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Green Bay Press-Gazette September 23, 2004

IN OUR VIEW

Hold state workers accountable

Planes. Cars. Boats. Snowmobiles. All-terrain vehicles. Cell phones.

"It's funny how one thing will lead to another thing will lead to another thing will lead to another thing. It just keeps going," said Sen. Rob Cowles, R-Green Bay.

Cowles should know. A member of the Wisconsin Legislature's Joint Audit Committee, he's been at the forefront in trying to restore state workers' accountability for how they use taxpayers' property.

The first hint of something amiss occurred a couple of years ago, when former Gov. Scott McCallum used a state plane and \$2,600 in public money to fly 40 miles from Madison to Janesville.

The state subsequently concluded

Issue

State property

Our view

Workers must be accountable for use of taxpayers' property.

ed that it had too many planes and reduced the size of its fleet.

Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager brought a new system failure to light earlier this year, when she drove her state-owned car into a ditch while driving drunk late at night on her way home to Fond du Lac.

The crash raised questions about how workers were using more than 7,000 state-owned vehicles and prompted Cowles to ask for an audit.

An internal review found hun-

dreds of underused cars and trucks, huge record-keeping problems and vehicle use improperly reported for income-tax purposes. The state subsequently sold 1,069 vehicles to reduce its fleet.

A legislative audit is pending.

That led to taxpayer-owned boats — 736 of them, including a 44-foot lobster boat and three 30-foot outboard Boston Whalers.

Again, there was sloppy record keeping, evidenced by the Department of Natural Resources' inability to come up with purchase prices on 153 of the boats.

The results of internal reviews of the DNR boat, snowmobile and ATV fleets are pending.

Now it's cell phones — nearly 10,000 of them — costing taxpayers almost \$220,000 a month.

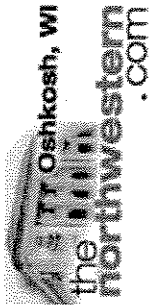
The state has no system for tracking whether state workers are using them for personal calls or other non-business purposes.

With state auditors poised to review cell-phone use, the Department of Administration announced that it soon would use a computer-tracking system to identify cell-phone abuse and would issue new cell-phone policies for all state employees.

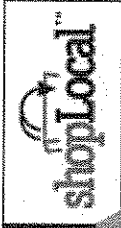
With so many audits in the works and so much evidence of sloppy record keeping, Cowles had the right idea when he said that one thing will lead to another thing will lead to another thing will lead to another thing.

After such widespread taxpayer abuse, there's no other way to regain the public trust.

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Posted Sept. 29, 2004

Editorial: State AG's follies good reason to lose her car

Now that the state Ethics Board has let Peg Lautenschlager off the hook for obvious violations of state laws with her use of a state car on personal time, it's time for the court of public opinion to review her case.

And talk about a comedy of errors. She charged a gas receipt in March right after a Racine County Democratic Party dinner, but nobody remembers her driving the car to a political event. Her husband signed off on purchases of car washes and gas, a violation of a privilege that is only Peg Lautenschlager's.

Then, four unauthorized people drove her car other than herself. As if that wasn't enough, she had an accident in 2003 and apparently made a call to police for clarification on reporting incidents and not to report the incident itself.

So many Wisconsinites wish they could be a politician. Then they could break rules without penalty, as the toothless pound puppy that is our state ethics board has seen fit to do.

The private sector wouldn't be so generous, and so often. A car accident that went unreported would affect the company safety record and imperil future driving privileges for the offender. Unauthorized credit card charges would result in the suspension of that privilege.

Here's a strong case for public officials to drive their own cars and get

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reimbursed for mileage connected with work. Here's also a case to suspend credit card privileges.

The toothless ethics board is another matter. Lautenschlager has gotten special treatment in our opinion that the private sector wouldn't tolerate. Taxpayers should have to be asking what's next? They don't deserve that kind of punishment. But now they will with this errant ethics board decision to extract no penalty. A comedy of errors, indeed.



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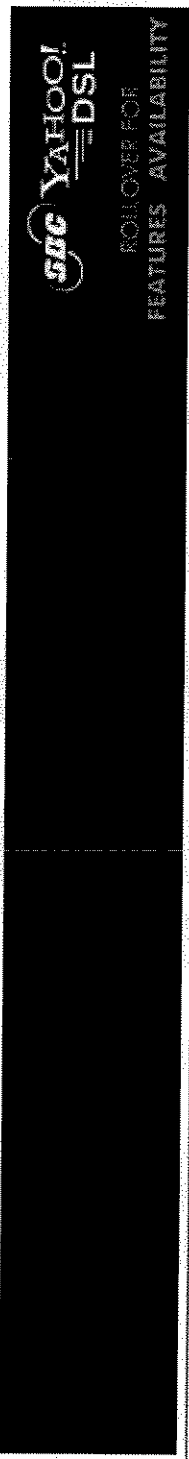
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Special Features

Doyle aides said only employees can drive; the policy was changed later

By STACY FORSTER
sforster@journalsentinel.com

Posted: Oct. 4, 2004

Madison - After Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager's drunken driving conviction and revelations that her husband had driven her state car, Gov. Jim Doyle's top aides adamantly declared that only the employee to whom a vehicle is assigned could get behind the wheel.

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Other state employees and volunteers chauffeured top officials - including Lautenschlager - in their state cars, freeing them to work or rest on their way to distant meetings.

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MAZDA

Even Doyle, when attorney general, occasionally had members of his staff drive him to meetings in his state car.

But in the scrutiny that followed Lautenschlager's run-in with the law, administration officials firmly held that other people weren't allowed to drive state cars, for insurance reasons and to ensure that state cars are used primarily for state business.

"It's a clear rule," Department of Administration Secretary Marc Marotta told the Journal Sentinel in April. "The state policy is that only the person designated to use the car is supposed to use it."

Actually, state policy at the time allowed for non-state employees to drive state cars if they had received proper clearance. Those rules were revised in July.

Under the old policy, any state employee, University of Wisconsin student or other authorized representative of the state could drive a car - even one that was personally assigned - if the driver had approval from the department's risk manager and two years of driving experience, said Scott Larrivee, spokesman for the Department of Administration. That meant non-state employees could - and did - drive cars with proper approval.

A form used at the time asked volunteers about their driving histories and required them to agree to a check of their driving records.

The rewritten policy now restricts state-car use to state employees and students who have access to the university's pool of cars, Larrivee said. They must still have two years of driving experience and be evaluated by a risk manager to be sure there aren't any liability issues, such as an spotty driving record.

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Volunteer drivers

The issue arose last week when the state Ethics Board cleared Lautenschlager of wrongdoing in its second inquiry into her use of the state car; its report raised the new issue of whether it was all right for her to be driven in her state car by volunteers.

The board's findings identified four people, including her husband, William Rippl, who had driven her car. Lautenschlager told the board that former Department of Justice administrator Paul Vornholt said others could drive the car with her in it and had suggested individuals who had volunteered to drive her.

While volunteers may have been able to drive Lautenschlager, having Rippl behind the wheel of a state car was different, Marotta now says.

"Once you start to have family members driving, it's a slippery slope," Marotta said. "There have to be some lines, even though they might add to the inconvenience."

In its findings, the board said Vornholt didn't recall ever talking with Lautenschlager about non-state employees driving the car. Vornholt, a longtime Lautenschlager adviser, no longer works for the attorney general.

When reached for comment about this story, Vornholt again said he never talked with Lautenschlager about volunteer drivers, but he wouldn't answer further questions.

The board's report also said Department of Administration counsel John Rothchild told investigators that state policy didn't permit non-state employees to drive state cars. Larrivee said Rothchild's comments in the report were paraphrased, and that volunteer drivers would have been eligible under the old policy.

Todd Schmitz, a political consultant and longtime friend of Lautenschlager's from Fond du Lac, was one of the non-state employees who drove the attorney general in her state car.

Beginning with her campaign for attorney general, Schmitz said, he frequently drove her to events or meetings. About once a month, Lautenschlager or one of her staff members would call to ask if he was available to drive her.

When he arrived to pick her up, he said, he would ask Lautenschlager which car they would be

taking. Only once did Lautenschlager say they would take the state car; usually they traveled in his car or took one of her family's vehicles, Schmitz said.

"I thought that was OK because she suggested it," Schmitz said of using the state car.

When Doyle was attorney general, he was either behind the wheel himself or had a state employee drive his car, said Doyle spokeswoman Melanie Fonder. Once he started his campaign for governor, he turned in his state car and used his own vehicle, Fonder added.

Because of budget restraints and reduced staff, the Department of Justice under Lautenschlager relied heavily on interns and volunteers for low-level work, which sometimes included driving the attorney general, said Michael Bauer, administrator of legal services for the Department of Justice. They were cleared to drive by the department's risk manager, he said.

Most of the time when others drove Lautenschlager, the trips were made in her own car, Bauer said.

Risk management officials advised Lautenschlager that the state would cover the liability for such drivers in case of an accident, he added.

"Attorneys were usually the ones driving Doyle around," Bauer said. "I'm not saying there's anything wrong; that's completely appropriate. It's ludicrous to criticize Peg for having volunteers drive her around rather than attorneys."

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Milwaukee Journal Sentinel October 5, 2004

Officials misstated state car rule

By **STACY FORSTER**
 sforster@journalsentinel.com

Madison — After Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager's drunken driving conviction and revelations that her husband had driven her state car, Gov. Jim Doyle's top aides adamantly declared that only the employee to whom a vehicle is assigned could get behind the wheel.

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Milwaukee Journal Sentinel October 5, 2004

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La Crosse Tribune October 5, 2004

OUR VIEW

Review policies governing use of state-owned cars

Last week the state Ethics Board ended its second investigation into Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager's use of a state-owned car.

Both of the investigations stemmed from her arrest for drunken driving last February. In March, the board found that she had not reimbursed the state \$672 for personal miles logged on the car. She paid that sum, along with a \$250 penalty.

The more recent inquiry had to do with two accidents

involving the car, and her husband signing receipts on her credit card, against state policy, and other people driving the car, also against state policy.

The board did not find additional penalties to be appropriate. And that's fine.

But the state's general policies regarding the use of state-owned vehicles by officials should be subject to more scrutiny. Among the issues that could be addressed:

- Should there be specific

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penalties for allowing others to use state vehicles or to sign off on state credit card purchases?

■ Do we really need as many officials driving state-owned cars as we have now? Gov. Jim

Doyle has reduced the number of state airplanes and motor vehicles. Do we need to go further with this?

Let's have a review of these issues.

Oshkosh Northwestern October 6, 2004

The time is right to debate state car policy

An opportunity may exist for a stronger state policy about the use of public vehicles by state employees, if Gov. Jim Doyle's administration harnesses the chance in the right way.

Statewide, there's been considerable discussion about the state Ethics Board investigation into whether Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager misused her privileges for keeping a state-owned car. While the board ruled there wasn't a violation, the investigation opened up the culture of how freely state-owned cars may be used. The board report also questioned if there would be room for her staff aides to drive her.

State policy was revised in July to tighten the rules. The Ethics Board decision issued last week may seem like a Johnny-come-lately, but the ensuing public discussion has a hidden benefit. The time may be ripe to further review those rules now that the public has bought into the discussion once again.

It's perfectly understandable that use of cars by relatives constitutes a breach of conduct, as happened when Lautenschlager's husband, William Rippl, drove her car. There should be some kind of penalty for that conduct, such as a reduced use of privilege. Otherwise, the Ethics Board has created a culture where the only "penalty" will be a toothless review.

Present policy makes clear that state employees can drive state vehicles. The state should review the policy again in light of training others to have permission to drive these cars. It seems perfectly reasonable for a public official to ask a trained staff aide to drive so the official can do business on the road.

This issue really is about legislating some common sense. It's sad that we can't have common sense required of all legislators. Rules create a common understanding, and their application generally produces the best outcome.

While the state is focused on driving privileges as a matter of public discussion, we should revisit them again. The Ethics Board report raised a question worth answering.



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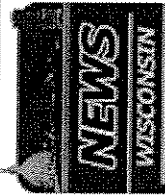
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Special Features

Probation supervisor falsified logs, internal investigation finds

By PATRICK MARLEY
pmarley@journalsentinel.com

Posted: Oct. 17, 2004

Madison - A state Department of Corrections supervisor routinely drove a state car home and falsified paperwork to report he had left it at a state office, an internal investigation has found.

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Mike Lew, a supervisor of probation and parole agents, told the Journal Sentinel he had long taken the state car home at night. But the internal review focused only on July and August, said Earl Fischer, the department's management services administrator.

Lew was ordered Friday to pay \$33.94 for 99

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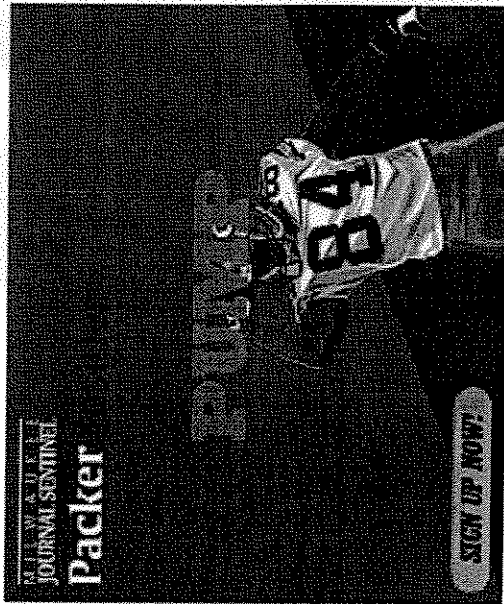
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will not be disciplined, Fischer said.

The department announced it had wrapped up the three-month investigation Friday after more than a week of inquiries from the Journal Sentinel.

Asked if the investigation was concluded because the department was aware the newspaper was about to publish a story about Lew, department spokesman Bill Clausius said: "I guess the answer is maybe . . . You can call it coincidental or deliberate, I don't know."

The infractions happened at the height of Gov. Jim Doyle's calls for more accountability in the state's vehicle fleet. This summer, Doyle announced he would trim the fleet by 1,000 vehicles after problems with the use of state cars and record-keeping were uncovered.

Good intentions cited

Lew told investigators and the Journal Sentinel that he had long taken the vehicle home at night in an effort to save time and mileage. The car was not personally assigned to him, however, and was shared with other workers.

Lew sometimes took the car home frequently. For instance, from June 10 through June 24, Lew recorded in his log that the state car's start and end location was at the New-Lisbon office. But a separate log kept by employees-suspicious of his travel-patterns notes the state car was not

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personal miles for three one-way trips home in July. It remained unclear why he had not been charged for round trips or other stops home to which he admitted. And employees who work under Lew said the investigation did not appear to be sincere.

"This guy makes decisions on whether somebody (on probation) goes to prison by the rules, and he can't figure out the state fleet policies?" said Rich Hanson, an agent who observed Lew's travel habits. "It's pretty cut and dried."

Lew was counseled on the new policy but

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parked at the station on any of those nights, while Lew's personal car was.

Lew told a reporter that he had routinely taken a 2001 Ford Taurus home and improperly filled out a vehicle log because he misunderstood the new policies. By taking the Taurus home, he was trying to cut down on the miles he put on the car and save the state money, he said.

Lew is designated as an ethics trainer for the department and oversees about 90 employees, including 61 probation and parole agents in southwestern and central Wisconsin. He earns \$76,036 a year.

Lew travels heavily and sometimes left the car at his Lake Delton home because it sits near the middle of the wide geographic area he covers, he said.

But regularly taking home a car that is meant to be used by several employees violates a long-standing state rule. Also, Lew had not been reimbursing the state for the commute home, which is considered personal travel under the new guidelines.

Department whistle-blowers

The investigation was prompted by two probation and parole agents who noticed the Taurus was often gone on nights that Lew reported in the log that he had parked it at a state office in New Lisbon.

In June, Lew began using that office as the main hub for the car. Soon after, agent Vonda Benson, aided by Hanson, began keeping a separate log because they noticed the official log did not accurately reflect where Lew left the car at night.

In mid-July, Benson turned her log over to department officials, who then launched an investigation. Lew stopped using the car in early September, Benson said.

Lew acknowledged that he had regularly taken the Taurus home and improperly filled out paperwork, but he maintained he had not put unnecessary miles on the state car or otherwise misused it.

"I can tell you with authority I never use that state car for personal business," he said. "I certainly saved the state far more money by doing it the way I did than by doing it the other way."

Fischer, who is in charge of the department's vehicles, said agency officials saw no need to hand down discipline. "It's a new policy and we're trying to educate people on how to follow it rather than discipline them on the first error they may encounter," he said.

Lew appears to have broken the rules even after he became aware he was under investigation in July. On Aug. 9, he took the car home overnight and then drove it to Wautoma. If the car had instead stayed at the New Lisbon office, Lew would have put about 45 fewer miles on the vehicle, but officials who reviewed his travel found no problem with that trip.

Lew is the second probation and parole manager whose vehicle usage has come into question in recent years.

In February 2001, a fleet administrator notified the department that Janice Cummings, the regional chief who oversees agents in Milwaukee, was not reimbursing the state for personal miles.

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Minocqua, Wisconsin

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

Agency 'not aware' whether wardens teach hunter education courses

By Richard Moore
The Lakeland Times

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

In the first request, Allan Pribnow of Port Wing — a citizen concerned about the appropriate use of federal hunter education dollars — wanted to know the DNR's total cost to staff a booth at a

Ducks Unlimited Great Outdoors weekend event; in the second, he asked how many conservation wardens teach hunter education courses on paid time and the specific price tag for the course taught in Brule.

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

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

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

actual figures.

"My boss, (who) is the section chief of all the safety education programs, sat down and said, 'Well, what would it take to put all this info together?'" Lawhern said.

"You've got to count your salary, which is your time, you've got to count

"My boss, (who) is the section chief of all the safety education programs, sat down and said, 'Well, what would it take to put all this info together?'"

— Tim Lawhern,
DNR Hunter Education Coordinator

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

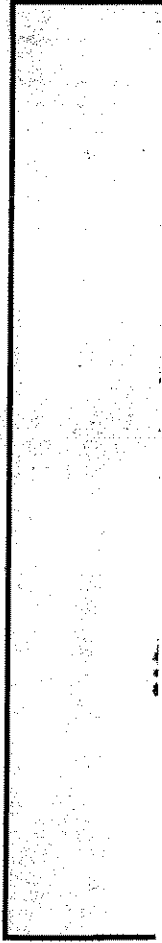
Lawhern said the DU weekend event happened more than two years ago after the department abandoned using volunteers to run a hunter safety trail in favor of a booth staffed solely by wardens.

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

Critics have charged that the DNR sent as many as 20 wardens for the weekends, paying for motels, meals, and travel. **See COSTS...**

(Please turn to Page 31)

Inside today's



Minocqua park's future in the hands of town

COSTS: It would be different if documents were in hand or electronic

(From Page 1)

el in addition to wages. Lawhern said this week he has no idea how much the cost was.

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

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

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

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

"I have that down to the exact penny," he said. "It is zero. We didn't have any

booth at the DU Festival and the reason was, it was a decision made in law enforcement not to because of budgetary issues."

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

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

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

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

require enormous effort.

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

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

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

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

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



...now add more than 5,000 acres short term, he should be comparing the gaining from the state payment has to had a say in the transaction. Not one becomes apparent how constricted the be if the land were sold to private own-

See WALKER . . .

(Please turn to Page 11)

DNR open records response should subject Hassett to prosecution, termination

Got a simple question you want the DNR to answer? Say, wanna know how many hunter education courses are taught by DNR staff?

No problem. Just send a check for \$3,312 - maybe more - and they might tell you.

By now nothing the DNR does or says should shock me, but I found myself stunned nonetheless when I found out last week the agency wanted \$5,000 from a citizen to answer two open records requests.

Let's be blunt. To charge \$5,000 to answer two simple questions is a brazen attempt to trample upon an open records law that these days is trampled upon about as often as my dog flattens my tender, new backyard grass (that's relentlessly and continuously, by the way).

To even think of asking an average citizen to pay such a price for what is that citizen's right to have is an affront in an open society, an act that so profoundly flouts the law it should subject the offending official to prosecution and termination.

In this case that would be DNR Secre-



something so absurd.

But they can, and they have.

For instance, Mr. Pribnow wanted to know how many hunter education courses are being taught by paid DNR personnel, and he wanted to know the cost for the hunter education course taught in Brule.

According to the DNR, compiling that information would cost Mr. Pribnow \$3,312.

In Mr. Hassett's letter to Mr. Pribnow, the secretary pointed out that any compiling of records requiring more than three hours of time would incur a location cost. Since state statutes say location costs can kick in if the tab is \$50 or more, the agency is apparently pricing its search fees for this request at about \$17 per hour.

That means they think it will take them approximately 195 hours to find out how many courses paid wardens teach and for the cost of the Brule course. That's because, according to the DNR, over 200 wardens are going to have to pull their time sheets and spend an hour or so researching their records.

Oh really?

Here's an easier way. Why not have the hunter education coordinator send an e-mail to all the wardens asking any who have taught courses in the past year to contact him within a certain time frame? That might take 15 minutes to compose and send, assuming the agency has an electronic address book for the wardens.

Presumably, if you believe the DNR, there aren't going to be that many reporting back, since volunteers teach the vast majority of the courses. When wardens do report that they have taught courses, the coordinator then could ask, How many in the past year?

Again, that's presumably something a warden will know right off the top of his or her head. All totaled, all this - along with a phone call or two to nail down the Brule price tag - shouldn't consume more than a couple of hours, certainly not 195.

The same goes for Mr. Pribnow's second request, an inquiry into how much it cost the agency to send wardens to a week-

See MOORE . . .

(Please turn to Page 11)

MOORE: One would think the DNR would want to know, too

(From Page 10)

end Ducks Unlimited festival. Surely the agency knows whom it sends to staff such events, and surely those folks have expense accounts they have to turn in.

Once more, it seems to be a project that would take several hours, not the approximately 100 hours the DNR seems to think it would require.

Both of these requests are reasonable and in the public interest. If the DNR has spent excessively by having too many wardens whooping it up at weekend festivals, that's something we have a right to know, especially since the people who would have let such a thing happen are still in charge.

We would think the DNR would want to know this information as well. Isn't it just good business sense to know how much money you're spending on staff weekend festivals? Doesn't the agency need to know if — in certain loca-

tions — the volunteer teaching of hunter education courses is falling off and paid wardens are having to pick up the slack?

Simply put, the stuff Mr. Pribnow seeks is the basic information a manager needs to have to operate efficiently. That the DNR doesn't know this data calls into serious question whether the hunter education program is being run properly and it raises red flags regarding other hunter education issues that have been raised.

That the DNR wants to charge a citizen \$5,000 to get what it should already have at its fingertips is even worse. In truth, the information is probably already available to DNR managers. What the \$5,000 bill most likely represents instead is an attempt to circumvent the open records law.

The same thing is happening across Wisconsin, not just at the DNR.

Last year, Richard P. Jones of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported in depth on this phenomenon. What he found was a troubling trend in which government officials are resorting to high charges to thwart legitimate requests for public records.

For instance, Mr. Jones reported that the UW system wanted \$44,000 for a request for the admission standards of the University of Wisconsin System, as well as for the data for those who were accepted and those who were rejected over a five-year period.

The UW resorted to the high bill only after it lost an initial attempt in the state Supreme Court to block release of the information altogether. Unable to sequester the records one way, they chose to charge an exorbitant location fee to make sure they could bottle up what the court ruled was public information.

Clearly, the DNR charge in this case follows the pattern. Given the relative simplicity of the requests, the charge represents a trumped up effort to evade the law.

But then, isn't that standard DNR policy? You know, allow DNR officials to have homes and decks that don't meet setbacks; tolerate the evasion of the state's competitive bidding procedures; look the other way when officials lie and hand out personal favors in permitting decisions; and on and on without anybody ever being disciplined or without even admitting anything's wrong?

Isn't the way of the world inside the DNR?

I'd pose the question myself, but it would take years for them to compile all their corruption into a single file, the bill for which would no doubt startle all in its Trumpian proportions of documented human misery, taxpayer waste, and environmental fraud.

DNR Secretary Scott Hassett's letter to Pribnow

Editor's note: This was Mr. Hassett's response to Mr. Pribnow's questions regarding hunter education.

August 18, 2003

Dear Mr. Pribnow:

ated. The total estimated cost to compile this information is \$70. Additionally, attached is a copy of a letter issued to each lead instructor when they are supplied with the authorized list of videos for the hunter education program. As the program is able, they purchase copies of

Answer: This information does not

runs the system. This simulator is not available to hunter education instructors for use in their classes. It is used solely for promotion of hunter education and safety.

Question #6:

What are the guidelines for finding

DNR Secretary Scott Hassett's letter to Pribnow

Editor's note: This was Mr. Hassett's response to Mr. Pribnow's questions regarding hunter education.

August 18, 2003

Dear Mr. Pribnow:

You have requested information from the Department regarding hunter education and conservation warden time, expenses, and allocation of funds. I've responded to each question separately. There were 6 questions from your original letter dated March 6th, 2003 plus an additional one in your recent letter dated August 1st, 2003. Some of your requests will require considerable staff time to put together. Due to this commitment it will be necessary for us to charge a fee for all time over 3 hours pursuant to Open Records Law. Where a fee is needed it is listed with the answer to the itemized question. I hope you find our efforts satisfactory.

Question #1:

Detailed financial report on what exactly the money, administration coordination of project activities and is spent from 1999 and the following years.

Answer: That information was provided previously in a letter dated December 11th, 2001. However complete reports from 1999 to current fiscal year are attached.

Question #2:

The Hunter Education Shooting Skills

event at DU's Great Outdoors is staffed by DNR personnel. What is the total cost for this event including motel rooms, meals, travel, wages, and incidentals. Could this be done by another group such as Hunter Safety Instructors?

Answer: This information does not currently exist in a specific file or document. Therefore it would need to be created. The total estimated cost to compile this information is \$1,690.00. When Ducks Unlimited began this event in Oshkosh the hunter education administrator developed a BB gun shooting range booth. Requests were made of volunteer instructors in that DNR Region to obtain volunteer help to run the booth. There were a minimal number of volunteers that participated in this event and the decision was made by the then chief warden, Thomas Harelson, to staff the booth with conservation wardens. It has long been known that the conservation wardens desire their first encounter with citizens to be a positive one and this was a perfect event in which to accomplish that part of the Law Enforcement mission.

Question #3:

How many copies of the films, "Firearms Safety and the Hunter," "Survival," and "Measure of the Hunt" are available?

Answer: This information does not currently exist in a specific file or document. Therefore it would need to be cre-

ated. The total estimated cost to compile this information is \$70. Additionally, attached is a copy of a letter issued to each lead instructor when they are supplied with the authorized list of videos for the hunter education program. As the program is able, they purchase copies of these videos and provide them free to instructor groups. Videos other than these may be shown in hunter education courses with prior Regional Safety Warden approval.

Question #4:

What was the average fee per student that instructors charged in 1999 and 2000?

Answer: \$5.89 per student. This is for the year 2000, which was the year we surveyed the instructors to address the questions from the Federal Audit. We do not track that information as a normal part of our business, as the state law prior to the enactment of free hunter education dictated that the fee per student was \$3.

Question #5:

What is the cost of the laser equipment that you are using for sports shows? Is that equipment available to all instructors? How do you work this equipment into a class schedule without adding hours to the class schedule?

Answer: The cost of the LaserShot Simulator when purchased was \$12,000. The department was able to partner with the NWTTF to purchase this simulator. The NWTTF donated the computer that

runs the system. This simulator is not available to hunter education instructors for use in their classes. It is used solely for promotion of hunter education and safety.

Question #6:

What are the guidelines for funding shooting ranges? Do the public and range safety officers have any input in this program?

Answer: That information was provided previously in a letter dated February 2nd, 2000.

Question #7: From letter Dated August 1st, 2003. How many hunter education courses are being taught by DNR personnel that are paid for their time? What was the cost of the course taught in Brule?

Answer: This information does not currently exist in a specific file or document. Therefore it would need to be created. The total estimated cost to compile this information is \$3,312.

If you would like us to proceed with answering your questions that require additional work beyond 3 hours, please send the appropriate funds and our staff will follow through. You will be notified of any additional costs should we see that it will take longer than estimated to compile this information for you. I am hopeful that these answers have addressed each of your questions.

Sincerely,
Scott Hassett
Secretary