metropolitan Council, Department of Natural Resources, Pollution Control Agency and Public Facilities Authority.

— S. HEGMAN

CRIME

Child solicitation contact changes

As technology changes, so do the ways that sexual predators can contact minors.

A bill held over Feb. 10 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee for possible omnibus bill inclusion tries to keep pace with the electronic advancements.

Sponsored by Rep. Karla Bigham (DFL-Cottage Grove), HF129 closes a loophole

in a 2007 law prohibiting solicitation of minors online. It expands the crime of computer solicitation of children to include "an electronic communications system, or a telecommunications, wire or radio communications system, or other electronic device capable of electronic data storage or transmission."

"This bill adds cell phones as a result of some instances that have occurred because of text messaging and picture messaging," Bigham said. She said the proposed statutory language is intended to be over-inclusive.

Under the bill, an adult using a telephone to solicit a child for sexual contact, communicates in a "sexually explicit" manner or distributes "sexually explicit" material to a child would be guilty of a felony.

The bill also changes a heading in statute to "Electronic solicitation of children" to better reflect the expanded nature of the offense. It is currently titled "Internet or computer solicitation of children."

SECOND CHANCE



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Ralph Crowder of Minneapolis joined a consortium of nonprofit leaders and justice system advocates that invited ex-offenders, their families and supporters to the "Second Chance" rally Feb. 11 in the Capitol Rotunda. The event was designed to increase the awareness of the barriers facing individuals with criminal records.

A companion bill, SF415, sponsored by Sen. Mee Moua (DFL-St. Paul), was scheduled to be heard Feb. 12 by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— M. COOK

Sex offenders off sites

Social networking sites, like Facebook and MySpace, are not only for people to keep in touch, but they can also be a place for unwelcomed guests.

For the second biennium, Rep. Karla Bigham (DFL-Cottage Grove) sponsors a bill prohibiting site access and usage by any registered sex offender.

Deputy Attorney General David Voigt noted that MySpace recently said more than 90,000 sex offenders have been removed from its site in recent years. "There is nothing to prevent them from going there in the first place," he said.

Approved Feb. 10 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee, HF130 was sent to the House Civil Justice Committee. Last year's version failed to get out of a conference committee because of some unanswered questions.

In addition to the social networking sites, offenders would be prohibited from using instant messaging or chat room Internet sites.

"For example, if you're on an accessible network that would allow you to play cards with somebody via the Internet, and there are chat rooms allowed in these gaming rooms, we wanted to prohibit that as well," Bigham said. "That was a point of concern by Rep. (John) Lesch last year."

She said the most logical question concerns enforcement.

"When you are a registered sex offender, you are subject to unannounced searches of your person, house and car. We are going to extend that to the computer, PDAs and such," she said.

If enacted, the bill would not take effect until Aug. 1, 2010.

"Every year a registered sex offender is sent a notification letter," said Bigham, who has been told that adding this to the restriction list would have no additional cost. "Prosecutors have asked that we need to be able to prove they were notified in order to charge the case."

Awaiting action by the Senate Judiciary Committee is the bill's companion, SF403, sponsored by Sen. Mee Moua (DFL-St. Paul).

— M. COOK

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EDUCATION

Tougher licensing standards

A plan supported by Gov. Tim Pawlenty to tighten teacher licensure standards received mixed reviews from House K-12 Education Policy and Oversight Committee members on Feb. 10. No action was taken.

Under the governor's proposals, aspiring teachers would be required to pass their pre-professional skills test (known as PPST or Praxis I) before entering a teacher training program. Currently teachers can enter a program even if they fail the test — though they must eventually pass it in order to be licensed.

Additionally the governor's plan — part of his proposed "Teaching Transformation Act" — would raise the minimum passing score on the Praxis II certification exam that teachers take to gain licensure, and it would put an increased emphasis on technology skills.

Department of Education Assistant Commissioner Karen Klinzing said the proposals would ensure that those lacking the basic skills to be effective teachers are eliminated from teacher training programs up front.

John Melick, the department's director of educator licensing, said some teacher candidates accepted into training programs despite failing the PPST go through three years of teacher training only to be rejected for licensure because they still can't pass the test.

That observation caused Rep. Kory Kath (DFL-Owatonna) to question whether the PPST is really useful in determining who will make a good teacher.

"If you're getting these phone calls from superintendents saying, 'This is an excellent teacher. How can we get them to pass this test?' The question then is how is it a measurement of effectiveness of a teacher?"

Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) asked whether it would be better to focus on getting as many new teachers into the field as possible at first and then cut some from the programs later if they're not effective.

Klinzing responded that it's easier to provide support to teacher candidates while they're in college than after they've already been in the classroom for three years but still don't qualify for a license.

— N. BUSSE

Recruiting SMART teachers

A proposal by Gov. Tim Pawlenty to recruit mid-career professionals to teach in K-12 classrooms was heard by members of a House committee.

The governor's proposal, known as SMART, for "State of Minnesota Alternative Route to Teaching," would implement a one-year teacher training program with the goal of recruiting mid-career professionals to teach math, science and other disciplines where there are shortages of qualified K-12 teachers.

"The thought is that mid-career individuals have very unique needs that are very different from an 18- to 20-year-old college student," said John Melick, director of educator licensing for the Department of Education.

Melick presented the governor's proposal to members of the House K-12 Education Policy and Oversight Committee on Feb. 11. No action was taken.

Under the SMART program, Melick said qualified individuals would attend a summer training program and then be provisionally employed as a teacher while receiving additional training at night and on the weekends. They would attend another summer program at the end of the school year, after which they would be eligible to receive their teaching license. The governor has recommended \$500,000 to fund the program.

Jan Alswager, a lobbyist for Education Minnesota, criticized the program as opening the door for unqualified teachers to enter the state's classrooms.

"It shouldn't be easy to be a teacher," Alswager said. "We don't want people experimenting with our children."

She warned that the program might compel small school districts to hire unqualified

teachers just because they don't want to go through the trouble of spending another year training a different teacher candidate.

Melick countered that a teacher candidate under the SMART program would be required to attain a license from a higher education institution, just like any other teacher.

Committee Chairman Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul) said mid-career professionals could be a good source of math and science teachers, especially in an economy where high-tech career fields are experiencing layoffs.

— N. BUSSE

EMPLOYMENT

DEED cuts questioned

Members of two House divisions took testimony on — and criticized — budget cuts proposed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty for a variety of programs run by the Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Officials from DEED-funded programs told the House Bioscience and Workforce Development Policy and Oversight Division on Feb. 10 that the proposed budget cuts come at a time when demand for their services is increasing because of the economy.

"We've got a lot more clients because of the fact that more people are going onto welfare rolls, and people are being laid off that need new training," said Bill Means, executive director of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers, which would



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Matt Reinartz, center, director of the St. Paul Youth Job Corps Program, and Tamara Downs Schweig, right, of the Community Design Center of Minnesota, listen as St. Paul Police Sgt. Ray Jefferson talks about A Community Outreach Program. The House Bioscience and Workforce Development Policy and Oversight Division heard about several youth programs Feb. 10.

receive a \$250,000 reduction under the governor's plan.

The OIC is one of 23 DEED-funded programs slated for cuts. Many of the programs provide job opportunities to dislocated workers and other economically disadvantaged populations.

"Keeping kids engaged in positive activities like a job means that we have fewer youth who are recruited into gangs or committing crimes or doing other unproductive activities," said Deb Bar-Helgen, who helps run the Minneapolis Summer Youth Program, which provides job training to at-risk youth. It faces a \$650,000 reduction under the governor's proposals.

At a meeting of the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Finance and Policy Division later that day, DEED Commissioner Dan McElroy said the reductions were necessary to help balance the state's budget.

"These are all good programs. None of them were easy to make the decision not to fund," he said.

Bonnie Elsey, workforce development director for DEED, said programs that help the largest number of people are being given the highest priority under the governor's plan.

That didn't stop Rep. Joe Atkins (DFL-Inver Grove Heights) from questioning the fairness of cutting programs designed to help economically challenged people at the same time the governor is proposing tax cuts for businesses.

"What I'm still waiting to hear is how we're all sharing the pain," Atkins said.

— N. BUSSE

ENERGY

Stimulus funding bill gets division OK

When the federal stimulus funding arrives, the state's Office of Energy Security would be one of the local project administrators responsible for doling out money to create jobs and improve living conditions for low to moderate income residents.

The House Housing Finance and Policy and Public Health Finance Division approved HF680, the recovery bill, as amended Feb. 11 on a divided vote.

Sponsored by Rep. Jeremy Kalin (DFL-North Branch), the bill establishes key principles for the use of the funds, including: money should be spent statewide; tracking of all expenditures; the amount of energy savings; number of jobs created; and the wages of those hired as a result of the federal funding.

No state funds are included in the bill, which relies on additional spending from utility companies that are mandated to reduce energy consumption, and corporations paying to help clean up polluted areas they helped cause, Kalin said.

An amendment successfully offered by Rep. Denny McNamara (R-Hastings) deleted references to "sole-source contracting" for building and improvement projects.

The bill also gives preference to projects that employ people "at a living wage." Kalin said trade workers and unions have said they won't be able to meet the immediate need for workers. McNamara and Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids) said the language was too restrictive and could lead to geographical imbalance.

Division Chairwoman Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) declined Severson's motion to lay the bill over for the next meeting, saying that several other House committees are due to hear the proposal.

A companion bill, SF657, sponsored by Sen. Yvonne Prettner Solon (DFL-Duluth), awaits action by the Senate Energy, Utilities, Technology and Communications Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

ENVIRONMENT

Trail extensions

Public trails in southern Minnesota could be expanded, under a pair of bills approved by the House Environment Policy and Oversight Committee Feb. 10.

Sponsored by Rep. Rod Hamilton (R-Mountain Lake), HF60 calls for the development of the Des Moines River Valley Trail, originating in Jackson County, extending northwest through Kilen Woods State Park and Cottonwood County. It would meet up with the Casey Jones Trail in Murray County.

An advocacy group called Friends of the Jackson County Trails would work with the Department of Natural Resources to develop the trail. Since 1998, the group has supported the expansion of trails in and around the city of Jackson, including securing \$50,000 from a private estate and by holding annual cookouts.

The committee also approved HF230, which provides for the extension of the Casey Jones Trail in Pipestone.

Sponsored by Rep. Doug Magnus (R-Slayton), it authorizes the DNR to work with Friends of the Casey Jones Trail with the goal of connecting the trail to Blue Mounds State Park and Schoneman Park near Luverne.

No specific appropriation amount is requested in either bill. Both were sent to the House Finance Committee.

Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy) sponsors the companion bills, SF34 and SF171, respectively. Each awaits action by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

Removing plastic from yard waste

More stringent rules about how Twin Cities metropolitan area residents dispose of yard waste is the subject of a bill approved Feb. 11 by the House Environment Policy and Oversight Committee.

Since 1992, consumers have been prohibited from commingling yard debris with their solid waste. Disposal methods vary throughout the state, but plastic bags are largely used to store the waste for removal. When plastic is shredded with the yard waste, it remains in the compost generated at the resource recovery facility. In addition, haulers must pay an additional tipping fee if plastic is mixed with the debris.

Sponsored by Rep. Paul Gardner (DFL-Shoreview), HF403 would, beginning Sept. 1, 2009, prohibit consumers, haulers and bag manufacturers from using or selling yard waste bags that do not meet American Society for Testing and Materials standards for compostable plastics.

Gardner said it's an attempt to have "truth in advertising" because there is a difference between compostable plastics and labeling practices do not differentiate between those that meet ASTM standards, he said. Keeping plastic out of the recycled commodity will also increase the quality and resale value of the compost.

The bill now goes to the House Finance Committee.

A companion, SF383, sponsored by Sen. Rick Olseen (DFL-Harris), is scheduled to be heard Feb. 16 by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

FAMILY

Potential care cuts evoke emotions

Child care users and providers told the House Early Childhood Finance and Policy Division Feb. 5 that the governor's proposed \$10.3 million cut to child care assistance could push children out of high-quality care settings and close providers' doors.

They object to the assumption there was a surplus last year in a sliding fee child care assistance program used by thousands of low-income working families. They said

the surplus is the result of technical issues regarding how funds are allocated based on prior year numbers that don't reflect actual need.

"We want to make it crystal clear to the members of this committee that there isn't a surplus in the child care assistance fund, but that, in fact, there are 7,000 families who are waiting for child care on the waiting list," said Susie Brown, executive director of Child Care WORKS.

Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) called budgeting from the premise of underspent funds a "very bad trend."

Testifiers said a proposed 3 percent drop in child care reimbursement rates to providers plus a 3 percent increase in parents' co-payments will hurt both families and providers' businesses.

A tearful Molly Thoulous said that she and her husband, who have four children, work three jobs between them and earn \$50,000 annually, but still find themselves with a \$319 deficit each month and rely on the subsidy to cover child care costs.

Bridget Bicknel, who assists her mother, a licensed care provider in St. Cloud, said the state's reimbursement to a nationally accredited child care program in St. Paul is \$310 per week for an infant; it's only \$107 to her mother's program.

"If funds get cut more than they already have, we won't be able to sustain our business and we'll have to either not accept state-paid clients or we'll go out of business," Bicknel read from a letter her mother wrote to the division.

Susan Tenecyk-Stafki, executive director of Children's Corner, said cuts could have a "harsh" impact, especially on rural Minnesota where child care centers are few and infant care is even more scarce and costly.

— K. BERGGREN

Death record replacement required

One family's multi-year struggle to have their son's death certificate changed has resulted in a bill that would at least have the issue considered by a court.

Current law makes it nearly impossible to make certificate modifications once a cause of death has been determined by a medical examiner.

Sponsored by Rep. Tom Emmer (R-Delano), HF176 would make it possible for a court to consider a request to amend a death certificate if it is determined the information is incomplete or incorrect.

Mary Hoeft told the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee Feb. 5 of her struggle to have her son's cause of death changed from suicide to accidental.

In November 2001, Ryan Hoeft, a former St. Louis Park police officer, was found dead from a gunshot in his police car at the base of a hill. The medical examiner ruled it a suicide. But Mary Hoeft believed her son's death was accidental and was determined to set the record straight.

Her trip to the committee began after consultation with a different chief medical examiner and the lead accident reconstructionist for the state who made a determination that Hoeft's death was accidental. Armed with the information, including a reenactment video, she again asked to have the cause of death changed. Her request was denied, and she took the issue to court, which said the statute would need to be changed for them to consider her request.

"For officers in the state of Minnesota who carry their weapons and chamber a bullet in their gun, and run the risk of death every day because that gun could accidentally misfire at anytime, this is for them; so their families don't have to go through what we did," Hoeft said.

Before being approved and sent to the House floor, the bill was amended to be retroactive to Jan. 7, 2001.

This would allow Hoeft's family to have a court consider whether a change of death statement should be amended on their son's death certificate.

The bill's companion, SF190, sponsored by Sen. Julianne Ortman (R-Chanhassen), awaits action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

GAME & FISH

Deer hunt changes proposed

A pair of bills regarding deer hunting were held over Feb. 9 for possible inclusion in the House Game, Fish and Forestry Division's omnibus bill.

Sponsored by Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Wabasha), HF436, would require the Department of Natural Resources to extend the first of two deer hunting seasons in November from seven to nine days in Zone 3, which includes the southern portion of the Twin Cities metropolitan area and points southeast. In 2003, the DNR reduced the number of days to help increase the buck population. Now hunters want the two days reinstated so they can hunt over the course of two consecutive weekends.

Winona resident James Panek, a member of the Bluff Country chapter of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, said special interest groups pressured the DNR to reduce the

number of hunting days in 2003 to five days. Even with the seven-day compromise, more than 1,000 signatures were collected from hunters wanting the DNR to reinstate the nine-day period.

Currently, the DNR commissioner determines the number of hunting days, but the bill would change that rule to actual legislation. There is no Senate companion.

The second bill held over was HF304, sponsored by Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar), which would let service members, including National Guard members, who have returned from federal active service within the past 24 months to receive a permit to hunt does. Hackbarth said many active service members are not present to apply for a doe permit during the application period. Current law states, "The commissioner shall issue, without fee, a deer license" for returning service members.

A companion bill, SF231, sponsored by Sen. Pat Pariseau (R-Farmington), awaits action by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

GOVERNMENT

Reimbursement bill draws controversy

Proposed legislation designed to reimburse members of the Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council for expenses incurred since they began meeting last December was approved Feb. 10 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division.

Sponsored by Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul), HF18 would authorize up to a \$150,000 transfer from the Department of Natural Resources' water recreation account to the council, charged with making spending recommendations for 33 percent of the new sales tax revenue generated by a constitutional amendment approved by voters last November.

The fund transfer would be used to reimburse council members for travel, lodging, meals and other expenses incurred as a result of serving on the council, as well as DNR staff, which has an unfunded mandate to provide staff support. The funding would serve as a stop-gap until the first sales tax receipts arrive in August. The constitutional amendment allows for 1 percent of the revenues generated for the Outdoor Heritage Fund to be spent on the council's administrative expenses.

Some think that's too much. Rep. Denny McNamara (R-Hastings) said he recalls last session there was discussion that only 0.5 percent should be spent on the council's administrative costs. "Don't be surprised if that shows up again," he said.

When the council receives its first installment of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, it would pay back the water recreation fund, Hansen said.

Rep. Sarah Anderson (R-Plymouth) requested an itemized list of council expenses. She is not opposed to reimbursing member expenses, but she advocated for accountability measures.

Previous plans to hire an executive director have been dropped, said Council Chairman Mike Kilgore, after some division members criticized the need for “more bureaucracy.”

Kilgore said another criticism of the process stems from the DNR having administrative duties for the council while also presenting requests for funding.

The bill’s companion, SF119, sponsored by Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL-St. Paul), was passed Feb. 9 by the full Senate.

— S. HEGARTY

Time limit for debate goes on and on

A change to put a time limit on House Floor debate was expected to make for a long Feb. 12 for members.

Members debated changes to the Permanent Rules of the House for about an hour in the morning Feb. 12 before recessing until 7:30 p.m. As of press time, no vote had been taken.

This and other potential changes to House rules governing procedure and acceptable conduct were approved one day earlier by the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee.

Some called the plan to place time parameters on a bill’s debate a way to gag the minority caucus, while others say that it will make for better and more informed debate.

The change would expand the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee authority.

House Majority Leader Tony Sertich (DFL-Chisholm), who chairs the committee, said that as the committee sets the floor agenda, it would discuss how much time to allot to each bill’s discussion based on how many amendments to expect and how contentious the issue. When the time is up, however, “there would be no automatic mechanism to move us to a vote.” Amendments would be accepted “within the time-management we discuss,” he said.

House Minority Leader Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) called the plan “a dangerous precedent,” saying the floor, oftentimes, is the only place where concerns of minority caucus members can be heard. “If we have a bill that impacts my community, I’m going to stand there and defend my communities and my values. ... It is the custom and usage of this body to not limit the debate. It is our job to be here and debate.”

There was disagreement as well over the value of amendments offered on the floor.

Seifert said when large omnibus bills are considered, there is the potential for more amendments.

Rep. Gene Pelowski Jr. (DFL-Winona) countered that amendments offered on the floor leave little time for member review, and that the committee is the appropriate place for amendments to be considered.

— L. SCHUTZ

HEALTH

Sexual infection rates rising

Rates of sexually transmitted infections in Minnesota are rising at an alarming rate, David Johnson, an epidemiologist with the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, told members of a House committee Feb. 11.

Johnson told the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee the number of Chlamydia cases reported across the state has nearly doubled in the last 10 years. Chlamydia is now the most common disease in Minnesota — even among non-STI illnesses, like the flu, he said.

There were 17,057 STI cases reported to the Minnesota Department of Health in 2007, according to Johnson, of which 13,412 were Chlamydia; however, he noted that the actual number of people infected with STIs is

probably much higher. He said that because STIs often show no immediate symptoms, many incidences go unreported.

Johnson presented graphs showing that incidences of Chlamydia and gonorrhea are much higher in minority communities — particularly in black communities. Current data shows that infection rates are also much higher among women, but Johnson said this reflects the fact that women are more likely than men to be screened for STIs.

The statistics were presented as part of testimony on HF550, sponsored by Rep. Maria Ruud (DFL-Minnetonka), which would require the Minnesota Department of Health to make recommendations to the Legislature on how to reduce STI rates “significantly” by 2014. The committee approved the bill and referred it to the House K-12 Education Policy and Oversight Committee.

Committee members did not discuss Section 1 of the bill, which would make changes to the state’s sexual education policies for K-12 classrooms. That portion of the bill is expected to be discussed in other committees.

A companion, SF273, sponsored by Sen. John Marty (DFL-Roseville), awaits action by the Senate Education Committee.

— N. BUSSE

If you have Internet access, visit the Legislature’s Web page at: www.leg.mn



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Deb Wilkens-Costello, executive director of the Family Tree Clinic in St. Paul, left, and Betty Nelson, president of SAFEPlan and executive director of Outlook Clinics in North Branch, testify before the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee Feb. 11 in support of a bill that would help prevent sexually transmitted infections and teen pregnancy, study sexually transmitted infection prevalence and health care system costs, and create a responsible family life and sexuality education program.

HOUSING

Warrant enforcement attorney fees

Eighteen months after moving into their “dream home,” Steve Palmer and his family began to notice water intrusion.

More than two years later the Woodbury resident still has a case pending against the builder to honor a warranty and fix the problem. So far, he said it has cost him about \$40,000 in legal fees, and it’ll cost another \$50,000 to go to trial and possibly another \$12,000-\$13,000 if his family wins and the builder appeals. Then they may have to sue to get their awarded damages.

“I had a home warranty,” he told the House Civil Justice Committee Feb. 9 at Woodbury City Hall. “I bought a \$583,000 house. I never thought I’d have to spend \$40,000-\$90,000 to ensure my warranty.”

The committee road trip allowed members to hear from people that aren’t able to make it to the Capitol.

Palmer was one of a dozen people to speak in support of HF211, sponsored by Rep. Marsha Swails (DFL-Woodbury). It would allow homeowners who are successful in suing a builder or contractor for a home warranty violation to receive reasonable attorney fees and any other costs related to the suit. The committee took no action, but is expected to have a future hearing on the issue in St. Paul. There is no Senate companion.

The problem, Palmer and others said, is that builders, contractors and their insurance companies will drag out a case, hoping a homeowner will exhaust their financial resources and settle for less than needed to fix the problem.

Ed Seifert of Shoreview said it cost \$151,000 to fix water intrusion damage in his \$260,000 home that was under warranty. His contribution ended up being \$77,000 when legal fees and other costs were included.

“I thought a warranty meant something, when it’s nothing more than a piece of paper,” said Yvonne McGonigal of Woodbury.

Nobody testified against the bill.

A second bill, HF412, sponsored by Rep. Julie Bunn (DFL-Lake Elmo), would clarify intent of a 2004 law to provide that a lawsuit for a warranty violation must be brought within two years of the breach discovery, but cannot be filed more than 12 years from when the warranty took effect. Bunn said one subdivision in law has a 10-year maximum and some courts have used that shorter timeframe.

It was also held over for potential action. A companion SF470, sponsored by Sen. Sandy Rummel (DFL-White Bear Lake), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— M. Cook

LAW

Transcribing video evidence

Action seen or heard on a tape should be able to speak for itself. But that is not always the case in some Minnesota courts.

Sponsored by Rep. Steve Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park), HF212 would provide that a pretrial filing of a written transcript of a law enforcement vehicle’s audio or video is not a prerequisite for admission of that evidence in a criminal trial or a DWI license revocation hearing.

It was held over Feb. 5 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee for possible omnibus bill inclusion. Its companion, SF333, sponsored by Sen. Leo Foley (DFL-Coon Rapids), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

“There is no rule of evidence right now that requires a transcript as a condition of admitting a police audio or videotape,” Simon said.

Simon said all state patrol vehicles, and many other police vehicles, have dashboard cameras and there are “tens of thousands of cases” recorded annually. “If every judge were to do this, there would be virtual paralysis in law enforcement of having to produce a transcript each and every time.”

Other problems, Simon said, include transcriber error and inaudible statements made by the accused making it tough to certify the transcript. He also said the tape is the evidence, not the transcript.

“Why would you want to review the script of a movie when you can watch the actual movie?” asked State Patrol Maj. Mike Asleson. He said a videotape starts when the lights go on, and troopers are required to use a handheld audio during a DWI arrest.

Jill Garrison, a Second District Court reporter, said tapes can sometimes include inadmissible evidence, without transcripts jurors may think they heard something different, and the Court of Appeals and Minnesota Supreme Court have required transcripts of any audio or video recordings.

— M. Cook

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

One less mandate

One legislator called it “an awful small fish to fry,” but supporters say a bill approved by a House division will mean one less mandate for local governments.

HF269, sponsored by Rep. Andy Welti (DFL-Plainview), would eliminate a requirement that local governments annually review their out-of-state travel policies.

The House Local Government Division approved the bill Feb. 9 and referred it to the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee.

Speaking in favor of the bill, Metropolitan Inter-County Association Executive Director Keith Carlson called the requirement for annual reviews “a needless occupation of time on board agendas each year.”

Rep. Rob Eastlund (R-Isanti) questioned whether the bill would actually save local governments money, and suggested that the division may want to set its sights a little higher.

“This just seems like an awful small fish to fry here in the circumstances that we’re in,” Eastlund said.

Welti responded that the bill represented a first step toward giving local governments more flexibility.

A companion, SF307, sponsored by Sen. Rick Olseen (DFL-Harris), awaits action by the full Senate.

— N. BUSSE

METRO AFFAIRS

Dog park bill passes committee

Dubbed the “Mighty Dog” bill by its sponsor, Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul), HF297 would authorize the Metropolitan Council to administer a regional dog park permit program in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Under the provisions, cities and counties could receive \$1 million in grants over the next two years to build, expand or maintain new or established dog parks. Currently there are approximately two dozen dog parks in the area. An 11-member advisory board would allocate the grants. Participating governmental units must provide \$1 for each \$2 received.

Approved by the House Environment Policy and Oversight Committee Feb. 5, the bill was referred to the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee. It has no Senate companion.

Park and recreation staff from Minneapolis and South St. Paul said that off-leash dog parks are an emerging trend that allows dogs to run off-leash and enables their owners to comply with city leash ordinances while still exercising their pets.

Chris Esser, South St. Paul parks and recreation director, said as owners gravitate to the parks at the same place and time, “Friends Groups” emerge.

“Some friends groups will tell you there

are just as many dogs as children (in their neighborhood)," Esser said. Separating pets that are off-leash and small children is a safety consideration.

The Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board operates several dog parks, which generate more than \$100,000 in user fees, according to Brian Rice, board attorney. South St. Paul has sold 72 voluntary memberships to its dog park, Esser said.

Adoption of the program would be contingent upon legislators' funding support from the newly created Parks and Trails Fund, which resulted from voters passing the constitutional amendment to raise the sales and use tax.

"I would think that the first thing we would think about doing is putting some money in the maintenance of our trails and our parks throughout the state before we go off in this direction," said Rep. Denny McNamara (R-Hastings), who voted against the bill.

— S. HEGARTY

SAFETY

Crisis intervention training grants

Sue Hanson's 34-year-old son has schizophrenia.

"We've had police to our home at least eight times. It's involved three different suburban police departments and two different areas of the Minneapolis Police Department. ... The response is always different each and every time depending who you call," said Hanson, who sits on the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota Board of Directors.

Sponsored by Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls), HF449 would provide \$144,000 to fund grants to local police departments to conduct crisis intervention training.

Training would have to be at least 40 hours, including at least eight hours of scenario-based role-playing. Other topics would include an overview of mental illness and the mental health system; an overview of psychiatric conditions, their manifestations and treatment; and visits to psychiatric receiving facilities.

Approved Feb. 5 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee, the bill was sent to the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee. Its companion, SF318, sponsored by Sen. Leo Foley (DFL-Coon Rapids), awaits action by the Senate Public Safety Budget Division.

Steve Wickelgren, president of the Minnesota Crisis Intervention Team Officer's Association, said the program has been implemented by the Minneapolis Police Department, a "small handful" of metropolitan area agencies are

getting officers trained, and Rochester has "a fairly established program."

"We know there is not parity regarding mental health issues; in law enforcement there is a lot of disparity," he said. "This training really brings up the expectations for officers."

According to the association's Web site, classes cost \$500 per attendee in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and \$675 outside the metro area.

Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Good Thunder), the Lake Crystal Police Chief, said the monetary request is "a drop in the bucket for what you'd really need," and many small towns couldn't afford to let their officers go for a week. He also believes that 99 percent of the cops that handle these types of situations handle them correctly, "whether it's use of force or deadly force."

— M. COOK

Mental health 911 assistance

When someone calls 911, it is usually for police, fire or ambulance service.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) would add mental health crisis teams to the list of emergency 911 responders, where available.

"I think we're all aware of the need for quick responses when somebody is having an emergency because of their mental illness, and we need to have them referred to a mental health crisis team," Mullery said.

Approved Feb. 5 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee, HF448 was sent to the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee. It has no Senate companion.

Sue Hanson, who sits on the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota Board of Directors, said there is no one general number to call for someone experiencing a mental health crisis.

She pointed to a collaboration between Grand Rapids public safety personnel that has resulted in a crisis team and police dispatched for all behavioral health emergency calls.

"Mobile crisis teams can go to a person's home, assess the situation and provide services to stabilize the individual who is in crisis," she said. "There are urgent and crisis services at mental health centers and clinics, crisis homes provide a safe place where people can live for a few days while they receive supportive therapy, stabilization, monitoring and transitions to other services. These are very cost-effective ways of dealing with a mental health crisis."

The bill would also permit the county or other governmental agency operating an emergency 911 system to include mental health crisis training among its system enhancements.

Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) wondered what the costs would be to bring dispatchers "up to speed on this type of referral."

Mullery countered that the bill says the training may be offered, so if counties opt not to provide it for whatever reason they don't have to.

Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center), the committee chairwoman, said fiscal implications will be evaluated as the bill goes through the process.

— M. COOK

TAXES

Tax priority discussion continues

In two meetings, the House Taxes Committee has gotten through only two provisions in the governor's proposed budget because of lengthy discussions.

During the committee's Feb. 10 meeting, Revenue Commissioner Ward Einess explained the reinvestment tax credit that would encourage job growth and new investments in Minnesota businesses. The credit would be capped at \$50 million and there would be a one-time General Fund revenue reduction in fiscal year 2010.

"Tax cuts are spending," said Rep. Ann Lenczewski (DFL-Bloomington), committee chairwoman. "So we either need to raise revenue or cut something else. It's about choices. I don't know that this is the right package."

The governor's plan would provide incentives for businesses that invest in their businesses quickly, Einess said. Qualifying investments would include things like machinery, equipment and furniture.

Rep. Randy Demmer (R-Hayfield) said, "We need to keep in mind about whether we're investing, or think we're investing, or whether it's an expense for something that's a service that we think people need to have." He added that a grant could create jobs, where a credit might only save jobs.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) asked, "Where is there proof that cutting business tax leads to job creation?"

To which Rep. Kurt Zellers (R-Maple Grove) asked, "Where can you show that raising taxes actually produces jobs?" He used Broadway in New York City as an example of how increased taxes have hurt the theater district there.

"Tax increases aren't good for business," Lenczewski said. "I've done many of the things people on both sides have wanted for business."

Most people say they want a balanced approach, she said.

“It’s so important to have the debate,” Lenczewski said. “This is hard. We need bills that get signed in the end that balance the budget. We need to think it through a little bit.”

—S. HEGMAN

Airport back on the tax rolls

Reattaching the St. Paul airport to the city and school district tax bases could give the state more money to balance its budget.

Held over Feb. 11 by the House Property and Local Sales Tax Division for possible omnibus bill inclusion, HF393, sponsored by Rep. Sheldon Johnson (DFL-St. Paul), would require that taxable property at the St. Paul intermediate airport, known as Holman Field, be considered part of the city and school district tax base for taxes payable after 2010. This property was “detached” from the two tax bases in 1996.

Properties at Holman Field now pay only for county and special taxing district property taxes, which is also the case for the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. The difference is the international airport does not pay school or city property tax because it is federal property.

The state aid reduction for the city would be about \$60,000 for each fiscal year. The proposal would increase homestead property taxes, resulting in a small increase in property tax refunds paid by the state.

Wendy Underwood, St. Paul’s chief lobbyist, said the city currently doesn’t have a position on the bill. In lieu of taxes, the city receives a \$72,000 cash payment each year for fire and police coverage at Holman Field, she said. Property tax estimates for the airport would be just under \$100,000 to the city for 2009, but because levy limits have already been set, a change would affect the city’s current projected budget.

“Unless we have a clear position from the city, it’s hard for me to get in the middle of this when it should be a local issue,” said Rep. Morrie Lanning (R-Moorhead).

A companion, SF167, sponsored by Sen. Sandy Pappas (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

—S. HEGMAN

TRANSPORTATION

Corridor route by Capitol questioned

Plans for the Central Corridor light rail line between Minneapolis and St. Paul can’t be changed without wasting time and money the state doesn’t have.

“To change the route would be a major fundamental change that would delay the

project for a year or two,” Peter Bell, chairman of the Metropolitan Council, told the House Capital Investment Finance Division Feb. 5. Members asked if the line could be re-routed slightly near the Capitol because pedestrian access will be limited across University Avenue.

“I think others need to be brought into that conversation because it has a boomeranging effect on other potential designs down the road,” Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Grand Rapids) said.

Capitol restoration plans have not been completed and members worried that the rail line could affect those plans as well.

Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul), division chairwoman, said some representatives recently discovered that the line is scheduled to go just north of the Capitol down University Avenue, through a trench that will have to be dug. It can’t go too far down, she said, because there are tunnels there, but it’s enough that there won’t be pedestrian access across the street behind the Capitol. “That plus the fact that we won’t have Capitol restoration completed; it has, of course, made some people a little nervous about the timing of our work not being ready for light rail.”

Bell said a change to the route would mean a whole new batch of environmental analysis.

“We could make the most minor tweaks to the line at this point. Things that wouldn’t cause a new environmental impact study.”

Additionally the route gets a 50 percent match in federal funding, and the restrictions could cause other problems.

“Other states have bypassed the money and have said, ‘We’re building it ourselves,’ because of the severe restrictions that the federal dollars bring,” she said.

—S. HEGMAN

Keeping youngsters safe

Investing less than the cost of a tank of gas could better ensure a child has every opportunity afforded them.

For Brynn Duncan the legislation would come too late.

Restrained with only a seat belt, as required by state law, the 7-year-old was riding in her grandmother’s car when it was involved in a crash on Aug. 18, 2008. The impact snapped Brynn’s body in half, tearing her spinal cord at the waist, severing an intestine, bruising her heart and damaging a kidney. Doctors said she was fortunate to survive, but the Moorhead girl is paralyzed.

Current law says a child passenger restraint system is required for children under age 4, at which point they can be buckled in with



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Abbie Swanson, 6, properly sits in a car seat equipped with a booster seat, as Gail Weinholzer, director of public affairs for AAA Minnesota/Iowa, explains the proper positioning of the seat belt on a child. The House Transportation and Transit Policy and Oversight Division approved a bill Feb. 11 that would require usage of a child passenger restraint for certain youth.

a regular seatbelt. Minnesota is one of six states that does not have a supplemental child restraint law.

However, a bill sponsored by Rep. Melissa Hortman (DFL-Brooklyn Park) and Sen. Jim Carlson (DFL-Eagan) would require that youth be in a restraint system until their eighth birthday or they reach 4 feet 9 inches tall.

Approved Feb. 11 by the House Transportation and Transit Policy and Oversight Division, HF267 was sent to the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee. A companion bill, SF99, awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

Gail Weinholzer, director of public affairs for AAA Minnesota/Iowa, said an improperly fitted adult safety belt could cause the lap belt to ride up over the stomach and the shoulder belt to cut across the neck. If the shoulder strap is uncomfortable, children often place it behind their backs, further defeating the safety benefits of the system.

Supporters said a backless booster seat, which raises a child so the belt properly goes across the shoulders and hips, costs less than \$20.

It would be a petty misdemeanor to violate the law, with the driver fined up to \$50. However, the fine would be waived if the driver proves within 14 days that a system has been purchased for use by the operator.

— M. Cook

Clearwater County vets highway

More than 28 miles of northern Minnesota trunk highway could honor those that have protected America.

Sponsored by Rep. Brita Sailer (DFL-Park Rapids), HF121 was amended and approved Feb. 10 by the House Transportation Finance and Policy Division and sent to the House Finance Committee. A companion, SF451, sponsored by Sen. Rod Skoe (DFL-Clearbrook), awaits action by the Senate Transportation Committee.

"In 1999, Otter Tail County veterans designated a drive that ended in Becker County. In 2006-07, the Becker County veterans replicated and continued this road up to the top of Becker County, the bottom of Clearwater County," Sailer said. "In the spring of 2007, three veterans organizations in Clearwater County — the Bagley, Clearbrook and Gonvick American Legions — proposed to continue this highway in Clearwater County."

The proposed "Clearwater County Veterans Memorial Highway" would be about 1.5 miles of Trunk Highway 200 from County State-Aid Highway 39 to its junction with Trunk Highway 92 at Zerkul, and about 27 miles of Trunk Highway 92 from that intersection

north to County State-Aid Highway 5 in Clearbrook.

"The Bagley American Legion has the funds to pay for the signs," Sailer said.

An amendment successfully offered by Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston), would give the Department of Transportation permission to remove a memorial highway sign if it needs maintenance and a reasonable attempt has been made to obtain necessary funds from nonstate sources for repair or replacement.

"Sometimes it happens where in 20, 30 years the people that requested the sign are gone and no one else knows," he said.

— M. Cook

High-speed rail route funding

A potential route for a high-speed rail service between the Twin Cities to Chicago remains up for debate.

Supporters of one bill heard by the House Transportation Finance and Policy Division Feb. 10 want it to follow the corridor designated by the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission. However, a group from Rochester told the division not to forget about the state's third-largest city.

Both bills were held over for a possible referral to the House Capital Investment Finance Division.

Sponsored by Rep. Leon Lillie (DFL-North St. Paul), HF259 would authorize \$10 million in general obligation bonds for the state's share of an environmental analysis of a high-speed rail line between the Union Depot in St. Paul and the Windy City. As designated by the commission, the route would be through Hastings, Red Wing, Winona and La Crescent.

Michael Rogers, senior transportation planner for the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, said the planned line would provide six daily trains to Chicago, create 1,570 permanent jobs and have \$1.6 billion in user benefits.

Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul) successfully amended the bill to require the analysis include costs of a future extension from the Union Depot to downtown Minneapolis.

Rep. Tina Liebling (DFL-Rochester) doesn't want her community forgotten as a possible stop. She sponsors HF124, which would authorize \$500,000 in general obligation bonds, so the Department of Transportation can conduct a feasibility study of a high-speed rail line between the Twin Cities and Chicago through Rochester.

Among points made by supporters of her bill are that the Mayo Clinic brings 500,000 people

to the state annually, and contributes roughly \$4 billion to the state's economy each year; a recent study indicates the city has the highest per-capita concentration of high-tech businesses in the country; and that a 2007 survey of southeast Minnesota residents indicated that 91 percent believe it is important that a high-speed route include a Rochester stop.

The companion bills, SF101, sponsored by Sen. Katie Sieben (DFL-Newport), and SF156, sponsored by Sen. Ann Lynch (DFL-Rochester), were scheduled to be heard Feb. 12 by the Transit Subdivision of the Senate Transportation Budget and Policy Division.

— M. Cook

Honoring a longtime legislator

A longtime representative and former speaker could have his name attached to a northern Minnesota highway.

"This is a special bill honoring a special person," said Rep. Tom Anzelc (DFL-Balsam Township).

He sponsors HF110, which would designate Trunk Highway 53 from Virginia to International Falls as the "Speaker Irvin N. Anderson Memorial Highway."

Amended and approved Feb. 10 by the House Transportation Finance and Policy Division, the bill was sent to the House Finance Committee. A companion, SF335, sponsored by Sen. Tom Saxhaug (DFL-Grand Rapids), was passed 63-0 by the Senate Feb. 12.

"Speaker Anderson passed away in November," Anzelc said. "In one of those interesting conversations that I'll never forget, his spouse, Phyllis, asked about the possibility of doing this."

"My first thought was, 'Well, Phyllis, the Legislature really frowns on doing these kind of things, but because it's Irv, and because of his service to the entire state of Minnesota and his commitment to a multimodal transportation system I'll do my best.'"

First elected in 1964, Anderson spent 34 non-consecutive years in the Legislature, serving from 1964-82 and 1990 until retiring in 2006. He was House speaker from 1993-96.

Nonstate funds must be used for the design and maintenance of the memorial signs.

Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston), the division chairman, successfully amended the bill to give the Department of Transportation permission to remove a memorial highway sign if it needs maintenance and a reasonable attempt has been made to obtain necessary funds from nonstate sources for repair or replacement.

— M. Cook

Connecting the state

Study highlights Minnesota's technology needs

By Kris Berggren

Minnesota's invisible resource — its bandwidth — could drive economic growth as the state's information technology infrastructure expands.

A broadband mapping survey commissioned in last year's omnibus energy law is underway, assessing statewide telecommunications provider capacity, connectivity access and connection speed. Final results are due in June, but preliminary findings show that 92 percent of Minnesotans now have potential residential access to at least one broadband platform. However, 8 percent, or 418,000 Minnesotans, don't, Brent Legg, vice president of state and local initiatives with Connected Nation, the nonprofit organization conducting the survey, told the House Telecommunications Regulation and Infrastructure Division Feb. 6.

Rep. Brita Sailer (DFL-Park Rapids) said that many constituents have expressed concerns about spotty or nonexistent Internet access that poses an obstacle to such business activities as making resort reservations, telecommuting or doing online research.

One constituent told Sailer that because of poor connectivity she had to drive 25 miles to town to file quarterly business tax forms until she signed up for satellite service. Although this solved the problem, it cost \$600 a year. Another was given permission to telecommute several days a week when gas prices reached record levels last year, "but she couldn't do it because she doesn't have high-speed service," Sailer explained. Federal Express is no longer fast enough for a Hubbard County photographer to get portfolio samples to clients, and he's losing business without the technology to send high-quality online images.

"When we're looking at an even playing field, it's sometimes about making sure economic development can happen even in areas where distance is a real impediment," Sailer said. "Broadband makes such a difference now

because it's just how so much of the world operates."

The Web-based survey compiles information from the approximately 150 telecommunications providers in Minnesota, and connectivity speed tests aggregated by a Connected National subcontractor from information entered by users at the Connect Minnesota Web site, www.connectmn.org.

Project results could position Minnesota to receive economic development funds from the anticipated federal economic stimulus funds and last year's federal Broadband Data Improvement Act, which is intended to boost broadband availability and connection quality in underserved areas. The act also provides for up to 80 percent of implementation costs to local municipalities or service providers building out access.

Ahead of the curve

Some cities have tried to get ahead of the curve by creating municipal broadband companies.

Rep. Michael Beard (R-Shakopee) recalled that a few years ago, Windom borrowed money, sought grants and passed a levy referendum to build out capacity using then state-of-the-art fiber optic lines to every home in the city — but the city suffered when residents didn't turn into customers.

"The city is saddled with millions in debt," Beard said, pointing to other cities, such as

Winona, that have run a successful broadband operation.


Beard said the mapping survey, useful as a "snapshot" of current broadband capacity, might guide entrepreneurs who want to get into the market of building out underserved areas, but he's cautious about committing public funds. "I would ask any (municipality) that's considering it to tread carefully. You are dealing with technology that's not going to be in the ground for 50 years. It's in the air."

Besides, he thinks the real growth area will be "G4" or next generation wireless technologies that can operate on bandwidth formerly used by analog television broadcasters. He said such telecommunications giants as Sprint and Nextel have paid \$16.4 million for wireless channels that will become available for development after the digital conversion is completed by June 12.

"While we're making plans to sell bonds and take bids on pulling fiber optic to the remote corners of the state like the Boundary Waters, once we get this conversion done and people are going to start deploying G4, wherever people get a TV signal you're going to get broadband service," Beard said.

Such new technologies as WiMax, short for Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access, could serve entire communities up to a 6-mile range in a sort of expanded version of Wi-Fi networks that allow Internet access in coffee shops or homes for a 100-yard range. WiMax networks could eventually combine for a panoply of voice, Internet and video services.

But Sailer isn't convinced the buildup of the old analog bandwidth will deliver the band-aid unconnected Minnesotans really need.

"I'm hearing when the digital conversion goes and this bandwidth is purchased everything will be wonderful," she said. "I have a little reservation. How many times a manufacturer, or a whole industry, has said something would happen and it didn't? I want to make sure it does occur and does in a way that is statewide." 

'When we're looking at an even playing field, it's sometimes about making sure economic development can happen even in areas where distance is a real impediment.'

— Rep. Brita Sailer

No ID required

House committee defeats proposal to require photo ID for voters

By Nick Busse

Rep. Tom Emmer (R-Delano) didn't waste time getting into the specifics of his voter ID bill for members of the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee on Feb. 12. Instead, he made a very simple pitch: it's about integrity.

Emmer argued that HF57, which would require all Minnesota voters to present a valid photo ID at their polling place on Election Day, would not only prevent voter fraud, but assure voters that the true outcome of any election is beyond doubt.

"If we're truly proud of our elections ... it's imperative that we do something as simple as require a voter ID," Emmer said.

Opponents of the bill, like Hamline University law professor David Schultz, disagreed. They argued that a photo ID requirement would make it more difficult for people to vote and thereby suppress turnout on Election Day. Moreover, Schultz and others said the problem that the bill seeks to prevent — voter fraud — is statistically insignificant to the point of being nonexistent.

They were familiar arguments on what has become an almost perennial issue. And the end result was also familiar: the bill was defeated on an 11-8 vote by committee members. With the exception of Rep. Phil Sterner (DFL-Rosemount), all DFLers voted against the bill and all Republicans for it.

It must have seemed like déjà vu to Emmer, who said he's baffled why voter ID has become such a partisan issue.

"We all want to maintain the integrity of our elections and make sure that people have the confidence in the legitimacy of the outcome — that if their candidate doesn't win, they know it was a fair and honest election," Emmer said.

Under the provisions of his bill, voters who don't already have a valid ID, such as a driver's license, would be able to obtain a special voter

ID card free of charge from their local county election officials. Additionally voters who are unable to present a valid photo ID at their polling place on Election Day could cast a provisional ballot that would later be counted if the voter could prove their identity.

Though the provisions are intended to assuage concerns about making it harder for people to vote, opponents argue Emmer's bill will do exactly that.

Keesha Gaskins, executive director of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota, said the bill adds another layer of complication to the voting process — one that will place an added burden on senior citizens, disabled persons and other demographics that already find voting a difficult endeavor.

"The problems we have seen in Minnesota's current election system are frequently a result of unnecessarily complicated systems that allow multiple opportunities for error. This bill adds another layer of responsibility and complication," Gaskins said.

Research on this subject has yielded mixed results. A study by Rutgers University and another by the California and Massachusetts institutes of technology indicated that voter ID laws do indeed discourage people from voting, especially among lower-income and lower-education demographics.

A University of Missouri study on a voter ID law in Indiana, however, found "no consistent or statistically significant evidence" that the law had a negative impact on voter turnout. In fact, it found that voter turnout had actually increased in Democratic-leaning areas following its enactment — though Schultz



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

As Rep. Tom Emmer, left, the bill's sponsor watches, Hamline University Law Professor David Schultz, right, testifies before the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee Feb. 12 against a bill that would require voters to provide picture identification before receiving a ballot.

and others have accused the report of using a flawed methodology.

There are other, more practical objections to the bill. Gaskins said providing counties with the staff and equipment to produce voter ID cards would have an unknown and potentially huge cost to the state. Meanwhile, Secretary of State Mark Ritchie said that other states' experiences with the provisional balloting

Voter ID continued on page 23

Is there a page in the House?

They 'do what needs to be done'

By KRIS BERGGREN

Arguably, the 24 House pages are the elbow grease that keeps the wheel of House business moving. Unexpected amendments to copy ASAP? Unscheduled testifiers to shepherd through a hearing? Temperamental overhead projector needs a calm hand? Need a bill jacket delivered pronto to a senator? Paperwork shuttled quickly to the chief clerk's office?

"I think I call the pages every single day at least three times," said Erin Huppert, legislative assistant to the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee and to Reps. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center) and Kim Norton (DFL-Rochester). Pages may help compile information, and are "invaluable" in committee, Huppert said, handling all manner of unexpected tasks.

In Garrison Keillor's words, pages simply "do what needs to be done."

Political passion wanted

A page's job "can be a little monotonous, but if you're enjoying being here, it's not like work," said First Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Eric Bergstrom, the page's supervisor. Not surprisingly, one quality he sought as he sifted through 150 applications for the 24 spots was an interest in politics.

Typical of those making the cut is Tricia Van Eschen, 22, a Hamline University graduate with a political science degree and job experience

with ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now). Two trips to New Orleans where she befriended locals still trying to rebuild their city three years after Hurricane Katrina really fueled her fire to create wider access to the political system.

She is happy to be learning the inside game by serving the House committees: Commerce and Labor, Civil Justice, Public Safety Policy and Oversight and the House Labor and Consumer Protection Division. The job is "like no other" way to experience the "hands-on, nitty-gritty working of the political system," said Van Eschen.

Tongues in check

Most pages have partisan tendencies but appreciate the nonpartisan nature of their job.

Luke Leadbetter, 22, a University of Minnesota political science major, has sampled political jobs, including an internship with Sen. David Hann (R-Eden Prairie), and most recently, staffing the Ramsey County Elections office, where he was one of three employees that helped oversee the recount of 280,000 ballots. He saw his share of partisan sniping in the ensuing frenzy.

"I'm a big fan of nonpartisan jobs," Leadbetter said. "I prefer to try to see an issue from both sides before I tackle it from one."

Conversely, Liz Young, 25, admits she enjoys the "echo chamber" of a campaign office where she can speak her mind, but she is learning a lot from simply absorbing what goes on in committee hearings and getting to know legislative staff members.

Possibly the most fashion-forward page, Young wears her scarves knotted the French way and heels that don't prevent her from wheeling carts laden with folders through the tunnels of the Capitol Complex. As a Syracuse University French and political science major, she spent one year in France, then two years teaching in Japan, her mother's birthplace. But the Minnesota senate race drew her home to volunteer for the Al Franken campaign.



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Among this session's two dozen pages are, from left, Luke Leadbetter, Tricia Van Eschen, Vitali Gueron and Elizabeth Young. Each comes to the House with a varied background.

Pages continued on page 23

Former teacher returns

Dauids is happy to be back after hiatus

By **SUSAN HEGARTY**

When is a freshman legislator not really a freshman?

Ask Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston), who was elected to his ninth term in 2008 after a two-year hiatus. He lost the previous election by less than 60 votes, but prior to that, he served eight consecutive terms.



Rep. Greg Davids

“It’s kind of like riding a bike. You get knocked off the bike; you get back on the bike and start to peddle again. Little did I know that I’d be peddling into a \$7 billion budget shortfall,” said Davids.

Even as a true freshman in 1991, he missed orientation because he was seated in February after a special election. With eight years each as a majority and minority legislator, he’s still

acclimating to the changes in today’s House.

“I haven’t served with over 50 of the members,” he said.

One thing that hasn’t changed is his reason for returning to public service. As a retirement financial planner, he’s accustomed to helping people plan for their futures. The same is true in public office.

“Being the elected official, you can do so much more to help people. For me, that’s what it’s all about,” he said.

Of the six committees/divisions he is assigned to, serving as the Republican lead for the House Cultural and Outdoor Resources Finance Division has gained him the most popularity. He’ll be deciding how to spend millions in dedicated tax receipts for the outdoor heritage funds. Oddly, he worked diligently against the constitutional amendment that authorized the tax increase, but now that it’s passed, he said he’ll do

DISTRICT 31B
Population: (2007 est.) 36,538 Largest City: La Crescent Counties: Fillmore, Houston Top Concern: Equity in school district funding

his best to get voters the best bang for their money.

Though he isn’t a member of any education committees, the former teacher said equality between rural and metropolitan area schools is his biggest concern. He’s also sensitive to cuts in education. In 1982, “I became a budget cut of a downturn in the economy because of budget deficits, so when someone says, ‘We’re concerned about our jobs,’ I understand it,” said Davids.

He and his wife, Bonnie, have been married for 30 years and have three daughters, one of whom is also a teacher.

From NYC to Minnesota

Business brought Doepke to state, led to public service

By **SONJA HEGMAN**

Rep. Connie Doepke loves being a legislator.

“I’m thrilled and honored to be here,” she said.



Rep. Connie Doepke

The first-term Republican from Orono said she knocked on 7,500 doors in her district after being endorsed in June to replace former Rep. John Berns (R-Wayzata).

Among her committee assignments are seats on the K-12 education finance and policy committees, an ideal fit for someone who has experienced the results of state action in the area.

Before running for legislator, Doepke spent nine years on the Wayzata School Board,

— eight years on the board and one year as a consultant. She had thought about being a legislator because she’d already spent several years in public service and enjoyed it.

“I found that I fell in love with public service,” she said. Prior to being on the school board, Doepke spent 20 years working as an executive in the corporate sector.

“Being a working mother is one of the hardest things in the world to do. Being a mother in general is hard,” she said. A time came when she needed to be at home more with her children, that’s when she devoted her skills to the school district.

Originally from Michigan, a business opportunity with Sears, Roebuck and Co. led Doepke to New York City after college. She worked for several businesses during her 20 years in New York — Avon Products being one — as an executive and an officer. She

DISTRICT 33B
Population: (2007 est.) 37,450 Largest City: Orono County: Hennepin Top concerns: Small business, education, environment

then worked for a small company called New Hampton Inc., before Fingerhut “discovered” her and wooed her to Minnesota in 1993. She worked as Fingerhut’s vice president of apparel until 2000.

She hoped to serve on an environment committee this year, but that did not happen. Nonetheless, she still plans to help in the environment area because it is important to her district, which includes part of Lake Minnetonka.

Doepke’s father was an environmental scientist for the state of Michigan. “I understand the need to protect our environment for future generations.”

Monday, February 9

HF584-Paymar (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

New billboard statewide moratorium established, and existing billboards declared as nonconforming.

HF585-Drazkowski (R)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

English designated as official state language.

HF586-Drazkowski (R)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Government employee salary and wage rate freeze instituted.

HF587-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Sexual violence prevention demonstration grant funding provided.

HF588-Falk (DFL)
Finance

Dawson-Boyd; ISDN 378; geothermal heating system funding provided.

HF589-Lesch (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Driver's license reinstatement diversion pilot program created for individuals charged with driving without a valid license.

HF590-Brynaert (DFL)
Taxes

Mankato; sales and use tax modified.

HF591-Hansen (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight

Reinvest in Minnesota Resources law modified.

HF592-Thissen (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Teacher retirement provisions amended, contribution rates and state aid adjusted, and terms redefined.

HF593-Drazkowski (R)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Firearm permit to purchase from federally licensed dealer renewal time period extended.

HF594-Liebling (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Human services commissioner required to establish and administer a universal prescription drug program and prescription drug bulk purchasing program, dedicated fund established and money appropriated.

HF595-Paymar (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Billboard erection prohibited near roads and highways, and maintenance of advertising devices restricted.

HF596-Paymar (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Billboard nonconforming use provisions modified.

HF597-Slawik (DFL)
Finance

Early childhood learning and child protection facility construction and rehabilitation funding provided.

HF598-Eken (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs

Nursery law provisions changed.

HF599-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Human services commissioner required to modify the reimbursement methodology for federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics and implement related initiatives.

HF600-Kalin (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Controlled substance offense minimum fine disbursement authorized to juvenile substance abuse court programs.

HF601-Slawik (DFL)
Finance

Pre-kindergarten exploratory projects continued; family, friend and neighbor grants continued; and school readiness service agreements continued.

HF602-Beard (R)
Energy Finance & Policy Division

Audio electronic recordings provided, and cold weather rule technical corrections made.

HF603-Beard (R)
Energy Finance & Policy Division

Public Utilities Commission proceeding provisions modified.

HF604-Beard (R)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Public employee definition modified.

HF605-Hortman (DFL)
Finance

Transportation Department management, priorities, research and planning provisions modified.

HF606-Hortman (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight

Fluorescent or high-intensity discharge lamp manufacturers required to organize collection and recycling programs for household generators, registration required, efficient lighting program modified and money appropriated.

HF607-Clark (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight

Polybrominated diphenylether manufacture and sale restricted, and multi-state clearinghouse participation authorized.

HF608-Kahn (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs

Industrial hemp industry development and regulation provided, possession and cultivation of industrial hemp defense provided and marijuana definition modified.

HF609-Newton (DFL)
Finance

Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal license plate established.

HF610-Peterson (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

Schools required to use environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products, and guidelines and task force created.

HF611-Kahn (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs

Disabled veteran-owned businesses designated as targeted group for purposes of awarding state and metropolitan agency contracts.

HF612-Lesch (DFL)
Commerce & Labor

Sick leave minimum standards established.

HF613-Buesgens (R)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

School districts enabled to focus on delivering academic services, and non-curricular athletic and fine arts activity responsibility transferred from school districts to local governments.

HF614-Buesgens (R)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

No Child Left Behind Act implementation prevented.

HF615-Rukavina (DFL)
Finance

Aurora; water treatment facility renovation funding provided.

HF616-Davnie (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Reproductive privacy right established.

HF617-Garfalo (R)
Taxes

Political contribution refund repealed.

HF618-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Senior nutrition appropriation and client contribution use clarified.

HF619-Hornstein (DFL)
Finance

Public Safety Department authorized to collect fuel decal fee for International Fuel Tax Agreement, and cost of decal rule removed.

HF620-Hornstein (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Metropolitan Council annual audit by private certified public accountants authorized.

HF621-Anzelc (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight

Northern pike spearing slot limits eliminated.

HF622-Welti (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Local law enforcement agency grant established to develop or expand lifesaver programs that locate lost or wandering persons who are mentally impaired, task force authorized and money appropriated.

HF623-Slocum (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

Charter school provisions modified and charter school advisory council revived.

HF624-Downey (R)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

Safe School Zone Law enacted, and clarifying and technical changes made.

HF625-Gardner (DFL)
Finance

Public access to data allowed by state accounting and procurement systems.

HF626-Bly (DFL)
Commerce & Labor

MFIP assistance extended, unemployment compensation modified, foreclosure provisions augmented, jobs creation program established, layoffs limited and money appropriated.

HF627-Juhnke (DFL)
Finance

Veteran homes required to use Medicare Part D for pharmacy costs for eligible veterans.

HF628-Rukavina (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

State lottery director authorized to establish video lottery terminals; powers and duties provided to the director; video lottery revenues provided; gambling taxes modified; and clarifying, conforming and technical changes made.

HF629-Juhnke (DFL)**Finance**

Veteran home federal certification application required.

HF630-Juhnke (DFL)**State & Local Government****Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Animal cruelty prevention assistance restriction eliminated.

HF631-Kahn (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

State lottery authorized to offer games involving sports wagering and sports wagering pools, sports bookmaking authorized under licenses issued by the director of the state lottery, licensed sports bookmaking tax imposed and a Minnesota active recreation fund created.

HF632-Jackson (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Uniform Adult Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Jurisdiction Act enacted.

HF633-Buesgens (R)**Commerce & Labor**

State lottery director authorized to establish gaming machines and enter into a contract for the management and placement of the machines, powers and duties provided to the director, and gaming machine revenue provided.

HF634-Jackson (DFL)**Taxes**

Minnesota agricultural property tax law modified, new property tax classification established for preservation and legacy land, and property valuation modified.

HF635-Hosch (DFL)**Taxes**

Green Acres program 2008 changes delayed by one year.

HF636-Draskowski (R)**Rules & Legislative Administration**

Per diem payments limited.

HF637-Hortman (DFL)**Finance**

Bottineau Transitway Corridor environmental review funding provided.

HF638-Scalze (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Outdoor recreation system land sales prohibited.

HF639-Fritz (DFL)**Taxes**

Medford; local sales and use tax authorization imposed.

HF640-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

White; municipal water and wastewater treatment facility funding provided.

HF641-Peterson (DFL)**Finance**

Office of Early Learning created.

HF642-Kelly (R)**Taxes**

Solid waste management tax exemption provided for service charges imposed by certain cities.

HF643-Champion (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Medical assistance required to cover doula services.

HF644-Champion (DFL)**State & Local Government****Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Home rule charter or statutory city authorized to adopt a program requiring certain hiring practices in city contracts.

HF645-Mariani (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

High school students required to have education and career plans, college readiness assessments allowed and post-secondary credits provided.

HF646-Seifert (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

MFIP electronic benefit transfers modified, and commissioner directed to apply for demonstration project to give bonus for buying Minnesota-grown foods.

HF647-Mullery (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Sex trafficking provisions clarified by providing definitions of sexual trafficking and sexual trafficking victim.

HF648-Mariani (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillator instruction guidelines established.

HF649-Abeler (R)**Taxes**

K-12 education subtraction and credit modified to apply to fees charged for extracurricular activities.

HF650-Abeler (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

MinnesotaCare CMF program established, and coverages provided through medical benefit accounts and high-deductible health plans.

HF651-Abeler (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Health and human services finance board established, and board designated to receive General Fund appropriations.

HF652-Kelly (R)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Bait and feed definition modified.

HF653-Kahn (DFL)**State & Local Government****Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Election provided of certain council members elected by ward after reapportionment.

HF654-Kahn (DFL)**State & Local Government****Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Fusion candidacies permitted.

HF655-Kahn (DFL)**State & Local Government****Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Candidacy affidavit required to state candidate's residence address and telephone number, and candidate placement on ballot prohibited if residency requirements are not met.

HF656-Kahn (DFL)**State & Local Government****Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Voting age changed from 18 to 16 in state and local elections.

HF657-Thissen (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

24-hour customized living services modified.

HF658-Hackbarth (R)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Natural resource fund account provided citizen oversight.

HF659-Hackbarth (R)**Commerce & Labor**

Farm winery provisions modified.

HF660-Morrow (DFL)**Finance**

Railroad track rehabilitation funding provided.

HF661-Torkelson (R)**Finance**

Floodplain management money appropriated.

HF662-Lanning (R)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Positive child and youth development grant program established, funding provided and money appropriated.

HF663-Gardner (DFL)**Taxes**

Truth in taxation process notice and hearing dates advanced.

HF664-Welti (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Mental health model curriculum created.

HF665-Swails (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Hospital construction moratorium exception provided.

HF666-Norton (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Nursing home and home care regulations modified.

HF667-Lieder (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Red Lake County; tax-forfeited land conveyance authorized for land that borders public water.

HF668-Morrow (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Post-crash procedures provided for school buses in accidents.

HF669-Bly (DFL)**Finance**

Minnesota campus compact and service learning grants funding provided.

HF670-Newton (DFL)**Finance**

Compensatory revenue pilot project continued for certain school districts, and money appropriated.

HF671-Dettmer (R)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Residency requirements eliminated for veterans obtaining complimentary state park passes.

HF672-Dettmer (R)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

Freeway shoulder use authorized by transit and Metro Mobility buses.

HF673-Dettmer (R)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Statewide academic standards for physical education required.

HF674-Brown (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

State lottery director authorized to establish video lottery terminals; revenue dedicated for education funding; powers and duties provided to director; gambling taxes modified; and clarifying, conforming and technical changes provided.

HF675-Hilstrom (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Insurance underwriting use of credit scores and other information regulated.

HF676-Laine (DFL)**Taxes**

Columbia Heights; tax increment financing duration extended to 10 years.

HF677-Thao (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Body art procedures and establishments regulated.

HF678-Peterson (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

Vehicle lighting display requirements expanded.

HF679-Peterson (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

School required to notify a parent when a student intimidates or bullies another student.

HF680-Kalin (DFL)
Finance

Federal stimulus funding allocated for energy programs.

Thursday, February 12

HF681-Hayden (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

HIV transmission public education program established.

HF682-Magnus (R)
Finance

Rock County; Nobles County; state rail line loan forgiven.

HF683-Rukavina (DFL)
Finance

Mountain Iron; municipal wastewater treatment facility funding provided.

HF684-Brod (R)
Taxes

City aid base increased.

HF685-Nornes (R)
Finance

Operation Happy Note grant provided.

HF686-Lenczewski (DFL)
Taxes

Cities and towns authorized to issue certificates for unexpected revenue shortfalls.

HF687-Mahoney (DFL)
Finance

Saint Paul; Lake Phalen waterfall funding provided.

HF688-Rukavina (DFL)
Commerce & Labor

University of Minnesota; on-sale liquor sale requirements modified.

HF689-Knuth (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division

Strategic tree planting included as eligible for direct expenditures as energy conservation improvement.

HF690-Hortman (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

Minnesota Clean Air Act enacted, new motor vehicle decreased emission required, low emission standard adoption required for motor vehicles and necessary updates provided to comply with the federal Clean Air Act.

HF691-Rukavina (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Vacation donation program modified.

HF692-Kahn (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Appropriation continuation provided until eliminated or modified.

HF693-Ward (DFL)
Taxes

School district referendum market value tax base altered and seasonal recreational property taxation modified.

HF694-Marquart (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Health care directive registry established.

HF695-Hilstrom (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Marriage terms, procedures and forms clarified, modified and specified.

HF696-Dill (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight

Certain private sales provided to resolve trespass issues, area added to and deleted from state parks, public and private sales of surplus state land authorized, and previous sales authorization and land description modified.

HF697-Smith (R)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Law enforcement officers required to record the country of citizenship and immigration status of felon arrestees, and peace officers required to report suspected immigration violations by felon arrestees.

HF698-Smith (R)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Child unattended in a motor vehicle penalty provided.

HF699-Demmer (R)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

Teacher contract negotiation prohibited during the school year, and failure to settle teacher contract by Jan. 15 penalty repealed.

HF700-Demmer (R)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

JOBZ businesses allowed specific service signs.

HF701-Hilstrom (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Minnesota Institute for Public Policy established to assist legislators and other policymakers in creating public policy.

HF702-Hilstrom (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Summary data collection and reporting required relating to decisions that affect a child's status within the juvenile justice system.

HF703-Hosch (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Long-term care provider rate adjustments provided, phase-in of rebased facility rates modified, funding provided for nursing facility moratorium exceptions and project extension approval, and human services commissioner required to develop recommendations on specialized care.

HF704-Knuth (DFL)
Civil Justice

Life insurance regulated, and stranger-originated life insurance prohibited.

HF705-Loeffler (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Preventive health care promoted by requiring high deductible health plans used with a health savings account to cover preventive care with no deductible as permitted by federal law.

HF706-Thissen (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Retroactive payments authorized, additional elderly waiver services authorized and medical assistance eligibility determination time frames established.

HF707-Hortman (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Absentee ballot rejection notice required to voter.

HF708-Falk (DFL)
Finance

Clean energy resource teams funding provided.

HF709-Nelson (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight

Duck decoy use requirements modified.

HF710-Faust (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs

Food Safety and Defense Task Force duties changed, Minnesota Organic Advisory Task Force membership and procedures changed, and language requiring two annual reports eliminated.

HF711-Faust (DFL)
Finance

Ogilvie; ISD 333 authorized to conduct an operating referendum more than once per year.

HF712-Thao (DFL)
Finance

Saint Paul; Asian Pacific Cultural Center funding provided.

HF713-Howes (R)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Fireworks limited personal use authorized, affidavit of safety guidelines required and criminal penalties provided.

HF714-Thao (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Collaborative services established for high-risk children.

HF715-Newton (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs

Disabled veteran-owned businesses designated as targeted group businesses for purposes of awarding certain state and metropolitan agency contracts.

HF716-Rukavina (DFL)
Taxes

Tax provided on interest rates over 15 percent.

HF717-Haws (DFL)
Finance

St. Cloud Civic Center expansion funding provided.

HF718-Nornes (R)
Finance

Interstate 94 designated as POW/MIA Memorial Highway, and POW/MIA flag and interpretive sign required at each official safety rest area.

HF719-Laine (DFL)
Finance

St. Anthony-New Brighton; ISD 282 fund transfer authorized.

HF720-Hilstrom (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Uniform Child Witness Testimony by Alternative Methods Act adopted.

HF721-Hornstein (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Metropolitan Council restructured as a council of governments.

HF722-Thissen (DFL)
Taxes

Tax preparation services law modified.

HF723-Murphy, M. (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Medical or psychological examination filing deadline extended, written applications required and disability benefit provision amended.

HF724-Kahn (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services
Policy & Oversight
Hospital-acquired infections required to be reported as adverse health care events.

HF725-Kahn (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
County consolidation and internal boundary rationalization feasibility study required.

HF726-Murphy, M. (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Retirement terms defined, disability benefit provisions amended and technical changes made.

HF727-Murphy, M. (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Correctional employee disability benefit provisions amended, terms defined and age limits amended.

HF728-Mullery (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Animal fighting device or substance possession prohibited.

HF729-Poppe (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Town election requirements changed.

HF730-Thao (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services
Policy & Oversight
Health plans required to cover formula-based wound care required.

HF731-Mullery (DFL)
Civil Justice
Civil liability modified for labor and sex trafficking crimes.

HF732-Dill (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Brimson Firefighters Relief Association alternate composition permitted for the relief association board of trustees.

HF733-Dill (DFL)
Finance
School district swimming pool levy criteria eligibility modified.

HF734-Sterner (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services
Policy & Oversight
Corporate adult foster care and corporate child foster care disqualification bars extended.

HF735-Sterner (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services
Policy & Oversight
Licensure law changed to include professional counselors as licensed mental health professionals.

HF736-Pelowski (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
State agency names changed.

HF737-Rukavina (DFL)
Higher Education & Workforce
Development Finance & Policy Division
Rehabilitation counselors for the blind certification provided.

HF738-Pelowski (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
General aid payments amended in districts with high online learning enrollment.

HF739-Solberg (DFL)
Taxes
Exemption provided for pollution control equipment.

HF740-Mariani (DFL)
Finance
Statewide science, technology, engineering and math initiative funding provided.

HF741-Kahn (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Minneapolis Firefighters Relief Association and Police Relief Association Employees permitted to be members of the Public Employee Retirement Association.

HF742-Hilstrom (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Instant runoff voting in federal, state and local elections provided.

HF743-Lillie (DFL)
Finance
Ramsey County; funding provided for restoration of channel connecting Round Lake to Lake Phalen.

HF744-Mullery (DFL)
Finance
Transitional employment training project funding provided.

HF745-Kohls (R)
Taxes
Charitable contribution subtractions increased.

HF746-Kohls (R)
Taxes
Research credit allowed against the individual income tax.

HF747-Kohls (R)
Taxes
Income and corporate franchise tax conformed to the federal treatment of section 179 allowances.

HF748-Gunther (R)
Higher Education & Workforce
Development Finance & Policy Division
Baccalaureate degree policy requirement removed, and Board of Trustees allowed to determine credit requirements.

HF749-Howes (R)
Finance
Akeley; culvert reconstruction or replacement funding provided for Trunk Highway 64 in Eleventh Crow Wing Lake.

HF750-Sertich (DFL)
Finance
Floodwood; business park development grant provided.

HF751-Benson (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
School districts authorized to create site-governed schools.

HF752-Hornstein (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services
Policy & Oversight
Adult mental health fatality review team established, criminal penalties for records disclosure provided and money appropriated.

HF753-Sterner (DFL)
Finance
Minnesota Zoo improvements funding provided.

HF754-Winkler (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Election complaint assessments and payment costs modified.

HF755-Simon (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Felony theft added to racketeering statute and identity theft added to the enhanced penalty for theft.

HF756-Hortman (DFL)
Finance
Coon Rapids; bicycle and pedestrian trail funding provided.

HF757-Murphy, M. (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Retirement and disability requirements for Department of Transportation pilots modified.

HF758-Persell (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Big Rice Lake; wild rice management cooperative established.

HF759-Bigham (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Lobbying by former legislators, constitutional officers and agency heads prohibited for two years after leaving office.

HF760-Ward (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services
Policy & Oversight
Minnesota Faith in Action permanent funding allocated.

HF761-Kalin (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Retirement plan cost study for post-sentencing officers conducted.

HF762-Eken (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Grasslands definitions repealed.

HF763-Reinert (DFL)
Taxes
Northern Lights Express Rail construction activities sales tax exemption provided.

HF764-Hosch (DFL)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Notice and public hearing before adoption of interim ordinance required.

HF765-Loeffler (DFL)
Finance
Minneapolis; Northtown Rail Yard Bridge construction funded.

HF766-Shimanski (R)
Taxes
Special service taxation districts establishment deadline repealed.

HF767-Downey (R)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
Labor Day school start provision repealed.

HF768-Mariani (DFL)
Finance
Child care assistance program modified.

HF769-Liebling (DFL)
Finance
Olmsted County; nursing facilities reimbursement rates increased.

HF770-Shimanski (R)
State & Local Government
Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Term limits for state legislators and constitutional officers established.

HF771-Mullery (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services
Policy & Oversight
Cohabiting couple estate recovery regulated.

HF772-Atkins (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Medical examination frequency limited for physicians of motor vehicle insurers.

HF773-Atkins (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Health carrier definition clarified.

HF774-Knuth (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Greenhouse gas emission registry provided.

HF775-Beard (R)**Finance**

Vehicle service fees credited to the vehicle services operating account.

HF776-Lesch (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Uniform Foreign-Country Money Judgments Recognition Act enacted and recommended for passage by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws.

HF777-Shimanski (R)**Finance**

Departments defined for the pupil transportation equal treatment statute.

HF778-Faust (DFL)**Finance**

School district with a negative fund balance authorized to hold a referendum election at a time other than November.

HF779-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

Contracted school food service vendor requirement to make deficit payments eliminated.

HF780-Dittrich (DFL)**Finance**

Management cost payment prohibited from permanent school trust fund land proceeds.

HF781-Kalin (DFL)**Taxes**

Voluntary firefighter pension subtraction created.

HF782-Sterner (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Shaken baby syndrome training requirements changed in licensed child care and child foster care programs.


Voter ID continued from page 16

provided for in Emmer's bill "is a nightmare that results in only one-third of those votes being counted."

Nevertheless, Emmer said requiring voter ID is a popular idea whose time has come. He points to a U.S. Supreme Court decision last year that found Indiana's photo ID law to be constitutional as evidence that many of the objections to his bill are invalid. As to the cost concern, he said it would be money well-spent.

"How much is too much to ensure the integrity of our electoral process?" he asked.

He may, however, have to ask the question again next year.

A companion to Emmer's bill, SF146, sponsored by Sen. Amy Koch (R-Buffalo), awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee. 

Pages continued from page 17

"I'd kind of seen it as Paul Wellstone's seat," Young said. "Not ever in a partisan way but as someone who stood up for people without a voice." She believes the drive "to take care of each other" is the hallmark of Minnesota politics.

Vitali Gueron, 25, has also canvassed for a congressional campaign and witnessed political tension on an international scale as an intern with the Israel Project, a Jerusalem-based nonprofit. But the self-described "political junkie" has learned as a page that even partisan aficionados can keep their tongues in check when necessary.

"People are surprisingly very civil," observed Gueron. A political science and Hebrew studies major at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Gueron was born and lived in Bulgaria until he was 8, then moved to St. Paul with his family. He recently spent two years working at the United Jewish Fund and Council of St. Paul.

Page assignments may reflect their personal interests.


For example, Gueron lives in a LEED-certified building two blocks from a light rail station, so he was a happy to be assigned to

the House Transportation Finance and Policy, and Cultural and Outdoor Resources Finance divisions. He teams up with Leadbetter, who also supports renewable energy technology and public transportation, to serve the House Transportation and Transit Policy and Oversight Division.

These pages have their eyes on the next step on their political journey — Gueron mentions working on the governor's race in 2010; Leadbetter, who speaks French, has applied for a job with the Canadian consulate or might join the Peace Corps; Young would like to lobby for women's rights or work on a national campaign.

Van Eschen wants to return to New Orleans, possibly with AmeriCorps, and eventually pursue public policy graduate studies at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. Meanwhile, she might be the only person who wouldn't mind if the Legislature went into a special session, so she could keep working and start saving money toward those goals.

But it's more than a paycheck.

"My parents asked me if I would have to work a special session," Van Eschen recalled. "I said, 'You mean get to.'" 

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MINNESOTA INDEX

Wanna Bet?

Percent of adult Minnesotans who gambled in the previous year.....	75
Licensed lawful charitable gambling organizations in Minnesota in fiscal year 2008.....	1,290
Combined locations for these organizations.....	2,934
Billions in state receipts from Minnesota lawful gaming industry in fiscal year 2008.....	\$1.14
Percent decrease from 2007.....	9.8
Percent decrease from 2004.....	19.5
Billions in estimated illegal gambling in the state in 2008.....	\$2
Prizes awarded in fiscal year 2008, in millions.....	\$933.51
Percent decrease from 2007.....	9.8
Percent decrease from 2004.....	19.6
Overall rate, as percent, of gambling prize payout in fiscal year 2008.....	81.8
In 2007.....	81.7
Millions in gross profit spent on "lawful purpose" donations in fiscal year 2008.....	\$92.26
Millions of that total on taxes and fees.....	\$46
Millions spent on "charitable" donations.....	\$38.9
Percent of charitable donations that went to nonprofit festival organizations.....	34
Percent to local units of government.....	23
Percent to youth activities.....	19
Average percent of gross profit that licensed organizations spend on expenses.....	55.5
State lottery revenue in fiscal year 2008, in millions.....	\$463.1
Profit to state programs in fiscal year 2008, in millions.....	\$116.26
Millions in fiscal years 2006, 2004.....	\$121, \$101
For each dollar spent on lottery in fiscal year 2008, cents returned as prizes.....	60.4
Cents to the state's General Fund.....	13.8
Cents to the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.....	6.6
Cents for every dollar spent on the lottery.....	6.6
Millions contributed by the state lottery, through fiscal year 2009 for problem gambling programs.....	\$32
Percent of Minnesotans, according to a study, who would feel comfortable talking to a friend or family member about a gambling problem.....	90
States, including Minnesota, that funded problem-gambling programs in 2007.....	29
Individuals in 2006 who received state-funded treatment from problem gambling treatment providers.....	1,150
Treatment providers registered with the state to provide outpatient treatment.....	93
Number of locations.....	111

— M. Cook

Sources: Minnesota State Lottery Overview 2009; Annual Report of the Minnesota Gambling Control Board, Fiscal Year 2008; Gaming News, January/February 2009, Minnesota Gambling Control Board; Department of Human Services.

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