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INSIDE: HOUSE MAKEUP COMES UP SHORT, FIRST VETO, LET'S GO FISHING, MORE

This Week's Bill Introductions HF2504-HF2514

SESSION Weekly

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On the cover: Pam Bonham's fourth graders from Tanglen Elementary School in Minnetonka look up at the lit chandelier in the Capitol Rotunda May 11. The chandelier was lit as part of Statehood Day.

—Photo by: Tom Olmscheid

Mirroring Minnesota

House makeup comes up short in reflecting gender, race

By **RUTH DUNN**

If the House had the same racial and gender composition as the state, more women and minorities would be serving as representatives.

Minnesota's racial composition is becoming more diverse with 13 percent of residents being of a race or ethnicity other than white. Yet the House remains overwhelmingly white, with just four of the 134 members coming from communities of color. In the Senate, 65 of the 67 members are white.

If the House had the same ethnicity ratio as the state, 117 members would be white but, based on the proportion of communities of color in Minnesota as of July 2003, five members would be black, four would be Hispanic, four would be Asian, two would be Native-American and another two would identify themselves as being of two or more races.

As for gender balance, the state's population was 50.4 percent female as of July 2004, according to State Demographer Tom Gillasp. Thirty-seven women now serve in the House, about 28 percent of the total membership.

Would discussion in committees and on the floor be different if legislators more closely reflected the racial ethnicity and gender composition of the state?

"It is a completely different debate on gaming without one Native American in the House," said Rep. Keith Ellison (DFL-Mpls), one of two black members. With more black legislators, Ellison believes his racial profiling bill would have done better. It didn't even get a hearing this session.

"If I was not there, some issues might not be brought up," said Rep. Cy Thao (DFL-St. Paul), who is of Hmong descent. "We are missing a lot of information unique to populations."

"We give a totally different perspective on

issues and process," said Rep. Kathy Tingelstad (R-Andover). Discussion on K-12 education and early childhood would be different if the House had more women who "are in the trenches and know what's happening in the schools," she said. Other issues would not even come up, she added, like the recent proposal to eliminate the Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women.

She believes women tend to be more bipartisan and build camaraderie across party lines. Women are also better at multi-tasking, she said.

"If women ran the House, we'd be done at 5 p.m. every day, run home and make supper," she said.

Reaching out

"I'd like to see a broader composition of minorities, especially if they're Republican," said House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon).

He's worked to recruit minorities for the House. "I've been successful in getting candidates to run but not as successful in getting them elected."

All the current representatives of color are DFLers, but Republican leaders say that has more to do with demographics than anything else. Part of the challenge is that most minorities live in the urban core cities and those areas are solidly DFL, according to Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall), majority whip.

"There is the feeling that inner cities are just Democratic territory with no chance to break in," he said.

Yet Seifert eyes potential Republican voters when he drives along University Avenue near the Capitol with its entrepreneurs and small business owners who have a strong work ethic and traditional family values — all issues that tap right into the Republican platform planks,

Civics lesson

Ninth- and tenth-grade students in a civics class at Arlington High School, one of St. Paul's most racially diverse high schools, received a grant from the National Geographic Society to explore whether culture affects people's attitude toward government and/or participation in the political process.

They wanted to begin their research by determining if there is proportional representation on different levels in the House. But when they went to the Legislature's Web site, they could not find the information they needed.

There was demographic information about representatives' occupations, education, gender and age, but nothing about their race or ethnicity. "We were surprised the information was not there," said teacher Diana Morton. "We thought it was a reasonable request."

This prompted students to write to 16 representatives and state officials requesting that information on race and ethnicity be included on the Web site.

They had impact.

Beginning next year, biographical information sought from representatives will include the question of race/ethnicity and the data will be included on the Web site, according to Lee Ann Schutz, assistant director of nonpartisan House Public Information Services.

he said.

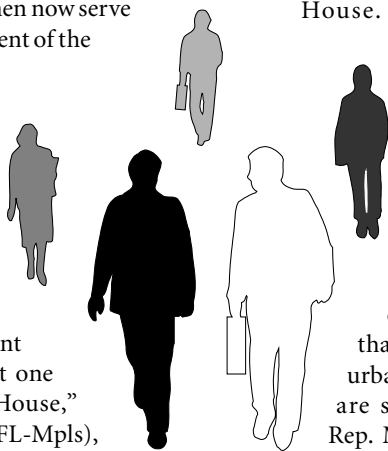
State organizations of both political parties say they're working to increase the number of minority candidates.

Outreach to minorities is a priority for the Republican Party of Minnesota, according to Michael Brodtkorb, communications director. "We're interested in all candidates who support Republican platform ideas." He predicts the next election will see more Republican candidates of color in certain districts across Minnesota.

"The Legislature needs to reflect the community," said Peggy Flannagan, director of community outreach for the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party.

"It starts with finding emerging leaders and helping them gain skills to run for office," she said. Because the traditional caucus and convention process can be intimidating to potential candidates of color, the party has to meet people halfway by going to their communities and their gathering places, she adds.

First Reading continued on page 4



**Racial makeup as of July 1, 2003,
according to the Census Bureau
estimate for Minnesota
(most recent)**

87.2%	White
3.8%	Black
3.3%	Hispanic or Latino (equivalent terms)
3.3%	Asian
1.3%	2 or more races
1.1%	American Indian
0.04%	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

From the office of the state demographer

Ellison is among members of the Black Democrats, formed not only to encourage candidates of color, but to impact other areas such as increasing diversity in the now predominately white House staff in the House.

A woman's place

There were no women in the House until 1922 when four women were elected following passage of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920, giving women the right to vote. The number of female representatives remained in single digits for more than 50 years until three women were elected to the Senate and 10 to the House in 1977.

When Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Herman-town) was elected that year, it was still a

rarity for rural Minnesota to have female representatives. She's happy those numbers have increased. "We've never had so many rural women as we have now, representing a wide spectrum of women's views," she said.

"I get lots of 'nos,'" said Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) who works to recruit women to run for office. She understands that a negative response may turn to a positive with patient coaxing. "Women tend to think they're not ready or prepared to run."

"Women ask more questions; they take a long time to recruit," she said. "But once women make the decision to run, they become solid, committed candidates."

"The biggest obstacle is that women think

Continued on page 23

Centennial Rose

Perennial blooms commemorate milestone



With names like Pink Gnome, Firecracker and Golden Eye, the 11 rose varieties in a newly planted Centennial Rose Garden promise to commemorate the Capitol milestone in a splendor of shades.

The flower-shaped bed of roses will feature a creamy white specially hybridized rose that mirrors the building's Georgia marble.

Bailey Nurseries of Newport, another centenarian in business since 1905, is donating the rose garden to celebrate the Capitol Centennial as well its own birthday.

Peggy Anne Montgomery, the nursery's media relations representative, designed



The Centennial Garden, shown here in the original design drawn Peggy Anne Montgomery, landscape architect and Bailey Nurseries media relations representative, features 11 varieties of roses.

and planted the flower-shaped garden. Approximately 30-feet square, it is located on the south mall of the Capitol, between Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and the Veterans Service Building.

Montgomery, who is also a landscape architect, selected one perennial plant, purple salvia, as an accent and divider.

"That wonderful purple color is really nice to weave colors with," she said.

The garden was planted April 20. "It looks like little thorny sticks right now," she said, laughing, but explained that if the weather cooperates – warm and sunny days, please – the roses will bloom in time for the June 23 dedication ceremony.

Some 12 years in the making, the Centennial Rose was created by Bailey's rose breeder Ping Lim.

Hybridizing new roses requires crossing one preferable plant with another, the abridged version of which entails: take pollen from one plant and place it on the stigma of the other, wait for the rose hip to swell and ripen, open the hip and take the seeds, plant the seeds and see what happens.

Lim makes approximately 30,000 crossings per year resulting in about 300,000 seeds, Montgomery said. It's a fascinating process, she said, one that requires foresight, love and hard work.

It takes 10 to 12 years to bring a rose to market, she said.



The Centennial Rose, created by rose breeder Ping Lim, is the garden's centerpiece.

The roses in the garden, all Easy Elegance varieties, were developed without pesticides or herbicides, Montgomery said. "Being an organic gardener myself, I don't believe we have to pollute the Earth to make something beautiful."

(N. Wood)

Come to the Capitol for the Centennial Garden Dedication Ceremony Thursday, June 23, 4 p.m.
Featuring First Lady Mary Pawlenty, Bailey Nurseries rose breeder Ping Lim and the unveiling of the Centennial Rose
All 87 counties will receive five Centennial Rose bushes

Photo courtesy of Michelle Meyer/Bailey Nurseries.

★ AGRICULTURE

Fairground turf tussle

County agricultural societies have been empowered under Minnesota law to organize, make rules and purchases, and have full jurisdiction over county fairgrounds since 1860.

The long-standing presumption has been that county fairgrounds are exempt from local zoning ordinances throughout the year, according to the nonpartisan House Research Department.

HF1389/SF1146*, sponsored by Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont), aims to clarify the exemption.

The House passed the bill 130-2 May 9. Because the House amended the bill slightly, it now returns to the Senate, where that body first passed it 58-0 April 27. Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy) is the Senate sponsor.

Some city attorneys have said the exemption applies only during the fair, proponents said in committee testimony.

The bill would prevent cities from imposing fees on fairgrounds.

Rep. Paul Kohls (R-Victoria) said the city of Waconia is concerned about whether the bill would also apply to the streets adjacent to the Carver County fairgrounds.

The language is already in existing law, Gunther said. "I don't think we're expanding it at all."

E20 gets green light

**Signed
by
the
governor**
★ ★ ★

Saying the state is on its way to becoming the Saudi Arabia of renewable fuels, Gov. Tim Pawlenty signed a new ethanol mandate into law May 10.

The new law establishes a "petroleum replacement goal" for Minnesota that by Dec. 31, 2015, at least 20 percent of the liquid fuel sold in the state be derived from renewable sources.

Most provisions are effective Aug. 1, 2005, unless otherwise noted.

Currently, the state requires that motor vehicle gasoline sold in Minnesota contain an "E10" blend, meaning 10 percent agriculturally derived ethanol by volume.

The new law raises that blend to 20/80 by Aug. 30, 2013, unless, by Dec. 31, 2010, the state is already using a 20 percent denatured ethanol blend in the gasoline supply or federal approval has not been granted for the E20 blend.

Under the new law, dealers and refiners

would be protected from lawsuits alleging damages from defective blended gasoline. The immunity would not apply to situations of "simple or willful negligence or fraud" or environmental or public health damages.

Effective May 11, 2005, the Agriculture Department, in consultation with other agencies and the renewable fuels, petroleum and auto manufacturing industries, is to implement strategies that promote the widespread use of renewable fuels. Items to address include installing more pumps, getting a green light from the federal government and working with large corporate fleets of vehicles.

The department, again in consultation with other agencies and stakeholders, is also directed to review the effects of E20 on the ethanol industry and Minnesota consumers.

Additionally, the Commerce Department is

required to report to the Legislature by Jan. 15, 2008, on the appropriate use of E20 gasoline in small engines and make recommendations on marketing tactics and ways to increase E20 availability.

Rep. Gregory M. Davids (R-Preston) and Sen. Dallas C. Sams (DFL-Staples) sponsored the legislation.

HF223/SF4*/CH52

★ CONSUMERS

Protecting hearing aid users

The House unanimously passed a bill May 9 that would establish and strengthen consumer protections and instill more trust in the hearing aid industry.

Sponsored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), HF949 would extend the period in which a consumer could return a hearing aid to a dispenser from 30 days to 45 days. Consumers buy hearing aids from dispensers rather than directly from manufacturers.

Clark said she's not aware of any opposition to her bill by any groups.

The bill would make the notice of cancellation period effective upon mailing the hearing aids, not upon receipt by the dispenser. The cancellation fee would be changed from 10 percent of the purchase price to no more than \$250, under the bill.

With some new hearing aids costing up to \$12,000 for a pair, users can pay up to a \$1,200 charge for returning hearing aids, under current law.

The bill would require old hearing aids that were given to a dispenser for a trade-in discount be returned upon request if the new aids are returned. A copy of the audiogram administered by the dispenser to select the hearing aid would need to be provided to the consumer upon request.

The bill now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Dallas C. Sams (DFL-Staples) is the sponsor.

Regulating travel contracts

Membership travel contracts could be modified to give consumers greater protection, under a bill passed unanimously by the House May 9.

Sponsored by Rep. Doug Meslow (R-White Bear Lake), HF1583 would close loopholes and make changes to laws enacted two years ago that regulate travel membership.

Changes would include moving the buyer's right to cancel the contract to the 10th day

STATEHOOD WEEK



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Wini Froelich, a costumed interpreter with the Minnesota Historical Society portraying an 1857 territorial schoolteacher, waits for 21st century school children May 10 during Statehood Week. The interpreters teach school groups touring the State Capitol how Minnesota's boundaries were drawn prior to statehood on May 11, 1858.

after the consummation of service, and prohibiting membership travel operators from offering a gift in Minnesota unless the gift is disclosed.

Oral disclosure requirements would also be modified under the bill. The disclosures would need to include information about any legal proceedings against the travel operator involving travel services, criminal offenses, consumer fraud, bankruptcy or unpaid court judgments.

The bill states that a membership travel operator would need to disclose when a third party travel agent is used to make travel arrangements, and whether the consumer could, on their own, buy the package directly from the third-party.

The bill now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley) is the sponsor.

★ CRIME

No quotas

**Signed
by
the
governor**
★ ★ ★

Quotas for issuing traffic and vehicle inspection citations will further be prohibited, under a bill signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty May 10.

Effective Aug. 1, 2005, the new law expands current statute, which applies only to the Minnesota State Patrol. It would prohibit law enforcement agencies, in addition to the state patrol, from requiring troopers, commercial vehicle inspectors or law enforcement representatives to issue a certain number of citations over any given period of time.

"This is a bill that doesn't have any opposition. It just reinforces the fact that commercial vehicle inspectors do not have quotas just like the state troopers don't," said Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia), the House sponsor.

Sen. David J. Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm) is the Senate sponsor.

HF998/SF1486*/CH46

★ EDUCATION

Parent power

**Signed
by
the
governor**
★ ★ ★

Parents and guardians will have first right of placement in classrooms for their multiple-birth children, under a new law signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty May 5.

Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall), whose wife is a twin, said he sponsored the bill after parents came to him with stories about schools that would not follow their wishes for placement of their multiple-birth children.

"Research shows that multiples, especially in the elementary school years, often do better in school if they are together," said Seifert.

The law will benefit parents who want their twins, quadruplets and quintuplets and other multiple-birth children in the same classroom and also those who don't.

School staff may recommend classroom placement to parents and provide advice, but parents will have the final say.

Seifert said the bill includes an element of local control. If multiple-birth children are disruptive in a classroom, a principal could request that the school board determine a new placement for the children after the initial grading period.

Sen. Dennis R. Frederickson (R-New Ulm), the father of twins, is the Senate sponsor.

The law is effective with the 2005-06 school year.

HF130/SF180*/CH33

★ EMPLOYMENT

Teacher soldiers

**Signed
by
the
governor**
★ ★ ★

Teachers whose first three years of consecutive employment are interrupted for active military service will be able to return to teaching and pick up where they left off on their probationary period, under a law signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty May 5.

New public school teachers have a probationary period of three consecutive years of teaching before they can be considered for tenure, according to Rep. Randy Demmer (R-Hayfield), the bill's House sponsor. The Senate sponsor is Sen. Sheila M. Kiscaden (IP-Rochester).

Under the law, eligible teachers will have to promptly resume teaching consistent with federal reemployment timelines for uniformed service personnel.

Teachers will not be able to count their military service as part of their consecutive teaching time, said Demmer.

Under the old law, probationary teachers who left their teaching jobs to serve in the military lost credit for the time they had taught and had to start over when they returned to their jobs.

The law applies to probationary teachers absent for active military service beginning on Sept. 10, 2001, or later.

HF1144/SF244*/CH36

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

Pay increases on the way

**Signed
by
the
governor**
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The 50,000 Minnesotans who currently earn minimum wage are going to get a pay raise thanks to a bill that Gov. Tim Pawlenty signed into law May 10.

Effective Aug. 1, 2005, the law requires employers with annual gross sales of at least \$625,000 to increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.15 an hour. Employers with annual gross sales less than \$625,000 will need to increase the minimum wage from \$4.90 an hour to \$5.25 an hour. Employers will be able to pay employees under 20 years of age \$4.95 an hour for the first 90 consecutive days of employment.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the federal minimum wage for covered, nonexempt employees is \$5.15 an hour.

The state's last minimum wage increase for employees of larger companies was Sept. 1, 1997, and Jan. 1, 1998, for employees of smaller companies.

The legislation is sponsored by Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) and Sen. Ellen R. Anderson (DFL-St. Paul).

HF48/SF3*/CH44

★ ENERGY

Renewable eligibility extended

**Signed
by
the
governor**
★ ★ ★

The wait is over for Minnesotans seeking an eligibility extension for wind incentive payments.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty signed a law May 5 that will extend until Dec. 31, 2005, the 18-month timeframe in which a wind facility must begin operating or lose its eligibility for state incentive payments. The law is effective May 6, 2005.

Those who take advantage of the extension or become eligible to build a wind facility after Jan. 1, 2005, will receive wind incentive payments of 1 cent per kilowatt-hour over a 10-year period. Owners of the wind facilities had originally sought payments of 1.5 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Facility owners requested the law, sponsored by Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Good Thunder) and Sen. Julie A. Rosen (R-Fairmont), after the federal Production Tax Credit, which investors can use against passive income to reduce tax liability, was unavailable for 10 out of the 18 months of eligibility. Without the credit, some people were unable to secure the financial backing they needed to go forward with their projects.

The Renewable Energy Production Incentive was created to support the development of wind energy.

HF218*/SF817/CH40

★ ENVIRONMENT

Tapping sales taxes for water

The state's ramped-up clean water efforts could be supported by a hybrid model of improved property fees and a constitutional amendment to tap a portion of sales taxes, under the latest funding mechanism for the so-called "Clean Water Legacy Act."

The House Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee approved the measure May 10. It now moves to the House Taxes Committee.

HF826, sponsored by Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), aims to achieve and maintain water quality standards for the state's surface waters as required by the federal Clean Water Act.

The committee considered an array of funding sources this session, including a clean water fee on all service connections to sanitary sewer systems, bond proceeds and a deed and mortgage transfer fee.

The bill would impose a "State Clean Water Fee" on all improved property (in this case property containing a structure valued at more than \$5,000). The proposal would raise an estimated \$79.44 million per year to support clean water activities. Fees would vary by property type — e.g. residential, commercial and industrial — and would be graduated based on market value of the structures.

Under the proposal, the property tax state-

ment would be the collection mechanism and fees would be paid at the same time as property taxes. Counties would be allowed to keep a portion to cover collection costs.

The fee would "blink off," Ozment said, if Minnesotans vote to dedicate a portion of the state sales tax to clean water activities.

The bill would propose the following constitutional amendment to voters in the 2006 general election:

"Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to provide funding beginning July 1, 2007, to protect and restore the state's lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and groundwater by dedicating additional sales and use tax receipts equal to the state sales and use tax of one-eighth of one percent on taxable sales until the year 2016?"

Currently, the state sales tax rate is 6.5 percent. The bill would increase that rate to 6.625 percent after June 30, 2007.

A companion bill (SF762), sponsored by Sen. Dennis R. Frederickson (R-New Ulm), awaits action in the Senate Finance Committee. The Senate passed on May 6 an omnibus tax bill (SF2206), sponsored by Sen. Lawrence J. Pogemiller (DFL-Mpls), that would support clean water activities with General Fund dollars.

If you will be visiting the Capitol in the near future, call the Capitol Historic Site Program at (651) 296-2881 to schedule a tour.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Samples of water collected from impaired lakes and rivers around Minnesota are displayed for the House Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee April 12 during public testimony on the Clean Water Legacy Act.

Sourcing St. Paul water

**Signed
by
the
governor
★ ★ ★**

A new law signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty May 5 will give the city of St. Paul a backup water supply plan in the event of an emergency such as a terrorist threat, drought or contamination.

Effective May 6, 2005, the law grants legislative approval for the Department of Natural Resources to issue the city's water board a consumptive use of groundwater permit to draw more than 2 million gallons per day average in a 30-day period.

The city primarily pulls water from the Mississippi River. Using backup wells would require obtaining the permit.

Under the new law, the permit is subject to a determination by the department that the water remaining in the basin from which the backup wells draw would be adequate to meet the basin's need for water.

Rep. Sheldon Johnson (DFL-St. Paul) and Sen. Ellen R. Anderson (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the legislation.

HF1327/SF1252*/CH39

Project Riverbend Board eliminated

**Signed
by
the
governor
★ ★ ★**

A new law signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty May 10 will eliminate a formal board with oversight of development along a stretch of the Minnesota River.

Effective Aug. 1, 2005, the Project Riverbend Board is dismantled, but proponents say protection efforts will not be diminished.

The board, consisting of representatives from Renville, Redwood, Brown, Nicollet, Blue Earth and Le Sueur counties, was created in 1980. It has not met since 1994.

In testimony before the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee, Nicollet County Environmental Services Director Tina Rosenstein said the board was established to set standards for development, similar to the state Wild and Scenic River designation, for a stretch of the Minnesota River from Franklin in Renville County to Le Sueur in Le Sueur County.

County ordinances will continue to protect that portion of the river even without a formal arrangement, Rosenstein said.

Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Good Thunder) and Sen. John C. Hottinger (DFL-St. Peter) sponsored the legislation.

HF2042/SF1841*/CH47

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

★ GAME & FISH

Give a hoot, change the statute

Alice the great horned owl may have fewer sleepless days, under a bill that unanimously passed the House May 9.

HF419, sponsored by Rep. Ray Cox (R-Northfield), would remove the great horned owl from the state's unprotected bird list. It aims to clarify the protected status of great horned owls in Minnesota.

The measure now moves to the Senate, where Sen. Thomas M. Neuville (R-Northfield) is the sponsor.

Some bills provoke more interest than others, Cox said. "This is one you can all give a hoot about."

Currently, great horned owls appear on Minnesota's unprotected birds list, along with such avian cousins as sparrows, blackbirds and pigeons.

Great horned owls are, however, protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Alice's handler, Houston Nature Center Naturalist Karla Kinstler, testified in committee that the classification is causing confusion even among conservation officers.

As the symbol of the new nature center, Alice received death threats from people opposed to its construction with tax dollars.

When Kinstler approached a local state conservation officer about the threats, he told her he had no jurisdiction over the matter because the great horned owl is on the unprotected birds list.

★ GOVERNMENT

Noxious weed appeals

**Signed
by
the
governor
★ ★ ★**

Counties can reassign appeals duties related to laws controlling and eradicating noxious weeds to a county board of adjustment, under a new law signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty May 10.

Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul), who sponsors the law with Sen. Pat Pariseau (R-Farmington), said it would streamline county government processes. The law is effective May 11, 2005.

Each county now has the ability to have a noxious weeds appeal board, but counties have to solicit members to join a rarely used board, Hansen said. Counties can reduce their efforts in trying to find members by having an existing board handle the appeals that may come from the public, he added.

"At its option the county board of commissioners, by resolution, may delegate the duties of the appeal committee to its board of adjust-

ment," according to the law. "When carrying out the duties of the appeal committee, the zoning board of adjustments shall comply with all of the procedural requirements."

HF1084/SF1016*/CH49

★ HEALTH

Provisions adopted in health bill

Two meetings of the omnibus health and human services bill conference committee have resulted in agreements and the adoption of some provisions, mostly fee increases, but the controversial issues are yet to be debated.

The committee met May 9 and 10 to compare sections of the bills. It then approved some identical provisions, including increasing well-management fees, and modifying the definition of "eligible rural hospital" for the rural hospital grant program. The population limit for an eligible hospital's community was increased from 10,000 to 15,000. Additionally, the fee for issuing a certified vital record was increased from \$8 to \$9.

Other provisions adopted by the committee include increasing fees for drinking water connections, environmental laboratory certification and food manager certification. The establishment of a statewide hospitality fee, requiring school food services to be inspected twice a year, and making technical changes to current laws were other provisions adopted by the committee.

Some of the major differences, which still need to be worked out, include eliminating MinnesotaCare eligibility for adults without children, abortion notification data requirements and limiting family planning grants to exclude organizations that provide abortion services, which are only in the House bill (HF1422).

Items only found in the Senate version (SF1313) include a series of health care cost containment provisions and mental health and chemical health provisions, including amending the discharge planning process for offenders with serious and persistent mental illness.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) and Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls) sponsor the respective bills.

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

Conference committee begins

Members of the higher education conference committee have different opinions for funding the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system.

The Senate bill (SF2265), sponsored by Sen. Sandra L. Pappas (DFL-St. Paul), totals more than \$2.79 billion, \$58.5 million more than the House bill (HF1385), sponsored by Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls), and \$35.1 million more than the governor's proposal.

The Senate funds the university at slightly more than \$1.22 billion, and MnSCU at about \$561,000 less. In each case the House is lower, by \$34.1 million and \$23.29 million, respectively.

The House bill also provides more than \$12.7 million for both the university and MnSCU, if a racino bill becomes law.

The Senate is also \$915,000 higher in funding for the Higher Education Services Office at \$348.53 million, but the bodies agree on \$2.78 million for the Mayo Foundation to help increase the number of doctors trained to practice in rural areas.

After a review of policy provisions May 10, conferees adopted identical language in each bill. They plan to reconvene May 12 to further review differences and take testimony.

Among the dissimilarities is funding for the development of a "mission-driven post-secondary educational institution in the Rochester area that meets the needs of the region ... and that capitalizes on the unique opportunities for educational partnerships."

Both bodies allocate \$200,000 for implementation, but the House and governor offer \$3 million for development; the Senate provides \$2.3 million.

The Senate bill also prohibits all postsecondary schools, and its alumni associations, from giving or selling student contact information to credit card issuers; establishes loan repayment program for nurses agreeing to practice in nursing homes or to work as educators in the state; and prohibits MnSCU from raising tuition by more than 4 percent in each of the next two years.

The House bill appropriates money for the creation of Centers of Excellence in the MnSCU system, increases the amount of time a student is eligible for the state grant program from eight to nine semesters and reduces the expected student share of instruction costs.

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Hospital board expansion

The Yellow Medicine County Hospital District Board could see its membership expanded, under a bill approved by the House 118-16 May 9.

Rep. Aaron Peterson (DFL-Madison) and Sen. Gary W. Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls) are sponsoring HF399/SF493*, which would allow

the elected members of the hospital board to appoint three additional voting members who are not residents of the district, yet whose hospitals or clinics are used by county residents.

"The bill is designed to specifically apply to Canby Hospital and Clinic, and Sioux Valley Hospital and Clinic out of Sioux Falls," Peterson said. He also said a clinic in Minnesota, just across the border in Lyon County, would like to have representation on the board.

Under the bill, the terms of the appointed members must be designated by the board at the time of the appointment, but the terms cannot exceed three years. Appointed members could be reappointed for successive terms.

Appointed members would have the same privileges as board members, including eligibility to hold office, according to the bill. Appointed members could be removed from the board for good cause by a two-thirds majority vote of elected members.

The Senate passed the bill 49-17 April 21. It now awaits the governor's signature.

★ INDUSTRY

Auctioneer numbers won't change

**Signed
by
the
governor**
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Auctioneers can now get used to their license numbers and include them on printed materials without having to worry about them changing every year.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty signed into law May 5 legislation that modifies the numbering requirements for auctioneer licenses issued by county auditors.

Effective May 6, 2005, the law allows auctioneers to keep the same numbers and requires the license to contain a number that individually identifies the auctioneer holding the license.

Formerly, license numbers could change each time they were issued, presenting a problem for auctioneers who wanted to include their numbers in marketing materials.

The legislation was sponsored by Rep. Lyle Koenen (DFL-Clara City) and Sen. Gary W. Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls).

HF1621/SF453*/CH32

Golden nuggets

A new law signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty May 5 will make some adjustments to the statutory provisions governing the first iron nugget production facility in the state.

A 2004 law exempted from certain environmental review the Hoyt Lakes Mesabi Nugget facility. The goal was to ensure a new process of producing high-quality iron nuggets from iron ore moved from demonstration to production in Minnesota ahead of nugget development efforts in Indiana.

Effective May 6, 2005, the new law makes a technical change to the statutory description of the hearth furnace used at the facility and extends its permit application timeframe to June 30, 2005.

The permit component of the new law is good news for mercury emissions, proponents said, because the company has discovered new, better technology to control the discharge of mercury in the process water. Though the discovery has extended the permitting process, the proprietary technology is designed to meet the federal Great Lakes Initiative mercury emissions standards.

Rep. David Dill (DFL-Crane Lake) and Sen. Thomas M. Bakk (DFL-Cook) sponsored the legislation.

HF1334*/SF1342/CH37

★ INSURANCE

Omnibus insurance bill passes

The omnibus insurance bill that would make a series of technical changes to insurance regulations was amended five times before being approved by the House 132-1 May 9.

Sponsored by Rep. Tim Wilkin (R-Eagan), HF1809 would regulate insurance agency terminations, coverages, fees, forms, disclosures, reports, information security and premiums.

"This is really an exciting day for insurance," Wilkin said.

The Department of Commerce-requested bill would prohibit a homeowner's insurer from taking adverse underwriting action against a person whose home is vacant as a result of being called to active military service. Insurers typically do not like to insure vacant buildings.

Rep. Diane Loeffler (DFL-Mpls) successfully amended the bill to include homes of military personnel that are occupied by a caretaker.

The bill would also require an insurance discount for snowmobiles that have a certain auxiliary lighting system.

Other provisions would increase the fee for filing insurance forms and premium rates that insurance companies pay to the Department of Commerce from \$75 to \$90, and eliminate a \$250 filing fee for a worker's compensa-

tion large risk alternative rating option plan that meets a \$250,000 threshold in annual premiums from a single employer.

Under the bill, insurance companies would be required to implement a comprehensive security program to protect customer information, and the initial annual renewal licensing fee for data service organizations would be increased from \$50 to \$1,000.

Wilkin successfully amended his bill to delete sections dealing with premium finance refunds, adding MinnesotaCare to the list of acceptable waivers of coverage for small employer health insurance and clarifying standards for claim filing and handling.

A successful amendment offered by Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Grand Rapids) would allow a pilot project in Aitkin, Itasca, Koochiching and St. Louis counties. Under the provision, member-employers that have 50 or fewer employees would be able to provide the same health coverage under the same plan and with the same premium rates as provided by member-employers with more than 50 employees.

Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth) offered a successful amendment that would require a high deductible health plan, when used in connection with a health savings account, to provide enrollees access to the same discounted provider fees offered by the high deductible health plan.

An amendment successfully offered by Rep. Jim Davnie (DFL-Mpls) would require service cooperatives to permit school districts participating in a service cooperative health coverage pool to solicit bids and information from competing sources of health coverage.

The bill now heads to the Senate where Sen. Linda Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park) is the sponsor.

Changing insurance regulations

The House approved miscellaneous changes in state insurance regulations 131-0 May 9.

The most significant change would allow expedited procedures for insurance companies to receive authority to offer new or revised insurance products or premium rates.

Sponsored by Rep. Tim Wilkin (R-Eagan), HF1669 would also regulate certain fees, rate filings and policy renewals and alterations.

Wilkin had previously said the bill would help insurance jobs stay in Minnesota as other states try to recruit them.

The bill would require an insurance company to post its policy form on its Web site rather than issue a new policy every five years, provided the policy has been renewed continuously without any changes. It would also allow expedited form and rate filing.

Rep. Barbara Goodwin (DFL-Columbia Heights) successfully offered an amendment to delete a section of the bill dealing with the collection of private information on individuals.

That section would have provided that an authorization given to an insurance company to collect information on an applicant for coverage, reinstatement or a change in benefits would remain in effect for as long as the person remains continually insured. Currently, the authorization is valid for no more than 26 months.

The bill now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Linda Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park) is the sponsor.

★ 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 133-1 by the House May 9.

Sponsor of HF732, Rep. Doug Meslow (R-White Bear Lake), said the bill "allows cities and townships to enter into agreements with residents to bury lines if every affected resident agrees to pay his or her fair share and if every affected resident agrees."

"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," Mark Sather, White Bear Lake city manager, previously told a House committee.

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

The bill was passed 60-0 by the Senate May 12. Also sponsored by Sen. Mady Reiter (R-Shoreview), it now goes to the governor.

County boundary change

The Hennepin and Wright county boards would be able to initiate a specific change in county boundaries, under a bill passed 133-0 by the House May 9.

The change is needed so that the entire city of Rockford can be included in Wright County.

The boundary under dispute is an 8-square block area in the city that is located in Hennepin County and has experienced

problems with ambulance response times and public safety issues because of its location and designated sheriff's office, said Rep. Tom Emmer (R-Delano), the sponsor of HF1595.

Under the bill, "the two boards would vote by resolution," to work out the tax and service implications and then the issue would be voted on by the public, Emmer said.

The bill now goes to the Senate where Sen. Mark Ourada (R-Buffalo) is the sponsor.

Elective to appointive positions

Polk and Lac qui Parle counties may have the ability to make the offices of county recorder and auditor-treasurer appointive, rather than elected, under a bill approved 92-38 by the House May 5.

Rep. Bud Heidgerken (R-Freeport), sponsor of HF2028, said 18 counties now have this authority.

Under the bill, the county board could make the positions appointive if approved by at least 80 percent of board members. The board must also notify the public of its intent by having a resolution published in the official publication of the county once a week in the two weeks prior to a public meeting.

The resolution could be implemented without submitting the question to the voters unless, within 30 days of the second publication, there is a petition signed by at least 10 percent of the county's registered voters requesting a referendum.

Among those against the bill was Rep. Torrey Westrom (R-Elbow Lake).

"For us to circumvent the voters in a referendum ... is not the right thing to do in taking away elected positions," he said. Members need to stop this bill right now if they are going to get serious about letting voters decide what elected positions they want to get rid of, he added.

The bill now goes to the Senate where Senate Majority Leader Dean E. Johnson (DFL-Willmar) is the sponsor.

St. Cloud boundary adjustments

The city of St. Cloud is the only city in the state that lies within three counties. A bill to put the community within just one county passed 102-31 in the House May 9.

Sponsored by Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL-St. Cloud), HF1949 now goes to the Senate where Sen. Dave Kleis (R-St. Cloud) is the sponsor.

Under the bill, "the county boards for the counties of Stearns and Benton may initiate the process to change the boundary between the two counties to include within Stearns County that portion of the city of St. Cloud

that is currently in Benton County if each county board adopts a resolution in support of the change." The bill also says Stearns and Sherburne may initiate the process as well, with the portion of St. Cloud to be included in Stearns. Voter approval would then be needed, Opatz said.

Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids) successfully offered an amendment that would sunset the provision Jan. 1, 2007. "I believe that to keep it open-ended can create more heartburn," he said.

Severson, who voted against the bill, said he has resolutions from the Benton and Stearns county boards against the measure because repositioning the lines creates some economic hardships, particularly for Benton County with its low tax base. "Redrawing those lines tends to take some of that economic development out," he said.

Severson read a statement from a Stearns County commissioner that said, in part, "Boundary changes as proposed by Rep. Opatz would create winners and losers, when, in fact, all that is needed is a helping hand with cooperative efforts. Rep. Opatz's bill is bound to create an inexhaustible turf war."

Opatz said the general public is raising "significant" concerns over the problems being created by the city lying in three counties. "It's controversial in some quarters among elected officials, but I can assure you that by enlarge the voters see the need for addressing these issues. With this I think the conversation will move forward, and I think that's a good thing."

Optional locations for meetings

County boards will have the option of holding a meeting at any location within the county, under a new law signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty May 9.

The new law states that a board "may meet" on other days "and at other locations within the county." Rep. Jerry Dempsey (R-Red Wing), who sponsors the law with Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing), said the issue came to him as a request by the counties.

Robert Davis, veterans service officer and legislative liaison for Goodhue County, told a House committee that the Goodhue County Board now holds meetings at county fairs, but cannot make the meetings official because of current state law.

Current law states, "the board shall meet at the county seat for the transaction of business on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January, and on other days it prescribes as necessary for the interests of the county."



RECREATION



Lifejackets a must

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A new law signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty May 5 aims to bridge a disconnect between state and federal lifejacket requirements and keeping Minnesota youth safer while boating.

Effective May 6, 2005, children under 10 years of age are required to wear a lifejacket while boating on state waters. The requirement does not apply while the child is below deck or in an enclosed cabin.

Previously, state law required readily accessible flotation devices for everyone on board. It did not state that the lifejackets must be worn.

Federal law requires that children under the age of 13 (who are not in the cabin or below deck) must wear a personal flotation device on waters under federal jurisdiction. This includes Lake Superior; Canadian border waters; the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers; and Cass, Leech and Winnibigoshish lakes.

The new state law specifies that the first violation will result in a warning, until May 1, 2006; thereafter, the penalty is a petty misdemeanor.

The new law provides exemptions for commercial watercraft and boats that are anchored for swimming or diving.

The legislation is formally titled the Grant Allen Law, named after a 5-year-old boy who drowned when he fell from a boat on a Chisago County lake in 2003. He was not wearing a lifejacket.

Rep. Char Samuelson (R-New Brighton) and Sen. Satveer Chaudhary (DFL-Fridley) sponsored the legislation.

HF590/SF1116*/CH31

Lifeguards not needed

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by
the
governor**
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Lifeguard supervision is no longer needed for adults who swim in zero-depth entry public pools.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty signed a law May 10 that exempts zero-depth pools, when used by people 18 years of age or older, from lifeguard requirements. The law is effective May 11, 2005.

Sponsored by Rep. Sandra Peterson (DFL-New Hope) and Sen. David Gaither (R-Plymouth), the legislation gives zero-depth pools the same lifeguard exemption as regular pools.

A zero-depth entry pool has a slope that begins at grade level and 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 law allows health clubs to hold aqua-aerobic classes for adults in zero-entry pools without the presence of a lifeguard. License requirements and inspections for pools do not change under the legislation.

HF604/SF284*/CH50

SAFETY



Bill aims to protect traffic cops

The shoulder of a road might become a little safer for Minnesota law enforcement officers, under a bill passed unanimously by the House May 9.

HF1164 was passed 66-0 by the Senate May 12. Sponsored by Rep. Paul Gazelka (R-Brainerd), and Sen. Sheila M. Kiscaden (IP-Rochester), it now goes to the governor.

"This bill is necessary to clarify ambiguity in the original Ted Foss Move-Over law that the courts have determined needs to be clarified," said Gazelka. Foss, a state trooper, was struck and killed when a semi-tractor trailer crashed into his squad car parked along the interstate as he was making a traffic stop in August 2001.

The bill amends current law that requires a car passing an emergency vehicle to move a lane away from the stopped emergency vehicle by extending that protection to any stopped emergency vehicle with its lights on, rather than only to emergency vehicles stopped on a street or highway that has two or more lanes in the same direction. Also, passing motorists must also slow to 10 mph below the posted speed.

Failure to follow the law would continue to be a misdemeanor, punishable by a \$100 to \$200 fine.

Unsafe crib protection

A bill designed to prevent the injury, and possible death, of infants in unsafe cribs was passed by the House 126-2 May 6.

"Each year, 240 Minnesota infants sustain injuries in cribs," said Rep. Katie Sieben (DFL-Newport), sponsor of HF987. In the past 12 months, four babies have died in cribs, she said.

The bill would regulate baby cribs and prohibit the sale and commercial use, such as licensed day-care use, of unsafe cribs.

Licensed child-care providers would be required to maintain documentation of their

cribs, including the brand name and license number, under the bill. Each year, child-care providers would need to check this information against a U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Web site listing of unsafe cribs. Every month, day-care providers would be required to perform safety inspections of their cribs.

Other provisions in the bill would prohibit the sale of unsafe cribs by a commercial user. Lodging establishments would be prohibited from providing an unsafe crib to guests.

The bill now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Ellen R. Anderson (DFL-St. Paul) is the sponsor.

TAXES



Drafting error corrected

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Cities in Minnesota eligible for local government aid could receive retroactive payments, under a bill signed into law by Gov. Tim Pawlenty May 5.

Sponsored by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) and Sen. Mee Moua (DFL-St. Paul), the law takes effect retroactively, with local government aid payable in 2004.

During the 2003 special legislative session, a portion of the local government aid was eliminated, but grants to specific cities for specific needs were retained. However, a drafting error made it unclear how to calculate the city aid base.

Local government aid distribution in 2004 and 2005 was calculated with the assumption that the error would be corrected in the 2004 omnibus tax bill, but that bill was never passed. How much the cities get now depends on the state's 2003 formula.

HF47*/SF1087/CH38

TRANSPORTATION



Liens can now expire

Security interests on passenger cars that have been satisfied will now expire seven years from the date of satisfaction and can be removed from state records, under a bill passed unanimously May 9 by the House.

HF2035, sponsored by Rep. Peter Nelson (R-Lindstrom), would also allow the lien holder to notify the Department of Public Safety in the sixth year, but not later than 90 days ahead of the expiration of the seven-year period, that the lien will not be satisfied in time, and, upon request, it can be extended for another seven years.

"Sometimes customers will lose the card, the

document, showing the satisfaction of the lien being paid," Nelson said. "If the lien company goes out of business or is sold it is sometimes difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a new release on this lien. That requires that the owner of the vehicle must go and get a court order to be able to sell that vehicle. This allows for the cancellation of those liens after seven years."

The bill, which Nelson said was requested by the department's Driver and Vehicle Services Division, now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Michael J. Jungbauer (R-East Bethel) is the sponsor.

Road test waiver

Veterans permitted to drive certain classes of vehicles by a branch of the military could get a licensing break in Minnesota, under a bill passed by the House 133-0 May 9.

HF1053/SF1095*, sponsored by Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids) and Sen. Michelle L. Fischbach (R-Paynesville), was passed by the Senate 63-0 April 18, so it now moves to the governor.

The bill authorizes, but does not require, the commissioner of public safety to waive the requirement of military veterans to take a road test to qualify for a Minnesota driver's license under certain conditions, specifically if the person is already licensed by a branch of the United States Armed Forces for that vehicle class, or has been licensed in the past year.

Veterans would still be required to take the written test.

Depending on the class of license, taking the road test could cost veterans up to \$5,000, Severson said on the House floor. "It's a good message to send to our veterans."

Truck weight limit

A law that allows recycling and garbage trucks to exceed certain seasonal weight limits was set to expire July 1, 2005, but Gov. Tim Pawlenty signed a bill May 5 that would indefinitely extend the sunset date.

Effective Aug. 1, 2005, the law, sponsored by Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina) and Sen. William V. Belanger Jr. (R-Bloomington), allows vehicles collecting recycling and mixed solid waste to exceed seasonal weight limits if the axle weight does not exceed 14,000 pounds.

The Department of Transportation and Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota were to have finished a study on road wear and weight restrictions by July 1, but those studies aren't completed, so the law should remain in effect, Erhardt said.

Garbage companies favor the law, but city

DEDICATED MEMBERS



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Members of the Isaiah Group, a coalition of 82 faith-based organizations from Minneapolis, St. Paul and St. Cloud, circled with their cardboard bus while others strategize on the second floor hall in the east wing of the Capitol before moving to the front of the House Chamber where the omnibus transportation bill was being debated May 11. The group seeks to have a dedicated source of funding for public transportation.

engineers and county representatives oppose it, fearing the continued use could further damage roads.

HF1189*/SF1259/CH34

Preserving disabled veterans land

The Disabled Veterans Rest Camp on Big Marine Lake in Washington County will be excluded from certain zoning controls, under a new law signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty May 10.

"This shows our appreciation for the sacrifices that our disabled veterans have made for us," said Rep. Ray Vandever (R-Forest Lake), who sponsors the law with Sen. Michele Bachmann (R-Stillwater).

The law requires the camp to continue developing and promoting camp features for veterans who are disabled, prohibits the taking of land from the park by eminent domain, requires access to the park to not be restricted and excludes the camp from property taxes effective for taxes levied in 2005, payable in 2006, and thereafter.

Most provisions are effective the day following local approval.

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

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. According to the law, "The camp, by terms of separate agreements, must offer Washington County the right of first refusal to purchase the rest camp property if a sale is ever contemplated and provide an easement across the main Veterans Rest Camp Road in order to provide a connection of the north and south areas of the park."

HF34/SF467*/CH43

Adjournment date approaches

The Minnesota Constitution stipulates that the Legislature cannot meet in regular session after the first Monday following the third Saturday of May in any year.

This means that the 2005 Legislature must adjourn no later than May 23.

If its work is not completed on time, only the governor can call a special session.

However, he or she cannot specify issues to be acted upon once a special session is called.

If needed, this would be the third straight biennium that a special session would be required to pass budget bills for the following biennium.

A one-day special session in 2002 was needed to provide flood relief for Roseau. Also considered were charitable deductions and a sales tax exemption on the delivery of aggregate materials and concrete block.

Frequently called numbers (Area code 651)

Information Services, House Public	
175 State Office Building	296-2146
Chief Clerk of the House	
211 Capitol.....	296-2314
Index, House	
211 Capitol.....	296-6646
TTY, House	296-9896
Toll free.....	1-800-657-3550
Information, Senate	
231 Capitol.....	296-0504
TTY, Senate	296-0250
Toll free.....	1-888-234-1112
Secretary of the Senate	
231 Capitol.....	296-2344
Voice mail/order bills	296-2343
Index, Senate	
110 Capitol.....	296-5560

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Primary numbers

Governor vetoes first bill of the session

By **LEE ANN SCHUTZ**

The legislative session's first gubernatorial thumbs down went to a bill that would have negated the need for primary elections in cases where there are uncontested races.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Larry Hosch (DFL-St. Joseph) and Sen. Michelle L. Fischbach (R-Paynesville), passed the House 129-0 May 3 and the Senate 64-1 March 7.

In his May 10 veto message, Gov. Tim Pawlenty said he agreed with the intent of the bill, but his veto was based on a concern that the bill's language does not achieve its objective.

"As you know, election laws are very technical and their interpretation is often contentious. As governor, it is important that any election

bill signed into law achieves its intended results and that we do not interject confusion into the election process," he wrote.

Under current law, a state primary is held the first Tuesday after the second Monday in September in each even-numbered year when more than one person from each party has filed to run for the same elected position. The primary is used to select only one nominee from each of the major political parties to be on the general election ballot in November.

Pawlenty explained the need for a primary is not based on the number of people seeking an office, but whether the elective office requires the conducting of a primary to select nominees. In essence, the primary is needed to make the candidate officially the nominee.

"All partisan offices elected at the state general election require that nominees be selected by a primary. As a result, there are arguably no circumstances under which the statewide primary election would not be required to select the nominees and the objectives of the proposed law would not be achieved."

Also of concern to the governor is the lack of any language that would make the candidate the nominee when no primary is held.

The idea of limiting primaries may still have legs, however. Pawlenty suggested the Legislature consider altering existing provisions in the omnibus state government finance bill to address his concerns.

Hosch said he and Fischbach are considering how to move the bill forward. "I agree with the concerns with this bill," he said. "I believe they can be easily rectified by making some technical changes through the State Government Finance Conference Committee."

HF1110/SF879*/CH48

Total Vetoes by Minnesota Governors, 1977 - 2004

Governor	Years in office	Vetoes per year	Total vetoes
Pawlenty, Tim			
	2004	5	
	2003	3	
			8
Ventura, Jesse			
	2002	9	
	2001 Special	6	
	2001	10	
	2000	11	
	1999	18	
			54
Carlson, Arne H.			
	1998	15	
	1997	19	
	1996	26	
	1995	20	
	1994	25	
	1993 Special	1	

Governor	Years in office	Vetoes per year	Total vetoes
	1993	29	
	1992	16	
	1991	28	
			179
Quie, Albert H.			
	1982 Special 3	0	
	1982 Special 2	0	
	1982 Special	0	
	1982	10	
	1981 Special 3	1	
	1981 Special 2	0	
	1981 Special	0	
	1981	7	
	1980	8	
	1979 Special	0	
	1979	5	
			31

Governor	Years in office	Vetoes per year	Total vetoes
Perpich, Rudy			
	1990	3	
	1989 Special	0	
	1989	4	
	1988	3	
	1987 Special	0	
	1987	1	
	1986 Special	0	
	1986	1	
	1985 Special	0	
	1985	1	
	1984	5	
	1983	2	
	1978	0	
	1977	0	
			20

Compiled by: Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

NOTE: Governor's term increased from two years to four years beginning in 1963. Legislature began to meet annually beginning in 1973.

Transportation clears House

Measure includes increase in gas tax, tab fees

By MATT WETZEL

An increase in license tab fees projected to raise \$740 million over the next decade for transportation needs, an annual tax on each car that could be as high as \$20, and a gas tax hike are provisions included in the omnibus transportation finance bill passed by the House 72-61 May 12.

Members met for more than four hours May 11 and another couple of hours the next morning before passing the nearly \$3.85 billion plan over the objections of the bill's sponsor, Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville). "You're going to put MnDOT in the red, and many projects will be delayed. Vote no," she said. Amendments to the bill are expected to generate \$7.4 billion over the next decade for transportation needs.

The bill now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing) is the sponsor.

Much of Holberg's concern is directed at the most controversial portion of HF2461, an amendment successfully offered by Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina) that would raise the gas tax by 10 cents a gallon — 5 cents this year and another 5 cents in mid-2007. The current 20-cent state gas tax was last increased in 1988.

Also part of Erhardt's amendment is a proposal allowing each county to impose an annual "wheelage" tax of up to \$20 per vehicle, to pay for roads and bridges in that county.

The amendment also proposes that 3.85 percent of sales tax receipts in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area and Chisago County be dedicated to transit — 3.08 percent to the metropolitan area and the

remainder into a Greater Minnesota transit fund.

Voters would be asked in November 2006 if they want to change how the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax is allocated. Currently, 30 percent goes to fund state and local highways, 21 percent goes to the Metropolitan Council for transit and other needs, and much of the rest goes to the General Fund.

When fully implemented beginning July 1, 2011, 60 percent of the proceeds would be deposited in the highway user tax distribution fund; 38 percent would be deposited into the metro area transit fund and 2 percent would go to the Greater Minnesota transit fund.

Holberg submitted a successful amendment, increasing license tab fees an average of \$30 a year over the next 11 years for public transportation projects.

House Minority Leader Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) was pleased with the final outcome. "Today we have the historic opportunity to make sure that Minnesota has a world-class roads-and-transit system.

"This compromise means that we will

finally be taking care of our transit needs in the Twin Cities metropolitan area," he said. "For too many years, we have been dead-locked."

"We're not getting it done," Erhardt said of the transportation problem. "The reason is we haven't been addressing the problem for many, many years. This is a big bite out of the apple that will help. Let's reach across the region, shake hands and get this bill done. Today we have an opportunity to vote for a bill that will be the largest transportation funding in history."

Holberg said, "I knew that this was going to be a tough bill to pass. I think I know where we're going now. Over the last two weeks I've begged lobbyists to accept a bill that will pass. I don't believe this bill will meet that criteria. We've got an interesting ride coming up ahead. Put your seatbelt on," she said.

Other aspects of the bill:

- Class A, B, C and D driver's licenses would all increase \$3.
- Those who fail their written driver's tests twice would have to pay a \$10 fee for the third and subsequent tests. Those who fail their road test twice would have to pay a \$20 fee for the third and subsequent tests.
- New license plates with the message "Global War on Terrorism" would be made available. Qualified members of the National Guard and military reserves would be eligible for the plates, which would carry a \$5 surcharge. Eligible veterans would be able to request a personalized plate, for no fee.
- "Support Our Troops" license plates for the general public would be available for cars, pick-up trucks, recreational vehicles and motorcycles for a \$30 contribution to an account created by the bill. Money would be used for financial support to Minnesota soldiers on active duty and their immediate families.
- The speed limit on Interstate 35E in from West Seventh Street to downtown St. Paul would increase from 45 mph to 55 mph.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Minnesotans could see a lot of road construction during the next two years if the House and the Senate can come to an agreement on their transportation bills. Both propose an increase in the gas tax.

A major league proposal

New ballpark plan for Twins clears first base

By PATTY JANOVEC

"Take me out to the ball game ..." Sing some Hennepin County and Minnesota Twins officials to the tune of a new baseball stadium proposal that would increase the county sales tax sans voter approval.

Joining supporters in song was the majority of the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee, which approved the plan May 10.

Under the bill, the team would contribute \$125 million with an upfront cash contribution of \$40 million and the second cash payment of \$85 million to be received before completion of the 42,000-seat ballpark on the edge of downtown Minneapolis behind the Target Center. Hennepin County would contribute \$235 million for construction, with additional on- and off-site development costs at \$84 million. A Minnesota ballpark authority, governed by a five-member

commission, would oversee the stadium construction and operation.

"First and foremost no state General Fund dollars are used in this stadium proposal ... and it's an outdoor open air stadium the way, in my opinion, baseball should be played," said Rep. Brad Finstad (R-New Ulm), the sponsor of HF2480. "The team assumes responsibilities for cost overruns, so they are committed to the building of a state-of-the-art structure and committed to staying on task and on budget with this proposal."

The most contentious part of the proposal is the exclusion of the referendum process so that county voters wouldn't have a say in an additional 0.15 percent sales tax proposed to pay for the county share of the ballpark.

"Our deal with the county is no referendum," said Jerry Bell, president of Twins Sports Inc. "We have a number of reasons for that ... but the most critical, of course, is the time delay which would move the opening of

the ballpark from 2009 to 2010." Additional concerns include the risk of increased interest rates and higher construction costs due to inflation, Bell said.

"Almost anything that the county does would not pass a referendum in my estimation," said Hennepin County Commissioner Mike Opat. This is a complicated issue with high emotion on both sides with details negotiated and understood. The issue "lends itself to representatives doing their job," Opat added.

Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake) predicted that a voter referendum would not pass. "I think the members of this institution ought to take note of that and consider what we're doing in light of what our current law requires."

Before a local sales tax proposal can take effect, legislative approval is needed.

Olson unsuccessfully offered an amendment that would have taken the referendum exclusion out of the bill, and put the question to voters in a special election or any regularly scheduled election in an attempt to address the time delay issue.

"Essentially there is a referendum on this issue and that's when Commissioner Opat is up for re-election and the rest of the county commissioners," said Finstad.

"The one thing I cannot justify is why we shouldn't have a referendum on the stadium, and yet should have a referendum on schools or libraries or courthouses, or anything like that," said Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls).

"This amendment is probably worth the discussion and the debate, but at this time it would be nice to have that debate in the tax committee," said Finstad. The bill is expected to go to the House Taxes Committee, if approved by the House Local Government Committee.

A Senate companion (SF2297), sponsored by Sen. Steve Kelley (DFL-Hopkins), awaits action in the Senate State and Local Government Operations Committee.

Some have said that without a new facility the Twins might shop for a new city to call home. "For the state, from our vantage point, it seems to me there should be something here for longevity and keeping the Twins," said Olson.

An amendment successfully offered by Olson would keep the team's history in Minnesota. "The lease or use agreement must



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Fans in the "cheap seats" at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome express their desire for a new Twins stadium during a recent game. Jerry Bell, president of Twins Sports Inc., said the Metrodome is far more suitable for watching football than baseball.

Continued on page 23

House passes tax bill

Local sales tax option included in proposal

By MATT WETZEL

After more than 10 hours of debate and 27 amendments, most of which were rejected, the House now has an omnibus tax bill. HF785 was passed 80-54 and will now go to the Senate, which passed its own tax bill May 6. A conference committee is expected to work out the differences.

"We have spent many hours in the (House) Taxes Committee assembling a bill that I think does a tremendous number of things for the taxpayers of the state of Minnesota," said Committee Chair Rep. Phil Krinkie (R-Shoreview), the bill's sponsor.

One of the more controversial aspects of the bill proposes to freeze property tax levies in cities, towns and special taxing districts payable in 2006. Taxpayers would receive a survey form with their property tax statements beginning with taxes payable in 2007, asking their reaction to any proposed levy increase. If more than 20 percent of property owners are dissatisfied, a special election would be called. If the new levy were not approved, it would return to the previous year's level.

Local government aid to Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth would also be cut, under the bill. Duluth already has an additional 1 percent sales tax, and Minneapolis and St. Paul would be able to make up for lost dollars by imposing their own 0.5 percent local option sales tax, if approved by voters.

There were no provisions for local option sales taxes other than for the state's two largest cities included in the bill. But an amendment successfully offered by Rep. John Dorn (DFL-Mankato) would allow a city or a group of cities to impose a local sales tax of 0.5 percent without asking legislative approval; however, voter approval would be needed. The proceeds must be used for specific regional projects and the tax must end when the project is paid for.

The amendment also authorizes local sales taxes for Sartell, St. Cloud, Waite Park, and St. Joseph. St. Augusta will have one if voter approval is given at the next general elec-

tion.

There was no mention about what this might do to any potential countywide sales tax in Hennepin County, which would be used to pay for a new ballpark for the Minnesota Twins. The House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee approved that bill (HF2480) May 10. It is next scheduled to be heard by the House Local Government Committee, and, if approved, would likely go to the House Taxes Committee.

Other parts of the bill include the creation of a 15-member reform commission to examine the fairness of the current tax system, with reports to the Legislature over a four-year period on different tax types.

The bill also aids current and former military personnel, and their families.

Veterans or surviving spouses who are totally or permanently disabled because of combat would receive a \$200,000 valuation exclusion for their property when determining property taxes.

There would be a new check-off on the state's tax form to allow taxpayers to donate \$1 to the Minnesota Military Families Relief Account. It would be established for National Guard or Reserve members ordered to federal active duty or surviving family members in need, effective beginning with income tax returns for tax year 2005.

The state's tax form would also be amended to allow taxpayers to direct a donation of \$1 or more to K-12 education, higher education,

transportation, health care, nursing home, clean water or a public safety memorial and survivors account. Money from the latter would be used to build and maintain memorials and help families of peace officers killed on duty.

All check-offs would be placed on a separate form, with the total amount transferred to the main tax form. Each check-off would be removed if it fails to gain at least \$100,000 in contributions from at least 8 percent of all returns over two years.

A controversial aspect of the bill was the change in the formula for calculating the rent credit, a refund that renters receive for their share of the property taxes they pay. DFLers have said the bill could cut the rent credit in half; thereby hurting many low-income residents who rely on it.

Rep. Jim Davnie (DFL-Mpls) unsuccessfully introduced an amendment to restore the credit. "I don't like cutting rent credit at all. HF785 will be even worse on seniors."

Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) agreed. "This is not a luxury item for so many of these folks. If we don't change this bill, we're going to have 44,000 people lose the renter's credit."

Knobloch said that renters pay a property tax through the rent they pay, and they should get a refund based on what they pay. "We have gotten away from that in recent years," he said, adding that the credit has been more like a bonus than a property tax refund in recent years.

House Minority Leader Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) was severely critical of the bill, including the cutting of rent credits and local government aid. "It does not make sense to have a tax bill that takes away from those working people in the state who ask for a little bit of tax fairness," he said.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), who chaired the tax committee the past three biennia, was not enamored with the final product. "There are many reasons to vote against this bill. To the members in the minority, you have only touched on a few. Like all bills, we hope it improves in the conference committee process."

"This is a good bill," said Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall). "There are some tiny provisions that might be problems, but it's a good bill."



Let's go fishing

Volunteers keep seniors on the water

By NICOLE WOOD

Senior angler Margherita Larmon is impressed with the walleyes in Minnesota lakes. But there was a time when she thought she would never fish again.

After her husband passed away eight years ago, Larmon moved from Watertown, N.Y., to Willmar to be closer to her son and family.

Relocating halfway across the country required her to give up her camper, boat and fishing rods.

"I thought that was part of my life that was gone, too," she told the Environment, Agriculture and Economic Development Budget Division of the Senate Finance Committee in March.

An invitation to join an outing with a Willmar-based nonprofit organization that provides free fishing and boating excursions to senior citizens put Larmon back on the water.

"You see the boats go by in early May and you just miss that part of your life," the 71-year-old said in a recent interview. "Until they started this Let's Go Fishing, there was just no way I could stay in touch with fishing."

Let's Go Fishing strives to reach those seniors who are no longer able to head out on their own for a day on the lake.

Founded in 2002 by Willmar businessman Joe Holm, the Let's Go Fishing mission is "to enrich the lives of senior citizens through fishing and boating activities that build relationships and create memories."

Like Larmon, many of the participants have lost a spouse and just need a fishing partner. Others have health concerns, a lack of income or equipment, mobility issues or any number of reasons that make solo trips difficult. Many live in nursing, veterans or community group homes. The only cost to program participants, if they wish to drop a line in the water, is a Minnesota fishing license.

"We're well taken care of, we're looked after, we have lifejackets so we're safe," said Larmon. "To think that the guides are willing to let us use their equipment and be on their boats and spend the time, that they would give up their

time and spend it with us."

The volunteer guides are put through a rigorous training program that includes a walk-through of boat and trailer operations, a primer in public access etiquette and inclement weather avoidance tactics, according to State and National Program Coordinator Michael O'Brien.

Besides Willmar, there are state chapters established in Little Falls, North Branch, Paynesville, Sauk Centre and Sleepy Eye. There is also a Colorado chapter.

Interest in the program has blossomed to the point where there are 25 communities on the waiting list, O'Brien said. And the calls keep coming in.

Thus, the program is seeking state support this session to establish a main office and expand the number of chapters statewide.

Willmar lawmakers Rep. Al Juhnke and Senate Majority Leader Dean E. Johnson are on board. Both DFLers were successful in getting some seed money for Let's Go Fishing into the omnibus environmental finance bills

The fishing opener in Minnesota is practically an official state holiday. Walleyes and northern pike are fair game, or fair fish as the case may be, and heaven forbid you would schedule a wedding or, egad, a House floor session for that special Saturday in May.

The opener is always two weeks before Memorial Day weekend.

This year the hallowed event is May 14.

both bodies have passed.

The House bill (HF902), sponsored by Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), would appropriate \$225,000 from the Game and Fish Fund to the Department of Natural Resources for a one-time grant to the program. The Senate has proposed \$325,000 in SF2276, sponsored by Sen. Richard J. Cohen (DFL-St. Paul), and the difference likely will be reconciled in a House-Senate conference committee.

O'Brien said he's grateful for the work Juhnke and Johnson have done to bring Let's Go Fishing to the Legislature.

His fingers are crossed that the state will come through with funding, he said. "A lot of seniors are depending on this."

A significant portion of the state appropriation would create a revolving fund for startup loans to new chapters.

Continued on page 23



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Minnesota is first in the nation in fishing license sales per capita, according to the Department of Natural Resources. The Legislature is considering funding for a program that aims to keep anglers and boaters on the water well into their senior years.

Paging through the process

Each week, a unique crew of high school juniors is introduced to the high school page program at the Minnesota State Capitol. Some have traveled from across the state and others just a few miles for a glimpse of what keeps Minnesota ticking.

Lora Evinger, a student at Visitation High School, Mendota Heights, who lives in Edina, is a member of the week 14 high school page team. Lora and the other pages spend their days in the State Office Building and the Capitol exploring all aspects of the legislative system. The agenda includes meeting their district representative, debating in a mock committee and, of course, working as a page when the House is in session.

"The whole process was a shock," Lora said. "I imagined it to be much quieter, and in reality, it was really loud and chaotic."

At the end of the day the pages cross Rice Street to the Kelly Inn, where they stay during the week. It's here Lora and her comrades have a chance to reflect on the day's activities. Asked if they discussed politics at night, Lora laughed and said, "Not really."



Lora packs for a week at the Capitol.

**Photos and story by
Sarah Stacke**



The pages have dinner at KFAN The Restaurant in Roseville.



A member of the Minnesota Historical Society meets the pages in the governor's office.



Clay Sharkey, Lora Evinger and Micah Nystuen in a mock committee meeting.



Lora passes out amendments during session.



Lora waits on the page bench during session.

In a different classroom

Page program teaches the teacher and the student

By RUTH DUNN

He is a teacher, the Capitol is his classroom, and every week a new group of high school juniors comes from all over Minnesota to be Steve Alger's students.

"It's fantastic. I love this job," said Alger, who for the past four years has guided students through the House high school page program, now in its 30th year.

"These kids are the cream of the crop and eager to learn," said Alger, a retired social studies teacher and dean of students from Kenyon. "This is a teacher's dream come true."

Students in the program come to St. Paul to get an insider's view of state government in action — way beyond what students typically experience on field trips to the Capitol.

There may be as few as eight or as many as 12 students in the weeklong program. The groups are set up as a mix of girls and boys from urban and rural areas of the state. They are slightly nervous when they arrive on Monday to start the page program, but by Friday they're reluctant to leave. Some groups develop tight bonds, keep in touch through e-mail and meet again for reunions, said Alger.

Abigail Joynes of Golden Valley applied for the program based on a friend's recommendation that it was a fun experience. She especially enjoyed learning about the history of the Capitol and gaining a deeper understanding of the process of passing bills. "I also honed my debating skills," said Joynes.

While in St. Paul, the high school pages follow a jam-packed schedule. They attend committees and work as pages on the House floor. They learn about the media and lobbyists and meet with their representatives, the secretary of state and representatives of the attorney general's office. Students always want to meet the governor, whoever is in the office.

"By the time they leave, they have a good idea of most of what goes on here," said Alger.

A highlight of the week is the mock committee activity, which always gets high ratings in a feedback survey students take at the end of the week, according to Jake Jewell, second assistant sergeant-at-arms. It's a hands-on learning experience with students researching bills then meeting as a committee to discuss them and offer amendments.

"This type of hands-on experience is vital to understanding how government works," said Jewell, who handles scheduling and other administrative details for the program.

Another highlight is the opportunity students have to talk with House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) about current issues.

"The more questions they ask, the more they're going to learn," said Alger, who encourages students to ask lots of questions. He also urges students to respectfully challenge the ideas and opinions expressed by people they meet during the week. "We have great discussions," he said.



Steve Alger, the High School Page Program coordinator, points out the House Majority Leader's desk while speaking to a group of pages on Monday, May 9.

PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

You Should Know

Students can apply in the fall for the high school page program. For more information, go to:

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/edprog/over2p.htm>

Every week is unique with a new group of students, and a different array of issues bubbling around the Capitol, and that's what Alger likes most about the job.

He is awed by the depth of knowledge and understanding of issues that students in the program have. "I'm not worried about future leadership, the future is in good hands," he adds.

Students can apply in the fall for the program. For more information, go to <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/edprog/over2p.htm>. Participants are reimbursed for the cost of their hotel room and receive a \$50 stipend for food.

Retirement job

When he retired four years ago, Alger planned to fill his days with golfing but somebody had other plans for him. "Why don't you come work at the Capitol," suggested Sviggum, whose children had Alger as a teacher and coach.

"I'm not the couch potato-type. I like to be involved and active," he admits.

"He's an absolute natural for what he's doing now, being an educator and a people person," said Sviggum.

Travel is also a passion. When the session is over, Alger will guide a group to Italy and Greece. He's taken groups of students and adults to many places, including Russia, China and England. Upcoming trips may be to the Amazon River, Australia and Costa Rica.

Alger's wife, Karen, will join him on trips when she retires from teaching. The couple has two grown children and two grandkids. Being a grandfather is a new role for him and he loves it.

Call, visit, watch, or log on...

Legislative information is available at your fingertips

Keeping track of what's happening at the Minnesota Legislature continues to get easier.

While the traditional methods such as visiting the Capitol and calling on the telephone are still useful ways to get the information you need, the newest technological methods on television and the Internet have made your choices better than ever.

An award-winning Web site

Since the Legislature's World Wide Web site went online in 1996, more than 230 million hits have been received. The site receives nearly one million hits per week, on average, during the year and well more than one million hits per week during the busy legislative session.

The site was honored in 2001 with an Eagle E-Government Award as The Council of State Governments named it the Best Legislative Branch Site. Among the criteria used in judging was: site design; how the site makes state government more accessible; the use of technological innovation, including online transactions; and how the site streamlines the government process.

Accessing information using your fingertips and a mouse begins by directing your browser to <http://www.leg.mn>, the Legislature's main page.

The site layout is often updated to make it visually simple but also easy to navigate. Users can use drop-down menus and hyperlink text to get to the information.

A mere click of a mouse button takes a user to both the House and Senate main pages. Easy access is also provided to other areas, including: member information, committee information, and schedules; Minnesota Statutes; Session Laws and Rules; joint legislative departments and commissions; youth pages; general information; legislative district information; and employment opportunities.

On each member's page is a link to their e-mail address so a user can easily contact his or her elected official.

One of the more popular options is the bill tracker. From the House and Senate pages, users can read any bill and track its status through



Through the Legislature's Web site, the public can access information including bill descriptions and status, committee meeting schedules and agendas, and weekly publications of both the House and Senate.

Background photo courtesy NASA and AURA/STScI

the legislative process. For those not familiar with the legal language used to draft bills, easy-to-understand summaries are also available. Bills can be searched by number, keyword, or author.

Both the House and Senate sites offer Internet streaming video of floor sessions, select committee hearings, press conferences, and other special events. The service features unedited,

live and recorded coverage. For archived events an index is provided making it easy for users to find the specific bill or topic they wish to view, without having to weed through hours and hours of coverage. A Windows Media Player plug-in viewer is needed to watch the events unfold. A link to install that program is provided.

Information is available on the House Television Services Web site at <http://www.house.mn/hvtv/hvtvserve.htm>.

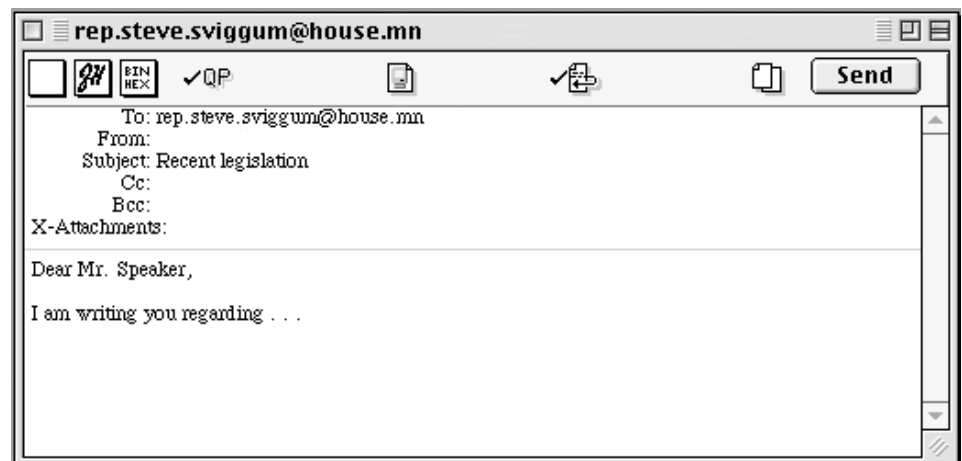
Schedules delivered to you

House committee schedules are available on the Web site at <http://www.house.mn/hinfo/hinfosched.asp>. Senate schedules are online at <http://www.senate.mn/schedule>.

Constituents with e-mail service can receive daily committee schedules from both the House and Senate.

Updated daily, the schedules give specific information about which committees are meeting on a particular day, the time and location of the meeting, and general topic agendas.

To receive the House committee schedule, fill out the subscription form at <http://www.house.mn/hinfo/schedule/listserv.htm>. The Senate listserv can be accessed at <http://www.senate.mn/schedule/listserv.htm>.



E-mail is an increasingly common and efficient way for constituents to contact their legislators. Lawmakers regularly respond to signed messages, and they prefer that correspondents include their full names and addresses.



House Television Services provides coverage of action on the House floor and selected committee hearings on Channel 17 in the Twin Cities and local cable systems throughout the state.

Come on down

Technology is a wonderful asset for governmental information, but the best way to find out what's happening at the Capitol is to witness it in person. A good place to begin your visit is at the House Public Information Services Office, located in Room 175 of the State Office Building, directly west of the Capitol.

The office has a series of informational and educational publications designed to make the legislative process understandable and accessible for all.

Office staff can quickly determine in which House and Senate district you live and provide you with the name, office number, phone number, and e-mail address of your representative and senator.

Committee schedules are available at the office, as are issues of the award-winning newsmagazine *Session Weekly*, a free publication covering weekly House activities during session. To have this thorough wrap-up mailed directly to your home or business, call or stop by House Information, or complete the subscription form on the House Web site at <http://www.house.mn/hinfo/subscribe.asp>. Likewise, *Senate Briefly*, which covers weekly Senate activities, is available online at <http://www.senate.mn/briefly/index.htm>.

Session Daily is the online companion to *Session Weekly*. Located at <http://www.house.mn/hinfo/sdaily.asp>, it offers news

from the House on a daily basis, so you can stay on top of the major events at the Capitol. Brief, informative updates about committee and floor action are posted before 8 a.m. Monday through Friday. Links to useful resources, such as bill introductions and reports or documents, are also offered. Each day's version is also archived by date and topic.

Pick up the phone

A wealth of information is also available via the telephone. The House Public Information Services Office can answer general questions regarding the legislative process and who your legislators are. They can also direct you to other offices for additional information. Call the information office at (651) 296-2146 (voice), (651) 296-9896 (TTY), or 1-800-657-3550 (voice and TTY).

You don't need to leave home to obtain copies of House bills, either. Simply call the House Chief Clerk's Office at (651) 296-2314 and they'll mail you a copy. If you don't know who sponsored a bill or what a particular bill's House File number is, call House Index at (651) 296-6646. They can also give you the status of a bill.

If you have a concern about a pending bill or a policy issue, call your legislator.

A voice version of the House committee schedule is available at (651) 296-9283. For similar information in the Senate, call (651) 296-0504 or 1-888-234-1112.

Tune in

Television coverage of the Legislature is available in the Twin Cities metropolitan area on KTCI-TV, Channel 17. Coverage also is included throughout Greater Minnesota on 31 cable providers' services. Check with your local cable system for availability. All broadcasts are closed-captioned and schedules are available from House Television Services. Call (651) 297-1338 or visit the House and Senate Broadcast Television Schedule page at <http://www.house.mn/hvtv/hvtv.asp>.

Live coverage of floor sessions and committee hearings is provided throughout the day, and taped coverage is played between live proceedings.

Frequently used Web links

Legislature's main page:
<http://www.leg.mn>

Session Weekly on the Web:
<http://www.house.mn/hinfo/swmain.asp>

Session Daily on the Web:
<http://www.house.mn/hinfo/sdaily.asp>

Maps and legislative district finders:
<http://www.leg.mn/leg/districtfinder.htm>

To search the Legislative Web site:
<http://search.state.mn.us/leg/>

North Star government information:
<http://www.state.mn.us/>

Governor's office:
<http://www.governor.state.mn.us>

Office of the Secretary of State:
(Elections & Candidate Information)
<http://www.sos.state.mn.us>

Legislative Reference Library:
<http://www.leg.mn/lrl/lrl.asp>

Revisor's Office:
<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor.html>

Legislative Links to the World:
<http://www.leg.mn/lrl/links/links.asp>

Frequently called numbers

House Information:
651-296-2146 voice; 651-296-9896 TTY
1-800-657-3550 toll free voice and TTY

Senate Information:
651-296-0504 voice; 651-296-0250 TTY
1-888-234-1112 toll free voice
1-888-234-1216 toll free TTY

Chief Clerk's Office: (copies of bills)
651-296-2314

Office of Secretary of the Senate:
651-296-2344

House Index: (bill status)
651-296-6646

State Capitol Information Desk:
651-296-3962
651-296-2739

Friday, May 6

HF2504—Erhardt (R) Transportation

Motor vehicle fuel and registration tax rates increased, county state-aid fund distribution formula modified, wheelage taxes authorized, revenue deposits specified, bonds issued, money appropriated and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2505—Lenczewski (DFL) Taxes

Twins; Minnesota Twins renamed the Hennepin County Twins if local Hennepin County sales taxes are approved for financing a new baseball stadium.

Monday, May 9

HF2506—Peterson, A. (DFL) Commerce & Financial Institutions

Country of origin labeling act adopted providing requirements and prescribing penalties relating to meat sales and labeling.

HF2507—Lenczewski (DFL) Regulated Industries

Bloomington Art Center on-sale liquor license authorized.

Tuesday, May 10

HF2508—Thissen (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs

Minneapolis Police Relief Association and Minneapolis Firefighters Relief Association pension benefits reductions limited.

HF2509—Peterson, A. (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs

State vehicle purchase bidding preference granted to small businesses.

HF2510—Severson (R) Taxes

Military pension income tax deduction provided.

Wednesday, May 11

HF2511—Kahn (DFL) State Government Finance

Casino operated by the state lottery authorized in the main terminal of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and money appropriated.

Thursday, May 12

HF2512—DeLaForest (R) Environment & Natural Resources

Natural resources programs worker displacement prohibition repealed.

HF2513—Hansen (DFL) Transportation Finance

St. Paul and Inver Grove Heights; Robert Street corridor transitway study and design funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF2514—Atkins (DFL) Commerce & Financial Institutions

Uniform Securities Act of 2002 adopted and modified and criminal penalties prescribed.

Continued from page 4

they have to be super-qualified and have a perfect resume,” said Tingelstad, who works to recruit female Republican candidates. Whereas men don’t give it a second thought, she adds.

Greiling believes that her goal of a House with at least 53 percent women won’t happen while she’s a member, but it will happen someday.

“It used to be that school boards were all men, now they’re mostly women. We’re not there yet with city councils, county boards and the Legislature, but we will be,” she predicts.

One of the challenges is that rural women don’t want to leave their families for several months to serve in the House, said Tingelstad. “There’s a group we don’t hear from, a whole missing generation of women in their 20s and 30s who have no voice here, no seat at the table.”

That can also be a problem for male legislators, said Seifert, a father of young children. Several young, energetic legislators who are fathers have left office in recent years, primarily because of the strain it placed on their families, he said.

Sviggum understands it can be a hardship for both mothers and fathers to serve, especially those who live far from St. Paul. As a father of three, he’s tried to make the House more family friendly in recent years. For example, committees don’t meet Monday mornings or Friday afternoons for most of the session to give parents more weekend time with their families.

“I want to help members feel they can serve in the Legislature without consequences to their family in a negative way,” he said.



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provide that the team and league will transfer to the state of Minnesota the Minnesota Twins’ heritage and records, including the name, logo, colors, history, playing records, trophies and memorabilia in the event of any dissolution or relocation of the Twins franchise.”

Rep. Neil W. Peterson (R-Bloomington) successfully offered an amendment that removed provisions dedicating \$4 million in county sales tax monies, if left over after paying off the stadium bonds, to youth activities, amateur sports, county libraries and

Minneapolis public libraries.

“I would suggest that if they really want the goodwill and cooperation of the communities, especially my community, that you do not make that specific,” Peterson added.



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“I think it’s a great way to use state dollars in a way that will be used over and over again,” Juhnke said.

The participants’ attitudes and outlooks on life change dramatically once they are back on the water, Juhnke said. “They have a zest for life when they return.”

Larmon and her fishing buddies eagerly

await another angling season.

“I am just one of the happy stories,” Larmon said. “In the senior citizen’s (center) we talk about it all winter long, but come the first of February, that is when we really get fish fever.”

Larmon is straightforward when asked about her secret to catching the big one: “We just use worms.

“Like I say, if my husband had known there were so many walleyes out here, we would have moved out here a long time ago.”



For more information:
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1025 19th Ave. SW
Willmar, MN 56201
Phone: (320) 235-8448
Email: info@letsfishingofmn.com

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MINNESOTA INDEX

Lobbying for dollars

Amount spent by local governments lobbying the Legislature in 2004, in millions.....	\$6.26
Millions spent in 2003.....	\$6.08
Millions spent in 1999.....	\$4.1
Local governments (cities, counties, school districts or metropolitan agencies) that directly employed or hired contract lobbyists in 2004.....	64
In 2003.....	61
Government units that relied entirely upon contract lobbyists to represent its interests.....	50
Units that hired contract lobbyists and used their own employees.....	9
Units that relied entirely on their employees to represent them.....	5
Amount these governments spent in 2004 on staff and contract lobbyists, in millions...	\$2.94
Percent increase from 2003.....	1.5
Percent of total paid by counties.....	38
Percent by cities.....	34.3
Percent by school districts.....	13.4
Percent of total dollars spent that went to contract lobbyists.....	63.3
Amount paid by Minneapolis in 2004 to lobbying staff or hired lobbyists.....	\$325,815
Amount paid by Hennepin County.....	\$285,669
Amount paid by St. Paul.....	\$144,043
Millions in dues that local governments paid to local government associations that also represented their interests before the Legislature.....	\$9.14
Millions in dues paid in 2003.....	\$9
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Percent of local governments that paid dues to three or more lobbying associations in 2004.....	7
Percent increase in association lobbying expenditures in past five years.....	71
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Percent increase by the Association of Minnesota Counties.....	202
Percent increase by the Metro-Inter County Association.....	102
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Millions spent by Minnesota Chamber of Commerce in 2004 for lobbying.....	\$1.14
Amount spent by Education Minnesota.....	\$980,000
Lobbyists registered in Minnesota, as approximate, in January 2005.....	1,200
Estimated number of associations represented.....	1,100

Sources: Handbook for Lobbyists and Lobbyist Principals, Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board, other board publications; 2004 Local Government Lobbying Services, Office of the State Auditor; Session Weekly, April 6, 2001, House Public Information Services Office.

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