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SESSION Weekly

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INSIDE: A BETTING CROWD, CAPTURE THE FLAG, CAPPING DAMAGES, MORE

This Week's Bill Introductions HF1549-HF1742

Session Weekly

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Clarification

A March 4 *Session Weekly* Highlight about a report to the House Transportation Finance Committee from the Association of Minnesota Counties stated the proposal to improve roads and transit would not raise taxes. The article should have stated that it would not raise property taxes.

On the cover: John Hanson, a historic site interpreter at the Oliver Kelley Farm in Elk River, portrays an 1860s farmer as he holds a rooster during the March 7 History Matters rally, sponsored by the Minnesota Historical Society, in the Rotunda.

—Photo by: Tom Olmscheid

Attracting a betting crowd

Gambling facilities benefit tourism statewide

By **BRETT MARTIN**

If you think that people visit Minnesota only to shop and fish, odds are you don't know how gambling impacts tourism. Gambling is good for Minnesota tourism, according to representatives of gaming facilities who say casinos and horse racing attract millions of visitors to the state each year.

"Tribal casinos make an important contribution to tourism, especially in rural areas of Minnesota," Marsha Kelly, communications consultant with the Minnesota Indian Gaming Association, recently told the Tourism Division of the House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee.

The estimated number of state visitors each year ranges from 24.5 million to 28.5 million, and Kelly said that about 15 percent of those visitors go to a casino. According to the association, out-of-state casino visitors spend \$191 million in Minnesota each year.

Casinos are a top state attraction, second only to the Mall of America, Kelly said.

American Indian tribes spend nearly \$30 million in annual advertising and visitor promotion to lure guests to their casinos, nearly 10 times more than Explore Minnesota Tourism, the state's tourism office, spends.

"Indian casinos are part of the Minnesota travel product," John Edman, director of Explore Minnesota, told *Session Weekly*.

Explore Minnesota does not directly promote gaming, but it does promote the cultural heritage of American Indians.

The casino draw

Tourism is a key component of Minnesota's economy, generating \$9.2 billion annually. While the lakes, malls, parks and scenic views attract millions of visitors, casinos also play a vital roll in the lucrative industry, and, by extension, in the state's economy.

Top activities, as percent, for travelers in Minnesota

Scenic touring	46
Visiting friends/family	38
Shopping	38
Fishing	32
Visiting state/national parks	25
Camping	22
Attending fairs/festivals	20
Sightseeing of city sites	19
Visiting historical sites	15
Casino gambling	14
Hiking	14
Museum/concerts/theater	13

Data reflects spring and summer travel
Source: Explore Minnesota Tourism

In the city of Red Wing, with a population slightly more than 16,000, Treasure Island Resort & Casino is responsible for up to half of the city's 1.25 million to 2 million annual visitors.

"The direct financial impact of these visitors is estimated at \$59.9 million. The chamber believes that one-third of this amount, or \$20 million, can be connected directly to Treasure Island," Pierre Menard, board chair of the Red Wing Area Chamber of Commerce, told the tourism division. "Gaming has had a profound impact on tourism in the Red Wing area."

About 25 percent of overnight guests and nearly 30 percent of day visitors to Red Wing are from out of state, said Stephanie Fox, public relations manager for the resort and casino.

"Treasure Island employs over 1,500 people with an annual payroll of nearly \$45 million. This is possible because of the successful tourism industry the casino has worked so hard to promote," Fox said.

The tourism industry in Red Wing now employs 2,200 people with an annual payroll of \$59.4 million, Menard said.

In northern Minnesota, casino visitors are literally crossing the country's border to come to Minnesota. Steve StandingCloud, enterprise administrator for the Lake Superior Band of Chippewa in Grand Portage, said the Grand Portage Lodge & Casino attracts more than 800,000 Canadians each year.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Red Lake Tribal Secretary Judy Roy discusses the possible effects of a casino partnership with the state and interested tribes during a March 4 news conference in the governor's reception room. Gov. Tim Pawlenty was also joined at the announcement by White Earth Tribal Chairwoman Erma Vizenor, left, and Leech Lake Tribal Chairman George Goggeye, third from left, tribal council members from each of the tribes, bill sponsors, labor and urban American Indian leaders. Pawlenty's proposal would provide a gaming partnership between the state and three northern Minnesota tribes.

First Reading continued on page 4

First Reading continued from page 3

"They spend money," StandingCloud said. "They spend money at the border, and they continue south."

He said that 80 percent of visitors who come to the casino are from Thunder Bay, Canada, which is 45 miles away.

Off to the races

While casinos tend to receive most of the attention when it comes to gambling, there's another segment of the gaming industry that also appeals to tourists.

"We bring a lot of tourism dollars in," said Carin Offerman, a board member of Canterbury Park in Shakopee. "Having a racetrack is an attraction that brings people to the state."

Kay King, executive director for the Minnesota Thoroughbred Association, agrees, saying horses benefit tourism.

"More than 1,400 horses from over 20 states come to Canterbury Park each year. Along with

them come trainers, groomers and owners. Whether they come for one weekend, such as the national Claiming Crown hosted at Canterbury Park, or they stable for the entire summer meet, there is a definite impact on the hospitality industry and Minnesota's economy," King said. "The impact of the horse industry is felt in a very real way all across the state."

Offerman and King both said the track needs to increase its purse size to attract better quality horses. The average purse last year was \$130,000 per race day and approximately \$10 million for the summer. More than 1 million people visited the facility.

"The significant increase in purses and the addition of a major show horse venue will help grow and develop Minnesota's horse industry and attract more horses from outside Minnesota

Economic impact of Indian gaming since 1990:

30,000 jobs (14,000 direct, 16,000 indirect)
\$2.8 billion paid in wages and benefits
\$1.9 billion paid to Minnesota vendors for goods and services
\$810 million paid in state/federal taxes
\$600 million in capital construction
\$298 million in out-of-state Minnesota tourism promotion
\$159 million paid to local governments

Source: Minnesota Indian Gaming Association

to race and show at Canterbury," King said.

Citing a 2004 University of Minnesota analysis of the impact of horses on Minnesota's economy, King said horses generate nearly \$1 billion of economic activity in the state each year, producing work for horse breeders, trainers, veterinarians and farmers.

"The analysis found the best way to increase the value of the horse industry in a state is to

First Reading continued on page 18

Capture the flag

Civil War battle cries echo the halls of the Capitol



The memories and wounds of the Civil War shaped the Minnesotans who built the State Capitol. It was the great conflict of the era, and the first chance for the nascent state to participate in the destiny of the nation.

Just 40 years had passed between the end of the war and the completion of the Capitol. So it is fitting that the Capitol motif is steeped in Civil War paintings, statues and memorabilia.

Although 140 years have passed since the end of the war, one dispute still lingers: the fate of the Confederate battle flag of the 28th Virginia Infantry that was captured by the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment at Gettysburg, Penn.

In July 1863, the First Minnesota was waging a dramatic battle against the Confederacy during a turning point in the war, the Battle of Gettysburg.

Though outnumbered, they staged a charge that left 215 of the 262 Minnesotans

dead. But they held off a Confederate advance that was threatening to cut the Union line in two and eventually move the war theater northward.

Pvt. Marshall Sherman, a painter from St. Paul, captured the battle flag on July 3, 1863, during what became known as Pickett's Charge.

Today, the flag is in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society, having rebuffed requests by Virginia state officials and a Civil War enactment group to return the flag.

Minnesota officials declined, hence the need for a security guard when the flag made a rare public appearance at the Capitol March 7.

The flag, which was displayed in a glass case, rests on a special form to prevent the wool bunting fabric from becoming stressed.

The words "28th Va. Inf'y" are embroidered in white thread across the red background of the "Southern Cross." The 13 white stars on a blue background represent the 11 Confederate states plus Kentucky and Missouri who attempted but failed to secede. Stains and tears are clearly visible.

According to the Gettysburg National Military Park, the 82 percent casualty rate experienced by the First Minnesota those three days in July 1863 was never equaled by any other Union regiment during the Civil War. The flag should stay in Minnesota, the First Minnesota re-enactment group and others have argued, to honor the soldiers who fought and died at Gettysburg.

(N. Wood)



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Shawn Ewing, portraying a young George Washington, counts the stars as he and his brother, Dylan, portraying Davy Crockett, take a closer look at a Confederate flag on display outside the House Chamber March 7. The boys are the stepsons of Rep. Mark Olson and came to the Capitol in costume as part of History Matters Day.

★ AGRICULTURE

Jump to the pump

In September 2004, Gov. Tim Pawlenty signed an executive order designed to move state agencies away from using gasoline in state vehicles and toward fuels such as ethanol, biodiesel and hydrogen.

HF560, sponsored by Rep. Rod Hamilton (R-Mountain Lake), would turn the so-called SmartFleet initiative into state law.

The House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee approved the measure March 8. It now moves to the House floor.

The bill would establish a goal of using 25 percent less gasoline in state vehicles by 2010 and 50 percent less gasoline by 2015; petroleum-based diesel fuel consumption would be reduced 10 percent by 2010 and 25 percent by 2015.

HF560 aims to set an aggressive, yet obtainable, goal for fleet management, Hamilton said, and it would "provide more certainty" to the governor's executive order.

Under the bill, a SmartFleet committee, consisting of representatives from the Pollution Control Agency; Administration, Agriculture, and Commerce departments; as well as any other department wishing to participate, would provide "information, guidance, sample policies and procedures, and technical and planning assistance."

The bill also calls for boosting fleet fuel efficiency and reducing the reliance on state vehicles by increasing Internet availability of state goods and services.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) said he surveyed state agencies a couple of years ago and discovered that 54 percent of travel management vehicles were E85-capable (meaning they were manufactured to run on an 85 percent ethanol/15 percent gasoline blend) yet only 16 percent of the fuel put through them was actually E85.

"So you can buy the cars but if you're not stopping at the station and fueling we've got a problem," he said. "It's one thing again to say we're doing this but, as we can see, it's not being done and just because we say so doesn't mean it will be done."

Juhnke successfully offered an amendment that would "keep the pressure on" by requiring the SmartFleet committee to submit to the Legislature

an annual progress report.

A companion bill (SF969), sponsored by Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy), awaits action in the Senate Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee.

★ BANKING

All the way to the bank

Burns Township in the northwest corner of Anoka County is one step closer to having a bank branch in its community.

Rep. Larry Howes (R-Walker) is sponsoring HF997, which would allow Pine River State Bank, which has its main office in Pine River, to establish a branch in Burns Township.

The House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee approved the bill March 8 and referred it to the House floor. A companion bill (SF985), sponsored by Sen. Carrie L. Ruud (R-Breezy Point), awaits action in the

Senate Commerce Committee.

Minnesota law does not permit locating a new branch in a township, so a bank that wants to do so must receive an exemption from the Legislature, something that is done an average of once every two years.

"This is the standard course for putting a bank in a township that does not have a bank," Howes said.

Even with approval from the Legislature, the bank would still be required to follow Department of Commerce procedures for approval of a new branch. The Burns Township Board would also need to approve it.

★ CHILDREN

Child-care reimbursement rates

Reimbursement rates for the state's child-care sliding fee program were frozen in 2003.

While child-care providers in the Twin Cities metropolitan area were not generally affected, it certainly wrought havoc with the providers in Greater Minnesota according to testimony received by the House Jobs and Economic Opportunity Policy and Finance Committee on March 9.

Four bills trying to address the problems were heard, and all were held over for possible inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill.

According to John Molinaro, vice president at the West Central Initiative, a nonprofit agency in Fergus Falls, a 2004 study shows that in the 22 rural counties closest to the metropolitan area, the average child-care center lost \$22.50 per month per child in state reimbursement. The average facility in the Twin Cities metropolitan area made \$20 per month per child.

That's because there is far less competition in Greater Minnesota, and fewer choices, so most centers have to charge the same rate, even when the state freezes reimbursements.

According to Tammy Anderson, executive director at Child's Corner Child Care Center, her program lost \$28,000 in 2003 because reimbursement rates went from \$28 to \$21 per child. Many of her clients have credit issues, so she is looking at approximately \$10,000 in uncollected fees, with little hope of recovery.

Rep. Bud Nornes, (R-Fergus Falls)

SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

Sammy Stoppelmoor, 16, of Blue Earth, participates in a March 8 rally for Minnesota's Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program at the State Capitol. Students taped together signed petition forms and hung them from the balcony. The petitions ask Gov. Tim Pawlenty to direct resources to implement a National Suicide Prevention Strategy and provide accessible and affordable health services.

who is Anderson's father, offered three bills to help.

- HF522 would return reimbursement rates of child-care providers to what they were before the freeze, which was enacted July 1, 2003. This applies only to those who had their rates cut. A companion bill (SF873), sponsored by Sen. Cal Larson, (R-Fergus Falls), awaits action in the Senate Finance Committee.
- HF1056 would provide for a half-day reimbursement rate for children who come in after school and stay until their parents finish work. When the rates were frozen, counties switched to hourly rates for those children. Reimbursement went from \$10 to between \$1 and \$2, Anderson said. A companion bill (SF1119), sponsored by Larson, awaits action in the Senate Finance Committee.
- HF374 would reduce license fees paid by child-care centers by 25 percent. A companion bill (SF826), also sponsored by Larson, awaits action in the Senate Finance Committee.

Sponsored by Rep. Morrie Lanning (R-Moorhead), HF1195 would reimburse providers who had their reimbursement rates cut. There is no Senate companion.

★ CONSUMERS

Spammers beware

Those that send spam e-mail messages could face criminal and civil penalties, under a bill sponsored by Rep. Joe Atkins (DFL-Inver Grove Heights).

HF1318 would prohibit e-mail messages that are false, misleading or deceptive sent to or from a computer in Minnesota. "We are all bombarded with spam on a daily basis," Atkins told the House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee March 9. He said the bill is similar to federal statutes and would not affect "appropriate" e-mails.

The committee approved the bill and referred it to the House Civil Law and Elections Committee.

The bill would make sending multiple illegal messages a misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$3,000 fine. Under the bill, a person would be committing a gross misdemeanor if convicted of sending multiple e-mail messages using 20 or more e-mail or online accounts, 10 or more domain names or sending more than 250 spam messages within 24 hours, 2,500 within 30 days or 25,000 within a year. Causing losses of \$500 or more to victims through spam e-mails would also be a gross misdemeanor.

Accessing a computer without authorization to send illegal e-mails would be a gross misdemeanor on the first offense and a felony on the second offense.

The bill would also grant the attorney general or e-mail service provider the right to sue a person who violates the terms of the bill, provided the suit is started within one year of the offense.

A companion bill (SF927), sponsored by Sen. Dan Sparks (DFL-Austin), awaits action in the Senate Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee.

★ CRIME

A bill for Ben

Ben Doran of St. Paul was beaten to death two years ago by members of a gang who mistook the 15-year-old youth for someone else.

The death of Doran was the inspiration for HF988, its sponsor, Rep. John Lesch (DFL-St. Paul), told the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee March 3. Lesch calls the bill "Benny's Law."

"The worst crime in Minnesota is not just murder, it's the murder of an innocent child," he said.

The bill boosts penalties for gang members who kill children less than 18 years of age. If a child is the victim of a felony crime committed by a gang member, then the sentence for the convicted offender would be extended five years

beyond the statutory maximum prison sentence. If the crime is a gross misdemeanor, then the offender would face a three-year felony sentence. If the crime is a misdemeanor, the sentence would be increased to a gross misdemeanor.

Most prisoners now are released for the final one-third of their sentences because "that's how we do it in Minnesota," Lesch said.

"Benny was my life," said his mother, Maggie. "I can't say enough about protecting kids." She stressed the importance of keeping "seasoned violent killers" in prison so they can't hurt anyone else.

Jim Lym, co-leader of the Minnesota Hope Chapter of Parents of Murdered Children, also spoke in favor of the bill. He said that one of the people convicted of killing his son nearly 10 years ago may be eligible to get out of prison in a couple of years.

The committee will consider the bill for inclusion in its omnibus bill.

A companion bill (SF1139), sponsored by Sen. Ellen R. Anderson (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action in the Senate Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee.

Name change

John Eastham, a Ramsey County deputy sheriff, was transporting prisoners last fall when he overheard their conversation, which led to the discovery that one of the prisoners had been able to legally change his name while jailed.

This disturbed Eastham because the prisoner was serving time for burglary and was



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Jim Lym, left, co-leader of the Minnesota Hope Chapter of Parents of Murdered Children, and Maggie Doran, right, whose son, Ben, was murdered by gang members, testify before the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee March 3 in support of a bill that would toughen penalties for gang members who kill children.

also a registered sex offender. He discovered there's no law to prevent such a person from legally changing names and nothing to require officials be notified of the change. "I found it disheartening that they be allowed to change their name and basically be their own monitor and have to report themselves for having a name change afterwards," he said.

Eastham contacted Rep. Lloyd Cybart (R-Apple Valley) and the result is HF1200 and HF1201 were combined, by amendment, into one bill.

The bill authorizes courts to do a search of national records through the FBI by submitting a set of fingerprints to determine if there is a criminal history when a person applies for a name change, Cybart told the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee March 9.

If a name change is granted for an applicant with a criminal history, the court and applicant must submit the name change to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. Failure to do so would result in a gross misdemeanor penalty.

Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown) asked if this bill would affect people changing their names through marriage. Cybart replied that his bill did not include name changes because of marriage since they're not done through courts.

The committee will consider the bill for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

There is no Senate companion.

Phishing could be a crime

There's a kind of phishing in Minnesota that has nothing to do with walleyes.

Phishing is a new technique used by Internet scam artists and it's legal under current state law, Rep. Steve Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park), sponsor of HF243, told the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee March 9.

Phishing occurs when scam artists send e-mails that look like they're from a trusted financial institution such as a bank, mortgage company or credit card issuer. Readers of the e-mail are asked to update their account information by clicking on a link that takes them to a Web site, which also looks authentic, said Simon.

The bill makes phishing a crime punishable by up to five years imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine.

"Phishing is the fastest growing form of identify theft on the Internet," according to Hilary Caligiuri, representing the Hennepin County Attorney's Office. An estimated 57 million Americans receive phishing e-mails a year, and 3 percent to 5 percent of them will respond and give out personal information that

is used by scammers to raid bank accounts and set up credit card accounts, she said.

"The bill makes it a crime to set out the bait even if they don't make a catch," said Caligiuri. It's important to stop these crimes at the source, she explained, because once a scam has succeeded a victim's identity has been lost, a good name is ruined and it can be difficult to repair the damage.

The committee will consider the bill for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

A companion bill (SF336), sponsored by Sen. Steve Kelley (DFL-Hopkins), awaits action in the Senate Finance Committee.

Sex offender changes

The governor's proposal to establish life sentences for certain sex offender crimes was approved by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee March 3.

Sponsored by Rep. Kurt Zellers (R-Maple Grove), HF1406 would create a sex offender review board and a sex offender policy board, change registration and community notification, and allow the Department of Human Services to access certain databases, including the sex offender registry.

Similar to HF1, also sponsored by Zellers, HF1406 differs on which penalty applies to what conduct, according to the nonpartisan House Research Department. Also, HF1 contains sentencing guidelines that the U.S. Supreme Court has since ruled could create complications in sentencing guidelines for states.

The bill is a "quantum leap forward" in making "Minnesota the very, very best in sex offender management," said Eric Lipman, state sex offender policy coordinator.

The review board would oversee the release of inmates, and the policy board would develop standards for the treatment and supervision of sex offenders.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) offered an unsuccessful amendment that would have required the retention of biological evidence used to secure a conviction in a criminal case for as long as the "person remains incarcerated, on probation or parole, civilly committed, or subject to registration as a sex offender in connection with the case."

The bill now goes to the House Civil Law and Elections Committee.

A Senate companion (SF1325), sponsored by Sen. Dave Kleis (R-St. Cloud), awaits action in the Senate Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee.

**If you have Internet access, visit the
Legislature's Web page at:
<http://www.leg.mn>**

EDUCATION



Classroom contributions

A process similar to one that helps candidates fund their campaigns may give a financial boost to classroom teachers.

Taxpayers can contribute to political candidates and receive refunds through the state's political contribution fund. Rep. Karen Klinzing (R-Woodbury) has come up with a similar program to fund contributions to classroom teachers through HF967.

"My rationale is there are lots of unique classroom needs and lots of innovative ideas coming from classroom teachers for which there's no specific funding stream," Klinzing told the House Education Finance Committee March 9.

Under the bill, a taxpayer can claim a refund for financial contributions made to a classroom teacher. The maximum refund for a single taxpayer could not exceed \$50 and for a married couple filing jointly, the maximum would \$100. Contributors would need to fill out a form, attach a receipt and send it to the state to receive a refund.

Contributions could be made to any licensed teacher in a public or accredited private school and could be spent on supplies, books, computer software or hardware, field trips or other materials used in the classroom.

Classroom teachers would be responsible for keeping records of receipts and expenditures.

Preliminary estimates indicate the program could cost between \$10 million to \$30 million to set up the fund and operate it, said Klinzing.

"A lot of our solutions we have at the Legislature this year are a result of people and families seeing not enough money for the schools," said Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville). All the proposed good solutions will limit what's available to add to the general education formula, she said.

Equity is also a concern, said Greiling, because some classrooms might receive a lot of contributions while others might not.

Rep. John Dorn (DFL-Mankato) expressed concern there could be a lack of accountability with teachers being solely responsible for the funds. For example, Dorn's campaign treasurer handles the money that is received from the political contribution fund.

The committee approved the bill and referred it to the House Civil Law and Elections Committee.

A companion bill (SF1153), sponsored by Sen. Steve Kelley (DFL-Hopkins), awaits action in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Measuring academic growth

Public school districts would be able to participate in a voluntary pilot project of value-added assessment to measure individual student academic growth, under HF1587 sponsored by Committee Chair Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Jordan).

The bill is an initiative from the Minnesota Department of Education, Buesgens told the House Education Policy and Reform Committee March 8.

Value-added assessment allows educators to measure individual student's growth in academic achievement from one school year to the next by tracking student's scores on annual standardized tests.

"This is a no brainer. We all agree value added is the way to go," said Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville).

The pilot project would be funded by a \$300,000 appropriation from the state for 2006 and \$1.6 million in fiscal year 2007.

Rural, urban and suburban public schools and charter schools would be able to apply to the Department of Education to participate in the program.

Value-added assessment would be used in addition to assessments now in place to determine schools' Adequate Yearly Progress as part of the national No Child Left Behind legislation, according to Dr. Patricia Olson, assistant commissioner of the Office of Accountability and Improvement of the Department of Education.

The committee approved the bill and referred it to the House Education Finance Committee.

It has no Senate companion.

Prinsburg receives approval

**Signed
by
the
governor
★ ★ ★**

Prinsburg School District 815 will be able to use voter-approved levy referendum money to pay off a debt to a neighboring school district, under a new law signed March 7 by Gov. Tim Pawlenty.

Funds will also be used to provide special education services for school district residents who attend a private religious school in the district.

Prinsburg owes about \$280,000 to the neighboring MACCRAY School District for tuition of Prinsburg residents who attended the district through an informal arrangement a few years ago.

Prinsburg has no students and is one of only two remaining common school districts in the state. Because of its unique situation, state approval was required for levy recertification and authority.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) and Senate Majority Leader Dean E. Johnson

(DFL-Willmar) sponsored the legislation, most of which is effective March 8, 2005, and applies to taxes payable in 2005.

HF248*/SF485/CH8

Pain relief

Secondary students would be able to possess and properly use nonprescription drugs in school without going to the nurse's office under HF615, sponsored by Rep. Karen Klinzing (R-Woodbury).

"It's legal outside of school, it's only inside of school we're saying these kids are not responsible enough to take medication," Klinzing, a high school teacher, told the House Education Policy and Reform Committee March 3.

Under the bill, if parents or guardians provide annual written authorization, their children would be able to take over-the-counter drugs on their own. The school district could revoke this privilege if a student abuses it.

Casey Hoshaw, a junior at Centennial High School, said when pain suddenly strikes, students must wait for a break in the class period to ask the teacher for permission to go to the nurse's office to get medicine. This can result in missed class time, getting pain relief too late to do any good and even having students go home because they're not feeling well.

According to Hoshaw, it can be inconvenient and even embarrassing to have to go to the school nurse's office for medicine. "Any 17-year-old could walk into a drug store and

buy Tylenol® or ibuprofen without parent's permission," she said. "Students should be able to do the same in school."

"I understand the issue of convenience but we should also look at safety," said Linda Sandvig, a lobbyist for the School Nurse Organization of Minnesota. She said school nurses aren't just pill dispensers. When children come in for medication, nurses can monitor their situation and ask questions. "Medicine is not always the best way to deal with pain," she said. But if students don't come to the nurse, there's no opportunity for teachable moments.

The committee approved the bill and sent it to the House floor.

A companion bill (SF232), sponsored by Sen. Mady Reiter (R-Shoreview), awaits action by the full Senate.



For information on HF 1086, sponsored by Rep. Duke Powell, which would allow school districts to raise money through two new levies, go the Session Weekly EXTRA page at <http://www.house.mn/hinfo/swx.asp>.

ELECTIONS



HF865, sponsored by Rep. Mark Olson, would speed up the process of updating precinct finder databases when precinct boundaries change. For more information, go to the Session Weekly EXTRA page at <http://www.house.mn/hinfo/swx.asp>.



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Centennial High School juniors Casey Hoshaw, left, and Nina Coon, right, testify March 3 before the House Education Policy and Reform Committee in support of a bill that would authorize secondary students to possess nonprescription pain relief in school.

★ ENVIRONMENT

Bombs, bullets and biodiversity

It's not every day a person snuggles a black bear and walks away unscathed. The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee members and staff had the rare opportunity to do so March 4 at Camp Ripley near Little Falls.

What they discovered is an environmental program flourishing in a most unlikely place: a military training base.

With 53,000 acres, the largest stretch of undeveloped shoreline along the entire Mississippi River, and no public roads crisscrossing the landscape, wildlife abounds at Camp Ripley. The committee encountered a red-shouldered hawk, a bald eagle, many wild turkeys, at least two-dozen deer and three bears during the brief visit.

Although it would seem incongruous for a landscape to support bombs, bullets and biodiversity, Post Commander Col. Richard Weaver said some Department of Defense installations have approximately 10 times more wildlife than civilian-owned parcels.

"Wildlife would rather be bombed than strip-malled," he said.

The camp's environmental program started in 1986, in part to comply with the Endangered Species Act and other federal laws, explained Bill Brown, the program's natural/cultural resources specialist.

"Of course that sounds good but nobody knew what that meant," he said. The first step, he said, was developing an accurate inventory of the plant and animal species on the base. The inventory served as the foundation for



Rep. Greg Blaine examines a bear's teeth during a black bear den visit at Camp Ripley. The camp, which is near Little Falls, is in Blaine's district.



PHOTOS BY ANDREW VONBANK

Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee and school children from Perham observe scientists from the Department of Natural Resources bear project as they check the condition of a bear sow and two of her cubs March 4.

several studies of the connection between military activities and wildlife.

One of those ongoing studies is the Camp Ripley Bear Project.

"When I first started here, it was nothing for bears to be going into tents and vehicles," said Environmental Supervisor Marty Skoglund. The black bears were deemed a nuisance, he said, but after further review they found they didn't have a bear problem; they had a people problem: Don't feed the bears, the soldiers learned.

The camp's environmental department teamed up with the Department of Natural Resources and bear monitoring continues to this day. The camp currently has eight collared

bears within its boundaries.

Once a year, DNR biologists conduct a den survey while the bears are hibernating. They tranquilize them and then take blood samples, body measurements and adjust the collars.

As part of the camp's community mission, students and civic groups are often allowed to trek along for the den visit. The lucky ones get to hold a bear cub.

"The bear project is what has really gotten us rolling with the community," Skoglund said.

Lawmakers and staff left the range with a special place in their hearts for Bear 2087: 41 pounds, 14 months old, surprisingly odor free and snuggly soft while sedated.

★ GOVERNMENT

Renaming a building

A bipartisan group of House members would like to see the State Office Building named after a longtime employee.

HF858, sponsored by Rep. Lynn Wardlow (R-Eagan), would rename the structure the Edward A. Burdick State Office Building. Of the legislation's other 28 sponsors, 14 are Republican and 14 are DFL.

The bill was approved March 8 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee and referred to the House State Government Finance Committee.

"Whose name is more germane to this building than Ed Burdick?" asked Wardlow.

Although not opposed to the bill, Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) asked committee members to reflect on the number of state buildings that are named after prominent influential women. The fact is there are none in the Capitol Complex, and only two plaques devoted to women, she said.

Kahn sponsors HF694 that would name the building after former Rep. Coya Knutson, who was the first female Minnesotan to serve in Congress (1955-58). Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) is sponsoring HF1541 to rename the building after Paul Wellstone, and Rep. Tim Wilkin (R-Eagan) is sponsoring HF26 to rename it after Ronald Reagan. All await a committee hearing.

"This is the peoples' house," said Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall). The building should be named after a person, like Burdick, instead of a politician, he added.

First hired as a page in 1941, Burdick served as chief clerk in the House from 1967 until retiring before the current session began. He served under 16 different speakers.

A companion bill (SF1283), sponsored by Sen. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley), awaits action in the Senate State and Local Government Operations Committee.

★ HEALTH

Abortion numbers could be tracked

A bill that would track the number of abortions performed under the parental notification/judicial bypass law was approved by the House Civil Law and Elections Committee March 7. It now moves to the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee.

Sponsored by Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound), HF226 would require physicians and facilities to file statistical reports with the Minnesota Department of Health on abortions

performed under the 1981 law, which provides that an abortion may not be performed on a minor unless parents are given 48 hours notice or the minor is given permission from a court for that abortion, a judicial bypass.

The reports would be used to compile statistics to be published annually.

"This bill does what should have been done in 1981; put into legislation the tracking device necessary to provide the Legislature the ability to oversee a bill," Smith said. "Secondly, it is in the best interest of the parents and their minor daughters."

Information that would be reported includes the age and race of the female, the county where the woman resides, where the abortion was performed, where the judicial bypass was obtained and the process used to inform the woman of the judicial bypass.

Rep. Keith Ellison (DFL-Mpls) questioned Smith about the intent of the bill. "What is the objective to this data collection bill? Do you believe that judges are granting judicial bypasses in incidents where they should not? Is that what is driving this bill?"

Smith said that he wouldn't speculate on whether that is happening. "I think we should have the numbers so that we can tell as a Legislature," he said.

A companion bill (SF328), sponsored by Sen. Thomas M. Neuville (R-Northfield), awaits action in the Senate Health and Family Security Committee.

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

Tuition freeze

Students in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system would not see an increase in their tuition during the next biennium, under a bill sponsored by Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka).

Held over for consideration in the Higher Education Finance Committee's omnibus bill, HF670 would appropriate \$20.7 million in fiscal year 2006 and \$42.2 million in fiscal year 2007 to hold tuition at the current level.

"Paying for school is a burden, and in some cases it's a burden that (students) can no longer handle," Abeler said at the March 7 meeting. "We believe in a strong higher ed system and so everybody who wants to have a chance can get there."

The bill would only take effect if 2006-07 biennial appropriations exceed current base funding by \$197.3 million — the amount requested by the system — and tuition in the biennium is not increased above 2004-05 levels.

MnSCU's request includes \$130.9 million for

enrollment growth, as provided in law, and a \$66.5 million base increase. Included in the appeal is an assumption that tuition will be increased 4.4 percent, an estimated \$62 million.

Students told the committee of expecting to graduate with debt exceeding \$20,000, even though they work 30-40 hours per week.

"In addition to working multiple jobs and living on ramen noodles and mac and cheese, our students are forced to deficit spend in hopes of brighter days ahead," said Brad Krasaway, state chair of the Minnesota State University Student Association.

Bill co-sponsor Rep. Gene Pelowski, Jr. (DFL-Winona) said part of the problem goes back to 2003, when higher education appropriations were reduced by "hundreds of millions" of dollars to help balance the state's budget.

"We let the students carry a significant part of the budget reduction in '03-'04 and now in '05," he said. "I think it's time that we took at least that burden off their backs."

A companion bill (SF707), sponsored by Sen. John C. Hottinger (DFL-St. Peter), awaits action by the Higher Education Budget Division of the Senate Finance Committee.

★ HOUSING

Buyer beware

Buyers would know if property they are purchasing has been used as a place to create methamphetamine, under an amendment to HF572 approved by the House Civil Law and Elections Committee March 7.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Jeff Johnson (R-Plymouth), clamps down on the sale of certain over-the-counter cold medications containing the essential ingredients needed to make methamphetamine. But with the amendment, the bill now spells out requirements for clean up of lab sites prior to being reoccupied and disclosure to any future purchaser of the property.

Under the provision, a seller must disclose, in writing, to the buyer if the property has been used as a clandestine drug lab, whether there has been an order for cleanup and if the cleanup has been successfully completed.

Contractors are put on notice that cleanup work would need to be done to meet Department of Health guidelines. Verification of cleanup would then be provided to the property owner and the "applicable authority" within five days from the completion of the remediation.

Once cleaned, a map and legal description of the property would be provided to the

county recorder or registrar of titles.

Additionally, each local community health services administrator would keep certain information on file and make it available to the public, including location of the property and the name of the owner, the extent of the contamination and status of the removal.

Rep. Keith Ellison (DFL-Mpls) said that he would like to see some disclosure requirement for renters who may be concerned about occupying a place that had previously been used as a meth lab. Johnson said he would be willing to consider the proposal.

The bill now moves to the House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee.

A companion bill (SF423), sponsored by Sen. Julie A. Rosen (R-Fairmont), awaits action in the Senate Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee.

★ INDUSTRY

Genomics may be funded

Two bills, if combined, would provide more than \$100 million for a collaborative venture between the Mayo Clinic and University of Minnesota, were approved March 8 by the House Jobs and Economic Opportunity Policy and Finance Committee.

HF434, sponsored by Rep. Randy Demmer (R-Hayfield), would provide \$15 million to the partnership in each of the next five years. HF1548, sponsored by Rep. Paul Kohls (R-Victoria), would provide \$18 million to the project in fiscal 2006 and \$15 million in fiscal 2007.

Both bills were referred to the House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee.

The project calls for extensive research in biology and medical genomics, which could create new industries, expand the state tax base and position the state as a world leader in biotechnology and medical genomics. The money would go toward operating expenses.

"All 50 states in the union are working very, very hard to try to take advantage of the growing opportunities in this field," Demmer said. Medical genomics pinpoints the normal and abnormal functions of individual genes and uses the information to diagnose and treat diseases. It's medicine tailored to each individual.

Demmer said the funding could create thousands of jobs. The economic impact could be hundreds of millions of dollars.

The research facility could attract grants from the National Institutes of Health, which would create jobs. Depending on how successful the research is, it could lead to licenses and patents, according to Dr. Eric Wieben, director of Mayo Genomics Research Center at the Mayo Clinic.

After patents, could come product development, clinical trials, funding from the federal Food and Drug Administration, then sales and marketing of the products.

Four research projects underway now are heart disease, prostate cancer, Alzheimer's disease and obesity. The goal is to diagnose the disease sooner, even prevent them and save money on treatment.

Demmer's bill has no Senate companion.

A companion bill to Kohls' bill (SF1309), sponsored by Sen. Steve Kelley (DFL-Hopkins), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

★ LAW

Make the shoulders safer

A bill that could make the shoulders of Minnesota's highways safer for law officers dealing with stopped vehicles was approved by the House Transportation Committee March 8 and sent to the House floor.

HF1164, sponsored by Rep. Paul Gazelka (R-Brainerd), would require motorists approaching a parked emergency vehicle with lights flashing to take precautions.

Under the bill, motorists would be required to slow to a speed of 10 mph below the speed limit. Motorists would also be required to pull over into the next lane if possible. Violators would be guilty of a petty misdemeanor, and could be fined more than \$100. "It'll take their foot from the gas pedal and move it over to the brake pedal," said Capt. Brian Erickson of the Minnesota State Patrol.

The bill is an attempt to improve the "Ted Foss Move Over Law," which requires passing motorists to move a lane over and reduce their speed, but it doesn't say by how much. That bill was passed after the 2000 death of Minnesota State Trooper Ted Foss, during a traffic stop near Lewiston.

"People do not move over when there is an emergency vehicle at the side of the

road," Erickson said, adding the wording to reduce speed does not provide a lot of direction.

Sgt. Curtis S. Mowers, a trooper from the Brainerd area, said police accept a certain amount of risk with their job, but this is something the Legislature could control.

"It's really close to all of our hearts. When there's something that can be done to help make us safe, we feel this is very important," Mowers said.

A companion bill (SF1388), sponsored by Sen. Mike McGinn (R-Eagan), awaits action in the Senate Transportation Committee.

★ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Buried electric lines

Local governments would be able to enter into agreements with private electric or communications companies to bury distribution lines under a bill approved by the House Local Government Committee March 9.

SOUNDING OFF



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

Justin Barlow and Jenny Williams, juniors at Minnesota North Star Academy, clap during the March 8 Rally for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The rally was organized to encourage and support legislative issues concerning deafness.

Sponsor of HF732, Rep. Doug Meslow (R-White Bear Lake), said the bill would give municipalities the authority to do so under the condition that "all of the residents of the property affected agree to the plan and agree to pay for it."

"Unlike a lot of the newer communities and newer subdivisions where everything is placed underground now, they see a beautiful street and sidewalk and at the end they still have some unsightly overhead cables," said Mark Sather, city manager of White Bear Lake.

A group of homeowners approached the city about burying some electric lines with the cooperation of a local utility, Sather said, but a city attorney said current laws might prohibit the city from being able to work with the utility company to bury the lines.

There was no opposition to the bill and it next goes to the House floor.

A companion bill (SF527), sponsored by Sen. Mady Reiter (R-Shoreview), awaits action in the Senate Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee.

Don't touch my mandate

The House Local Government Committee approved a bill March 7 that would establish procedures for local governments to opt out of state mandates.

"I call this the 'Don't touch my mandate' list," said Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake), the sponsor of HF1172.

Under the bill, counties, towns, school districts and cities could present the Legislature with a resolution requesting to opt out of state mandates, and the legislative bodies would have to adopt rules ensuring that those resolutions are given priority status and presented in a timely manner.

The bill is intended to foster "institution to institution communication" and solve the issue of "unfunded mandates," that Olson said he continually hears about from local units of government.

Opponents say entities could be released from mandates such as special education services, transportation, health, and safety standards or, potentially, the state's public employee bargaining law.

Local governments may not opt out of property tax laws, under the bill.

It could also create a "patchwork" of laws depending on the region in which cities are able to opt out, said Brad Lehto, legislative director for Minnesota American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations.

This is "a recipe for fragmented government," said Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul).

According to the nonpartisan House

Research Department, a state mandate is "a state law or rule that affects local government structure, operation, services, programs or financing and imposes a cost on local government, decreases revenue without decreasing required programs or services, makes local government or its officials liable for failing to comply with a law or rule, restricts the ability of local government to operate or obtain funding, or increases or decreases program, service, or funding levels in implementing or interpreting federal law."

The bill, which has no Senate companion, next moves to the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Help for Taylors Falls

Interstate Park is a popular tourist destination in Minnesota; known for camping, rock climbing, hiking and kayaking.

It's wholly within the city of Taylors Falls, for which the locals take great pride, according to Vice Mayor Ross Rivard. However, with all that fun comes a few problems, and that's why the police department and volunteer fire department are kept busy by calls to the park.

They need some help, so Rep. Peter Nelson (R-Lindstrom) is sponsoring HF1146, which would give a city an extra \$25,000 a year in local government aid if its population is at least 1,000, 14 percent of the city's land is a state park and the city provides rescue services at the park. Taylors Falls is the only city that qualifies for this aid under those conditions.

The bill was heard March 9 in the Property and Local Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee and held for possible inclusion in the division's report to the full committee.

Taylors Falls has historically provided basic services for the park, and the state has purchased water and sewer services. "The state and the city have mutually benefited from this for years," Rivard said. "Taylors Falls has its own responsibilities."

Between 1998 and 2002, there were an average of 277 police calls per year to the park, and 30 for fire or rescue services, he said.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) pointed out that there are parks in northern Minnesota where local governments are responsible for emergency services, but Nelson said the situation in Taylors Falls is more pronounced. "This would be a fee to the state of Minnesota for providing services," he said.

A companion bill (SF1097), sponsored by Sen. Sean R. Nienow (R-Cambridge), awaits action in the Senate Taxes Committee.

No new jail for Wabasha

Wabasha County may not be able to build a new jail outside the county seat because the bill authorizing it to do so failed in the House Local Government Committee March 9.

HF1287, sponsored by Rep. Andy Welti (DFL-Plainview), would permit the county to build a jail and criminal justice center to replace the current jail located in Wabasha. The bill would have allowed the county to do so without local approval.

The bill is "an effort to effect the best possible price for land or the availability of services to accommodate a new facility," said County Commissioner David Harms. The best deal for the taxpayers is what the board is trying to accomplish, he added.

By law, each county is to have the sheriff's office and a sufficient jail at the county seat.

"It is not just law enforcement and jail inmates who must have easy and frequent access to the court, but also social services, court administration, probation, the county attorney. ... If we move some of those branches to a new criminal justice center and keep others here in the county seat, we will be creating a horribly inefficient system," Wabasha District Court Judge Terry Walters said in a written statement.

"It is essential to have the jail as near the courtroom as possible," Wabasha Mayor Peter Klas said while testifying against the bill.

"This is fraught with difficulties ... there is something here that legislation is not going to solve," said Rep. Paul Marquart (DFL-Dilworth).

A Senate companion (SF1299), sponsored by Sen. Sheila M. Kiscaden (IP-Rochester), awaits action by the Senate Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee.

Minors in bars

Current law allows minors to play music but not wash dishes in bars without approval from the Department of Labor. A bill sponsored by Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) would change that.

HF12 would amend the Child Labor Standards Act to regulate the employment of minors in establishments that serve alcohol. It would generally prohibit minors from working in rooms in establishments, such as bars and restaurants, where liquor is served or consumed, but allow them to work in an area where no alcohol is consumed or sold.

"I would appreciate common sense support of this bill," Rukavina said.

Exceptions would be made for minors at least 16 years of age to bus tables, wash dishes, wait on tables or provide musical entertainment in areas where alcohol is incidental to food service.

The bill would regulate the employment of minors in establishments where liquor is served or consumed the same way Department of Labor rules do now. However, the exceptions in the bill would apply to minors who are at least 16 years of age, while the current law applies to 17 year olds.

Before approving the bill and referring it to the House floor, the House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee amended it March 8 to also exempt minors who perform hosting services.

Rep. Tina Liebling (DFL-Rochester) unsuccessfully tried to introduce an amendment to prohibit minors from working in any establishment that allows smoking. Rukavina said he did not want the tobacco issue attached to his bill. The amendment was ruled out of order because it did not meet the 24-hour rule.

A companion bill (SF187), sponsored by Sen. David J. Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), awaits action in the Senate Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee.

★ RECREATION

No lifeguards

Adults who swim in zero-depth entry public pools may be doing so at their own risk.

Sponsored by Rep. Sandra Peterson (DFL-New Hope), HF604 would exempt these pools, when used by people 18 years of age or older, from lifeguard presence requirements.

The House Health Policy and Finance Committee approved the bill March 3 and referred it to the House Civil Law and Elections Committee. It was approved and referred back to the Health Policy and Finance Committee.

A zero-depth entry pool is one with a slope that begins at grade level, and gradually deepens in a uniform slope to a depth of 3 feet or more. The gradual slope makes it easier for some people to get in and out of the pool. The bill would allow health clubs to hold aqua-aerobic classes for adults in zero-depth pools without being required to have a lifeguard present.

Regular pools are currently exempt from the lifeguard requirement when used by adults.

"If this bill passes, zero-depth pools would still have to meet license requirements," Peterson said.

The bill would have no fiscal impact, add no additional regulatory responsibilities to the state or local government, and not affect the need for inspections.

A companion bill (SF284), sponsored by Sen. David Gaither (R-Plymouth), awaits action on the Senate floor.

Houseboat hot tubs

If you swim in a hot tub or whirlpool on a rental houseboat, you could be swimming at your own risk, under a bill that would exempt hot water pools on rental houseboats from public pool requirements.

Rep. David Dill (DFL-Crane Lake) is sponsoring HF423 to help houseboat owners, including 125 in his district, who rent out their boats. Dill said the owners shouldn't be responsible for making sure the houseboat pools meet public pool requirements since the boats are rented.

"They have no control over what happens on the houseboat," Dill said.

Under current law, a hot water pool on a rental houseboat is considered a public pool and subject to review and inspection under the Minnesota Pool Code. Dill's bill would have no fiscal impact.

The House Health Policy and Finance Committee amended the bill March 3 to require a notice be placed near the pool that would read, in part, "NOTICE: This spa is exempt from state and local sanitary requirements that prevent disease transmission. USE AT YOUR OWN RISK." The committee approved the bill and referred it to the House floor.

A companion bill (SF520), sponsored by Sen. Thomas M. Bakk (DFL-Cook), awaits action on the Senate floor.

★ TAXES

Business incentives proposed

Companies could benefit from new tax incentives under a trio of bills approved March 9 by the House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee. All were referred to the House Taxes Committee.

"This is an economic development initiative," said Rep. Paul Kohls (R-Victoria). "One of my priorities is creating good jobs in Minnesota."

Kohls is sponsoring HF1356, which would increase the research and development credit rate to 5 percent across the board through gradual increases over the next three years. Current law sets the credit rate at 5 percent for the first \$2 million of research expenses and 2.5 percent after that.

Firms want to add high-paying research and development jobs in Minnesota, and the bill would encourage that investment, he said.

Rep. Joyce Peppin (R-Rogers) is sponsoring HF1357, which she said would make the tax credit even more competitive. Her bill would increase the tax credit to 6 percent of research expenditures, effective for taxable years beginning after Dec. 31, 2004.

"The benefits outweigh the costs," Peppin said.

The bill would also provide tax benefits of \$2 million in fiscal year 2006 for businesses in technology and health science zones.

Rep. Barbara Goodwin (DFL-Columbia Heights) opposed the bills, saying they amount to corporate welfare.

Rep. Laura Brod (R-New Prague) is also sponsoring a bill to provide tax credits or exemptions for biotechnology and health sciences industry zones. HF1127 would allow businesses to receive tax benefits totaling \$2 million in 2006 by applying for tax credit certificates issued by the commissioner of employment and economic development.

The Senate companion for Kohls' bill (SF1348), sponsored by Sen. Steve Kelley (DFL-Hopkins), and the companion for Brod's bill (SF1024), sponsored by Sen. Julie A. Rosen (R-Fairmont), await action in the Senate Taxes Committee. Peppin's bill does not have a Senate companion.

Growing pains

In 2003, approximately 40 people living just outside the city of Wells in Faribault County approached city officials asking that their area be annexed.

They had issues with their septic systems and wanted be part of the city's system. The city said, "Welcome aboard," to the people, but then in 2004, they said goodbye to \$93,000 in local government aid.

That was because their population went from just under 2,500 to approximately 2,540. Cities with a population of under 2,500 receive local government aid according to one formula, and cities with a population of 2,500 or greater receive the aid under an entirely different formula. So when Wells gained people, it lost money.

Under HF835, sponsored by Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Good Thunder), cities would lose that aid gradually, instead of all at once. The bill was heard March 9 in the Property and Local Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee and held for possible inclusion in the division's report to the full committee.

Under the bill, in the first year after reaching a population of 2,500, the city would still receive 80 percent of its local government aid under the small city formula and 20 percent under the large city formula.

The split would be 60-40 in years two through five, then a city would receive 100 percent of its local government aid under the large city formula.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) said the bill is fair. "When you do something new, there are sometimes things that develop that we haven't thought through. This actually

improves things quite a bit," he said.

There is no cost to the state because the total aid to cities is already established. The bill would take effect with the 2006 payments.

A companion bill (SF1312), sponsored by Sen. Julie A. Rosen (R-Fairmont), awaits action in the Senate Taxes Committee.

Some nasty mold

In 2000, Nancy Johnson of Columbia Heights was having some work done on her home and the windows were accidentally left open during a five-hour rainstorm.

Because of the incident, the house became infested with mold that had to be removed. The Johnsons had to find somewhere else to live during, what turned out to be, an eight-month renovation.

In 2001, they applied for a property tax rebate, because the house had been uninhabitable for eight months. They were turned down by both the Anoka County assessor and the Anoka County Board.

Flooding, fire damage and other obvious problems are listed, they were told, but not mold contamination. However, some counties do allow a rebate for mold contamination.

Rep. Barbara Goodwin (DFL-Columbia Heights) is sponsoring HF420, which would add mold contamination to the list of problems eligible for a property tax rebate. Homeowners would have to apply with both the county assessor and the county board. The size of the rebate would depend on how long the affected party was unable to live in their home.

The bill was heard March 9 in the Property and Local Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee and held for possible inclusion in the division's report to the full committee.

A companion bill (SF1081), sponsored by Sen. Lawrence J. Pogemiller (DFL-Mpls), awaits action in the Senate Taxes Committee.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Transaction costs

Deputy registrars say that e-commerce is allowing them to do more work than ever before, and more efficiently, but to continue to do so they're going to need some help.

"We're able to enter information immediately. We're able to do the work that was done by the department (of transportation)," said Gary Spooner, president of the Minnesota Deputy Registrars Association. "In order to do this, we're looking for an increase in fees to cover our costs."

Rep. Connie Ruth (R-Owatonna) is spon-

soring HF1354, which would reduce some driver's license fees, but add a \$5 surcharge to them until June 30, 2007, and \$10 after that. Filing fees with deputy registrars for any application other than a registration renewal would go from \$7 to \$8.50 until June 30, 2007, and to \$13 after that.

The bill was approved March 9 by the House Transportation Committee and referred to the House Transportation Finance Committee.

The fee for a Class D license, the conventional driver's license, would drop from \$18.50 to \$15. Fees for a learner's permit and a provisional license would decrease from \$9.50 to \$6, fees for a duplicate license would be reduced from \$8.50 to \$5 and the fee for a state identification card would be lowered from \$12.50 to \$9.

Fees for some commercial licenses would also drop. The fee for the Class A license would go from \$37.50 to \$34 and the fee for a Class C license would go from \$22.50 to \$19.

The fee for a Class B commercial license would go from \$20.50 to \$26, however.

A companion bill (SF1240), sponsored by Sen. Julianne E. Ortman (R-Chanhassen), awaits action in the Senate Transportation Committee.

Goodbye to 10-day tags

When you buy a new vehicle, you usually get everything but the license plates. Instead, you get a 10-day (or longer) tag, which allows you to drive the vehicle until the state sends you your license plates and registration.

Members of the Minnesota Automobile Dealers Association want to give their customers the new plates and stickers, without having to wait. A bill approved by the House Transportation Committee March 9 would accomplish that. It now goes to the House floor.

Sponsored by Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids), HF1134 would allow the Department of Public Safety to distribute license plates and stickers to automobile dealerships. Dealers would then issue the plates and stickers to customers at the time of purchase. The information would then be electronically transmitted to the state. A deputy registrar would also review the transaction electronically before issuing the registration.

The charge to customers in other states for the service has been around \$20, said Alyssa Schlender, director of government affairs for the association. She doesn't yet know what it will cost here. Distribution of the plates by dealers would be optional. People could still get their new plates directly from the state.

"Dealers are willing to contract with a third

party vendor to create software and transfer the data from the dealer's computer to the state's computer," Schlender said. "This bill is a good bill. It really represents modernization of the system. Dealers benefit because they get satisfied customers," she said.

Rep. Melissa Hortman (DFL-Brooklyn Park) agreed. "This is part of the great bureaucracy that could move faster. This is the short line to the DMV," she said.

A companion bill (SF1056), sponsored by Sen. Mee Moua (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action in the Senate Transportation Committee.

★ VETERANS

Preserving disabled veterans land

The Disabled Veteran's Rest Camp on Big Marine Lake in Washington County would be excluded from certain zoning controls, under a bill approved by the House Local Government Committee March 7.

HF34, sponsored by Rep. Ray Vandever (R-Forest Lake), would also require the camp to continue developing and promoting camp features for disabled veterans, and would exclude the camp from property taxes effective 2005.

There was no opposition to the bill, which next moves to the House Taxes Committee.

The Disabled American Veterans organization, in a written letter to the committee, said there have been numerous attempts by the Washington County Park Commission and the Washington County Board of Commissioners to acquire the land and make it part of the Big Marine Park Reserve.

The proposal "ensures that (the camp) is going to be there for the next 100 years," said Donald Drigans, camp board treasurer.

"We've been working with the veterans," and things are going fairly well on issues that need to be addressed, said Myra Peterson, chair of the Washington County Board.

Concerns have been raised about how the county would be able to purchase the land if the camp wanted to sell the land in the future, she said. Under the bill, Washington County would have a right of first refusal for the camp.

A companion bill (SF467), sponsored by Sen. Michele Bachmann (R-Stillwater), awaits action in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Moving?

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Capping damages

Three bills seek to lower medical malpractice insurance costs

By Brett Martin

Relief could be on the way for health care providers, nursing homes and private ambulance services that are experiencing skyrocketing medical malpractice insurance costs.

The House Health Policy and Finance Committee heard three bills March 8-9 that would set caps on malpractice claims and limit tort liability.

"The evidence is very clear that caps do work," said Rep. Matt Dean (R-Dellwood). He said 30 states already have legislation that addresses rising medical malpractice costs.

Dean is sponsoring HF1464, which would enact limits on the damage recoverable, and attorney fees charged, in medical malpractice claims.

Total damages for non-economic loss and punitive damages would both be capped at \$250,000. The bill would prohibit disclosing the limits to juries. All punitive damages would be paid to the Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association. Private nonprofit hospitals would not be liable for punitive damages.

The bill would accomplish three critical objectives, Dean said. It would improve health care, improve access to health care and decrease health care costs.

The committee amended the bill to remove the best practices guidelines and narrow the scope of the bill to emergency health care workers, obstetricians and gynecologists.

Dr. Gary Gosewisch, a partner at Emergency Physicians Professional Association, said his group is no longer able to buy malpractice insurance in the United States, so he buys it through an offshore organization. One or two malpractice suits can end a doctor's career and cause an insurance company to stop offering

insurance, he said, adding that doctors now meet to discuss insurance rather than medical issues.

"It truly is a crisis," he said. "We just want to be able to practice."

Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth) opposed the bill, saying legislators don't know the extent of a person's pain and suffering caused by medical malpractice and therefore shouldn't limit damages. Instead, courts should continue to decide damage amounts, he said.

"I don't know why we think we're smarter than a jury to make these decisions," Huntley said.

One such victim of malpractice is Linda McDougal. In May 2002, after a routine mammogram, she was told she had breast cancer. After undergoing a double mastectomy, she learned her doctor had made a mistake. To make matters worse, she ended up with an infection that required several more surgeries.

"I will never, ever have what I had before," McDougal said. "Victims of malpractice never plan on being victims of malpractice." However, she did not say if a suit was filed.

She said legislators should focus on eliminating medical errors rather than setting caps.

Rep. Brad Finstad (R-New Ulm) is sponsoring similar legislation for long-term care providers. HF1465 would limit non-economic damages

that could be awarded against a provider to \$300,000 per claim and \$1 million for all claims arising from a single occurrence.

"Because of fixed reimbursement rates, nursing homes do not have the ability to sim-

ply raise prices to cope with climbing liability insurance costs," Finstad said in a prepared statement.

The average per bed premium expense for liability insurance is estimated to have increased by \$400 since 1999, according to the Long-Term Care Imperative. Therefore, a typical 100-bed facility has experienced an estimated increase of nearly \$40,000 in total premium expenses since 1999.

The bill would require nursing homes to hold certain insurance in order to benefit from the cap. The cap would not apply if a nursing home caused harm intentionally or through gross negligence.

"Our goal is to change the regulatory environment in Minnesota so that health care remains accessible now and in the future," Finstad said.

Both bills were amended to require the commissioner of commerce to provide to the Legislature an annual report on the status of medical malpractice insurance in Minnesota.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Duke Powell (R-Burnsville) would limit the tort liability of private ambulance services to the same limits that apply to local government ambulances.

Those limits are \$300,000 per claim, \$1 million per incident and zero for punitive damages.

Brian Holmer, director for Great Plains EMS, said if the bill becomes law, it could save him up to \$20,000 a year in insurance costs.

Huntley also opposed this bill, saying if victims can't collect enough money to cover their expenses and needs, such as medical and home care, then the state will get stuck with the tab.

All three bills were approved and referred to the House Civil Law and Elections Committee. A companion for Powell's bill (SF713), sponsored by Sen. Geoff Michel (R-Edina), awaits action in the Senate Health and Family Security Committee. Dean's and Finstad's bills do not have Senate companions.

"I will never, ever have what I had before. Victims of malpractice never plan on being victims of malpractice."

— Linda McDougal

"Our goal is to change the regulatory environment in Minnesota so that health care remains accessible now and in the future."

— Rep. Brad Finstad

Benefiting veterans

Bills seek to ease transition back to civilian life

By PATTY JANOVEC

Minnesotans might see camouflage painted military tractor trailers going between Fort Snelling in St. Paul and Camp Ripley near Little Falls, but what they may not suspect is that the driver, once back in civilian clothes, is not authorized to drive a similar size commercial vehicle.

"Other states invite veterans to come back and they actually recruit veterans that have skills in certain areas," including tractor-trailer drivers, said Randall Tesdahl, senior veterans employment representative with the Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Tesdahl is part of an informal military working group trying to address "road blocks" veterans face as they transition back to civilian life.

The group includes representatives from the department's Workforce Center, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, the Department of Public Safety and House members.

One of the areas the group is working on is to identify the top 10 job shortages in the state by category, and giving veterans the opportunity to fill those occupations. Examples include nurses, truck drivers, emergency medical technicians and middle management positions.

Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids) said he is working with the group on formulating legislation that would create incentives to entice veterans to fill those jobs.

In the nursing field, there are people who are well-trained Navy corpsmen, medics in the Army, and Air Force medical technicians "that are saving lives on the battlefield ... but when they come back to the state and go to a local college or the University of Minnesota to a nursing program, they start at day one," explained Tesdahl.

The group has been working with the Minnesota Board of Nursing to inform soldiers of the opportunities and exemptions for licensing.

"When I came into the Legislature, one of the

things that I wanted to do was make Minnesota a better place for veterans," said Severson. By tapping into a workforce that is already educated, experienced and has a real desire to contribute to their local community you could have "a tremendous workforce," he added.

When Severson retired as an Air Force pilot four years ago, he was given a list of veteran-friendly states at his weeklong transition assistance seminar. Minnesota ranked near the bottom.

Many times a soldier hasn't been off a military base in nearly 20 years, and transition assistance helps them mold into civilian life, explained Severson.

Veterans' legislation

In conjunction with an informal military working group, Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids) has introduced a number of bills that would help state veterans. He said there has been no opposition to any of the bills.

- HF685 would eliminate the veteran's preference restriction that says preference for state employment cannot be used for those who receive or are eligible for veteran's pension. It awaits action on the House floor.

Severson said the components of the bill would tell soldiers looking for state employment that "we recognize your contribution to our country and to this state and we are willing to make an exception for your case and give you some extra credit."

A companion bill (SF1268), sponsored by Sen. Michelle L. Fischbach (R-Paynesville), awaits action by the full Senate.

- HF1240 would designate May as "Hire a Veteran Month" and awaits action on the House floor.

The measure instructs the governor, each year, to "issue a proclamation honoring this observance, urging Minnesota state and local government departments, agencies, and boards, as well as private employers, to give fair and appropriate consideration to hiring military veterans."

A Senate companion (SF1254), sponsored by Sen. Betsy L. Wergin (R-Princeton), awaits action by the full Senate.

- HF1053 would allow the public safety commissioner to issue a waiver for a road test for a veteran trying to obtain a commercial driver's license. Severson said 48 other states recognize a veteran's military license for operating certain types of vehicles.

The bill awaits action by the House Transportation Committee.

A companion bill (SF1095), sponsored by Fischbach, awaits action in the Senate Transportation Committee.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Jefferson Hobbs and his wife, Jennifer, leave the National Guard Armory in Anoka after a homecoming reception March 9. Hobbs is a member of Battery E, 151st Field Artillery that returned home after spending more than a year in Iraq. This was the third deployment in eight years for the group. They were previously in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Finding common ground

Ruud wants to connect constituents to government

By RUTH DUNN

Vividly colored children's artwork brightens the stark white walls of Rep. Maria Ruud's office in the State Office Building.



Rep. Maria Ruud

It's a mini art gallery of original works created by children who live in her district.

After Ruud (DFL-Minnetonka) was elected, she invited schools to select artwork for display.

Not only do students feel good that their art was selected, but Ruud, a passionate supporter of the arts, gets a boost every time she enters her office. "How can you not smile when you look at these?" Ruud asks as she gestures to the walls.

It was "seeing the human costs of bad policy" that prompted Ruud to run for the House. She saw those human costs as a nurse practitioner working with people in poverty; as a mother

with children in the public schools; and as the spouse of a small business owner. She kept waiting for an adult to stand up and run for office and then realized, "I was the adult. If not me, then who?" Still she said the decision to seek office was "a huge step and scary."

Ruud (pronounced "rood") ran on a campaign theme of "finding common ground" — a phrase that resonated with constituents in her traditionally Republican suburban district of Minnetonka and Eden Prairie where many are social moderates.

Increased support for public education turned out to be the prime common ground. "My district contains three outstanding school districts but people are really worried about deterioration in light of budget cuts and resulting increases in class sizes and decreases in class offerings," she said. She serves on the House Education Policy and Reform and Regulated Industries committees.

The youngest of seven children, Ruud grew up in Bloomington, but has Iron Range

DISTRICT 42A

2002 population: 36,923
Largest city: Eden Prairie
County: Hennepin
Top concern: Education

"My district contains three outstanding school districts but people are really worried about deterioration in light of budget cuts and resulting increases in class sizes and decreases in class offerings."

— Rep. Maria Ruud

connections through her father, a Croatian-American.

She's an avid runner who hits the pavement at least five days a week, often with her teenage son. "It's a good time for us to talk," she said.

Ruud sponsors regular coffee parties to keep in touch with people in her district. How will she judge her success? "If people in my district feel more connected to government and more engaged in the process and if I help facilitate that."

Turning a new page

Youngest lawmaker setting a path

By PATTY JANOVEC

At age 24, Rep. Andy Welti (DFL-Plainview) said he didn't expect to already be a legislator.



Rep. Andy Welti

He says it's an advantage being the youngest lawmaker. "I have a lot of support," and with that comes increased attention and many legislators are offering to mentor him, he said.

Welti was a participant in the page program in high school. "I remember being up here for that week long program and thinking how, someday, I wanted to be here in a legislative seat because I really enjoyed the debate." He just thought it would be more like at age 28 or 29.

Serving as a page and participating in his local 4-H program, Welti said he "developed a strong appreciation for community service, which I

think translated well to public service."

Participating in 4-H also helped with his speaking and leadership skills, both extremely important as a legislator. "Your ability to know how to compromise and ... communicate well with others so you can achieve an end result," and finding common ground is important, he added.

He's using those skills in the House committees on which he serves: Agriculture and Rural Development, Environment and Natural Resources and Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs.

He knows about the issues he faces on the agriculture committee because he grew up on dairy farm. "I can relate to the issues when we are discussing them."

What he enjoys most about the job so far is, "Being able to respond to the constituents and knowing that I have voted in a way that my constituents wanted me to vote. You're

DISTRICT 30B

2002 population: 37,084
Largest city: Rochester
Counties: Olmsted, Wabasha
Top concerns: Affordability of health care and education

Welti has invited two teachers from every school, and farmers from around the district to engage in discussions. He expects to sponsor legislation on key issues from the meetings.

making a difference and making effective policy."


Welti says he has started something unique in his district to get his constituents more involved the process. "I have an education think tank, and an agriculture think tank," he said. He invited two teachers from every school, and farmers from around the district to engage in discussions. He said he expects to sponsor legislation on key issues from the meetings.

increase the purses for racing and invest in a show horse infrastructure,” she said.

The money at stake is significant. On average, each horse produces \$6,002 in total economic impact, King said. Minnesota has 155,000 horses, ranking ninth in the nation in the number of horses.

Canterbury Park, which currently offers poker and other casino card games, is advocating for slot and video gaming, which would make it a racino. Also on the park’s wish list is a world-class equestrian center that would include two indoor arenas, three outdoor arenas, a cross-country jumping course and new stalls specifically for show horse events. A 250-room hotel and conference center is also part of the proposal.

The racino would be privately financed and not require state bonding or subsidies.

“Our proposal is really a Minnesota proposal,” Offerman said. 

Tourism ad money makes money

A nearly 800 percent return on an investment makes good business sense, Rep. Paul Gazelka (R-Brainerd) told the Tourism Division of the House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee March 3.

Every \$1 invested in tourism marketing returns an estimated \$4.60 in state and local taxes, \$20.40 in wages and \$53 in gross sales, according to Explore Minnesota Tourism.

“If we spend more, we’re going to get back more,” Gazelka said. “It benefits business, and it can benefit the state.”

Gazelka is sponsoring HF1002, which seeks to boost tourism by appropriating \$14.5 million in each year of the 2006-07 biennium to market Minnesota tourism. The bill would make \$6 million of those funds each year contingent upon matching money from private entities that have partnered with Explore Minnesota.

The base budget for Explore Minnesota is currently slated at approximately \$8.6 million each fiscal year.

If the additional money were appropriated,

part of the marketing effort would focus on small resorts.

“If we don’t watch how they take care of mom and pop resorts, we’ll be looking for a new job in two years,” said Rep. Larry Howes (R-Walker), the division chair.

Following division approval, the full committee approved the bill March 9 and referred it to the House Jobs and Economic Opportunity Policy and Finance Committee. A companion bill (SF1141), sponsored by Sen. Carrie L. Ruud (R-Breezy Point), awaits action in the Senate Finance Committee.

Maureen Scallen, director of government relations for the Greater Minneapolis Convention and Visitors Association, said she’s frustrated to see other states with larger tourism budgets advertise in Minnesota. She cited a billboard along a busy Minnesota highway advertising the Wisconsin Dells.

If the \$14.5 million annual budget were approved, Minnesota would be on par with South Dakota’s tourism budget, but still behind Wisconsin.

SPEAKING OF THE HOUSE



As he presented a bill (HF670) that would appropriate an additional \$62.9 million for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system in the next biennium and institute a tuition freeze, **Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka)** said the bill was needed, in part, because the state is short in areas such as nurses, doctors and lawyers.

“Well, maybe not lawyers,” Abeler said with a smile. “Sorry Mr. Chair, just a cheap shot.”

“I’m not a lawyer,” responded a laughing

Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL-St. Cloud), who held the gavel.

“It’s no wonder I like you so well,” said Abeler.

With laughter filling the room, **Rep. Ron Latz (DFL-St. Louis Park)**, an attorney by profession, quickly spoke, “Mr. Chair, sounds like libel.”

Said Abeler: “He would know.”



When talking about choices students make when deciding a major, **Rep. Dean Urdahl (R-Grove City)** complimented his college counselors.

“I’m just glad that St. Cloud State had some good advisors when I was trying to decide if I wanted to be a dance major or social studies,” he said with a chuckle.

“The market would have taken care of that,” said **Rep. Ron Latz (DFL-St. Louis Park)**.

Minnesota State Agencies

(Area code 651)

Administration 296-8261
Agriculture 297-2200
Toll-Free 1-800-967-2474
Commerce 296-4026
Corrections 642-0200
Education 582-8200
Employment and
Economic Development 296-3711
Toll-Free 1-888-GET-JOBS
Employee Relations 297-1184
Job Information Hotline 296-2616
Explore Minnesota Tourism 296-5029
Toll-Free 1-800-657-3700
Finance 296-5900

Health 215-5800
Housing Finance 296-7608
Toll-Free 1-800-657-3769
Human Rights 296-5663
Toll-Free 1-800-657-3704
Human Services 297-3933
Labor and Industry 284-5000
Toll-Free 1-800-342-5354
Military Affairs 268-8925
Natural Resources 296-6157
Toll-Free 1-888-646-6367
Pollution Control Agency 296-6300
Toll-Free 1-800-657-3864
Public Safety 282-6565

Driver and Vehicle Services 296-6911
Fire Marshal 215-0500
Alcohol and Gambling
Enforcement Division 296-6979
State Patrol 282-6871
Div. of Homeland Security and
Emergency Management 296-0466
Revenue
Income Tax Helpline 296-3781
Transportation 296-3000
Toll-Free 1-800-657-3774
Veterans Affairs 296-2562

Monday, March 7

HF1549—Ruth (R)

Transportation

Public safety commissioner's authority to deny limited driver's licenses clarified.

HF1550—Ruth (R)

Transportation

Motor bicycle rental business regulation provisions repealed.

HF1551—Holberg (R)

Education Policy & Reform

Student survey notice requirements provided.

HF1552—Magnus (R)

Education Finance

Transportation sparsity formula modified and money appropriated.

HF1553—Sykora (R)

Taxes

Income tax credit authorized for contributions to scholarship granting organizations.

HF1554—Opatz (DFL)

Higher Education Finance

Nursing low-income loan repayment program established to expand the supply of trained nurses and money appropriated.

HF1555—Powell (R)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs

Minnesota Emergency Health Powers Act and authority of out-of-state license holders modified.

HF1556—Huntley (DFL)

Health Policy & Finance

Medical education funding provisions modified.

HF1557—Hilty (DFL)

Health Policy & Finance

Carlton County nursing facility rate increase provided and money appropriated.

HF1558—Hilty (DFL)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs

Minnesota State Retirement System service credit purchase authorized.

HF1559—Urdahl (R)

Health Policy & Finance

Meeker County nursing facilities placed into geographic group II.

HF1560—Heidgerken (R)

Agriculture & Rural Development

Rural economic development base funding level established including ethanol producer payments.

HF1561—Peterson, A. (DFL)

Regulated Industries

Wind power usage goal established at 20 percent by 2020 and wind energy conversion system loan guarantee program established.

HF1562—Ellison (DFL)

Public Safety Policy & Finance

Hunting licensees reviewed to determine whether they are ineligible to possess a firearm and governmental officials notified where applicable.

HF1563—Vandever (R)

Education Finance

Basic general education revenue amounts uniform increase provided and uniform school levy authorized.

HF1564—Erhardt (R)

Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Diseased shade trees removal and replacement funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF1565—Paymar (DFL)

Regulated Industries

Renewable development account expenditures and nuclear fuel storage facilities legislative approval authority granted.

HF1566—Ellison (DFL)

Civil Law & Elections

Campaign workers allowed to access multiple unit dwellings unaccompanied by a candidate.

HF1567—Ellison (DFL)

Civil Law & Elections

Primary election moved from September to June.

HF1568—Meslow (R)

Public Safety Policy & Finance

State identification cards and driver's licenses assessment fee authorized to fund the Minnesota Financial Crimes Task Force and regional districts organization provided.

HF1569—Sertich (DFL)

Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance

Community action grants funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1570—Huntley (DFL)

Regulated Industries

Hospital revenue provided from the operation of gaming machines in licensed hospitals under contracts with the state lottery.

HF1571—Emmer (R)

Civil Law & Elections

Settlement offer effect provided on the recovery of costs and disbursements.

HF1572—Meslow (R)

Education Finance

Special education delivery and funding task force established.

HF1573—Krinkie (R)

Transportation

Metropolitan area access ramp meters deactivated.

HF1574—Samuelson (R)

Health Policy & Finance

Home care services reimbursement rates increased.

HF1575—Brod (R)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs

Public officer and employee vacation and sick leave accumulation clarified while on military leave and payments of accumulated leave authorized.

HF1576—Erickson (R)

Education Policy & Reform

Alternative teacher training program established for qualified professionals.

HF1577—Erickson (R)

Education Finance

Equalized debt service levy tax base modified.

HF1578—Liebling (DFL)

Civil Law & Elections

Human Services Department authorized to collect spousal maintenance.

HF1579—Westrom (R)

Regulated Industries

Telecommunications standard provider contracts authorized.

HF1580—Westrom (R)

Regulated Industries

Telecommunications combined per number fee provided.

HF1581—Smith (R)

Environment & Natural Resources

Hennepin County tax-forfeited land conveyance authorized.

HF1582—Meslow (R)

Taxes

White Bear Lake city payments required and money appropriated.

HF1583—Meslow (R)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Membership travel contracts regulated.

HF1584—Mullery (DFL)

Taxes

Limited market value provisions extended for five additional years for certain property, different value maximum increases provided and certain property exempted from the limitation.

HF1585—Olson (R)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Manufactured home park exclusions provided relating to seasonal agricultural operations.

HF1586—Lanning (R)

Higher Education Finance

State higher education grant program regulated.

HF1587—Buesgens (R)

Education Policy & Reform

Value-added student growth assessment program provided and money appropriated.

HF1588—Scalze (DFL)

Taxes

Cigarette and tobacco taxes increased, health care provider tax repealed and portion of tax increases dedicated to health care access fund.

HF1589—Scalze (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

Prescription drug bulk purchasing program established.

HF1590—Magnus (R)**Transportation Finance**

Bonding bills required to fund transportation purposes including local streets and highways, motor vehicle sales tax revenue dedicated, motor fuel tax increased, bonds issued, money appropriated and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1591—Larson (DFL)**Local Government**

Metropolitan Airports Commission eliminated and duties transferred to the Department of Transportation.

HF1592—Westrom (R)**Regulated Industries**

Public Utilities Commission authorized to develop incentives for community-based generation projects, renewable energy price incentives provided and interconnection studies required.

HF1593—Emmer (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

Candidates not agreeing to spending limits required to make a specified payment to the state elections campaign fund.

HF1594—Eken (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

Respiratory therapy practice recognized in emergency situations.

HF1595—Emmer (R)**Local Government**

Hennepin and Wright county boards authorized to initiate a process for the change of boundaries by resolution.

HF1596—Emmer (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

Polling place regulations modified.

HF1597—Sertich (DFL)**Education Finance**

All-day kindergarten levy authorized.

HF1598—Sertich (DFL)**Education Finance**

Alternative facilities bonding program qualifications modified.

HF1599—Rukavina (DFL)**Education Finance**

School districts authorized to levy for employee health care premium increases.

HF1600—Solberg (DFL)**Education Finance**

School districts authorized to levy for school bus purchases.

HF1601—Ozment (R)**Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance**

Foreign trade promotion funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1602—Smith (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Upward durational departure sentencing procedures established; Blakely hearings provided; and notice, jury determinations beyond a reasonable doubt and court findings required.

HF1603—Slawik (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

Maplewood Firefighters Relief Association authorized to transfer assets to the Oakdale Firefighters Relief Association to cover service credits earned by certain individuals.

HF1604—Hoppe (R)**Transportation**

Carver County auditor appointment as a deputy motor vehicle registrar authorized.

HF1605—Hackbarth (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Snowmobile state trail sticker provisions modified, trail maintenance costs payment provided, easement acquisition provided and money appropriated.

HF1606—Smith (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Interstate offender data collection law repealed.

HF1607—Smith (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Advisory council on interstate adult offender supervision appointments authorized.

HF1608—Cox (R)**Regulated Industries**

District court authorized to hear appeals of lesser utility fines.

HF1609—Lesch (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Presumptive stayed sentence imposed for first-time fourth- and fifth-degree controlled substance possessors, expungement of records authorized, terms of imprisonment modified and money appropriated.

HF1610—Goodwin (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

Patient's consent required to transmit medical records out of the country.

HF1611—Lanning (R)**Taxes**

Affordable housing contribution tax credit provided.

HF1612—Hamilton (R)**Transportation**

Department of Transportation required to indicate on specific service signs those businesses that sell E85 at retail.

HF1613—Lesch (DFL)**Taxes**

St. Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority authorized to establish tax increment financing subdistricts.

HF1614—Olson (R)**Regulated Industries**

Net energy billing provisions extended to electricity generated from livestock manure.

HF1615—Smith (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

Minneapolis Teachers Retirement Fund Association coordinated program consolidated with the Teachers Retirement Association, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF1616—DeLaForest (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

Marriage dissolution grounds modified and waiting period provided for certain dissolutions.

HF1617—Finstad (R)**Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Redwood County waste-to-energy and material recycling facility funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF1618—Thissen (DFL)**Civil Law & Elections**

Eminent domain attorney fee requirements and provisions modified for taking for public purposes.

HF1619—Dean (R)**Health Policy & Finance**

Health Care Administrative Simplification Act of 1994 modified and other health care administrative and filing requirements modified.

HF1620—Koenen (DFL)**Agriculture & Rural Development**

Noninvasive floating of horses' teeth excluded from the definition of veterinary medicine practice.

HF1621—Koenen (DFL)**Commerce & Financial Institutions**

Auctioneer license numbering requirements modified.

HF1622—Davids (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Beaver Creek Valley State Park special deer hunt required.

HF1623—Davids (R)**Commerce & Financial Institutions**

Dresbach Visitor Information Center hours expanded.

HF1624—Davids (R)**Taxes**

Preston tax increment financing district authorized to capture the state general tax.

HF1625—Davids (R)**Commerce & Financial Institutions**

Commerce commissioner directed to communicate to federal authorities this state's desire for federal law changes to facilitate the use of long-term care insurance with a long-term care partnership program.

HF1626—Davids (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Beaver Creek Valley State Park camping facilities availability required during spring turkey hunting and fall firearm deer hunting seasons.

HF1627—Atkins (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

Dakota County developmental disabilities facility downsizing authorized.

Wednesday March 9

HF1628—Seifert (R)

State Government Finance

State surplus property sales proceeds distribution provisions modified.

HF1629—Seifert (R)

State Government Finance

Legislative public information publications and media productions revenue solicitation required, donations accepted, fees authorized and money appropriated.

HF1630—Thissen (DFL)

Taxes

Homestead exemption increased relating to debtor creditor relations.

HF1631—Sykora (R)

Health Policy & Finance

Medical Assistance for needy persons \$20 general income disregard authorized in certain circumstances.

HF1632—Larson (DFL)

Local Government

Metropolitan Council and Metropolitan Airports Commission required to submit proposed budgets to legislative committees.

HF1633—Larson (DFL)

Local Government

Metropolitan Airports Commission and Metropolitan Council transition to fiscal year budgets provided, and legislative approval of budgets required.

HF1634—Clark (DFL)

Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance

Hennepin County; New Chance program funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1635—Huntley (DFL)

Health Policy & Finance

Individuals and small employers authorized to purchase state health coverage at their own expense and MinnesotaCare coverage authorized at full cost.

HF1636—Hornstein (DFL)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs

Minnesota State Retirement System allowable service definition modified to include time on strike.

HF1637—Liebling (DFL)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs

Legislative fiscal notes required for nonbinding resolutions.

HF1638—Peppin (R)

Transportation Finance

I-94 and Hennepin County Highway 101 interchange construction funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1639—Hoppe (R)

Regulated Industries

Basic services regulation of telephone companies provided.

HF1640—Magnus (R)

Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance

Job opportunity building zones and biotechnology and health sciences industry zone provisions modified.

HF1641—Olson (R)

Local Government

Personal rapid transit local bonding authorized.

HF1642—Finstad (R)

Health Policy & Finance

Rural pharmacy planning and transition grant program established, rural loan forgiveness program modified and money appropriated.

HF1643—Sieben (DFL)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Student information sale to credit card marketers by higher education institutions prohibited.

HF1644—Knoblach (R)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Real estate appraiser oversight, licensing and certification provisions modified.

HF1645—Simpson (R)

Regulated Industries

Electric transmission lines state permitting process length reduced, automatic cost recovery provided for certain facilities and easement payment options provided.

HF1646—Ruud (DFL)

Education Policy & Reform

School districts required to comply with the schools interoperability framework specifications and school data sharing working group established.

HF1647—Charron (R)

Transportation Finance

Trunk Highway 5 safety improvements funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF1648—Abeler (R)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs

Teachers Retirement Association service credit purchase authorized.

HF1649—Hosch (DFL)

Education Finance

Independent School District No. 750, Rocori, fund transfer authorized.

HF1650—Ruth (R)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Cosmetology regulatory oversight transfer provided, regulatory provisions modified and conforming changes provided.

HF1651—Seifert (R)

Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance

Minnesota Inventors Congress grants provided and money appropriated.

HF1652—Peterson, S. (DFL)

Education Policy & Reform

Learning year record system modified from a pupil unit basis to a credit unit basis.

HF1653—Johnson, R. (DFL)

Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture information exchange program funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1654—Johnson, R. (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources

Bridge or culvert replacement provisions modified relating to drainage repairs.

HF1655—Kohls (R)

Civil Law & Elections

Corporation definition expanded relating to campaign finance.

HF1656—Solberg (DFL)

Education Policy & Reform

Regional education districts provided.

HF1657—Mullery (DFL)

Taxes

Health insurance premium income tax deduction provided.

HF1658—Mullery (DFL)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Auto insurance discrimination prohibited based on geographic location within the metropolitan area.

HF1659—Mullery (DFL)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Driver's license suspension as a result of mailed demands for proof of insurance authority repealed, remedial measures for victims provided and money appropriated.

HF1660—Krinkie (R)

Taxes

Truth in taxation provisions modified, taxpayer satisfaction survey provided and public hearings and newspaper advertisement requirements eliminated.

HF1661—Olson (R)

Education Policy & Reform

Character development education promoted in schools.

HF1662—Sailer (DFL)

Higher Education Finance

University of Minnesota student outreach funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1663—Bernardy (DFL)

Education Finance

Special diet breakfast and lunch pilot program established for paying additional costs of special diets based on religious beliefs of students and money appropriated.

Thursday, March 10

HF1664—Buesgens (R)

Regulated Industries

Lottery gaming machines provided, contracting for placement of machines authorized, horse racing purse payments established, tax on machines and card club revenue imposed and blackjack and other card games authorized.

HF1665—Hackbarth (R)**Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Metropolitan Regional Parks System funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1666—Severson (R)**Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 738, Holdingford, fund transfer authorized.

HF1667—Beard (R)**Transportation**

10-ton vehicle loading authorized under certain circumstances and 7-ton vehicle loading allowed during spring weight restrictions.

HF1668—Lesch (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

Clinical drug or biological product trial registration and civil penalties provided.

HF1669—Wilkin (R)**Commerce & Financial Institutions**

Insurance fees, rate filings, policy renewals and alterations and data collection regulated.

HF1670—Abrams (R)**Local Government**

Municipal planning requirements modified for certain nonconformities relating to floodplains.

HF1671—Abrams (R)**Transportation Finance**

Motor vehicle sales tax proceeds allocation modified, highway and transit bonds issued, money appropriated and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1672—Abrams (R)**Transportation**

Van-only handicapped parking spaces limited to parking for handicapped-enabled vans and penalty imposed.

HF1673—Lanning (R)**State Government Finance**

Legislators' forum money appropriated.

HF1674—Abeler (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Deaf individuals tuition assistance provided.

HF1675—Seifert (R)**Commerce & Financial Institutions**

Barbershop registration fee exception provided.

HF1676—Finstad (R)**Education Finance**

Capital levy amount increased in certain instances.

HF1677—Cornish (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Snowmobile state trail sticker procedures modified, fees established and deposited, electronic licensing system commission provided, account created and money appropriated.

HF1678—Westrom (R)**Taxes**

Property tax refund schedule for homeowners and renters modified and percentage of rent constituting property taxes reduced.

HF1679—Westrom (R)**Taxes**

Property tax refund schedule for homeowners and renters modified and percentage of rent constituting property taxes reduced.

HF1680—Meslow (R)**Education Policy & Reform**

Licensed student support services student access provided.

HF1681—Penas (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Off-highway vehicle forest classification requirements modified.

HF1682—Eastlund (R)**Regulated Industries**

On-farm qualified biogas recovery facility definition expanded.

HF1683—Solberg (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Lakeshore acquisition with county environmental trust fund resources authorized.

HF1684—Gazelka (R)**Taxes**

Baxter city sales and use tax and bond issuance authorized.

HF1685—Moe (DFL)**Education Finance**

Early childhood family education program funding restored.

HF1686—Moe (DFL)**Education Policy & Reform**

Hazardous traffic condition pupil transportation zone establishment locally controlled process defined and levy authorized.

HF1687—Moe (DFL)**Education Finance**

Transportation aid for school districts providing full day, every day kindergarten authorized.

HF1688—Nelson, P. (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Clean Water Legacy Act created; authority, direction, and funding to achieve and maintain water quality standards provided; conformity with federal Clean Water Act provided and money appropriated.

HF1689—Simpson (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Muzzleloader hunting with optical scopes authorized.

HF1690—Abrams (R)**Taxes**

Taxable estate definition modified, exemption amount increased and Minnesota qualified terminable interest property elections allowed.

HF1691—Westrom (R)**Taxes**

Biomass electric generation facility property tax exemption construction date requirement and sales tax exemption duration extended.

HF1692—Peterson, N. (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

State Board of Investment compensation plans regulated.

HF1693—Thao (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

St. Paul Police; Asian Gang Task Force funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1694—Thao (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance**

St. Paul; Asian community center funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF1695—Sykora (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Regent candidate recommendation method modified.

HF1696—Sieben (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

Prescription drug discount program established and money appropriated.

HF1697—Dill (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Mineral research funds transferred to the University of Minnesota for core sampling at the Tower-Soudan mine complex and money appropriated.

HF1698—Pelowski (DFL)**Taxes**

Winona; port authority tax increment financing district duration extended.

HF1699—Cox (R)**Health Policy & Finance**

Scott County intermediate care facility for persons with mental retardation licensing change authorized.

HF1700—Cox (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Motor vehicle hit-and-run offense petty misdemeanor penalty imposed.

HF1701—Cox (R)**Transportation**

Driver's license renewal provisions modified to include passing specified examinations.

HF1702—Smith (R)**Transportation**

Railroad company prohibited from obstructing treatment of railroad worker injured on the job or from disciplining or threatening to discipline injured employee for requesting treatment or first aid.

HF1703—Smith (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Railroad and employees prohibited from obstructing treatment of a railroad worker injured on the job or from disciplining or threatening to discipline the employee injured for requesting treatment or first aid.

HF1704—Demmer (R)**Education Finance**

Limited English proficiency aid increased by including pupils with less than seven years of average daily memberships.

HF1705—Smith (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

Marriage dissolution, child custody, child support, maintenance, and property division style and form changes provided; child support and pension distribution provisions modified; data classified and procedures and enforcement clarified.

HF1706—Smith (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

Volunteer Firefighter Relief Association working group recommendations implemented relating to firefighter retirement financing and benefits.

HF1707—Abeler (R)**Regulated Industries**

Anoka; Main Street Stage Theatre wine license expanded to include malt liquor.

HF1708—Krinkie (R)**Transportation**

Counties authorized to contract with commissioner of transportation to maintain trunk highways.

HF1709—Lesch (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Sex offenders prohibited from living near schools and other predatory offenders except under specified conditions.

HF1710—Beard (R)**Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance**

Broadband telecommunications revolving loan fund established.

HF1711—Beard (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Radioactive waste or material transport fee imposed.

HF1712—Beard (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Scott County; Community Corrections Act subsidy funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1713—Krinkie (R)**Taxes**

Solar energy sales tax exemption sunset removed.

HF1714—Kahn (DFL)**State Government Finance**

Coya Knutson memorial funding provided for the Capitol grounds and in the city of Oklee and money appropriated.

HF1715—Ellison (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Expungement eligibility expanded to include certain criminal proceedings not resolved in petitioner's favor.

HF1716—Hamilton (R)**Health Policy & Finance**

Jackson County nursing facility reimbursement rate increased.

HF1717—Emmer (R)**Education Policy & Reform**

Minors under age 18 required to attend school as a requirement for possessing a driver's permit or license.

HF1718—Demmer (R)**Education Policy & Reform**

School boards prohibited from contracting to limit superintendent authority to assign teachers and administrators.

HF1719—Klinzing (R)**Education Policy & Reform**

High school reform measures provided including educational planning and assessment program, and a college-level examination program; basic skills tests replaced with comprehensive assessments and money appropriated.

HF1720—Holberg (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

Sexual abuse personal injury civil action limitation period modified.

HF1721—Paulsen (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

Public employer reimbursement modified for compensation paid to firefighters and peace officers and claim evaluation panel established.

HF1722—Mullery (DFL)**Commerce & Financial Institutions**

State contract bidding prohibited for certain employers and safety and health plans required for all construction projects.

HF1723—Mullery (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Falsely reporting crime and providing false information to law enforcement criminal penalties imposed.

HF1724—Mullery (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Sex offender mandatory life sentences provided for specified offenses, indeterminate sentences provided for repeat offenders, sixth degree criminal sexual conduct crime established and sentencing guidelines modified.

HF1725—Mullery (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Violent offenders required to consent to on-demand searches as a condition of probation, supervised release or parole.

HF1726—Blaine (R)**Agriculture & Rural Development**

Pesticide application record retention requirement eliminated.

HF1727—Beard (R)**Regulated Industries**

Off-sale wine licenses authorized for supermarkets.

HF1728—Beard (R)**Regulated Industries**

Basic services regulation of telephone companies provided.

HF1729—Nornes (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Electronic computer product waste recycling provided.

HF1730—Beard (R)**Transportation Finance**

House resolution memorializing the president and Congress to support Amtrak funding.

HF1731—Lanning (R)**Taxes**

Historic structure rehabilitation expenditure income tax credit provided.

HF1732—Blaine (R)**Agriculture & Rural Development**

Agricultural loan provisions modified, livestock equipment pilot loan program established, livestock zoning requirements modified, town road repairs funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1733—Kahn (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

Adverse Health Care Events Reporting Act expanded to include facility-acquired infection rates.

HF1734—Kahn (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

Stem cell research state policy established and criminal penalties imposed.

HF1735—Erhardt (R)**Transportation Finance**

Metropolitan area sales tax imposed with the proceeds dedicated to transportation and transit improvements, allocation of revenues for the motor vehicle sales tax provided and money appropriated.

HF1736—Dill (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

St. Louis County tax-forfeited land sales authorized.

HF1737—Rukavina (DFL)**Commerce & Financial Institutions**

Employee invention agreements regulated.

HF1738—Murphy (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

Higher education individual retirement account plan members permitted up to five years to elect between defined benefit and defined contribution plan coverage.

HF1739—Peterson, S. (DFL)**Education Finance**

Limited English proficiency programs funding restored.

HF1740—Seifert (R)**Health Policy & Finance**

Abortion criminal penalty eliminated.

HF1741—Thao (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance**

Group residential housing supplemental rate modified for certain specified facilities.

HF1742—Mullery (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Hunting licensees reviewed to determine whether they are ineligible to possess a firearm and governmental officials notified where applicable.

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MINNESOTA INDEX

Seeing the sites

Billions generated for state economy by travel and tourism annually	\$9.2
Billions in state and local tax revenue from tourism annually	\$1.1
For each dollar invested in tourism marketing, return on investment in	
new state and local taxes	\$4.60
In wages	\$20.40
In gross sales	\$53
Millions, as estimate, tourism generates in gross receipts/sales per day	
in Minnesota	\$25
Estimated number of travelers in Minnesota in 2003, in millions	28.6
Percent of travel that is for pleasure	85
Median number of night stays for pleasure trips	3
Percent of travel occurring between April and August	55
Percent between September and November	26
Jobs, as approximate, in state that were in leisure and hospitality industry	
in 2003	233,000
In 1993	199,700
Expected industry growth between 2002 and 2012, as percent	19
Number of scenic byways in the state	22
Year Itasca State Park was established	1891
Feet above sea level in the park where the Mississippi River begins	1,475
Estimated number of lakes in the Brainerd Lakes Area	500
Miles of Lake of the Woods shoreline, as estimate	65,000
Islands in the lake	14,582
Miles of canoe routes, as estimate, within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness	1,500
Estimated number of annual visitors to the area	200,000
Weight, in pounds, of "Willie the Walleye" that greets visitors in Baudette	9,500
Number of freighters, as approximate, that drop anchor in Duluth's harbor	
each year	1,100
Weight, in tons, of Duluth's Aerial Lift Bridge center span	1,000
Height, in feet, of cliff that Split Rock Lighthouse was built atop in 1910	130
Nesting species of birds in the Superior National Forest	155
Length, in miles, of the North Shore Scenic Drive from Duluth to Grand Portage	150
Miles of snowmobile trails, as estimate, on the Iron Range	3,000
Approximate miles of bike trails the state has developed along former railroad beds	450
Year Vikings allegedly inscribed a rock displayed at the Kensington Runestone Museum	1362

Sources: 2006-07 biennial operating budget background, Minnesota Department of Finance; Stepping Stones, Department of Natural Resources; Explore Minnesota 2005 Travel Guide, Minnesota's Boundary Waters and Tourism Works for Minnesota: Tourism and the Economy 2005; Explore Minnesota Office of Tourism; Duluth Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

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