

comes at a time when the state is already chronically under-funding its own health-care programs, particularly Medicaid, and passing those costs on to employers and employees."

Supporters of such a measure argue the limits would place reasonable controls on government growth and let voters decide if additional increases are warranted.

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Green Bay Press-Gazette May 10, 2004

**JOHN  
DIPKO**

Commentary



## Cowles champions audit of state fleet

**M**ADISON — 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.

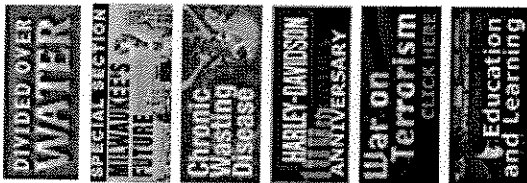
State Rep. Frank Lasee, R-Bellevue, initially proposed the amendment, and Republican lawmakers are trying to hammer out a compromise package. The measure would limit tax increases to certain factors and require any proposal exceeding those limits to undergo a referendum vote.

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 comes at a time when the state is already chronically under-funding its own health-care programs, particularly Medicaid, and passing those costs on to employers and employees."

Supporters of such a measure argue the limits would place reasonable controls on government growth and let voters decide if additional increases are warranted.

Call John Dipko at (920) 255-9254 or e-mail him at [jdipko@greenbaypressgazette.com](mailto:jdipko@greenbaypressgazette.com).



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"In general, there's been a substantial spike upward in director pay," the corporate watchdog said. He said the pay increases are coming "in response to the enhanced time and responsibility post-Sarbanes-Oxley and post-Enron."

To translate: Now that the feds have enacted tougher laws, such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, demanding that board members stay awake during meetings because they can be held responsible for what happens, the directors are insisting on better pay.

Even with that, McGurn said, Harley was passing out some pretty juicy comp packages. "For a company that size, it's probably on the high side," the diplomatic McGurn said. "It's eye-catching."

Indeed it is. And here you thought hog referred just to the motorcycles Harley produces.

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**Come fly with me**

Gov. **Jim Doyle** could afford to make the size of the state airplane fleet a big campaign issue for one good reason:

He's got a buddy with a private plane idling on the runway for the first-term gov's use.

New ethics reports show that Doyle flew on **Perry Armstrong's** private plane last April to watch **Marquette University** get blown out of the NCAA Final Four basketball tournament.

In July, Doyle flew on Armstrong's **Piper Cheyenne** to go to Auburn Hills, Mich. Also on board was Commerce Secretary **Cory Nettles**.

Armstrong, owner and CEO of **Preferred Title** in Madison, said the second flight was to let Doyle have a sit-down with the head of automaker **DaimlerChrysler** about the company's plans to open a new factory in the Midwest.

*MD 85-12-04  
Spivak & Bice*

"Jim blew in his ear and asked him to open that plant in Kenosha," said Armstrong, appointed by Doyle to head the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority.

In the end, DaimlerChrysler decided against opening the new plant.

So why did Doyle use the private plane for this business trip? Was he trying to keep the secret talks under wraps?

Nah, says Doyle flack **Dan Leistikow**. Doyle was just trying to save the state a few bucks.







More recently, Doyle flew the friendly skies on Armstrong's aircraft last week to go to Wausau for a news conference and to Ashland for a WHEDA project and to host a fund-raiser for embattled state Rep. **Gary Sherman**.

Armstrong guessed that Doyle didn't want to use a state plane for a political event. But the businessman said there might be another reason that the Democratic governor and his crew turned to Armstrong to get a lift.

"Maybe," he said, "they just like the way I fly."

From the May 13, 2004 editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

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✱  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel May 26, 2004

# Request for truck bids looks familiar

2003 DNR deal led to  
audit, but new specs  
match last year's

By PATRICK MARLEY  
pmarley@journalsentinel.com

**Madison** — Less than a year after auditors scolded the state Department of Natural Resources for all but rigging bids for a truck supplier, the agency in another bid request last month used the exact specifications that prompted the audit.

"They're still doing it. It's not been corrected," said Jim Ederer, co-owner of Madison Truck Equipment, which didn't respond to either bid request because of the tight specifications.

"The handwriting's on the wall. They want the same damn thing."

In early 2003, the DNR awarded a contract for 10 dump trucks to Monroe Truck Equipment for \$269,940. Low bidder Casper's Truck Equipment, which did not meet all the specifications, contested the award because of the way the bid request was written. Casper's bid came in at \$259,840, a discount of more than \$1,000 a truck.

Both Madison Truck Equipment and Casper's maintained in letters to the DNR that the specifications were written so that only Monroe would qualify.

"Why even go out for bids if this is the only product that the state will accept?" Casper's salesman Tim Rupiper wrote in a March 2003 letter to DNR officials. "We feel that if we don't make a stand now, next year your specifications will be for the same body and this fiasco will start all over again, writing us and other bidders

out."

The letters from vendors and concerns raised by a DNR employee prompted an audit ordered by Vance Rayburn, the department's customer and employee services administrator.

## Bidding shortcuts

That audit, completed in July, found an employee routinely skirted bidding rules in 2002 and early 2003 by writing multiple smaller invoices for maintenance jobs that cost more than \$5,000, the threshold for soliciting bids under state guidelines.

In other instances, the employee, whom DNR officials have declined to name, issued solicitations for bids but wrote them so only a handful of ven-

**"Why even go out for bids if this is the  
only product that the state will  
accept?"**

Tim Rupiper, salesman for Casper's Truck Equipment

dors would qualify.

The employee gave Badger Utility, Monroe Truck Equipment, Transport Refrigeration and Trudell Trailers nearly \$500,000 worth of work that should have been bid, the audit found. Another \$322,147 in work went to those companies using questionable specifications, the audit says.

The employee was disciplined and still works for the DNR, but Rayburn has declined to say what punishment he received. Four other employees should have known of the problem, Rayburn has said.

One DNR worker was a former employee of one of the vendors and another had a "questionable work relationship" with another vendor, Rayburn said. He wouldn't say whether either of those employees was the one who was disciplined or whether either of the vendors was Monroe Truck.

In late April, Rayburn and DNR Secretary Scott Hassett made assurances that the problems discovered in the audit had been corrected. But 10 days earlier, the department's solicitation for bids for four dump trucks matched word for word a bid that prompted the review.

The internal audit emerged publicly just as state authorities began to scrutinize the state's fleet of vehicles. In 2002, the DNR spent \$6.1 million on vehicle purchases, up 44% from about \$4.2 million in 2001.

A review of state records suggests six in 10 state employees with personally assigned vehicles did not reimburse the

...cont. next page

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel May 26, 2004

...cont. from prev. page

state for any personal mileage on their cars in a recent 14-month period.

Those records also suggest a like number averaged fewer than 16,000 miles a year, the minimum required in most cases for employees to receive personally assigned state vehicles. Poor record-keeping has made it difficult to reach firm conclusions, said Secretary of Administration Marc Marotta.

Gov. Jim Doyle ordered a freeze on vehicle purchases until the Department of Administration wraps up an inquiry into vehicle purchases and personal use of vehicles. Meanwhile, the Legislative Audit Bureau is poised to launch its own review of the fleet.

When asked about the latest bid specifications Monday, Rayburn said he was not aware they had been written the same as they were a year ago. Casper's bid was \$26,783 a truck and Monroe bid \$26,994.

On Tuesday, Rayburn said that solicitation would be scrapped because of Doyle's moratorium on vehicle purchases.

Choice defended

The department will solicit bids again after the new fiscal year starts July 1 if budget officials decide they can afford it, Rayburn said. If the bids are close again, Rayburn said, he would likely buy two dump trucks from both Monroe and Casper's.

Nonetheless, Rayburn said, "It looks on paper as if Monroe is a better piece of equipment."

He said that the same specifications were used this year because the department needs heavy-duty equipment. The DNR is trying to balance that need with an attempt to get numerous bidders so it can find the best price, he said.

"In previous experience with Casper's dump trucks, the (dump) boxes have not held up well," Rayburn said. "They've not stood behind the product, whereas we had Monroe replace two (dump) boxes last year, and they completely stood behind them."

DNR letters to Casper's never raised such concerns, however, and Casper's said it never heard these complaints.

After Casper's contested the 2003 bid award, DNR and DOA officials reviewed the matter and determined the DNR made the right decision in buying the more expensive trucks, Rayburn said.

"Although we think we demonstrated it was a good business decision because we got a more heavy-duty piece of equipment, I did not feel it was

done in a way that fostered broader competition," he said.

An official with the National Truck Equipment Association, an industry group, said he does not believe the specifications were too tight.

"There's no question it's narrow, but it's not just (for) one guy," said Doyle Sumrall, the group's director of business development. "I don't read it as having been written to exclude a particular business."

Salesmen with Casper's maintain that their trucks are just as sturdy as Monroe's.

Jason Sagorac, sales manager for Casper's, said he tried several times to demonstrate to DNR officials that Casper's trucks would meet their needs, but he was continually put off. At one point, DNR officials agreed to see a demonstration, but they skipped the meeting, Sagorac said.

"If you're spending this amount of money . . . don't you think you would take the time to see what else is out there, see what other services people can provide and get the taxpayers of this state the best bang for their buck?" he said.

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## State plans sale of 1,000 cars

### Cuts are aimed at trimming costs, employee misuse

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

Posted: May 27, 2004

**Madison** - The state plans to unload 1,000 vehicles, possibly as early as July, as part of its effort to cut costs and eliminate employee misuse of the cars.

Half the vehicles would come from the Department of Administration, with the rest from the University of Wisconsin System and the departments of Transportation and Natural Resources, according to a source familiar with a state report on the subject. The report is to be released next week.

In 2002, the DNR spent an average of just more than \$20,000 each on its cars and trucks. At that rate, selling 1,000 cars would eventually save \$20 million in replacement costs.

Figures on repair savings were not available. Some of the savings would be offset by mileage payments the state would have to make to employees using their own vehicles.

The proposed cut would represent a reduction of about 14% in the state's fleet of 7,228 cars, trucks and law enforcement vehicles.

The vehicles would be sold at auction by July, one source said. Another source who had been told of details of the report suggested that a slower approach would be taken.

Administration Secretary Marc Marotta, Gov. Jim Doyle's top deputy, declined to comment on the report.

"I'd say there's going to be a substantial reduction, but I'd say let's wait for the report," he said Thursday.

Marotta launched a review of the state's fleet early this year, and the inquiry intensified in February, after Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager drove a state car into a ditch and was arrested on suspicion of drunken driving.

### Legislative audit set

A review of state records has shown that some 60% of 1,700 employees paid for no personal miles for vehicles assigned to them.

The review also revealed flaws in state records. Numerous cars that were considered personally assigned were actually shared by several employees.

Purchasing irregularities have also been discovered with the state fleet. The DNR spent \$6.1 million to buy vehicles in 2002, compared with \$4.2 million the previous year. Those purchases fell to \$1.7 million last year.

Internal auditors last year found that a DNR employee avoided bids on nearly \$500,000 worth of maintenance work and purchases. The employee wrote bid specifications improperly for another \$322,147 worth of work, according to the audit.

DNR officials have said the problems have been corrected, but last month the department put out a bid solicitation for new dump trucks that mirrored word for word the bid request that prompted the 2003 audit.

In addition to the Department of Administration review, the Legislative Audit Bureau is about to launch a far-reaching audit of the state's fleet by next month. It is expected to take at least six months.

Administrators are focusing on cutting motor pool cars and personally assigned vehicles driven by employees who drive fewer than 16,000 miles a year on state business. That figure is the threshold in most cases for receiving a personally assigned car. But a review of state records has shown that some 60% of employees put fewer than 16,000 miles on their vehicles.

Sen. Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay), who called for the legislative audit, welcomed Doyle's plan.

"I do feel the state fleet is top-heavy," he said. "Whether it's 1,000 or 500 or 2,000, it's too soon to say for me."

He warned against selling off the cars and trucks too fast.

"I'm all for downsizing the fleet and having a more fuel-efficient fleet, but I hope they use caution in how they sell these assets," Cowles said. "They can take their time with this."

## Doyle records released

A cut to the fleet would likely mean an increase in the number of employees using their own cars and being reimbursed for state business. The Department of Administration reimburses employees 32.5 cents a mile for such use.

"That's something we have to be concerned about," Cowles said. "We don't want this to end up costing more, so I think there has to be a little caution on how that's approached."

Also Thursday, the Department of Administration released records of Doyle's use of a state car while he served as attorney general. He kept detailed logs of the business trips he made in his state car, then regularly paid the state for any additional miles, according to the reports, released under the state's open records law.

"Any miles he couldn't document as a business mile, he just paid for to make sure he was totally aboveboard," Doyle aide Dan Leistikow said.

For three months - October 2000 and January and February 2002 - Doyle, who lived in Madison, paid for no personal mileage. His highest check to the state was for \$870.57, for four months of travel in 1999.

In contrast, Lautenschlager, who lives in Fond du Lac, drove the 1999 Buick Park Avenue that Doyle once used, but she kept no log of miles during the early part of her tenure.

In a March settlement with the state Ethics Board, she reimbursed the state \$672 for personal miles and paid a \$250 fine. She gave up her state car after the accident.

The Doyle documents also reveal that the state's records have a one-year gap.

The Department of Administration has no records for state employees' personal use of state vehicles from July 1998 to August 1999 because the state was switching to a new computer system to track vehicle use, department attorney John Rothschild said.

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Wisconsin State Senator • 2nd Senate District

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May 28, 2004

Senator Cowles or Todd Stuart  
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**Cowles Asks Audit Bureau to Monitor Sale of Fleet Cars**

**Madison** – State Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) called on the Legislative Audit Bureau to monitor the sale of vehicles in the state fleet. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel today reported that the Doyle administration plans to sell 1,000 cars, possibly as early as July of this year. Earlier this month, Cowles secured a comprehensive audit of the entire state fleet by the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau. "I think the fleet needs to be downsized," said Cowles. "We need to do this in the most cost-effective way. I'd like the independent Audit Bureau to watch how the sale is conducted, as I want the best possible deal for the taxpayer."

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 Department of Natural Resources (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 System. The Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Family Services also operate smaller fleets. The proposed cut of 1,000 vehicles would represent a reduction of about 14% in the state's fleet.

The Legislative Audit is conducting a review that will include:

- An analysis of the number of vehicles owned and leased.
- A review of the specific types of vehicles, such as sedans, S.U.V.s and trucks.
- An assessment of how the total number of vehicles needed is determined.
- Mileage reimbursement issues for state employees, state legislators and private sector employees contracting with the state.

According to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, half the vehicles would come from the Department of Administration and with the rest from the UW System, Department of Transportation and Department of Natural Resources. The report is to be released next week. "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. "I want to work with the administration to find significant savings."

State statute and administrative rules are in place for the sale of vehicle and surplus property, and the public auction process is detailed. There are seven state auctions scheduled for the rest of this year. According to the Department of Administration's website, 900 vehicles are auctioned off annually.

"I want to reduce the size of the fleet and have a more fuel-efficient fleet, but the administration needs a well thought out plan to sell these cars," Cowles said. "The goal is to save the taxpayers significant dollars. We can't have a fire sale or end up having the state spending more in the long run."

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## OPINION

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# Editorial: Study reveals sloppy controls on state vehicles

It should not take Wisconsin's attorney general driving drunk to shed light on an abuse of taxpayer dollars.

But it was Peg Lautenschlager driving a state-owned car into a ditch while under the influence of alcohol that put a review of the state-vehicle fleet on Wisconsin's priority list.

Results of the study reportedly will include a recommendation that the state sell off 1,000 of the 7,228 cars, trucks and law enforcement vehicles that it owns.

Half would come from the Department of Administration and the rest from the University of Wisconsin System and the departments of Transportation and Natural Resources, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported.

Dumping 1,000 cars eventually would save \$20 million in replacement costs in addition to savings on repairs, the newspaper estimated, although some of those savings would be offset by mileage payments to state employees using their own vehicles for work-related travel.

Newspaper reports paint a picture of sloppy record keeping, state employees violating state-vehicle rules and more. According to the Journal Sentinel:

nSome 60 percent of 1,700 state employees paid for no personal miles for vehicles assigned to them.

nSome 60 percent of employees put fewer than 16,000 miles on their state-owned vehicles, although 16,000 miles is considered the threshold for receiving a personally assigned car.

nSeveral employees shared numerous cars that were



personally assigned.

nA Department of Natural Resources employee avoided bids on almost \$500,000 worth of maintenance work and purchases and wrote bid specifications improperly for another \$322,000 worth of work.

nThe Department of Administration has no records for state employees' personal use of state vehicles from July 1998 to August 1999.

Show us a private business that is that negligent about enforcing its rules on use of company property and we'll show you a business in trouble. The difference with the state vehicles is that taxpayers and state-service users unknowingly paid the full cost for whatever rules were violated – until Lautenschlager's drunken driving arrest pressured the state to take action.

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
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## State car program review stalled

Department of Justice calls policies too vague

### The Associated Press

MADISON — Policies on state cars are so vague that the Department of Justice can't perform a review of its vehicle use, department officials claim in a report obtained Friday.

The report found only one clear instance of improper use of a state car by a Justice Department employee who worked as a fraud investigator under then-Atty. Gen. Jim Doyle.

DOJ officials said they can't go any further in the investigation because car regulations are too muddy.

Dan Leistikow, a spokesman for Gov. Doyle, said he couldn't believe the Justice Department is confused. He said the Administration Department is doing a review that will clear up any ambiguity about its regulations.

"The fact is, for people in the Department of Justice, the rule has always been very clear. You have to pay the state for personal use of those cars," Leistikow said.

The Justice and Administration departments have been at odds since February when Atty. Gen. Peg Lautenschlager was arrested for drunken driving while in a state car on a trip from Madison to her Fond du Lac home.

Lautenschlager has accused the department, which is under Doyle's authority, of trying to smear her politically.

She ordered her agency to review state car use after she reached a settlement with the state Ethics Board over allegations she hadn't reimbursed the state for personal mileage.

She repaid the state \$672 to cover personal mileage and paid a \$250 fine in the settlement.

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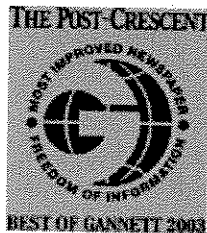
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"Obviously, she was under a misunderstanding how the vehicle assigned to her should be used. She quite frankly wanted to make sure we're doing things correctly," said Division of Law Enforcement Services administrator Michael Roberts, who prepared the report.

Roberts said the review found that former Medicaid Fraud Control Unit investigator John Ohm hadn't reimbursed the state for commuting from his home near New Berlin to Madison in a state car for several years.

Ohm's abuses affected morale in the unit and generated negative remarks among investigators such as "if you want to see fraud just look down the hall in the fraud unit," according to a letter The AP obtained. The letter was written by former Assistant Attorney General Lisa Taylor to Doyle in 2002, about 10 months before Doyle was elected governor.

Ohm retired from the DOJ in January 2003. A message left at a telephone listing for John Ohm in New Berlin was not immediately returned Friday.

The report said DOJ officials discovered in the fall of 2000 that Ohm hadn't reimbursed the state for his personal travel. They made him pay the state for what the report describes as "two months of personal travel."

Roberts said he didn't know how much Ohm paid.

"That was the only instance we found of obvious abuse of the system," Roberts said.

Leistikow said Doyle was meticulous about reimbursing the state for his personal mileage as attorney general.

"The governor led by example," he said.

The report lists a several concerns DOJ officials have about state car regulations.

They said state workers on call 24 hours a day don't have to pay for personal mileage but they don't know if on-call DOJ agents fall in that category because the criteria are unclear.

They also are confused about what penalties workers who violate state car regulations should face and why the policies don't require mileage logs.

The report said the DOJ will impose an internal rule requiring mileage logs, but Roberts said he won't question the drivers of the 17 vehicles with no personal miles until he gets everything straightened out.

"If we go to them now and they begin to ask me questions about what a particular rule means, since I have confusion in my mind, I'd do more harm than good," he said.

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## Audit finds underused state cars, unpaid miles

### More than 550 vehicles identified for sale with plan to find 500 more

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

*Last Updated: June 10, 2004*

**Madison** - A report on state vehicles to be released today documents rampant oversight problems, finding more than 1,000 cars and trucks underutilized and about 70 employees suspected of failing to reimburse the state for personal miles.

The Department of Administration report identifies more than 550 vehicles that can be sold almost immediately and lays out a plan to find another 500 by the end of July, according to a source familiar with the report.

At least 70 employees who regularly drive their vehicles home have not been reimbursing the state for their commutes and other personal trips, according to the source. Those employees will be sent letters within days saying they must reimburse the state or provide documents by July 1 proving they do not owe any money.

Any punishment will be doled out on a case-by-case basis, the source said. The report clarifies the reimbursement rules so all employees understand when they have to make payments.

The Department of Administration began reviewing ways to trim the state fleet in January. But the department expanded the focus to include personal use of state cars in February, after Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager was arrested on suspicion of drunken driving in a state-owned car.

Lautenschlager later pleaded guilty, turned in her driver's license, paid \$784 in fines and gave up \$3,250 in pay. In a March settlement with the state Ethics Board, she paid a \$250 fine and reimbursed the state for \$672 worth of personal travel that she had not reported to the state.

Gov. Jim Doyle imposed a moratorium on vehicle purchases while the review was being conducted. That freeze will stay in place through the end of the year.

The cuts will be spread fairly evenly across state agencies, with the initial focus on larger departments, according to the source.

Software that tracks the purchase and maintenance of vehicles will be upgraded, and all agencies will be required to include their vehicles in the system. A consultant's review in 2000 called for better use of that system.

The report does not include an estimate of savings from selling off the more than 1,000 vehicles.

### Concerns sounded

State agencies have not yet seen the report but have been briefed on the number of vehicles they are likely to lose. They gave the cuts a mixed reaction, with some saying it would actually increase costs.

"We have a fleet sized to the operation we're at," said Greg Diemer, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point vice chancellor for business affairs. "We wouldn't have these vehicles on campus if we weren't using them."

Cutting the school's motor pool of 29 vehicles would force the university to rent cars or reimburse employees for using their own cars, both of which are more expensive options than using state-owned vehicles, he said. The campus has another 57 vehicles, many of which are used for maintenance, he said.

Vice chancellors at UW-Parkside and UW-Green Bay raised similar concerns. But Ron Lostetter, UW-La Crosse's vice chancellor for administration and finance, said it costs his school about the same to run its motor pool as to reimburse employees for their own use of vehicles.

"We've been considering this elimination for some time," he said.

Faramarz Vakili, who oversees the fleet for UW-Madison, said he had been working with Department of Administration officials to avoid cuts that would hurt the school's operations.

"We don't believe there are that many vehicles sitting around doing nothing," he said. "As far as I see it, if there was a lot of opportunity to save money, we would have done it by now . . . For the Madison campus, I'm very happy with what we've got and why we've got it."

UW-Madison has about 700 vehicles, accounting for roughly half of the UW System's vehicles, he said. About 150 of the UW-Madison vehicles are for farming and field research, and another large chunk is devoted to maintenance work, he said. Those essential vehicles leave just a small number that can be cut, he said.

The Department of Corrections will lose 120 of its roughly 1,000 vehicles, said department spokesman Bill Clausius.

"This is not going to happen overnight," he said. "Our intent is to reach that goal, but it's going to take a while to get there."

Vance Rayburn, the head of customer and employee services for the Department of Natural Resources, wouldn't say how many vehicles the Department of Administration has targeted but noted his agency could withstand a cut of 150 to 200 vehicles.

"We feel we can be more efficient," he said. "We think this will be a money-saving thing for the taxpayer and the state DNR."

But like Clausius, he said a July deadline would be difficult.

"That's pretty quick because of the way the fleets in general are spread out across the state" for the DNR, he said.

## Low-use vehicles

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A Journal Sentinel review of state records in April showed about 60% of 1,700 employees paid for no personal miles for vehicles assigned to them during a recent 14-month period. But the report released today finds that most of those vehicles, though labeled as personally assigned, are actually left at work sites rather than driven to employees' homes at night. Those vehicles will likely be reclassified.

The report found more than 200 employees with personally assigned vehicles who likely should be regularly paying for personal trips. About 70 of them are not and will receive the letters.

In 2002, the DNR spent an average of about \$20,000 each on its cars and trucks. At that rate, selling 1,000 cars would eventually save \$20 million in replacement costs. But such savings would be offset by increased reimbursements paid to employees who use their own cars for state business.

State Sen. Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay), who has called for downsizing the fleet, applauded the planned reductions and continued freeze on vehicle purchases.

"I don't think there should be any additional purchases until we're darn sure the car purchases and reimbursements are legitimate," he said.

Appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on June 11, 2004.



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

For More Information Contact:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 11, 2004

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

**Cowles Hails Sale of Fleet Vehicles,  
Demands Administration Review of 700 State Boats**

**Madison** – Today State Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) praised the Doyle administration plan to sell 1,050 cars, possibly as early as July of this year. Earlier this year, Cowles secured a comprehensive audit of the entire state fleet by the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau. In the meantime, Cowles has compiled information regarding 736 state-owned boats. “I think the fleet needs to be downsized,” said Cowles. “I’d like the independent Audit Bureau to watch how the sale is conducted, as I want the best possible deal for the taxpayer. In addition, I want the administration to conduct a top-to-bottom review of their 700 boats to find taxpayer savings.”

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 Department of Natural Resources (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 System. The Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Family Services also operate smaller fleets. The proposed cut of 1,000 vehicles would represent a reduction of about 14% in the state's fleet.

A review by the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau created an inventory of 736 state-owned boats with values over \$1,000. The year, model, engine, purpose and location of each boat has been detailed. The Fiscal Bureau has indicated the quality of the data was low and incomplete, so a more thorough analysis is necessary to determine potential cost savings. “Do we need this many boats?” asked Cowles. “Is this the most effective use of our resources? I think the administration now needs to perform a thorough review of their boat fleet.”

The Legislative Audit Bureau is now beginning a review that will include:

- An analysis of the number of vehicles owned and leased.
- A review of the specific types of vehicles, such as sedans, S.U.V.s and trucks.
- An assessment of how the total number of vehicles needed is determined.
- Mileage reimbursement issues for state employees, state legislators and private sector employees contracting with the state.

The Doyle administration has stated that half of the 1,000 vehicles for sale would come from the Department of Administration and with the rest from the UW System, Department of Transportation and Department of Natural Resources. “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. “I want to work with the administration to find significant savings.”

-more-

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State Fleet Sale  
Senator Cowles  
Page Two

State statute and administrative rules are in place for the sale of vehicle and surplus property, and the public auction process is detailed. There are seven state auctions scheduled for the rest of this year. According to the Department of Administration's website, 900 vehicles are auctioned off annually.

"I want to reduce the size of the fleet and have a more fuel-efficient fleet, but the administration needs a well thought out plan to sell these cars," Cowles said. "The goal is to save the taxpayers significant dollars. We can't have a fire sale or end up having the state spending more in the long run."

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.

In early April, Cowles requested a comprehensive audit of the entire state fleet by the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau. The Legislative Audit Committee approved the audit on May 4 in order to document the effectiveness and efficiency of vehicle procurement in addition to exploring the accuracy of mileage reporting and related issues.

Cowles also requested an update this year 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 this comprehensive accounting," said Cowles. "The Legislative Audit Bureau has the most credibility to conduct this thorough review and the sale. Now the administration needs to look hard at these boats for savings"

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

#30#



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

One East Main, Suite 301 • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 266-3847 • Fax: (608) 267-6873

June 3, 2004

TO: Senator Robert Cowles  
Room 122 South, State Capitol

FROM: Rebecca Hotynski, Fiscal Analyst

SUBJECT: Department of Natural Resources Boat Ownership

This memorandum is in response to your request for information on the number of boats owned by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and their uses. Unlike the motor vehicles used by the Department, boats are not maintained or managed as part of a centralized fleet. Rather, boats may be assigned to specific individuals (such as conservation wardens, scientists, or fisheries biologists) for specialized uses, or may be available for general use in regional areas by DNR staff as needed. Boats may also be maintained by bureaus for general use on specific properties under the management or oversight of that program.

While the use of boats is not centrally managed, DNR does maintain an inventory of equipment valued at \$1,000 or more. From this list, as well as from equipment survey records compiled by the Bureau of Law Enforcement, it is estimated that DNR owns approximately 736 boats. The number of boats owned, by program, is shown in the following table. For programs other than law enforcement, this list excludes any boat with an estimated value of less than \$1,000 (such as most canoes, rowboats, and life rafts).

TABLE 1

DNR Boat Ownership By Program

Law Enforcement (Conservation/Environmental Wardens)	434
Fisheries Management and Habitat Protection	197
Integrated Science Services	22
Water Program Supervisors (multidisciplinary)	20
Parks	18
Wildlife Management	17
Watershed Management	12
Forestry	6
Facilities and Lands	5
Enforcement and Science Managers	4
Administrative and Field Services	1
Total	736

The law enforcement program uses the boats at its disposal for a variety of purposes including the enforcement of regulations related to sport and commercial fishing, spearing, trapping, and waterfowl hunting. Boats may also be used to investigate environmental contamination complaints, water regulation violations, shore land management complaints, or aquatic contamination spills. In addition, boats may be used for recreational boating enforcement patrols as well as boating safety classes, and in some cases search and rescue efforts.

Fisheries management and habitat protection staff use airboats to research and sample difficult to reach backwater or marsh systems in various areas of the state, including along portions of the Mississippi River. Other boats are used to set nets to sample fish for seasonal surveys, determining population estimates for different waters. Boom shocker boats (which send an electrical charge through the water, stunning fish) are also used for sampling purposes. On the Great Lakes, boats are used both to assess fish populations and to monitor commercial harvest activities. Additional boat uses statewide include fish stocking, water quality monitoring, vegetation surveys, and critical fish habitat identification, maintenance, and restoration.

Integrated science services staff use the boats at their disposal primarily for research purposes. Activities include netting fish for species survey, conducting waterfowl surveys, and conducting research on specific species of fish (including walleye and musky). Boats are also used for water chemistry surveys, aquatic habitat research, mercury testing, and fish propagation studies. Boats equipped with mini-boom shocker systems are also used for sampling purposes on rivers and in smaller lakes.

Water program supervisors and watershed management staff conduct lake monitoring activities to track fish health, the progress of invasive species, and general water quality issues (including follow up of reports of contamination, spills, or fish die-offs). These efforts include aquatic plant management surveys, sediment sampling, and fish population surveys. Sediment contamination is also monitored, particularly in conjunction with the Fox River PCB remediation project. Boats are also used to evaluate dredging projects compliance with environmental regulations, and for river clean-up projects.

Wildlife management staff frequently use boats as part of waterfowl population monitoring efforts and for habitat evaluation and development. Other uses include investigation of wildlife disease outbreaks, invasive aquatic species control efforts, and other aquatic and waterfowl research. Boats are sometimes used for property maintenance (including the posting of signs, towing bogs away from marsh outlet structures, and assisting with prescribed burns on flowage property).

The different uses of boats by parks, forestry, field services, and facilities and land staff tend to vary by property. Some boats are used to conduct safety patrols in high use beach or recreation areas, and are available for rescue purposes as needed. Others are used for property maintenance activities, such as placing buoys, piers, and swimrafts, retrieving litter, or accessing remote camping areas for maintenance and cleaning purposes. At other locations, boats may be the primary way for staff to access remote areas of the property (for example, DNR-owned islands and flowages).

I hope this information is helpful. Please contact me if you have further questions.

RH/bh



## **State Senator Bob Welch**

**State President Pro-Tempore**

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

For Immediate Release  
June 14, 2004

Contact: Senator Bob Welch  
(608) 266-0751

### **Welch has Mixed View of Recent Cut in State Fleet**

*Senator from the 14<sup>th</sup> approves of cuts, calls for further actions to eliminate wasteful spending.*

**[Madison.]** State Senator Bob Welch applauds the Governor's decision to reduce the state fleet by one thousand vehicles.

"This is a step in the right direction," Welch noted, "but we need to realize that Wisconsin should eliminate the entire fleet of vehicles. I have long advocated the use of our current communication technologies as an alternative to travel, rather than buying a vehicle that would not be fully utilized."

While reimbursing drivers for mileage when traveling is absolutely necessary is something Welch feels is more appropriate he would like to see all state employee travel more heavily scrutinized.

"State employees should be held responsible when utilizing taxpayer's money," Welch said.

"This measure does not go far enough however," Welch referred to a budget amendment he authored in 2001 that would get rid of the states fleet of aircraft, he added, "the Governor needs to address the fleet of aircraft the state owns as well. These aircraft need to be eliminated in order to reduce costs that are adding to the budget deficit."

Welch said that while he thanked the Governor for reducing the fleet, he wishes the Governor would stop flouting the will of the legislature and make all the necessary cuts to ease the burden on taxpayers.

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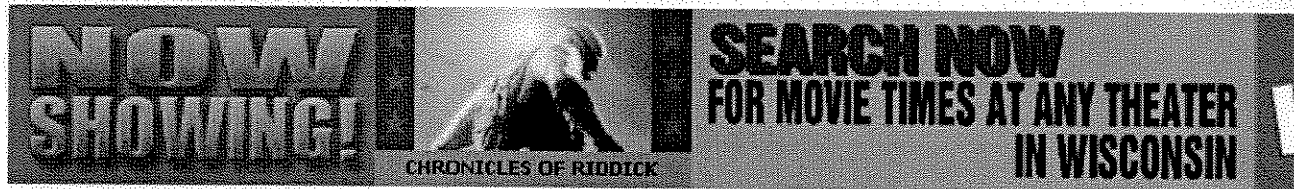
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# State rules on employee car use run afoul of IRS

Shop the lighting

By PATRICK MARLEY  
pmarley@journalsentinel.com

Last Updated: June 11, 2004

**Madison** - The guidelines for employees' personal use of state vehicles has run counter to IRS rules for years, raising the possibility that hundreds of workers might owe back taxes.

The tax reporting mix-up was raised for the first time in a report issued Friday that announces various changes to how the state manages its fleet of 7,300 vehicles, 1,000 of which will soon be sold because many of them are underutilized.

According to Internal Revenue Service rules, employees must reimburse their employers for any personal use of an employer vehicle, including commuting, or report it as taxable income at the rate of 37.5 cents per mile. But the state requires employees to pay at most 32.5 cents per mile, and in some cases those workers do not have to reimburse the state for their commutes.

Under IRS rules, employees are responsible for paying taxes on miles that were not reimbursed, as well as on the difference between the two reimbursement rates, Administration Secretary Marc Marotta said.

The state, however, never included the added compensation on its taxing reports to employees and the federal government.

## Big headache

In most cases, proper reporting would add just a small amount of

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taxable income for most employees, but reissuing hundreds of federal W-2 forms to employees would create a huge administrative burden for the state, he said.

"The hassle factor would be fairly high," said Marotta, Gov. Jim Doyle's top deputy.

Marotta said the state has already begun negotiations with the IRS and hopes to reach an agreement that will minimize the need to reissue the forms.

IRS officials could not be reached Friday because their offices were closed in observance of President Ronald Reagan's funeral.

It's not known over what period back taxes might be owed and whether employees would face any additional penalties for failing to have paid them in the past.

Marotta and Deputy Secretary Laura Engan stressed that it was the state, not employees, who erred.

"The fact the state issued the wrong W-2 form really isn't the employees' fault," Engan said.

The finding adds yet one more problem to the list of troubles that have plagued the management of the state's fleet of vehicles, worth more than \$50 million. Friday's report is meant to alleviate those problems by laying out a plan to sell more than 1,000 vehicles in the coming months.

According to the report, 569 vehicles have already been identified for elimination, and another 500 will be found by the end of July.

The report also: lays out new guidelines to clarify reimbursement rules; says vehicle-tracking software will be updated; and notes that payments will be sought from 69 employees who apparently have skipped the required reimbursements.

"The system just wasn't working particularly well, and this is an attempt to fix it," Marotta said.

### Impact debated

Some University of Wisconsin campuses complained this week that the vehicle reductions would increase their costs because they would need to reimburse more employees for using their personal vehicles, which is more expensive.

But Marotta said the intent is to reduce travel by increasing the use of conference calls, video links and the Internet.



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"How much are we going to save if we continue to do business as we always have? Probably not that much, but we've got to change the way we do business and thereby reduce costs," he said.

As of Feb. 1, nearly 400 state employees used personally assigned vehicles, the report says. About 9% of those employees regard their home as their workplace because they travel heavily. Those and some other employees, such as prison wardens, are not required by the state to pay commuting miles, but the IRS requires most of those people to report such vehicle use as income.

Between 1994 and 2003, the size of the state fleet grew from 6,187 to 7,360 vehicles, an increase of about 19%. Doyle has put a moratorium on new vehicle purchases through the end of the year.

In sheer numbers, the Department of Natural Resources will take the biggest cut, losing 114 vehicles, or 7% of its fleet of 1,562 vehicles. Smaller agencies face steeper percentage cuts, with the departments of Commerce, Public Instruction, Revenue and Workforce Development, along with the Office of the State Public Defender, losing one-quarter of their vehicles.

"Our work is still getting done, but we're able to do it in a much cheaper way with fewer miles," said Joe Donovan, a spokesman for the Department of Public Instruction.

But Fred Schlichting, the administrator for the Cooperative Educational Service Agency No. 12 in Ashland, said the cuts would simply mean fewer visits from DPI staff to remote parts of the state.

The department used to update educators at Ashland conferences, but now administrators from the area have to travel to Eau Claire or even Madison to see the department's staff, he said.

"We're down to basically no visits," said Schlichting, whose organization supports school districts in the region. "Now those (visits) are fewer and now we're always driving further."

Appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on June 12, 2004.

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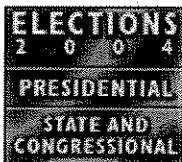
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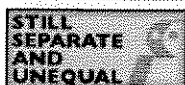
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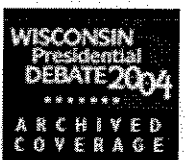
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"We feel we can be more efficient," he said. "We think this will be a money-saving thing for the taxpayer and the state DNR."

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### **Low-use vehicles**

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The report found more than 200 employees with personally assigned vehicles who likely should be regularly paying for personal trips. About 70 of them are not and will receive the letters.

In 2002, the DNR spent an average of about \$20,000 each on its cars and trucks. At that rate, selling 1,000 cars would eventually save \$20 million in replacement costs. But such savings would be offset by increased reimbursements paid to employees who use their own cars for state business.

State Sen. Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay), who has called for downsizing the fleet, applauded the planned reductions and continued freeze on vehicle purchases.

"I don't think there should be any additional purchases until we're darn sure the car purchases and reimbursements are legitimate," he said.

Appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on June 11, 2004.

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## State vehicle inquiry shifts to DNR's 735 or so boats

### Poor records cited on \$4 million fleet

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

Posted: June 22, 2004

**Madison** - Less than two weeks after a report exposed problems with state-owned vehicles, Gov. Jim Doyle revealed Tuesday that his administration is reviewing the state's fleet of boats.

An examination of poorly maintained Department of Natural Resources records shows a need to account for the 735 or so boats owned by the state, Doyle spokesman Dan Leistikow said.

The department spent at least \$4 million to buy the fleet over recent decades, but poor record-keeping has made it impossible for administrators to determine the costs of 20% of the boats.

"In the 16 years that Republicans ran the state, record-keeping of state vehicles was atrocious," Leistikow said. "We're seeing the same thing now with state boats, and the governor wants to see some accountability."

The two-week-old inquiry so far has found no signs of misuse, Leistikow said.

The DNR has spent more than \$1 million on boats since 2000, including \$169,254 for a 44-foot converted lobster ship, the records show.

Spending over the past 4 1/2 years was boosted by a one-year spike in 2000, when the department spent close to \$500,000 on 58 vessels, including the lobster boat.

State Sen. Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) asked for data on the DNR's boats last month after securing a legislative audit of the management of the state's fleet of 7,300 vehicles. As DNR administrators gathered documents for Cowles, they learned that the records lacked adequate detail, Leistikow said.

Cowles on Tuesday came short of demanding cuts, saying officials should review the DNR's purchase and use of boats because of that agency's recent history with buying vehicles.

"Is there any blood in the water like there was for the car fleet? No, but there isn't a good track record there," he said.

Earlier this month, the Department of Administration released a report saying it had identified 569 underutilized vehicles in all state agencies that would be sold. It plans to find 500 more vehicles to cut by the end of July, as well.

The DNR has contributed to the rising number of state vehicles over the years. In 2002, as the state faced a \$1.1 billion deficit, the department spent \$6.1 million on 278 vehicles, up from \$4.2 million on 203 cars and trucks the previous year.

### Boat values vary

The DNR owns 736 boats worth more than \$1,000 each, according to data from the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau. The state has spent almost \$4 million to buy 585 of them over the years. The bureau has been unable to find full purchasing

### Quotable

“Is there any blood in the water like there was for the car fleet? No, but there isn't a good track record there.”

- State Sen.  
**Robert Cowles**  
 (R-Green Bay),  
 who asked for data  
 on the DNR's boats

information on the remaining 151 boats.

Purchase prices ranged from \$169,254 for the lobster boat to about \$1,000 each for 14-foot canoes. One purchase dates back to 1940 and two to the 1960s. The state purchased 123 others in the late 1970s and 1980s, but the bulk were obtained in the past 15 years.

The DNR has not disclosed the current value of the boats or the cost to operate them. Cowles said the department told him compiling such data would take until October, a time frame he called "ridiculous."

"(If) the fiscal bureau can specify this much, why can't the agency go one better and refine the numbers?" said Cowles, who sent a letter this week to DNR Secretary Scott Hassett asking for a quicker response.

Leistikow agreed the initial DNR timetable was unacceptable but said he did not know when full details would become available.

DNR policy analyst Paul Heinen said the department has sent regional offices questionnaires to glean more information about the boats and what they're used for.

"We need to find out what our inventory is out there," he said.

The state must maintain hundreds of boats to monitor underwater life, oversee commercial and sport fishing and police waterways, he said.

"We have a lot of lakes and a lot of rivers and a lot of shoreline," he said.

The incomplete records, coupled with other documents, provide a look at the kind of fleet the department maintains:

- The lobster boat, dubbed the Perca, is used to survey yellow perch, chinook salmon, alewives and forage fish in Lake Michigan, according to the DNR's Web site. The handful of other large, expensive ships owned by the agency are used on Lake Michigan, Heinen said.
- The department spent more than \$132,000 each on three 30-foot boats with outboard motors in 1990. Two are used by wardens and one by the parks division.
- The fisheries division uses two 52-foot, inboard-motor boats that were each purchased for close to \$100,000. One of those boats was purchased in 1976; the purchase date of the other is unknown.
- The department maintains nine boats that were purchased for \$30,000 to \$50,000 and nine boats purchased for \$20,000 to \$29,999.
- Most boats cost far less, however, often \$4,000 or less.

The jump in spending in 2000 was propelled in part by the purchase of the \$169,254 lobster boat. The DNR bought 58 boats that year, almost double the number it bought in 1999.

The department spent \$170,829 to \$221,222 on about 30 boats each year from 2001 to 2003. It is on track to spend within that range again this year.

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Article  
June 22

**Asbjornson, Karen**

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**From:** Stuart, Todd  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 23, 2004 9:47 AM  
**To:** Matthews, Pam; Asbjornson, Karen  
**Subject:** state boats

FYI:  
Cowles did NOT call for an audit of the state boats. He only asked the administration to do an internal review like they did for the cars.

This headline from the Lakeland Times is wrong.  
<http://www.lakelandtimes.com/news.php?story=528>

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OPINION

Posted June 25, 2004

## Editorial: Cutting fleet could save money

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State-owned vehicles are certainly getting a lot of press.

**Issue**

This week's search for information on the value and location of some of the 736 state-owned boats used by the Department of Natural Resources pales in comparison to some past issues about planes and cars. But it bears watching.

State-owned bo

**Our view**

A closer look at  
might help save

A report by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau placed the value on 583 of the boats, but the purchase prices for the other 153 boats couldn't be found. It all points to some sloppy recordkeeping at the DNR, at the very least.

Sen. Robert Cowles, R-Allouez, had his interested piqued in early May when he v to public testimony about the audit of the state's automobile fleet. Someone ask official about the size of the department's boat fleet, and the answer produced a

That sent the Fiscal Bureau and the DNR on a search of boats and boat records. was informed by the DNR that information wouldn't be forthcoming until October public with his concerns.

While Cowles is quick to point out that the absence of clear records doesn't auto translate into, as he phrased it, "blood in the water," it does raise some key que

Is the state over-supplied in boats? Is there duplication where boat-sharing wou beneficial and cost-effective?

The scrutiny of the boat fleet comes at a good time, as the state scrounges for v costs. If some money can be saved in one corner of the DNR budget, it could be valuable areas, such as fish stocking. Most of the boats are purchased through n from state fishing and hunting licenses, but the money trail still has to be monit

It would also wipe away what has to be a growing public suspicion about the sta vehicles. It has been only a couple of years since Gov. Scott McCallum was calle carpet for reckless use of state planes — using a plane and \$2,600 to fly from M Janesville. This resulted in the reduction in the number of state-owned planes, a did him little good in his unsuccessful campaign in 2002.



Earlier this year, Gov. Jim Doyle announced that 1,000 state-owned cars would be sold in the summer after the audit revealed they weren't needed, and big bucks could be saved.

While boatgate isn't exactly at that level of an issue, it's part of a healthy and ongoing conversation to take a closer look at the way state tax money is being spent, and to keep state government accountable.

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## LOCAL NEWS

Posted June 23, 2004

# Cowles requests probe on 736 state-owned boats

By John Dipko

Press-Gazette Madison bureau

[jdipko@greenbaypressgazette.com](mailto:jdipko@greenbaypressgazette.com)

MADISON — A Northeastern Wisconsin lawmaker is urging a state agency to rev owned boats in the wake of a report that the combined purchase price for nearly surpassed \$3.9 million.

State Sen. Robert Cowles, R-Allouez, sent a letter this week to state Department Resources Secretary Scott Hassett seeking the review, saying taxpayer savings achieved.

"It could be this fleet is entirely justified, but I think the administration now need a thorough study," the letter states. "Wisconsin taxpayers deserve a comprehensive accounting."

The action comes on the heels of Gov. Jim Doyle's announcement earlier this month to sell nearly 1,100 state cars following an internal review that showed many of underused.

The Legislature's Joint Audit Committee, which includes Cowles, approved an audit of the state auto fleet.

Questions about state car usage emerged after state Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager was arrested in late February for driving drunk in a state-owned car.

At Cowles' request, the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau obtained a list from 736 state-owned boats and secured purchase prices for 583 of them. The total:

Purchase prices for the remaining 153 boats, which are located under the DNR's enforcement division, were unavailable, according to the bureau.

Four of the boats reached six-figure territory, including a 44-foot Dugas lobster boat acquired in 2000 for \$169,254 and three 30-foot outboard Boston Whalers acquired in 1998 for \$136,014, \$133,636 and \$132,522.

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DNR legislative liaison Paul Heinen couldn't immediately say late Tuesday afternoon if a lobster boat was needed. He said staff that could answer that were unavailable because three Boston Whalers were in use on the Great Lakes for tasks such as search-and-rescue missions and commercial fishing-related work.

Heinen said a DNR review of the boat fleet has been under way for about a month.

More than 150 of the boats were acquired after Jan. 1, 2000, the fiscal bureau for the DNR said.

"There isn't any allegation of wrongdoing, but it's a big chunk of assets, and it makes sense to see," Cowles said.

Most of the boats are purchased through money raised from state fishing and hunting licenses, Heinen said.

Still, Cowles said, proceeds from any boat sales could go toward tax relief.

In his letter, Cowles also took DNR staff to task, saying a staff member told him that after his initial request that a good boat inventory may not be completed until October.

Meanwhile, the fiscal bureau created the boat inventory. The majority — 434 boats — are for law enforcement, followed by 197 for fisheries management and habitat protection, Heinen said. He said the rest are for program supervisors, parks, wildlife management, water management and forestry.

Heinen said that, when the DNR initially put its inventory together after Cowles' request last month, there wasn't enough information at the time.

"No one ever asked for specific information about it before," he said.

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## Cowles wants DNR boat audit

By: [Richard Moore](#)

Even as he praised Gov. James Doyle last week for the governor's recently announced plan to sell 1,050 state vehicles, State Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) called for the Doyle Administration to audit the state's boat fleet, which numbers more than 700.

"I think the fleet needs to be downsized," Cowles said of the vehicle decision. "I'd like the independent Audit Bureau to watch how the sale is conducted, as I want the best possible deal for the taxpayer. In addition, I want the administration to conduct a top-to-bottom review of their 700 boats to find taxpayer savings."

At Cowles's request, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau has created an inventory of 736 state-owned boats with values of more than \$1,000, along with the year, model, engine, purpose and location of each craft. However, according to Cowles, the Fiscal Bureau indicated the quality of the data was low and incomplete.

That means a more thorough analysis is necessary, Cowles said, but the senator's office also said this week the DNR has told Cowles it cannot provide its own comprehensive boat inventory "very quickly" and that it may be October before it can produce one.

Cowles doesn't think the Doyle administration should wait.

"Do we need this many boats?" he asked. "Is this the most effective use of our resources? I think the administration now needs to perform a thorough review of their boat fleet."

Unlike with motor vehicles, the agency does not maintain or manage a centralized boat fleet but instead assigns boat to specific employees, such as conservation wardens, or makes them available for general use in regional locations.

In a June 3 memo to Cowles, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau placed the DNR's boat tally at approximately 736, using an inventory of equipment valued at \$1,000 or more, as well as equipment survey records.

However, the list would not include most canoes, rowboats and life rafts and other non-law enforcement boats valued at less than \$1,000.

More than half of the boats – 434 – are designated for law enforcement, while another 197 are used for fisheries management and habitat protection.

The law enforcement program uses its boats not only for enforcement of such things as fishing regulations but also to investigate complaints of environmental contamination and shoreland management violations.

The fisheries management boats are airboats used to reach backwater or marsh systems and to set nets to sample fish for seasonal surveys.

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Meanwhile, an audit of the state's vehicle fleet requested earlier this year by Cowles is continuing.

The Legislative Audit Committee, of which Cowles is a member, approved the audit May 4.

The review will include an analysis of the number of vehicles owned and leased, a review of specific types of vehicles, such as sedans, SUVs and trucks, an assessment of how the total number of vehicles needed is determined, and mileage reimbursement issues for state employees, state legislators and private sector employees contracting with the state.

Finally, Cowles has also requested an update this year on the progress of a Department of Administration (DOA) plan to consolidate the state fleet management programs.

In 2000, the DOA developed a five-year action plan to achieve consolidation, projecting millions of dollars in savings.

**Posted:** June 22, 2004

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**Cowles Applauds DNR Review of 700 State Boats**

**Madison** – Today State Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) applauded Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Secretary Hassett for his prompt response and commitment to review the state's boat fleet. Earlier this year, Cowles secured a comprehensive audit of the entire state car fleet by the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau. "I want the administration to conduct a top-to-bottom review of their 736 boats to find taxpayer savings," said Cowles. "I appreciate Secretary Hassett's response to my letter and his directive for a thorough internal review."

Cowles requested information regarding state boats from the DNR after the May 4<sup>th</sup> hearing of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee that approved the state fleet audit. At this public hearing, questions were raised regarding the size of the department's boat fleet. Nearly a month later, senior DNR staff member contacted Cowles' office stating that the boat inventory was not compiled in a format that would be useful and an inventory would be completed by October of this year.

In the meantime, Cowles requested a review by the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau, which generated an inventory of 736 state-owned boats with values over \$1,000. The Fiscal Bureau compiled information such as the year, model, engine, purpose and location of each boat. The purchase price of only the law enforcement boats was later obtained, which means at least 150 boats are without detailed information. The Fiscal Bureau has indicated the quality of the data was low and incomplete, so a more in-depth analysis is necessary to determine potential cost savings.

"Do we need this many boats? Is this the most effective use of our resources?" asked Cowles. "It could be this boat fleet is entirely justified, but I think the administration now needs to perform a thorough study."

Cowles recently received a letter from DNR Secretary Hassett that responded to his concerns. Secretary Hassett has directed an internal review of DNR boats, due August 31, that will include:

- An assessment of continuing needs, with resulting allocations to assure the most cost-effective deployment of state boats.
- A determination regarding any surplus boats and plan to sell them accordingly.
- A review of state purchasing practices to ensure boats are only purchased when appropriate and necessary.
- The development of an inventory system for state-owned boats.

"I think the taxpayers deserve this comprehensive accounting," said Cowles. "I am glad the administration will look hard at these boats for savings. Depending on the findings of their internal review, we'll see if a Legislative audit is warranted."

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

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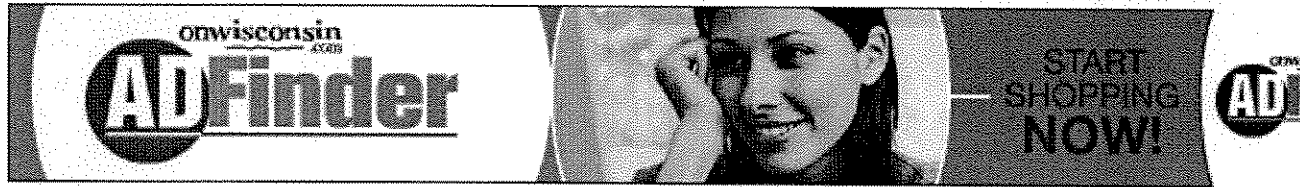
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# Prison wardens told not to take state cars on vacation

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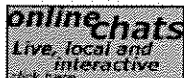
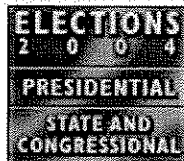
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**Madison** - Wisconsin state prison wardens have been told they should no longer take : owned vehicles on vacation while the Department of Corrections investigates possible the agency's deputy secretary says.

Rick Raemisch told wardens of the move after the Wisconsin S Journal reported state records appear to show that Waupun War McCaughtry used his state gasoline card and a state-owned For Expedition for at least three vacations during the last 18 months

Raemisch said Thursday that the department's policy has been l need to be able to contact a warden quickly - and that meant wa vehicles were equipped with three types of radios.

McCaughtry denied that he used his state-assigned vehicle and card for vacations.

"If I am in the area of the institution and I am able to respond to may use the vehicle. Essentially, I use the vehicle whenever I a required to respond to the institution."

"When I traveled to Canada and Montana, I did not use the veh added in an e-mail to the State Journal.

The State Journal said state records show that, during one vacat 20 to 25, 2003, McCaughtry filled his vehicle three days in a ro in about \$40 worth of fuel each time on the state-paid gas card.

He pumped gas at stops in Belmont on Dec. 21, Hanlontown, K



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22 and Lac du Flambeau Dec. 23, the newspaper said.

The State Journal also said that McCaughtry pumped state-paid the vehicle for a vacation July 14 to 18.

He got gasoline July 12 and 15 in Woodruff and July 19 in Osh newspaper said records show.

It also said records show McCaughtry put in gas Feb. 14 in Mir prior to a week's vacation Feb. 16 to 20, and he gassed up on th card in Mosinee Feb. 21.

State policy says McCaughtry and other prison wardens do not keep track of personal miles on their vehicles because they are command posts, but a 1994 state Administration Department pc forbids the use of such cars for vacation.

Raemisch said that six months after the 1994 policy was created corrections officials issued an internal policy that said "commar vehicles should be made available to other individuals for busir when wardens are on vacation. But it included a provision sayin exemption can be made for "special circumstances."

Corrections Department spokesman William Clausius said that "been interpreted to mean wardens are allowed to choose to hav vehicles with them in case they need to be contacted by their institutions."

Administration Department spokesman Tom Solberg he had no aware of the Corrections Department's internal policy.

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## NEWS

EMAIL STORY PRINT 5

### Don't expect a Caddy at state's car auction

11:30 pm 7/22/04  
Tom Sheehan Wisconsin State Journal

Tired of hearing about state employees taking advantage of the state's car fleet? Here's your chance to get in the driver's seat.

The state will auction off 150 vehicles July 31 at the University of Wisconsin Agricultural Research in Arlington. You could pick one up for an average of about \$4,500, if the state gets what it expects from the sale.

This month's sale will include about 50 cars being sold as a result of Gov. Jim Doyle's plan to cut the state's fleet by more than 1,000 vehicles by the end of the year, said Melanie Fonder a spokeswoman for the governor. Additional sales will be held monthly.

Don't expect to be driving around in a new Cadillac for that kind of cash, though. Most of the vehicles sold this month are from model years 1999 and 2000, including about two dozen each of Ford Crown Victorias, Ford Contours and Dodge Neons. A few truck offerings may not enhance your image, but think riding around in a 1978 International Harvester tanker is cool.

Last month, Doyle put a freeze on the purchase of state vehicles, except in emergency cases, after identifying 569 "under-utilized vehicles." Doyle plans to identify another 500 such vehicles soon and is rewriting the state's vehicle-use policy. The state could recoup \$675,000 from the sale, most of which would go into the state's general fund.

"In the past decade, state government has gone on an unprecedented car-buying spree. We need to get cars and more accountability," Doyle said. "This auction is just another step in making state government live within its means."

Administration officials began looking into the use of state cars after Attorney General Peg Lautens was ticketed for drunken driving after driving a state-owned car into a ditch in February. After the investigation, administration officials said the state couldn't account for all its vehicles and how they were being used.

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The Legislative Audit Bureau, which found the state has more than 7,000 cars, is now reviewing the state's fleet on the request of Sen. Robert Cowles of Green Bay. Cowles also has asked the bureau to monitor the sale of fleet vehicles.

"The goal is to save the taxpayer significant dollars. We can't have a fleet that is sold or ends up having the state spend more in the long run," Cowles said.

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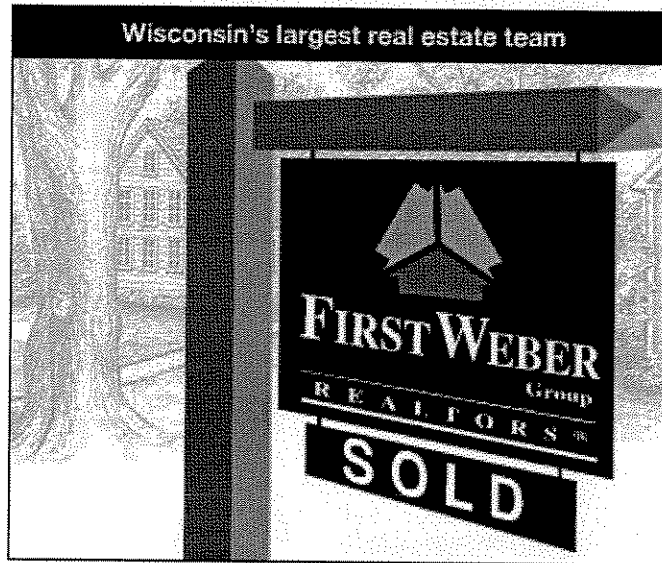
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Agencies will now be required to all vehicles in a central database maintained by the state Department Administration, Doyle said.

Contact Tom Sheehan at [tsheehan@madison.com](mailto:tsheehan@madison.com) or 252-

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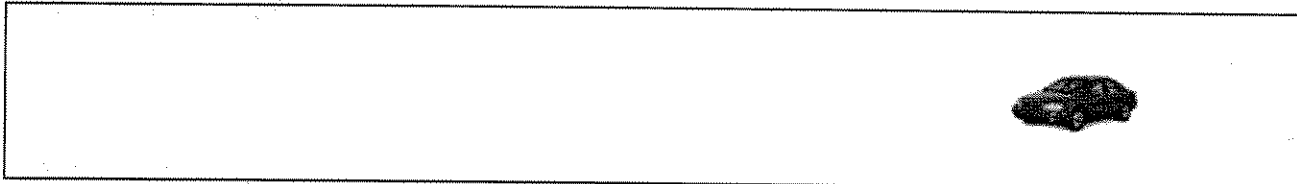
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# 150 state vehicles will be auctioned July 31

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By **STACY FORSTER**  
[sforster@journalsentinel.com](mailto:sforster@journalsentinel.com)

Posted: July 22, 2004

**Madison** - As part of an ongoing effort to reduce the size of Wisconsin's car fleet, Gov. Doyle said Thursday the state will put 150 vehicles on the auction block next week.

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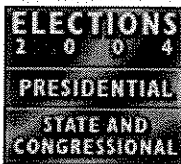
The auction, to be held July 31 at the University of Wisconsin Agricultural Research Station in Arlington, is the first in sales that is intended to reduce the overall number of state vehicles to 1,000.

Doyle has said his goal is to save money by cutting underutilized vehicles and to bring the size of the fleet to 1994 levels; it ballooned from 6,187 then to 7,360 by 2003. Doyle has placed a moratorium on new vehicle purchases through the end of the fiscal year.

The Department of Administration last month found 569 vehicles that could be eliminated from the fleet. Another 141 soon be identified, the governor said.

Among the cars, trucks, vans and sport utility vehicles to be sold are 28 Ford Crown Victorias, 25 Dodge Neons and 17 Ford Contours, according to a document on the Department of Administration Web site that lists 116 of the available cars.

Most of the cars are 1999 models or newer, but among the vehicles for sale are a 1978 IHC Tanker, with 55,000 miles and a 1979 Ford F600, which had the lowest mileage of the cars with just 15,800 miles.



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Doyle said the average cost per vehicle would be about \$ which means the state is likely to rake in roughly \$675,000 the sale of the cars.

The car with the most mileage is a 1993 Chevrolet Subur which has been driven 144,845 miles. According to Kelle Book values, the price for such a car might range from at \$3,760 in a private sale to nearly \$5,500 at retail price.

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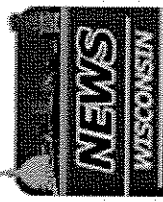
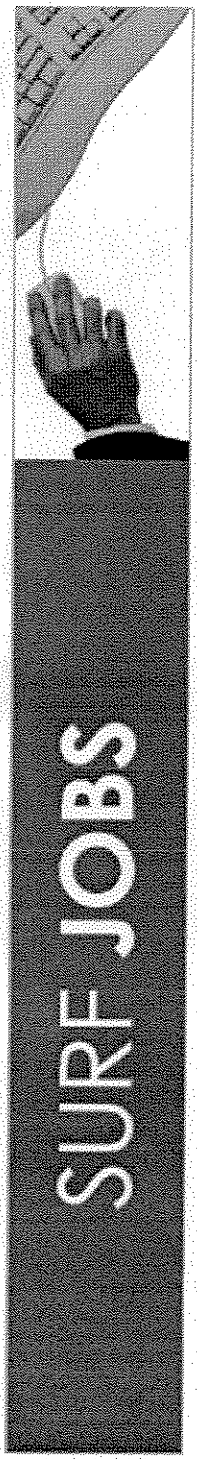


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# Nine state employees to pay for personal car use

## They must reimburse \$1,900 to taxpayers for using state fleet

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

Posted: July 23, 2004

**Madison** - Nine state employees have been ordered to pay a combined \$1,900 for putting personal miles on state vehicles, according to documents released Friday by Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle's office.

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Fifty-seven of the 69 employees whose lack of personal-mile reimbursements were first questioned in a report last month have now been absolved of acting improperly, said Doyle spokesman Dan Leistikow. The driving habits of three employees remain under review.

"The finding is that the vast majority of our state employees are following the rules and are doing the right thing," he said.

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problems, but said more would likely be uncovered in the legislative audit due early next year.

"When a problem gets away from you like this problem has, it doesn't get fixed overnight,"

Last month the Department of Administration issued a report saying it would sell off more than 1,000 of the state's roughly 7,300 vehicles, many of which have been underutilized in recent years. Administrators have identified 569 vehicles to sell so far, with the first 150 going on an auction block in Arlington on July 31.

Another 500 vehicles will be tagged for sale in about two weeks, Leistikow said. Doyle has put a moratorium on vehicle purchases through the end of the year.

The Department of Administration began reviewing the vehicle fleet early this year as part of Doyle's push to downsize state operations. After Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager pleaded guilty to drunken driving in a state car and acknowledged not reimbursing taxpayers for personal miles she put on it, the department expanded the scope of its inquiry.

According to the information released Friday, a Department of Veteran's Affairs worker owed \$806, the most of any of the employees. All nine employees have committed to making the payments, Leistikow said, but none of them will be disciplined for not making them when they were first incurred.

State Sen. Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay), who spearheaded the push for a legislative audit of the fleet, said discipline may not have been in order because fleet policies were not uniformly applied across state government until recently.

"If the rules were clear - and I don't know if they were - but if the rules were clear that they should have been reimbursing, they should be disciplined," Cowles said. "But if the rules weren't clear, they shouldn't be."

Cowles praised Doyle for moving aggressively on fixing fleet problems, but said more would likely be uncovered in the legislative audit due early next year.

"When a problem gets away from you like this problem has, it doesn't get fixed overnight,"



Cowles said. "It's ingrained in the culture and it's hard to get around."

Leistikow did not release the names of the employees, saying he could not do so until they had been notified of the Journal Sentinel's request. The employees have ten days to challenge the release of their names under the state's open records law.

In 39 of the 69 cases, administrators found the employees had not used their cars for personal trips, such as commutes, Leistikow said. The homes of 18 other employees were determined to be their official state headquarters, meaning any driving they do is considered work-related.

Four Department of Commerce employees, two Department of Public Instruction employees, two Department of Workforce Development employees and the Department of Veteran's Affairs employee were ordered to make repayments of \$1,902.58. The use of vehicles by two Commerce employees and one state Supreme Court employee still are under review.

While recent efforts are meant to save vehicle costs, a report this month by the state's maintenance vendor shows per-vehicle repair costs are up sharply for the 2,998 vehicles owned by the Department of Administration. Repairing the average truck jumped 59%, from \$41.63 per month last year to \$66.29 per month so far this year. Car repair costs are up 39% over last year, from \$24.71 per car per month to \$34.33 per car per month.

The Department of Administration spent \$462,056 to repair 1,678 vehicles through July 14, which accounts for just more than 60% of the \$760,565 the department spent in all of last year. The upcoming auto auctions are expected to reduce overall repair costs.

The rise in maintenance costs comes after declines in recent years. Deputy Administration Secretary Laura Engan attributed the increases to an aging fleet, noting that fewer cars are covered by the three-year warranties the state buys. She said about 57% of the vehicles were not covered by warranty last year, but 76% are not covered this year. Meanwhile, today's stock of vehicles is older compared with last year because the state has cut back on purchases, making more repairs necessary.

Engan predicted the problem would resolve itself as the older vehicles are sold off because there will be fewer vehicles to keep up.

*State vehicles being auctioned are listed [online](#).*

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**Cowles Hails the Sale of Fleet Cars**

**Madison** – State Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) applauded the announcement of 118 fleet vehicles sold at an auction July 31<sup>st</sup>. “I think the fleet needed to be downsized,” said Cowles. “I hope this was done in the most cost-effective way, as I want the best possible deal for the taxpayer.”

“I am concerned that once these vehicles are sold, the state might end up paying more in the long term through increased mileage reimbursements or poor use of our assets,” said Cowles. “That’s why I am awaiting the audit’s conclusions and final recommendations.”

The Doyle administration sold 1,073 vehicles overall with 569 sold in June and another 504 to be sold by the end of 2004. Earlier this year, Cowles secured a comprehensive audit of the entire state fleet by the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau and a DNR review of state-owned boats. Cowles has also called on the Legislative Audit Bureau to monitor the sale of vehicles in the state fleet. “I am encouraged by the Governor’s directive to all state agencies to participate in the FleetAnywhere database,” said Cowles. “This is common sense to share information and is what most businesses would do.”

State statute and administrative rules are in place for the sale of vehicle and surplus property, and the public auction process is detailed. According to the Department of Administration’s website, 900 vehicles are typically auctioned off each year. The sale will more than double the usual number of cars sold.

The State of Wisconsin owned and maintains a fleet of over 7,228 vehicles for use by employees on official state business (the state employs roughly 66,000 workers) at the beginning of this year and will be down to 6,155 vehicles by 2005. The Department of Natural Resources (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 System. The Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Family Services also operate smaller fleets. The elimination of 1,073 vehicles would represent a reduction of about 14% in the state’s fleet.

The Legislative Audit is currently conducting a review that will include:

- An analysis of the number of vehicles owned and leased.
- A review of the specific types of vehicles, such as sedans, S.U.V.s and trucks.
- An assessment of how the total number of vehicles needed is determined.
- Mileage reimbursement issues for state employees, state legislators and private sector employees contracting with the state.

“I want to reduce the size of the fleet and have a more fuel-efficient fleet, but I hope the administration implemented a well thought out plan to sell these cars,” Cowles said. “The goal is to save the taxpayers significant dollars. We can’t have a fire sale or end up having the state spending more in the long run.”

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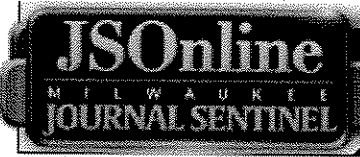
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# Doyle administration logging less air time

## Governor reduces use of state planes, flying far less often than predecessors

By PATRICK MARLEY  
pmarley@journalsentinel.com

Posted: Aug. 5, 2004

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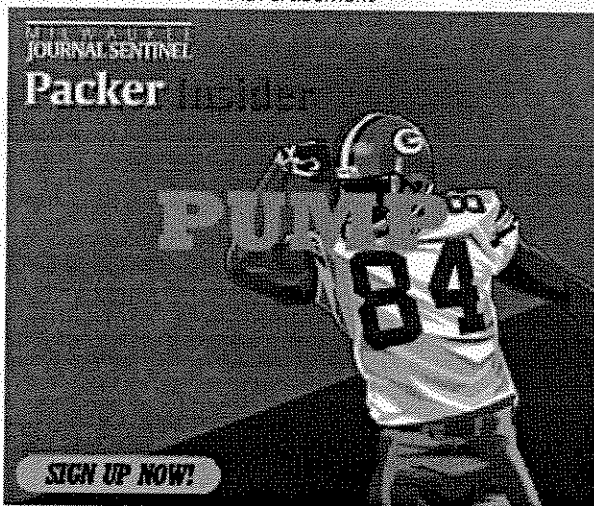
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**Madison** - Gov. Jim Doyle and his top staff climb aboard state planes far less frequently than the two preceding administrations, according to records released Thursday.

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Doyle traveled 24,282 miles in the just-ended fiscal year, about one-third of the miles logged per year by former Gov. Tommy G. Thompson in fiscal years 1999 and 2000. It's about half as often as then-Gov. Scott McCallum flew in fiscal 2002.

### Plane Use Limited

Gov. Jim Doyle allows the Natural Resources Board of Wisconsin Inv Board, the Technical College System the like to pick up for meetings, as predecessors did the planes by ca secretaries also limited.

Records released to the Journal Sentinel under the state's open records law also show Doyle has sold six state planes over the last year, or 22% of the 27 planes the state owned as of last fall.

Two other planes have been tagged for sale as well.

Six of the planes in the fleet, including the two now for sale, are used for travel. The re