



**Drawing a crowd**

Sidewalk widths along the length of the new Second Avenue roadway drew several people to the Staples City council's June 23 meeting. Chuck Mayer, left, had presented the city audit to the council, while Roger Houselog and others

came to discuss the sidewalk issue. Second Avenue is being reconstructed next year, with the state paying a portion of the cost before the road is turned back from a state highway to a city street. (Staples World photo by Tom Crawford)

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**City will consider resolution 'voicing displeasure' with unallotment**

should remain at the 2008 level for 2009.

The governor's action in unallotting funding is drawing various reactions. Council Member Rob Schmieg requested the city prepare a formal resolution "voicing our displeasure" with the action. In addition, it's likely the unallotment process will be challenged by legal action.

The 2008 audit was accepted on a 6-0 vote from the city council.

In other matters, the city council:

- RENEWED a taxicab

license for Friends of Staples, Inc., for them to operate a taxi service. It had been just issued in April, but all such licenses are set to expire on June 30 each year.

- DISCUSSED and acted on the street width and other matters related to the Highway 10 turnback project for Second Avenue and Fourth Street (two blocks), a project slated for construction in 2010. (See the June 25 Staples World article for full details.)

- HEARD City Administrator Mathews report

on his activities, which included working on a future Food Shelf location; fire protection contracts with surrounding townships; progress toward instituting a 'Quiet Zone' for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway crossings in Staples, meaning the whistles would not be blowing as trains cross; labor union negotiations June 11 with the IBEW and July 9 with the Teamsters; and a Friends of the Library session June 10 to discuss furniture choices in the new library.

**Wolves returned to threatened status in state of Minnesota**

Timber wolves in Minnesota will be returned to threatened status under an agreement reached and announced recently by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The timber wolf in early 2008 was moved from endangered to threatened under terms of the Endangered Species Act.

That prompted several lawsuits and the agreement announced this week is part of a settlement agreement with plaintiffs who challenged the FWS's 2009 rule removing Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves in the western Great Lakes.

Under the terms of the agreement, which must still be approved by the court, the service will provide an additional opportunity for public comment on the rule to ensure compliance with the Administrative Procedures Act.

Gray wolves in the western Great Lakes area have exceeded recovery goals and continue to thrive under state management. However, the FWS agrees with plaintiffs that additional public review and comment was required under federal law prior to making that final decision.

Upon acceptance of this agreement by the court, and while the service gathers additional public comment, gray wolves in the western Great Lakes area will again be protected under the Endangered Species Act.

All restrictions and requirements in place under the act prior to the delisting will be reinstated. In Minnesota, gray wolves will be considered threatened; elsewhere in the

region, gray wolves will be designated as endangered. The service will continue to work with states and tribes to address wolf management issues while western Great Lakes gray

wolves remain under the protection of the act.

This settlement agreement does not affect the status of gray wolves in other parts of the United States.

**Minnesota booster seat law took effect July 1**

Minnesota children under age eight and shorter than four feet nine inches tall must be in a child safety seat or booster seat, effective July 1. Under the booster law, children cannot use a seat belt alone until they are age eight or four feet nine inches tall — whichever comes first. To ensure child safety, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) recommends parents keep children in a booster based on their height, rather than their age.

DPS reports only 30 percent of Minnesota children use boosters. In the last five years in Minnesota, 2004-2008, 18 children passengers ages four-eight were killed in crashes and 3,047 were injured.

Booster seats lift a child up allowing for proper seat belt fit — the lap belt low and snug across the hips and the shoulder belt snug across the middle of the chest. Typically children around age four and more than 40 pounds are ready for a booster, upon outgrowing a forward-facing child safety seat. Before the law takes effect, DPS officials

are reminding parents and caregivers to secure a booster seat for children to be in compliance with the law. A booster seat citation is more than \$100.

Child passenger safety officials say the importance of boosters is underscored by death and injuries associated with poor seat belt fit — including ejection, internal decapitation and serious abdominal damage.

The booster law further strengthens the state's motor vehicle occupant protection laws, accompanying the primary seat belt law that went into effect June 9. The primary law means drivers and all passengers must be belted or in a child restraint to avoid being stopped and ticketed by law enforcement.

Children are not ready to ride in a seat belt alone until they can sit with their back against the vehicle seat, knees bent completely over the seat and feet touching the floor. A sign that a seat belt does not fit properly is if the child wraps the shoulder belt behind them to avoid the belt rubbing against their neck. Parents must be aware

of the restraint steps a child should progress through as they grow: rear-facing infant seats, forward-facing toddler seats, booster seats and seat belts — all of which are effective and necessary.

DPS reports the following as the most common child passenger safety mistakes:

- Turning a child from a rear-facing restraint to a forward-facing restraint too soon.
- Restraint is not secured tight enough — it should not shift more than one inch side-to-side or out from the seat.

- Harness on the child is not tight enough — if you can pinch harness material, it's too loose.

- Retainer clip is up too high or too low — should be at the child's armpit level.

- The child is in the wrong restraint — don't rush your child into a seat belt.

Parents are encouraged to visit [www.buckleupkids.state.mn.us](http://www.buckleupkids.state.mn.us) to download booster seat and child passenger safety resources.

**Unemployment insurance overview offered for employers**

A business seminar on Minnesota Unemployment Insurance is being offered in two locations for area employers.

Gary Johnson, employer/agent liaison with the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), will be the featured speaker and will answer questions.

Sessions are scheduled from noon-3:30 p.m., Wednesday, July 15, at the Arvig Communications Systems' Don Swenson Room at 150 2nd St. SW in Perham and from 8:30 a.m.-noon Thursday, July 16, at Central Lakes College-Staples Campus in Room C168, 1830 Airport Road, Staples.

Topics will include:

- New UI legislation and how it could affect your workplace
- Unemployment benefits eligibility (quits, dis-

charges, misconduct)

- Important follow-up you must do after dismissing a problem worker

- Filing an appeal or raising an issue

- Common mistakes made and how to avoid them

- "Partial UI" — MN Shared Work Program

- Temporary and permanent layoffs

- Employer Online Self-Service System (with a focus on online benefits functionality)

- Covered vs. non-covered employment (owners, independent contractors, family, etc.)

- Tax rates and experience rating

- Taxable wages

- Submitting quarterly wage detail reports

- Reporting unemployment fraud

The Staples session

includes a continental breakfast and the Perham session includes a box lunch.

A small fee will be charged and pre-registration is requested.

For a registration form or for more information contact Cindy Brey at 218-825-6783 or [cindy.brey@state.mn.us](mailto:cindy.brey@state.mn.us) or Steve Retzer at 218-846-7379 or [steve.retzer@state.mn.us](mailto:steve.retzer@state.mn.us).

Seminar sponsors include MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Lake Country Human Resource Association, Lakes Area Human Resource Association, Staples Business Group, Brainerd Lakes Chamber, Little Falls Chamber, Long Prairie Chamber, Perham Chamber, Staples Motley Area Chamber and Wadena Chamber.

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