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# Gift cards need rules to protect users

Consumers often lose money on fees, unused credit as retailers profit

By Michael Pesch  
St. Cloud State University

State Sen. Wes Skoglund's proposal to legislate gift card rules is a necessary protection against an outrageous consumer rip-off by some retailers.

Consider the fantastic advantages of gift cards to the retailer:

- The card is an interest-free loan to the retailer until the card holder makes a purchase.

- Card holders may never use the card, effectively forfeiting the entire card value to the retailer.

- Card holders are more likely to use the cards on higher-profit, non-sale items because gift cards are an unexpected windfall of purchasing power to the holder.

- Gift cards get customers in the store who might make purchases beyond the value of the card and/or become long-term repeat customers.

## Raising profits

Evidently, some local retailers aren't satisfied with the natural advantages of the gift card concept. They see gift cards as an opportunity to shake down customers with additional "non-use" fees, "activation" fees and "no cash redemp-

## 62 Your Turn

tion" policies.

Crossroads Center impos-

es a \$2 per month non-use fee if the card is not used within one year of purchase. The Olive Garden and Caribou Coffee also

charge monthly non-use fees. The Mall of America charges a \$2.50 per month fee beginning six months after a gift card's purchase, whether the card is used or not.

Crossroads charges a \$1.50 "activation" fee at the time of the card's purchase. A \$20 card costs \$21.50.

An "activation" fee is a fancy term for the incidental cost of ringing up a sale — otherwise known as "the cost of doing business" — with a hefty profit margin tacked on.

The "no cash redemption" policy is another rule that retailers use to boost gift card profits. A customer who pays for a \$17.87 purchase with a \$20 gift card should be able to receive \$2.13 in cash. Instead, many stores such as Target and the retailers already mentioned, force customers to carry any remaining balances on the cards. This no-

cash redemption policy increases the likelihood that customers will forfeit low card balances to the store.

The argument in support of these extra fees is that retailers incur extra costs to provide gift cards, including transactions costs, database management costs to track card holder purchasing activity and fees paid to credit card companies to manage these programs.

As a consumer, my response to these pleas that gift cards are a financial burden to retailers is: Do you want my business or don't you? The natural financial and marketing advantages of the cards to the retailer, as noted earlier, are more than sufficient for retailers to offer them. We don't need to worry about gift cards driving retailers to bankruptcy.

## Let's regulate

To prevent the further fleecing of the public on gift cards, Skoglund's legislative proposal would ban gift card expiration dates and service fees. It also would require a cash balance return if a certain percentage of a card's value has been used.

As a professor of service operations management, I tell my students to speak up when service providers are providing poor value.

In the case of gift cards, customers should protest to the managers of the stores

that impose these excessive practices, write letters to the CEOs of these companies and consider giving cash gifts to friends and relatives instead of gift cards. (Isn't that what they really want?)

I also believe legislative intervention is required because retailers have made gift card rules so complex that they confuse the public and take unfair advantage.

My advice to retailers: Walk the talk. Don't refer to customers as "guests" and then dun them with fees and policies that are designed to confuse and exploit the customer for profit advantage.

When my guests come for dinner, I don't charge them an "access fee" because I shoveled my sidewalk, an "activation fee" because I turned on my oven or a "non-use" fee when they don't eat dessert. If I did these things, I wouldn't have any guests to invite to dinner.

Retailers, please take note. If your goal is to develop long-term customer relationships, then forget the add-on fees and design a service experience that meets customers, needs for value, service, and trust. If you succeed, profits will follow.

Michael Pesch, Ph.D., is professor of operations management at the Herberger College of Business, St. Cloud State University.



Michael Pesch

Gift cards need oversight

PIONEER PRESS JAN 15 '05 (62)

## Go get 'em, senator

I see where state Sen. Wes Skogland is proposing to put an end to the abuses by greedy merchants on gift cards. Expiration dates that vary from card to card, fees for not using the card within a certain period and the newest one I encountered at a Mendota Heights restaurant are all problems.

When the waitress presented the check, I gave her my gift card, which was for much more than the price of the meal. I told her to take her tip out of it. She said she couldn't do that and pointed to the small print that showed an expiration date of six months and another line that said the card couldn't be used for gratuities.

So, the customer who has a credit balance with the merchant has to reach into his or her pocket for cash or not tip the server. Needless to say, we will never go back there again.

Go get 'em, senator.

P.J. KELLY  
*Lakeland*

PIONEER PRESS JAN 11 '05 (2)

## Regulate gift cards

Sen. Wes Skogland's idea of barring fees and allowing cardholders to receive cash back on gift cards is great ("Bill would bar fees, expiration dates," Dec. 31).

\* \* \*

On many occasions I've "bought" my kids' unused gift cards so that they could use the cash for a special purchase elsewhere. Gift cards really hold recipients hostage to the store.

These cards should be regulated. In the meantime, cash is great gift.

# Bill would curb cell phone use by bus drivers 62

STAR TRIBUNE MAR 16 '05

State Sen. Wes Skoglund says he's been a worried passenger on city buses and charter buses whose drivers were talking on cell phones. But the last straw came the other day when he saw a school bus pass the State Capitol with a load of children on board and a tiny telephone to the driver's ear.

So the Minneapolis DFLer won approval from the Senate Transportation Committee on Tuesday for a bill to outlaw cell phone use while driving a bus, except in emergencies. Skoglund said that the ban would probably be the first of its kind anywhere, and that it is long overdue.

"It's time to stop it," he said. "It's just not safe to be driving with cell phones."

For several years, Skoglund has unsuccessfully pushed to prohibit hand-held cell phoning by all drivers. Some cities and states outside Minnesota have enacted hands-free laws, but recent research has shown that the devices don't enhance safety at all. The laws also are widely ignored.

Finding little support among fellow legislators, Skoglund changed course Tuesday, accepting a bus drivers-only amendment from Sen. Mee Moua, DFL-St. Paul. On a divided voice vote, it advanced to the Finance Committee.

"I still favor a full ban in cars," Skoglund said afterward. "But this is all I could get."

*Conrad deFiebre*



## Much ado about cards <sup>(b2)</sup>

Apparently enough folks are concerned about expiration dates and service fees imposed on some gift cards (Star Tribune, Dec. 30) that Sen. Wes Skoglund is considering legislation to ban the practice.

However, now that the secret is out and people know what to expect, why worry about it? Besides, anyone who receives a gift card, or any other gift for that matter, and then doesn't use it for more than a year really didn't appreciate the gift in the first place and deserves to lose it.

Gift cards are not meant to be legal tender or long-term investments, and merchants who put expiration dates on them should not be made out to be Scrooges when the practice is so common on other everyday items.

The "use it or lose it" rule is so common in our daily lives that many people fail to notice it.

For example, where is the outrage over the 2½-hour expiration stamp on bus transfers, and what about expiration dates on Chinese buffet and pizza coupons that come with the newspaper, or other coupons that arrive in the mail?

Even with a time limit of a year, gift cards have a longer useful life than some other gifts such as fruit, calendars or Super Bowl tickets that are unlikely to give much satisfaction if they are not used within that amount of time.

Don't fault your gift card and its expiration date because, in the grand scheme of things, it doesn't make such a bad showing.

And just like that Super Bowl ticket, if you lose it because you didn't use it, then you have no one to blame but yourself.

*Gilbert Mros, Columbia Heights.*

STAR TRIBUNE JAN 6 '05

MINNESOTA

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# Broad meth battle plan is unveiled

*Robert DeLo*  
Bipartisan effort tackles state 'crisis'

BY RACHEL E. STASSEN-BERGER  
*Pioneer Press*  
PIONEER PRESS JAN 7 05

On this, Minnesota leaders from across party and geographic lines are united: The state must immediately work to counter the scourge of methamphetamine.

The fight got another boost Thursday from Attorney General Mike Hatch, who was joined by lawmakers from both sides of the aisle, Ramsey County Sheriff Bob Fletcher and former North Dakota Gov. George Sinner. They unveiled a proposal — expanding on similar proposals from Republican Gov. Tim Pawlenty — to rein in meth and its impact.

"I don't see this as a partisan issue. ... We've just got to start working together," said Hatch, a Democrat. "We're dealing with a crisis."

The proposal would:

- **Limit the sale of over-the-counter cold pills.** Minnesotans could buy up to 9 grams in 30 days (roughly three to 12 boxes) and require retailers to put such pills behind their counters. Meth makers need cold pills or similar sources of pseudoephedrine or ephedrine to produce the drug.

- **Require locks on tanks of anhydrous ammonia,** another necessary meth ingredient.

- **Investigate whether the state can sue distributors of**

bulk pseudoephedrine. Large-scale meth makers use the compound in their superlabs. The vast majority of meth bought in Minnesota is made in massive labs outside the state.

- **Request an audit** of meth addiction treatment programs to explore what works.

- **Renew funding** for the Gang Strike Task Force.

The measures are sweeping and potentially costly in the short term but need to be so,

The drug has now infiltrated cities and suburbs.

proponents said, because of how pervasive meth is. A cost estimate of the proposal was not available.

The drug, which got its Minnesota start in rural areas, has now infiltrated cities and suburbs, filling the state's prisons and jails and addicting thousands.

In the Itasca County jail this summer, more than 90 percent of prisoners were somehow involved with meth, authorities said. Crow Wing County, population 57,000, spent \$1.8 million tracking, prosecuting and treating meth offenders, officials estimate.

"Methamphetamine is taking over the state of Minneso-

ta," Sheriff Fletcher said. "It is ... far more dangerous than any other drug."

Democratic state Sens. Wes Skoglund and Satveer Chaudhary and Democratic state Rep. John Lesch will sponsor the legislative parts of the proposal, which also won backing from Sen. Julie Rosen, a Republican from Fairmont who has been a leading voice in her party in the meth fight.

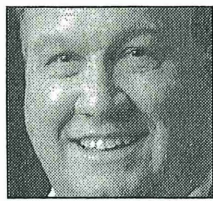
"This is a bipartisan approach," said Rosen, who also was on hand when Pawlenty unveiled his anti-meth proposal in October. That package also would limit access to cold pills, create a public awareness campaign and concentrate resources on treatment. Additionally, it would pay for 10 new state narcotics agents, increase penalties for meth makers and create cleanup standards for meth labs.

Pawlenty said in a Thursday news release that he looked forward to "strong bipartisan legislation" passing this session.

With the high-profile backing and the statewide focus, it seems certain this Legislature will pass a wide-ranging anti-meth package this year. But lawmakers made similar pledges last year. In the end, those efforts got stuck in legislative gridlock.

*Rachel E. Stassen-Berger can be reached at rstassen-berger@pioneerpress.com.*

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REAL WORLD  
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PIONEER PRESS MAR 13 '05

### Overzealous rules smack of mercantilism

Though Louis XIV's most capable minister died 422 years ago, Jean-Baptiste Colbert's spirit lives on. Under Colbert's direction, the economic system known as mercantilism reached its high point.

Other nations admire Colbert's policies, but history demonstrated that mercantilism was a dead end. Though unjust and economically inefficient, it remains seductive to many. Consider:

In Rio de Janeiro, a legislator recently introduced a bill requiring that shopping mall parking be free for anyone purchasing above a certain amount.

In the Minnesota Legislature, Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, introduced a bill prohibiting expiration dates on gift certificates and requiring that all such certificates be redeemable for cash.

Also in the Legislature, a consultant reported that Minnesota consumers pay about \$400 million per year more for beer, wine and liquor than they would if alcohol distributors did not enjoy state-created quasi-monopoly power. Thus, Minnesotans pay about 18 percent more for alcohol than their Wisconsin neighbors.

All these demonstrate that mercantilism is alive and kicking. The system emphasized petty regulation

of commerce. Heavy blue cloth could only be produced in the town of Nimes, for example. Hence the fabric in our blue jeans is still "denim" from "de Nimes." Only certain families could sell salt. Elaborate requirements had to be met before one could build cabinets.

In a half-century, more than 15,000 French citizens were executed for violating such regulations, and thousands more were flogged or sent to the galleys.

Laws requiring free parking or banning expiration dates on gift certificates make the same erroneous assumption that government must micromanage most economic interactions.

Economies that let individual households and firms accept or not accept the terms of most business transactions are not only wealthier, but also more just.

Not all regulation is bad. Requiring lenders to disclose true interest rates corrects a problem of asymmetric information. Regulating utility rates corrects for imbalances of market power.

But there clearly is no market failure in minor parking fees or gift-certificate expiration dates that would justify government regulation. People can park elsewhere and they can give cash if they don't like the terms.

Neo-mercantilists fail to see the costs of government as our nanny. Brazil is not poor despite much well-intentioned government regulation — it is poor precisely because of such regulation.

The Minnesota economy will not grind to a halt if government requires that all gift certificates be redeemable in cash. But we will be worse off as a result, just as we are because government-fostered oligopoly in liquor distribution raises prices.

Mercantilist impulses remain beloved of baby boomers, but are increasingly scoffed at by younger generations. If Democrats wonder why they are losing Generation X, this is one place to look.

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TRENDS | CELL-PHONE USE DOUBLES AMONG DRIVERS STAR TRIBUNE MAR 2 '05

# Just can't wait to get on the phone again

If you think more drivers are talking on cell phones, you're right. The rise in driving and jawing grew faster than cell-phone use overall in the past few years.

A new federal study concludes that nearly one in 10 drivers talk on phones, double the number four years ago. People driving alone are six times more likely to use cell phones.

"This is a recipe for disaster," Kevin Smith, a spokesman for the state Highway Safety Department, said of the findings.

Despite the surge, U.S. road deaths in 2003 fell to the lowest level in 29 years that records have been kept, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. In Minnesota, 60 people died so far this year, four more than in the year-ago period.

A bill sponsored by Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, and Rep. Mike Jaros, DFL-Duluth, would require a hands-free headset. State records don't indicate which crashes

involved drivers using cell phones, Smith said. "Not a whole lot of people want to tell us they were on their cell phone when they get in a car crash, know what I'm saying?"

*Matt McKinney*



Photo illustration provided by Newhouse News Service



M68-Pub-Safety R40 c152.5

# Slew of bills aims to avert identity theft crisis

STAR TRIBUNE, MAR 2 '05  
By Mark Brunswick  
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Concerned that Minnesotans' confidential information might be stolen by identity thieves, a legislative leader will propose that all state documents containing personal information such as driver's license numbers and birth dates be shredded rather than simply recycled.

Rep. Matt Entenza, DFL-St. Paul, said he will introduce the bill on Thursday, following published reports that documents including motor vehicle titles, registrations and accident reports from the Department of Public Safety were found intact at a recycling facility in Eau Claire, Wis.

Entenza, who is House minority leader, said his bill would require all state agencies to

shred documents containing personal information. A story in the Star Tribune on Sunday said the company that discarded the Public Safety documents offered to shred the materials for a cost but the state declined.

"This is yet another example of how this administration tries to save a little money and ends up costing Minnesotans more money," Entenza said.

State law requires agencies to maintain appropriate security on personal information, based on the record's classification, and that should include when the records are destroyed, said Katie Engler of the state's Information Policy Analysis Division.

## Other bills

Identity theft in every form is a hot topic. On Tuesday, a Senate committee passed two bills

on the subject.

One bill, sponsored by Sen. Steve Kelley, DFL-Hopkins, would broaden the definition of identity theft to include the use of a false e-mail or electronic correspondence of an otherwise legitimate entity, such as a Web site or a logo of a bank or credit card company. It is a practice known as phishing.

The proposal would make it prosecutable even to attempt to get a recipient of a message to respond by providing personal information. The bill calls for phishing to be a felony, punishable by five years in prison.

"What we want to do is prohibit the act of throwing the bait in the water, even if the fish never bites," Kelley said.

Another bill, sponsored by Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, would require an offender to pay restitution of at

least \$1,000 to each direct victim, largely to recoup the costs of cleaning up ruined credit.

Testifying in favor of the bill, Hennepin County Attorney Amy Klobuchar said the scope of identity theft is increasing.

"It's people that you would normally think would be using a crowbar and breaking into someone's house, but instead they are using a computer and committing identity theft," Klobuchar said. "We are seeing more and more cases where less sophisticated crooks are using more sophisticated means to commit crimes."

Both bills passed by unanimous voice vote in the Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee and were sent to the Senate Finance Committee.

Mark Brunswick is at [mbrunswick@startribune.com](mailto:mbrunswick@startribune.com).

# Lawmakers take aim at methamphetamine

St. Paul Ledger Wedger 1-10-05

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Republicans and DFLers seek to restrict sales of meth ingredients and punish those who expose children to the drug.

BY CHARLEY SHAW

Legal Ledger Staff Writer

Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle introduced legislation last week that aims to crack down on methamphetamine production in Minnesota by restricting the sale of ingredients used to make the extremely addictive drug.

At a Capitol press conference last week, Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, said 700 people have been sent to Minnesota prisons under laws against methamphetamine, mainly for selling and making the drug.

It's time to restrict sales of over-the-counter drugs containing ingredients that can be used to make methamphetamine, Skoglund said. "We're here to announce legislation to make Minnesota safer."

The Senate bill prohibits retailers from selling any customer more than three packages, or 9 grams, of over-the-counter products like cold medicine that contain so-called precursor drugs such as ephedrine and pseudoephedrine.

It would also give businesses immunity from civil lawsuits for reporting suspicious transactions to local law enforcement in good faith. Violating the law carries a misdemeanor penalty and fine.



Last week's unveiling of House and Senate bills aiming to crack down on methamphetamine production in Minnesota included a bipartisan show of force. Addressing reporters at a press conference Thursday were, from left, Sen. Julie Rosen, R-Fairmont, Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, Attorney General Mike Hatch and Ramsey County Sheriff Bob Fletcher. Proposed regulations would protect children and the environment from the harmful effects of methamphetamine. Provisions also restrict the sale of so-called precursor drugs that are available over the counter. (Photo by Charley Shaw)

Similar legislation restricting the sale of precursor drugs was also introduced in the House last week by Rep. Jeff Johnson, R-Plymouth.

The proposal also restricts the sale of veterinary products that contain the ingredients for making methamphetamine. Farmers will be required to put locks on their anhydrous ammonia tanks.

Skoglund also wants the Legislative Auditor to conduct an efficacy study of treatment options.

"I'm of the opinion that some treatment is great. Some treatment is worthless. But we don't know what really works," Skoglund said.

METHAMPHETAMINE 70 PAGE 10

## Methamphetamine

Continued from page 1

Sen. Satveer Chaudhary, DFL-Fridley, who co-authored the Senate bill, noted the state's Gang Strike Force is set to expire in February. Law enforcement officials are calling for \$275,000 in emergency funding to keep the force going.

"We've got to address the gang problem as we address methamphetamine," Chaudhary said.

Chaudhary said penalties should apply to non-parents as well as parents when children are exposed to methamphetamine. Bills in both chambers call for a maximum five-year prison term and \$10,000 fine for methamphetamine crimes in the vicinity of children or vulnerable adults.

Lawmakers also want to also address the environmental risks posed by the manufacture of methamphetamine.

"Methamphetamine is an environmental hazard, and I want to applaud the proposal that is going to make it a felony for disposing of methamphetamine, not just manufacturing," Chaudhary said.

Only about 20 percent of methamphetamine sold in Minnesota is manufactured here.

Methamphetamine precursor drugs are made in nine plants worldwide, said Minnesota Attorney General Mike Hatch. The substances are brought into the U.S. by distributors and wind up in "super labs" that produce the majority of the methamphetamine that is later smuggled into Minnesota.

Hatch said he wants to talk to officials in Manitoba about the distribution of precursor drugs. He also is calling for federal legislation that addresses the distribution of pseudoephedrine.

In October, Gov. Tim Pawlenty announced a \$3.5 million plan to fight methamphetamine that includes funding for 10 new narcotics agents. Pawlenty said he welcomed last week's legislative proposals.

"We are looking forward to a productive discussion on this issue during the legislative session and are hopeful that strong bipartisan legislation will be passed," Pawlenty said.

# Life terms for sex crimes?

## PAWLENTY'S SEX OFFENDER PLAN

- **Life in prison** without release for "heinous" sex crimes, such as those involving young or multiple victims.
- **Indeterminate sentences** up to life for forcible rape and repeat sex offenders.
- **Increased prison time** for all categories of sex offenders.
- **Stepping up tracking**, monitoring and supervision of offenders released from prison, including 18 new agents to monitor offenders and use of satellite tracking.
- **New resources** and expertise to civilly commit offenders who remain dangerous.
- **Enhanced treatment programs** for offenders in prison or being supervised in the community.
- **More than \$100 million** in funding.

Source: Governor's office

## Governor proposes keeping worst offenders locked up.

STAR TRIBUNE FEB 1 '05  
 By Mark Brunswick  
 Star Tribune Staff Writer

Vowing to protect Minnesotans from "the worst of the worst," Gov. Tim Pawlenty on Monday proposed harsher prison sentences for sex offenders — including life without release for the most serious ones — and more than \$100 million in funding for increased supervision, confinement and treatment.

The plan, which closely mirrors a failed 2004 proposal, includes 18 new agents to supervise serious offenders in the community, more than \$27 mil-

lion to keep dangerous sex offenders civilly committed and more than \$25 million to cover the costs of longer sentences.

"It's again clear that Minnesota, as well as many other states around the nation, needs to do a better job in how we track down, prosecute, convict, incarcerate, and supervise and treat sex offenders," Pawlenty said.

Critics raised concerns that the proposal is overly focused on punishment of the most serious sex offenders, giving short shrift to the costs associated with monitoring and treatment of the bulk of offenders. Others

questioned whether it is wise to impose a harsher sentence for some sex offenders than for people convicted of murder.

Much of the focus on how the state handles its convicted sex offenders arose after college student Dru Sjodin was abducted and killed in 2003. A repeat sex offender released from prison about six months before the abduction has been charged in the case.

**CRIMES continues on B5:**  
 — Sjodin's family plans to file a wrongful-death lawsuit against the state.

## CRIMES from B1

### Pawlenty personally supports death penalty in some cases

Pawlenty, who has said he personally would support the death penalty in sex offense cases where the victim is murdered, said the stricter sentences would recognize that sex offenders are some of the more heinous criminals, and Minnesota needs "to have the worst of the worst locked up and for as long as possible."

Among the proposals:

- **Life without release** for heinous sex crimes, including torture and abuse of young or multiple victims.
- **Indeterminate sentences** up to life for forcible rape and repeat sex offenders.
- **Enhanced sentencing guidelines** for judges that would increase prison terms for all categories of sex offenders. All statutory maximum sentences for criminal sexual conduct would be doubled.

While the governor has consistently pointed out that Alfonso Rodriguez Jr., the man charged in Sjodin's killing, was released from prison based on actions during the Ventura administration, Pawlenty and his corrections department have been under scrutiny to beef up penalties for sex offenders. Sjodin's family has said it plans to file a wrongful-death lawsuit against the state for what it says was Rodriguez's botched release.

Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, the author of several sex offender proposals,

said Pawlenty's might encourage some sex offenders to kill their victims and face a lighter sentence under state law than if they allowed their victims to live. A person convicted of murder might be eligible for parole.

"The bill could do that for the real sickos out there," Skoglund said. "The sentences for people who hurt people badly but don't kill them ought not to be longer than for sentences for people who kill people."

Others involved in supervising and monitoring sex offenders criticized Pawlenty's proposal as providing little funding for most of the 3,900 sex offenders already out of prison and in communities across Minnesota — the 3,200 lower-level sex offenders on probation. Those offenders usually are monitored by county corrections departments.

Apart from funding for some global positioning systems to track offenders, Pawlenty's proposal would do little in the short term to assist counties in reducing caseloads or in improving monitoring offenders on probation, said Keith Carlson, executive director of the Metropolitan Inter-County Association, which represents 12 of the most populous Minnesota counties other than Ramsey and Hennepin.

Ramsey County Attorney Susan Gaertner praised the proposal for longer prison terms for more serious offenders but also raised concerns that there was

not enough funding for or attention to treatment and supervision of lower-level offenders.

"Prison is good. Longer sentences are good. But most people aren't made safer by longer sentences. Supervision and treatment improve the public safety," she said.

Proponents say the longer sentences and the imposition of indeterminate sentencing (meaning prisoners would have no specific release date but would have to petition a board to get out) would free up counties from such things as civil commitments.

"It's clear folks who are dangerous at the end of their sentences need to remain in the corrections system. This plan will do it," said Eric Lipman, Pawlenty's sex offender policy coordinator.

Pawlenty must sell his plan to the Legislature, where a number of other sex offender initiatives have been proposed. His bonding proposal for corrections includes \$84.8 million for a 700-bed expansion of the prison in Faribault and \$20.6 million for a 150-bed segregation unit at the prison in Stillwater.

Asked whether he would lobby for the prison construction bonding proposal, Pawlenty said he is confident that public sentiment against sex offenders would translate into more aggressive funding.

"When the vote comes on who is for more prison space for locking up sex offenders, I think that there will be a pretty compelling argument for the Legislature," he said. "It better be."

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STAR TRIBUNE JAN 9 '05  
Voice of the people **E18**

The unknown Democratic presidential elector from Minnesota who mistakenly voted for John Edwards instead of John Kerry last month has inspired a legislative proposal to end the secret balloting for Minnesota's 10 electoral votes. Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, has introduced a bill that would require electors to vote by public ballot and "speak aloud the name" of the candidates for whom they are voting. Electors are responsible to their political parties and their party's nominees, and their status is not the same as regular voters. "All this says is that there will be some accountability," Skoglund said. "Most people, like me, thought that this was a public vote."

# Meth 1200DU precursor bills pass Senate committee

By Josh Verges  
*Austin Daily Herald*

Three bills restricting access to methamphetamine precursors passed a state Senate committee Thursday.

The primary function of the bills is putting tablets containing pseudoephedrine behind the counter. Buyers would be limited to six grams of the drug per month, per retail store. To track the purchases, customers would have to produce identification and sign a log kept at the store. Sales would also be restricted to people 18 and older.

"We really want to work on these meth labs," **Sen. Wesley Skoglund**, DFL-Minneapolis, said. "If they don't have the drugs, they can't cook it."

The crime prevention and public safety committee legislation would also create new penalties for cooking meth in the presence of children and for improperly disposing of meth ingredients.

"There are people who literally dump meth products in a lake," Skoglund said.

The legislative audit commission will also be asked to check into the efficacy of drug treatment centers, where Skoglund said patients are too often making return trips.

Sen. Linda Berglin, DFL-Minneapolis said the bills are tougher than what was proposed last year.

"Last year's legislation was pretty weak. It just limited the number of packages per sale, but people could just go back in and go to a different counter," she said.

Berglin said even under the proposed legislation, it would still be possible for someone to go from store to store, but that one batch of meth would require dozens of trips. She said the Senate bills would stop meth at the root of the problem.

"I'm looking at this way upstream. People can talk about putting people in prisons and other things but really you need to limit the problem," Berglin said.

**Meth, P. 6**

# Meth

From Page 1

The Austin city council passed an ordinance in September that put precursor drugs like Sudafed behind counters, limited the sale to two packages per visit and prohibited minors from buying drugs containing meth

ingredients.

The main bill that passed committee Thursday will go before the Senate Feb. 24. The other two bills should reach the Senate floor in April, Skoglund said. Similar bills are in committee in the House of Representatives.

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AUSTIN DAILY HERALD

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Two gambling plans may be melded after both go bust in a Senate committee.

# Casinos voted down

BY PATRICK SWEENEY

PIONEER PRESS APR 5 '05

Two bills proposing new metro-area casinos were decisively defeated Monday in a Minnesota Senate committee.

The votes against the bills by the Democratic-Farmer-Labor majority on the committee were expected.

But a decision by Gov. Tim Pawlenty and Republican House leaders to postpone casino votes today in the House Tax Committee was a more important sign that the move to expand gambling in Minnesota is facing significant opposi-

tion from lawmakers.

In an interview before the Senate committee voted, House Speaker Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, said members of Pawlenty's staff requested a delay in the Tax Committee votes because they feared the casino bills might be defeated.

"The governor's office wanted some opportunity, some time to develop a different strategy," Sviggum said.

A merger between the two casino plans — a state-tribal partnership that Pawlenty advocated and a rival plan promoted by the owners of Canterbury Park racetrack in Shakopee — could

be the next step.

"The tribes would consider it favorably," said Erma Vizenor, chairwoman of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe.

Randy Sampson, president of Canterbury Park Holding Corp., said he, too, was open to discussing a marriage of the two casino proposals.

Dan McElroy, Pawlenty's chief of staff, delivered a mixed message after the two 10-4 votes in the Senate Agriculture, Veterans and Gaming Committee.

On one hand, McElroy predicted the

CASINO VOTED DOWN, 4B

## Casino voted down

(continued)

slim Republican majority in the House would eventually pass Pawlenty's casino plan this year, keeping the legislation in play for end-of-session negotiations between the House and Senate. On the other, he also talked about passing the casino plan next year.

"If we don't pass it in 2005, we'll pass it in 2006, or 2007 or 2008," McElroy said.

Under both casino plans, the Minnesota Lottery would own or lease the slot machines and have a hand in running the gaming operation. There the specifics diverge:

■ Pawlenty's proposal calls for three or more Indian tribes to pay a \$200 million state licensing fee for an off-reservation casino in the metro area or

an adjoining county that would earn an estimated \$143 million a year for the state.

■ The Canterbury plan calls for a \$100 million state fee, plus annual state earnings of about \$103 million.

McElroy said the votes Monday against the casino plans represented a choice to raise taxes rather than allow Minnesota to share in some of the same kind of gaming profits that neighboring states enjoy.

• Sen. Becky Lourey, DFL-Kerrick, offered the flip side of that argument.

"Our governor," Lourey said, "feels that he can break his promises to the tribes, but he cannot break his no-new-taxes pledge, and that's where the problem lies."

The casino legislation is a key part of Pawlenty's budget

plan. He is counting on \$200 million from gambling to help cure a budget deficit and provide modest increases in some areas of state spending.

After the votes Monday, Senate Minority Leader Dick Day, R-Owatonna, who began sponsoring the Canterbury bill in 1997, angrily charged that Senate Democrats were influenced by big campaign contributions made by Indian tribes opposed to any new off-reservation casinos.

Three Senate Republicans joined seven Democrats to defeat Pawlenty's plan. On the Canterbury proposal, two Republicans voted with eight Democrats.

• Democratic Sen. Rod Skoe of Clearbrook, who represents the Red Lake Band of Chippewa, one of the tribes that would benefit from Pawlenty's state-tribal partnership, voted for the Pawlenty plan and against the

### HOW THEY VOTED

#### PAWLENTY PLAN

- Democrats voting against plan:
  - Dean Johnson, **Wes Skoglund**, Becky Lourey, Steve Murphy,
  - Ann Rest, Yvonne Prettner Solon and Jim Vickerman
- Democrats for: Rod Skoe
- Republicans against: Steve Dille, David Hann and Sean Nienow
- Republicans for: Dick Day, Paul Koering and Betsy Wergin

#### CANTERBURY PLAN

- Democrats voting against plan:
  - Dean Johnson, Wes Skoglund, Becky Lourey, Steve Murphy, Ann Rest, Rod Skoe, Yvonne Prettner Solon and Jim Vickerman
- Republicans against: Steve Dille and David Hann
- Republicans for: Dick Day, Paul Koering, Sean Nienow and Betsy Wergin

Canterbury casino. Sen. Sean Nienow, R-Cambridge, voted for Canterbury and against Pawlenty's plan.

Vizenor, the White Earth chairwoman, said the committee had been stacked with opponents of off-reservation casinos.

"The makeup of this com-

mittee made the vote inevitable," she said.

Last week, Attorney General Mike Hatch said Pawlenty's casino proposal was unconstitutional. Supporters of Pawlenty's plan on Monday presented an opinion from Waltraud Arts, a Madison, Wis., lawyer who disagreed with Hatch.

# Plane truth: MnDOT shifted its plans

A18 M68-DOT C106 M68-leg Audit

• Miscommunication — not misconduct — clouded a controversial state aircraft purchase, an investigation has determined.

By MARK BRUNSWICK  
mbrunswick@startribune.com

STAR TRIBUNE NOV 23 '05

A report issued Tuesday chalks up a controversy over the purchase of a new state airplane to miscommunication and misunderstandings but finds no evidence of "bid rigging" or other corruption.

The Minnesota Legislative Auditor's Office said the state's Department of Transportation (MnDOT) needed to be more transparent about the kind of plane it was seeking when it wrote bid specifications that could be met by only one company.

MnDOT officials have defended their decision to buy a make of plane more expensive than one made by a Minnesota company that wanted to bid on the sale.

The issue arose after the state



The Minnesota-built Cirrus SR22 wasn't MnDOT's choice after all.

decided this year to replace an aging 1978 Beechcraft Bonanza, one of two planes used to monitor safety at Minnesota's system of 130 small airports.

Officials from Duluth-based Cirrus Design Corp. and legislators said that Cirrus had been led to believe MnDOT would buy the company's SR22 model. But the state issued a bid request with specifications that could be met only by a Bonanza. The cost of the new Beechcraft Bonanza, made by Raytheon, is listed at about \$730,000; the SR22 price tag was about \$470,000.

The legislative auditor was asked to look into the bidding process after a state Senate

hearing raised further questions about the purchase. On Tuesday, the auditor's office said the confusion arose after MnDOT's aeronautics officials initially gave the impression they were interested in buying a Cirrus but did not communicate a change in plans to Cirrus.

MnDOT officials have said the Beechcraft has more cargo space, better meeting the state's needs.

Despite criticism from some legislators and Cirrus that the bid process might have been "rigged," the report said it appeared there was no indication of wrongdoing and made no recommendations for improvement.

"We found no evidence of personal gain or other inappropriate influence on the airplane procurement process," the report reads. "Therefore, to the degree the term 'rigged' implies that corruption was involved, we do not think the evidence supports that characterization."

Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, one of the harshest critics of the plane purchase, expressed frustration over the limits of the report. Skoglund sent a letter to MnDOT last month requesting more information about the bidding process.

On Tuesday Skoglund renewed criticism of the process with a hypothetical example.

"The state needs a new squad car, so we send a bid to a Ford dealer and another to a John Deere dealer and another to a Farmall tractor dealer, and guess what? The Ford dealer gets the bid," Skoglund said.

"You really have to question the management of the state when we throw around hundreds of thousands of dollars like this and wonder how many tens of millions are being wasted by the state when they have bidding processes like this."

The plane was provided to the state by an Eden Prairie Beechcraft distributor.

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FORUM

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# Sinner joins Hatch in anti-meth plan

## Forum and wire reports

ST. PAUL — Minnesota Attorney General Mike Hatch laid out a mostly DFL anti-meth proposal Thursday, upsetting a Moorhead lawmaker who wants a bipartisan approach to fighting the illegal drug.

Hatch, former North Dakota Gov. George Sinner and Democratic senators said they want measures to stop production of the addictive stimulant, such as requiring pharmacies to lock up cold medicines that contain meth ingredients and buyers to sign for purchases.

They also want the federal government to crack down on large-scale meth manufacturers, who are responsible for 80 percent of Minnesota's meth supply.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty, who has rolled out his own \$3.5 million meth plan with many similarities, said he looks forward to "strong bipartisan legislation."

However, Rep. Morrie Lanning, R-Moorhead, said he is sorry Hatch and Sinner turned ideas that came out of a recent Fargo symposium, named after Sinner, and turned them into political messages.

"That's why I'm disappointed," Lanning said. "This is turning into a partisan show."

The Fargo meeting was

nonpartisan, and involved attorneys general from North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota and Manitoba.

While there is general legislative agreement that Minnesota should make it harder to make meth and meth makers should get longer sentences, Lanning said he fears Hatch's Democrat-oriented announcement "does not bode well."

Sinner said cracking down on meth will cost: "You've got to put your money where your mouth is."

He agreed with Hatch that states should sue some companies that recklessly distribute pseudoephedrine and ephedrine, ingredients used to make meth. One-sixth of the world supply of those chemicals end up being used for meth, Hatch said.

Sudafed's maker, Pfizer Inc., has announced that next week it will start selling Sudafed PE, a new version of the cold and allergy medicine without pseudoephedrine.

A crime bill increasing penalties for meth crimes in Minnesota was a casualty of last year's legislative gridlock. The Senate aims to pass meth legislation quickly this session, Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, said. In the House, Rep. Jeff Johnson, R-Plymouth, introduced a bill containing a raft of meth measures.



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WEST CENTRAL TRIBUNE  
WILLMAR, MN  
TUESDAY 16,927  
FEB 1 2005

PIONEER  
BEMIDJI, MN  
TUESDAY 10,200  
FEB 1 2005

FORUM  
FARGO, ND  
TUESDAY 51,694  
FEB 1 2005

FRONT PAGE

# Pawlenty takes aim at sex offenders

## Plan focuses on tougher laws, includes funds for treatment

By Don Davis

Capitol Correspondent

ST. PAUL — Gov. Tim Pawlenty is taking a second run at tougher laws for sex offenders.

He wants to spend more than \$100 million to treat and imprison sex offenders in a broader proposal than he promoted a year ago.

Legislative leaders on the issue liked most of what they heard.

"In the wake of the Dru Sjodin tragedy, it became again clear that Minnesota, as well as many other states throughout the nation, need to do a better job in how we track down, prosecute, convict, incarcerate, supervise and treat sex offenders," Pawlenty said Monday.

Pawlenty's sex-offender policy coordinator, a newly created position, said the plan is "the most aggressive and comprehensive and thoughtful and far ranging proposal in a generation."

Pawlenty hired former legislator Eric Lipman to handle sex-offender matters after Sjodin was kidnapped from a Grand Forks, N.D., shopping mall and later found dead near Crookston. Convicted sex offender Alfonso Rodriguez of Crookston is in jail awaiting a federal trial in the case.

Legislators and Pawlenty agreed last year that sex-offend-

er laws needed to be tougher, but those changes died along with most other bills when legislative leaders reached an impasse as the session ended. All sides appear optimistic sex offenders will be targeted this year.

"It's a good start; there are some good things in there," Sen. Leo Foley, DFL-Coon Rapids, said about Pawlenty's proposal.

Foley, chairman of the Senate Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee, said there are a lot of similarities between last year's Senate bill — expected to return much the same this year — and Pawlenty's proposals. Rep. Kurt Zellers, R-Maple Grove, said the proposal the House passed a year ago is much like the one Pawlenty proposed Monday.

"We are on almost the exact

same page," said Zellers, a Devils Lake, N.D., native who attended the University of North Dakota, as did Sjodin and is handling the House package.

The centerpiece of Pawlenty's plan is to permanently lock away sex offenders who seriously hurt or kidnap their victims, who sexually assault young people or who use a firearm or other weapon in their attacks.

Others who commit forcible rape also would get life in prison under the governor's plan, but a review board would have the power to release them early if it determines they are not dangerous — although all sex offenders would have to serve minimum sentences longer than ones now in force. A similar indeterminate life sentence would be handed to repeat sex offenders. Lesser offenses would receive fixed sentences, in many cases twice as long as today's sentences.



Pawlenty



Foley



Skoglund

Continued from A1  
Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, questioned the life sentence without a chance of release that Pawlenty and Zellers want. Skoglund said he fears sex offenders would figure out that they might be better off killing their victims under the Pawlenty plan. Not all murderers receive life sentences, so Skoglund said some sex offenders could get lighter sentences if they are charged with murder rather than sexual assault.

The Senate proposal will require dangerous sex offenders to remain in prison, Skoglund said. State officials could decide an offender no longer poses a great risk to the community so he could be released. Pawlenty's sex-offender plan would cost about \$100 million. Included in the governor's budget request are 18 more agents to supervise sex offenders when they get out of prison. He also includes money for using satellite technology to track sex offenders.

Sex offenders in prison now fall under current law, so Pawlenty also included funds to upgrade the current system of putting dangerous sex offenders in state hospitals after their prison terms end.

"We widened the net," Corrections Commissioner Joan Fabian said, by taking a harder look at sex offenders before deciding who should be committed to state hospitals.

After Rodriguez's arrest on Dec. 1, 2003, Pawlenty ordered Fabian to suggest that county attorneys take all Level 3 offenders, those deemed most likely to reoffend, to court to have them committed when they are released from prison. The state had not done that for Rodriguez.

## Offenders

### Highlights of Pawlenty's plan

From Staff Reports

Highlights of Gov. Tim Pawlenty's proposal for Minnesota's handling of sex offenders:

- Life in prison without the chance of release for sex offenders who tortured or kidnapped their victims, used a weapon or sexually abused a young person.
- Others convicted of forcible rape would receive a sentence that could extend to life, although they would have a chance to get out of prison by applying to a release board.
- Increase all other sex-offender sentences.
- Spend \$100 million on a variety of projects including increasing the capability of treatment and sending more agents to supervise released sex offenders.
- Spend nearly \$34 million to handle added commitments to state hospitals.

Source: Governor's office

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WEST CENTRAL TRIBUNE

WILLMAR, MN  
TUESDAY 16,927  
MAY 17 2005

BEMIDJI PIONEER

BEMIDJI, MN  
TUESDAY 10,200  
MAY 17 2005

DAILY GLOBE

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# Sex offender penalties discussed

By Don Davis And Scott Wente • Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis.

Capitol Correspondents

ST. PAUL — Lawmakers plan to toughen penalties for sex offenders, but they said some proposals may not be viable.

Nearly every legislative leader made getting tougher on sex offenders and methamphetamine users their top two policy priorities. Late Sunday, top lawmakers and Gov. Tim Pawlenty agreed to a \$1.7 billion spending target for public safety during the two-year budget cycle beginning July 1.

Knowing its budget limit, a House-Senate public safety conference committee met Monday to sort through differences between their respective bills.

Committee members responded negatively to two controversial penalties for the most serious predators. They questioned the purpose of requiring Level 3 offenders to have special driver's licenses and vehicle license plates identifying them as predatory offenders.

• Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Delano, who drafted the proposals, said the intent is to protect citizens once offenders are released.

"It is not intended ... as a punishment," Emmer said. "This is a public safety issue."

Critics said offenders could simply avoid the requirement by not buying cars. They also cited problems if a relative drives a vehicle labeled as an offender's.

"Why would anybody operate a car with that on there?" said Sen. Wes

If the purpose is to keep the public safe, Republican Sen. Thomas Neuville of Northfield said the state should make each offender wear an electronic monitoring bracelet.

• Sen. Jane Ranum, DFL-Minneapolis, said it's not likely the committee will keep those license proposals in the final bill.

"I don't think that's the direction we want to go," said Ranum, who is co-chair of the conference committee.

The only other issue leading lawmakers and Pawlenty have settled was putting the worst sex offenders in prison for life, without the chance of release. The conference committee is left with the responsibility of defining who the worst sex offenders would be.

The original Senate bill would have allowed any offenders to be released if they met certain requirements. The House voted to keep violent sex offenders locked up for life.

• Rep. Steve Smith, R-Mound, the other conference committee co-chair, said he predicts the result will include around 100 offenders. The House plan would have affected more, he said.

"Some people are going to prison for the rest of their lives," he said.

All other provisions of the bill remain for the conference committee to decide. Both Smith and Ranum said they don't expect to take any votes until today at the earliest.

"We have finally come to the point of making Minnesota a safer place," said Rep. Kurt Zellers, R-Maple Grove, who has tried for two years to

toughen sex offender laws.

The issue arose in 2003 when Alfonso Rodriguez Jr. of Crookston was arrested in the disappearance of University of North Dakota student Dru Sjodin, who later was found dead. Zellers, who also attended UND, said the leaders' agreement was a good step to locking up the worst offenders.

"That was the ultimate goal to keep the worst of the worst off the streets forever," Zellers said.

— optional copy —  
Zellers said the public safety deal "was one of the easier ones," with about eight other budget conference committees waiting for tougher decisions.

• Rep. Jeff Johnson, R-Plymouth, said methamphetamine-related laws will be part of the public safety conference committee debate. Differences between House and Senate bills are not too great, he added.

"I think we can work them out pretty easily," Johnson said.

Meth-related sentences would be longer under both bills. They also both would limit access to pseudoephedrine, a key ingredient to meth and part of cold and allergy medicine such as Sudafed. A near total ban on pseudoephedrine products that the House passed is expected not to be part of the conference committee's final bill.

Overall, public safety spending would rise 16 percent under the agreement.

"We're trying to address in an aggressive fashion the public safety needs of Minnesota," Pawlenty said.



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**Wetterling  
 cites activism  
 as she enters  
 Senate race**

**By Martiga Lohn**  
*Associated Press Writer*

ST. CLOUD — Pointing to federal and state laws she helped pass to protect children from sex offenders, Patty Wetterling kicked off her U.S. Senate campaign Sunday.

The 55-year-old Democrat told more than 100 supporters who gathered in St. Cloud's Riverside Park that she is a nontraditional candidate — a mother and wife who became politicized through her efforts to find her son Jacob, who was abducted 16 years ago and never found.

"My campaign is about reminding all of us that faith, possibility and hope are always there, even if sometimes we have to look a little harder to find them," said Wetterling, who lives nearby in St. Joseph. "I am a survivor and our nation is resilient."

Despite her well-known name, Wetterling is seen as the underdog in the DFL race. Even state Sen. Wes Skoglund, a Minneapolis DFLer who introduced her at the rally, said so. Her biggest hurdle is Hennepin County Attorney Amy Klobuchar, who has raised more money.



**Wetterling**

"Her biggest challenge is raising the money," said Larry Jacobs, who teaches political science at the University of Minnesota. "She's clearly going to be behind in terms of fund-raising. The question is, can she get ahead in terms of grassroots enthusiasm and loyalty? It's going to be a struggle for her."

The Klobuchar campaign didn't comment directly on Wetterling, but said Klobuchar's message has resonated statewide and attracted thousands of supporters.

Wetterling, Klobuchar and veterinarian Ford Bell are running as Democrats; attorney Michael Ciresi, a Democrat who ran for Senate in 2000, is also mulling a campaign. The candidates are seeking the seat of Democratic incumbent Mark Dayton.

On the Republican side, U.S. Rep. Mark Kennedy appears to have a lock on the GOP nomination.

Wetterling lost to Kennedy in the 6th Congressional District last year, but she was a recognized name long before because of the tragic unsolved kidnapping of her son in 1989. After his disappearance, she became an activist for child safety and established the Jacob Wetterling Foundation to protect children from abduction and sexual exploitation.

Her 46 percent showing in the right-leaning district encouraged key Democrats, who urged her to run again for Congress. She switched to the Senate race in February after Dayton decided not to seek re-election.

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# Ban sought on gift-card expirations

R84 LG0.107 C102.2

● DFL legislators have renewed their push to end cutoff dates on gift cards, which have grown in popularity. Retailers say the limits haven't been a problem for consumers.

By DANE SMITH  
rdsmith@startribune.com

STAR TRIBUNE DEC 2 '05

Two DFL legislators announced Thursday that they would renew their efforts to prohibit gift cards from expiring or charging penalties for delayed use.

Legislation seeking a ban on time limits and fees was approved in the DFL-controlled Senate last year but never got a hearing in the Republican-controlled House.

"When holiday shoppers buy a \$25 gift card, they expect the card to be worth \$25, not \$20," said Rep. Ron Latz of St. Louis Park, who was joined by Sen. Wes Skoglund of Minneapolis.

Opponents of the legislation in the retail industry say that gift cards are wildly popular

and that consumers apparently don't consider the limits to be a big problem.

"These cards may be the single most popular item sold during the holiday season. ... It suggests that consumers are not as dissatisfied as these legislators," said Bruce W. (Buzz) Anderson, president of the Minnesota Retailers Association.

Legislators "are approaching this from a real negative standpoint, as if retailers are trying to cheat people," Anderson said. "If people don't have a positive experience, they're not going to go back to the store."

Association officials are encouraging retailers to provide fuller disclosure of the terms of the cards and are encouraging buyers of the cards to do the same with the recipients of

the gifts.

Among the more likely cards to have expiration dates are those that are issued by banks or credit card companies for large shopping malls, such as the Mall of America. They can be redeemed at any store in the mall and some can be redeemed anywhere in the world, a service for which there is a price, Anderson said.

Most major retailers don't have restrictions on gift cards.

However, in response to steady complaints and consumers' loss of hundreds of millions of dollars, at least six other states — including California — have enacted prohibitions similar to those proposed for Minnesota.

Also in response to complaints, many companies in

the past year have dropped the expiration dates or extended them. Among these are Half Price Books, a Dallas-based retailer that eliminated its expiration date.

Skoglund and Latz chose a Half-Price store in St. Paul's Highland Park neighborhood to announce their push for a ban in the 2006 Legislature.

Michael Miller, the company's assistant district manager for Minnesota and Iowa, said officials decided that the time limit for gift cards was in conflict with the company's basic principle of "easy to sell to and easy to buy from."

He said the accounting costs of keeping track of long-dormant gift cards were "negligible" when weighed against the value of customer satisfaction and good public relations.

Dane Smith • 651-292-0164

# MnDOT plane purchase hits turbulence

McB-DOT C106 McB-leg. Audit.

- A Minnesota aircraft maker and some legislators are protesting the purchase of an out-of-state competitor's more costly plane.

By DANE SMITH  
rdsmith@startribune.com  
STAR TRIBUNE OCT 15 '05

State officials are investigating a Minnesota Department of Transportation bidding process that resulted in the purchase of an airplane at a considerably higher price than a similar craft offered by the Duluth-based Cirrus Design Corporation.

In a letter to legislators this month, Cirrus vice president William T. King called the process "an absolutely out-

rageous and obvious abuse of a public bidding process."

Five state senators agree and have sent a letter to Legislative Auditor James Nobles asking him to investigate. He said Friday he will look into the matter.

A MnDOT official defended the purchase and said that the Cirrus plane "did not fit the state's needs" and that Cirrus officials apparently are angry because they mistakenly "thought they had a deal with the state."

The state recently decided to replace an aging 1978 Beechcraft Bonanza, one of two planes used to monitor safety at Minnesota's system of small airports. In that role, it is often used to haul navigational equipment.

After talking for months to Cirrus officials and leading Cirrus to believe it would buy the company's SR22 model, company officials and legislators say, the state issued a bid request with specifications tailored so that they only could be met by the Bonanza.

**Plane continues:** Pawlenty voices regret over process **B7** ▶

## THE PLANES IN THE PICTURE



The Transportation Department this year bought a Beechcraft Bonanza, left; officials of Duluth-based Cirrus, maker of the SR22, right, thought they were in line. MnDOT said the SR22 didn't meet the state's specifications.

# MnDOT plane purchase hits turbulence

## ◀ PLANE FROM B1

The cost of the new Beechcraft Bonanza, made by Raytheon, is listed at about \$730,000; the SR22 price tag was about \$470,000.

The Transportation Department acknowledged that it received only one bid but insists the purchase was proper and that the SR22 simply did not meet the state's specifications.

Bob McFarlin, an assistant to Transportation Commissioner and Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau, said Office of Aeronautics officials at the start of the process were contemplating the purchase of a Cirrus because they wanted to add a third, smaller plane to their fleet of two Bonanzas.

But the Administration Department and higher-ups in the Transportation Department advised the aeronautics agency to replace the aging aircraft rather than buy a third one, McFarlin said, and the Cirrus did not meet the specifications of a replacement plane.

The Beechcraft is a "bigger, beefier" plane, McFarlin said. The Cirrus had less cargo capacity and the Beechcraft has a "double-door" design that allows the loading of larger objects, he said.

But Cirrus' King contests that claim. "The Cirrus is wider than any other aircraft in its class. ... I have no idea where they are going with that claim." When Cirrus flew the SR22 several times to the Twin Cities for tests, company officials were led to believe that it satisfied all the agency's needs, King said.

"Everything they asked us to put in the aircraft fit comfortably," King said. He acknowledged that the Bonanza is a top-of-the-line aircraft in the estimation of industry experts, "but when you're dealing with the taxpayers' money and there's more than one product that can suit the purpose, you should have open bidding."

An official for Elliot Aviation, the Minnesota Beechcraft dealer that sold the Bonanza to the state,

said the Bonanza is clearly superior in capacity and "standards of construction and strength."

The Bonanza has a seating capacity of six, to four for the SR22, said Todd Jackson, aircraft sales manager for Elliott, and two of the Bonanza's seats can be removed to make more cargo room.

The Bonanza has easier access to cargo areas and is rated by the Federal Aviation Administration in the "utility" class, a higher tier than the "standard" designation for the SR22.

## Pawlenty expresses regret

Cirrus officials took their case recently to Gov. Tim Pawlenty when he was visiting Duluth. Pawlenty met with the company's top executives and founders, Alan and Dale Klapmeier, and he expressed sympathy for their case and irritation with the Transportation Department's decision when he talked to reporters Friday.

"I told [Cirrus executives] my own personal view was that

I didn't think this was handled very well. From the state standpoint it's regrettable and I wish we could have found a way to accommodate their ability to bid," said Pawlenty, who has frequently extolled the company.

None of the critics of the deal has suggested corrupt motives for the decision, but state Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, pronounced it "definitely a waste of taxpayer money."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Dane Smith • 651-292-0164

M68-DOT C106

MINNESOTA M68-leg Audit -

# Questions raised over state plane bid

BY BRIAN BAKST

Associated Press

PIONEER PRESS OCT 15 '05

State auditors have opened a preliminary inquiry into a plane purchase by the Minnesota Department of Transportation after a company that didn't get the contract and some state senators made accusations of bid rigging.

Legislative Auditor James Nobles said Friday it could

take weeks before his office determines if a full-blown investigation is warranted. But a handful of senators, Duluth-based Cirrus Design Corp. and Gov. Tim Pawlenty have voiced disappointment over the way the plane deal was handled.

This summer, the state agreed to buy a 2005 Beechcraft Bonanza at a cost of \$727,000, which was nearly \$300,000 more than a model built by Cirrus would have cost. WCCO-TV first reported the transaction Thursday night, including a last-minute change in the bidding that gave Beechcraft an inside track.

Pawlenty told Cirrus executives during a private meeting that he regretted the way the purchase was handled. He told reporters Friday that he doesn't suspect any wrongdoing by the state employees involved.

"The bid has already been awarded and the plane is about to be delivered, but you can't unring the bell," Pawlenty said. "But in hindsight, it would have been better to try to allow

Cirrus to compete for this business."

MnDOT's Office of Aeronautics was in the market for a new plane to replace a 1978 Beechcraft. It uses the plane to monitor safety at small Minnesota airports.

MnDOT said the Beechcraft suited the agency's desire for a bigger, beefier utility plane with a longer service life.

Cirrus executives were livid about how the bidding went. According to documents released Friday, the company had spent months preparing a bid only to see the specifications change days before the contract application period closed.

Cirrus thought it had met all the requirements, flew a plane to St. Paul for inspection and offered demonstration flights to MnDOT staff.

In an Oct. 3 letter to a state senator, Cirrus Vice President William King described the process as offensive and amounting to "fraudulent bid rigging."

"We are aware that in busi-

ness there are always those who cheer for your demise," King wrote. "It is terribly hard, however, to hear such cheering coming from inside your own state Capitol!"

He continued, "This is a black eye for the state of Minnesota and a blow to one of its own upstanding businesses."

Five lawmakers — four DFLers and one Republican — urged Nobles to take a closer look at the plane purchase.

"We're not sure what happened here, but we clearly need to get to the bottom of it," said Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis. "The people of Minnesota deserve to know whether the people entrusted to make contract decisions for the state are using procedures which are ethically, legally and fiscally above reproach."

Nobles said the preliminary probe will involve data gathering but will stop short of subpoenaing documents and taking sworn testimony. His office routinely is called on to review contracts.

MINNEAPOLIS  
PIONEER PRESS SEP 30 '05

### Senators seek probe into veterans home

H44-4 N68

Two Democratic-Farmer-Labor state senators on Thursday called for an independent investigation of the Minneapolis Veterans Home.

Although Gov. Tim Pawlenty recently called for an analysis of the state's veterans homes by the Minnesota Veterans Home Board, **Sens. Wes Skoglund** and Linda Berglin, both of Minneapolis, said an independent investigation is needed.

"Under political pressure, the governor called for an investigation that only scratches the surface of this important issue," Skoglund said.

A state Senate hearing Sept. 21 disclosed numerous problems with care at the Minneapolis Veterans Home.

"This country is great at sending troops off to war, but we are doing a poor job of tending to their needs when they return," Skoglund said.

— Pioneer Press

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U.S. CONGRESS

# Wetterling joins Senate race

## Public safety advocate touts 'nontraditional candidate' status

BY RACHEL E. STASSEN-BERGER

PIONEER PRESS OCT 10 '05

ST. CLOUD, Minn. — Patty Wetterling said Sunday the next step in her public journey, which began with her son Jacob's abduction in 1989, will be her run in the 2006 race for U.S. Senate.



Patty Wetterling

"The honest truth is that I haven't accomplished what I started out to do 16 years ago. We are still searching. Meanwhile, there is more to do," Wetterling said in a St. Cloud park near her St. Joseph home.

Wetterling, a Democrat, came into the public eye when her 11-year-old son was abducted at

gunpoint on a rural St. Joseph road. Since then, she has supported the creation of sex offender registries, stronger penalties for offenders and other public safety initiatives. That work and Jacob's unsolved disappearance played a prominent role in her announcement Sunday.

Wetterling made her first foray into politics last year. She ran for U.S. Congress from Minnesota's rural and northern suburban 6th District, which runs from Anoka to St. Cloud. Wetterling, whose political naiveté and lack of knowledge of federal issues was sometimes apparent last year, lost that race to incumbent Republican U.S. Rep. Mark Kennedy.

"I'm a stronger candidate this time. I learned a lot," Wetterling told reporters after her speech. "I learned a lot about myself, who I am,

WETTERLING RUNNING, 4B

During her announcement speech, Wetterling largely avoided staking out positions on policy issues. She did, however, reiterate her support for a firm deadline to pull U.S. troops out of Iraq.

government. I have seen there is strength and goodness in both," she said on the cool fall day as children played on a nearby jungle gym.

During her announcement speech, she largely avoided staking out positions on policy issues. She did, however, reiterate her support for a firm deadline to pull U.S. troops out of Iraq.

"I've set that date as Thanksgiving 2006," she said to the applause of approximately 100 supporters. "I did this because it's what I feel in my heart. I can't watch another American soldier die or another American dollar be spent fighting a war that has no plan, and seemingly no end."

The Minnesota Republican Party reacted to Wetterling's pullout plan Sunday in a news release titled, "Patty Wetterling Creates a Losing Niche as Anti-War Candidate."

Wetterling also addressed rumors that she might become a candidate for the U.S. House again or become a running mate to one of the Democratic candidates eying the governor's office.

"For members of the press that still aren't hearing me, it is: United. States. Senate," she said.

Later, in response to a question, she said she is running for Senate but did not definitively say she would not consider a run for something else.

Rachel E. Stassen-Berger can be reached at rstassen-berger@pioneerpress.com.

# Wetterling running

(continued)

what I stand for, and I'm back."

That political maturity showed in her presentation Sunday, which was smoother than many of her earlier stump speeches, although she's not as suave as some other congressional candidates.

In the 2006 Senate race, she might face Kennedy again. He is running for the U.S. Senate as well.

Before she can run against Kennedy, she'll confront competition within her own Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. Incumbent U.S. Sen. Mark Dayton, a Democrat, announced in February that he would not seek re-election, opening the DFL field.

Hennepin County Attorney Amy Klobuchar was the first Democrat to officially jump into the race. She is considered a strong candidate and has been aggressively working the campaign circuit — and the national fundraising circuit. Through the end of last month, Klobuchar raised about \$1.75 million in campaign cash. Kennedy also has been forcefully campaigning and fundraising; he has raised about \$2.1 million so far.

Minneapolis Heart Foundation President Ford Bell, another Democrat, also has thrown his hat into the Senate ring. His campaign is a bit more low-key. Bell has raised about \$130,000.

Wetterling trails Klobuchar and Kennedy in the "checkbook primary." She said Sunday she has raised about \$1 million.

She was introduced as an underdog by state Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, an early Wetterling supporter.

Wetterling told supporters she appreciates that she comes to the race with a different profile.

"I embrace the fact that I am a nontraditional candidate — not really a politician. My life has uniquely connected me to both our communities and our



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EDITORIAL

# Legislation on motorist cell phone use unnecessary

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DAILY JOURNAL

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Lawmakers at the state may introduce as many as 1,500 bills this session. The number grows as the deadline for introduction in the first week of April draws near.

One bill being considered is outlawing the practice of talking on a cell phone by those driving buses. Bus drivers would be permitted to use cell phones only in the case of emergencies.

Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, first attempted to include all drivers using cell phones while they are at the wheel in the bill.

But a lack of support apparently led him to drop it down to only bus drivers.

Certainly, those using cell phones while driving are distracted and present a danger to other motorists. We've all seen such activity and shuddered to think about the potential for accidents.

But the problem with such an approach is there are many activities people engage in while driving that can distract them.

Why not ban eating, drinking, changing CDs in the

stereo, arguing with passengers or even day-dreaming while driving?

Drivers should know they must concentrate on the road when they take the wheel. Educational campaigns by the state can go a long way to remind them of that.

And there are already protections in place. If drivers are distracted, they can already be fined by law enforcement authorities.

Highlighting cell phones as a specific problem with legislation isn't a good way to approach the matter.

It simply adds more legislation to an already full agenda for lawmakers to consider.

As for bus drivers, we'd hope they would know enough to drive without engaging in the assortment of distractions we listed and without using cell phones.

Any action they take while driving that distracts them unnecessarily from the road should, and likely is, a cause for dismissal.

Frankly, there are more important matters facing our elected officials in St. Paul.

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ST. CLOUD TIMES

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# Senate revamps gun law

## Court has said 'conceal-carry' legislation is unconstitutional

By Lawrence Schumacher  
lschumacher@stcloudtimes.com

ST. PAUL — Most adult Minnesotans would once again be guaranteed a permit to carry handguns in public, if a bill the Senate approved Friday becomes law.

Senators voted 44-21 to approve SF2259, the so-called "Conceal and Carry" handgun bill.

It would guarantee a permit to adults older than 21 who receive required training, pay a fee and pass a background check.

The bill would replace the current law, which gives law enforcement officials the right to deny permits to applicants at their discretion. It would reinstate a law the Legislature approved in 2003, which the courts have

LEGISLATURE  
2005



found to be unconstitutional because it was attached to an unrelated bill to obtain a vote.

"The sky didn't fall when we passed it last time, and it won't this time," said Sen.

Dave Kleis, R-St. Cloud, who supported the bill. "The doom and gloom predictions of 90,000 or more people getting permits and all the handgun deaths haven't happened."

Handgun permits doubled in the law's first year from what they were the year before, to about 22,000 permits statewide. About 2,000 of those permits went to people who live in Central Minnesota.

### Opposition fails

Opponents of the bill, mostly Twin Cities DFLers,

See GUN, 3B ▶  
See how area lawmakers voted/3B

## From Page 1B

# Gun

claimed the bill had been rushed through at the last minute without proper consideration. They were angered that amendments they offered to ban guns from churches, government facilities and around children were voted down.

One said the state's gun lobby had manipulated the process.

"They did what the NRA told them to do," said Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis. "St. Cloud State University should have the right to say 'No guns in the dorms.' That's not good for the college, it's not good for the kids and it's not good for Minnesota."

### Some changes

The bill the Senate passed Friday is not identical to its previous incarnation.

In addition to allowing sheriffs to disqualify applicants for criminal, mental health and safety reasons as in the past, the Senate bill expands the disqualifications to include people who are prohibited by federal law from possessing a gun.

Previously, the law required public establishments that wanted to ban guns from their premises to both post signs at entrances and to inform people in person of the ban. The bill passed Friday allows for either option.

### How they voted

The Minnesota Senate voted 44-21 Friday to approve SF2259, a bill reenacting the so-called "Minnesota Citizens Personal Protection" act, which increases the ease and availability of obtaining permits to carry concealed handguns. A "yes" vote was a vote to approve the bill.

- Sen. Michelle Fischbach, R-Paynesville: yes.
- Sen. Dean Johnson, DFL-Willmar: yes.
- Sen. Dave Kleis, R-St. Cloud: yes.
- Sen. Paul Koering, R-Ft. Ripley: yes.
- Sen. Betsy Wergin, R-Princeton: yes.

### What's next

The House of Representatives is expected to vote on the bill next week.

Kleis voted for both amendments as well as an amendment to preserve a fingerprinting requirement for permit applicants, which was ultimately removed.

Two amendments Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson, DFL-Willmar, voted for did not get adopted: to ban guns in places of worship and in local government buildings. After voting against the bill in 2003, he voted for it this time.

"It is not the magnitude of a problem we thought it would be," he said.

# Freeway safety measures restored

STAR TRIBUNE JUL 9 '05

Freeway surveillance cameras, overhead message signs and highway helpers are going back into service under an order from Ramsey County District Court to reinstate these driver services.

The court issued the order Thursday in response to a petition from Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, who argued that the services are essential for driver safety. They had been discontinued as part of the partial government shutdown.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation's Regional Transportation Management Center in Roseville has called 35 employees back to work Monday to provide these services.

Traffic monitoring cameras already appeared to be working on the department website on Friday. To check traffic conditions, go to [www.startribune.com/323](http://www.startribune.com/323).

Traffic managers will post messages as needed on overhead signs and dispatch highway helper trucks to assist motorists.

Congestion maps will not be available on the MnDOT website. Traveler information will not be provided at [www.511mn.org](http://www.511mn.org) or by phone at 511, and KBEM traffic radio reports will not resume until the government returns full service.

Laurie Blake

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# Protecting information

Bill makes certain information public and some private

By **LEE ANN SCHUTZ**

**D**rivers using the new MnPASS, which allows use at a fee, of the so-called "sane lane" on Interstate 394, would be assured that information gathered from their credit cards used to pay the fee would remain non-public.

And to give further assurance to consumers, if the personal information retained by the state is breached, the person would be notified in "the most expedient time possible and without unreasonable delay."

These are two provisions of HF225, sponsored by Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), which addresses many of the data practices-related House proposals. The bill was passed by the House 133-0 May 17, and now awaits action by the Senate, where **Sen. Wesley J. Skoglund** (DFL-Mpls) is the sponsor.

The bill would add the number of serious injuries to, or death of, individuals in the licensed program that were reported to the commissioner of human services.

Other facilities covered would include foster care and day care services for adults.

## Opting to opt out

When a person registers a vehicle, most provided information is considered public. However, under the bill, the individual may request, in writing, that his or her home address and name be classified as private data, if it is needed for the safety of the registered owner or his or her family. This provision could also apply to applicants of a driver's license, instructional permit or a Minnesota identification card.

Current law states that the registered

still being in compliance with the state's Open Meeting Law. The bill extends the option to the Agricultural and Economic Development Board, the Small Business Development Center Advisory Board, Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Board, the Governor's Workforce Development Council, the Urban Initiative Board and the Explore Minnesota Tourism Council.

At least one member of the board would need to be at the regular meeting site, but the meeting could be held by telephone or other electronic means if interactive television is not available and if other specific requirements are met.

## Keeping it private

When a business does business with the government, many times information that would be private in the private sector becomes public.

Among the information that would be classified as private, under the bill, is the non-public financial or proprietary data retained by the State Board of Investment in connection with its venture capital, real estate and resource investments.

Additionally, some design information gathered during the early stages of planning for state construction projects could be classified as private.

## Sharing crime data

Law enforcement officials could more easily share case information once the Comprehensive Incident Based Reporting System is up and running. But the system, to be operated by the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) and the Department of Public Safety, does create some data privacy issues.

System information would be classified as confidential for 10 days unless it is important to an active investigation, then that classification could be held for up to 120 days. Access to the information could only be achieved through certification from the BCA. Subjects of the data would have access to their information through a participating law enforcement agency or the BCA.

## Penalty for non-compliance

Government entities found in violation of the Data Practices Act could be subject to paying substantially higher damages, under the bill.

**Continued on page 21**

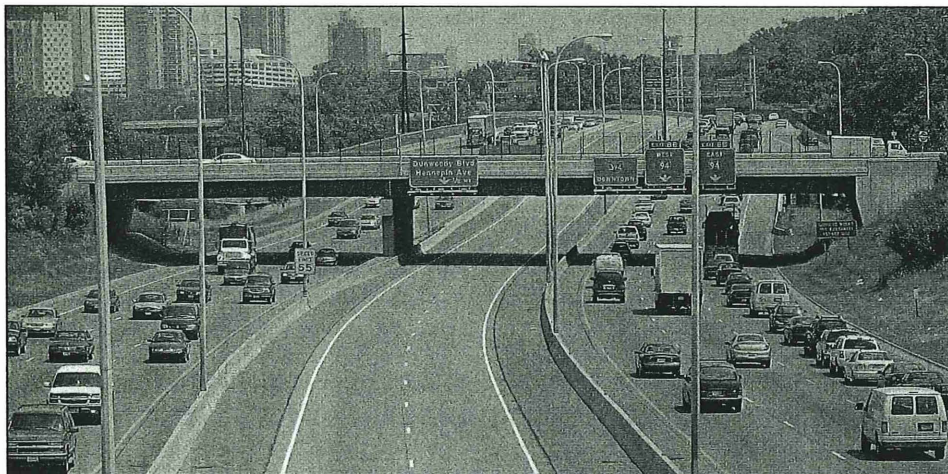


PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Motorists using their new MnPass to drive the Interstate 394 "sane lane" will have some assurance the information collected by the state will remain private under HF225.

## Day-care information

The bill would permit parents looking into day-care options to access information about centers that is currently not considered public.

Under current law, basic information about the licensee is available; such as date of licensure, licensed capacity, type of dwelling, name and relationship of other family members and the existence and status of complaints.

owner's personal information may be used, rented or sold to organizations for bulk mail solicitations. The bill would allow this dissemination of information only if authorized by the registered owner.

## Meeting electronically

Some state boards and councils currently have the option of meeting electronically and

In addition to potentially covering reasonable attorney fees, an entity could be fined \$5,000 to \$100,000 for each violation.

In addition, if data is withheld, and the district court is brought in to force compliance, a civil penalty of up to \$3,000 could be imposed against the entity.

### Genetics and pesticides

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) successfully offered an amendment asking that the administration commissioner review the law, rules and policies on how the state handles genetics information. She said that as DNA and genetic technology keeps advancing, how this information is handled will become an issue.

An amendment proposed by Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba (DFL-Long Prairie) was ruled out of order. It would have required information about pesticide application gathered by the Department of Agriculture to be made public, including what product was used and where it was spread.

### Negotiations continued from page 19

#### Negotiating the negotiations

None of this end-of-session angst should come as a surprise. There were clues along the way.

First, the finance committee structure in each body, as determined separately by House and Senate leadership before session started in January, reveals dissimilar account structures. For example, the Senate has an Environment, Agriculture and Economic Development Budget Division, while the House splits those areas of the state budget into two committees, one for Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Finance and another for Jobs and Economic Opportunity Policy and Finance.

Next, the House adopted a new set of Permanent Rules of the House Feb. 10. To those

rules, which also list the omnibus budget bills the body will consider, Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake) successfully offered an amendment prohibiting major finance or revenue bills from being combined.

To the contrary, Senate rules prohibit major finance or revenue bills from being divided.

Furthermore, Senate Concurrent Resolution 4, adopted by the two bodies Feb. 28, provides more evidence that end-of-session negotiations will be complicated. Besides setting committee deadlines, it identifies the major appropriation and finance bills for the 2005 session.

Of the 15 bills documented under the resolution, six bills correspond between the two houses: bonding, state government, higher

education, transportation, public safety and claims.

But nine others clearly require an arrangement by House and Senate leadership before conference committees can be established.

Of those nine, the Senate bills are: early childhood education; K-12 education; health and human services; and environment, agriculture and economic development.

The House bills are: education; health; jobs and economic opportunity; agriculture and rural development; and environment and natural resources.

Basically, it comes down to this: A tidy end to a legislative session depends on House and Senate leadership first negotiating the negotiations.

### Pages continued from page 20

will help her future career in sales. She has been able to use her current position to make contacts, including talking to a lobbyist who is trying to help her get a pharmaceutical sales job.

Regardless of which path pages take, their House experience will be applicable to their careers.

"It's been a learning experience," Listug said. "Whether I end up working for the House or the Senate or a Congressional office, I can take what I learned here and apply it."

If Bordenaue decides on a psychology career, he can draw on his experience watching legislators with opposing views and ideologies debate each other and sometimes even work together.

#### Point of order

A common theme among pages, regardless of their career goals and undergraduate degrees, is their avid interest in government.

"I've always been interested in state government and government in general," Berguam said. "Working here is an opportunity to learn about it firsthand."

Even with an educational background in politics, nothing can compare to seeing the Legislature in action, said Listug, a political science major.

"You can learn a lot from books, but you can learn a lot more in person," he said.

"As much as I thought I knew about politics in general, I didn't know anything until I got here," Andrews added. "This is the equivalent of having a backstage pass to your favorite band. This is the center of where things happen."

Andrews finds all House procedures interesting.

"I like being at the committees and on the floor and hearing the whole parliamentary thing, 'Point of order this, Point of order that,'" he said.

The inner workings of the Legislature have also proved eye-opening to some pages.

"My biggest surprise was the first day on the House floor, everybody was talking when somebody on the floor was talking," Berguam said.

She said one of the benefits of her job is the close friendships she's formed with the other pages. "Not many of us will probably be here next year, but the friendships will remain."

With so many job perks, it's no wonder that the competition is fierce for the coveted positions. Carter said he receives more than 200 annual inquiries and more than 100 résumés for the page jobs. Since only 25 pages were hired this year, down from 45 openings four years ago, the candidates are dueling for fewer positions and only the best ones are extended job offers.

"This is the best group we've had since I've been around," Carter said.

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# Tougher gun permit bill advances

## Senate panel OKs amendments that tighten invalidated 2003 law.

STAR TRIBUNE MAY 3 '05

By Conrad deFiebre  
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Compromise-minded senators went over Minnesota's invalidated handgun law with a fine-tooth comb Monday, adopting amendments to tighten background checks, training requirements and other rules for people licensed to carry firearms in public.

Bipartisan harmony generally reigned as the Senate Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee advanced a bill sponsored by Sen. Pat Parisseau, R-Farmington, toward a promised floor vote this month.

But practically none of the combatants in Minnesota's long-running fight over handgun rights declared victory, and the legislation still faces uncertain prospects of enactment.

The issue reemerged at the

State Capitol after two courts struck down a 2003 handgun law because it was passed as part of a larger bill addressing more than one subject. Under that law, more than 25,000 people received permits to carry a weapon.

The Minnesota Supreme Court is expected to hear a final appeal on the 2003 law, but new legislation could render it moot.

Among amendments adopted by the Senate panel, none with more than one dissenting vote:

➤ Churches are off-limits to guns unless they give specific notice that they are permitted. Violation would be a gross misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$3,000 fine.

➤ Guns can't be brought to schools, colleges or a broad array of "youth organization

properties," under penalty of a felony.

➤ Property owners need only to post signs or to make an oral request — not both — to ban guns from their premises.

➤ Permit applicants must submit fingerprints and full addresses to facilitate checks of their criminal and mental health backgrounds.

➤ No alcohol — down from a 0.04 percent blood-alcohol limit — can be consumed while carrying a gun, under penalty of a gross misdemeanor.

➤ The state Department of Public Safety must certify instructors for handgun training required of applicants. This removes the American Association of Certified Firearms Instructors Inc., a for-profit firm founded by lobbyists for the 2003 law, as a certifying group.

Gun-rights advocates pronounced many of the changes unacceptable.

"We've made it way too narrow today," said Sen. Carrie Ruud, R-Breezy Point, who voted

to advance the bill anyway.

The only committee vote against the bill came from Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis. Earlier, his effort to bar guns from all private and local government property, unless permission was given or signs saying "Guns Welcome" were posted, was soundly defeated.

Still, Rebecca Thoman, executive director of the gun-control group Citizens for a Safer Minnesota, called the hearing "a good start. We're glad to see a spirit of let's fix it up."

Whether that spirit extends throughout the Legislature remains in question. House Speaker Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, miffed by a broken promise from Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson, DFL-Willmar, to advance the bill without amendments, said Monday that he hasn't decided whether to schedule a House floor vote.

Conrad deFiebre is at [cdefiebre@startribune.com](mailto:cdefiebre@startribune.com).

# R84 Bill preserving value of gift cards advances

STAR TRIBUNE MAR 1 '05  
By Pat Doyle  
Star Tribune Staff Writer

The value of store gift cards wouldn't be lost or diminished by expiration dates and service fees under a proposal that advanced Monday in the Minnesota Senate.

The Commerce Committee passed a bill sponsored by Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, that gives currency to gift cards that now become worthless or reduced in value after a certain time. The bill will be sent to the Senate floor. There

is a companion measure in the House.

"When somebody spends \$20 on a gift certificate, it will be worth \$20," Skoglund said in describing his bill.

The National Retail Federation said in late November that it expected more than \$17 billion to be spent nationwide on gift cards during the 2004 holiday season. Skoglund said about 12 to 20 percent of the gift cards purchased are never redeemed.

**CARDS continues on B5**

## CARDS from B1

### *Proposal for dates of expiration loses out*

The prohibition on expiration dates and service fees would not apply to free certificates given by a store as awards or promotions, or to certificates sold below face value to charities for fundraising. Nor would it apply to already expired gift cards.

The committee didn't adopt a proposal favored by Sen. David Gaither, R-Plymouth, that would have allowed cards and other purchased certificates to become void when expiration dates are printed on them.

Skoglund argued that such

notifications could easily be overlooked by card holders. Holding a tape measure to one certificate with such a warning, he said, "If you can read that, then you can read something that is smaller than one-sixteenth of an inch."

The bill passed by the Commerce Committee would allow expiration dates on bank debit cards purchased by consumers as alternatives to carrying cash.

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## Legislators draft bills to address identity theft

With identity theft one of the fastest growing crimes in the country, legislators have introduced several bills in the Minnesota House and Senate looking to combat the problem.

One such bill, authored by Sen. Mady Reiter, R-53 in Shoreview, proposes to restrict the use of Social Security numbers in social transactions.

Sen. Chris Gerlach, a Republican from District 37 representing Apple Valley and Burnsville and who is a co-author on the bill, said, "Everyone is asking you for your Social Security number as a contact means. The bill would make it so you would not be required to give that up."

Exempted in the bill are businesses providing banking, investment, insurance, student loan services, health care claim services and government agencies.

The final draft of the bill also exempts any business granting a loan or credit application.

"Almost anyone who needs financial information on you will require your Social Security number and your date of birth," Reiter said.

People have the option of declining to give out their Social Security number, Reiter said, but then the business can either continue the process or end it.

However, if the bill passes, utility companies, cable companies and other types of businesses would not be able to ask for

### Identity theft: A statewide issue

**Top five cities in Minnesota where victims live**

1. Minneapolis — 343 reports
2. St. Paul — 266 reports
3. Eagan — 50 reports
4. Bloomington — 47 reports
5. Coon Rapids — 44 reports

*Note: Minnesota ranks 29th in the nation for number of identity theft victims per 100,000 population, at 49.7 victims. Arizona tops the list at 122.4 victims per 100,000 population. South Dakota is 50th, at 19.6 victims per 100,000 population*

Source: Federal Trade Commission

customers' Social Security numbers.

"It's like a key, a combination that unlocks so much of your personal finances," Gerlach said.

Another bill sponsored by Rep. Jim Davnie, DFL-62A of Minneapolis, and co-sponsored by Rep. Greg Davids, R-31B of Preston, would allow a consumer to place a "security freeze" on their credit report, preventing reporting agencies from releasing the information without the consumer's authorization.

The bill would also allow a victim of identity theft to petition a court for "factual innocence."

Additionally, the use of Social Security numbers would be limited and businesses that use per-

sonal information would be required to take protective measures in disposal.

A bill sponsored by Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-62 of Minneapolis, proposes that an offender pay restitution to the victims of identity theft.

In a bill by Sen. Steve Kelley, DFL-44 of Hopkins, the use of e-mail under false pretenses to obtain an identity of another individual would be made illegal. This would apply to "phishing."

Sen. Steve Dille, R-18 of Dassel, proposed a bill that would require greater proof of identity for driver's license applicants.

For more information or to track these bills, visit [www.leg.state.mn.us](http://www.leg.state.mn.us).



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# Attorney General weighing options against foreign makers of ingredients used to make methamphetamine

by T.W. Budig  
ECM capitol reporter

Attorney General Mike Hatch is weighing possible legal action against foreign manufacturers of pseudoephedrine and ephedrine — ingredients used to create the highly addicted drug methamphetamine — saying the way their products are distributed is “very sloppy.”

Meth is a growing blight across the country, Hatch said.

According to the newspaper, The Oregonian, the most potent forms of meth are produced from ephedrine or pseudoephedrine produced by a small group of overseas manufacturers and shipped into the United States.

German manufacturers alone shipped some 392 metric tons of these drugs in powder form into the country in 2001, according to the Oregonian.

“I believe it’s not being properly handled — it would be nice if the federal government would handle this as a controlled substance,” said Hatch.

Hatch said he wasn’t currently announcing a lawsuit.

“But I’m telling you, that’s where we’re going,” said Hatch, speaking at a press conference Jan. 6, while presenting a DFL meth initiative.

Former North Dakota Gov. George Sinner, an anti-meth crusader appearing at the press conference, endorsed Hatch’s possible lawsuit.

The manufacturers of the drugs being cooked in meth superlabs in America are producing way, way more than has a legitimate use, Sinner said.

“And they’re selling it at excellent profits all over the place,” he said.

“I think Mike is right — we ought to sue the bastards for public endangerment.”

Several DFL lawmakers presented their anti-meth legislative initiative.



Attorney General Mike Hatch helps present the DFL legislative initiative to fight the use of meth. Hatch called on the help of the federal government in curbing the use of the highly addictive drug. (Photo by T.W. Budig)

• **Sen. Wes Skoglund**, DFL-Minneapolis, is proposing a bill which would require pseudoephedrine and ephedrine to be sold behind the drug store counter, in limited quantities, by pharmacists or technicians.

DFL lawmakers propose requiring locks on anhydrous ammonia tanks — tanks left alone by farmers are often the target of meth cookers.

• **Sen. Satveer Chaudhary**, DFL-Fridley, is proposing to extend child endangerment laws to include nonparents as well as parents.

More and more children are hapless meth victims, he said.

Chaudhary also wants to make the disposal of meth byproducts by meth cookers a felony.

According to Skoglund, the DFL legislative agenda would cost nothing and long-term, save the state money.

Hatch wants the state to develop a meth awareness program to alert young people to the danger of the drug, he said.

• **Sen. Julie Rosen**, R-

Fairmont, who has led the Senate Republican meth initiative, called the DFL plan a good one. Progress on the issue has been made, she said.

“I only hope that the Attorney General will help us remain focused on this progress, not politics,” Rosen said.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty welcomed the DFL focus on meth.

The administration recently announced its own initiatives, including limiting access to chemicals cooked into meth, funding 10 new Bureau of Criminal of Apprehension narcotics agents and other steps.

According to the Attorney General’s office:

• Three-quarters or more of the crimes in many Minnesota counties are meth-related.

• The number of Minnesota felony meth cases from 2001 to 2002 increased by almost half, jumping from 882 cases to 1,316 cases.

T.W. Budig is at [tim.budig@ecm-inc.com](mailto:tim.budig@ecm-inc.com).

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ANOKA, MN  
WEEKLY 5,100  
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LAINES-SPRING LAKE PARK  
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## Pawlenty proposing to jail Minnesota sex offenders longer

by T.W. Budig  
ECM capitol reporter

Gov. Tim Pawlenty has proposed more funding, a new sentencing structure and longer prison sentences in dealing with Minnesota sex offenders.

"We need to put these people away for a long time," said Pawlenty, unveiling his more than \$100 million proposal.

Pawlenty's proposal includes lifetime sentences for sex offenders convicted of first- or second-degree forcible rape, whose crime includes any one or more of six aggravating factors — torture, use of a weapon, others.

He restated his personal support for the death penalty for violent criminals, but noted the Legislature's lack of support for capital punishment.

Pawlenty selected elements from recent reports, that of Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission, the Legislative Auditor's and his own Governor's Commission on Sex Offender Policy, in for-

mulating his proposal, he said.

One sentencing provision both commissions recommend, and proposed by the governor for the first time, was indeterminate sentencing.

Pawlenty proposes indeterminate life sentences — a sentence in which a sex offender could possibly serve life unless meeting certain conditions of release — for forcible rape and repeat sex offenders.

Some see the adoption of indeterminate sentences for sex offenders as landmark.

"The indeterminate sentencing approach is the most dramatic change from existing law, which will have the longest term impact on protecting public safety," said Dakota County Attorney Jim Backstrom, who served on the Governor's Commission on Sex Offender Policy.

Backstrom believes the Legislature will pass the sentencing proposal, he said.

"This is not a political issue," said Backstrom. "It's time we take this out of the political area

— quit pointing fingers at who did what in the past."

The majority of the commission's recommendations were included in the governor's proposal, he said.

Eric Lipman, state sex offender policy coordinator, said Pawlenty's sentencing proposal would significantly decrease the need for the civil commitment of sex offenders, because they'd be in jail.

They don't know exactly how many more sex offenders will be in prison under the new sentencing provisions versus the old, but he thought dozens, Lipman said.

Under the governor's proposal, the presumptive prison sentences for all categories of sex offenders would be increased.

In general, Pawlenty's initiative drew positive responses from lawmakers.

• **Sen. Leo Foley**, DFL-Coon Rapids, Senate Crime Prevention and Public Safety chairman, called it a "good start."

• **Sen. Wes Skoglund**, DFL-Minneapolis, Senate author of



Gov. Tim Pawlenty, flanked by three commissioners, including Corrections Commissioner Joan Fabian (left), presented his proposed sex offender legislation at the Capitol.

(Photo by T.W. Budig)

sex offender legislation, said everyone seemed heading down the same track.

• Rep. Kurt Zellers, R-Maple Grove, who carried sex offender legislation last session, endorsed the governor's proposal.

Beyond sentencing changes, Pawlenty's proposal includes additional supervised release agents and Bureau of Criminal Apprehension agents to monitor sex offenders in the community, and additional hearing officers

to speedily hear cases of sex offenders violating their parole.

It also includes funding for the GPS tracking of sex offenders.

Zellers believes the use of technology could prove efficient and cost effective, he said.

Pawlenty's proposal would be well received in the House, said Zellers.

The governor's calls for the development of housing for

released sex offenders, housing to allow maximum surveillance and supervision.

It also establishes a Sex Offender Policy Board to foster statewide supervision and treatment standards, and push for implementation of best practices.

T.W. Budig is at tim.budig@ecm-inc.com.

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BLAINE-SPRING LAKE PARK  
LIFE

ANOKA, MN  
WEEKLY 1,350  
MAY 13 2005

COON RAPIDS HERALD

COON RAPIDS, MN  
WEEKLY 3,600  
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# Public safety bill passes Senate floor

**Sen. Jane Ranum, DFL-Minneapolis, Senate Public Safety Budget Committee chairwoman, talks to reporters on the Senate floor after passage of the Senate's public safety bill.**

(Photo by T.W. Budig)

if they exhibit certain desired behaviors, she said.

Other than the House's lifetime without parole provision, the Senate bill doesn't contain castration and sexual predator license plate provisions.

The House bill requires level three sex offenders to have a special sex offender license plate for their car.

It also allows the court to order chemical castration for certain sex offenses — for pedophiles, for instance.

• Sen. Leo Foley, DFL-Coon Rapids, Senate Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee chairman, said special license plates were tried for drunken drivers and didn't work — they used other people's cars.

And Foley, who believes one of the biggest flaws in public safety is a lack of parole officers, watched the House floor debate on castration with disbelief, he said.

"I looked at one and a half hours of it and I was absolutely amazed that anybody in a civilized society could recommend something like that," Foley said.

Foley, like Ranum, questions whether castration is a sentencing policy Minnesotans support.

No Senate Republican attempted to amend a castration provision onto the Senate public safety bill.

Skoglund amended the bill to have the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension cross-check Minnesota hunting licenses for purchasers ineligible to possess firearms.

In Senate committee early this session, Skoglund said he believed Katie Poirier, the Moose Lake store clerk kidnapped and murdered by Donald Blom in 1999, would be alive had hunting licenses been cross-checked.

Blom, who should not have had weapons, bought hunting licenses, said Skoglund.

Other highlights of the Senate bill include methamphetamine (meth) provisions that increase penalties and create new methamphetamine crimes.

The Senate earlier in the session passed meth legislation placing restrictions on the sale of cold products used to make meth but didn't ban the sale of such drugs as Sudafed or Actifed that the House recently banned in its public safety bill.

Local senators voting in support of Kleis' sex offender, lifetime without parole amendment included Bachmann, Johnson, Jungbauer, Nienow, and Reiter. Opposed were Betzold, Chaudhary and Foley.

T.W. Budig is at tim.budig@ecm-inc.com.

by T.W. Budig  
ECM capitol reporter

The Senate passed a \$1.6 billion public safety bill without the sex-offender castration and lifetime without parole provisions found in the House public safety bill.

How best to deal with the "worst of the worst" dominated debate on the Senate floor.

• Sen. David Kleis, R-St. Cloud, attempted to amend onto the bill the lifetime sentence without the possibility of parole for the worst sex offenders that House Republicans have made a focus in their public safety bill.

"I know the governor will sign it — it's his provision," said Kleis.

• But Sen. Jane Ranum, DFL-Minneapolis, Senate Public Safety Budget Committee chairwoman, argued that prosecutors want flexibility in sentencing.

Additionally, Ranum said that the Republican sentencing approach would require the construction of multiple new prisons.

• Sen. Don Betzold, DFL-Fridley, questioned whether life without parole wouldn't prompt sex offenders to murder their victims.

That's exactly the effect the sentence would have on a violent criminal, according to Sen. Wesley Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis.

"He's going to do the math," said Skoglund.

Kleis countered by arguing that assuming sex offenders plan their crimes rationally is a fallacy.

But his amendment failed on a 32-35 vote.

Violent first-time sex offenders can be sentenced to indeterminate life sentences under the Senate bill — the House bill, too, uses indeterminate sentencing.

"In many instances it will be a life sentence because they will not meet the very tough criteria the Senate has in place," said Ranum, speaking after the Senate floor session.

Under this approach, a sex-offender can be released after serving a set amount of time

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RED WING, MN  
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**State, federal  
legislation aims  
to shut loophole**

By Don Davis  
ddavis@forumcomm.com

ST. PAUL – State and federal legislation would close a loophole keeping police and the public in the dark when an out-of-state sex offender moves to town.

Bills in Congress and the Minnesota Legislature had widespread support last year, but unrelated political disagreements stalled both efforts. Backers promise to resurrect the bills this year.

Lt. Bob Larson of the Moorhead Police Department said nothing has changed since he testified to Minnesota legislative committees.

Law enforcement agencies in other states are under little obligation to let Minnesota authorities know if a sex offender moves to the state. If the other state does inform Minnesota authorities, existing law requires that information to be kept secret.

When a Minnesota Level 3 sex offender, deemed most likely to re-offend, is released from prison, the community where he will live is notified. Rep. Morrie Lanning, R-Moorhead, wants that to happen to out-of-state offenders, too.

Lanning said his 2004 bill to close the loophole will be in

front of this year's Legislature. Lanning and Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, said their bills should face little opposition because lawmakers heard them last year.

The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension reported last year that it knew of 1,045 sex offenders registered in other states who lived in Minnesota. North Dakota offenders accounted for 106 of them, with 28 in Clay County.

While Minnesota state lawmakers are reworking state law, members of Congress are expected to bring back the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Database Act, named after the University of North Dakota student kidnapped from a shopping mall in November 2003 and found dead near Crookston, Minn., last April. A convicted sex offender is in jail facing federal charges in the case.

The federal bill, which passed the Senate but not the House, would establish a national database of the most heinous sex offenders for the public to access. It also would require improved communication among police in different states.

Readers can reach Forum reporter Don Davis at (651) 290-0707

RED WING REPUBLICAN  
EAGLE

RED WING, MN  
SATURDAY 8,100  
MAY 14 2005

BEMIDJI PIONEER

BEMIDJI, MN  
SATURDAY 10,200  
MAY 14 2005

WEST CENTRAL TRIBUNE

WILLMAR, MN  
SATURDAY 16,927  
MAY 14 2005

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# Senate votes to reinstate pistol permit law

BY SCOTT WENTE  
Staff Writer

ST. PAUL — Outstate DFLers joined most Republicans Friday as the Senate voted overwhelmingly to allow law-abiding citizens to carry concealed pistols.

The 44-21 vote followed about five hours of debate during which metro area legislators repeatedly attempted to make the proposal more strict.

The bill would reinstate a law that was approved by the 2003 Legislature but later ruled unconstitutional because of the way it was passed. The modified bill allows churches and business owners who want to ban concealed pistols to post signs stating their policy or to verbally inform visitors.

*"It doesn't lower the crime rate and it also doesn't put guns in the hands of criminals."*

**STEVE MURPHY**  
Red Wing senator



The old law required them to do both.

Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson of Willmar and other rural DFL lawmakers who opposed the previous bill changed their minds and cast yes votes Friday.

"The issues raised two years ago did not turn out to be fact," Johnson said. "Lawmakers assured me over and over again that the system was working, and citizens in west-central Minnesota told me the same

thing."

The state needs a fair handgun permit application process, bill proponents said. The measure requires authorities to grant pistol permits to almost any law-abiding adult. Prior to the 2003 legislation, police chiefs and sheriffs had considerable discretion over who received permits.

"From now on, we should have a seamless system," said bill author Pat Pariseau, R-Farmington, noting that the Republican-

controlled House still must pass the measure. That is expected to happen next week.

Sen. Steve Murphy, DFL-Red Wing, said that while he wishes local authorities had more power over who gets permits, he supported the revised bill. He opposed the 2003 legislation.

"There hasn't been a big deal," Murphy said. "It doesn't lower the crime rate and it also doesn't put guns in the hands of criminals."

After the 2003 Legislature approved the pistol permit legislation, a court ruled the law unconstitutional because it was attached to an unrelated bill. An appeals court upheld the ruling. An estimated 25,000 people received permits while that law was in effect.

On Thursday, Minnesota Attorney General Mike Hatch asked the state Supreme Court to review the lower court decisions.

The Senate bill was stripped of many provisions that were tacked on in committee, including allowing local governments to ban concealed handguns. Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, argued that pistols don't belong at those sites.

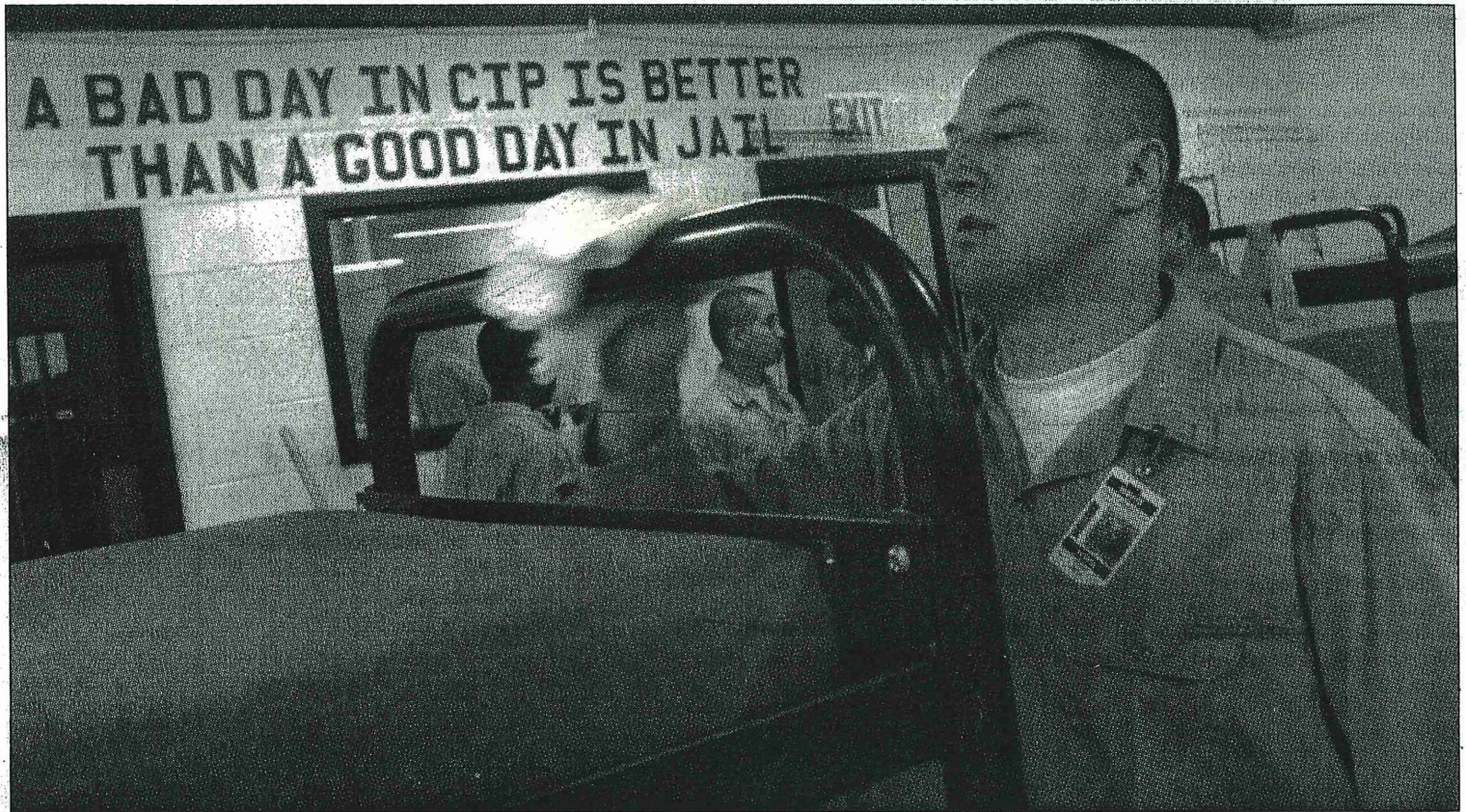
Lawmakers voted to repeal a provision in the bill that required permit applicants to be fingerprinted for a background search.

Most of the DFL amendments failed, but lawmakers did pass a provision preventing registered sex offenders from carrying concealed pistols, even if they had a permit. That measure passed 64-0.

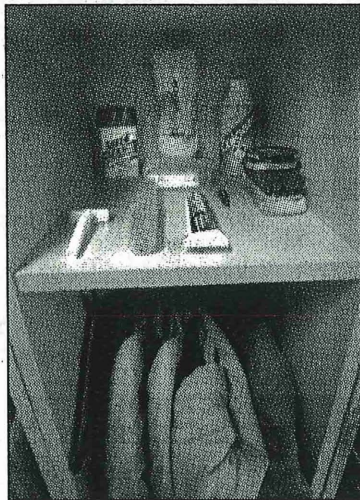
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# SPECIAL TREATMENT



**Inmate Kevin Estle, above,** cleans barracks at the state prison in Willow River, Minn. Estle, a recovering meth addict, is in a boot camp and treatment program called the Challenge Incarceration Program, or CIP. Inmates must keep their personal goods, **right, tidy.**



JOHN DOMAN, PIONEER PRESS

*Lawmakers are exploring what works to help meth-addicted inmates curb their cravings.*

BY RACHEL E. STASSEN-BERGER  
PIONEER PRESS FEB 7 '05

**K**evin Estle's personal journey with methamphetamine was like the drug's effects — a lightning-fast trip from solid citizen to meth-making addict.

The 41-year-old Apple Valley man was introduced to the stimulant by a friend.

"Three months down the line I got hooked on the drug, and the next thing I know I was manufacturing it, and before I knew it six more months went by and the task force started watching me, watching my house," said Estle,

who was arrested for making meth in his home in 2003. "Meth just takes your life and drives it right down the tubes."

The speed with which meth can turn a person like Estle into an hard-core addict and the number of people like him across the state has led many lawmakers to conclude that better enforcement and longer sentences in certain cases are needed to fight this drug's impact in Minnesota.

But a less flashy response to the meth plague is also gaining traction: treatment.

Politicians from both parties are

SPECIAL TREATMENT, 8A

(over)

# Special treatment

(continued)

making treatment of addicts part of their anti-meth strategies. Many addiction experts welcome attention being paid to treatment therapies, but some also fear lawmakers may want to study the issue more than fund practices proven to be successful.

Trying to quit meth on your own is very tough, said Estle.

"I tried a couple times and made it at most four days. I couldn't do it," said Estle in a Minnesota Corrections Department conference room. Estle, like about 110 men and women sentenced to prison, is in an intense boot camp and treatment program at the department's Willow River facility. "I found that once it gets a hold of you and you try to quit, you are so tired you just can't function and you need the drug just to get the energy back ... You depend on it."

Some public officials initially reacted to meth the way they had to the scourge of other highly addictive drugs — with the cry that quitting was not impossible.

That's just not true, said Carol Palkowski, director of research and communication at the Hazelden Foundation.

"Can methamphetamine addiction be successfully treated? Absolutely. Yet often we hear an elected official, environmental health officer or law enforcement agent definitively state, 'Treatment for meth addicts doesn't work,'" wrote Palkowski in a journal for policy-makers. "Yet it is simply not the case. Methamphetamine addiction can be successfully treated."

Several key policy-makers, however, believe Minnesota must learn more about how meth addicts can be successfully treated. Gov. Tim Pawlenty, a Republican, Attorney General Mike Hatch, a Democrat, and senators from both sides of the aisle have proposed various ways of studying which pro-

grams work best to help users kick the highly addictive drug. There has not yet been significant discussion of those proposals in the state Legislature.

Federal lawmakers also are paying attention to treatment needs. Nineteen U.S. senators have backed a bill designed to crack down on meth that would create a methamphetamine research center, which would have among its priorities the study of effective treatments. That bill's sponsors include Minnesota Sens. Norm Coleman, a Republican, and Mark Dayton, a Democrat.

"We don't know what works. We really should find out what works," said **Sen. Wes Skoglund**, DFL-Minneapolis, who has sponsored a measure to require the state's legislative auditor to study the best practices for meth treatment.

Longtime meth users need more time to physically recover than users of other drugs, treatment experts say.

Some treatment programs, here and elsewhere, have adopted portions of the California-based Matrix Institute model, which studies have found works well with meth users and has some federal backing behind it. Others say they are successfully treating meth users with older programs. And still others say getting users to affordable professional treatment is key — and studying it could siphon away needed resources from providing the services.

"If we devote millions to researching effective treatment for methamphetamine addiction, what's going to be left to treat the addicts?" said Jim Atkins, a drug counselor and manager of Admissions and Case Management at Hazelden.

Treatment officials say they already know some key facts about meth and how to help those in its thrall.

The first is that longtime meth users need more time to physically recover from the drug, through detox and withdrawal,

than users of other drugs.

During that time, former meth users may sleep nearly constantly, struggle with deep depression and deal with their brains literally repairing the serious damage the drug can cause. They also will likely be hungry — many meth users tend to eat badly and lose a lot of weight.

Peter Woollard, a meth offender now in the state's boot camp and treatment program, can confirm that.

"For the first few days in county jail, I did nothing but sleep and eat and was totally preoccupied with getting high," said Woollard, 26, of Thief River Falls, Minn.

That means programs that last just 15 to 28 days, as many drug treatment programs do, may be of limited use with some meth addicts, treatment experts say.

"With methamphetamine we are looking at much longer treatments," said Don Eubanks, director of the Chemical Health Division of the Minnesota Human Services Department.

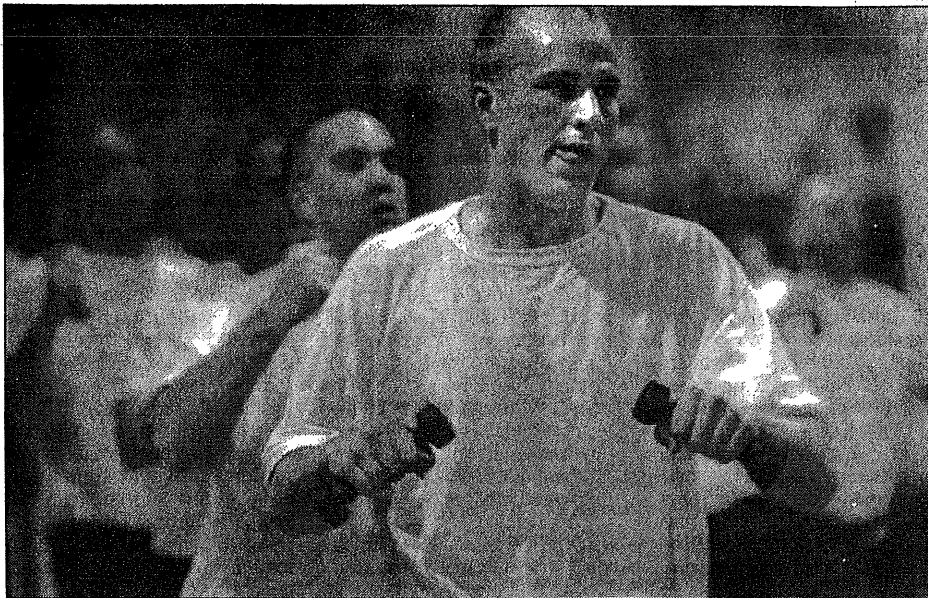
In his budget, Pawlenty acknowledged that and put some money behind that need. His budget added \$300,000 to the state's outpatient treatment program so women with children could get the needed hours of treatment for meth. The state needed to up the budget for treatment because it simply takes longer to effectively treat meth users than users of other drugs, his budget documents said.

Experts also say cognitive behavioral therapy, which concentrates on thinking patterns and behavior, works better for meth addicts than 12-step programs, which emphasize spirituality.

That's an approach the state Corrections Department has adopted in the past few years in its Challenge Incarceration Program, which houses and treats inmates like Estle and Woollard. That program used to treat inmates with the 12-step program model but now relies on cognitive behavioral therapy.

Some addicts found the 12-step programs' emphasis on the spirituality of a higher power discordant with their own spiri-

(Cont'd)



**Willow River inmate Travis Martin** goes through rigorous aerobics exercises with fellow prisoners.



**Inmates shovel** the prison grounds at the state prison in Willow River, Minn.

tual beliefs. The cognitive therapy approach is also backed by the well-researched Matrix Institute treatment model.

But for Hazelden's Atkins and some other treatment experts, the best answer for meth treatment is much like the

answer to other drugs. Make treatment available, make it professional and individually tailored, and it can work, he said.

"It is a lot more about addiction than it is about a particular drug ... It really is all about individualized assessment and

individualized treatment," said Atkins.

Jonathan Dickson, a former meth user from Buffalo, Minn., says the individual nature of the help he received in the state prison's boot camp and the supervision he got after he left prison worked for him.

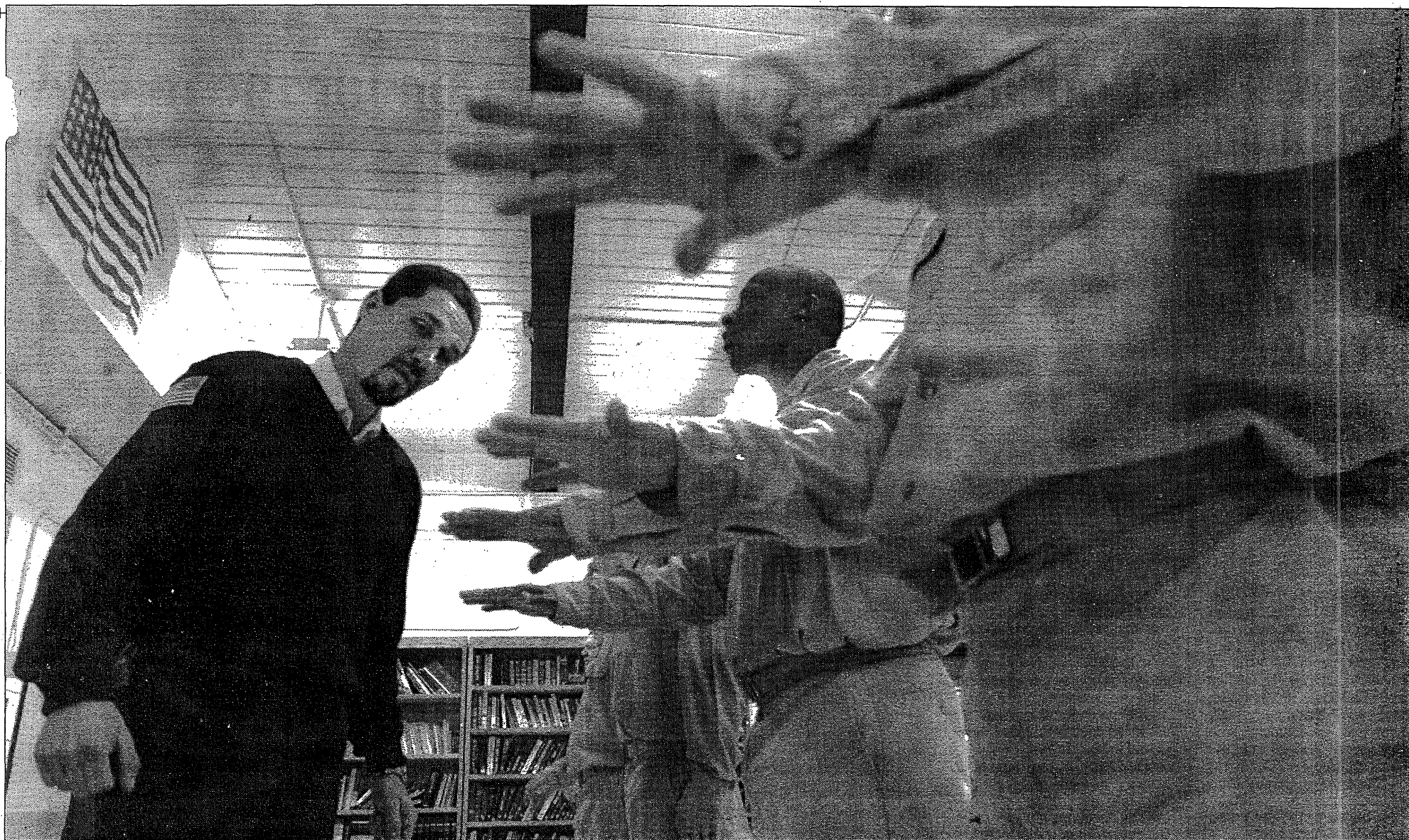
"I just like the way they taught us. It was more personal than the other treatments," said Dickson, who had been through two treatment programs before he ended up in the boot camp program.

He is out of prison, has a job and is rebuilding his life. Now he spreads the word about treatment and the value of staying clean.

"I preach, that's what I call it. When I see kids, like my little brother and sister, I tell them my story and that there's a better life out there sober," said the 23-year-old. "I'm living proof."

(over)





PHOTOS BY JOHN DOMAN, PIONEER PRESS

**Inmates in the Challenge Incarceration Program** have their fingernails checked for cleanliness in a daily inspection by Sgt. Mike Dragicevich at the state prison in Willow River, Minn.

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# Hatch, DFLers take aim at meth

By **Martiga Lohn**  
*Associated Press Writer*

ST. PAUL — Democrats led by Attorney General Mike Hatch outlined a multi-pronged attack on methamphetamine, a potent illegal drug responsible for a wave of crime across the state.

Hatch, **Sens. Wes Skoglund** and Satveer Chaudhary and Rep. John Lesch said Thursday they want measures to stop homegrown production of the addictive stimulant, such as requiring pharmacies to lock up cold medicines that contain meth ingredients and buyers to sign for purchases.

They're also asking the federal government to crack down on large-scale meth manufacturers,



**Fletcher**

who are responsible for 80 percent of Minnesota's meth supply.

"Meth is taking over the state of Minnesota," Ramsey County Sheriff Bob Fletcher said. "People cannot beat this. It's everywhere. Two or three times on it, you're addicted."

Gov. Tim Pawlenty, who rolled out his own \$3.5 million meth plan

in October, said he looks forward to "strong bipartisan legislation."

A crime bill increasing penalties for meth crimes was a casualty of last year's legislative gridlock. The Senate aims to pass meth legislation quickly this session, Skoglund said. In the House, Rep. Jeff Johnson, R-Plymouth, introduced a bill containing a raft of meth measures.

Aspects of Pawlenty's and the DFL proposals match up. Both would restrict purchases of cold medicines such as Sudafed, stiffen penalties for meth offenders who endanger children or vulnerable adults, require offenders to pay for

cleanup of meth labs and create a revolving loan fund for communities to clean up sites where meth has been made.

The Democrats would also make disposing of meth waste a felony, restrict the sale of veterinary products containing meth components and require locks on tanks of anhydrous ammonia, used to fertilize fields but also needed to make methamphetamine.

Fletcher called on the state to fund the Minnesota Gang Strike Force, which will run out of money at the end of February.

Hatch said he's exploring a civil lawsuit against companies that dis-

tribute pseudoephedrine and ephedrine, ingredients used to make methamphetamine. One-sixth of the world supply of those chemicals ends up being used for meth, Hatch said.

Sudafed's maker, Pfizer Inc., has announced that next week it will start selling Sudafed PE, a new version of the cold and allergy medicine without pseudoephedrine.

U.S. Sen. Mark Dayton said he will work closely with Hatch and local police to come up with a federal response.

**Meth/ Page A2** A

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WEST CENTRAL TRIBUNE

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## Meth

*Continued from A1*

"Everything up here is an uphill battle, but it's one that I hope will have broad bipartisan support," Dayton said. "We're just getting it started."



**Dayton**

Pawlenty's proposal includes 10 new narcotics agents to focus on meth crimes.

"I'm very thankful we are getting something done," said Sen. Julie Rosen, R-Fairmont, who joined the DFLers' press conference.

Methamphetamine produces an intense high, can damage nerve cells and blood vessels in the brain and lead to strokes and movement disorders similar to Parkinson's disease. Other side effects include aggression, memory loss, heart problems, convulsions and deterioration of the teeth, known as "meth mouth."

Minnesota imprisoned 869 people for meth crimes last year, compared with none in 2000. Fueled by rising numbers of drug and sex offenders, the state prison population now occupies all available beds, and corrections officials expect the increase to continue.

— *Associated Press Writer*  
*Frederic J. Frommer contributed to this report from Washington.*

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BECKER COUNTY RECORD

DETROIT LAKES, MN  
WEEKLY 14,000  
MAY 4 2005

BEMIDJI PIONEER

BEMIDJI, MN  
TUESDAY 10,200  
MAY 3 2005

DAILY GLOBE

WORTHINGTON, MN  
TUESDAY 13,000  
MAY 3 2005

WEST CENTRAL TRIBUNE

WILLMAR, MN  
TUESDAY 16,927  
MAY 3 2005



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Wednesday, May 4, 2005

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RED WING REPUBLICAN  
EAGLE

RED WING, MN  
TUESDAY 8,100  
MAY 3 2005



Burrelles Luce 201 3280 VC

# Return of concealed-carry Senate panel amends pistol permit bill

By **SCOTT WENTE**  
St. Paul Bureau

Churches and local governments upset by a pistol permit law passed in 2003 scored a small victory Monday when lawmakers considering a new version of the legislation gave them authority to ban concealed handguns.

The Senate Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee amended a new version of the so-called Personal Protection Act that would allow law-abiding citizens to apply for permits to carry hidden pistols.

The original law passed the 2003 Legislature after the Senate version was attached to an unrelated natural resources bill. The law was challenged, and last month an appellate court upheld a lower court ruling that the law was unconstitutional. The state constitution requires bills to deal with only one issue.

After the court ruling, supporters of the law introduced a new version they hope will pass on its own before the session is scheduled to adjourn May 23. The bill cleared its first House committee last week, but still needs some minor technical work before it reaches the floor.

The DFL-controlled Senate committee changed the bill to allow property owners, religious establishments and local governments to ban hidden pistols. They would be required to post signs saying so or verbally notify permit holders of their policy. Businesses already could ban concealed pistols.

Lawmakers also voted to make it a felony to bring a dangerous weapon onto school grounds or youth organization property, such as the YMCA.

Supporters of the original proposal said the committee weakened the legislation by adding too many exemptions. Bill co-author Sen. Carrie Ruud, R-Breezy Point, said the new proposal would create a "patchwork" of policies throughout the state.

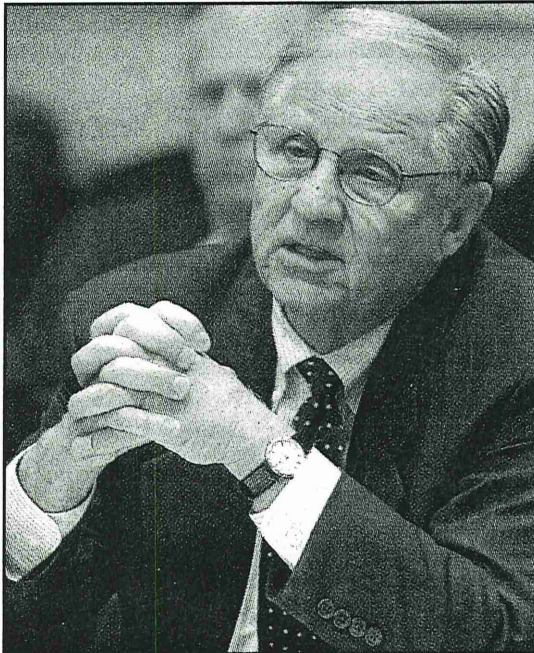
"We've made it too narrow," Ruud said. "We forget about the Second Amendment when we do all this stuff."

The Senate version also would require permit applicants to undergo a background check with fingerprints. Proponents said that is the most effective way to determine whether an applicant has a clean record.

Opponents insisted that type of search is offensive to law-abiding citizens.

"That makes me a criminal," said Ruud, who has held a permit for 10 years.

Some lawmakers criticized their colleagues for trying to force the legislation through. They said other bills aren't being heard now that deadlines have passed.



Former Gov. Arne Carlson

"But for some reason when it's a gun bill it's going to the front of the list," said Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis. He tried unsuccessfully to place further restrictions on the permit bill.

• Bill sponsor Sen. Pat Pariseau, R-Farmington, said she is not sure a compromise can be reached with the Republican-controlled House now that the Senate version has been changed considerably.

"It's got more language on there than I ever bargained for," Pariseau said.

More than 25,000 Minnesotans received permits after the 2003 law went into effect. Those permits are still valid.

Opponents of the bill include former Minnesota Gov. Arne Carlson, who said the proposal wouldn't be superior to the previous law unless it is modified.

Carlson also said the legislation compromises the authority of local government, which is most responsive to its citizens.

"Those differences in law should be recognized and should be preserved," Carlson said.

Gene German, a certified firearms instructor from Shorewood, told the committee that a permit holder who carries a pistol works even harder to avoid street conflicts, knowing they could quickly escalate to violence. But he said permit holders have a right to protect themselves.

"Everyone who carries a firearm is not a bad guy," German said.

# Report lights a fire under Ford talks



GLEN STUBBE • Star Tribune file 2004

Ford workers in St. Paul have endured 14 weeks of furloughs since 2004 because of dwindling sales of Ranger and Mazda B-Series pickups.

STAR TRIBUNE DEC 3 '05 P67 M14 I22.8

● A report that Ford's St. Paul plant is marked for closing might be speculation. But experts say the clock is ticking, and state officials are looking to influence the decision.

By DEE DePASS • ddepas@startribune.com

The endgame has begun between the state and Ford Motor Co. over the future of the St. Paul assembly plant.

The plant, which has just under 2,000 workers, had been identified as a potential casualty in the round of closings Ford plans to announce in January. Now the Wall Street Journal, citing anonymous sources said to have knowledge of Ford's plans, has reported that the St. Paul plant is one of five that are likely to be shuttered.

Ford on Friday called the article "specula-

tive" and repeated that no announcement is planned until next month. The UAW head at the Ford plant argued that the article couldn't be true because production targets for the entire company haven't been set for 2006.

Nevertheless, the article triggered a new round of talk among state and city officials about the possibility of last-minute moves to save the plant, with one legislative leader suggesting that a special session could be warranted.

**Plant continues:** Tax-free zone or fuel project are possibilities. **A16**

**375,751**

Ford Ranger trucks were sold in 2000

**102,967**

Ford Ranger trucks were sold in 2005\*

\* Through October  
Includes Ford Ranger and U.S.-made Mazda B-Series light pickups

Decline in production, **A16**  
Plant's strengths may not matter in face of industry competition, **D1**

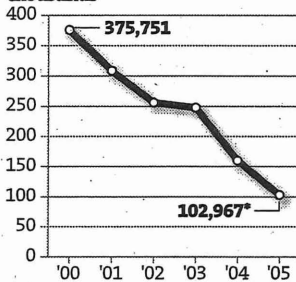
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PLANT FROM A1

RANGER PRODUCTION IN REVERSE

Annual production of Ford Rangers dropped 57 percent between 2000 and 2004, and the downward trend continued in 2005. Ford closed its Edison, N.J., Ranger plant last year and consolidated all U.S. Ranger and Mazda B-Series truck production at the St. Paul plant. Employment there has held steady at about 2,000 workers.

Ranger\*\* pickup production in thousands



\* Through October  
\*\* Includes Ford Ranger and U.S. made Mazda B-Series light pickups  
Source: Ford Motor Company  
Star Tribune

"We would do everything we could within reason to keep those jobs here," said House Speaker Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, including designating the plant a tax-free zone. The closing, he said, would be "very negative news for Minnesota. Those are good-paying jobs."

Gov. Tim Pawlenty, who was traveling in California, followed through on the plan that his office announced this week to send a letter to William Clay Ford Jr., the automaker's CEO, proposing a joint biofuel production center in which Minnesota could make "significant investments."

Ford said this fall that his company must take a bigger role in the production of alternative-fuel vehicles. Minnesota is a big producer of ethanol, and some Ford vehicles run on an ethanol blend called E-85.

"While Ford has indicated it is evaluating the future viability of all its plants, they assured me no final decisions regarding closure have been made and that such final decisions won't be made until mid or late January," Pawlenty said in a statement.

Fred Zimmerman, professor of manufacturing at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, said he's sure the Ford plant will be closed if the state doesn't persuade the company to remain.

"I don't know if it's true or not true," he said of the Journal story. "But if we do nothing, it sure as hell is going to be true."

Closing talk for decades

The St. Paul plant is one of the oldest Ford manufacturing facilities, having begun making Model T's in 1925.

The plant, the seventh-largest private employer in St. Paul with 1,945 workers, has often been the object of shutdown speculation but always survived. Retiree Richard Peterson said Friday that rumors about the plant have flared up for four decades. His daughter and son-in-law work there now.

"We have been a candidate for closing ... since I started there in 1966. There always seemed to be a reason why they wanted to close that plant," he said.

Some lawmakers, including state Sens. Ellen Anderson, DFL-St. Paul, Dick Cohen, DFL-St. Paul, Larry Pogemiller, DFL-Minneapolis and Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, began talking in September 2004 about how to encourage Ford to keep the plant open. The state has offered Ford \$400,000 in job training assistance.

Zimmerman said that compares with offers of \$250 million to \$400 million made by other states to lure manufacturers.

He called the \$400,000 offer "a fart in a tornado."

The latest guessing game over the plant began in October when CEO Ford said the automaker will restructure and

make "significant" plant closings to reverse several years of flagging performance. The company lost \$284 million in the third quarter.

Ford's workers in St. Paul have already endured more than 14 weeks of furloughs and production slowdowns since September 2004 because of dwindling sales of the Ranger truck and its Mazda B-Series lookalike, the St. Paul plant's only products. The plant produced 148,993 vehicles last year, down from 203,355 in 2000.

Should the plant be closed, Zimmerman said it would take 15,000 new jobs to replace the income and benefits being earned by the 1,945 Ford workers.

Minnesota state economist Tom Stinson said it's hard to judge the full economic impact if the plant shuts down.

The jobs there, which typically pay more than \$20 an hour, represent only about half of 1 percent of the state's 348,000 manufacturing jobs. However, countless suppliers provide everything from stamped metal to glass to fasteners used in the trucks, Stinson said, so Ford workers wouldn't be the only ones hurt.

"It's been rumored for a long time that the plant's going to close," said Todd Dobmeier of Waste Management Inc., a Ford vendor. "If it [closes], we'll lose a job or two."

Extended furloughs

Whatever the decision, the plants it closes are not expected to shut down for good until 2007, after Ford's United Auto Workers contract expires.

In that case, the St. Paul workers could remain on extended furlough until a formal closing, still receiving some pay and benefits.

Rob McKenzie, president of UAW Local 879, isn't convinced there will be a shutdown.

"This is not the definitive decision. That is not the cur-

80 YEARS YOUNG

"We're not gonna turn our back on this plant."

— William Clay Ford Jr., chairman of Ford Motor Co., in a meeting with Gov. Jesse Ventura, May 9, 2001.

1925 Plant opens, producing Model T's.

1961 Companywide strike idles the plant for 17 days.

1967 Strike lasts six weeks.

1974 13,000-square-foot expansion to manufacture catalytic converters.

Aug. 1976 4 millionth Ford built in Minnesota, an LTD, rolls off the assembly line. Plant employs 2,000.

1978 Production peaks.

July 1978 Last passenger car produced as the plant converts to light-truck production. Employment grows from 2,000 to 2,300.

1982 Worst domestic auto industry slump in 50 years. St. Paul plant employs 1,450 hourly and 250 salaried workers.

1992 F-Series full-sized pickup production is phased out. Plant employs 2,155.

2001 Ford Motor Co. holds its annual meeting in St. Paul.

Aug. 2004 Its first Japanese-nameplated vehicle, the Mazda B-Series pickup, rolls off the assembly line.

2005 Sales of Ford Ranger pickups made in St. Paul slump 26 percent. The plant employs 2,100.

rent status of the restructuring agreements," he said. He called the Journal report "an old story that somebody who was pretty far removed from the decision-making process leaked out for some reason."

McKenzie cited three reasons to hope for a good outcome. Ford has a contract with CP Rail to ship Rangers out of St. Paul through 2008, he said. Second, Ford hasn't settled on its vehicle production needs for 2006 yet. Announcing plant closings before figuring out production needs doesn't make sense. Finally, he said he had "heard from an extremely good source ... that they are not going to be naming specific plants in January, but will announce the plant [closings] as the months go on through the end of the year."

Zimmerman from St. Thomas has long urged city and state officials to work to retain the Ford plant. He noted that the site, on a bluff of the Mississippi River, could be valuable for other development. That could tempt Ford officials to sell the facility and profit from the land sale, some believe.

Peterson, who worked as a manager at the plant for 35 years, said the facility still has a lot going for it. It makes its own electricity, has a well-trained staff and state-of-the-art technology to build large or small vehicles.

"There's nothing wrong with the plant. It's just the product," he said.

# MnDOT defends decision on new airplane for state

• A turbulent hearing over the bidding for the plane brought forth some apologies and lots of confusion.

STAR TRIBUNE OCT 25 '05  
By MARK BRUNSWICK  
mbrunswick@startribune.com

In front of a Senate committee Monday, officials from the Minnesota Department of Transportation defended their decision to buy a more expensive make of plane than one manufactured by a Minnesota company that wanted to bid on the sale.

Responding to allegations that the process was rigged, they said they preferred the more expensive make, were trying to save taxpayer money in the long run and were after the most suitable aircraft.

In addition, officials from the Department of Administration, which handled the technical bidding process for the new aircraft, apologized to legislators and to the competing aircraft manufacturer, Cirrus Design Corp. of Duluth, for miscues and miscommunications that may have hindered some others from competing for the contract.

During almost five hours of testimony, MnDOT's director of Aviation Operations acknowledged that he was simply looking to replace the old plane with a newer model from the same manufacturer.

In the end, the chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee expressed frustration but said it was unclear what, if any, further action could be taken.

"They wanted to replace the old Beechcraft with the new Beechcraft," said Sen. Steve Murphy, DFL-Red Wing. "I don't know what else we can do. The plane is bought."

The hearing produced no evidence of corruption or wrongdoing, but several legislators continued to raise suspicions about the purchase.

"I'm going to say the bid's rigged. As a legislator I feel very free to utter my opinion and I will continue to do so," said Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis.

Several senators raised concerns about the process after hearing complaints during a recent trip to Duluth. They have also asked that the legislative auditor investigate.

Senators indicated that talks about improving the procurement process might take place, but no further Senate hearings are scheduled.

Officials from Cirrus have been critical of the purchase, calling the bidding process "terribly compromised."

The state recently decided to replace an aging 1978 Beechcraft Bonanza, one of

two planes used to monitor safety at Minnesota's system of 130 small airports. In that role, it is often used to haul navigational equipment and to do testing from the air.

Cirrus officials and legislators said that after Cirrus had been led to believe MnDOT would buy the company's SR22 model, the state issued a bid request with specifications tailored so that they only could be met by the Bonanza. The cost of the new Beechcraft Bonanza, made by Raytheon, is listed at about \$730,000; the SR22 price tag was about \$470,000.

MnDOT aviation personnel clearly preferred buying a new Beechcraft, copying the specs from the 1978 purchase and speaking directly to one of Beechcraft's local distributors about what specifications should be included in the bid, acknowledged Larry Myking, director of Aviation Operations. MnDOT's pilots thought the plane would be able to carry more cargo and would meet requirements for a better eventual resale, he said.

While the state is permitted to make some purchases through what is called "single source" bidding, the practice is largely frowned upon as uncompetitive. The state received only one bid for the plane.

A Cirrus official testified that the company had requested specifications for the bid but was rebuffed by bureaucracy in the Department of Administration. At one point, the bid specifications mistakenly were sent to an Anoka County flight operations center, Cirrus Flight Operations, that is not affiliated with the Duluth aircraft manufacturer. That limited the time Cirrus could respond. Cirrus, thinking the books were cooked in favor of Beechcraft, decided not to bid, said William King, Cirrus vice president for business administration. King said company officials tried to contact state officials with their complaints but found MnDOT uncommunicative.

"The bid process lacked integrity," he told the committee.

Administration officials acknowledged that the person who normally would have handled the bidding process was out on medical leave, accounting for some of the confusion. At one point, Administration Commissioner Dana Badgerow apologized for the miscues.

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SAFETY

1200DU

# Bills push for police database

FRONT PAGE

BY GREG CORRADINI  
gcorradini@mndaily.com

University police and other state police departments might have a new resource for solving crimes that lack much evidence.

Bills currently in the State House and Senate are pushing for the creation of a statewide incident-based data system that might make it easier for police to track crime suspects traveling across Minnesota.

◆ Rep. Mary Liz Holberg, R-Lakeville, is the author of the bill, which promotes the Comprehensive Incident-Based Reporting System.

The data system would allow state police departments to share information on anyone who has come in contact with police.

▶ See **POLICE** Page 6A

Minnesota had a statewide police database that started in the 1990s and ended in 2003.

MINNESOTA DAILY  
(UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA)

MINNEAPOLIS, MN  
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## Police

▶ from Page 1A

"Any time there is an incident reported to the police, it will go into the database," said Holberg, who introduced the bill in the House.

Incidents in the system would also include accusations against people who aren't formally charged with a crime, she said.

Police officials said reported incidents can act as arrows, which direct investigators with little information on suspects to possible leads about similar statewide crime patterns.

Steve Johnson, deputy police chief for the University Police Department, said the data system could be a helpful tool for law enforcement.

While Holberg believes there is valid law enforcement use for the data system, she is also a skeptic of government's ability to manage the public's private data, she said.

"I recognize the need (for this system), but I also feel a strong desire to protect the privacy rights of the average citizen," Holberg said.

### How it works

For example, Holberg said that when someone calls the Lakeville (Minn.) Police Department to report an incident, a file is started for that incident.

The police might not choose to investigate the incident, she said, but the incident is recorded.

Then, information about the incident would be entered into a confidential database only law enforcement can access. After 10 days, the information would become public, unless it were being used in an ongoing investigation, she said.

For ongoing investigations, police would be able to hold

confidential data for 120 days before needing to request an extension on it.

"Probably 95 percent of the data put into (the system) will be (public) in 10 days," Holberg said.

A person could go to any law enforcement agency that is paying to participate in the system and check what data the police have on him or her, Holberg said.

If someone disagrees with the accuracy of the data, that person could challenge it by contacting the police agency that submitted the data to the system.

The police department would have to flag the data in the system while it was being challenged, she said.

There is no process by which people can get data about them erased at this time, she said.

### Not the first

If the system goes into effect, it will not be Minnesota's first statewide incident-based database for police.

In the late 1990s, the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association created and ran a system called the Multiple Jurisdiction Network Organization, said Chaska (Minn.) Police Chief Scott Knight, who was also on the organization's board.

Knight said the organization was one of the most valuable tools for law enforcement in Minnesota because it was a guide system for police in pursuit of witnesses and suspects.

"There was just enough information for an officer to want to call another department to investigate what that (previous incident) was about," Knight said.

For example, Johnson said he heard of an incident in which a suspect threw something through a car window. The people inside the car were cut

by shattered glass.

The investigators, Johnson said, knew just a little about the suspect. The officers put that small amount of information into the network, Johnson said, and were able to link the suspect to a completely unrelated encounter with police in another county.

"Having a resource like (the Multiple Jurisdiction Network Organization) that connects law enforcement data statewide, helps us connect the dots on criminal activity," he said.

### The old system goes down

The association put the program out of commission in December 2003, Knight said, because it did not have the money or the staff to defend itself against an increase in privacy lawsuits filed against the association.

"The foes of the system called it a secret police database. That's absolutely false," Knight said.

Nothing in the database was private or confidential, he said, unless it was under investigation.

But Holberg was a critic of the association's system, because it wasn't secure, she said.

She said she knew people who had hacked into the system and looked at confidential data.

Holberg authored this bill, she said, because she wanted to see a new system that was more secure and complied with privacy laws.

She said she hopes the bill passes and believes it will.

"There is a valid law enforcement use of putting all this information together, but they have to do it (by following) the law," Holberg said.

### The difference between the bills

◆ Sen. Wesley Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, authored and introduced a companion bill in

the state Senate.

But there are differences between the bills.

Holberg said that in her bill, she requested public-safety committees to reconvene at next year's legislative session to talk about whether the new data system should be used to do employment background checks required by state statute.

The committees would also make recommendations about whether people can erase data from the system and how long the data will be retained.

But people such as Rich Neumeister, a resident lobbyist for privacy and civil liberties, said the accountability standards for the data system need to go further.

Neumeister said he can understand the data system is an important tool for law enforcement.

But the data in the system, he said, will be unverified — raw data that will be fraught with inaccuracies and will need to have some kind of quality control.

Neumeister has several recommendations for enhancing the system's quality control.

One of those would require law enforcement officials to purge inaccurate and unfounded data from the system within a few business days after it came to their attention.

Currently, there is no time limit on how long disputed data would stay in the system, he said.

Neumeister said putting accurate, verifiable and quality data into the system would reduce the mistakes law enforcement officials might make by depending on raw data.

"The bottom line is: For my liberty and for your liberty, there is danger when government collects raw and investigative data that we all know and recognize is based on accusations," he said.

# 1200 DU Lawmakers address rural Minnesota needs

FRONT PAGE

By Jennifer Rogers  
Tribune staff writer

Whether it be an omnibus bill or committee hearing legislators are working through issues and paying attention to the needs of Greater Minnesota. This week at the capitol: omnibus game and fish bill, renewable fuels, electoral college votes, and alcohol costs.

## House approves omnibus game and fish bill

The House voted Wednesday to restrict just how fancy hunters can make deer stands that sit on public lands.

The change came as the House approved its the so-called omnibus game and fish bill, which includes a series of tweaks and changes to state law governing hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreational activities. The final bill, passed 117-16, does not include any fee increases for hunting and fishing licenses.

But the change to statute governing the construction of deer stands proved the most controversial measure in the bill. It requires any permanent deer stand on public lands can't have a permanent roof or permanent walls.

Supporters of the change said concerns are being raised around the state that hunters are essentially taking ownership of public stands that should be community property.



"As deer stands look more and more permanent, I think the ownership of that deer stand will become more and more permanent," said Rep. Cy Thao, DFL-St. Paul. "On public lands, deer stands are public."

Opponents said the ability to put up walls and roofs are important, especially for older hunters who aren't able to withstand harsh weather for hours at a time.

"We've got hunters out there who are getting up there in years but still enjoy the great outdoors," said Rep. Mark Buesgens, R-Jordan. "I haven't seen any indication out there that this is a real problem."

## Senate to agencies:

### Use less gasoline

The Minnesota Senate unanimously approved legislation Wednesday to make state agencies use less gasoline and more renewable fuels such as ethanol, biodiesel and hydrogen made from crops.

The state would have to cut gas use in half by 2015, while boosting its consumption of diesel fuel and renewable fuels, if the bill from Sen. Jim Vickerman, DFL-Tracy, succeeds.

See Needs, Page 2

ALBERT LEA TRIBUNE

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## Needs

From Page 1A

Vickerman also would require more fuel efficiency from new state vehicles: They would have to get at least 30 miles per gallon on city streets and 35 mpg on highways.

The Senate approved the bill on a 55-0 vote.

Motorized scooter drivers should be able to zoom around without displaying license plates or paying vehicle registration fees or taxes, the Senate decided Wednesday.

Scooters would follow the same rules as bicycles under a bill that passed the Senate 55-1.

The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Steve Murphy, DFL-Red Wing, also requires scooter drivers to wear helmets, use headlights, stay off sidewalks, ride close to the right curb, and dismount and cross on foot when making a left turn. It would be illegal for children under age 12 to use the scooters.

## Changes to Minnesota's electoral college votes

Minnesota's Electoral College votes would go to the presidential candidate who won the state's popular vote if legislation passed by the Senate Wednesday becomes law.

That's after an unnamed Democrat cast one of the state's 10 electoral votes for Democratic vice presidential candidate John Edwards - not presidential candidate John Kerry - back in December, giving the state its first so-called "faithless elector" and cutting Kerry's electoral tally by a vote. Kerry won Minnesota's popular vote last year, but lost overall.

None of the state's electors claimed the Edwards ballot, and ballots weren't signed.

"This bill corrects the problems that we had with Electoral College election last December," said Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis, who sponsored the bill.

Under the legislation, an elector would have to vote ver-

bally and on a written public ballot. Failure to vote for the party's candidate would result in an invalidated ballot and an alternate elector stepping in to cast the vote.

Skoglund's bill passed the Senate on a 52-8 vote.

## Penny-a-drink rise in alcohol dies in Senate committee

A penny-a-drink rise in wholesale liquor, wine and beer taxes died Thursday when the Senate Taxes Committee voted to strip the provision from a public safety spending bill.

"I don't think this is the right time and the right way to do it," said Sen. David Tomassoni, DFL-Chisholm, who proposed removing the tax. His move passed on a divided voice vote.

Beer industry representatives, including a wholesaler, a brewer and a bar owner, said the tax hike would burden their businesses and could send customers to Wisconsin in search of lower prices. Minnesota imposes a 2.5 percent retail tax on alcohol, plus wholesale taxes, they noted.

The drink tax increase would have raised about \$50 million over two years for stepped-up supervision of offenders released from state prisons, alcohol and drug treatment and crime victim services. All are underfunded, said DFL Sen. Jane Ranum of Minneapolis, the bill's sponsor.

The public safety package now heads back to the Senate Finance Committee, which will decide whether to take those provisions out of the bill.

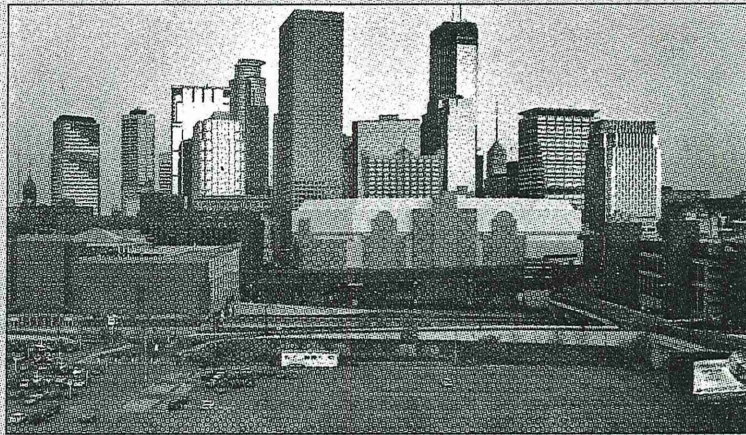
After the hearing, Taxes Committee Chairman Larry Pogemiller, DFL-Minneapolis, said he would consider raising aid to counties to pay for parole and other public safety items.

Most crimes involve alcohol and one in 10 state residents have been convicted of driving drunk, so linking the items to a liquor tax was fair, Ranum said. Wholesale alcohol taxes haven't gone up since 1987.

Information gathered from Associated Press news reports. For more information on happenings at the capitol go to [www.house.mn](http://www.house.mn) and [www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/](http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/).



The Twins and Hennepin County today will announce a plan to build a 42,000-seat, open-air stadium in downtown Minneapolis.



Marlin Levison/Star Tribune

# WILL IT FLY?

STAR TRIBUNE APR 25 '05  
By Matt McKinney  
Star Tribune Staff Writer

State legislators were cautious in assessing the prospects for a new open-air Twins stadium in downtown Minneapolis, but few could beat state Rep. Ron Erhardt, R-Edina, for understatement as he considered the plan Sunday afternoon.

"The current plan," he said, "has been preceded by several."

The reaction among state legislators to a new Hennepin County plan for a stadium was tempered by experience with proposals dating back to 1996, when it became clear that the Metrodome, now 25 years old, could no longer meet the needs of the Twins.

The latest plan for the \$478 million, 42,000-seat stadium project would not require any state money. Twins owner Carl Pohlad would put up \$125 million. A Hennepin County-wide sales tax of 0.15 percent — about 3 cents on a \$20 purchase — would provide \$28 million a year in financing.

But can the plan make it out of the Legislature?

Whether the plan has firm support from legislators wasn't clear Sunday. A few said sure, others said no way, and many have not yet commented or were not available Sunday. And it's likely that the debate, if it even comes to a vote before the session ends May 23, will have some familiar themes.

"I've been through this so many times," said Sen. Wes Skoglund, DFL-Minneapolis. "I'm not a legislator who's automatically opposed or automatically for a stadium. I've voted for and against these deals over the years."

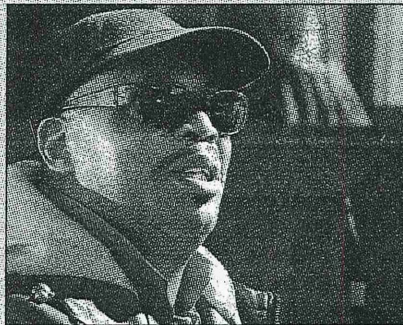
**STADIUM continues on A8:**  
— Plan comes at a time of extremely tight budgets.

## 5148.2 C132-Henn. WHAT TAXPAYERS ARE SAYING



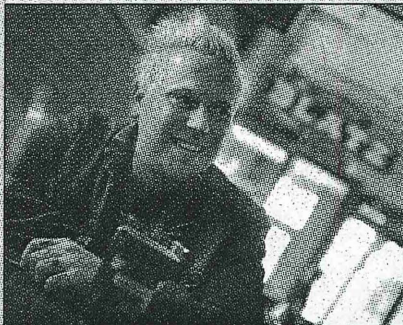
"I have always been of the opinion that I'm not going to pay for it but 3 cents on every \$20 — I'll do it. It's worth it."

— Holly Morris, 36, Minneapolis



"It all depends on how many stadiums you want. The Gophers want one. The Vikings want one. How are they ... going to fall in line?"

— Tony Williams, 40, Minneapolis



"I do believe outdoor baseball would be a great draw. ... We are barraged with taxes as it is — one more, just lay it on me."

— Josh Vanheuvein, 30, Minneapolis



"Even though it's just a small amount of money, I just don't think that it should be borne by the taxpayers."

— Darcey Penner, 50, Eden Prairie

David Brewster/Star Tribune

More quotes on A8.

### WHAT WOULD IT ADD TO THE COST OF A ...

Toyota Camry



Price: \$20,000  
Added tax: \$30

Flat-screen TV, 42 inch



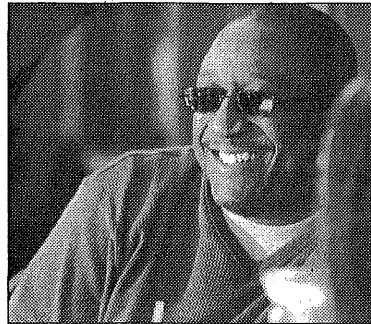
Price: \$4,000  
Added tax: \$6

Sofa



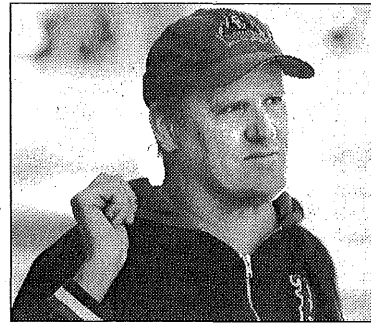
Price: \$1,300  
Added tax: \$1.95

**WHAT TAXPAYERS ARE SAYING**



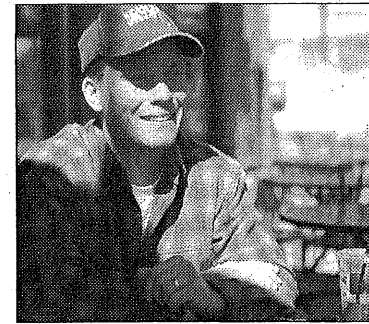
"I don't want to pay any more in sales tax. This is a high tax state."

— **Thomas Ward, 44,**  
Maplewood



"That's actually the best deal I have heard so far. If they can keep it to 3 cents for every \$20 I would support that."

— **Terry Sheridan, 47,**  
Minneapolis



"Some public participation would be OK. ... I think it's kind of fun to go to a game now and then."

— **Joel McElhany, 35,**  
Minneapolis

Photographs by David Brewster; reporting by Laurie Blake

**STADIUM from A1**

*Current stadium plan differs significantly from past ones*

Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson, DFL-Willmar, and House Speaker Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, both said on Saturday that they would support the plan.

In 1997, a similar proposal for a stadium in Minneapolis withered without the support of the Minneapolis delegation. And that was in a year with a budget surplus.

The 2005 plan comes at a time of extraordinarily tight budgets and stretched public services.

The Minneapolis City Council has already suggested raising the city's sales tax by one-half of 1 percent to hire more police officers. That idea will go to a referendum, but county and Twins officials don't want residents to vote on the sales-tax increase for a stadium, saying a referendum would kill the deal.

"We're still in the midst of a horrible budget that will have a lot of impacts on people in the county," said Rep. Diane Loeffler, DFL-Minneapolis.

Sen. Jane Ranum, DFL-Minneapolis, was a shade more

blunt: "I don't understand why this is even being shopped."

Still, this stadium plan differs from those in the past in two significant ways. It has wholesale support from Pohlrad, and the team and county are going in tandem to the Legislature for the authority to levy a tax but are not seeking any state money. The total cost would be about \$478 million, including infrastructure and finance costs. Pohlrad would contribute \$40 million up front with an additional \$85 million to follow before the ballpark would open in 2009. The proposed sales tax increase is projected to raise \$28 million a year and underwrite \$353 million in county debt.

The deal clearly has supporters among legislators.

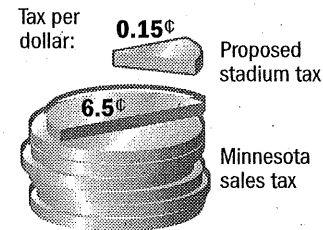
"It's a very attractive proposal," said Sen. Linda Higgins, DFL-Minneapolis. "That's an awful lot of jobs that they're proposing."

The legislators have just four weeks left to resolve most major funding bills. A stadium debate likely would not come until the

**Stadium tax penny by penny**

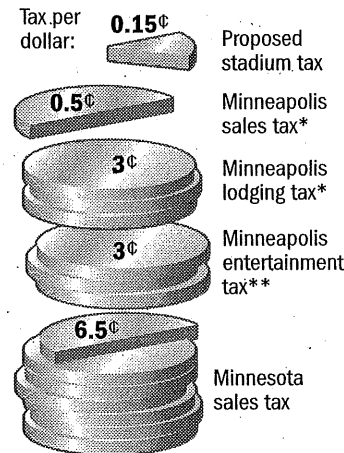
Here's a look at how much a proposed Hennepin County stadium tax would add to the cost of restaurant food, lodging and a drink at a bar.

**EXAMPLE Food at a Champlin restaurant**



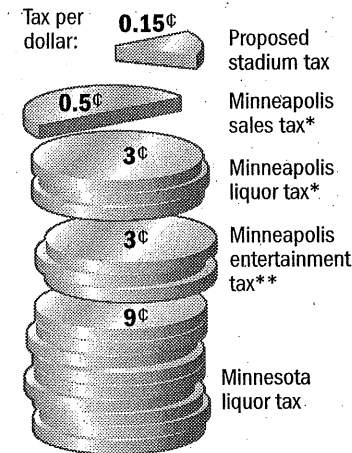
Price of food	\$14.00
Current sales tax (6.5%)	.91
Proposed stadium tax (0.15%)	.02
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14.93</b>

**EXAMPLE A room in a large downtown Minneapolis hotel**



Price of room	\$150.00
Current sales tax (13%)	19.50
Proposed stadium tax (0.15%)	.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$169.73</b>

**EXAMPLE A martini at a downtown Minneapolis live-music bar**



Price of martini	\$8.00
Current sales tax (15.5%)	\$1.24
Proposed stadium tax (0.15%)	.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9.25</b>

\*Began in 1987 as part of financing for the Minneapolis Convention Center. \*\*Began in 1969. Source: Minnesota Department of Revenue

Jane Friedmann/  
Star Tribune

end of the session. Even then, said Sen. Geoff Michel, R-Edina, a stadium for the Twins is not the only one on their minds.

"I think the first stadium in line is the University [of Minnesota] stadium," said Michel, the assistant minority leader. Michel said a Twins stadium might be possible this year, but

it would have to include a roof to make it workable. "I don't think a roof is optional," he said.

The plan as presented so far does not include a roof, but urges the state to consider paying \$100 million for one. The Twins and Hennepin County have said they would build an open-air stadium if money for

a roof was not available.

The official unveiling of the plan today also signals the end of a rival plan to build the new stadium in downtown St. Paul near the Xcel Energy Center. The rival plans faced off in the Legislature last year, with no clear winner.

St. Paul Mayor Randy Kelly

said this weekend that he has no immediate plans to pursue a stadium. "We have worked very hard to attempt to encourage development of a Twins ballpark in St. Paul, but in the final analysis, the Twins have to make their own decision in their best business interests."

A Star Tribune study of stadium proposals dating to 1996 and published earlier this year found that the sports facilities initiatives likely to get through the Legislature shared a few traits: a supportive governor, a site-specific proposal, a simple finance package and firm support from the proposed site's legislative delegation.

Through a spokesman, Gov. Tim Pawlenty has said he will withhold comment until after the presentation. Officials plan to formally announce the plan at a news conference at the Metrodome at 2 p.m. today.

The Hennepin County Board is expected to endorse the plan Tuesday. "It's important to have a vital downtown," County Commissioner Mike Opat said of the ballpark plan. "The team is a state asset, and we can't forget that."

The Associated Press contributed to this report. Matt McKinney is at mckinney@startribune.com.