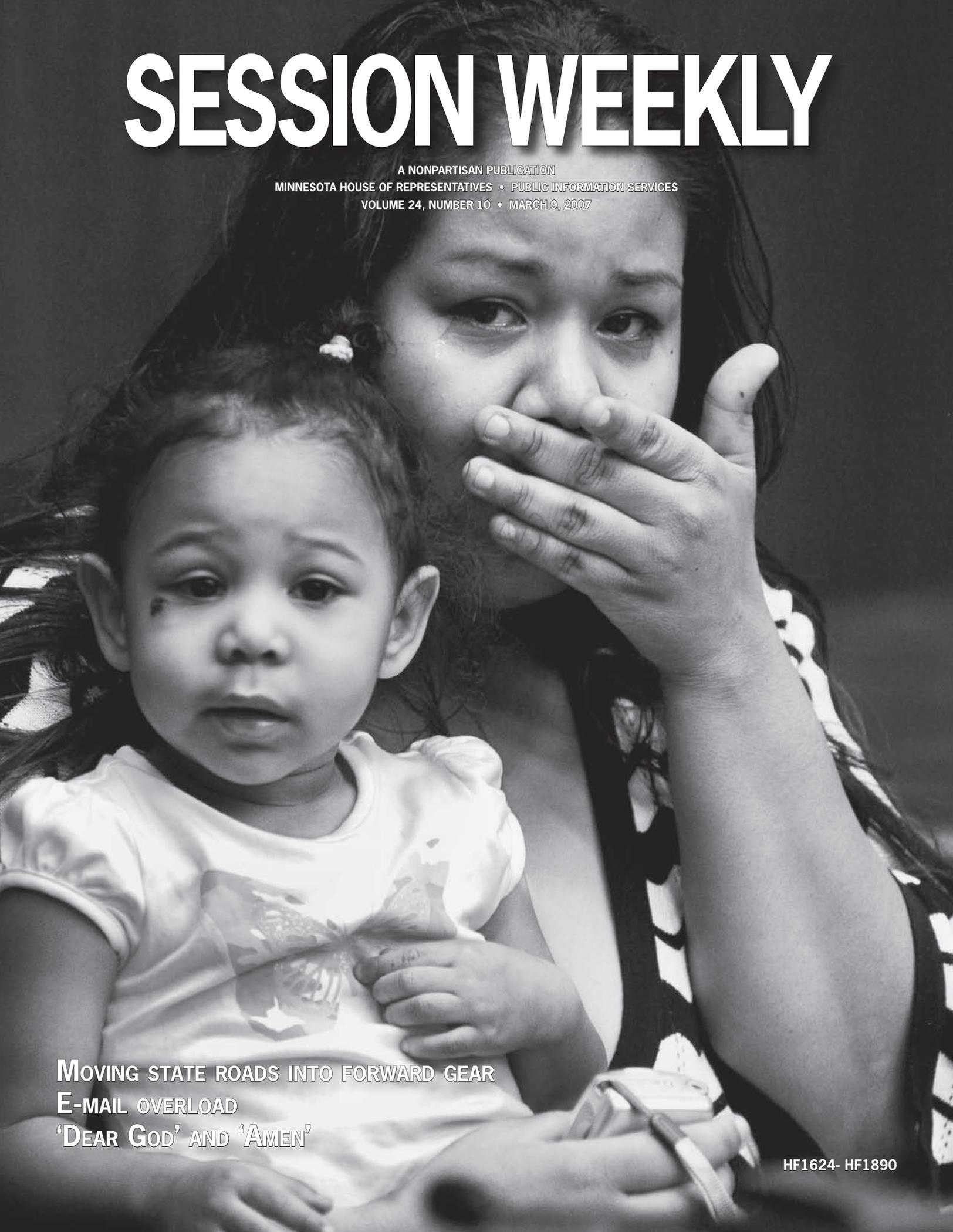


SESSION WEEKLY

A NONPARTISAN PUBLICATION
MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES
VOLUME 24, NUMBER 10 • MARCH 9, 2007



MOVING STATE ROADS INTO FORWARD GEAR
E-MAIL OVERLOAD
'DEAR GOD' AND 'AMEN'

HF1624- HF1890

SESSION WEEKLY

Session Weekly is a nonpartisan publication of Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Services. During the 2007-2008 Legislative Session, each issue reports House action between Thursdays of each week, lists bill introductions and provides other information. No fee.

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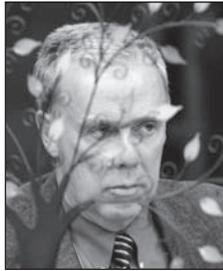
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Session Weekly (ISSN 1049-8176) is published weekly during the legislative session by Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Services, 175 State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298. Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, Minn.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Session Weekly*, House Public Information Services, 175 State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298.

Printed on recycled paper which is 50% recycled, 30% post-consumer content.



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On the cover: Ruth Shaugobay becomes emotional as she tells the House Housing Policy and Finance and Public Health Finance Division March 5 how her 4-year-old daughter, Laela, left, went through a screen and fell four stories on June 16, 2006. The committee was hearing a bill that would require new residential dwellings to comply with window screen safety standards.

—Photo by: Tom Olmscheid

'Dear God' and 'Amen'

Opening prayer in the Chamber must not offend any faith

BY SONJA HEGMAN

Invoicing the name Jesus Christ makes prayer denominational. This was part of a prayer debate three days into the 1999 session. The opening ceremony that year included a Catholic choir that sang "The Apostle's Creed." Seen as a highly Christian prayer song, several members were uncomfortable with its sectarian nature.

This was also the Rev. Lonnie Titus' first of eight years as House Chaplain. He recognized nondenominational prayer was a way to unite the members.

"It was an historical event," he said. "I had no idea it would lead such a discussion."

Former Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-St. Paul) first offered an amendment to House Rules stating prayers should be nondenominational because it "respects the diversity of faiths in the chamber." It was later successfully amended by

former Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) to read "a nondenominational prayer by the Chaplain that respects the religious diversity of the House," with the intent of allowing the word "God" and discouraging the use of "Jesus Christ."

Even though the language was eliminated the following year, Titus said the nondenominational concept remained. Now there is an understanding that chaplains must be sensitive to diversity in the House and recite

a general prayer, starting with "Dear God" and ending with "Amen." If the House Chaplain or visiting chaplain would acknowledge Jesus, Titus said a few representatives would ask for clarification of the guidelines.

Prayer has been a part of Minnesota House sessions since the state was a territory. The Rev. Mr. Parsons gave the prayer in the territory's first session on Sept. 3, 1849.

The words "under God" were added to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954. "That's considered nondenominational," McCollum said.

But some members didn't agree that saying Jesus Christ was a problem.

Former Rep. Steve Dehler (R-St. Joseph) said the prayer rules were fine as they were.

"I would guess that the opening prayer song that we had the first day of session would not follow this new rule," he said. "That certainly wasn't nondenominational. It was beautiful and it was a prayer."

Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) agreed that it was a beautiful prayer, but it still made him feel uncomfortable.

"It belonged in the church," he said. "It did not belong in this House of Representatives."

He said as a boy living in Duluth, his and three or four other Jewish children's parents would not allow them to participate in the school's Christmas program.

"We had to sit in an office with glass windows while the other kids walked by, pointing and laughing at us," he said. "We were ostracized for our religious beliefs. Yes, we're the minority – other Jewish members and other non-Christian members in this House. We're the minority in this House and a minority in this state of Minnesota. But the constitution in our state and the constitution of this country were designed to protect the minority. I cannot tell you how uncomfortable I felt opening night."

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, the custom of legislative prayer draws its roots from both houses of British Parliament. In the United States, the custom has continued without interruption at the federal level since 1789 and for more than a century in many states. Almost all state legislatures still use an opening prayer as part of their tradition and procedure. But there is the question of whether prayers in the Chamber are a violation of the separation of



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Rep. Sondra Erickson bows her head in prayer as the Rev. Paul Rogers, House chaplain, gives the invocation prior to the March 7 House floor session.

First Reading continued on page 4

church and state.

In 1983, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of legislative prayer, ruling that Congress and state legislatures do not

violate the separation of church and state even when clergy are paid to lead daily devotionals. In the Minnesota House, the elected chaplain is paid an honorarium of \$2,000 per year and \$35 for each day they give a prayer. Visiting chaplains are also paid \$35 for offering a

prayer. Chief Justice Warren Burger's opinion held that the use of legislative prayer "has become part of the fabric of our society" and that it is not "an establishment of religion or a step toward establishment; it is simply a tolerable acknowledgment of beliefs." 

Spreading the Word

Rogers is new leader of 134-member congregation

By **SONJA HEGMAN**

As a young boy, the Rev. Paul Rogers was inspired to become a man of the cloth.

When he was 10, his mother was dying of cancer and his family's pastor visited regularly.

"He had a deep, kind of soothing voice," Rogers said. "The kind of care he provided was inspirational."

That pastor read Bible passages to Rogers' mother in Norwegian. She was born in Norway and at the end of her illness and before her death, she often wanted to speak her native tongue.

A couple of years later, a visiting pastor inspired him when talking about global missions. In high school, Rogers was influenced by another pastor who "preached great sermons."

The Lutheran minister served in churches in South Dakota, Europe and many rural and urban communities in Minnesota during his 37-year career. After six years as senior pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church at Augsburg College, Rogers retired in 2000 and served as an interim pastor at various churches with the Minneapolis/St. Paul Area synods until December 2006.

But he has a new job: he was elected House Chaplain Feb. 1.

"He brings sensitivity and understanding to this body," said [Rep. Tina Liebling](#) (DFL-Rochester), who nominated Rogers. "He understands the diversity of our religious sensitivity that exists in this body and throughout our state."

[House Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher](#) (DFL-Mpls) gathered names from a variety of her own contacts. A staff member at Rogers' bishop's office gave Kelliher his name, he said. Rogers then had interviews with Kelliher and Liebling.

Rogers was surprised he was chosen because after he'd been told his name was submitted, he was out of town for three weeks. "I assumed they didn't want to wait around."

A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Rogers started his ministry in rural South Dakota, his home state, in 1969 and from there moved to congregations in southern Germany and Switzerland before returning to the Midwest.

One of the leaders of the Evangelical Church of Wurttemberg, a province in southern Germany, was in South Dakota for meetings, where Rogers had long conversations with him. Perhaps because of his German experience and fluency, the pastor suggested to his bishop that Rogers, whose undergraduate degree is in German, be invited as a guest pastor in a German congregation.

Rogers and his wife, Camille, had neither debts nor children, and were both a bit adventuresome, so, they accepted the invitation. Camille once hitchhiked with

two other women from Argentina to Peru, he said.

During his five years there, he was "loaned out" to the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva, Switzerland, for several weeks each year. Through that contact, Rogers was invited to return some years later to be on the staff before returning to South Dakota.

The Rogers settled in Minneapolis nine years ago. Rogers has been the non-staff coordinator for a partnership between the Minneapolis Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Leipzig District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony, Germany. They came to Minnesota because it was better for their 29-year-old developmentally disabled daughter, Elisabeth.

"She kind of fell through the cracks in South Dakota because the services she needed, just by chance, weren't available," Rogers said. "We had to seek a place that had what she needed."

That and the bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod invited him to come here.

As House Chaplain, Rogers won't do the opening prayer all the time, he said. Members submit names of persons to do that. With visiting chaplains, it's Rogers' job to welcome them to the whole issue of sensitivity to diversity issues.

Prayers have to be nondenominational, he said.

"That's a major challenge," he said. "There has to be a balance somehow of maintaining one's own integrity and being respectful of the diversity."

That diversity includes people who are of no faith community and people who think prayer is inappropriate, he said.

The second major area of the work is to be available for pastoral care, especially for members who are away from home during the week.

"It takes awhile to develop the kind of confidence one would need to talk to me when I'll be here for four months, but I'm available for that," he said.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

The Rev. Paul Rogers gives the invocation prior to the March 1 House floor session.

Editor's note: The following Highlights are coverage of select bills heard in House committees held March 1-8 and other House activity. To track the progress of a bill, go to www.leg.state.mn and click on Bill Search, Status and MyBills.

BIOSCIENCE

Commercialization grants

A bill sponsored by [Rep. Sandra Masin](#) (DFL-Eagan) would provide \$10 million for bioscience business development and commercialization grants to help create new bioscience jobs in the state.

[HF1256](#) was approved by the House Biosciences and Emerging Technology Committee March 7 and now goes to the House Finance Committee. A companion, [SF1458](#), sponsored by [Sen. James Metzen](#) (DFL-South St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

The bill would appropriate \$5 million a year for the next two fiscal years to the Department of Employment and Economic Development for grants to bioscience companies. Grant recipients would be selected by a 12-member committee consisting of representatives of state government, public and private higher education institutions, nonprofits and the bioscience business community.

Dale Wahlstrom, executive committee chairman of the BioBusiness Alliance of Minnesota, said that a recent statewide assessment of bioscience-related industries found that Minnesota had lost bioscience jobs between 1997 and 2002, and that most of the losses occurred in small businesses and startup companies.

Wahlstrom said the grant money would be targeted specifically at companies that are likely to create immediate, sustainable bioscience jobs that will stay in the state.

"All we're trying to do is pick a few very good ones that have a potential for nearly immediate job creation, so we can begin to turn around the job loss that we have experienced in this state in the last 10 years or so," he said.

He added that the state will make its money back in the form of tax revenues from the companies.

Some committee members expressed concern about giving state money to private companies. [Rep. John Berns](#) (R-Wayzata) asked whether similar actions are being taken by other states, to which Wahlstrom replied with "an emphatic yes."

— N. BUSSE

Nanotechnology fund

The House Biosciences and Emerging Technology Committee approved a bill March 6 designed to allow small businesses greater access to nanotechnology — technology that allows scientists to manipulate materials on an atomic or molecular level.

[HF1637](#), sponsored by [Rep. Mike Beard](#) (R-Shakopee), now goes to the House Finance Committee. A companion, [SF1303](#), sponsored by [Sen. Julie Rosen](#) (R-Fairmont), awaits action by the Senate Business, Industry and Jobs Committee.

The bill would establish a "nanotechnology development fund" through the [Department of Employment and Economic Development](#) and appropriate more than \$1 million over two years. The department would use the money to provide one-to-one matching funds for small companies to buy or rent advanced nanoinstrumentation such as atomic microscopes.

Karen Arnold, chief financial officer for Nanocopoeia Inc., said her company manufactures nanoparticles of pharmaceutical drugs and nanoparticle coatings for medical devices — new technologies that she said could have huge benefits to the health care industry. She said her company has relied on grants to pay for access to necessary research equipment, but that other small nanotech companies don't have the same opportunity.

"One of the things that this bill does is allow access to other small companies that have not received that kind of grant support ... to have access to those very important facilities," Arnold said.

Beard said the bill focuses on companies with 50 employees or fewer, but that the department has the option of providing funds for companies with up to 100 employees. He said the department would have to report back to the Legislature every year on how the funds were allocated.

Also included in the bill is a provision that would allocate \$160,000 for a student internship program with the goal of expanding the number of researchers who are "experienced in working with existing nanotechnology applications."

— N. BUSSE

BONDING

Fixing up Fort Snelling

A bill that would help stabilize part of Minnesota's crumbling history was laid over by the House Capital Investment Finance

Division March 1 for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

Sponsored by [Rep. Linda Slocum](#) (DFL-Richfield), [HF875](#) would provide \$500,000 for emergency building stabilization at Fort Snelling Upper Bluff. The buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places, but they are among the most endangered historic places in America, Slocum said.

Patrick Connoy, Hennepin County economic development project coordinator, said the Fort Snelling Upper Post, owned by the Department of Natural Resources, contains 28 buildings, the Fort Snelling Golf Course and athletic fields on 141 acres of land. In the past year, it was named one of the 11 most endangered historic places by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The buildings have poor roof conditions and some buildings have partially collapsed.

The Department of Natural Resources gave \$20,000 to stabilize the two buildings, and Hennepin County matched that with \$20,000 in Sentence-to-Serve labor.

The county is eligible for a \$150,000 Save America's Treasures federal grant from the National Park Service, but it requires a \$150,000 state match.

But Connoy said the allocation would not cover all that needs to be done. The requested \$500,000 would cover the grant match, and the remaining \$350,000 would be used for further stabilization.

[Rep. Larry Howes](#) (R-Walker) said he didn't want to see \$500,000 spent if the buildings would not be used.

"We might as well throw \$500,000 into the river," he said. "Let's use it for something useful."

The bill was held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill.

A companion bill, [SF546](#), sponsored by [Sen. Dan Larson](#) (DFL-Bloomington) awaits action by the Senate Economic Development Budget Division.

— S. HEGMAN

CONSUMERS

Full gift card valuation

A House division approved a bill that would ensure that the full value of a gift card could be used. Sponsored by [Rep. Joe Atkins](#) (DFL-Inver Grove Heights), [HF512](#) would prohibit the sale of a gift card that has an expiration date of less than two years or a service fee of any kind, including an inactivity fee. If there is an expiration date, it must be printed clearly

on the face of the card.

Approved March 2 by the House Labor and Consumer Protection Division, the bill was scheduled to be heard March 8 by the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

“A gift card can either be a gift that keeps on giving or keeps on taking. Some cards now expire after six months, or they charge a monthly fee that can make the card’s value almost zero in no time,” Atkins said. “We live in a country where people expect to get what they paid for.”

The bill would not apply to cards given to a consumer free of charge, prepaid calling cards, cards sold below face value or at a volume discount to employers, or sold to nonprofits for fundraising purposes. Nor would the bill address debit cards, such as those issued by malls that are actually bank debit cards subject to federal regulations.

Buzz Anderson, president of the Minnesota Retailers Association, said he knows of no store that would not accept an expired gift card, nor does he know of any association member retailers that charge an inactivity fee. “Consumers vote with their pocketbooks, and a bad experience likely means the loss of a customer.”

The bill would also entitle the cardholder to cash back if the remaining value of the card is \$5 or less.

“The biggest boon to the retailer is unredeemed value,” said Joseph Daly, a Hamline University law professor, who said 10 percent of gift card values are never redeemed. “Allegedly, right now, there is over \$100 billion out there in the merchant hands unredeemed.”

A companion bill, [SF69](#), sponsored by [Sen. Katie Sieben](#) (DFL-Newport), awaits action by the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee.

— M. COOK

Poisonous plant warning

Some plants that have a place in landscape design could be fatal to pets, livestock and even children.

Take for instance the Japanese Yew, which is commonly used in landscaping around a home’s foundation. According to the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association, an animal needs to eat only 0.10 percent of its body weight to receive a toxic dose.

Sponsored by [Rep. Steve Sviggum](#) (R-Kenyon) and [Sen. Steve Murphy](#) (DFL-Red Wing), [HF255/SF138](#) calls for the commissioners of agriculture and health to evaluate the potential hazards posed by plants to consumers and livestock, and report their findings to the Legislature by March 1, 2008.

Bob Marg of Altura told the committee how two of his cows died after they each ate a twig from Japanese Yew trimmings, which he had piled up for disposal. He would like to see some type of consumer-warning label placed on plants that may be poisonous.

“I’ve been told there are as many as 120 plants that have some degree of poisonous,” he said. “I do believe that people should know.”

Approved March 5 by the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee, the bill now moves to the House Finance Committee.

It was approved the Senate 63-0 Feb. 7.

— L. SCHUTZ

Vehicle protection warranties

More than 14,000 motor vehicle thefts were reported in Minnesota in 2005, at an estimated value of \$88 million.

As a result, anti-theft mechanisms, such as alarm systems, ignition disablers, steering wheel locks, radio or satellite tracking systems and glass etching, are becoming more popular, especially as aftermarket add-ons.

Sponsored by [Rep. Tom Tillberry](#) (DFL-Fridley), [HF933](#) seeks to ensure that purchasers are sold what they are promised.

Approved March 2 by the House Labor and Consumer Protection Division, the bill was scheduled to be heard March 8 by the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

Under the bill, product warrantors would register with the state and demonstrate their ability to financially cover their warranty obligations, either through a reimbursement insurance policy or they must have a net worth of at least \$50 million. They must also provide disclaimers and claim procedures in warranty agreements.

“The financial responsibility requirements, disclosures and disclaimers will significantly protect consumers who purchase these products,” Tillberry said.

State statute mandates a 5 percent premium reduction for certain anti-theft devices on automobiles, said Paul Cassidy, government relations director for Leonard, Street and Deinard, and representing the National Vehicle Protection Association, which supports the bill.

“The problem covered by this legislation is anti-theft products with warranties that typically provide up to \$5,000 in coverage in the event the product that you purchased fails to prevent your car from being stolen. ... This will provide auto dealers with the assurance that they are selling a viable product, backed by a company with a financial viability to stand behind their warranty and pay their claims in the event of a loss,” he said.

Sixteen states have passed similar legislation,

and it is pending in a number of others.

“Items can still be sold without any kind of warranty. This bill simply says that if you make a warranty claim you must be able to stand behind it,” Cassidy said.

A companion bill, [SF128](#), sponsored by [Sen. Dan Sparks](#) (DFL-Austin), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— M. COOK

CRIME

Internet controls

While the Internet can be a tool for research and communication, it can also be used to legally harass and defame.

Sponsored by [Rep. Debra Hilstrom](#) (DFL-Brooklyn Center), [HF505](#) would change the definition of harassment to include some actions taken over the Internet.

The bill was laid over March 1 by the House Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill.

Under current statute, harassment is defined as “a single incident of physical or sexual assault or repeated incidents of intrusion or unwanted acts, words or gestures.”

According to Assistant Attorney General Al Zdrzil, one posting on a Web site, regardless of its length or breadth, would serve as a single incident and not fit the description of harassment. This bill would add a single posting to the definition, Zdrzil said.

The legislation would also allow for restraining orders against the computer networks that publish the information.

A companion bill, [SF645](#), sponsored by [Sen. Don Betzold](#) (DFL-Fridley), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— C. GREEN

DEVELOPMENT

Inventor assistance

Who hasn’t dreamt of having a million-dollar idea?

The Minnesota Inventors Congress helps those that do more than dream. They help product developers find information to protect their intellectual property; identify companies with an interest in the product; and help find assistance for spending money wisely to promote and develop the product. They also hold an annual invention convention every year.

“I help educate inventors about the process, and take them through the stages and provide a sounding board to help them,” said Executive Director Deb Hess, who has been with the organization for 22 years, first as a volunteer.

Sponsored by [House Minority Leader Marty Seifert](#) (R-Marshall), [HF519](#) would appropriate \$85,000 in fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

The bill was laid over March 6 by the House Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance Division for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

Seifert said the request is “basically a supplement” to the \$60,000 that is in the [Department of Employment and Economic Development](#) base budget. Of the requested amount, \$10,000 each year must be used for the Student Inventors Congress.

Hess said she is the lone full-time staff person, but needs more assistance. Nearly 2,000 inventors were served in fiscal year 2006, and more than 3,400 contacts were made with students, outside resources or businesses. She said it isn’t uncommon for people to call the office for more than a day before not receiving a busy signal.

A companion bill, [SF364](#), sponsored by [Sen. Dennis Frederickson](#) (R-New Ulm), was laid over Feb. 28 by the Senate Economic Development Budget Division for possible omnibus bill inclusion.

— M. Cook

EDUCATION

Age limit may rise for diploma

The Minnesota school funding formula provides general education aid to schools for students up to age 21 who are working toward their high school diploma.

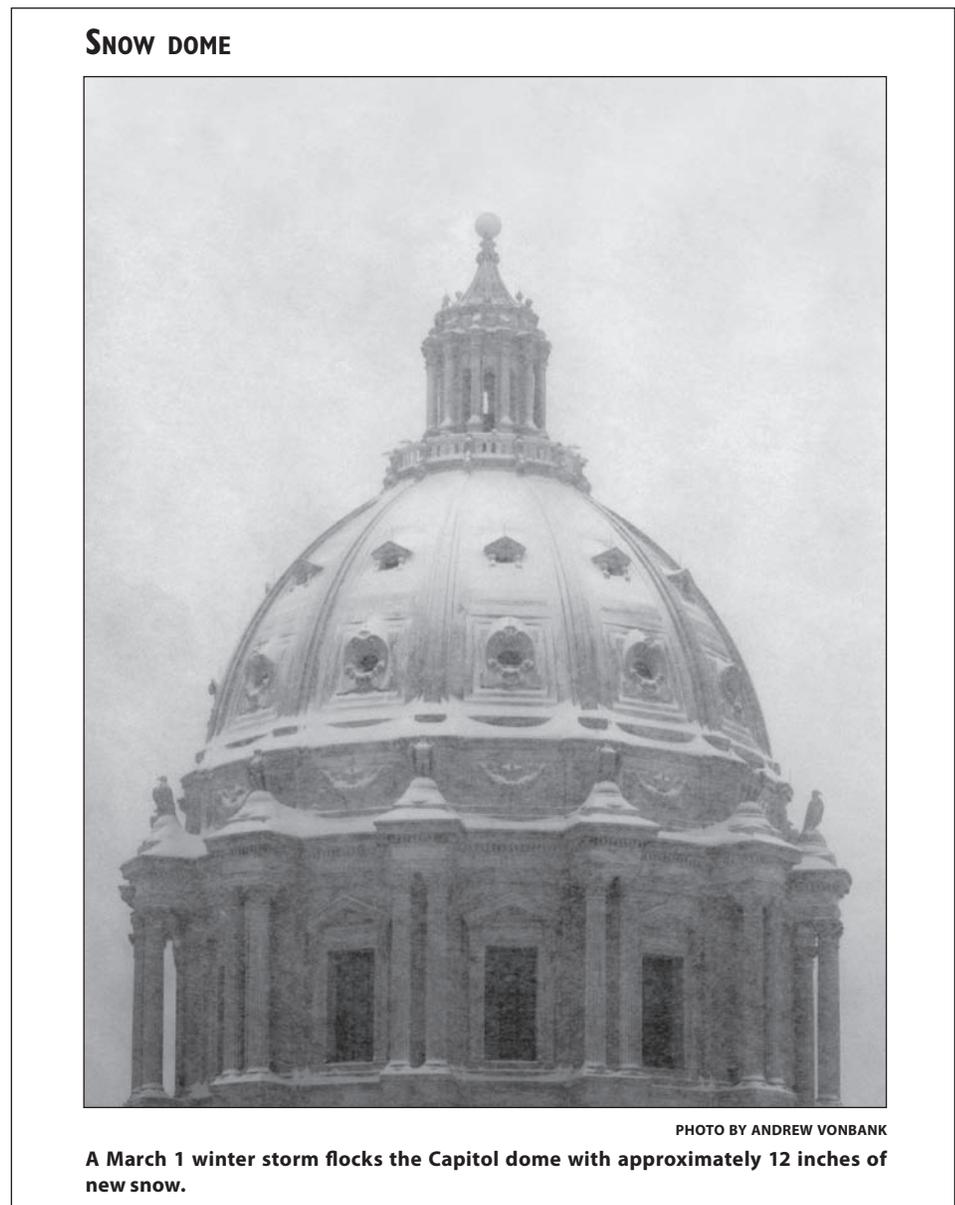
Sponsored by [Rep. Jim Davnie](#) (DFL-Mpls), [HF987](#) would expand, by the year 2010, the maximum age to 23 if certain requirements are met by the student. The House K-12 Finance Division laid the bill over Feb. 28 for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

The stipulations are the student must speak limited English or has limited English proficiency, has received less than eight years of public education beginning at age 5, has not completed the requirements of a high school diploma and will graduate by age 23.

Carmen Pacheco, a student at the International Academy in St. Paul made an impassioned plea to the committee to approve the bill so she could continue her education. “For a better life, we need a better job. With the opportunity to graduate, we will take advantage of it.”

Most students over age 20 now attending alternative schools are recent immigrants that want to earn their diploma, but most will be too old and must leave the program before they can graduate.

“I want to be a productive citizen who wants



to work here,” said Asha Mohammed, student body president at the Wellstone International High School in Minneapolis.

A companion bill, [SF853](#), sponsored by [Sen. Patricia Torres Ray](#) (DFL-Mpls), was laid over March 6 by the Senate E-12 Education Budget division for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

— S. HARDING

Family-provided daycare

Family, friends and neighbors provide 70 percent of family daycare in Minnesota each year.

[HF796](#) sponsored by [Rep. Erin Murphy](#) (DFL-St. Paul), would establish a grant program that would help providers promote early literacy, healthy development and school readiness.

Approved March 6 by the House E-12 Education Committee, the bill next goes to

the House Education Finance and Economic Competitiveness Finance Division.

Less than 20 percent of the family providers have little to no formal training in early child development; however, 46 percent of Minnesota families use this as their primary child care provider, and 24 percent use it exclusively, Murphy said.

“Passage of this legislation would put Minnesota at the leading edge of the nation at efforts for training opportunities for FFN caregivers,” she said.

Under the bill, the human services commissioner would make grants to community-based organizations, nonprofits and American Indian tribes working with FFN caregivers to provide training, support and resources to improve and promote children’s health, safety, nutrition and school readiness.

Grants would also be awarded to Minnesota

and regional library systems to implement early literacy programs in low-income communities. The grants would go to bookmobiles and read-mobiles, translations of early childhood books and literacy training in native languages, and family literacy activities.

The bill does not specify a total cost for the program.

[Rep. Sondra Erickson](#) (R-Princeton) asked why this bill is necessary. “Don’t our care-providers already have care networks?”

Murphy said this is just an opportunity to improve the networks.

A companion bill, [SF686](#), sponsored by [Sen. Patricia Torres Ray](#) (DFL-Mpls), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

— S. HARDING

High Five

Teachers could be possibly slapping hands with 4-year-olds entering the High Five kindergarten program.

Sponsored by [Rep. Sandra Peterson](#) (DFL-New Hope), [HF1325](#) would allow school districts to offer the High Five program.

“High Five boosts school readiness skills for poor, high-needs children,” said Annie Pearson, an early education teacher in the Minneapolis School District. Children attend either morning or afternoon sessions five days a week.

Under the bill, the programs would need to provide instructional content and activities that are of sufficient length and intensity to address learning needs; have class sizes of less than 20 children and child staff ratios of 10:1 or less; and have compensatory instruction that accelerates children’s language, literacy skills and mathematical thinking.

A child could participate in the program if they are 4 years old on Sept. 1, have completed the developmental screening process, qualify for free and reduced lunch, and is an English language learner.

School districts participating in the program would be able to count the new students as kindergartners and would receive .557 per pupil unit of state funding. The cost for this program is unspecified in the bill.

On March 6, the House E-12 Education Committee approved the bill and referred it to the House Finance Committee.

A companion bill, [SF1374](#), sponsored by [Sen. Ann Rest](#) (DFL-New Hope), awaits action by the Senate Education Committee.

— S. HARDING

Ice arena operating costs

In “The State of Hockey,” 10 school districts operate and maintain their own ice arenas.

Under current law, those districts can levy 90 percent of the net actual cost of ice arena

operation. Arenas also charge for open ice time and concessions to cover operating expenses.

[Rep. Leon Lillie](#) (DFL-North St. Paul), sponsor of [HF112](#), would like to see the levy amount increased to 100 percent.

The House K-12 Finance Division laid the bill over March 1 for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

Lillie said the North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale School District failed to pass its most recent levy request. “We have had to cut \$15 million; we have to count every penny, and that’s what this bill is about,” he said.

The district’s cost for operating its two arenas is \$6,647. The bill would save the district \$664.

If the levy were increased to 100 percent, the 10 districts combined would save \$100,000.

A companion bill, [SF12](#), sponsored by [Sen. Chuck Wiger](#) (DFL-North St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

— S. HARDING

More library funding

Libraries across the state have had to trim hours, staff or both to meet budget cuts enacted in 2001 and 2003.

“Minnesota currently allocates \$8.57 million per year for libraries, the same amount that was in 1992,” according to Chris Olson, executive director of the Metropolitan Library Service Agency. A new bill would raise appropriations by \$5 million a year.

[HF319](#), sponsored by [House Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher](#) (DFL-Mpls), would appropriate a \$13.57 million grant for fiscal year 2008 and again in 2009 for the state’s 12 regional library systems. Multi-county, multi-type library systems would see a grant of \$1.3 million for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, a \$400,000 increase over current allocations.

The House K-12 Finance Division laid the bill over March 1 for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

The increased funding for the service systems would go toward books and collections, interlibrary loans, updating shared electronic databases, bookmobiles and continuing education and staff training, among other things.

Supporters cite Minneapolis as an example of what reduced funding has meant to a community. According to a handout from the Minnesota Library Association; in 2004, library hours were cut, the material budgets were reduced and nearly 30 percent of the staff were laid off. Earlier this year, Webber Park, Southeast and Roosevelt libraries were closed, and all other libraries, including the new downtown library, are now only open five days a week.

A companion bill, [SF623](#), sponsored by [Sen. Rick Olseen](#) (DFL-Harris), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

— S. HARDING

TEACH

Scholarships up to \$5,000 per year could be awarded for courses leading to child development associate credentials, and associate or bachelor degrees in early child development and school-age care.

[HF814](#), sponsored by [Rep. David Bly](#) (DFL-Northfield), would establish the Teacher Education and Compensation Help program. Grants would provide scholarships, education incentives and an early childhood retention program for early childhood teachers. However, no specific funding is requested.

The House E-12 Education Committee approved the bill March 6 and referred it to the House Finance Committee.

TEACH was formed to address the issues of under-education, poor compensation and high turnover in the early childhood workforce, according to its Web site.

The program’s goals are to provide scholarships for people working in regulated child care centers and family care homes, to encourage child care programs to support the continuing education of their staff, and to provide increased compensation that is directly related to increased education.

Ann Kaner Roth of Minneapolis, an early education teacher, said that most early child care providers receive “the same pay as a dishwasher.”

The retention program incentives range from \$1,000 to \$3,500 annually, based on education.

Among the eligibility requirements, an applicant must be employed by a licensed early childhood or child care provider and be working with children. The employee may also be working at a licensed family child care provider or at a school-age program operated by a license-exempt public program.

A companion bill, [SF770](#), sponsored by [Sen. David Tomassoni](#) (DFL-Chisholm), was held over March 6 by the Senate Higher Education Budget and Policy Division for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill.

— S. HARDING

Teacher development

Minnesota teachers pursue their master’s degrees as a way to continue receiving credits to renew their licensure, getting a raise and becoming a better educator.

[Rep. Sandra Peterson](#) (DFL-New Hope) sponsors [HF412](#) that would award grants to teachers participating in the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The

House E-12 Education Committee approved the bill March 1. It awaits action by the House K-12 Finance Division.

NBPTS was established in 1987 to develop professional standards for accomplished teaching, create a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet those standards and integrate certified teachers into educational reform efforts.

The problem is that only a handful of districts offer compensation for going through this process, but not as much as someone who earns a master's degree. Nor do the credits count towards a pay raise.

Teachers accepted as candidates would receive a \$1,000 grant. Once certified, the teacher would receive a \$3,000 grant, and would receive another \$2,000 grant for their 10-year renewal of the certification.

Although no fiscal note was provided, Peterson indicated \$100,000 would be needed to pay for one coordinator and three facilitators who assist and support certification applicants. Money also would be used for program costs, travel expenses, meetings, supplies and Web maintenance.

Currently, there is a \$2,500 assessment fee to get into the program.

[Rep. Andy Welti](#) (DFL-Plainview) asked why a teacher would want to go through this process instead of obtaining a master's degree.

"This process meant more to the practical teaching process than a master's degree," said Sharon Kjellberg, a teacher in the Mounds View School District. "This program is relevant for what you do in your classroom today."

A companion bill, [SF319](#), sponsored by [Sen. Tarryl Clark](#) (DFL-St. Cloud), was scheduled to be heard March 8 by the Senate E-12 Education Budget Division.

— S. HARDING

Teachers of diverse backgrounds

Of the approximately 10,000 potential teachers educated in 2005-06 at postsecondary schools in Minnesota, only 5 percent were of color, which demographically does not match up with the increasing number of students of color.

"In the state, 20 percent of students are of color and 70 percent of Minneapolis students are of color," said Paul Spies, the parent of two North Minneapolis students.

A bill sponsored by [Rep. Mindy Greiling](#) (DFL-Roseville) would appropriate \$1.3 million for the 2008-09 biennium for the collaborative urban educator recruitment and training programs at three St. Paul universities. The trio last received that much state funding in the 2000-01 biennium. Currently, it receives \$528,000 annually.

Supporters of [HF1186](#) say that with extra

funding, more teachers of color could be recruited and retained for schools with diverse racial backgrounds.

The House Disparities in Students and Services Subcommittee approved the bill March 5 and referred it to the House K-12 Finance Division.

Concordia University would receive \$500,000 each year for the Southeast Asian Teacher program, the University of St. Thomas would receive \$400,000 each year for the collaborative urban educator program and Hamline University would receive \$400,000 each year for the Center for Excellence in Urban Teaching.

A companion bill, [SF894](#), sponsored by [Sen. LeRoy Stumpf](#) (DFL-Plummer), was laid over March 6 by the Senate E-12 Education Budget Division.

— S. HARDING

ELECTIONS

Election judge party affiliation

Election judges would not have to affiliate with a major political party, under a bill approved March 6 by the House Governmental Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee.

Sponsored by [Rep. Carol McFarlane](#) (R-White Bear Lake), [HF965](#) would also remove the requirement that the list of major party affiliated individuals be exhausted before a precinct appoints individuals who meet the qualifications to serve as an election judge. This bill also specifies that at least two election judges per precinct be affiliated with different major political parties.

Under current law, designated county or district chairs for each major political party submit lists of eligible voters to act as election judges in their designated area. Appointments are then made from the list. However, if no list is submitted or all names have been used, any other individual meeting necessary qualifications may be appointed to serve.

A constituent who had been an election judge in 2004 was not able to be an election judge in 2006 because of changes made in law last year, McFarlane said.

Under the bill, township elections would have the requirement of party balance of election judges removed completely.

Kent Sulem, attorney for the Minnesota Association of Townships, said township elections that happen in March typically involve only one to two candidates and do not need balanced partisan judges. School districts have similar election laws, he said.

Ann Higgins, intergovernmental relations representative for the League of Minnesota

Cities, said the change would still maintain the political party balance at the polling place for all other elections, but would allow precincts the opportunity to go to a larger pool of qualified election judges, such as those not affiliated with a major political party. As election judges are getting older, finding replacements is becoming more difficult, she said.

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

A companion bill, [SF753](#), sponsored by [Sen. Sandy Rummel](#) (DFL-White Bear Lake), awaits action in the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

— P. OSTBERG

Caucus, primary month changes

The state primary election would be moved from September to June, under a bill approved March 7 by the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee.

Sponsored by [Rep. Steve Simon](#) (DFL-St. Louis Park), [HF1117](#) would also move the precinct caucuses from March to February. Both changes would take effect in 2010. The bill's next stop is the House floor.

Simon disagrees with opponents who say the change would extend the length of the campaign season. Instead, Simon says, it would adjust the time candidates can campaign for the state seat rather than against others vying for the same party endorsement.

In the case of a contested September primary, candidates now spend "a lot more time talking about who's the best Democrat or who's the best Republican," and not enough time discussing who's the best candidate, Simon said.

Annette Meeks, who co-chairs the Council for Electoral Leadership, said the change would mean "cleaner, more issue-driven elections" rather than shorter and meaner ones. The time allows discourse on issues rather than throwing "torpedoes" at other candidates.

[Rep. Laura Brod](#) (R-New Prague), a cosponsor of the bill, unsuccessfully offered an amendment that would have changed the primary date from June to August to give counties more time to manage the election process.

[Rep. Bill Hilty](#) (DFL-Finlayson) said moving the primary to June would make it more difficult for those holding legislative offices to run for another state office, because members are typically at the end of session. Moving the party endorsement process to February also puts them in the middle of session, thereby raising myriad conflicts, he said.

Simon agreed the conflicts could be troubling for those in that situation, and the bill doesn't make life easy for ambitious state legislators. "But I guess that's one of the risks one has to weigh when one runs for higher office when they're already holding an office," Simon said.

A companion bill, [SF893](#), sponsored by [Sen. Dan Larson](#) (DFL-Bloomington), awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

—P. OSTBERG

Getting more people to the polls

People registering on Election Day may be able to use lease agreements to help prove their residency, under a bill approved March 6 by the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee.

Sponsored by [Rep. Bill Hilty](#) (DFL-Finlayson), [HF1223](#) would modify the voter registration process.

Under current law, a voter wanting to register on Election Day must document a proof of residency, which can include a driver's license or state identification card with the current address or photo identification along with a current utility bill. The bill would add lease agreements and wireless telephone bills as forms of utility bills.

The bill would also require public and certain private postsecondary institutions to submit a list of current students enrolled in the institution with the most recent residency address of the student to the [Office of the Secretary of State](#). The office would submit the list at least 14 days prior to the state or city general election to the appropriate county auditor.

Voters are finding barriers in trying to participate in the political process, said Scott Cooper, representing the Minnesota Voting Rights Coalition.

Under the bill, employees of a residential facility, such as homeless and battered women's shelters, could vouch for residents of a facility on Election Day to help prove residency. This is a specific concern brought to the coalition, Cooper said.

[Rep. Laura Brod](#) (R-New Prague) said using a lease as a form of a utility bill does not prove a person has residency.

"We believe it proves residency as well as a utility bill does," Cooper said. The person is still registering on Election Day and committing a crime if they are doing that dishonestly, he said.

Hilty said expanding the definition of utility bill helps renters whose landlords pay utility costs resulting in some not having a utility bill to prove residency.

The bill now goes to the House Education Finance and Economic Competitiveness Finance Division.

A companion bill, [SF954](#), sponsored by [Sen. Linda Higgins](#) (DFL-Mpls), awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

—P. OSTBERG

EMPLOYMENT

A load off the back

A 2004 report from the Department of Labor and Industry indicated that nursing assistants ranked second, registered nurses seventh and LPNs 12th among occupations where injuries occur.

Backs bear the most burden because providers are required to lift patients manually, said Elizabeth Shogren, a registered nurse.

[Rep. Patti Fritz](#) (DFL-Faribault) is sponsoring the "Safe Patient Handling Act" to provide relief.

The bill, [HF712](#), would require all licensed health care facilities to implement a program that would establish committees, buy equipment, provide staff training and offer annual evaluations to ensure safe handling of patients. An appropriation of \$2 million would be provided each year until fiscal year 2010 to help moderate costs.

Approved March 1 by the House Health and Human Services Committee, the bill was referred to the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

"The data is so clear: Everyday we go to work we risk serious injury because we do not have the appropriate equipment to move patients effectively," said Stacy Lundquist, a registered nurse who suffered a career-ending back injury on the job.

She and proponents argued that the body mechanics encouraged with manual lifting do not help prevent injury regardless of the patient's weight.

"The danger in relying in techniques is that it provides a false sense of security," Shogren said.

They said the proposed program would ultimately reduce costs for facilities by eliminating the injuries, and therefore insurance claims.

This did not assuage opponents' concerns.

"Even if there is an eventual return of investment, there is an initial cash outlay that will be difficult for some facilities to do," said John Lips, director of legal affairs for Care Providers of Minnesota, a long-term care organization.

A companion bill, [SF828](#), sponsored by [Sen. Linda Higgins](#) (DFL-Mpls), is scheduled to be heard March 9 by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

—M. SIMPSON

Geothermal investment loans

A bill sponsored by [Rep. Aaron Peterson](#) (DFL-Appleton) aims to help local governments invest in geothermal heating and cooling systems—technology that utilizes the constant temperature of the earth rather than gas to heat and cool buildings.

[HF1098](#) would establish a revolving loan program through the [Department of Commerce](#) for the installation of these systems in city and county buildings.

The House Energy Finance and Policy Division laid the bill over March 2 for possible inclusion in an unspecified future omnibus bill. A companion bill, [SF904](#), sponsored by [Sen. Gary Kubly](#) (DFL-Granite Falls) awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

The bill would provide loans only for projects that have been proven "economically feasible" and that can ensure "proper and efficient operation" of a facility. The maximum loan term is 10 years, and before being approved, a municipality must adopt a resolution to collect sufficient revenues to pay the loan back.

Peterson said he was not yet sure what interest rates, if any, would apply to the loans. He said the issue would be worked on as the legislation progresses.

Craig Johnson, intergovernmental relations representative for the League of Minnesota Cities, praised the bill as an opportunity for local governments to use new technologies when and where they see fit.

"It allows a community that has already made the decision to go forward with renewable energy—in this case, geothermal—to have a state resource where they can help finance that at potentially a much better rate than they could otherwise achieve if they were to do it on their own."

[Rep. Brita Sailer](#) (DFL-Park Rapids) successfully amended the bill to make its provisions apply to solar-thermal heating and cooling technology as well as geothermal.

—N. BUSSE

Energy conservation

A bill sponsored by [Rep. Jeremy Kalin](#) (DFL-Lindstrom) would require Minnesota's gas and electric utility companies to set a more aggressive energy conservation goal.

[HF1221](#) would establish a goal of 1.5 percent of gross retail sales for all gas and electric companies in the state. It was approved March 7 by the House Energy Finance and Policy Division and now goes to the House Finance Committee.

The bill represents an expansion of the state's current conservation improvement program,

which directs utilities to invest money in programs and initiatives that encourage energy conservation among their customers.

Kalin called the 1.5 percent goal both “aggressive” and “doable.” Representatives of utility companies, however, said they would have a tough time meeting it, and that it might result in higher gas and electric prices.

Mike Bash, chief financial officer of Connexus Energy, said it didn’t make sense to put the onus for energy conservation on the utility companies when customers are responsible for gas and electric demand.

“We’re not at our customers’ shoulder when they’re at Best Buy buying that new plasma TV. We’re not at their shoulder when they’re at the hardware store deciding which light bulb to buy. We’re not there with their builder at their new home deciding what appliances to put in,” Bash said, adding that his company will have to raise its rates anywhere from 6 percent to 10 percent if the bill passes.

Sheldon Strom, executive director of the Center for Energy and the Environment, disputed the notion that the bill would increase energy prices, arguing that having to build new power plants to meet energy demands would be much more expensive than conservation.

“Saving energy is so much less expensive than producing new energy supplies,” he said.

A companion bill, [SF997](#), sponsored by [Sen. Scott Dibble](#) (DFL-Mpls), was scheduled to be heard March 8 by the Senate Energy, Utilities, Technology and Communications Committee.

— N. BUSSE

ENVIRONMENT

Global Warming Mitigation Act

A bill sponsored by [Rep. Maria Ruud](#) (DFL-Minnetonka) aims to make Minnesota do its part to curb global warming, but critics say it could negatively impact the state’s power companies and consumers.

[HF375](#) would enact the Global Warming Mitigation Act of 2007. The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee approved the bill March 6. It now goes to the House Energy Finance and Policy Division.

The bill would implement a cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gas emissions, whereby aggregate carbon emissions from power plants would be limited, and companies given “allowances” of emissions that they could trade with one another. The goal would be to reduce emissions to 45 percent below the 2005 levels by 2025.

A section of the bill that would forbid the



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Rep. Brita Sailer watches a committee room monitor during a March 1 presentation to the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee on global warming by Alden Meyer, director of strategy and policy for the Union of Concerned Scientists.

construction of any new carbon-emitting power plants until the cap-and-trade system is implemented — a process Ruud said could take “a couple of years” — emerged as the most controversial provision. Critics said it could stall plans to build new coal-fired power plants that are necessary to meet the state’s growing demand for electricity.

“I believe there’s a way to solve the global warming problem and keep the lights on at the same time,” said Rick Lancaster, vice president of generation for Great River Energy.

Ruud replied that global warming is an urgent problem, and that power companies have an obligation to figure out for themselves how to meet electricity demands without increasing emissions.

That answer wasn’t good enough for [Rep. David Dill](#) (DFL-Crane Lake) or the committee chair, [Rep. Kent Eken](#) (DFL-Twin Valley). Both tried unsuccessfully to amend the bill to allow greater flexibility to the power companies.

“I just wonder who’s going to get browned-out first. Is it going to be the power-glutton pigs that continue to expand their communities or is it going to be the rural people who have one farm light on out in the barnyard?” Dill said.

[Rep. Dennis Ozment](#) (R-Rosemount) said

he supports efforts to reduce global warming, but warned that the bill in its current form amounts to “knee-jerking” that would cost the state construction jobs and risk power outages.

“I want to do all these things. I want us to go in this direction. But why do we all-of-a-sudden have to start putting people out of work and turn around on a dime? I don’t understand that,” he said. “If we were going to resolve this just within Minnesota, I would have a different attitude.”

A companion bill, [SF192](#), sponsored by [Sen. Ellen Anderson](#) (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Energy, Utilities, Technology and Communications Committee.

— N. BUSSE

Conservation corps funding

The Minnesota Conservation Corps, an organization that educates and employs Minnesota youth to help manage the state’s natural resources, would get a funding boost under a bill sponsored by [Rep. Aaron Peterson](#) (DFL-Appleton).

[HF538](#) would appropriate \$2.29 million per year to the corps over the next two fiscal years. The House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division laid the bill over March 6 for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill. A companion bill, [SF395](#), sponsored by [Sen. Tom M. Bakk](#) (DFL-Cook), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

Peterson said the bill represents a \$1.2 million per year funding increase over what is currently recommended in Gov. Tim Pawlenty’s proposed budget. He added that the MCC can leverage an additional \$2 for every \$1 the state provides.

Len Price, MCC executive director, said the additional funds will allow the MCC to expand its conservation activities.

“The more dollars that we can get from the state, the more we can go out and leverage — and really, the more corps members that we can put in the field to have this experience,” Price said.

Sara Wourinen, a 17-year-old MCC Summer Youth Program participant, called the corps the best thing that has ever happened to her.

“I really enjoy working with the Minnesota Conservation Corps. It’s taught me so much about who I am, about life and work ethics and working with different people,” Wourinen said.

[Rep. David Dill](#) (DFL-Crane Lake) praised the MCC and said it provided “the best bang for the buck” of any conservation program in the state.

— N. BUSSE

FAMILY

Combating domestic violence

In 2004, there were 15,000 cases of domestic violence reported in St. Paul. That equals almost 300 cases a week and 40 cases a day.

[Rep. John Lesch](#) (DFL-St. Paul) is sponsoring a bill to help address the problem.

[HF1311](#) proposes a one-time \$500,000 appropriation to St. Paul to create an integrated framework to develop policies, procedures and quality assurance for domestic violence responses from law enforcement agencies. Once established, the program could be a blueprint for similar programs throughout the state.

The House Public Safety Finance Division laid the bill over March 1 for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

St. Paul Chief of Police John Harrington said that having different agencies work together and share resources is crucial. Cops alone cannot stop domestic violence. Harrington said what works is a collaborative effort.

St. Paul Domestic Intervention Project Executive Director Shelley Johnson Cline said the framework would also address domestic violence issues within the diverse populations of St. Paul.

One of the greatest values of this bill, Lesch said, is the many different individuals and agencies that would be brought together to make this happen.

A companion bill, [SF1159](#), sponsored by [Sen. Mee Moua](#) (DFL-St. Paul), was laid over Feb. 28 by the Senate Public Safety Budget Division.

— C. GREEN

GOVERNMENT

Notaries public fees

Fees charged by notaries could be raised, under a bill approved by the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee March 1.

Sponsored by [Rep. Melissa Hortman](#) (DFL-Brooklyn Park) and [Sen. Don Betzold](#) (DFL-Fridley), [HF144/SF463](#) would raise the fee up to 5 percent of the \$100 fee paid every five years by notaries for their license to perform the service. Currently, notaries can charge up to \$1.

The increase would help offset the increase to the notary-licensing fee made several years ago, said Lona Schreiber, Anoka County intergovernmental coordinator.

[Rep. Laura Brod](#) (R-New Prague) said the increase goes beyond the amount needed to offset the notaries' licensing fee.

"This isn't at all going to be a moneymaker," Schreiber said. There are several people in

SHADE SUPPORT

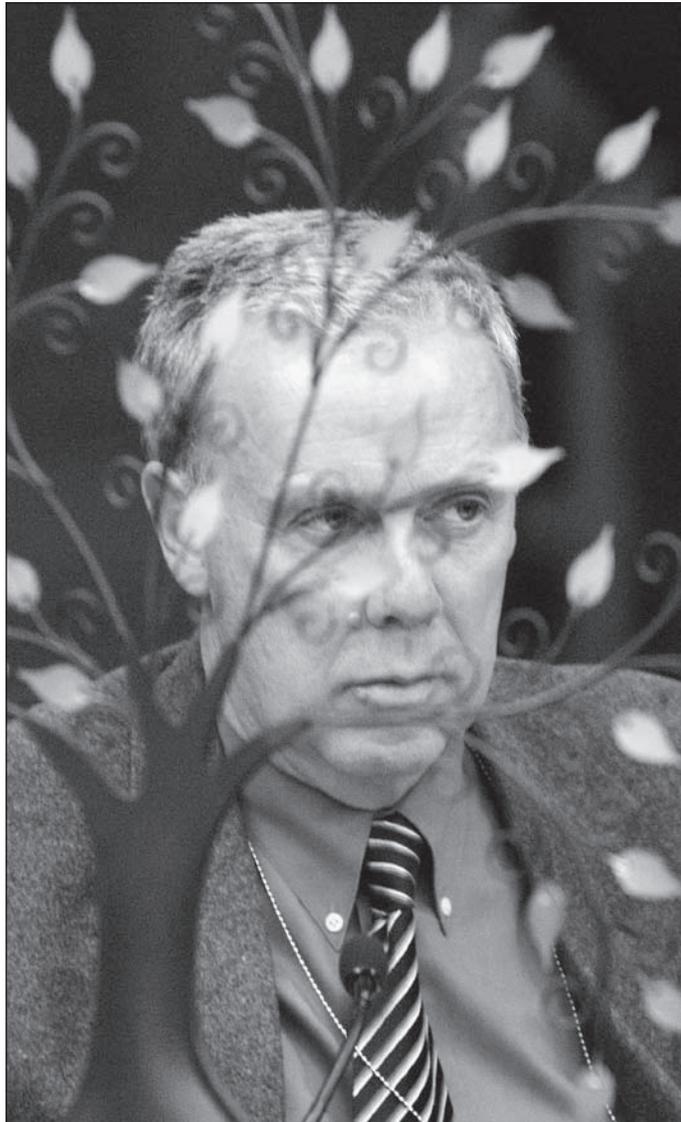


PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Robert Tomlinson, assistant director with the Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry, testifies March 5 before the House Game, Fish and Forestry Division in support of a bill that would provide forest and shade tree pest control.

an office that are licensed notaries, she said, adding that the cost to maintain those every five years is substantial.

The bill now goes to the House State Government Finance Division.

The Senate passed the bill 58-7 Feb. 21.

— P. OSTBERG

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Preventing lead contamination

The Lead Poisoning Prevention Act seeks to do as it says: prevent lead poisoning, specifically in children.

Members of the House Housing Policy and Finance and Public Health Finance Division

agreed March 6 to consider the legislation for its omnibus bill, after adopting an oral amendment to ease a provision on landlords.

[Rep. Karen Clark](#) (DFL-Mpls) sponsors [HF695](#), which she said would make the process of testing, reporting and assessing lead contamination easier, quicker, more affordable and more forthcoming. The result, she believes, is cost savings across the board.

"I just think this is such a good investment in our kids," Clark said. "These are children who lose neurological function ... they can't learn; they get into trouble. These are the kids who drop out of school ... and there's a disproportionate number in the criminal justice system."

The bill would allow for filter paper use in

the testing of lead in blood, which is faster than methods currently approved. It also lowers the threshold — from 15 to 5 micrograms of lead per deciliter — of reportable contamination and would require risk assessments earlier and at lower thresholds for children and pregnant women.

It would also affect the state's medical assistance program by requiring that it cover risk assessments and environmental investigations.

Some committee members took issue with a final provision that would force landlords to test properties built before 1978 for lead prior to rental and to disclose the results.

"We're penalizing landlords across the board," [Rep. Dan Severson](#) (R-Sauk Rapids) said. "I think that this has more economic implications than these landlords should bear."

Jack Horner, general counsel for the Minnesota Multi Housing Association, argued that current requirements that require certain landlords to distribute an informational brochure are satisfactory enough.

"Both in federal law and state law, we simply assume that pre-1978 housing has lead dust in it," he said. "It's an assumption we disclose."

Members ultimately adopted an amendment that would still force landlords to test, but wouldn't require it more than once a year or if a property had already tested positive.

A companion bill, [SF1015](#), sponsored by [Sen. Linda Higgins](#) (DFL-Mpls), is scheduled to be heard March 12 by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

— M. SIMPSON

Finding hearing loss

House Speaker [Margaret Anderson Kelliher](#) (DFL-Mpls) said she sponsored [HF1206](#) because of her daughter's experience.

"At some point, she was deaf," she told members of the House Health and Human Services Committee March 6 as she described the resulting speech delays her daughter incurred. "I have a special place for this issue."

HF1206 would require universal newborn hearing and infant screening programs in all hospitals statewide, and services for hard-of-hearing children.

The bill would also oblige hospitals to inform parents if their child is diagnosed with a hearing loss, a practice that testifiers said has been neglected by some providers.

"Hearing loss occurs more frequently than any other condition tested for," said Dr. Karl White, the founding director of the National Center for Hearing Disease and Management. "Minnesota screens 80 percent of children, but there's often no follow up."

"The average deaf adult in the United States reads at a fourth-grade level," he said. "But



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Trent Brown testifies with his 6-month-old daughter, Linnea, before the House Health and Human Services Committee March 6 in support of the Universal Newborn and Infant Hearing Screening Act.

those children diagnosed with hearing loss before 6 months of age are achieving on an age level with their peers."

The bill was approved and referred to the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee. Its companion, [SF1095](#) sponsored by [Rep. John Marty](#) (DFL-Roseville), awaits action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

— M. SIMPSON

Assistance for people with disabilities

Assistive technology allows people with disabilities to lead independent lives by assisting with communication, mobility, play and other activities that, by design, may be difficult for some.

Sponsored by [Rep. Shelley Madore](#) (DFL-Apple Valley), [HF725](#) would support further development of this technology by funding supportive services, helping finance a grant and facilitating a study to determine whether people with disabilities and the elderly are getting everything they need.

"This levels the playing ground," said Judy Moening, executive director of United Cerebral Palsy of Minnesota.

The House Health Care and Human Services Finance Division held over the \$700,000 request March 6 for possible omnibus bill inclusion.

The \$200,000 in grant funding would help satisfy federal match dollars that will ultimately launch a low-interest loan program for people seeking this equipment.

Proponents say the funding can't wait.

"We have no time," said Carol Fury, executive director of Assistive Technology of Minnesota. "If we send this money back, we will never see it again."

Fury said information gained from a study, which is expected to cost \$200,000, would help advance the system currently in place for the product.

[Sen. David Tomassoni](#) (DFL-Chisholm) sponsors [SF639](#), the bill's companion. It awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

— M. SIMPSON

HIGHER EDUCATION

Remote learning

In the hundreds of millions of dollars projected to be spent by the state on higher education in the upcoming biennium, \$120,000 may seem like a drop in the bucket.

But the amount could help residents along Lake Superior and the state's Arrowhead Region, where a person often has to drive more than two hours to attend a college class.

That is where the nonprofit [Cook County Higher Education](#) comes in.

From a site in Grand Marais, students can partake in a real-time classroom experience via interactive television or can take traditional courses online or through other technological means.

"This provides an opportunity for people to obtain their degree and get their training without having to leave the community," said Paula Sundet, program director. "In essence we're brokering programs that the colleges and universities in the area have."

Sponsored by [Rep. David Dill](#) (DFL-Crane Lake), [HF358](#) would appropriate \$120,000 in the 2008-09 biennium to the program, a \$40,000 increase over current base level funding administered through the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. The \$80,000 base has been in place since the 2000-01 biennium.

"We need the additional money so we can expand some of the programming that we are currently doing," Sundet said. Overall, the program has seen a 112 percent increase in

participation in the past year.

The bill was laid over March 6 by the House Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance Division for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

A companion bill, [SF313](#), sponsored by [Sen. Tom M. Bakk](#) (DFL-Cook), was laid over March 6 by the Senate Higher Education Budget and Policy Division for possible omnibus bill inclusion.

— M. COOK

Car owners get hit with tickets

If your car is involved in a hit-and-run crash, you could be found guilty of a misdemeanor. Even if you're not driving.

Current law says that if a driver fails to stop, provide information or submit an accident report, he or she could face charges. [HF1166](#), sponsored by [Rep. Larry Haws](#) (DFL-St. Cloud), would make it a petty misdemeanor for vehicle owners or lessees whose vehicle is involved in a hit-and-run.

The bill was laid over by the House Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee March 1 for possible inclusion in an upcoming omnibus bill.

Lt. Jim Mortenson of the St. Cloud Police Department said that the bill is a tool that can be used when the owner won't cooperate with police.

[Rep. Paul Kohls](#) (R-Victoria) said the bill puts law-abiding citizens in a difficult position. While law enforcement officers are required to prove cases on their own, citizens are under no obligation to talk to the authorities about anything. The bill would force someone to talk or get a ticket, Kohls said.

A companion bill, [SF447](#), sponsored by [Sen. Rick Olseen](#) (DFL-Harris), was laid over March 7 by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— C. GREEN

METRO AFFAIRS

Elections proposed for Met Council

In 1967, the Legislature created the [Metropolitan Council](#) "to coordinate the planning and development of the metropolitan area." The council serves Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties, providing support and services for transportation, wastewater treatment, regional parks and housing.

The 17 members of the council are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor, but a bill sponsored by [Rep. Frank Hornstein](#) (DFL-Mpls), would change that.

[HF312](#) proposes putting these appointments in the hands of voters by 2008, with council members serving four-year terms, staggered

so that one-half of the membership is elected every two years.

Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls), who spent five terms in the House and one in the Senate, said that with its budget of over \$600 million, the council is the third largest entity in the state behind the city of Minneapolis and Hennepin County. He argued that with such broad local government authority, there must be accountability. It is unprecedented for a body with this much power not to be elected, Orfield said.

Peter Bell, chairman of the council, said support for the council is "broader and deeper than it has ever been." He listed some of the council's major accomplishments, including the Hiawatha light-rail transit line, the North Star commuter rail system and operating an award-winning wastewater treatment system.

Bell said that if the members are elected, the council would lose its regional focus, become less accessible to the governor and the Legislature, and lose its racial and gender diversity.

"Never does the cliché 'If it's not broke, don't fix it,' apply more than now," Bell said.

Approved by the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee March 5, the bill's next stop is the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee.

A companion bill, [SF81](#), sponsored by [Sen. Chuck Wiger](#) (DFL-North St. Paul), awaits action by the full Senate.

— C. GREEN

MILITARY

GI bill promise

Military recruiters promote education benefits as part of the package for a person enlisting in the National Guard and reserve units. However, not all reservists are eligible for the benefits provided under the [Montgomery GI Bill for the Selected Reserve](#).

This is a form of "bait and switch," [Rep. Dan Severson](#) (R-Sauk Rapids) told the House Veterans Affairs Division March 2.

His bill, [HF903](#), would let Congress and the president know by resolution about the state's desire to have the benefits applied as advertised by recruiters. The division approved the bill and referred it to the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee.

The Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve does not adequately address the changeover to an all-volunteer force, where reservists are called up and discharged multiple times, possibly making them ineligible for the education benefit, Severson said.

A companion bill, [SF590](#), sponsored by [Sen. Jim Vickerman](#) (DFL-Tracy), awaits

action by the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

SAFETY

Defibrillators for all

When law enforcement agencies answer emergency 911 calls, they occasionally encounter situations where they must assist heart attack victims.

The most effective treatment for cardiac arrest is a combination of CPR and electric shock to the heart, usually provided by a defibrillator. However, many law enforcement agencies do not have the defibrillators for transport.

Sponsored by [Rep. John Ward](#) (DFL-Brainerd), [HF687](#) would appropriate \$200,000 to help law enforcement agencies outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area purchase defibrillators, and create a working group to make recommendations for awarding grants to buy the new equipment.

The House Public Safety Finance Division held the bill over March 1 for possible omnibus bill inclusion.

Buck McAlpin, president of the Minnesota Ambulance Association, said that in some rural areas, it can take an ambulance 45 minutes to respond to a call, where a squad car may be five blocks away.

A companion bill, [SF334](#), sponsored by [Sen. Paul Koering](#) (R-Fort Ripley), was laid over Feb. 21 by the Senate Public Safety Budget Division.

— C. GREEN

TAXES

More ambulance exemptions

Emergency vehicles used like ambulances could get the same tax exemptions if a bill heard March 6 in the House Taxes Committee passes.

Sponsored by [Rep. David Dill](#) (DFL-Crane Lake), [HF1333](#) would expand tax exemptions to all emergency response vehicles owned by an ambulance service. These vehicles would be exempt from the motor vehicle registration tax even though they do not have the appearance of an ambulance. The repair and replacement parts for these vehicles would also be exempt from sales and use tax.

Currently, licensed and marked ambulances are exempt from the motor vehicle registration tax and the motor vehicle sales tax. If passed, the bill would take effect July 1. The cost to the state would be minimal.

The bill was held over for possible inclusion in the omnibus tax bill. A companion bill,

SF869, sponsored by [Sen. Rod Skoe](#) (DFL-Clearbrook), was laid over by the Senate Taxes Committee.

— S. HEGMAN

Pet tax exemption

A bill that would exempt sales tax on certain pet sales was heard by the House Taxes Committee March 6.

Sponsored by [Rep. Pat Garofalo](#) (R-Farmington), [HF1152](#) would give nonprofit animal shelters sales tax exemptions on animal sales. To qualify for the exemption, the selling price of the animal cannot exceed reasonable costs in caring for the animal before the sale. The impact to the General Fund would be \$400,000 in fiscal year 2008 and \$480,000 by fiscal year 2011.

One organization that would benefit from the bill is Last Hope Inc. Started in 1985 as a nonprofit organization in Farmington dedicated to saving abandoned, unwanted and helpless dogs and cats, the organization has 200 volunteers and no paid staff. Any money raised from adoption fees goes to keep the animals healthy.

With two small dogs nearby, one of which was available for adoption, the organization's president, Bev Orr, said since its beginning, the organization has helped 30,000 animals find homes. In 2005, Last Hope paid about \$12,000 in sales tax. When an animal is adopted, sales tax is not figured into the fee. The state's 6.5 percent

sales tax is figured from the organization's gross receipts for the year.

The bill was held over for possible inclusion in the omnibus tax bill. There is no Senate companion.

— S. HEGMAN

Homestead credit change

A bill that would give 86 percent of homeowners in the state property tax relief was held over March 5 by the House Property Tax Relief and Local Sales Tax Division for possible inclusion in a division report.

Sponsored by [Rep. Denise Dittrich](#) (DFL-Champlin), [HF647](#) would increase the market value homestead credit for most homes, effective for taxes payable in 2008 and after.

The bill would index the market value at which the maximum homestead credit is received from \$304 at \$76,000 to \$332 at \$83,000; extend the point that the credit phase-out begins from \$76,000 to \$381,000; and change the phase-out rate from 0.09 percent, meaning the credit decreases by \$9 per \$10,000 of value, to 0.304 percent, meaning the credit declines by \$30.40 per \$10,000 of value.

"This will make a difference in people's budgets," Dittrich said.

Mary Anne Razim-Fitzsimons, a Coon Rapids resident, said the value of her house has increased \$142,000 in 10 years, including \$17,000 from 2006 to 2007.

A companion bill, [SF404](#), sponsored by [Sen. Terri Bonoff](#) (DFL-Minnetonka), was held over March 5 by the Senate Property Tax Division for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill.

— S. HEGMAN

Online tax filing

Though Minnesota is No. 2 in the country in online tax filing, a bill heard by the House Taxes Committee and House State Government Finance Division March 5 would require the [Department of Revenue](#) to provide the service and implement a new program.

Sponsored by [Rep. John Benson](#) (DFL-Minnetonka), [HF843](#) would require the department to provide free online filing of individual income tax returns on its Web site. It would also direct the commissioner of revenue to implement a "ReadyReturn" program for individuals with simple income tax returns.

Under the program, the commissioner would complete returns for eligible taxpayers based on data in the commissioner's possession. Taxpayers would access their return on the department Web site or in paper form. Eligible taxpayers would then have the option of signing the return and filing it in lieu of completing an income tax return. Penalties for underpayment and failure to file would be waived for taxpayers using the program.

Carole Wald, the department's assistant commissioner for income tax, said the program, which is operating in California, has some issues. For one, when employers provide their tax information to the state, they don't do it electronically, meaning the information would not be available fast enough for the program.

"We would need more compliance by employers for it to work," she said.

She added that the "ReadyReturn" program would also make the department the auditor for those returns, which would also make the process difficult. It would also be unknown if a person was married in the previous year or something else changed in their tax status.

The bill was held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill.

A companion bill, [SF665](#), sponsored by [Sen. Ann Rest](#) (DFL-New Hope), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

— S. HEGMAN

Toll-free tax line

Toll-free tax information lines would be required as part of a bill heard jointly by the House Taxes Committee and House State Government Finance Division March 5.

Sponsored by [Rep. Ken Tschumper](#) (DFL-La Crescent), [HF1509](#) would make an appropriation for tax compliance initiatives and require the [Department of Revenue](#) to maintain a toll-free taxpayer assistance telephone service. It would also make changes consistent with recommendations in a [tax compliance report](#) prepared in March 2006 by the [Office of the Legislative Auditor](#) by: requiring the revenue commissioner to enter into an agreement with the Internal Revenue Service for the processing of electronically filed state returns; implementing electronic filing of employer withholding returns; requiring a study of the provision of sales and use tax forms; and providing telephone assistance to limited-English speakers.

Revenue Commissioner Ward Einess said the state already has five toll-free phone lines that are fully operational for tax questions, including (800) 652-9094. They are targeted to Greater Minnesota residents, but metro-area residents can call (651) 296-3781 with tax questions. Einess estimates the lines cost about \$95,000 per year to maintain.

The bill, which has no Senate companion, was held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill.

— S. HEGMAN



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

Bev Orr, president of Last Hope Inc., holds 14-year-old Decker as she testifies March 6 before the House Taxes Committee. Rep. Pat Garofalo, holding Brittany, sponsors a bill that would make animal shelter pet sales exempt from sales tax.

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



Funding transportation needs

Ideas drive to put state back on the smooth, uncongested road

PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Three separate bills would promote a comprehensive approach to addressing the state's transportation needs.

By Mike Cook

It is widely accepted that transportation funding has not kept up with the times.

Now three bills offer different ways of trying to get the state back on the road to better times.

Each was heard March 6 by the House Transportation Finance Committee, and held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus transportation finance bill.

"We all know what comes out of this committee is going to be a compilation of a number of elements from a bunch of different bills," said [Rep. Mary Liz Holberg](#) (R-Lakeville).

Pawlenty plan

Sponsored by Holberg, [HF799](#) is the governor's transportation initiative.

It includes a one-time \$100 million transfer from the General Fund for state highways. Of that, \$95 million would supplement current state funding to keep the next three road construction seasons worth of projects on schedule, including the Highway 169/County Road 81 "Devil's Triangle" project in the northwest Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Holberg said the bill provides for a number of fee increases, including certificates of title, motorized bicycles and identification cards for seniors. It also establishes a \$20 reinstatement fee for people whose license is suspended for theft of gasoline.

Most significant, the bill calls for \$1.7 billion, 10-year bonding package that would finance and accelerate 25 high-priority state highway construction projects.

"The debt on this bonding package is

serviced entirely by the new revenues that come to the trunk highway fund from the new constitutionally dedicated portion of the motor vehicle sales tax revenue approved by the voters for November," said Bob McFarlin, assistant to the transportation commissioner. Revenues from the tax still leave more than \$1.7 billion for other trunk highway fund purposes.

The governor would also like to see all sales tax on leased vehicles be a dedicated transportation revenue stream and added to the motor vehicle sales tax revenue fund for distribution to state highways, local roads and transit. This move would likely raise \$450 million in the next 10 years.

A companion bill, [SF541](#), sponsored by [Sen. Dick Day](#) (R-Owatonna), was tabled Feb. 26 by the Senate Transportation Budget and Policy Division.

'A much bigger bite'

The governor's plan does not call for a gas tax, but [HF23](#), sponsored by [Rep. Ron Erhardt](#) (R-Edina) does.

It calls for a nickel increase in each of the next two fiscal years, and would index it to inflation beginning in 2009. It also would raise the tax on special fuels, such as E85, proportional to the gas tax increase. The 20-cent gas tax has not been raised since 1988. Since then, Erhardt said all but five states have increased their tax.

According to a fiscal impact summary, "This will bring in an additional \$237 million for fiscal year 2008, \$352 million in fiscal year 2009, \$378 million in fiscal year 2010, and \$405 million in fiscal year 2011."

His bill also calls for a restructuring and cap elimination of the motor vehicle registration

tax, would permit counties to impose up to a \$20 wheelage tax and would appropriate \$1.1 billion in trunk highway bonds over the next decade. It would permit counties in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, as well as Greater Minnesota, to impose a 0.5 percent local transportation sales tax.

"This bill will take a much bigger bite out of the problem that exists in the funding over what the governor is offering," Erhardt said. "A lot of it will be on a pay-as-you-go basis."

A companion bill, [SF5](#), sponsored by [Sen. Steve Murphy](#) (DFL-Red Wing), awaits action by the Senate Transportation Committee.

County requests

Counties could play a greater role in funding roads in their jurisdiction under a bill ([HF946](#)) sponsored by division chairman [Rep. Bernie Lieder](#) (DFL-Crookston). It is similar to Erhardt's proposal, in that it would raise the gas tax by 5 cents in each of the next two years and be indexed for inflation. But it would allow counties to increase the wheelage tax they could charge, and to establish a local sales tax of up to 0.5 percent for transportation.

The bill would restructure the motor vehicle registration tax, while eliminating the cap and it calls for \$200 million in bonding.

All counties are facing increased costs, but not increased revenues for transportation, meaning property taxes have been increased to meet the needs, said Washington County Commissioner Myra Peterson, who chairs the Association of Minnesota Counties' Transportation Policy Committee.

Transportation continued on page 22



E-mail — love it or hate it

New technology presents new challenges

PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Computers and e-mail have become an integral part of how legislative business is conducted.

By MIA SIMPSON

From typewriters to computers and cell phones, technology has affected “business as usual” at the Legislature.

Now that E-mail has surfed in on the latest technology wave, legislators can now electronically correspond with anyone at almost any time. They can also send and receive notices and newsletters, organize listservs and forward information as quickly as one can type and press “send.”

“E-mail does take up a lot of my time,” said [Rep. Andy Welti](#) (DFL-Plainview), who often uses his evenings and weekends to respond to messages from his constituents. “I think it’s a good way for people to stay in contact and to get a real-time response.”

But e-mail presents a change from an environment that, as former state Sen. Jack Davie said, “is run by those who show up.” One doesn’t have to “show up” when e-mailing; he or she can simply sit in front a computer.

“I hate it,” [Rep. Neil Peterson](#) (R-Bloomington) said. “From a mechanical standpoint, it’s great. But from a communication standpoint, it’s impersonal, cruel, mean and not very effective.”

Impersonal, unmoving

Peterson admits his opinion may be a product of his age. But as e-mail has become a vehicle for people to respond en masse on a particular issue, many legislators complain about volumes of impersonal, unmoving messages.

Welti and Peterson, who estimate they receive upwards of 50 to 100 e-mails daily, also say that people are sometimes more aggressive

than they might be face-to-face or by phone. “People just fire away,” Peterson said.

An e-mail’s malicious intent may also lie beyond its surface.

Between Jan. 14 and Jan. 20, nearly 400,000 e-mails arrived at the House, but only about 12 percent reached their intended destination. The others were returned to sender or blocked, most likely because they included viruses or were flagged as spam.

Protecting the network

“Many people do not understand that e-mail is the perfect delivery system for an attack on any network,” House Network Engineer Peter Marren said. “If even one of the virus-infected files got through, it could have done damage to our system and data.”

Marren and Director of Information Technology Dennis Kern could be considered the protectors of the House network. Their mission is to seek and destroy incoming e-mails that may cause harm to a very precious system.

“It’s a constant cat-and-mouse game,” Marren said. “I need to be ahead of them, but I’m never ahead of them. There’s something new every week.”

When e-mail arrives, it faces two filters. The first blocks viruses; the second, spam. More than 75 subject lines commonly used by hackers are blocked automatically.

Such an endless variety of potentially pernicious material makes network managers extremely cautious. They say they’d rather accidentally block an innocent e-mail than allow a dangerous one to infiltrate the system.

Tips for writing your legislators

E-mail can be a fast, convenient way to connect with elected officials, but the jury is still out on whether it effectively influences them. There are rules of thumb for communicating with legislators that may serve e-mailers well.

“Do it as you’d do on the telephone,” [Rep. Neil Peterson](#) (R-Bloomington) advises. “Personalize it.”

This means introduce yourself — tell your name, your home address and your district. Then explain why you’re writing.

“Give as much information as possible,” [Rep. Andy Welti](#) (DFL-Plainview) said. “But keep it brief. Three to four paragraphs, or a page, is enough.”

And be polite. Passion is fine, pushy is not. Legislators also say not to expect a response immediately.

“I tell people they will get a response back in a week or so,” Welti said.

“Following my security philosophy does require a few inconveniences for the end user, but I feel the trade-off is worth it,” Marren said.

It’s a perspective that sometimes haunts policymakers.

“From a political standpoint, a legislator would rather avoid constituents’ e-mail being blocked than getting a little extra spam,” said Nathan Hunstad, an IT analyst with the House DFL caucus. “Especially in small communities, where constituents can complain about their legislators not responding to e-mails in the newspaper.”

E-mail continued on page 23

Monday, March 5

HF1624-Hausman (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
St. Paul Port Authority; qualified emissions-reduction project recovery costs provided.

HF1625-Hosch (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Permanent orders for protection and restraining orders authorized after multiple violations or continued threats.

HF1626-Ward (DFL)
Taxes
Brainerd and Baxter wastewater and water treatment facilities construction materials sales tax exemptions provided.

HF1627-Hilstrom (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
International marriage brokers regulated.

HF1628-Lesch (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
License tab violations surcharge reduced.

HF1629-Hilstrom (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Fair market value determination clarified in certain dedication proceedings.

HF1630-Hornstein (DFL)
Finance
Pavement life-cycle cost analysis required to compare paving materials in certain highway contracts.

HF1631-Haws (DFL)
Biosciences & Emerging Technology
Bioscience business promotion and marketing program established.

HF1632-Tillberry (DFL)
Taxes
Homeowners property tax refunds increased and household income modified for persons age 65 or older.

HF1633-Koenen (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Animal husbandry requirements modified and terms defined.

HF1634-Solberg (DFL)
Finance
Renewable energy economy higher education training needs study required.

HF1635-Lieder (DFL)
Finance
Highways safety improvement account established, and eligible purposes modified for expenditure of 5 percent of highway user tax distribution fund.

HF1636-Lieder (DFL)
Finance
Trunk highway interchanges construction funding provided.

HF1637-Beard (R)
Biosciences & Emerging Technology
Nanotechnology development fund program established.

HF1638-Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Grants management process, governance and structure established.

HF1639-Faust (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Agricultural best management practices loan program provisions modified.

HF1640-Faust (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Feed law provisions modified.

HF1641-Solberg (DFL)
Finance
Washington Center pilot program for scholarships funding provided.

HF1642-Peterson, A. (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Wind energy conversion systems capacity increased for school board ownership.

HF1643-Gardner (DFL)
Taxes
Scrap metal dealers tax credit provided.

HF1644-Hilty (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Renewable energy research funding provided for the University of Minnesota sunset date delayed.

HF1645-Bly (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Low-income residential customers energy affordability programs criteria specified.

HF1646-Hamilton (R)
Finance
Worthington redevelopment grant requirements clarified.

HF1647-Simon (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Judges mandatory retirement age raised.

HF1648-Gottwalt (R)
Taxes
Senior citizen's property tax deferral program modified.

HF1649-Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Legislative Commission on Minnesota-Ontario Matters abolished.

HF1650-Nornes (R)
Taxes
Fergus Falls regional treatment center campus tax-free renaissance zone provided.

HF1651-Wagenius (DFL)
Finance
Environmental and natural resources funding provided; revenue disposition, fees and accounts modified; off-highway vehicle safety program established; and sustainable forest provisions continued.

HF1652-DeLaForest (R)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Public employees police and fire retirement plan duty disability status clarified.

HF1653-Davnie (DFL)
Finance
St. Anthony Falls heritage interpretive zone signage provided.

HF1654-Peterson, A. (DFL)
Finance
Renewable energy economy higher education training needs study required.

HF1655-Slocum (DFL)
Finance
Opportunities industrialization centers funding provided.

HF1656-Thissen (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Jewelry products containing lead manufacture and sale regulated.

HF1657-Dettmer (R)
Finance
Washington County; Disabled Veteran's Rest Camp improvements funding provided.

HF1658-Peppin (R)
Taxes
Health care providers gross receipts tax third-party purchasers responsibilities provided, and itemization of tax on billings authorized.

HF1659-Bunn (DFL)
Finance
Bayport sewer system completion funding provided.

HF1660-Jaros (DFL)
Finance
St. Louis County Heritage and Arts Center studies and planning activities funding provided.

HF1661-Hansen (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Railroad prairie right-of-way management provided.

HF1662-Moe (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Wild rice management plan required.

HF1663-Moe (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Wild rice; genetically-engineered organisms regulation provisions modified.

HF1664-Kalin (DFL)
Finance
East central Minnesota renewable energy plant feasibility study grant authorized.

HF1665-Gardner (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Consumer reports security freezes regulated and fees provided.

HF1666-Eken (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Terrestrial and geologic carbon sequestration reports and studies required.

HF1667-Shimanski (R)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Hutchinson Area Health Care privatization effective date clarified.

HF1668-Hamilton (R)
Taxes
Monosloped roofs used for livestock operations property tax exemption provided.

HF1669-Rukavina (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Amusement games permits, penalties and inspection provided.

HF1670-Morgan (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Election procedures and terminology clarified, requirements and duties modified and penalties imposed.

HF1671-Morgan (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Legislators, constitutional officers and agency heads prohibited from lobbying for two years after leaving office.

HF1672-Knuth (DFL)
Taxes
New Brighton tax increment financing expenditures outside district authorized.

HF1673-Sailer (DFL)
Finance
Gonvick regional emergency training administration center pre-design funding provided.

HF1674-Eken (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Environmental review rules relating to biofuel production facilities adoption required.

HF1675-Simon (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Car buyers' bill of rights enacted, disclosures required, dealer compensation for vehicle financing capped, certified used motor vehicle sales regulated and cancellation option required on purchase of used motor vehicle.

HF1676-Murphy, M. (DFL)
Finance
Minitex program funding provided.

HF1677-Sertich (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Conservation reinvestment program provisions modified relating to expenditures by existing heating or cooling systems.

HF1678-Johnson (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Public Utilities Commission electronic filing authorized, and technical and clarifying changes provided.

HF1679-Johnson (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Utility current and past due bills and undercharges payment arrangements provisions modified.

HF1680-Slocum (DFL)
Finance
Office of Educational Accountability funding provided through the University of Minnesota.

HF1681-Mullery (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Special retirement plan for post-sentencing officers and emergency dispatchers actuarial cost estimate provided.

HF1682-Koenen (DFL)
Finance
Upper Sioux Community water system improvements funding provided.

HF1683-Koenen (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
New open air swine basin prohibition extended.

HF1684-Madore (DFL)
Housing Policy & Finance & Public Health Finance Division
Redevelopment housing applicant preferences modified.

HF1685-Mullery (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Hennepin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority powers clarified.

HF1686-Mullery (DFL)
Taxes
Minneapolis housing replacement districts provisions modified.

HF1687-Emmer (R)
Taxes
Buffalo wastewater treatment facility construction materials and equipment sales tax exemption provided.

HF1688-Pelowski (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Office of Enterprise Technology terminology changed.

HF1689-Hortman (DFL)
Finance
Industry sector training initiatives funding provided.

HF1690-Clark (DFL)
Finance
Minneapolis; East Phillips Cultural and Community Center improvements funding provided.

HF1691-Anzelc (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Lawful gambling expenditure restrictions modified; and game requirements, prize amounts and other provisions modified.

HF1692-Davnie (DFL)
Finance
Taxpayer notice modified on renewal of school district operating referendum.

HF1693-Erickson (R)
E-12 Education
Character development education revenue provided.

HF1694-Davnie (DFL)
E-12 Education
Teacher training to integrate learning technologies into K-12 classrooms provided.

HF1695-Walker (DFL)
E-12 Education
How's My Driving program required of all school districts relating to school bus operation.

HF1696-Loeffler (DFL)
E-12 Education
Special education litigation costs reporting required.

HF1697-Loeffler (DFL)
E-12 Education
State Board of Education established.

HF1698-Norton (DFL)
E-12 Education
Scholar loan program established to encourage teacher diversity in schools, revolving account established.

HF1699-Peterson, S. (DFL)
E-12 Education
Student counseling services in high-need public high schools grant program established.

HF1700-Hornstein (DFL)
E-12 Education
Parent and community involvement in learning funding provided.

HF1701-Peterson, S. (DFL)
Finance
School counselors revenue established as a component of general education revenue.

HF1702-Faust (DFL)
Finance
School finance system changes phased in, and school finance reform legislative task force created.

HF1703-Brown (DFL)
Finance
Voluntary full-day kindergarten funding authorized.

HF1704-Tillberry (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Mandatory air bag replacement required for all motor vehicle collision repairs.

HF1705-Thao (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Board of Pharmacy licensing provisions modified.

HF1706-Mullery (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division
Private motor vehicle carrier definition modified.

HF1707-Loeffler (DFL)
Taxes
Taxpayer assistance grants notice to past recipients and timely procedure required.

HF1708-Peterson, N. (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Hennepin County design-build contract provisions modified.

HF1709-Winkler (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Public employment offers of settlement prior to arbitration and assessment of costs in certain cases provided.

HF1710-Hilty (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Private cemeteries clarified.

HF1711-Hortman (DFL)
Finance
Vinland Center for rehabilitation services funding provided.

HF1712-Masin (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Rental vehicle coverage regulated.

HF1713-Erhardt (R)
Finance
Household goods movers requirements modified.

HF1714-Hornstein (DFL)
Finance
Railroad Walkways Safety Act adopted, state rail safety inspector position established, special account provided and penalties imposed.

HF1715-Urdahl (R)
Environment & Natural Resources
Greenleaf, Cedar and Sioux Lakes Area Conservation District study funding provided.

HF1716-Knuth (DFL)
Finance
New Brighton infrastructure improvements funding provided.

HF1717-Welti (DFL)
Finance
Transportation aid for flexible learning year programs authorized.

HF1718-Heidgerken (R)
Finance
School district integration revenue modified.

HF1719-Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Medical assistance eligibility treatment of assets modified.

HF1720-Lenczewski (DFL)
Finance
Hennepin County nursing facility reimbursement rates increased.

HF1721-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Dementia care and mental illness care training required for certain direct care staff, employers required to maintain training records and employee access to records established.

HF1722-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Pharmacy dispensing fee modified and report required.

HF1723-Walker (DFL)
Finance
AIDS prevention initiative focusing on African-born residents grants provided.

HF1724-Walker (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Naturopathic doctors licensing provided.

HF1725-Moe (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Leech Lake youth treatment center proposal grant provided.

HF1726-Thissen (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Health Records Act adopted.

HF1727-Erickson (R)
Health & Human Services
Single-family dwellings exempted from food, beverage and lodging establishments requirements.

HF1728-Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services
School immunization disclosures required.

HF1729-Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Health care, welfare data, medical assistance eligibility and Minnesota Care provisions modified; Minnesota Care II and Minnesota Health Insurance Exchange established; and Section 125 plans required.

HF1730-Juhnke (DFL)
Finance
Military affairs and veterans affairs funding provided.

HF1731-Hackbarth (R)
Taxes
Electric generation peaking plant personal property tax exemption provided.

HF1732-Paymar (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
World Summit Outcome of the United Nations General Assembly implementation and support urged of the president by resolution.

HF1733-Paymar (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Re-entry grant addressing domestic violence and intimate partner violence authorized.

HF1734-Dominguez (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Minneapolis; employment services for ex-criminal offenders pilot project established.

HF1735-Slawik (DFL)
Finance
Child care assistance absent days modified.

HF1736-Atkins (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Board on Judicial Standards executive secretary Senate confirmation provided.

HF1737-Atkins (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Cigarette fire safety definitions and reduced ignition propensity standards provided, enforcement provided, fee imposed and penalties provided.

HF1738-Greiling (DFL)
Taxes
Individual income tax rates modified, and revenues deposited in a K-12 education account.

Wednesday, March 7

HF1739-Wardlow (R)
Finance
Trunk Highway 149 upgrades funding provided.

HF1740-Peppin (R)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Energy; ban repealed on issuing certificate of need for construction of new nuclear-powered electric generating plant.

HF1741-Atkins (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
School district tort liability regulated.

HF1742-Thao (DFL)
Finance
St. Paul; Asian Pacific Cultural Center funding provided.

HF1743-Juhnke (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Noxious weed eradication requirements modified.

HF1744-Davnie (DFL)
Finance
Homeownership education, counseling and training program funding provided.

HF1745-Bunn (DFL)
Taxes
Homestead market value maximum valuation limit indexed.

HF1746-Gottwalt (R)
Taxes
Local government aid, city aid base increased for specified cities.

HF1747-Davnie (DFL)
Taxes
Qualified business ventures investment income tax credit provided.

HF1748-Atkins (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Residential mortgage lending licensing and education requirements modified, examination powers provided and criminal penalty prescribed.

HF1749-McNamara (R)
Environment & Natural Resources
Pheasant hunting; cock pheasant bag limit rulemaking authority granted to modify the limit.

HF1750-Hansen (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Critical Areas Act of 1973 modified.

HF1751-Atkins (DFL)
Taxes
Aggregate resource preservation property tax law and property classifications provided.

HF1752-Erickson (R)
Taxes
Sherburne County public works building construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF1753-Knuth (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
High-cost home loans counseling and disclosures required.

HF1754-Peppin (R)
Taxes
K-12 education income tax credit extended to tuition, and income phase-out for the credit modified.

HF1755-Poppe (DFL)
Finance
Community-based energy development pilot project funding provided.

HF1756-Hortman (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Salvage certificates of title and vehicle being dismantled or destroyed regulated and electronic notification required.

HF1757-Juhnke (DFL)
Finance
Spicer; historic military airplane enclosure and visitor center funding provided.

HF1758-Davnie (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Financial institution access cards regulated and security breach liability established.

HF1759-Olin (DFL)
Finance
Agronomic research on native plants grant provided.

HF1760-Greiling (DFL)
Finance
County state-aid highways grant program established for metropolitan cities.

HF1761-Lesch (DFL)
Finance
Emergency preparedness coordinator funding provided.

HF1762-Simon (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
City charter commission discharge mechanism provided.

HF1763-Juhnke (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Farm wineries authorized to operate restaurants on site.

HF1764-Ruth (R)
Finance
Owatonna College and University Center purchase funding provided.

HF1765-Brod (R)
Commerce & Labor
Charitable organizations authorized to sell alcohol at silent auctions.

HF1766-Nornes (R)
Taxes
Pelican Rapids wastewater treatment facility construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF1767-Hausman (DFL)
Finance
Highway construction training programs federal funds use provided and reports on training programs and disadvantaged business enterprise programs required.

HF1768-Westrom (R)
Finance
Alexandria Technical College asset preservation and replacement provided.

HF1769-Marquart (DFL)
Taxes
Joint public truth in taxation advertisements and hearings authorized.

HF1770-Sailer (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Utility service disconnection and reconnecting conditions modified.

HF1771-Haws (DFL)**Finance**

Military affairs and veterans affairs funding provided.

HF1772-Morrow (DFL)**Finance**

Greater Minnesota transit federal funds use authorized.

HF1773-Nelson (DFL)**Finance**

Construction management education grants provided, permit fees surcharge and account established and report required.

HF1774-Kalin (DFL)**Taxes**

Local government aid payable to a specified city increased.

HF1775-Svigum (R)**Finance**

Pine Island Economic Development Authority grant provided for utility upgrades and extension for bioscience research park and integrated medicine facility.

HF1776-Simon (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Nonbinding presidential primary established.

HF1777-Liebling (DFL)**Taxes**

County program aids restored and county program aid inflation adjustment provided.

HF1778-Mullery (DFL)**Finance**

Public defender salary increase funding provided.

HF1779-Sailer (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Minnesota State Retirement System and Public Employees Retirement Association annuity back payments provided to a specified annuitant who was not timely accorded a combined service annuity.

HF1780-Marquart (DFL)**Higher Education & Work Force Development Policy & Finance Division**

Higher education data disclosure provided relating to specified criminal offenses.

HF1781-Davnie (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Motor carrier insurance requirements regulated.

HF1782-Haws (DFL)**Finance**

Rice; commuter rail service extension technical analysis funding provided.

HF1783-Faust (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Teachers Retirement Association sabbatical leave related salary credit purchase authorized for a specified Minneapolis school teacher.

HF1784-Faust (DFL)**Taxes**

Pine County Judicial Center construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF1785-Koenen (DFL)**Finance**

Railroad track rehabilitation funding provided.

HF1786-Hansen (DFL)**Finance**

Carbon sequestration demonstration project funding provided.

HF1787-Welti (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Agricultural chemical incident provisions modified, and application and inspection fee eliminated.

HF1788-Ward (DFL)**Finance**

Silvicultural research funding provided to improve the quality and quantity of timber fiber.

HF1789-Peppin (R)**Taxes**

Dayton tax increment financing district authorized subject to special rules.

HF1790-Knuth (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Commerce Department license technology fees provided and account established.

HF1791-Heidgerken (R)**Taxes**

Capital equipment sales tax exemption modified.

HF1792-Garofalo (R)**Finance**

Successful schools aid provided for schools succeeding in reading and mathematics or pre-kindergarten through grade two schools.

HF1793-Hilstrom (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Special education; task force established to compare federal and state special education requirements.

HF1794-Slawik (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Children's early literacy funding provided.

HF1795-Greiling (DFL)**Finance**

Independent School District No. 623, Roseville, fund transfer authorized.

HF1796-Marquart (DFL)**Finance**

Independent School District No. 852, Campbell-Tintah, fund transfer authorized.

HF1797-Hornstein (DFL)**E-12 Education**

No Child Left Behind Act and other student testing requirements impact evaluation provided.

HF1798-Morrow (DFL)**Finance**

Kindergarten space needs additional lease levy authorized.

HF1799-Bly (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Alternative schools progress assessment development required.

HF1800-Dettmer (R)**E-12 Education**

Staff development goals and expenditures clarified relating to education.

HF1801-Urdahl (R)**Finance**

Independent School District No. 463, Eden Valley-Watkins, authorized to levy for costs of remediating certain environmental hazards.

HF1802-Kranz (DFL)**E-12 Education**

School districts falling below average revenue funding provided.

HF1803-Erhardt (R)**Rules & Legislative Administration**

Legislative salaries increased.

HF1804-Faust (DFL)**Finance**

Kanabec County nursing facility rate increase authorized.

HF1805-Demmer (R)**Finance**

Living-at-home/block nurse program base grant funding provided.

HF1806-Dean (R)**Finance**

Health professional education loan forgiveness program expanded for child mental health professionals.

HF1807-Huntley (DFL)**Finance**

Inpatient hospital services payment required on a fee-for-services basis for the general assistance medical care program.

HF1808-Atkins (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Tax increment financing plan modification procedures clarified to not apply to certain acquisitions of property.

HF1809-Dominguez (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Essential community provider status applications and renewals authorized, safety net health care providers grants provided, reimbursement rates modified and MinnesotaCare outreach grants and study required.

HF1810-Poppe (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Family day care demonstration project authorized.

HF1811-Huntley (DFL)**Finance**

County-based purchasing program profits allocated to provide services to individuals receiving medical assistance or general assistance medical care.

HF1812-Carlson (DFL)**Finance**

Robbinsdale nursing home bed moratorium exception provided.

HF1813-Ozment (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

County comprehensive plans required to consider natural heritage data, development limited in Greater Minnesota, and priority provisions required in certain county and city comprehensive plans.

HF1814-Emmer (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Rockford sales and use tax authorized.

HF1815-Smith (R)**Commerce & Labor**

Uniform Real Property Electronic Recording Act adopted.

HF1816-Erhardt (R)**Taxes**

Local transportation levies limited.

HF1817-Wollschlager (DFL)**Taxes**

Military service income tax credit modified and increased.

HF1818-Solberg (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Vehicle restrictions modified for vehicles hauling unfinished forest products, renewable energy objectives modified, wood products industry definition provided and tax exemptions and apportionment of net income modified.

HF1819-Murphy, M. (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Proctor sales taxes authorized.

HF1820-Lieder (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Crookston sales and use tax authorized.

HF1821-Hortman (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division
Vehicle title and transfer provisions modified, and motorized foot scooter definition clarified.

HF1822-Jaros (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division
Mobile telephones used in motor vehicles required to be hands-free.

HF1823-Paymar (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
High-risk adults five-year demonstration project established to improve and promote recovery of adults who frequently use costly public services.

HF1824-Faust (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Amusement ride regulation provisions modified.

Thursday, March 8

HF1825-Kahn (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Smoking in a nonsmoking hotel room penalty increased and civil and criminal penalties imposed.

HF1826-Carlson (DFL)
Taxes
Vehicle purchase income tax credit provided for purchase of vehicles modified for people with disabilities.

HF1827-Simon (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Voting materials required to be printed in languages other than English.

HF1828-Simon (DFL)
Finance
Trunk Highway 7 interchange funding provided.

HF1829-Winkler (DFL)
Finance
Trunk Highway 100 reconstruction funding provided.

HF1830-DeLaForest (R)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Criminal vehicular homicide penalty increased for persons with a prior DWI offense.

HF1831-Thao (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Interpreter services work group established relating to medical and dental settings.

HF1832-Urdahl (R)
Finance
Libre Academy sober school onetime grant authorized.

HF1833-Urdahl (R)
Finance
Greenleaf Lake state park land acquisition required by a specified date.

HF1834-Wollschlager (DFL)
Taxes
Multi-county housing and redevelopment authority levies authorized.

HF1835-Peterson, A. (DFL)
Finance
Wind energy loan guarantee program established.

HF1836-Thissen (DFL)
Finance
Nursing facility rate increase provided for the costs of code compliance and reports required.

HF1837-Madore (DFL)
Finance
Options Too disability services interagency work group funding provided.

HF1838-Hosch (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Pesticide application limitations provided, rulemaking authorized.

HF1839-Slawik (DFL)
Finance
Child care provider standards study and reports required.

HF1840-Abeler (R)
Housing Policy & Finance & Public Health Finance Division
Sober housing work group convened and reports required.

HF1841-Simon (DFL)
Housing Policy & Finance & Public Health Finance Division
Domestic abuse victim's right to terminate lease granted.

HF1842-Clark (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Cancer surveillance system expanded to include environmental toxicity data collection.

HF1843-Clark (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Landlords prohibited from limiting posting of campaign materials in windows of tenants' residences.

HF1844-Walker (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Hair braiding registration required.

HF1845-Severson (R)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Marriage recognized as a union between one man and one woman, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1846-Sviggum (R)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Marriage recognized as a union between one man and one woman, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1847-Emmer (R)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Marriage recognized as a union between one man and one woman, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1848-Mullery (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Employers required to pay for continued health coverage for injured workers, and attorney fee payment required in certain cases.

HF1849-Gottwalt (R)
Health & Human Services
Prescriptions or drug orders validity requirements specified.

HF1850-Simon (DFL)
Finance
Minnesota Urban Debate League programs grant provided.

HF1851-Morgan (DFL)
Finance
Housing trust fund appropriation provided.

HF1852-Abeler (R)
E-12 Education
Student achievement of locally developed academic standards reporting required.

HF1853-Benson (DFL)
E-12 Education
Reading instruction clarified to require supporting children with dyslexia and related language disorders.

HF1854-Lanning (R)
Commerce & Labor
Free drinks and other promotions banned.

HF1855-Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Nonprofit hospitals and outpatient surgical centers required to report on community benefits in a standard way, and work group established.

HF1856-Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Universal health coverage provided, health care access portal established, dependent coverage extended, tax credits provided and prevention programs established.

HF1857-Eken (DFL)
Finance
Native American juvenile treatment center study and pre-design funding provided.

HF1858-Cornish (R)
Finance
Peace officer training related to domestic violence no contact orders funding provided.

HF1859-Cornish (R)
Finance
Uniform statewide no contact order form developed.

HF1860-Urdahl (R)
Finance
Historic preservation funding provided.

HF1861-Urdahl (R)
Finance
Historical preservation revolving loan fund established.

HF1862-Urdahl (R)
Finance
Minnesota Historical Society grant-in-aid program for county and local historical societies funding provided.

HF1863-Bunn (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Health care payment information disclosure provided.

HF1864-Hilstrom (DFL)
Finance
Supervised parenting time service providers grants provided.

HF1865-Poppe (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Common carrier railroad employee rules required.

HF1866-Hansen (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Game and Fish Oversight Committee membership expanded to include legislators.

HF1867-Hilstrom (DFL)
Finance
Vehicle registration taxes, title transaction fees and driver's license fees increased.

HF1868-Abeler (R)**Finance**

Debt service and referendum equalization aid programs equalizing factors indexed.

HF1869-Juhnke (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Food safety and defense task force established.

HF1870-Thissen (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Uniform health plan claims processing required.

HF1871-Sviggum (R)**Health & Human Services**

State-sponsored health programs funds use for abortion prohibited.

HF1872-Thissen (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Hennepin Healthcare system personnel conflicts of interest regulated.

HF1873-Bunn (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Health care cost containment goals annual reports required, medical expenditure review committee and health care transformation task force established, performance payments modified and grants provided.

HF1874-Davnie (DFL)**Finance**

Green building innovation grant program established.

HF1875-Huntley (DFL)**Finance**

Medical education research funds; public program volume factor for MERC converted from revenue to charges.

HF1876-Hilstrom (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Annexation provisions modified and municipal boundary adjustment advisory task force extended.

HF1877-Tschumper (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Food license requirements and milk requirements modified, bulk tanks sale requirement eliminated and penalties clarified.

HF1878-Welti (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Public Employees Retirement Association service credit purchase for community education employment authorized.

HF1879-Laine (DFL)**Taxes**

Columbia Heights tax increment financing district authorized.

HF1880-Swails (DFL)**Finance**

Big Marine Park Reserve land acquisition and development funding provided.

HF1881-Bigham (DFL)**Taxes**

Local government aid city base adjustment modified for certain cities.

HF1882-Hamilton (R)**Finance**

Worthington campus of Minnesota West Community and Technical College; YMCA facility construction land-lease agreement authorized.

HF1883-Bunn (DFL)**Taxes**

Income and franchise tax apportionment formula modified.

HF1884-Atkins (DFL)**Taxes**

Minnesota Land Conservation Incentives Act of 2007 adopted providing an income tax credit for land donations.

HF1885-Hansen (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Invasive species emergency management provided.

HF1886-Peterson, A. (DFL)**Finance**

Greater Minnesota facilities aid grant program established, school district eligibility specified, grants funds use defined, matching requirement imposed and application process provided.

HF1887-Slawik (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Hearing loss early education intervention coordinator provided.

HF1888-Dittrich (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Academic rigor and 3R high schools provided.

HF1889-Urdahl (R)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Minnesota River Valley study group established to promote the historic, scenic and natural features of the area.

HF1890-Kalin (DFL)**Energy Finance & Policy Division**

Energy efficiency minimum standards established for certain products sold in Minnesota.

Transportation continued from page 16

Lieder's bill, which he said is "basically drawn up by the Association of Minnesota Counties," would also allow the imposition of a local transportation impact fee on building permits, something he said cities and counties have been trying to get for years.

"That would be something put on a property owner-based, in essence, on the number of vehicles traveling on a particular portion of road right in front of wherever they live or if it's a business," Lieder said. "That's the way the cities supposedly would get some money back for maintenance or reconstruction of the road. It's an issue that's been before the committees in other sessions."

A companion bill, [SF798](#), sponsored by Murphy, awaits action by the Senate Transportation Committee. 🗽

E-mail continued from page 17

Legislators can block e-mail address from their computers, and no notice is sent to senders who've been blacklisted.

But just as an address can be blocked, it can be granted access. Marren keeps a week-long record of e-mails dubbed spam by the network and can comb through the list to find a message by request.

He says the first person to contact with complaints is the IT analyst for the legislator's political party.

Despite the time e-mail requires, and its vulnerabilities, quirks and, sometimes, hostilities, its mark is locked in history.

"It's probably the lifeblood of this place," Marren said. "I don't know how we would function without it." 🗽

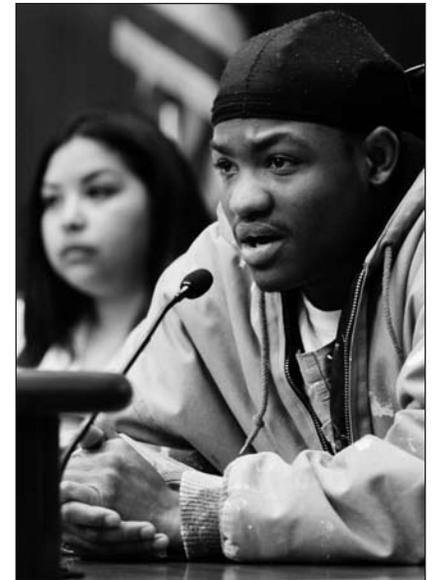
YOUTHBUILD SUCCESS

PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Chris Anderson, right, a participant in the Youthbuild Program, told the House Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance Division March 7 that he will graduate from high school in three weeks and has already started working with A&W Construction. Anderson and Tonya Ortiz, left, another program participant, urged members to support a bill that would provide \$4 million in the next biennium for the program.

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MINNESOTA INDEX

Is there a doctor in the house?

Approximate number of physicians licensed by the Board of Medical Practice	17,100
Number of complaints received by the board in fiscal year 2006.....	770
In fiscal year 2005.....	780
Percent decrease from fiscal year 2004 to 2005.....	17
In 2005, percentage of all practicing physicians who were female.....	28
Statewide median age of active physicians	48
Active physicians 55 and older in 2005, by percent	28
Percent of physicians 55 and over who were female	11
Percentage of physicians under age 45 who were female	40
Of physicians practicing in rural areas in 2005, percentage who were women.....	24
Percentage of physicians practicing in 2005 in urban areas who were women	28
Of all first-year Minnesota medical students in 2005, percent who were women.....	47
Percent of physicians who practiced in the state's most rural counties in 2005	5
Number of physicians statewide per every 100,000 Minnesotans in 2005.....	246
Counties where more than 60 percent of the state's physicians practice	3
Number of physicians practicing in Olmsted County, home of the Mayo Clinic, per 100,000 Minnesotans	1,551
State average per 100,000 population.....	143
Physicians, by percent, practicing in a primary care specialty in Olmsted County	28
Percent of rural physicians in 2005 that practiced in a primary care specialty.....	78
Percent of surgical specialists practicing in non-metropolitan area counties	16
Percent in the state's 46 most rural counties	4
Non-surgical specialists practicing in non-metropolitan area counties in 2005	9
Percent practicing in rural areas.....	2
Number of Minnesotans who worked in health care occupations in 2005.....	210,000
Percent of rural area jobs	20
Percentage of all state physician assistants in 2005 who were women	58
Statewide, physician assistant median age in 2005.....	41
Median age for registered nurses.....	47
Percentage of all registered nurses that are female.....	93
Number of pharmacists licensed to practice in the state in 2005.....	4,720
Percentage of state's pharmacists who live in the seven county Twin Cities metropolitan area	58

— L. SCHUTZ

Sources: Rural Minnesota Journal, published in 2007 by the Center for Rural Policy and Development; [Board of Medical Practice](#) Biennial Report, July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2006.

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