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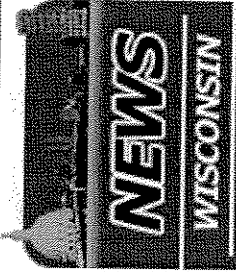
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# Lautenschlager late in reporting car damage

## And husband drove state vehicle, against policy

By PATRICK MARLEY and STACY FORSTER  
pmarley@journalsentinel.com

Posted: April 21, 2004

**Madison** - Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager did not immediately report two accidents involving her parked, state-issued car last year, months before she drove into a ditch and was charged with drunken driving.

In addition, Lautenschlager admitted in an interview late Wednesday to violating state policy by allowing her husband to drive a state car for short distances. Earlier in the day, she told a reporter he had never driven the state car assigned to her.

Her husband drove the car about five blocks

### State Car Details

Records released Wednesday show that Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager:

- In the year before her Feb. 24 drunken-driving

6

from the repair shop to their Fond du Lac home on a few occasions, but he did not drive long distances, she said.

"If they were closing before I went home," he would sometimes drive the vehicle, she said. "We thought that was in compliance."

Also in violation of policy, she allowed her husband on three occasions to sign for car washes and interior cleaning of a state vehicle paid with her state credit card, with one bill totaling \$66, according to records obtained by the Journal Sentinel Wednesday under the state open records law.

Lautenschlager was required by law to notify police or other authorities immediately of an October accident involving her car because damages exceeded \$1,000, but she did not formally do so until five weeks later. That notification came only after the state Department of Administration sent her a form informing her of the obligation to report the incident.

Another accident in April 2003 did not have to be reported to police because the damage was \$747, less than the \$1,000 limit.

The documents describe both incidents as having been reported as hit-and-run accidents involving her parked state car. But late Wednesday, Lautenschlager said the April incident, which occurred in Madison, appeared to be vandalism and that someone had "kicked in a door panel."

The records also show that Lautenschlager's husband, William Rippl, signed three receipts for car washes and detailing on a state credit card

accident, reported twice having her parked car hit by an unknown vehicle or otherwise damaged. **Damage came to \$747 for one accident and \$1,232 for the second.**

Had her husband, William Rippl, sign three state credit-car receipts for car washes and car detailing.

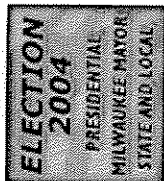
Exceeded the state's \$7 limit on car washes four times. She charged two \$17 car washes, a \$21 wax job and a \$66 detailing.

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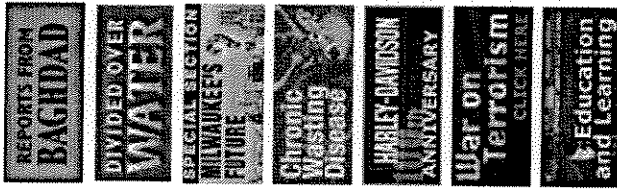


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issued to Lautenschlager. Those three bills and one signed by Lautenschlager showed car cleaning costs of between \$17 and \$66 - more than the \$7 limit allowed by the state.

Department of Administration staff discovered that her husband signed the receipts last year in a review of the \$66 bill for detailing to a Ford Crown Victoria assigned to Lautenschlager while her usual car was in the shop for maintenance.

The fleet staff ultimately approved the charge, but advised Lautenschlager's office on cost limits for car cleaning. They also told her that her husband could neither drive a state car nor sign receipts on the state credit card.

Lautenschlager said when she went to pick up the Crown Victoria, fleet staff advised her to have it cleaned. "They told me it was very dirty and I should get it detailed and washed," Lautenschlager said. "That's an example of the ludicrousness of what's happening now."

She said that her husband had signed for the car washes when they were out together.

**Investigation continues**

Lautenschlager met with Ethics Board staff Wednesday on the matter as part of an ongoing inquiry into her use of her state vehicle.

The board last month reached a settlement with Lautenschlager, under which she reimbursed the state \$672 for personal miles driven on state cars during her first 14 months in office. She also paid a \$250 penalty in the matter.

At the time, the settlement appeared to end the matter. But last week the board announced that it planned to review additional documents that it had not previously obtained.

Lautenschlager's use of state cars came into question shortly after she

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was arrested Feb. 24 for drunken driving in Dodge County while traveling from Madison to Fond du Lac in a state vehicle.

The incident sparked greater scrutiny of how the state operates its fleet of cars. Last week, Gov. Jim Doyle ordered a moratorium on vehicle purchases and said all employees with state cars who drive fewer than 16,000 miles a year must justify why they need to have one.

Doyle would not comment Wednesday on Lautenschlager's 2003 accidents, saying he had not reviewed the material that was released.

According to the documents, Lautenschlager said her 1999 Buick Park Avenue was damaged while parked in a Madison parking lot around April 14, 2003, and while parked at her Fond du Lac home the night of Oct. 27, 2003. The first incident caused \$747 in damage to the driver's side door of the car. The second bill came to \$1,232 for a smashed headlight, bumper and passenger-side panel.

Neither the Madison Police Department nor the Fond du Lac Police Department had accident reports on file for the two incidents.

John Lettau, of J.L.'s Auto Body in Fond du Lac, said he remembers doing the work on the attorney general's car after the second accident, but doesn't remember what the damage looked like. He said he believes Lautenschlager brought the car in to the shop herself.

Lautenschlager notified a company that oversees car maintenance for the state Oct. 28 of the second accident, but did not fill out paperwork advising authorities of it until Dec. 3, when the Department of Administration sent her a form and told her it was required under state law.

The two incidents raised no alarms for the division that manages the state's fleet, according to a memo written last week by Jeff Knight, who oversees the state fleet.

"We get a lot of accidents like this, up to about 400 per year. There

was no reason to treat this special and (Doug Pollard, an auto accident representative for the state) handled it the way he does with all other accidents," Knight wrote.

Administration Secretary Marc Marotta agreed, saying there is no reason to suspect the incidents were anything more than what Lautenschlager reported.

"People might infer something, but I haven't seen anything to doubt the veracity of those reports," he said.

The records were supposed to be turned over to the Ethics Board during its initial inquiry, but administrators were apparently unaware they had them when the request was first made.

"It's a little embarrassing," Marotta said. "I wish it had come to light a little earlier."

In another recent memo, Knight said he started searching out new records "as a result of an off-the-cuff comment from staff at fleet that additional information related to use and billing for the AG's car washes was available. We also heard of third-hand rumors that a Fond du Lac vendor had made comments related to the AG's husband's use of her state car."

That led to the discovery of the car washing receipts that Rippl had signed for Lautenschlager. From there, Knight ordered another document search, which turned up the records on the repairs.

In a statement issued late Wednesday, Lautenschlager said: "If DOA had any concerns about my husband having the car cleaned, those concerns were not raised in any contemporary memorandum to me. The same holds true for the repairs.

"Finally, I question the creation of long after-the-fact memoranda by DOA concerning car washes and car repairs they approved long ago, particularly at a time when DOA faces myriad other problems it

purports to have uncovered regarding the state vehicle fleet."

Earlier Wednesday, Lautenschlager drew maps for Capitol reporters showing that her driveway abuts her neighbor's driveway. The neighbor's roof was being repaired at the time, and vehicles were frequently moving through the area, she said, indicating that is how the damage might have occurred while the car was parked at her home.

Lautenschlager initially reported that the damage likely occurred between 8 p.m. Oct. 27 and 10 a.m. Oct. 28 at her home. In her statement Wednesday, however, she indicated that the damage occurred "likely while it was parked outside my home," but left open the possibility it occurred elsewhere.

The neighbor whose driveway runs next to Lautenschlager and Rippl's refused to provide her name, but said she wasn't aware of the accident or any damage to Lautenschlager's car.

*Steven Walters of the Journal Sentinel staff contributed to this report.*

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## NEWS

### Saga of Lautenschlager's state car continues

11:55 PM 4/21/04  
Scott Milfred Wisconsin State Journal

Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager rushed Wednesday to explain and dismiss more documents detailing her use of a state car, her two reports of being the victim of hit-and-run accidents last year and her husband's limited use of the state car and purchasing card. <

Without elaborating, Lautenschlager suggested Gov. Jim Doyle's Department of Administration was "absolutely politically motivated" for releasing the records. <

"Either they're intentionally doing this for reasons known to them, or they appear to be incompetent," she said. "You tell me why DOA is revisiting car washes and relatively minor incidents of non-moving damage of a state vehicle. No particular concerns were raised at the time these were reported to them." <

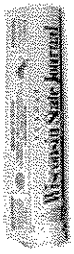
Dan Leistikow, a spokesman for Doyle, said the DOA released the information to comply with requests from news outlets and the Ethics Board. <

The records show: <

Lautenschlager reported her state car was twice damaged when she was not driving it. One incident likely occurred in a shared driveway in October at her Fond du Lac home, she said. <

The DOA became skeptical of the damage to the car, earlier this month conducting "additional investigation with all the staff to find out exactly what else might have happened," a memo by DOA Bureau of General Services

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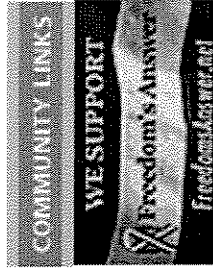
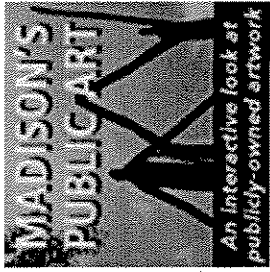
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Director Jeff Knight states. <

But ultimately, DOA determined the nearly \$2,000 in total damages from both accidents weren't suspicious: "There is nothing in the reports to suggest that the incidents are anything more than was reported," DOA vehicle fleet worker Gary Gorlen said. <

Her husband, William Rippl, used her fuel purchasing card three times to pay for car washes and cleanings in Fond du Lac, one of which cost \$66 - an "excessive charge," DOA concluded. DOA also told Lautenschlager state rules don't allow her husband to use her car or card, and that car

washes of more than \$7 must be approved in advance. <

DOA wrote a letter to Lautenschlager more than a month after one of the accidents, telling her the law required her to immediately report it to police. <

Lautenschlager said Wednesday she did call the Fond du Lac police chief, even if a report was not filed. Fond du Lac Police Chief Tony Barthuly said Wednesday he gets many such calls and isn't sure if he got one from Lautenschlager. <

She did acknowledge her husband sometimes drove her state car to get it fixed, washed or cleaned. Records show her 1999 Buick Park Avenue did need a lot of repairs. Last fall, the state loaned her "a used, out-of-service, Capitol Police transport car" while her regular car was being fixed, she said. The loaner was extremely dirty, Lautenschlager said, and Gorlen himself told her to get it cleaned. Gorlen could not be reached for comment. <

"My husband never used (a state) car for personal reasons, and he helped assist with its service because its service needs were great," Lautenschlager said. "He was very concerned I was in a vehicle that had significant difficulties, including stalling on the highway, not starting." <

"I am appalled that someone would question the time off Bill took from work and the amount of

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personal investment he took in what was essentially a state employee's job," she said. As for state rules barring her husband from using the car or purchasing card, she said: "That isn't the issue. The issue is I was given a car that didn't run. Nobody was going to deal with it except my husband, and he did." <

Lautenschlager said her car was unattended and parked near the UW-Madison campus when she discovered what turned out to be \$747 in damage to the driver's side door April 14, 2003. <

She also discovered what turned out to be \$1,232 in damage to the passenger's side headlight and a front-right panel after her car sat in a shared driveway the night of Oct. 27, 2003. "You could tell someone backed into the front corner of the car," Lautenschlager said. "I have no idea what happened to it." <

A DOA official noted in a report that up to 400 similar accidents involving state vehicles are reported each year. <

State GOP spokesman Chris Lato said Lautenschlager's reports of the two accidents in a short span "raised eyebrows." <

"The real question becomes do voters and citizens and taxpayers of Wisconsin want to believe her or not?" Lato said. "Her record of forthrightness and honesty has been less than stellar ever since she drove her car drunkenly into a ditch." <

The incident earlier this year in Dodge County and her subsequent conviction for drunken driving have caused Lautenschlager's use of her state car to come under scrutiny. The state Ethics Board also charged and fined the attorney general for failing to reimburse the state for commuting miles. <

In addition, the Ethics Board is reviewing gas receipts after a State Journal investigation raised questions about whether Lautenschlager used her car to get to political events - something she adamantly denies. <

Lautenschlager clashed with fellow Democrat Doyle last year over a "jobs bill" he negotiated with the Republican-run Legislature. Lautenschlager criticized the bill as harmful to the environment. She wouldn't comment on why she thought the administration might be trying to hurt her politically. <

"They're re-reviewing it and now calling it into question," she said. "It's old news." <

*The Associated Press contributed to this story.*

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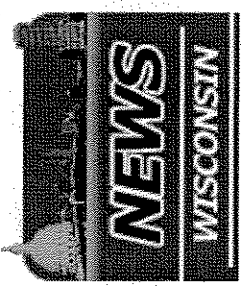
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# Lautenschlager portrays release of car records as political

State complying with requests, Doyle staff says

By PATRICK MARLEY and GINA BARTON  
pmarley@journal sentinel.com

Posted: April 22, 2004

**Madison** - Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager's attempts to dismiss her mounting woes as unjust political attacks were dismissed Thursday by Gov. Jim Doyle's allies and others.

Already deflecting questions about her drunken driving arrest in a state car and personal use of the vehicle, Lautenschlager was confronted Wednesday with more records that have caused additional concerns for some in and out of state government.

**Lautenschlager**

Lautenschlager and her top aide characterized the latest release of documents

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as a political attack from fellow Democrat Doyle, but Administration Secretary Marc Marotta denied that.

"There's no politics involved in this," Marotta said. "All we're doing is complying with the (records) requests of the media, as well as the Ethics Board. This is not something we want to spend a lot of time and resources on, believe me."

The documents show she did not immediately report to police \$1,232 in damage to her state car in October and that the car sustained more than \$700 in damage while parked in Madison last April.

The records also show that her husband had signed receipts for car cleaning for a state-issued credit card in Lautenschlager's name, including one cleaning for \$66. She also acknowledged this week that her husband drove the state car short distances, which is against state policy.

Allowing her husband to drive the state car - even short distances - violates state policy, Marotta said. The rules are in place for insurance reasons and to ensure state cars are used primarily for state business, Marotta said.

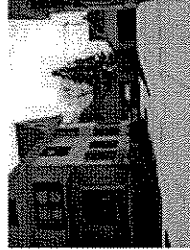
"It's a clear rule," he said. "The state policy is that only the person designated to use the car is supposed to use it."

In March, Lautenschlager agreed in a



Photo/File

An aide for Gov. Jim Doyle said the importance of questions surrounding the use of a state-owned vehicle by Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager (above) is "something that people are going to have to decide for themselves."



Photo/Journal Sentinel

The driveway at Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager's house (left) in Fond du Lac abuts the neighbors' driveway. Lautenschlager said she noticed damage to her car Oct. 28, when the neighbors were having roofing work done at the time. The neighbors said they were never told of any damage to her car.

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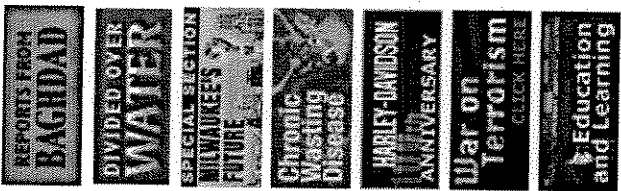
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settlement with the state Ethics Board to reimburse taxpayers \$672 for personal miles logged on her state car and to pay a \$250 penalty.

attorney general's drunken driving incident

Last week, the Ethics Board announced it was reviewing more documents in the case, including those released Wednesday, the same day an Ethics Board lawyer interviewed Lautenschlager for about three hours.

Lautenschlager said late Wednesday that her husband, William Rippl, sometimes picked up the state car from a repair shop. On Thursday, she denied telling a Journal Sentinel reporter early Wednesday that he had never used the car.

"What I said was he hadn't used the car for any personal travel, OK? Which he hasn't," Lautenschlager said.

She cut off the interview at that point.

Lautenschlager said Wednesday that Rippl drove the car five blocks at a time, from J.L.'s Auto Body to her home in Fond du Lac. But the shop is actually 3.2 miles from her home.

Lautenschlager said in documents that she noticed a smashed headlight and other damage the morning of Oct. 28. She noted the new neighbors, who have a driveway that abuts hers, were having roofing work done at the time. The neighbors, who declined to give their names, said they were never told of any damage to her car.

The two driveways are shared coming off the street but split into two lanes with a triangle of grass between them. The neighbors said Lautenschlager and her family usually park near the garage, but Lautenschlager said that night she parked near the sidewalk, where the two driveways come together.

One of the neighbors said that a contractor had repaired the roof on his

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house about the time of the accident, but that he parked his truck on the street and had not been involved in any accidents while on the job. The neighbor added that the roofer was trustworthy and would have told him if his truck had hit Lautenschlager's car.

Lautenschlager also had \$747 damage done to her car while it was parked in Madison April 16, 2003.

On Wednesday, she noted that the damage reports had been approved by the Department of Administration and processed normally.

### **Feud brews**

In a statement released late Wednesday, Lautenschlager implies the latest flare-up was politically motivated. Deputy Attorney General Dan Bach struck a similar tone, questioning why the Department of Administration did not produce the documents when the Ethics Board first made its request weeks ago.

"Why are these things trickling out in this manner from the (Department of Administration)?" he said. "They're the ones that instigated an ethics review of Peg's vehicle use. If they had concerns at that time, where were these documents? Why wasn't an effort made to get all this stuff to the Ethics Board at that time, if these are matters that relate to that? If they're not matters that relate to that, why are they disseminating them at all at this point?"

The fleet staff did not find all the documents in an initial search conducted for the Ethics Board, according to memos released Wednesday.

Lautenschlager's office has been critical of Marotta's efforts to examine the state's management of the state fleet, with Bach sending Marotta a letter last week calling the state's rules on cars "schizophrenic." Marotta downplayed Bach's complaints Thursday.

"We've got a lot of things going on, and I just haven't read Dan's

letter . . . It's not real high on the list of priorities at this point," he said.

Doyle sidestepped the issue Wednesday, saying he had not reviewed the documents. He was in Wausau late Thursday and unavailable for comment.

"It's really something that people are going to have to decide for themselves," Doyle aide Dan Leistikow said. "Ultimately, the people of Wisconsin are her only boss, and they'll have to make their own judgments about this."

Lautenschlager's supporters rallied behind her Thursday.

Rep. Gary Sherman (D-Port Wing) said Rippl's use of the state car is a minor matter.

"If he's going out and getting the car maintained because she's busy and he's not driving the car for any purpose of his own, then it may or may not be a technical violation, I have no idea - but if he's doing that, he's essentially doing a public service . . . it's certainly not nefarious," he said.

Rep. Frank Boyle (D-Superior) said he expected the matter to subside soon.

"No one (in Superior) is interested in it," he said. "I think it plays more in Madison on the steps of the Capitol."

Others were troubled by the developments, however.

"This week it's the car wash," said Jay Heck, executive director of government watchdog group Common Cause in Wisconsin. "What's it going to be next week?"

Heck said that it's "the cumulative effect of all these things that's troubling."

Although they have attacked Lautenschlager in the past for her drunken driving conviction and use of a state car, Republicans were quiet on the latest developments.

"From day one, it's been an unfortunate incident that's raised more questions than answers," said Steve Baas, spokesman for Assembly Speaker John Gard (R-Peshigo), who declined to comment. "But we're not a district attorney, we're not an investigator, so we probably can't weigh in."

*This story was reported by Journal Sentinel reporters Patrick Marley in Madison and Gina Barton in Fond du Lac.*

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**Cowles Hails Audit Committee Hearing On State Fleet**  
*Internal DNR fleet audit raises more issues*

**Madison** – State Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) today praised the decision to schedule a legislative hearing on the possibility of an audit of the entire state fleet. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee will hold a public hearing on the potential audit. “I am glad the Co-chairs Sen. Roessler and Rep. Jeskewitz will take up the audit of the state fleet,” said Cowles. “The hearing comes on the heels of new information that demands some answers.”

This Sunday, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported that according to an internal DNR audit, a state employee directed contracts to favored vendors. The news article and the information contained in the DNR internal audit raises even more troubling issues regarding fleet practices and costs.

“Did this divert scarce resources away from other conservation programs?” asked Cowles. “What was done to end these practices? What disciplinary actions were taken? Were any violations referred to the Department of Justice?”

The DNR internal audit detailed several issues including:

- Of the five major recommendations outlined in 1999 for improving the fleet, only one was fully implemented.
- Documented attempts to circumvent state competitive bidding purchasing procedures. This means collusion between the state and certain vendors with “invoice splitting.”
- Half a million dollars in questioned fleet costs from avoiding low bid purchasing procedures.
- \$2.7 million in a negative balance for fleet operations last year.
- The Conservation Fund has had over \$13 million in borrowing for vehicle purchases in the last three years.

The State of Wisconsin owns and maintains a fleet of over 7,000 vehicles for use by employees on official state business (the state employs roughly 66,000 workers). The DNR has a fleet of over 2,000 vehicles. There are four major fleets, which are operated by the Department of Administration, Department of Transportation, DNR, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Family Services also operate smaller fleets.

It has been reported that the DNR spent \$18 million on vehicles since 1999 – at a rate of \$17,000 each day in 2002. That year, 278 vehicles were purchased for over \$6 million. The DNR northern region alone paid \$10.4 million on new vehicles and doubled the size of their fleet in ten years.

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Audit State Fleet  
Page Two

“At a time when we are seeing record gas prices and state budget deficits, the state was buying a ton of fuel-inefficient, expensive vehicles,” said Cowles. “Was this the best use of our resources?”

In early April, Cowles requested a comprehensive audit of the entire state fleet by the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau. The audit could document the effectiveness and efficiency of vehicle procurement in addition to exploring the accuracy of mileage reporting. The audit should also look at the overall number of vehicles and the mix of large versus small vehicles in the fleet.

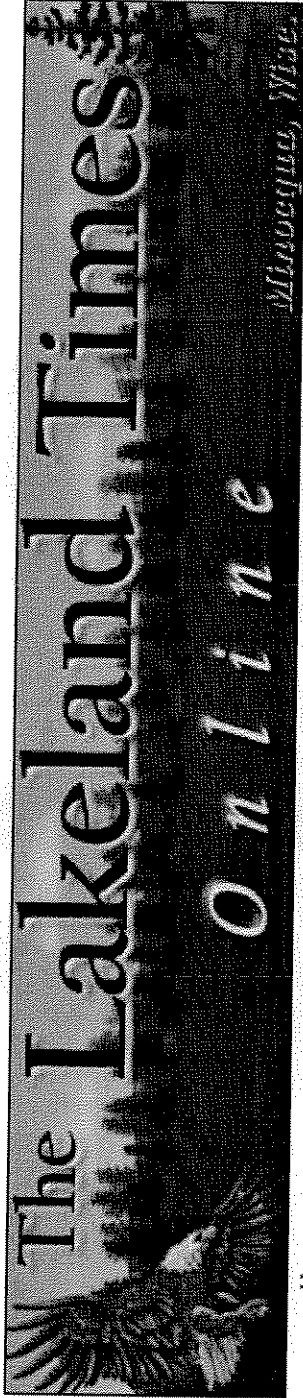
Cowles also requested an update on the progress and time to completion for a Department of Administration (DOA) plan to consolidate the state fleet management programs. When serving on the Joint Finance Committee, Cowles sponsored amendments to reduce the size of the state fleet. In September of 2000, former DOA Secretary Lightbourn briefed Joint Finance on a 5-year action plan to consolidate the fleet and improve practices. The plan was based on the Final Report on Consolidation of Fleet Management Programs (DMG Maximus, August 2000). The Final Report projects millions in savings from fleet management consolidation (p.79).

The plan recommended centralizing the fleet management system, standardizing the methodology for calculating per-mile costs, outsourcing commercial maintenance and repair management and consolidating motor pool operations in Madison. “According to the report submitted to the Legislature, the state could save between \$5-8 million on fleet costs,” said Cowles.

“I think the taxpayers deserve a comprehensive accounting,” said Cowles. “The Legislative Audit Bureau has the most credibility to conduct this thorough review.”

Senator Cowles is a member of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. The public hearing was requested by Senator Cowles, Senator Roessler, Representative Jeskewitz and Representative Dan Meyer.

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**Sen. Panzer says DNR should be broken up**  
**By: Richard Moore**

Saying the agency has grown too large, Senate Majority Leader Mary Panzer (R-West Bend) has called for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to be reorganized and downsized once current efforts to reform the administrative rule-making and regulatory processes relating to the department are completed.

Panzer made her comments during a wide-ranging interview at The Lakeland Times.

"If I had my ideal wish, it would be broken up and made smaller," Panzer said. "You can make the argument that DNR has become too big, too broad, too many things."

Such a move would be down the road, she said. In the meantime, the senator said the Legislature has already taken steps to gain control of the agency, most of all by tackling the administrative rule-making process that governs its decision-making and by reforming time-consuming permitting procedures that have hampered business investment in Wisconsin.

Specifically, Panzer said lawmakers worked this session to reform the air permitting process, shoreland regulations and general rule-making procedures.

"Those are 90 percent of the problems with the DNR," she said. "We have to see that through to its conclusions and then look at reorganization."

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But the senate majority leader joined other officials who have called for audits of the agency's operations after stories about DNR vehicle purchases appeared in The Lakeland Times.

"Some audits would be helpful because they have to spend the way we're asking everyone else to spend, and audits are our vehicle in government when there's a question and you need to get the right answer," Panzer said. "Our auditors are very good. If we know what we're looking for, or that there is a problem, they go in and do a very good job."

The senator said the agency's vehicle purchases were too much, especially given the state's economic climate.

"It's excessive when people all over the state are having a hard time putting food on the table and are worried about their jobs," she said.

Asked why lawmakers had not scrutinized DNR spending before, Panzer pointed to the budget process.

"When we sit at the finance table, we don't see these things in this form," she said. "Because a lot of their revenue is fee generated and not GPR (general fund), it affords them the ability to have flexibility in a way that it's not always transparent in terms of what they're doing. I can tell you that after sitting at that table for a long time, no matter how hard you go after this stuff, it's hard to get the information."

Still, Panzer said a tenacious Legislature could control the agency, and she said lawmakers had begun to force officials to make decisions according to state statutes and administrative rules, not by bureaucratic fiat, which she cited as one of the biggest problems with the DNR.

"We can't allow them to do what we don't allow them to do by regulations," she said. "There has to be some consistency. If you're going to have a public policy, even though it may look different by region, there ought to be some similarity about what a permit means from one part of the state to the other."

That consistency has been lacking, she said, and one of her top priorities is to restore it.

"What we are doing is very significant," Panzer said. "With DNR, you have statutes, you have administrative rules, and then they have these guidance manuals that are not vested anywhere. They're not vested in rules, they're not vested in statutes, they're not anything any elected official ever did."

That's wrong, the senator said.

"A permit should be vested in the law," she said. "It shouldn't be vested by some DNR official on a certain site on a certain day, and it's more their opinion than based on what the law is."

Over time, Panzer said, DNR bureaucrats simply created the manuals to govern day-to-day fieldwork. In effect, she said, those manuals became the law of the land, though they were often derived from bureaucratic desire rather than from the statutes or administrative rules.

"They aren't based on anything except what some bureaucrat thinks it should be," she said. "This is exactly what we're going after. That was the problem. All of a sudden we had all these manuals that were there that they were using for their day-to-day decisions that were out in the field. We didn't agree to those. They literally don't track back to rules or to statutes."

Panzer also said regulatory reforms accomplished this past session will help improve the state's economic climate by changing the way the agency enforces environmental standards and grants permits.

Those changes will guarantee more timely permits for business, she said. "We didn't change environmental regulations, but we changed the process by which we look at them."

The Legislature has also begun to look at DNR regulations that don't make any practical sense, she said, though Panzer acknowledged that federal regulations were partly to blame, especially those involving clean air.

"I live, in my area, with the effect of the Clean Air Act, which is a huge thing," she said. "It's not that I don't want clean air, it's just the way this thing was done federally. We are more of a recipient state than a donor state. Because of the way the wind blows we get sucked into the fact that places in Tennessee and along the east coast haven't done the same kind of clean-ups - scrubbers and things we've put in - so we're paying twice and I just think that's incredibly unfair and it takes businesses out of my area every day."

The rules are so absurdly written, she said, that what applies in one place might not apply a few miles down the road.

"In my district, part of it is in and part of it is out, so if you go from Washington County to Dodge County, it changes," she said. "Quad Graphics is a great example. It's the same air, believe me, but because they go three miles over the border they get different rules. How stupid is that?"

Though Panzer cites legislative accomplishments this past session, she acknowledges there's still a lot of work to do.

"I would argue that we have finally taken major steps forward in this session, maybe later than we would have wished," she said. "But the devil is in the details. It's in how you work out the emergency rules and permit rules because that is what will define the statutory changes we made - will they be more monumental in breadth or are they going to be minimized by people in DNR?"

*Editor's note: Panzer's take on other issues will appear in future editions.*

**Posted:** April 27, 2004

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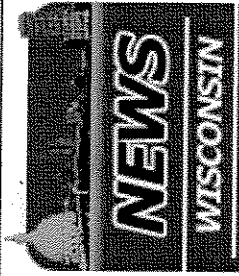
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## DNR worker broke auto bidding rules

### Audit shows he directed contracts to favored vendor

By PATRICK MARLEY  
[pmarley@journal sentinel.com](mailto:pmarley@journal sentinel.com)

Posted: April 24, 2004

**Madison** - A Department of Natural Resources auto fleet worker wrote maintenance invoices to avoid competitive bidding and directed work to four favored vendors, an internal audit obtained by the Journal Sentinel shows.

The worker engaged in "serial purchasing" in 2002 and early 2003, writing multiple invoices for jobs that exceeded \$5,000, the threshold for putting out competitive bids. In some cases, vendors submitted parts and labor costs separately, some bills came in at \$4,999, according to the audit. In other instances, the worker wrote bid specifications so that the jobs landed in the laps of the preferred vendors.

The improperly requisitioned work - including a \$154,716 job to install heaters on vehicles - came to almost \$500,000 over two fiscal

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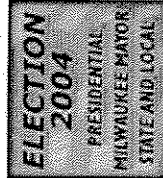
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years, according to the audit, which was obtained under the state's open records law. During the previous two years, the firms had done just more than \$2,000 worth of work with the DNR.

Four other workers knew or should have known of the arrangements, said Vance Rayburn, the DNR administrator who commissioned the July 2003 audit.

The vendors - Badger Utility, Monroe Truck Equipment, Transport Refrigeration and Trudell Trailers - in many cases were aware of the state purchasing guidelines, according to the audit, which calls the serial purchasing transactions collusion between the DNR staff and vendors.

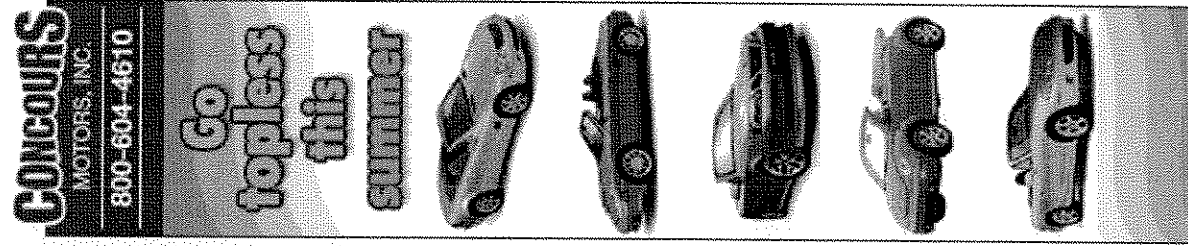
The details emerge at a time of increased scrutiny of state vehicles. Gov. Jim Doyle has frozen vehicle purchases and ordered a review of cars assigned to state employees who travel fewer than 16,000 miles a year.

The deals with the vendors were cut at the same time the DNR was rapidly buying new vehicles. In 2002, the department spent \$6.1 million on 278 new cars and trucks, up from \$4.2 million for 203 vehicles in 2001, according to records recently released to the Journal Sentinel. Purchases dropped off sharply last year, to \$1.7 million.

Meanwhile, the state Ethics Board is reviewing more documents in its inquiry of Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager's personal use of a state car. Newly released records show her car was twice damaged while parked last year and that her husband sometimes signed receipts for a state credit card issued in Lautenschlager's name.

Rayburn said the Madison-based DNR employee arranged the jobs with shops the vendors operate across the state. Most of them were for maintenance, but some were for buying trailers, he said.

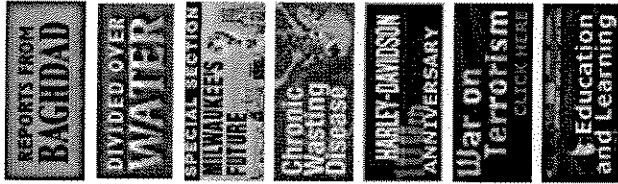
One employee was disciplined, but not fired, after the problem was discovered, Rayburn said. The vendors have not been cut off from



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state business or otherwise sanctioned, and purchasing guidelines are now being strictly followed, he said.

Police were not informed because the worker did not personally benefit from the arrangement, Rayburn said.

"We didn't feel the issue rose to that (criminal) level," he said.

The audit says the fleet manager, who is not named, wanted to develop a "good working relationship" with the vendors to get price breaks for the DNR. But according to Rayburn, one fleet worker was a former employee of one vendor and another had a "questionable work relationship" with a different vendor.

Rayburn declined to name any employees or which vendors had ties to DNR employees.

David Turbiville, president of Trudell, said he had never been notified of the problem.

"That's not our practice," he said. "I'm not aware of it, that's for sure."

A representative from Monroe Truck Equipment hung up on a reporter, and the other two vendors did not return phone calls Friday.

The problems highlighted in the internal audit show that a wider review of how the state manages vehicles is needed, said state Sen. Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay).

"It seems to be getting bigger and bigger," he said Friday. "That's a good reason why we need a full-blown, outside audit. (DNR officials) didn't bring it to us voluntarily. Were they going to tell us about this? I don't think they were going to."

Rayburn believes the practice started some time after 1999, because an audit that year did not identify the problem.

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Business for the four vendors picked up dramatically in 2001, the audit shows. Between fiscal years 2001 and 2003, their combined business jumped from just \$2,209 to \$578,380.

Under state law, all purchases exceeding \$5,000 must include bids or written quotes. Sealed bids must be submitted for jobs exceeding \$25,000. All but two of the bids reviewed in the audit had just one or two bidders.

Most of the work identified in the audit as improperly requisitioned were jobs that fell between \$5,000 and \$10,000 - for wiring work, brake jobs and the like. Five jobs came in between \$15,000 and \$25,000. The most expensive work came in at \$154,716, by Transport Refrigeration, to install heaters on vehicles, and \$59,307, by Badger Utility, to install autogreasers.

Asked why no one was fired, Rayburn said: "The level of the problem we believed could be handled by discipline, not including termination. That's always a personnel issue call. In any of these cases there are a number of circumstances that need to be considered. And it was fully evaluated and the action taken we feel was appropriate to the situation."

Shortly after Rayburn was appointed to head the department's Division of Customer and Employee Services in March 2003, an employee alerted him to the questionable practices, and he ordered the internal audit, Rayburn said.

When the results came in and the employee was punished, he told the other workers such behavior would not be tolerated.

"It just is not the way I expect business to be done," he said. "And I think that there was no doubt after that meeting what was expected of those folks."

He has since ordered annual audits of the fleet work, and the second one is now under way. It is expected to be complete by June.

"I think the change has been pretty dramatic," Rayburn said. "I think this year's audit will show we made every attempt to have specs that could be bid upon by multiple vendors and to be inclusive in the way we look for vendors."

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# Contracts not criminal, Doyle says

## DNR chief also says no-bid deals don't merit termination

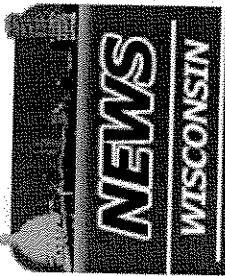
By **PATRICK MARLEY**  
[pmarley@journal sentinel.com](mailto:pmarley@journal sentinel.com)

Posted: *April 26, 2004*

**Madison** - Gov. Jim Doyle and the head of the state Department of Natural Resources defended a decision Monday not to tell police about an employee who sent work to favored vendors last year.

Both said the employee's behavior was improper but that it did not rise to a criminal level.

"From what I know of it, I think they made an appropriate personnel decision" in disciplining but not firing the employee, Doyle said. "My understanding - unless there are facts other than this - (is) that there was nothing about anybody receiving any personal gain from this, and that's what would make the difference. If it was a state person not following state procedures correctly, then it's a state matter, a state personnel matter."



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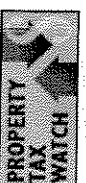
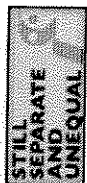
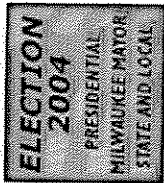
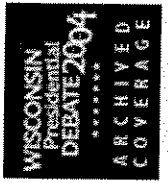
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Dane County District Attorney Brian Blanchard declined to comment Monday on whether he was investigating.

A July 2003 internal audit shows that a DNR employee split large vehicle maintenance jobs onto multiple invoices to avoid putting them out for competitive bid. The employee, whom the DNR refuses to name, also wrote bid specifications so that just one or two vendors would qualify for the work.

Released last week under the state's open records law, the audit uncovered nearly \$500,000 worth of work that was improperly billed over two years, including one job for almost \$155,000 to install heaters on vehicles.

Doyle said Monday that he was not aware of the situation until Sunday, when the Journal Sentinel reported on the audit.

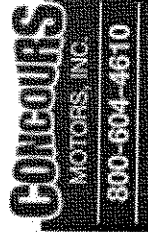
The audit is the latest record to emerge that raises questions about how the state manages its fleet of more than 7,000 cars and trucks.

Because of various problems that have surfaced, Doyle has frozen vehicle purchases until the Department of Administration completes a review next month of the fleet. The review is meant to identify whether employees are properly reimbursing the state for personal use of the vehicles and determine whether workers who do not travel heavily are assigned cars they don't need.

### Fleet review likely

Meanwhile, momentum grew Monday for a legislative audit of the state's fleet of cars. The Joint Audit Committee will meet next week to decide whether to authorize the audit, and state Sen. Carol Roesler (R-Oshkosh) signaled that an audit was likely.

Roesler, the co-chairwoman of the committee, showed less enthusiasm for the audit in the past, saying it would be difficult to schedule because auditors were already booked with a slate of other

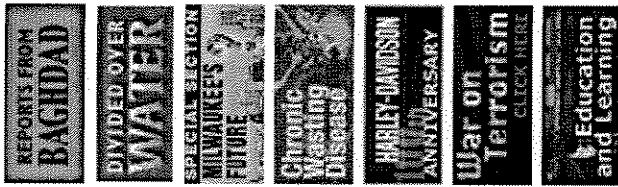


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jobs.

If the fleet audit is approved by the committee, the review would start in a few weeks and take at least six months, State Auditor Janice Mueller said.

Like Doyle, DNR Secretary Scott Hassett said the purchasing problem was handled properly.

"It wasn't a crime," said Hassett, a former defense attorney. "You have to look for a criminal statute, was it violated? My understanding of this is what this person was doing was not feathering his own nest. There wasn't any personal gain, so it wasn't like a theft case, so a criminal referral just isn't appropriate. No DA would be interested in it."

Darrell Bazzell, the DNR secretary at the time most of the invoices were issued, said he was not aware of the problem. Bazzell, now a University of Wisconsin-Madison vice chancellor, said the Doyle administration had responded properly by scheduling annual audits of purchasing of maintenance work. The next audit is due in June.

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"There seemed to be pretty good follow-up in terms of identifying the problem, stopping it (and) putting some procedures in place to make sure the policy is being adhered to," Bazzell said.

According to the audit, vendors Badger Utility, Monroe Truck Equipment, Transport Refrigeration and Trudell Trailers likely knew they were avoiding state purchasing guidelines. Transport Refrigeration got \$175,107 worth of work, the most of the four vendors, followed closely by Badger Utility. Monroe Truck Equipment performed \$129,755 worth of work, and Trudell Trailers did two jobs worth a combined total of \$23,918.

One worker set up the deals, but four others knew or should have known about the arrangements, according to Vance Rayburn, who commissioned the audit as the administrator for the department's Division of Customer and Employee Services.

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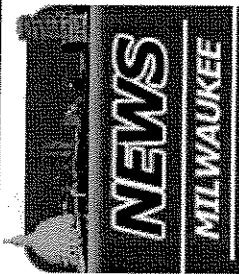
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# Lautenschlager is far from an artful dodger

Posted: April 24, 2004

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Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager hasn't swerved this much since that February night when the cops busted her for drunken driving.

The first-term Democrat has been all over the road trying to explain why her hubby was driving her taxpayer-owned car and signing for car washing and detailing work.

Everybody knows the story of how

Lautenschlager drove her state car into a ditch in Dodge County and ended up pleading guilty to drunken driving - and how she failed to reimburse the state for any trips between her Fond du Lac home and Madison office until forced to pay up by the state ethics police.

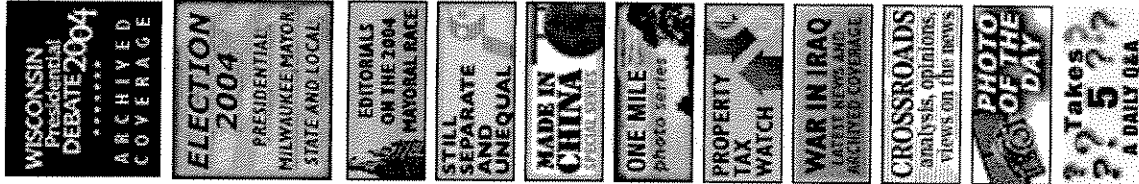
In response, she offered implausible stories about how much she drank and why she didn't pay to use a state car for personal trips.



Cary Spivak & Dan Bice

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Then, last week, the plot thickened.

Records showed that her state car had body work twice last year and that her husband improperly used her state credit card to have the vehicle scrubbed inside and out.

Watch Lautenschlager career through the media maze to explain that away.

First, she told media outlets - including the **Capital Times** and the **Journal Sentinel** - that her husband, **William Rippl**, never got behind the wheel of the state car. When talking to **The Associated Press**, she said Rippl drove only when she was with him.

So why did Rippl, an ex-cop, on four occasions sign the receipts for her state credit card to pay for that vehicle to be cleaned? One bill came to \$66.

The state's top cop speculated to **Wispolitics**.

**com**, a Web site for political junkies, that he signed the credit card bill because she was in the bathroom. But a stranger tale was told to the **Cap Times**, in which Lautenschlager chalked it up as a "guy thing."

We don't know what that means, either.

But later in the day Wednesday she was offering up another story.

She told the **Journal Sentinel** that Rippl did in fact hop in the driver's seat from time to time but only to take the state car back and forth between her Fond du Lac home and a repair shop.

So her story now is that Rippl never took any joy rides. When he was behind the wheel, it was strictly state business.

"The issue is I was given a car that didn't run," Lautenschlager told the **Wisconsin State Journal** of the '99 Buick Park Avenue that she was

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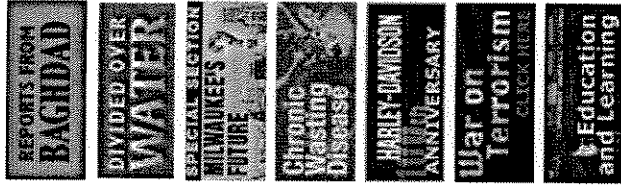
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assigned when she took office in January 2001. "Nobody was going to deal with it except my husband, and he did."

Translation: It's all the state's fault.

And if all that's not confusing enough, Lautenschlager's now denying that she originally said Rippl never drove the state vehicle.

"What I said was he hadn't used the car for any personal travel, OK?" she was claiming by the end of the week.

Here's a bit of advice for the AG: Don't make credibility the cornerstone of your campaign if you actually run again in 2006.

### Primary supporter

The best thing about primary elections is that they allow pols to curry favor on both sides of the aisle. Just ask **Tyrone Dumas**, the school administrator and one-time candidate for county executive.

"There's a Democratic side and a Republican side, and I have people on both sides," Dumas said, referring to the September congressional primary.

First, Dumas eagerly threw his support behind **Corey Hoze**, a rising young star in the GOP who has lined up an impressive list of supporters in his uphill bid to replace Rep. **Jerry Kleczka**, who is retiring. Dumas said he hopes this is the year that Milwaukee sends an African-American to Congress.

"I endorsed him - he was first to call," Dumas said.

Then, Democratic state Sen. **Gwen Moore** said she wanted the job. When the veteran central-city pol called Dumas, he jumped on board her bandwagon as well.

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**ROBERT L. COWLES**  
Wisconsin State Senator • 2nd Senate District

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For More Information Contact:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 27, 2004

Senator Cowles or Todd Stuart  
at 1-800-334-1465

**Cowles: Internal DNR fleet audit raises more issues**

**Madison** – State Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) today raised concerns over an internal DNR audit that came to light from a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel open records request. Yesterday, Governor Jim Doyle and Department of Natural Resources Secretary Scott Hassett defended their decision not to report a state employee who violated state procurement rules. “This new information that demands some answers,” said Cowles. “It should have all taxpayers concerned.”

This Sunday, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported that according to an internal DNR audit, a state employee directed contracts to favored vendors. The news article and the information contained in the DNR internal audit raises even more troubling issues regarding fleet practices and costs.

“Did this divert scarce resources away from other conservation programs?” asked Cowles. “What was done to end these practices? What disciplinary actions were taken? Were any violations referred to the Department of Justice or the District Attorney?”

The DNR internal audit detailed several issues including:

- Of the five major recommendations outlined in 1999 for improving the fleet, only one was fully implemented.
- Documented attempts to circumvent state competitive bidding purchasing procedures. This means collusion between the state and certain vendors with “invoice splitting.”
- Half a million dollars in questioned fleet costs from avoiding low bid purchasing procedures.
- \$2.7 million in a negative balance for fleet operations last year.
- The Conservation Fund has had over \$13 million in borrowing for vehicle purchases in the last three years.

The State of Wisconsin owns and maintains a fleet of over 7,000 vehicles for use by employees on official state business (the state employs roughly 66,000 workers). The DNR has a fleet of over 2,000 vehicles. There are four major fleets, which are operated by the Department of Administration, Department of Transportation, DNR, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Family Services also operate smaller fleets.

It has been reported that the DNR spent \$18 million on vehicles since 1999 – at a rate of \$17,000 each day in 2002. That year, 278 vehicles were purchased for over \$6 million. The DNR northern region alone paid \$10.4 million on new vehicles and doubled the size of their fleet in ten years.

-more-

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Internal Audit

Page Two

"At a time when we are seeing record gas prices and state budget deficits, the state was buying a ton of fuel-inefficient, expensive vehicles," said Cowles. "Was this the best use of our resources?"

In early April, Cowles requested a comprehensive audit of the entire state fleet by the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau. The audit could document the effectiveness and efficiency of vehicle procurement in addition to exploring the accuracy of mileage reporting. The audit should also look at the overall number of vehicles and the mix of large versus small vehicles in the fleet. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee will hold a public hearing on the potential audit.

"I think the taxpayers deserve a comprehensive accounting," said Cowles. "The Legislative Audit Bureau has the most credibility to conduct this thorough review."

Senator Cowles is a member of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee.

#30#



## **State Senator Bob Welch**

**State President Pro-Tempore**

Vice-Chairman, Joint Committee on Finance  
State Capitol • Madison

For Immediate Release  
April 27, 2004

Contact: Senator Bob Welch  
(608) 266-0751

### **Welch Renews Plan for Selling Entire Automotive Fleet**

*Senator from the 14<sup>th</sup> points to earlier proposal for solution to oversized fleet*

**[Madison.]** State Senator Bob Welch has once again called for Wisconsin to sell off all but the most specialized vehicles owned by the state.

Renewing a proposal from Welch's "Freeze it and Fix it" plan from past legislative sessions, the Senator would like to see Wisconsin implement a limited employee travel plan, similar to plans used by private businesses that pay by the mile, rather than own a myriad of automobiles.

Welch stated, "I have long advocated the use of our current communication technologies as an alternative to travel. With the wide spread use of e-mail, cell phones, and teleconferencing, government agencies have more alternatives than ever for communication when a face to face meeting is not essential. The state would also be wise to reimburse drivers for mileage when traveling is absolutely called for, rather than buying a vehicle that would not be fully utilized."

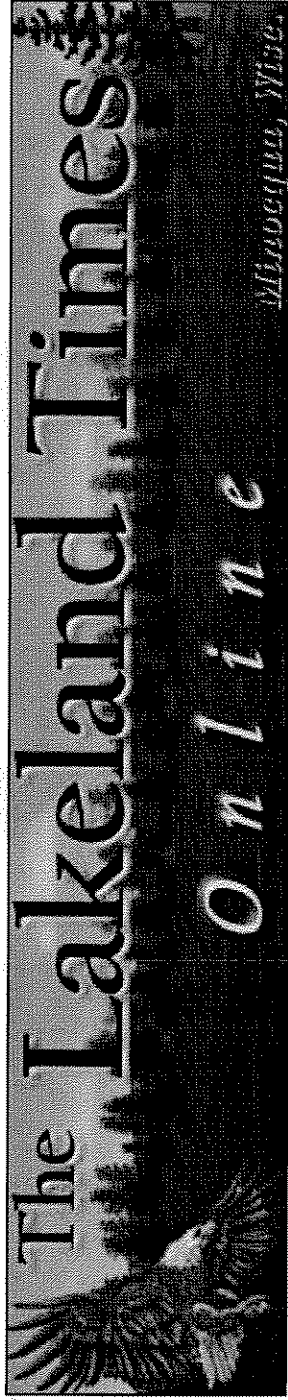
The state-owned automotive fleet has come under heavy scrutiny in recent weeks amid reports of misuse of automobiles by state employees and the revealing by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources of a mind-boggling increase in spending on non-vital state owned automobiles.

Since 1999, the DNR has spent \$19.1 million on their portion of the state fleet. "This out-of-control spending must be stopped in order to put Wisconsin's fiscal house back in order." Welch added.

With the recent news in mind, Senator Welch viewed the sale of the fleet, along with the use of personal vehicles by state employees when needed as an opportunity to both get rid of overhead and eliminate the opportunity for potentially embarrassing scandals in the future.

Welch said that while he wished that this proposal had been adopted when he offered it in past years, he will continue to fight for this important cut in irresponsible and unnecessary spending.

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**DNR wanted \$5,000 to answer citizen's inquiry**

**By: Richard Moore**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sought last year to charge a citizen \$5,002 to answer two inquiries related to staffing and expenditures in the agency's hunter education program, The Lakeland Times has learned.

In the first request, Allan Pribnow of Port Wing -- a citizen concerned about the appropriate use of federal hunter education dollars -- wanted to know the DNR's total cost to staff a booth at a Ducks Unlimited Great Outdoors weekend event; in the second, he asked how many conservation wardens teach hunter education courses on paid time and the specific price tag for the course taught in Brule.

Last Aug. 18, DNR Secretary Scott Hassett responded, informing Pribnow the agency would have to charge for the requests because the information did not exist in a "specific file or document" and would have to be created.

The estimated cost for the first request would be \$1,690, Hassett wrote. For the second, the estimated tab would be \$3,312.

This week, DNR Hunter Education Coordinator Tim Lawhern defended the cost projections, saying both would require extensive time and effort to compile. Lawhern also said he and his supervisor, not Hassett, determined the actual figures.

"My boss, (who) is the section chief of all the safety education programs, sat down and

May. 05, 2004

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said, "Well, what would it take to put all this info together?" Lawhern said.

"You've got to count your salary, which is your time, you've got to count how much time you think it's going to take to get that stuff all together and the number of people you're going to have to make contact with to get it, and that's the number we came up with," he added.

Lawhern said the DU weekend event happened more than two years ago after the department abandoned using volunteers to run a hunter safety trail in favor of a booth staffed solely by wardens.

"The second year we decided to do a BB gun booth and we did that two years in a row and what we did was, we used that as a community wardening project," he said. "The administration of law enforcement made the decision to staff it with wardens."

Critics have charged that the DNR sent as many as 20 wardens for the weekends, paying for motels, meals, and travel in addition to wages. Lawhern said this week he has no idea how much the cost was.

"The bad news is, there's no such document that exists that lists all those things that are being asked of us," he said. "I've answered these questions once before for a couple of instructors and my reply at the time was, in order for me to get this information... it would require us to do a hand check of expense vouchers, time sheets, those kinds of things."

That would involve "a fair amount of time" - \$1,690 worth, he estimated. Since the money was never sent, Lawhern said he thought everyone was satisfied.

"I never heard back from them so I assume they didn't want anything further," he said.

While Lawhern said he couldn't answer the question Pribnow asked, he said he did know the numbers for the past two years.

"I have that down to the exact penny," he said. "It is zero. We didn't have any booth at the DU Festival and the reason was, it was a decision made in law enforcement not to because of budgetary issues."

As for the second request, Lawhern said he was not aware whether any wardens were teaching hunter education courses from start to finish. About 4,500 volunteers currently teach the courses, he said, certifying about 30,000 hunters each year.

The wardens, he said, give a law enforcement presentation at the courses, as they have done since 1967. According to Lawhern, wardens charge back the time they spend for those presentations to the hunter education budget - a pool of money equivalent to 6.5

funded positions.

"It's not paying for a whole course," he said. "It's just paying for the wardens' time to go to the hunter education course and make that (law enforcement) delivery."

While Lawhern did say he was checking to see if DNR wardens taught the entire course in Brule, he said to pursue the project requested - how many wardens taught hunter education courses from start to finish on paid time - would require enormous effort.

"If you track the number of wardens - you would have to go back and pull out time sheets and that kind of thing - you're looking at over 200 people and if each person has to take an hour or two to try and pull all this info together, that's 200 times their salary and times the fringe benefits that go with that times the copy work," he said. "It gets to be astronomical."

Lawhern said the actual costs might even go higher than the \$5,000 estimate.

"At such a point, if that were the case, then we'd have to say, well, we've expended the amount of money we requested initially," he said. "It's taken more time and it will cost an additional amount to do that."

The program director said it would be different if the records were in hand or existed in electronic form.

"But if you've got hard copy documents and you have to go back and check who was and who wasn't (teaching), its going to take time to do that," he said. "And if it exceeds 10 pages of material there's an additional cost for copy work to get that produced. Those are all pretty standard things that happen under open records."

**Posted:** *May 04, 2004*

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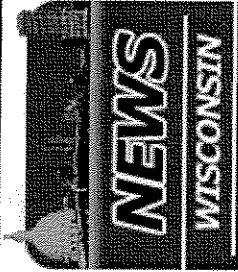
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## Audit of state vehicles approved

### Millions of dollars could be saved, lawmakers say

By PATRICK MARLEY  
pmarley@journalsentinel.com

Posted: May 4, 2004

**Madison** - Lawmakers on Tuesday approved a wide-ranging audit of the state's fleet of cars and trucks to determine whether the state owns too many vehicles and effectively manages them.

With more than 7,200 vehicles, the fleet is ripe for an audit that could yield millions of dollars in savings, said members of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, which unanimously approved the review.

"This is the low-hanging fruit, ladies and gentlemen," Sen. Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) told fellow committee members.

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- Review how agencies decide to buy, sell and maintain vehicles.
- Consider how administrators decide when to assign vehicles to individuals.

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The audit will mirror a study now under way by the Department of Administration, but it will be far more comprehensive. The audit will examine how decisions are made to buy vehicles and assign them to individuals; how vehicle purchases and maintenance work are bid; and whether employees are properly reimbursing the state for personal miles they put on the vehicles.

The Department of Administration started studying ways to trim the fleet in January. After Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager was arrested for drunken driving in February in a state car, officials expanded the review to include a look at the personal use of government vehicles.

Gov. Jim Doyle last month put a moratorium on vehicle purchases until the department finishes its review and ordered all agencies to justify the personal assignment of many vehicles. The Department of Justice, headed by Lautenschlager, has gone a step further, initiating its own review of the state's regulations on car usage.

The far-reaching legislative audit will tie together all the disparate issues raised by the reviews already being conducted, Cowles said.

"The Audit Bureau has a reputation that's unquestioned and will not be tainted by any partisan interests," he said.

### Long process

State Auditor Janice Mueller said her work would build on what the Department of Administration finds in its review, which is expected to be completed by June 1. Three auditors will need at least six months to

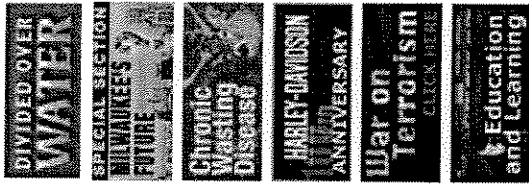
- Determine whether employees are properly reimbursing the state for personal miles on state vehicles.
- Review vehicle maintenance that was performed by state mechanics and private contractors.
- Compare how other states manage and maintain their fleets.
- Look at mileage rates paid to employees and contractors for business miles they put on their personal cars.

### Quotable

“The quality of data, I fear, is not going to be strong.”

- **Janice Mueller, state auditor**

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complete their report because of poor record-keeping by those who manage and use state cars.

"The quality of data, I fear, is not going to be strong," she said.

State records reviewed by the Journal Sentinel in recent weeks have often proved inaccurate. For instance, many vehicles that are deemed personally assigned by the Department of Administration are actually treated as motor pool vehicles by state agencies. The Journal Sentinel also found that mileage payments by two University of Wisconsin System chancellors were not centrally recorded.

According to the records, during a recent 14-month period, more than 60% of the employees with personally assigned vehicles paid no personal mileage reimbursements to the state, as required for commuting under state rules. Those same records show a similar number drove their state cars fewer than 16,000 miles a year, the minimum required to get a personally assigned vehicle in most cases under state regulations.

Auditors will:

- Review how agencies decide to buy, sell and maintain vehicles.
- Look at how administrators decide when to assign vehicles to individuals and whether it is cheaper for agencies to assign such vehicles or reimburse employees for using their own cars.

The Department of Administration is now reviewing the same matter for the first time in 18 years, said Sean Dilweg, the executive assistant to Administration Secretary Marc Marotta.

- Determine whether employees are properly reimbursing the state for personal miles they put on state vehicles.
- Review vehicle maintenance that was performed by state mechanics and private contractors. The state recently changed how it performs

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maintenance work as the result of a 2000 study by consultant DMG-Maximus, which found that the state could save millions of dollars if it better coordinated the fleet operations of various agencies.

- See how other states manage and maintain their fleets.
- Look at the mileage rates paid to employees and contractors for business miles they put on their personal cars. Legislators will not escape scrutiny, as the auditors will review how much they have been reimbursed for trips from their home districts to Madison.

"It's only fair if we look at others that we look at ourselves," said committee member Rep. Mark Pocan (D-Madison).

Doyle's office said the governor has tackled the fleet problems but sounded support for the audit.

"He has already directed (officials) to take aggressive action to address record-keeping (problems) and reduced the size of the fleet, but of course we welcome another set of eyes on the situation," Doyle aide Dan Leistikow said.

From the May 5, 2004 editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

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# Audit sought of state vehicle use

AG's OWI arrest puts focus on costs, employee misuse

**By Jenny Price**  
*The Associated Press*

MADISON — A legislative committee directed Wisconsin auditors Tuesday to examine the state's fleet of cars and how they are used after reports some employees have not properly reimbursed the state.

The Joint Legislative Audit Committee voted unanimously in favor of the audit, which Sen. Robert Cowles said likely would show the state owns too many vehicles.

"I'm absolutely obsessed with saving money; I see this as a place to do it," said Cowles, R-Green Bay.

Scrutiny of state vehicle use flared up after Atty. Gen. Peg Lautenschlager's Feb. 24 arrest for drunken driving in a state-owned Buick.

A subsequent investigation by the state Ethics Board found

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Lautenschlager failed to reimburse the state for personal miles she put on the car commuting between Madison and her Fond du Lac home.

The audit will look into other possible abuses of the more than 7,000 vehicles used by state employees and workers at University of Wisconsin System campuses.

Gov. Jim Doyle already has frozen vehicle purchases and ordered the Department of Administration to review cars assigned to state employees who travel fewer than 16,000 miles a year. DOA executive assistant Sean Dilweg said the review would be completed by June 1.

"It'll be a significant reduction in fleet vehicles," Dilweg said. "That's what the trend shows at this point."

State Auditor Jan Mueller said her office's study would take six months to complete.

She said the audit would determine how many vehicles the state owns and leases, how officials decide the number of vehicles needed and what disciplinary action has been taken against employees who violated mileage policies.

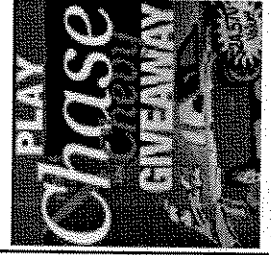


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Hello Joint Audit Committee Members:

I believe this person's editorial sums it up nicely.

**The Morning Mail**

From Journal Sentinel readers

Posted: May 3, 2004

**DNR**

**Agency bureaucracy has become too large**

State Sen. Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) has requested an audit of the entire state auto fleet. That request was expected to be reviewed by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee today, but without accountabilities does the proposed audit of fleet and auto irregularities have any lasting value? Accountably in the Department of Natural Resources has been diluted to the point where nobody is responsible. All newspaper articles have failed to mention any DNR personnel who can be held responsible for any fiscal actions.

The DNR bureaucracy has become too huge and needs to be broken up. It appears the secretary of the DNR is just a figurehead with no accountability. How many anonymous deputy secretaries in the DNR have no accountability? If they can dictate policy and make fiscal decisions, why can't they be held accountable? Time for these now-anonymous policy-making deputy secretaries to let the light of day shine on them and sign their names on documents they create. Maybe then the public can have a responsible, open, and accountable government agency.

The senators should spend their energy on creating a DNR that will have accountability. If that entails a break-up, so be it.

**Cheryl Piland**

**Glendale**

**Sincerely:**

**Carlton H. Alt  
President**

**Chairman Action Group**

**Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Yellow Perch Conservation Groups**



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Posted May 10, 2004

# John Dipko column: Sen. Cowles champions audit of state fleet



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MADISON — A Northeastern Wisconsin lawmaker has long pushed for an extensive look at the state's vehicle fleet.

Last week, Sen. Robert Cowles got his wish.

The Legislature's Joint Audit committee last week voted to have an audit done on the fleet of more than 7,000 vehicles that are made available to state workers for business use. Cowles, R-Allouez, is a member of the committee and said the review is overdue. He had asked for the audit in early April.

"This isn't about partisan politics," he said in a written release. "I am focused on saving the taxpayers money, and I think the audit can best identify cost effectiveness."

A key incident that brought the issue to light took place in late February, when Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager was arrested for driving a state car while drunk.



She no longer has the car and she agreed following a state Ethics Board probe to reimburse the state for personal miles driven and to pay a penalty.

#### **About the audit**

According to Cowles, auditors will study the number of vehicles owned and leased, vehicle type and the methodology used to determine vehicle needs.

"I think the taxpayers deserve a comprehensive accounting, and the Legislative Audit Bureau has the most credibility to conduct this thorough review," he said.

The audit is expected to be complete June 1.

Meanwhile, citing potential savings of up to \$8 million, Cowles also has called for a progress report on an administrative plan to consolidate the state's fleet management programs.

#### **Taxing question**

A proposal to limit tax increases through an amendment to the state Constitution has gotten a lukewarm reception from five Wisconsin health-care organizations.

In a press release last week, the groups voiced concerns about "potential unintended consequences," because of a Taxpayer Bill of Rights, known as TABOR.

The groups include the Wisconsin Association of Health Plans, the Wisconsin Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, the Wisconsin Health Care Association, the Wisconsin Hospital Association and the Wisconsin Medical Society.

State Rep. Frank Lasee, R-Bellevue, initially proposed the amendment, and Republican lawmakers are trying to hammer out a compromise package. The measure would limit tax increases to certain factors and require any proposal exceeding those limits to undergo a referendum vote.

Any constitutional amendment would require ratification by two successive legislatures and a statewide vote.

"This is not a partisan issue; we have no qualms with the notion of limiting taxes and spending," hospital association President Steve Brenton said in the release. "However, TABOR