

Metro News

Congressman's office budget mostly spent

JULIA MALONE

Cox Washington Bureau

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Washington --- Rep. Paul Broun of Athens has spent more than 80 percent of his annual office budget, leaving his office very close to running on empty for the last half of this year.

Official numbers released Monday show that almost half of his spending went for mass mailings to constituents in advance of his July 15 primary.

House administrative officials who oversee congressional office disbursements already have tagged the Republican freshman's budget as being the closest to going bust of any member in recent history. That assessment was highlighted Monday when the **chief administrative officer** released the quarterly "brown book," which lists disbursements for the first half of 2008.

Broun's spending totaled \$1.139 million through June 30. Based on an annual budget of about \$1.38 million, that leaves the congressman with just \$241,000 to pay essentials --- including office rent, salaries, equipment and his travel through December.

Broun's Washington spokesman, Bryan Partridge, did not respond immediately to inquiries about the disbursements and how the office would eke through until January.

Some of the top staff members, including the chief of staff, already have departed. His press secretary, Jessica Morris, recently has gone off payroll to work for Broun's re-election campaign.

Broun almost certainly will have to make more cutbacks in personnel costs and benefits, which totaled \$405,000 for the first six months of the year. However, he still must pay fixed costs for supplies, office leases and computers, which totaled about \$150,000 in the first half of the year.

The congressman, a fiscal conservative who has made a point of criticizing federal overspending, has defended his decision to drain much of his congressional budget on mass mailings to his district.

At a time when most lawmakers are making more use of less expensive e-mail, Broun spent \$562,000 to print communications and mail them through what is customarily called the "franking" privilege of lawmakers.

A newcomer who was relatively unknown when he won his seat in a special election, he beat back a well-financed challenge from former Republican state Rep. Barry Fleming in the primary.

Broun's office spending far exceeds that of many colleagues. Freshman Rep. John Barrow of Savannah, a Democrat, spent about half as much --- \$613,000 --- in the first half of the year, with about \$125,000 for mass mailings and printed communications. Rep. Sanford Bishop (D-Albany) spent just over \$585,000 for the first half of the year. Rep. Nathan Deal (R-Gainesville) spent \$570,000.

ID: 0008057588 Type: Photo Name: BROUN OFFICE3.1 Date: 08/19/2008 Page: C3 Edition: Main Pub: AJC Caption: GOP Rep. Paul Broun of Athens is in danger of going bust after spending heavily on mass mailings before his July 15 primary.

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'Shared' Staffers Face More Regulation

Emily Yehle
664 words
31 July 2008
Roll Call
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All shared employees now must file financial disclosure forms under a resolution approved by the **House** Administration Committee on Wednesday.

The resolution was one of a slew of legislative measures the committee passed on the cusp of the August recess. It moved unanimously, about two months after the **House** Inspector General recommended tighter supervision of those employees who work for several **House** offices.

IG James Cornell investigated the shared employee system after one person was caught embezzling money from Member office accounts. At a committee hearing in May, Cornell told Members his office was also investigating a second shared employee who may have improperly billed offices.

"It's their actions that unfortunately make these requirements necessary," ranking member Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.) said at Wednesday's hearing. "We want to make sure we've locked the barn door even after the horse is gone."

Under the resolution, shared employees will also have to inform every employing office of their other employers. The regulations apply to those employees who work for three or more offices.

Financial disclosure requirements are usually limited to employees who make more than \$114,468, a threshold required by law. But since the **House** Administration Committee oversees shared employees, it is making the disclosure a condition of employment -- and thus no laws need to be changed and the measure does not require full **House** approval, said committee spokesman Kyle Anderson.

Many shared employees already reach the threshold and file disclosures, since they are able to make a tidy profit by providing financial or computer services to several offices.

Tom Anfinson, who handles the finances for more than 20 offices, is one of them. But he expressed frustration at being kept out of the process for changing the requirements.

He only found out about the new regulations when contacted by Roll Call.

"They never tell us about these damn hearings. It's a little frustrating that we can't keep up on this," he said. "We will abide by anything they want us to do, but for God's sake, let us know what we need to do."

The regulations won't go into effect until **House** officials complete the "Shared Employees Manual," which Anderson predicted would be finished in the next few weeks. The new regulations will be included in the manual, and shared employees will have to sign a form pledging that they will comply.

The committee also used Wednesday's hearing to pass several other bills that affect **House** employees and the legislative branch.

- A bill introduced by Chairman Robert Brady (D-Pa.) would ensure that **House** employees receive their full salary if called away for active military duty. The **House** would pay the difference between their military salary and their usual pay. It passed unanimously.

- Legislation from Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) would direct the **Chief Administrative Officer** to distribute pay stubs electronically. Right now, staffers receive them on paper. It passed unanimously.

- After a bit of debate, the committee passed a bill to authorize the CAO to spend \$10 million over the next two years on "demonstration projects" to promote energy efficiency. Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), who introduced the bill, said it would allow the CAO to come up with innovative ways for the **House** to reduce energy consumption, while Ehlers argued the power should be given to the Architect of the Capitol.

- Lofgren's bill to give the Law Library some financial independence also passed. It would create a separate line item for the Law Library in the Library of Congress' budget and create a program for donations.

- The committee also passed a bill requiring the secretary of Veterans Affairs to allow states to designate VA facilities as voter registration agencies -- a direct response to a recent VA directive that prohibits voter registration drives in its facilities. Some Republican committee members voiced concern that veterans may be hounded by activists, but the bill was eventually approved.

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Boehner Calls Upon Pelosi to Remove CAO Beard

Emily Yehle and Elizabeth Brotherton

845 words

31 July 2008

Roll Call

English

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House Republicans' long-standing distrust of **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** came to a head Tuesday with Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio) calling for his immediate removal.

In a lengthy letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Boehner asked the California Democrat to immediately fire Beard, citing his "complete disregard for the interests of American taxpayers" and "recklessly partisan manner."

But Pelosi had fired back by Wednesday afternoon, writing back to Boehner that "Beard has embodied the kind of innovation [at] the CAO's office that was needed."

"I reject your mischaracterizations of Mr. Beard's leadership and particularly object to your unwarranted accusations of partisanship or political involvement," Pelosi wrote. "These attacks are unjustified by the facts and unfairly impugn Mr. Beard's record of accomplishment."

Beard's tenure has been controversial since the start. Pelosi hand-picked Beard for the post when she became Speaker, deviating from the typical process of vetting applicants through a bipartisan task force.

Ever since, Republicans have painted Beard as a partisan who abuses his position for Democratic ends. Democrats, meanwhile, point to his success in implementing greening initiatives in the **House**.

In a statement, **House** Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D- Pa.), who oversees the CAO's office, said Beard acts with "efficiency, fairness and an unwavering commitment to the best interests of this institution."

"Under his guidance, we have implemented a world class greening program, greatly enhanced the quality of food service in the **House** and improved our overall operational infrastructure," Brady said. "He has acted honorably and in a non-partisan manner that compares favorably with his predecessors."

During his 18 months as CAO, Beard has taken on several projects, including a revamping of the **House** cafeterias and a slew of energy- efficiency projects.

But he's also sometimes deviated from **House** procedure, most recently by neglecting to get Congressional approval to cover the costs of some greening efforts in the **House** cafeterias.

In his letter, Boehner characterized Beard as a CAO who repeatedly exceeds his authority. He writes that Beard launched an "unprecedented personal image promotion campaign," pointing to an expanded communications staff and numerous speeches around the country. He also accused Beard of improperly firing **House** employees.

"Clearly, we disagree with the concerns raised in Mr. Boehner's letter and we await the Speaker's response to the letter, given it was addressed to her," CAO spokesman Jeff Ventura said.

One Democratic leadership aide called the letter "a politically motivated stunt," adding that if Boehner had real concerns, he wouldn't have waited until the end of the session to raise them.

Beard will have to be reapproved by the **House** at the beginning of the 111th Congress, and several Republican aides have said their Members likely will put up a fight should Beard be renominated.

But apparently Boehner does not wish to wait. His letter asks for Beard's immediate removal and the convening of a bipartisan task force to hire a replacement. Beard's predecessor, Jay Eagen, was selected that way, with help from an outside search firm.

Boehner has the support of **House** Administration ranking member Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.), who said in a statement that "it is imperative that the **Chief Administrative Officer** is an individual that both parties can stand behind with great confidence."

"As a result of the closed appointment process, subsequent partisan behavior and questionable management actions taken by the **Chief Administrative Officer**, a considerable amount of bad feeling has been generated and a substantial number of my colleagues have lost confidence in the CAO," Ehlers said.

Most notable among the number of controversial projects Beard has led is Pelosi's Green the Capitol Initiative. Republicans repeatedly have criticized the project, including the 2007 purchase of \$90,000 worth of carbon offsets from the Chicago Climate Exchange and the \$700,000 allocated to design a new, energy-efficient lighting system for the Capitol Dome.

"Mr. Beard claims that this effort will save money on lighting costs, but in reality it will take the **House** more than 50 years to generate enough energy savings to finally recoup the cost of Mr. Beard's misguided design effort," Boehner wrote.

But in her letter, Pelosi defends the initiative, writing: "The Green the Capitol initiative, which I charged Mr. Beard to implement, is recognized throughout the country as a far-reaching initiative to make the **House** complex carbon neutral by the end of this Congress."

Boehner also wrote that Beard has used his position to advocate for Democratic policy initiatives, including extension of the Family and Medical Leave Act. (Beard served as a Democratic staffer on the then-**House** Interior Committee in the 1990s, a fact Republicans have pointed to in the past when alleging that the CAO was engaging in partisan behavior.)

"From the mismanagement of his office, to his penchant for partisan attacks and waste of taxpayer-funded resources, the case for dismissing Mr. Beard is clear," Boehner wrote. "I encourage you to do this immediately."

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Metro News

Political Insider: Wanted: Congressional chief of staff with lower-than-usual salary requirements

JIM GALLOWAY

Staff

278 words

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Online

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English

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Wednesday, July 30, 2008, 08:42 AM

The chief of staff to U.S. Rep. Paul Broun (R-Athens) has resigned --- two weeks after his boss' impressive win in the GOP primary, and one week after news broke that the same boss has already spent most of his yearly budget allowance.

This comes from The Hill (<http://thehill.com/leading-the-news/brouns-chief-of-staff-quits-amid-budgetary-debacle-2008-07-29.html>) in Washington, a newspaper that covers Congress:

J. Aloysius Hogan, Broun's chief of staff, was in charge of the Member's Representational Allowance (MRA), which was depleted because of franked mail, according to sources. The franked mail, which was sent to constituents, may have helped Broun in his recent primary win.

Earlier this month, sources said that Broun's MRA was so low that the lawmaker would have to cut staff. At the time, Broun's office said it was unaware of any possible cuts.....

Jeff Ventura, a spokesman for the **House Chief Administrative Officer**, said, "Although we have seen MRAs dip this low before, what makes this situation unique is that it went so low so early in the calendar year."

It was unclear at press time what the office planned to do in order to pay staffers, who could be furloughed if the problem is not resolved quickly.

http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/shared-blogs/ajc/politicalinsider/entries/2008/07/30/wanted_congressional_chief_of.html

Document ATJC000020080816e47u0001h

Campus Notebook
Ford Eatery Moves

Emily Yehle
882 words
28 July 2008
Roll Call
English

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Ford Eatery Moves. The Skenteris family has only a few weeks until they are forced out of the Ford cafeteria, but staffers who miss their gyros and rice pilaf won't have to travel far.

The family has opened an identical restaurant in the Voice of America building at 330 Independence Ave. SW. They'll maintain both locations until they move out of the Ford Building on Sept. 12 -- in time for Restaurant Associates, the company that runs the **House** cafeterias, to take over on Sept. 22.

"We're making such an easy transition for everyone," said Artemis Dimopoulos, who runs the cafeteria and nearby carryout with her brother, Christopher Skenteris, and her parents, Jordan and Soula Skenteris. "It couldn't be written better."

Originally, the family's last day was Feb. 15, soon after Restaurant Associates took over the contract for the **House** cafeterias. But after the family expressed anxiety over moving after almost 15 years at Ford, **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** extended their contract for six months.

The new restaurant is open from 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Most employees (all who want to) will continue to work for the family at the new location, Skenteris said.

Gorbey Sentencing Delayed. The sentencing for Michael Gorbey, who came to Capitol Hill armed last winter, has been delayed until Aug. 1.

Capitol Police officers found Gorbey with a loaded shotgun, a sword and ammunition in January. A later search of his truck turned up a tin can filled with explosive black powder.

In May, he was convicted of 14 charges, including possession of a weapon of mass destruction. His sentencing was originally scheduled for July 25.

Gorbey represented himself during the trial, and he still hasn't given up: He has filed several motions since his conviction. On Monday, he submitted a "pro-se motion to stay proceedings," asking that his motions be reviewed by another court.

"[T]he ends of Justice and requirements of due process will not be met with until this case is reviewed by A Judiciary Authority other than the Presiding Judge," Gorbey argues in his handwritten motion.

D.C. Superior Court Judge Gregory Jackson presided over the trial, often stopping the proceedings to chastise Gorbey for not following court rules. Gorbey repeatedly insisted that there was a government conspiracy against him, and prosecutors constantly objected to his questions to witnesses.

The Right to Clutter. Rep. Walter Jones Jr. (R-N.C.) is refusing to follow a new hallway policy that forbids furnishings outside Members' offices, arguing that he should be allowed to keep a memorial to fallen soldiers.

Last week, he introduced legislation to create an exception to the policy and allow displays of "tributes to members of the Armed Forces killed in United States engagements in Iraq or Afghanistan."

Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard announced the hallway policy in May, citing an effort to prevent accidents from hallway clutter. The policy forbids such furnishings as signs, easels, electronic kiosks and sign-in tables.

Jones argues that the memorial displays haven't posed any obstacles in the years they've been up. He has refused to take his down.

"For those of us who display these memorials, it is important they remain visible to the hundreds of visitors

who pass through the **House** office buildings each day," Jones said in a press release. "They are a respectful reminder of the cost of war and the heroic sacrifices of those who have given their lives to preserve the freedoms all Americans enjoy today."

Pay for Fighting Staffers. **House** Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D-Pa.) introduced a bill last week that would ensure that **House** employees received their full salary if they were called away for active military duty.

The bill directs the **Chief Administrative Officer** to pay employees the difference between their military pay and their base **House** salary. **House** Administration ranking member Vernon Ehlers (R- Mich.) co-sponsored the legislation.

It would apply only to those in the armed forces reserves who are called to active duty for more than 30 days. It's also limited to those who work in the **House** for at least 90 days before being called to active duty.

Separate Money for Lawyers. Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.) introduced a bill last week that would give the Law Library of Congress its own line item in the annual budget.

The bill would also establish a Law Library support program that would be able to accept donations and provide services to the Law Library.

Law librarians throughout the country have long advocated for the Law Library to have more independence and more funding. It's a subset of the LOC and has minimal say over its budget.

But librarian groups have described the library's services as "third rate," while its collection is unparalleled. One-third of its collections remains uncatalogued and thus hard to find.

In previous hearings, supporters of a separate line item claimed that it would show potential donors that their money isn't replacing Congressional support.

And the support program, they argue, would help separate donations for the LOC from those specifically for the Law Library.

Please send tips to notebook@rollcall.com.

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News

CONGRESS' HALLS AREN'T HALLOWED FOR MEMORIALS ; CROWDING PROMPTS BAN ON ALL ITEMS

JENNIFER A. DLOUHY P-I Washington Bureau

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A standoff is developing in the halls of Congress - but not over such pressing issues as the war in Iraq or health care policy. Instead, the fight is over exactly what can be placed inside those congressional corridors.

House leaders are trying to clean up the hallways, which have long been littered with cast-off computer equipment and discarded furniture, and are cracking down with a new policy that bans almost any freestanding item from the corridors of the **House** office buildings.

Caught in the cleanup: easel-mounted displays honoring soldiers who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan, guest books on podiums outside office doors and even the occasional welcome mat.

Rep. Jim McDermott, D-Wash., and dozens of other lawmakers have been issued citations and warned that the displays and furniture outside their offices violate the new policy. **House** Office Buildings Superintendent Frank Tiscione and the **House's chief administrative officer**, Daniel Beard, warned the lawmakers that they have until Aug. 2 to comply - or else the offending items could be removed.

McDermott is fighting back.

The Vietnam-era veteran says his three easel-mounted posters, which memorialize 99 dead servicemen and -women from the Seattle area, deserve to stay on display outside his office.

"Having had that experience, if someone died from my neighborhood I want to (honor that)," McDermott said. "I don't want people to forget" the casualties of the war, McDermott added.

The issue has united an unlikely foursome in Congress, bringing the liberal McDermott together with conservative Rep. Ted Poe, R- Texas, as well as Reps. Walter Jones, R-N.C., and Steve Cohen, D- Tenn.

Like McDermott, the other three have hallway memorials honoring fallen soldiers.

They are pressing **House** Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., to relax the rule and make an exception for memorials honoring fallen soldiers.

Poe said he is going to "respectfully refuse to comply" with the edict and will not take down a poster with photos and names of 26 men and women from southeast Texas who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Our poster isn't going anywhere," Poe said, before issuing a challenge to **House** management during a floor speech: "Come and take it if you dare."

Jones said his "Faces of the Fallen" memorial should not be lumped together with hallway trash.

It makes sense for congressional leaders to try and clean out some clutter, including "trash, recycle bins and old office furniture," Jones said. But, he said, it's going too far to remove "memorials to service members who have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan."

The new policy went into effect April 17 after approval from Pelosi, **House** Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., and **House** Minority Leader John Boehner, R-Ohio. They sit on the commission that oversees much of the Capitol complex.

The new clean-up rule was designed to make it easier for staffers and tourists to flee the building in case of an evacuation and make it easier for people using wheelchairs to navigate congressional corridors.

The halls in the three **House** office buildings have grown increasingly cluttered in recent years. Staff workers in crowded offices had become used to putting unwanted furniture, cardboard boxes and discarded equipment in the hallways for janitorial staff to remove - eventually.

A walk down a marble hallway could take visitors by abandoned desks resting on their sides, long-disconnected monitors and cardboard boxes filled with reams of paper.

Lawmakers also have increasingly used the area outside their main office doors to display posters and draw attention to issues. For instance, members of the Blue Dog coalition of fiscally conservative Democrats had put signs near their doorways spotlighting the national debt.

In a July 21 letter to Jones, Pelosi defended the new rule, saying it was "intended to facilitate evacuation of the buildings in the event of an emergency, to bring the **House** office buildings into compliance with safety and disability access codes and to provide consistent application of signage and posting rules."

Pelosi said she shared the foursome's "commitment to our fallen soldiers and those currently serving in uniform," but she held firm. "Members may erect memorials or displays within their offices, but not in hallways where they present hazards to the disabled, visitors and congressional staff," she said.

An informal survey of **House** office buildings reveals that more than a dozen lawmakers still had memorials to fallen soldiers on hallway display as of July 24.

McDermott said his signs don't get in the way. "I don't see us making an obstruction," McDermott said.

But the Washington Democrat conceded he would be willing to put his posters in a wall-mounted display in the hallway, if **House** leaders signed off on that alternative.

Jennifer A. Dlouhy can be reached at 202-263-6400 or at the e-mail address jdouhy@hearst.com

Photo; Caption: Outside Rep. Ted Poe's office in Washington, D.C., there are flags, a sign-in book and a poster memorializing 26 servicemen and -women from southeast Texas who died in Iraq or Afghanistan. Poe and three other representatives refuse to comply with an edict to remove such displays.

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Metro News
Lawmaker's funds dwindling fast

JULIA MALONE
Cox Washington Bureau
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Washington --- U.S. Rep. Paul Broun of Athens already has spent most of his annual office allowance, chiefly for mass mailings to constituents before his July 15 primary, his office acknowledged Wednesday.

The Georgia Republican's fast-spending rate has raised concerns within the **House** of Representatives that he could exhaust his estimated \$1.38 million budget before year's end.

Broun is "the first who has dipped this far down this early in the year," said Jeff Ventura, spokesman for the **chief administrative officer** in the U.S. **House** of Representatives, the overseer of member expenses.

Aides to Broun insisted the congressman was in no danger of running out of cash for his offices either on Capitol Hill or in his district in Athens, Augusta and Toccoa.

"We are within budget now and will remain so throughout the year," said chief of staff Aloysius Hogan. "There are no lay-offs," he said.

The aide was responding to the newspaper Roll Call report that Broun's funds are so low that the **House** Minority Leader, Rep. John Boehner, an Ohio Republican, was looking for ways to help.

Boehner spokesman Michael Steel confirmed in an interview Wednesday that the GOP leadership was aware of the situation but declined to discuss specifics.

"That's going to be a private matter between us and Mr. Broun," Steel said. The spokesman added, "There are a number of options" for assisting the congressman if his office runs short of cash.

Broun did not respond to requests for an interview.

A statement released by his press secretary said the congressman "has put a priority on communicating with constituents."

"Those official communications have all been done in compliance with the rules of the **House** and were all approved" by the **House** bipartisan office on mailing standards, the e-mailed statement added.

The use of official funds for mass mailings, or "franking" as the privilege has been called for centuries, has long been controversial. Critics, especially conservatives such as Republican strategist Grover Norquist, have said it gives incumbents an unfair advantage at the taxpayers' expense.

Little known in Georgia politics before pulling an upset victory in a special election last year, Broun has established a reputation as a hard-line foe of big federal spending. But he also made full use of the tools --- and budget --- of his incumbency to establish ties with his new constituents.

With his congressional allowance, he was able to send 10 mass mailings and pay for extensive automated telephone messages until mid-April, 90 days before the July 15 primary.

Broun's effort appeared to pay off when he bested his primary opponent, state Rep. Barry Fleming, with 71 percent of the vote.

Roll Call reported that Broun had spent \$109,559 on mass mailings during the first quarter of this year,

making him the second-highest spender in the **House**, just behind Rep. Pete Stark (D-Calif.).

Broun's second-quarter office finances won't be disclosed until mid-August.

Asked for "ballpark" estimates, Hogan said the office had "hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars" for the last six months of the year.

In the few cases where members have overspent office allowances, they have had to reimburse Congress out of pocket.

However, campaign finance experts said that members routinely use campaign dollars to offset some official expenses, such as travel to and from the district, normally paid through the member's annual allowance.

ID: 0006912029 Type: Photo Name: broun.0729-004 Date: 07/24/2008 Page: D7 Edition: Main Pub: AJC
Caption: LINDA SPILLERS / Associated Press From left, Rep. Jack Kingston (R-Ga.), Rep. Paul Broun (R-Ga.) and Broun aide Joshua Evans chat in Washington in 2007.

Document ATJC000020080724e47o0005y

Broun's Office Funds Run Low

Jennifer Yachnin

625 words

23 July 2008

Roll Call

English

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Having nearly expended his annual office budget by midyear, sources said on Tuesday that Rep. Paul Broun (R-Ga.) may be forced to seek assistance to manage the office's day-to-day functions. At the same time, Broun's office said it was unaware of any problems.

A Broun spokeswoman denied that the office will furlough or otherwise reorganize staff.

"We're not laying off anybody," spokeswoman Jessica Morris said. In a separate interview she said the office's annual budget remains intact, stating: "It's not been depleted that I'm aware of."

But according to a Republican consultant familiar with the matter, Broun -- who sends out prodigious amounts of constituent mail -- has spent nearly half of his \$1.38 million annual budget on letters, telephone messages and other communications with nearly six months left in the calendar year.

Michael Steel, a spokesman for **House** Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio), said Tuesday: "We're aware of the situation, and are willing to offer whatever assistance we can."

Morris, who is based in Georgia, said she was not aware of any help the office was receiving. Broun's chief of staff, Aloysius Hogan, did not return a telephone message Tuesday afternoon.

The Georgia lawmaker's office declined to provide detailed information on its mailing costs or budget, noting those figures are available in the quarterly expenditure statements published by the **House**, which detail lawmakers' spending in a line-item format.

"All of that will be public information," Morris said. Records are currently available only for the first quarter of 2008, however, and second-quarter records are not expected to be made publicly available until mid-August.

According to **House** records, Broun spent \$109,559 on mass mailings in the first quarter of 2008, making him the second-highest spender behind only Rep. Pete Stark (D-Calif.), who recorded \$111,122 in mailings.

A review of Broun's mailings, copies of which are maintained by the Clerk of the **House**, shows a flurry of activity leading up to April 2008. Broun faced a July 15 primary challenge and was prohibited from sending mail within 90 days of that election.

Leading up to that contest -- in which he defeated state Rep. Barry Fleming with 71 percent of the vote -- Broun signed off on 10 mass-mailed letters, along with two first-class mailings, a newspaper ad, seven e-mail newsletters and a telephone survey.

"Everything that's gone has been approved," Morris said, referring to the franking commission, formally known as the Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards, which must approve the content of such mailings.

Each **House** Member is provided with an annual base budget of about \$875,000 and receives additional funds based on the distance between the lawmaker's district and Washington, office space rental rates in each district, and an "official mail" allowance determined by variables including residential addresses and postage rates.

According to the quarterly **House** disbursement records, each office received at least \$1.1 million in 2008 for their Members' Representational Allowances, with many budgets, including Broun's, listed between \$1.3 million and \$1.4 million.

The Office of the **Chief Administrative Officer** oversees the annual budgets and monitors account balances for each office, according to CAO spokesman Jeff Ventura.

"When they go too low, too fast, we give them a heads-up," Ventura said. He declined to disclose current balances for individual offices, stating that is up to the discretion of individual lawmakers.

One knowledgeable GOP aide, who asked not to be identified citing the sensitive nature of the subject, said: "We're not aware of any Member whose account has completely depleted," adding, "The emphasis is on completely."

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Document RLCL000020080723e47n00001

Ehlers' Green Credentials in Dispute

Emily Yehle
628 words
22 July 2008
Roll Call
English

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An environmental lobbying group is turning against Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.), claiming that his criticism of the **House's** greening initiatives is a sign that he's not as environmentally friendly as his reputation suggests.

In a letter sent last week, Friends of the Earth asked the League of Conservation Voters to withdraw its endorsement of Ehlers. An LCV spokesman said the group did not yet have a response.

In the letter, Friends President Brent Blackwelder cited Ehlers' "irresponsible and unjustified attack" on Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-Calif.) efforts to green the **House's** operations.

"It's something you would have thought Ehlers would be cheering," Blackwelder said in an interview. "Instead he seems to be launching an attack."

Blackwelder said that improvements can be made to the greening project but that Ehlers seems "preoccupied with finding fault."

"Why do we need more people up there who, instead of leading, are being a roadblock?" he said.

Ehlers spokeswoman Salley Collins declined to answer Blackwelder's comments.

"I'm not going to dignify those false claims with a response," she said in an e-mail.

Ehlers is one of the rare Republicans who has long had the support of the environmental community. The LCV gave him a 70 percent rating on its 2007 Environmental Scorecard, a report that ranks Members based on their votes.

Most recently, Ehlers introduced a renewal for the Great Lakes Legacy Act, which funds cleanup efforts in 31 areas around the Great Lakes. And LCV cited his support of "wind, solar, biomass, and hydro power" in the group's endorsement.

But in the past year, Ehlers has also criticized the way **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** has handled Pelosi's "Green the Capitol" initiative, which aims to make the **House** carbon-neutral. As ranking member of the **House** Administration Committee, Ehlers helps oversee such projects.

Last fall, Ehlers wrote a letter to Beard expressing his "deep concerns" about Beard's intention to spend about \$89,000 to buy carbon offsets from the private Chicago Climate Exchange.

"As I have expressed to you directly, using our limited **House** resources for purchases where the measure of return is so dubious makes me very wary," Ehlers wrote.

Instead, he wanted Beard to wait until the Government Accountability Office finished a report on carbon offsets markets. But Beard went ahead and bought the offsets. The GAO report still hasn't been released.

Most recently, Ehlers questioned the CAO's contract with Restaurant Associates, which runs the **House** cafeterias. One of the provisions allows RA to subtract the cost of certain greening efforts -- such as biodegradable cups -- from the profits it hands over to the **House**.

Ehlers criticized the CAO for not clearing the change with the **House** Administration Committee, even though RA has already subtracted about \$227,000 from the \$362,000 that was originally supposed to go to the **House**.

Blackwelder also pointed to a provision in the fiscal 2008 appropriations bill that directs Beard to buy offsets.

Ehlers, he claims, is throwing "a bunch of procedural" obstacles rather than giving constructive criticism. And

he questioned why Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio) had also criticized the project.

"How much do they have to keep chewing on this thing?" he said.

Blackwelder conceded that the carbon offsets market is far from perfect. A "fair criticism" is that it needs more guidelines and regulations, he said, but the market also needs support as it grows.

One of the main challenges is to ensure that the money goes to environmental projects that wouldn't have occurred otherwise, he said. For example: If the market gave the money to a group planting trees, would the trees have been planted without that money?

Document RLCL000020080722e47m00007

Letters

Poor Word Choice

336 words

14 July 2008

Roll Call

English

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It's really a shame that the new improvements in the **House** cafeterias have been called a "scheme" and your newspaper used that word, without quotes, in your headline as if it were a point of fact ("Greening Scheme Evokes Criticism," July 10).

Anyone who walks into our cafeterias, where we serve 240,000 meals every month, can plainly see that this "scheme" is really an unquestionable "success."

But, there's an old saying in politics: "If you can't beat them on the facts, complain about the process."

And that's what is happening here. Our critics are not seeing the forest through the trees. Choosing to focus on the nuances of our contract with Restaurant Associates, and portraying the **Chief Administrative Officer** as someone who is nefariously "squandering millions of dollars," is simply a disrespectful distortion, an unfortunate distraction and completely not the point.

Improving the cafeterias was a much-needed investment and a universally welcomed change. Period.

Nothing was "squandered." We deftly managed a difficult, fast-moving contract negotiation that resulted in a nationally recognized waste reduction operation in our cafeterias, of which all 7,000 employees of the **House** and the millions of visitors who dine with us every year can be proud.

The **House** Administration Committee's minority spokesman said "at this point the greening of the cafeterias is irrelevant." We don't feel that Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-Calif.) initiative is irrelevant at all. In fact, being environmentally responsible is never irrelevant. We are also proud that the **House** has become a model of sustainability for the rest of the nation to follow.

And, rest assured, nobody eating in our cafeterias today will be fretting over contract details obscured through the lens of partisanship. Republicans and Democrats will instead dine together, swiping their QuickPay cards and settling into a satisfying lunch. And they can thank the CAO staff for that common ground.

Bon appetit.

Jeff Ventura

Director of Communications, Office of the **Chief Administrative Officer**

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Campus Notebook

What! Free Bikes! House staffers will soon have a new way to get around town, thanks to the long-anticipated Wheels4Wellness bike-sharing program that will be unveiled this afternoon

Alison McSherry

354 words

10 July 2008

Roll Call

English

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What! Free Bikes! **House** staffers will soon have a new way to get around town, thanks to the long-anticipated Wheels4Wellness bike-sharing program that will be unveiled this afternoon.

Both Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) and Zach Wamp (R-Tenn.) will be on hand to formally introduce the program that will put 30 bikes at various locations on the **House** side of the Capitol campus. The bikes will have lights, odometers and baskets, and will be available for **House** staffers to use at their leisure for up to 12 hours at a time. The Office of the **House Chief Administrative Officer** is hoping to have all bikes in place by Monday.

"I've always believed the federal government should lead by example, and one thing we must be doing is providing people with transportation choices," said Blumenauer, a member of the Bike Caucus. "The Wheels for Wellness program will help staff get around, save money, and reduce their carbon footprint."

House employees can sign up to use the bikes at the **House** Staff Fitness Center in Room 24 of the G-2 level of the Rayburn **House** Office Building.

Phil Get Your Gun! D.C. Councilmember Phil Mendelson on Tuesday introduced emergency legislation that will lift the D.C. gun ban in compliance with the Supreme Court ruling that it violated District residents' Second Amendment rights.

Traditionally D.C. laws must be reviewed by Congress before taking effect, but because the Council is recessing on July 16 for the summer, Mendelson introduced the law in emergency form, which bypasses this step.

The emergency law, which will take immediate effect and last for 90 days, will allow residents to register guns in the District and keep them in their home without a trigger lock. Guns must be kept unloaded and disassembled unless they are being used in the home for self-defense.

Please send tips to notebook@rollcall.com.

Document RLCL000020080710e47a00034

Greening Scheme Evokes Criticism

Emily Yehle
852 words
10 July 2008
Roll Call
English

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House officials have committed to spending millions on greening efforts in the chamber's restaurants without Members' required stamp of approval, according to the ranking member on the **House** Administration Committee.

Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.) sent a letter to **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** on Wednesday, claiming that the **House's** contract with Restaurant Associates "underwent substantive changes in the time period between Committee approval and the contract's execution."

"As a result, the **House** has lost significant revenue to date and will forfeit millions of dollars of commissions over the length of the contract," he said.

The letter comes days after Beard's office announced that the **House** is set to make an annual profit of almost \$1 million from the cafeterias. But more than \$600,000 of that will be invested back into the restaurants to pay for greening efforts, such as biodegradable cups and local food.

That payback was never cleared with the committee.

By not getting the committee's approval, Beard violated **House** guidelines that require the CAO to clear any purchases that cost more than \$250,000, Ehlers spokeswoman Salley Collins said.

But **House** Administration Committee spokesman Kyle Anderson said the change wasn't a "purchase" because it wasn't paid out of the **House's** revolving fund. Instead, he said, it was a change that was "consistent" with the approved contract.

A statement from the Democratic side of the committee called such modifications "commonplace and within the purview of the CAO."

"The minority's ongoing opposition on this issue ignores the value of environmental efforts and greening initiatives, two factors that are central to the RA relationship," it reads. "Since they can't dispute the success of the **House's** new restaurants and the overall Capitol Greening Initiative, they've chosen to focus on contract details."

But it's more than details, Collins contends, pointing to the millions of dollars that will be spent on greening over RA's seven-year contract.

Because the committee was bypassed, Members have no idea how Restaurant Associates computes the cost of the greening effort or what the money specifically goes to, she said. For example: Is RA charging the **House** for the most cost-efficient biodegradable cups?

In his letter to Beard, Ehlers asked for a "comprehensive report about the execution and management of the contract" by July 31.

"At this point, the greening of the cafeterias is irrelevant," Collins said. "What concerns us is Mr. Beard's carte blanche approach to squandering millions of dollars without seeking approval from the oversight committee - those ultimately held accountable for spending at the end of the day."

Restaurant Associates took over the management of the **House** cafeterias in December with the promise of better food and more environmentally friendly practices. And like private vendors in the past, RA signed a contract ensuring that a certain percentage of their profit would go into the **House's** revolving fund.

But the **House** wanted more greening measures than any other cafeteria RA runs, such as composting, biodegradable utensils and local food. So the CAO and RA made an agreement: RA could subtract the cost of such measures from the profit they handed over to the **House**.

That agreement has ensured that the cafeterias are environmentally friendly without any extra money from

taxpayers, said Jeff Ventura, spokesman for the CAO. In fact, he said, the **House** is making more profit from the cafeterias than it did before bringing in RA.

He called the agreement to pay RA for greening efforts an "administrative change" that allowed the **House** to install "a waste reduction program in our cafeterias that is a key element of the Speaker's Green the Capitol Initiative."

The cafeterias have undergone dramatic change. All cups and utensils are made from materials that break down easily, food is composted, and some of the produce and meat is bought locally.

But it all costs more than the cheap stuff.

In RA's first four and a half months, the **House** earned \$362,308. About \$227,000 of that went back to RA for the greening efforts, and another \$38,000 was subtracted to help pay for Quick Pay (a payment system for staffers).

That means about \$96,000 of the original \$362,000 went into the **House's** revolving fund, which is used to make various **House** improvements.

Still, it puts the projected annual **House** profit - after greening costs- at about \$256,000, or about \$100,000 more than the **House** received annually from the previous vendor, General Services Inc.

The CAO's office has emphasized this expected increase in profit.

But Collins questioned why the CAO didn't come to the committee to approve the plan, if only so Members could see for themselves whether it was effective and fiscally responsible.

"Had the CAO sought the required authorization before making unilateral changes, our Members would have ensured that any terms were structured to provide the best value for the **House**," she wrote in an e-mail. "However, there is still a great deal of uncertainty regarding modifications."

Document RLCL000020080710e47a0002z

Hackers Hit 15 Offices in House

Jennifer Yachnin

536 words

10 July 2008

Roll Call

English

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Computer hackers who infiltrated **House** computers in late 2006 compromised as many as 50 machines throughout the chamber, according to a memorandum prepared by the Information Systems Security Office.

As stated in the confidential document, a copy of which was obtained by Roll Call, cyberspies infiltrated computers in 15 offices, including eight committee offices and seven personal offices.

In addition to Reps. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and Chris Smith (R-N.J.), who acknowledged the incident last month, hackers accessed machines in the offices of the late Reps. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) and Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), and Reps. Mike Pence (R-Ind.), Steve Chabot (R-Ohio), now-Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Del. Eni Faleomavaega (D-American Samoa).

The slide-show-style memorandum also lists computers or servers compromised in the Education and Workforce, Commerce, International Relations, Transportation and Infrastructure, Homeland Security and Ways and Means panels. The document also listed one server violated in the office of the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China.

The International Relations Committee, since renamed the Foreign Affairs Committee, suffered the largest attack, with 25 computers and one server infiltrated, the memo notes.

According to the report, the first compromised computer was detected in October 2006 - although it does not indicate in which office - and the FBI was contacted to assist in the investigation. Using information gleaned from that computer, analysts conducted a subsequent scan of the "**House** Network" and found additional infected machines.

The report states that the hackers were able to copy files and record keystrokes from infected machines, which were accessed through Web sites, active content in e-mail messages and instant messaging.

A spokesman for the Office of the **Chief Administrative Officer**, which oversees the Information Systems Security Office, declined to comment on any aspect of the incidents or investigations.

Although **House** Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D-Pa.) called on the CAO in early June to work with the FBI and "adopt all necessary protections for **House** information," it remains unclear whether or how much the chamber has improved its technological security since the attacks were discovered.

While **House** Information Resources, the chamber's information technology office, issues minimum standards for Member offices, each office sets its own policies regarding technology, including the purchase of its computer equipment from office funds.

An FBI spokeswoman declined to comment Wednesday and would not confirm whether the investigation remains open.

Although the **House** report does not identify the source of the attacks, Wolf asserted in June that the invasion originated from China.

"In subsequent meetings with **House** Information Resources and FBI officials, it was revealed that the outside sources responsible for this attack came from within the People's Republic of China," Wolf said in a statement. The Virginia lawmaker said his computers were accessed in August 2006. "These cyber attacks permitted the source to probe our computers to evaluate our system's defenses, and to view and copy information. My suspicion is that I was targeted by Chinese sources because of my long history of speaking out about China's abysmal human rights record."

Chinese officials have denied those accusations.

Document RLCL000020080710e47a0002y

Power Plant Needs Millions for Greening

Daniel Heim
439 words
19 June 2008
Roll Call
English

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The acting Architect of the Capitol told a Senate committee on Wednesday that the Capitol Power Plant needs \$200 million in improvements to be run most cost-effectively.

Acting AOC Stephen Ayers told the Rules and Administration Committee that the improvements would allow the plant to make its own electricity and would save money in the long term, but committee members seemed unlikely to consider such a large funding request.

"Two hundred million is a tough sell," ranking member Bob Bennett (R-Utah) told Ayers.

The power plant heats and cools the Capitol complex, but the Capitol's electricity is provided by Pepco.

The committee hearing was held to discuss energy efficiency and reducing the Senate's carbon footprint. It follows the Green the Capitol Initiative on the **House** side.

Jeff Ventura, spokesman for **House** Chief Administration Officer **Dan Beard**, declined to compare the Senate's progress with the **House's**.

The 2007 energy bill requires the AOC to reduce the Capitol complex's energy consumption by 30 percent by 2015, and Ayers testified that the AOC is on target to meet that requirement.

He said energy consumption has been reduced by 6.7 percent since 2003.

The power plant uses coal, natural gas and fuel oil, and committee Chairwoman Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) asked Ayers to "look into whether we could reduce Senate greenhouse gas emissions at the Capitol Power Plant by changing the fuel mixture used," which Ayers quickly agreed to do.

He advocated for \$7 million in equipment improvements to increase the power plant's natural gas capacity, which he said is almost maxed out.

The AOC is striving to phase out coal and fuel oil in favor of more environmentally friendly natural gas.

Ayers pointed to a number of successes his office has had in greening the Senate, including replacing 4,000 light bulbs with fluorescent bulbs and saving more than 900 tons in carbon emissions.

Motion-sensitive lights have been installed, insulation has improved, water consumption has declined and a solar energy source was selected to light parking lot 18, north of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Ayers testified.

He said 2,300 tons of paper was recycled from the **House** and Senate office buildings in fiscal 2007.

Bennett and Feinstein congratulated Ayers on his success and pledged to work with colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, on which both serve, to secure funding for further greening initiatives.

A number of greening reports are in production at the Government Accountability Office.

"I doubt very much we will take action until we get all the facts," Feinstein said.

Document RLCL000020080619e46j0000b

Heard On The Hill
Thune's an Easy Date

Emily Heil and Elizabeth Brotherton
1,085 words
17 June 2008
Roll Call
English

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Thune's an Easy Date. It's easy to snag a date with Sen. John Thune - but it isn't cheap. While perusing

financial disclosure forms made public last week, HOH noticed a preponderance of auctioned-off dates with the South Dakota Republican, with all proceeds, of course, going to charity.

Thune sold "lunch/dinner" packages for six different charities in 2007, the records show, with such outings fetching as much

as \$2,000 for the good causes. Beneficiaries of Thune's "dates" included the Teddy Bear Den charity, the Sanford Health Foundation and the March of Dimes.

"This is an easy way for the Senator to spend time with his supporters and give back to the community," Thune spokesman Kyle Downey says. "In other words, everybody wins - and walks away with a full stomach."

Thune's mealtime company might be worth the big bucks he commands: After all, he's one of the Hill's lookers, and a pretty smooth talker, too.

And in other financial-disclosure news, HOH noticed a few more oddities:

Yen Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Wash.) has an unusual line of side income. He reported earning \$1,080 in 2007 from participating in research at the National Institutes of Health. Turns out it was his wife who took part in the studies, his spokeswoman said.

Yen Staffers for Rep. George Radanovich apparently think their boss's golf game needs a little help. The California Republican reported that his staff gave him private golf lessons worth \$300. A spokeswoman tells HOH that the lessons were a Christmas gift for the big guy, but she insisted they weren't a commentary on his game. Everyone - even the illustrious Tiger Woods - could use a little coaching, the spokesman notes.

Musgrave for President. Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) seems to have the whole GOP presidential nomination thing pretty well sewn up. But there's still a contingent, apparently, that has another candidate in mind. Drumroll, please ... it's Rep. Marilyn Musgrave (R-Colo.)!

Even Musgrave's staffers were surprised to see their boss - who doesn't exactly have big-time national name recognition and who's fighting a tough re-election battle - on a list of potential replacements for McCain as the Republican nominee. In a posting on Huffingtonpost.com, blogger Steve Rosenbaum posits the theory that McCain actually won't accept the presidential nomination, leaving the field open for another candidate. He lists a dozen or so names for possible McCain substitutes, including all the usual suspects - i.e., a bunch of rumored choices for the vice presidential spot - and Musgrave.

"We're honored to be in such company," spokesman Joseph Brettell told HOH. But he humbly shot down any presidential aspirations. "After a history-making one-day campaign, we're throwing the full weight of our constituency behind John McCain," he joked. "But we're withdrawing with our heads held high."

He also kidded that as a would-be White **House** press secretary, he's hiring an agent and planning to write a tell-all book.

Hmm ... haven't we heard that one before?

The Brad Pitt of Washington. The old adage that Washington, D.C., is just Hollywood for ugly people is something HOH always has thought to be a little harsh. After all, there are plenty of D.C. celebs who really are quite good-looking. (See our previous item about South Dakota Republican Sen. John Thune.)

But we must admit that we found a recent Hollywood comparison put forth by the folks over in the office of

Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard to be a stretch. In the office's latest "Green Team" newsletter, one article describes what happened when a **House** staffer met with Beard to talk about the Green the Capitol Initiative.

"She was so nervous when she met him that she was practically shaking. She'd been waiting to meet him for months and the moment had finally arrived," the article reads. "Marcie Cooperman, a staff assistant in the Committee on Natural Resources, wasn't anticipating a meeting with Dennis Quaid or a passing glimpse of Brad Pitt, but with **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard.**"

Mr. Beard, HOH knows Brad Pitt, and you, sir, are no Brad Pitt.

Now, we don't want to knock Beard's Capitol Hill star status; the guy's been featured everywhere from the New York Times to CNN, even to the gossip-filled pages of *Wonkette*. But we would hardly compare Beard - more of the grandfather-type - to Pitt, who's been *People's Sexiest Man Alive* and has an array of beautiful children with beautiful actress Angelina Jolie.

As one **House** aide quipped: "Personally, I'd go with Pitt."

Mad Mamas. There are plenty of ways to make a mom mad: Don't clean up your room, or chew with your mouth open, to name a few. But don't vote for her bill? That's enough to make a mom take action.

If you eye a group of women wearing sashes near presumptive GOP presidential nominee Sen. John McCain's office today, don't assume you've run into a bunch of Miss America contestants.

Two dozen or so protesters from the Web-driven advocacy group *MomsRising.org* could create a scene in the Russell Senate Office Building today as they deliver more than 20,000 r[142]sum[142]s to the Arizona Republican to protest his decision to not support a discrimination bill.

The Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (which failed on a cloture vote in April) would ease restrictions on the length of time workers have to file pay discrimination claims. But McCain came out against the measure, arguing that it would increase frivolous lawsuits and saying a better solution to pay inequity is increased training and education.

That whole argument didn't really go over well with *MomsRising*, which immediately began collecting r[142]sum[142]s to show plenty of women already are well-educated, spokeswoman Gretchen Wright tells HOH. And today, members will sport sashes reading, "Magnificently Overqualified Mothers" and head to McCain's office in the Russell Building to hand-deliver the r[142]sum[142]s.

"There is every chance his office won't let us in," Wright admitted. "I don't know why that would be."

Jennifer Yachnin contributed to this report.

Please send your hot tips, juicy gossip or comments to hoh@rollcall.com.

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PAGE ONE

Hacking on Hill traced to China ; Human rights data targeted

David R Sands

David R. Sands, THE WASHINGTON TIMES

611 words

12 June 2008

The Washington Times

A1

English

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Two Republican congressmen revealed Wednesday that China-based hackers had broken into their office computer networks, stealing files and data that included information on dissidents critical of the Beijing regime.

Northern Virginia Rep. Frank R. Wolf and Rep. Christopher H. Smith of New Jersey said they believed they were targeted in the cyber-attacks in 2006 and early 2007 because of their long records of criticizing China's human rights record.

Both lawmakers said the hacking incidents targeted aides who worked specifically on China and human rights issues. Mr. Wolf said a FBI investigation pinpointed the attacks as coming from China, but could not determine whether Chinese government agents were involved.

"My suspicion is that I was targeted by Chinese sources because of my long history of speaking out about China's abysmal human rights record," said Mr. Wolf, who called the August 2006 hacking of his office computers a "very, very sophisticated operation."

Mr. Smith added, "I have every reason to believe that the Chinese government was behind this, given its obsession with political control."

Mr. Wolf, in a "privileged resolution" introduced on the **House** floor Wednesday afternoon, said he knew of other lawmakers and at least one **House** committee that were subject to cyber-attacks. The resolution called on the **House chief administrative officer** and the FBI to brief members and staff "on how to protect themselves, their official records and their communications from electronic security breaches."

The resolution comes just days after U.S. officials acknowledged they were investigating charges that a government computer laptop belonging to Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez was compromised on an official trip to Beijing in December, and that Commerce Department computers were later hacked.

In one sign of mounting U.S. concern, Congress late last year approved a bill requiring the Pentagon to report on China's growing computer-warfare capabilities when producing assessments of Chinese military power.

Wang Baudong, spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, denied Wednesday his government engaged in cyber-warfare.

"We are consistent and clear that China has never engaged in such activities against any other country," said Mr. Wang, adding that China itself has been the target of hackers.

The embassy spokesman said the Chinese Internet address used by the hackers did not even mean the attack came from his country.

"It is very easy for these people to make up anything," Mr. Wang said. He added the Chinese government was willing to work with other governments to counter cyber-attacks.

Mr. Wolf said he knew of the hacking of his office's computers for a long time, but he was pressed not to go public by U.S. government officials whom he declined to identify. "A lot of people urged me not to do this," he said.

But he argued that U.S. lawmakers, government officials and staffers needed to know the security threats from cyber-snoops in an age of laptop computers, cell phones and communicators such as the BlackBerry.

Mr. Wolf said he decided to air his concerns on the floor of Congress because, "by not talking about this

openly, we are making a national security problem worse."

Rep. Peter Hoekstra, Michigan Republican and ranking minority member of the **House** Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, said the foreign cyber-attacks targeting Capitol Hill underscored the Bush administration's argument for enhanced U.S. counterespionage and surveillance efforts.

"The changes in technology and capabilities in how the world communicates mean we still have to update our foreign intelligence surveillance capabilities," Mr. Hoekstra said.

Document WATI000020080612e46c00001

Wolf: Chinese Hacked Into Computers

Melissa Attias

462 words

12 June 2008

Roll Call

English

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Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.) on Wednesday introduced a resolution requiring **House** Members to be notified of the dangers of electronic information hacking after announcing that a source within the People's Republic of China hacked into four of his office computers in August 2006.

At an afternoon press briefing, Wolf said that he believed he was targeted because of his advocacy against human rights abuses in China and that the hackers initially attacked a computer containing information about the whereabouts of Chinese dissidents.

Wolf was joined by Reps. Pete Hoekstra (R-Mich.) and Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.). Smith announced that his computers were similarly compromised in December 2006 and March 2007 from a Chinese IP address.

Smith, who in the previous Congress chaired the Foreign Affairs subcommittee then known as Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations, also attributed the attacks to his involvement with Chinese dissidents.

Smith said he has "every reason" to believe that the Chinese government is responsible for the hacking. "The Internet can be used as a terrorism device," he said, "and no one has done that more expertly than the Chinese government."

After the press conference, Smith said it was possible the hackings have occurred with other Members since his computer responded the same way it might for an everyday virus.

"The computers were malfunctioning, and the screen completely froze," Smith said.

Wolf said he was aware that computers in several other Members' offices were also compromised, but he declined to give names or even approximate how many computers were involved.

He said the computers in the **House** Foreign Affairs Committee office were also breached.

Several Members, including Wolf, brought the subject up on the **House** floor Wednesday afternoon.

"There is a great concern about that," **House** Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) said. "This matter is being investigated in a bipartisan way."

The issue was also put to **House Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** last week.

In a June 6 letter, **House** Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D- Pa.) told Members that the committee has "directed the CAO to work closely with the FBI and other security agencies to ensure that we adopt all necessary protections for **House** information."

He promised that he and ranking member Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.) "will be working with the CAO to provide improved safeguards in data protection, enhanced user authentication and system patch management."

Howard Gantman, the spokesman for Senate Rules and Administration Chairwoman Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), said the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms has been asked for a full report on the security of the Senate computers, but the committee is "not immediately aware" of any problems. "It's clear that we need to maintain a strong vigilance," Gantman said.

Document RLCL000020080612e46c00009

Campus Notebook
Ferment Over Carbon Offsets

Emily Yehle
274 words
10 June 2008
Roll Call
English

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Ferment Over Carbon Offsets. **House** officials are well aware of Rep. Vernon Ehlers' distaste for the carbon offset market - the Michigan Republican loudly criticized **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** when he bought \$89,000 worth of offsets last year in an effort to make the **House** carbon-neutral.

Last week, Ehlers was at it again, pushing through an anti- carbon offsets amendment for a bill that provides grants and low- interest loans to public schools that make environmentally friendly improvements.

In a "Dear Colleague" letter, Ehlers argued that schools might try to buy carbon offsets to reduce the carbon footprint reported to the state.

"While I support reducing carbon footprints," he wrote, "using these federal funds to buy carbon offsets is the wrong approach. Green construction funding should be used directly on school building modification, which will result in long-term carbon reductions."

The **House** passed his amendment 397 to 17, prompting his spokeswoman, Salley Collins, to wonder why the same Members have allowed the **House** to spend money for the same purpose.

"Where were they when we were screaming bloody murder about the **House** of Representatives purchasing bogus offsets?" she said.

Since Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) initiated the Green the Capitol project, several Republicans have criticized some of its initiatives as a waste of taxpayer money.

But Beard has maintained that the offset purchase was necessary to meet the goal of being carbon-neutral by the end of this year, and he has touted other benefits of the project, including composting and energy-efficient light bulbs.

Please send tips to notebook@rollcall.com.

Document RLCL000020080610e46a00009

Campus Notebook
Sharing Their Names

Emily Yehle
227 words
9 June 2008
Roll Call
English

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Sharing Their Names. Members will soon know every other office that employs their "shared employees," those financial and technical staffers who work in several **House** offices.

The **House** Administration Committee recently directed **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** to produce the first quarterly report on that information, along with guidelines and rules for hiring and retaining shared employees.

Those steps are taken directly from a **House** Inspector General report that made several recommendations on how to improve control over shared employees. The use of such employees has increased in recent years, with many **House** offices using the employees on a part-time basis for financial and technical issues.

House IG James Cornell began investigating the issue after discovering that Laura Flores, an office manager for three offices, had billed the offices for supplies she had not purchased. She recently pleaded guilty to wire fraud and was sentenced to six months in prison.

The CAO has not yet come up with the timeline or format of the reports, said CAO spokesman Jeff Ventura.

While it's unclear when the CAO will release the reports, it's sure to be just one of several planned changes. When Cornell testified at a hearing last month on his recommendations, Members said they would implement many of them.

Please send tips to notebook@rollcall.com.

Document RLCL000020080609e46900009

Senate Puts Glitch in House Pay

Emily Yehle
690 words
9 June 2008
Roll Call
English

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House staffers could now miss their opportunity to get paid twice a month after a **House** bill to make the switch was muddied by a Senate amendment designed to tweak the ethics rules.

The **House** easily passed a bill allowing the change from monthly to biweekly paychecks two months ago. Senate staffers already are paid every other week.

But when the bill hit the Senate, Majority Leader Harry Reid (D- Nev.) and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) added an amendment changing a provision in the ethics rules passed last year.

Now the bill is in a state of uncertainty, with **House** leadership researching the effects of the change and assessing whether both sides of the aisle are on board.

"We are closely reviewing the Senate amendment to the legislation and following that careful review, we will announce our intentions on the bill," said Nadeam Elshami, spokesman for Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.).

Both Democratic and Republican staffers say the Senate amendment corrects an unintended consequence of the ethics law. Essentially, several junior Senate staffers are now covered by the lobbying ban - which prohibits former staffers from lobbying the Senate for one year after they leave - because their Christmas bonuses pushed them over the salary threshold.

Under the new law, staffers who make more than 75 percent of a Member's basic rate of pay for "at least 60 days" fall under the lobby ban.

The issue threatens the long-awaited switch to biweekly paychecks in the **House**, where staffers have long relieved only one paycheck a month. Getting paid that infrequently makes budgeting difficult, especially for younger staffers on skimpy salaries.

About 54 percent of **House** employees are under 35. Seven percent of all **House** staffers earned \$20,000 to \$29,999 in 2007, while 21 percent earned \$30,000 to \$39,999.

The **House** bill gives the **House** Administration Committee the authority to change the pay schedule, and **House** officials have indicated that they would like to do so.

In April, the bill seemed well on its way. It passed the **House** just two weeks after it came out of committee; it was expected to quickly pass the Senate as well.

When **House** Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D-Pa.) first introduced the bill, **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** heralded the change as "historic."

"I think it's an extremely important piece of legislation, and I'm thrilled that Mr. Brady has introduced it," he said at the time. "It's going to mean an historic change for **House** staff."

But the Senate's amendment, while a relatively simple fix for an unintended problem, involves a change to the ethics bill, which by its nature is controversial, and whose every nuance is carefully monitored. And that is enough to threaten - or at least delay- the **House** bill's once all-but-certain passage.

Reid and McConnell's amendment would change the timing for a lobby ban from "at least 60 days" to "more than two months." The distinction is crucial to prevent Senate staffers who receive bonuses from being inadvertently caught up by the lobby ban.

"At least 60 days" covers four Senate pay periods. But because Senators are not allowed to give separate bonuses to their staff, many lawmakers temporarily inflate a staffer's salary for four pay periods, or "at least 60 days."

"More than two months," however, would allow four bonus paychecks without reaching the new threshold.

Bonuses usually are awarded over four pay periods because staffers are not allowed to earn more than a Member.

For example, a staffer who makes \$90,000 a year doesn't meet the salary requirement for the ban, which is currently \$123,900. But if that staffer got a \$6,000 bonus over two months, his basic rate of pay would suddenly soar, and calculated over the entire year, would balloon to more than the threshold.

It appears that both Democrats and Republicans in the **House** eventually may agree to the change; a spokesman for Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio) said there had been staff-level discussions and "no objections."

Document RLCL000020080609e46900006

Another 'Shared' Aide Investigated ; IG Said to Eye a Former Employee

Paul Singer
760 words
22 May 2008
Roll Call
English

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House Inspector General James Cornell told a **House** committee on Wednesday that his office has uncovered a second "shared employee" who appears to have been improperly billing Member offices for expenses.

Cornell offered no clue to the identity of this person, and **House** Administration Committee staff said they have only been told that it is a "former employee."

Cornell's announcement was part of a broader IG report suggesting a range of steps to improve control over financial and information technology employees who work for multiple Congressional offices, and the committee's leaders promised to implement many of the recommendations, though Members are still discussing which reforms to advance.

House Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D-Pa.) emphasized that he has "no intent to eliminate shared employees," though he and ranking member Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.) agreed on the need to increase oversight of this group of staff members.

The IG recommended issuing new guidelines for shared employees, training shared employees in the rules that apply to them, requiring shared employees to disclose their outside earnings even if they would not normally be required to do so and regularly updating Members on whom else their shared employees are working for.

Over the past decade, Congress has seen a dramatic increase in the number of offices using shared employees to handle bookkeeping and technical support. There are now about two dozen financial staffers and another dozen or so information technology staffers in the **House** who function essentially as independent contractors.

Cornell told the committee on Wednesday that these shared employees earn an average of \$132,000 a year, while comparable employees working in the **Chief Administrative Officer's** office earn about \$68,000.

The IG first began looking into shared employees after discovering that Laura Flores, serving as an office manager for three Congressional offices, had billed the offices for reimbursement of supplies and subscriptions that she had not purchased. She also presented bills for reimbursement to multiple offices. Flores pleaded guilty earlier this month to one count of wire fraud and was sentenced to six months in prison.

In his testimony Wednesday, Cornell referenced the Flores case, and also said, "In another ongoing investigation, we found a second financial administrator who was paid for thousands of dollars of improper expense reimbursements and bonuses that were self-approved and resulted in improper payments."

Cornell also suggested that other shared employees are violating **House** rules - and in some cases federal law - by taking sensitive financial materials out of the Capitol complex to work from their home offices, passing work from an individual Congressional office on to another worker who is not on the payroll of that office, storing **House** documents in off-site locations and using their access to Congressional offices to market outside services to Member offices.

Committee members were broadly supportive of proposals offered by Cornell - and seconded by CAO **Dan Beard** - to develop written guidance to Members and staff regarding the rules for shared employees and to provide more information to Members about how shared employees operate.

But some of the more dramatic suggestions may be harder for the committee to implement. For instance, one staff member said that setting new financial disclosure requirements for shared employees that are more stringent than other **House** employees may require a change in **House** rules and a rewrite of the **House** Ethics Manual.

Republicans also raised concerns about the suggestion by Beard and Cornell that the CAO's office could begin providing bookkeeping and technical support services as an option to Members in lieu of the shared

employees.

Cornell said one of the "potential solutions" the IG has explored would be "to develop a centralized pool of employees within the financial realm and IT to provide comparable services. We think there is a lot of merit to exploring that."

But Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said that if these services were offered by the CAO's office, he would not use them, because he believes the CAO's office has become a partisan position, and he suspects Republicans would get worse service than Democrats.

Rep. Dan Lungren (R-Calif.) also warned that creating a centralized pool of staffers may not ultimately save the **House** any money, because even if the staffers were less expensive, their pay would still come out of each Member's office budget. That money would simply be spent on other things unless the CAO would propose to lower Members' office budgets, which Beard did not suggest.

Document RLCL000020080522e45m00002

Boehner Remains Defiant Over Earmark Web Site

Emily Yehle
610 words
21 May 2008
Roll Call
English

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House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio) continues to defy an order to take down his Web site touting earmark reform - and the **House** Administration Committee has yet to push back on the issue.

It's been almost three months since **House** Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D-Pa.) told Boehner that his Web site, earmarkreform.house.gov, violated **House** rules. Boehner immediately decried the order and declared that he wouldn't comply.

So far, he seems to have had the last word. **House** officials haven't brought up the matter since, though they say that they are still working on a solution.

Meanwhile, the earmark site is not only up but active, with press releases posted as recently as last week. Most of those posts criticize Democrats for not agreeing to an earmark moratorium.

The home page's introduction explains the Web site's purpose.

"In spite of the Democrats' refusal to change the way Washington spends taxpayer dollars, **House** Republicans have committed themselves to a series of standards that will be the basis of their comprehensive earmark reform efforts," it reads. "This website is dedicated to those standards and what **House** Republicans are doing to fix Washington by stopping earmarks."

Remarks like that would be acceptable on Boehner's Minority Leader Web site, **House** officials say, but they contend the earmark site breaks a **House** rule requiring a domain name to be "recognizably derivative or representative of the name of the Member or the name of the office sponsoring the website."

In short, the Web site puts forth an opinion that visitors might take for the **House's** viewpoint - when really it's from Boehner.

Originally, Deputy **Chief Administrative Officer** Daniel Doody approved the Web site name back in August. In February - less than two weeks after the Web site's launch - he sent an e-mail to Boehner's office admitting that he made a mistake and asking that the site be taken down.

Boehner responded in a letter that blamed the reversal on partisanship, sparking Brady's formal order.

"Changing its address now will inevitably hamper the effectiveness of the new website, much to the convenience of the majority that runs the **House**," Boehner wrote.

But since that exchange in February, Boehner spokesman Kevin Smith said the office hasn't heard from Brady or CAO officials. And they've continued to update the site without any further objection.

The **House** Administration Committee is working on "potential next steps" to take down the Web site, spokesman Kyle Anderson said.

Not only is the CAO willing to help move the Web site, Anderson said, but Brady offered to put up a redirection notice after it was moved.

"At that point, the impetus was on the Minority Leader to comply," Anderson said. "The decision to unilaterally remove a Member's site is one that is not taken lightly, and we continued to hope that Mr. Boehner would voluntarily comply with the rules, which he voted in favor of during his tenure on the committee."

While **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** could take down the site at any time, that would probably cause an uproar from Republicans. Smith said Boehner's office would "raise holy hell."

Already, Boehner has used the opportunity to blast Democrats about their earmarks. In a letter to Beard in

February, he questioned the number of earmarks sought by Democratic freshmen.

"They could unilaterally shut the Web site down if they so chose," Smith said Tuesday, "but that act would frankly highlight the fact even more that Democrats represent the status quo when it comes to earmark reform."

Document RLCL000020080521e45I00008

'Shared' Staffers Draw Scrutiny ; IG, CAO Want More Oversight

Paul Singer
1,125 words
21 May 2008
Roll Call
English

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The **House** Inspector General and **Chief Administrative Officer** want tighter supervision of the financial and technical staffers who work for multiple Congressional offices following a scandal in which a "shared employee" was caught embezzling money from Member office accounts.

House IG James Cornell and CAO **Dan Beard** are expected to testify today before the **House** Administration Committee that Congress should establish a new system to oversee shared employees, several sources said, though their recommendations were unavailable at press time. One source said both offices are exploring ways to reduce "vulnerabilities to the **House** arising from the use of shared employees."

Over the past decade, Congress has seen an explosion in the number of offices that are using shared employees to handle their bookkeeping and technical support. In many offices, the part-time bookkeeper may actually be the highest-paid employee, taking into account the salary he or she is taking from each office served.

Many offices prefer to hire an outside expert to handle complex tasks such as managing the office computers and handling the books because dealing with the **House** rules is a highly specialized skill. But a single office may not have enough work to justify hiring a full-time employee with a high level of expertise. One staffer said offices don't want to hand off important duties such as running a Web site or keeping office finances to a legislative assistant who has other responsibilities and no technical expertise.

The result is that there are now about two dozen financial staffers and another dozen or so information technology staffers in the **House** who function essentially as independent contractors competing with each other for "clients" and working for as many different offices as they can handle.

Sources say the IG first began looking into shared employees after discovering that Laura Flores, serving as an office manager for three Congressional offices, had billed the offices for reimbursement of supplies and subscriptions that she had not purchased. She also presented bills for reimbursement to multiple offices. Flores pleaded guilty earlier this month to one count of wire fraud and was sentenced to six months in prison.

The CAO's budget request for 2009 included a \$14 million increase over its \$114 million budget for 2008, intended in part to provide more services to the large class of new Members expected to join the **House** in 2009, given the already large number of retirements. The budget request envisions providing "increased financial services" and "additional technical support" to Member offices, and **House** sources suggest the office is hoping to begin offering bookkeeping services and IT assistance to new Members of Congress as an option they can choose in lieu of independent shared employees now providing those services.

According to payroll data compiled by LegiStorm, the salaries of many of these shared employees have skyrocketed over the past few years. For example, Susan Anfinson, a financial aide, earned just over \$40,000 in 2003 from eight Congressional offices. In 2007, according to payroll records compiled by LegiStorm, she earned over \$141,000 in paychecks from 13 different offices.

Several shared employees have more than doubled their salaries in the past five years, according to LegiStorm's data. April Blankenship, a financial staffer for Republicans and Democrats, earned just under \$50,000 in 2003 and just over \$147,000 in 2007; Paul Nenner earned under \$73,000 in 2002 and about \$159,000 in 2007, all from Texas Republicans. Thomas Gallagher, an IT staffer, earned about \$49,000 in 2005 and over \$105,000 in 2007.

The shared employees function essentially as independent contractors or vendors, with two key exceptions: As employees of the **House**, they have their benefits covered and office space provided, though many apparently work mostly out of their homes; and they are bound by the **House** employees' caps on total salary and outside earnings limits when their salary exceeds \$114,000.

But in several cases, the shared employees bring on family members to share their workload. Susan Anfinson works with her husband, Ed, and his father, Tom, the former chief financial officer in the **House**.

Tom Anfinson told Roll Call that he understands the IG's interest in seeing some changes in the system because there are many more people offering their services as shared employees than there were a decade ago. "When I started 12 years ago there was one person doing this. Now there are 20," Anfinson said. "People go to work for finance [in the CAO's office] for six months, then they go out on their own."

But Anfinson also said there is no reason for the **House** to prohibit experts in the finance system from making a living providing that service. "Why should we be punished because we are able to provide our customers with a level of services they cannot get somewhere else?"

Congressional offices can purchase some services from outside vendors - including some computer and IT services - but because of the sensitivity of **House** finances, bookkeeping must be done by **House** employees. Anfinson said, "I have been trying to get the **House** administrator for years to say that you don't have to be an employee, that you could be a contractor."

Part of the concern about shared employees arises from the fact that there appears to be no set price for the services they provide. For instance, Reps. Denny Rehberg (R-Mont.) and Bob Filner (D-Calif.) use the same shared employee for bookkeeping services, but Rehberg paid her about \$24,500 in 2007 while Filner paid only \$16,500.

A spokesman for another office that uses shared employees said these kind of disparities don't matter to the individual offices. "We don't care what other people pay her," this source said. "What we pay is what we feel her work is worth."

Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.), who pays Imran Awan, a shared employee, to provide technical support in his office, said he has been extremely happy with the service he receives, and that it is better and cheaper than it was when the **House** was providing all of the IT service for his office.

Meeks called Awan "a gem" and said that if the **House** were to provide these services instead of the shared employees, "only a few people [could] get their foot in the door. I like the fact that there are opportunities for people to get in the door and not be excluded." Meeks said that Congressional offices function like independent businesses, trying to get the best service for the best price. "What I'm looking for is quality, not bureaucracy," Meeks said.

Melissa Giaimo contributed to this report.

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U.S. Capitol going green

By WHITNEY BLAIR WYCKOFF

Chicago Tribune

471 words

8 May 2008

The Kansas City Star

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10

English

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Many voters remember how the Democrats came to power two years ago promising change on everything from Iraq to fighting terrorism to the minimum wage.

But congressional Democrats have also made changes in a more immediate, housekeeping sort of way, making the Capitol complex itself a greener, healthier and more nutritious place to work — to the applause of some and the annoyance of others.

Ornate hearing rooms now have motion-detector lights to save power. Electronic vending machines shut down at night to conserve energy. The cola in the soda machines is stored at a higher temperature at night. And smoking areas and sales of related products have been sharply cut back.

Most notably, the **House** cafeterias now serve healthier and more politically correct food, including fair-trade coffee, hormone-free meat, organic entrees and locally grown produce.

Plus, everything from plates to knives is biodegradable. A pulper shreds used containers and flatware and extracts excess water. It turns the waste into a "coleslaw" that weighs 70 percent less than it did before, and within 75 days decomposes.

Many of the changes are part of a Green the Capitol program created by **House** Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat, with the goal of making the **House** carbon-neutral by year end. Last year the **House** produced 91,000 metric tons of carbon.

Advocates say Congress is setting a good example. Jeff Ventura, communications director for the **House's** **chief administrative officer**, says the program could encourage Americans to live in healthier and more environmentally friendly ways.

If the **House** achieves carbon neutrality, which Ventura says it is on track to do, it would become one of the world's few carbon-neutral legislative bodies.

"The food service was one of our most titanic achievements," he said.

In the Senate, the Rules Committee has mandated that all new appliances be Energy Star-certified. The Senate has also implemented a pilot program using office lights that automatically dim when it is sunny or no one is around.

Some Republicans complain that these environmental initiatives cost too much; Green the Capitol comes with a \$4 million annual price tag. Others say they are irrelevant or a distraction.

"Nancy Pelosi's focus on greening the Capitol seems a little hypocritical in light of her earlier demands to have a military 757 fly her home every weekend," said Nicklaus Simpson, a spokesman for **House** Minority Whip and Missouri Republican Roy Blunt, in an e-mail statement. "Whether the Capitol carry-out uses 'green' spoons that dissolve in soup or green eggs and ham, what the speaker should be focused on is the reality that the American people are paying \$4 a gallon for gas."

image/jpeg | Nancy_Pelosi_05-08-2008_FK12R1IC.jpg | Pelosi

Document KCST000020080508e4580002I

Chicago Tribune

News

Capitol Hill going green; But Republicans say spending \$4 million a year to reduce carbon footprint is too much

By Whitney Blair Wyckoff, Washington Bureau

798 words

30 April 2008

Chicago Tribune

Chicago Final

6

English

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Photo: A worker stacks biodegradable salad containers made of cornstarch in the cafeteria of the Longworth **House** Office Building, part of the "greening" of Capitol Hill. Photo for the Tribune by Jonathan Ernst

WASHINGTON

Many voters remember how the Democrats came to power two years ago promising change on everything from Iraq to fighting terrorism to the minimum wage.

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\ PC food

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Many of the changes are part of a Green the Capitol program created by **House** Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) with the goal of making the **House** carbon-neutral by year end, meaning it would offset any carbon it releases. Last year the **House** produced 91,000 metric tons of carbon.

Advocates say Congress is setting a good example. Jeff Ventura, communications director for the **House's** **chief administrative officer**, says the program could encourage Americans to live in healthier and more environmentally friendly ways.

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Bernadette Maxwell, a Library of Congress employee who goes to the Longworth **House** Office Building cafeteria for lunch, said she has noticed more options recently. "The quality of the food has edged up a little bit," she said.

Maxwell, whose lunch recently consisted of soft tacos and a Mr. Goodbar, said she used to often buy pizza in the **House** cafeteria but now she eats more healthily. "I haven't gotten the pizza since they changed over," she said.

Ventura said the changes have garnered a positive response. "Things like that aren't sexy but they're effective," Ventura said.

It isn't just the **House**. In the Senate, the Rules Committee has mandated that all new appliances be Energy Star-certified. The Senate has also implemented a pilot program using office lights that automatically dim when it is sunny or no one is around.

Some Republicans complain that these environmental initiatives cost too much; Green the Capitol comes with a \$4 million annual price tag. Others say they are irrelevant or a distraction.

"Nancy Pelosi's focus on greening the Capitol seems a little hypocritical in light of her earlier demands to have a military 757 fly her home every weekend," said Nicklaus Simpson, a spokesman for **House** Minority Whip Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), in an e-mail statement. "Whether the Capitol carry-out uses 'green' spoons that dissolve in soup or green eggs and ham, what the speaker should be focused on is the reality that the American people are paying \$4 a gallon for gas."

Pelosi has in the past said it is a myth that she had requested a larger plane and that it was the **House** sergeant-at-arms' office that wanted it for security reasons.

\ Buying out

Green the Capitol has faced criticism for purchasing carbon offsets on the Chicago Climate Exchange, which allows buyers to fund carbon-reduction projects rather than reduce their own carbon output.

Some question whether the Climate Exchange projects really benefited from the **House** funding. "We don't want to be in that game," said Ventura, adding that he hopes the **House** will soon be carbon neutral without resorting to the offsets.

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Trying to quit

While Congress is getting greener, it is also trying to get less smoky. Sundry shops in the Capitol no longer sell cigarettes or chewing tobacco products. And shortly after taking over as speaker, Nancy Pelosi ejected smokers from the comfortable Speaker's Lobby. Now senators are exploring plans to nix smoking rooms in the Russell and Dirksen Senate Office Buildings.

wwyckoff@tribune.com

NATION

Photo(s)

Document TRIB000020080430e44u0001b

EDITORIAL
Green Congress

524 words
23 April 2008
Roll Call
English

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Roll Call readers know that we don't take stands on policy issues before Congress unless they concern Congress itself - and we won't start now, even in observance of Earth Week.

In that spirit, we certainly are not going to opine about the merits of various legislative proposals to control global climate change. We won't even get into the controversy - albeit a diminishing controversy - about whether global warming is primarily caused by human activity and should be stopped by limiting carbon dioxide emissions.

We do, however, agree with the point made by President Bush last week - and others, as well - that federal policy on these issues needs to be established by elected officials - Congress and the president - not the courts and regulatory bodies. Given the complexities involved, it won't be easy. Perhaps it can't happen this year. But Congress has to debate and act, and it should try to accomplish as much as possible this year.

On a subordinate and modest aspect of this huge national and global question, we applaud most elements of Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-Calif.) initiative to help make Congress "green" by making **House** operations carbon-neutral by the end of the 110th Congress and reducing energy consumption by 50 percent in 10 years.

The effort includes installing environmentally friendly lighting for the Capitol Dome, retaining a new food-service vendor using 100 percent biodegradable food containers and replacing coal with cleaner natural gas at the Capitol Power Plant.

The **House** greening project has received vastly more publicity than a parallel effort in the Senate led by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), chairwoman of the Rules and Administration Committee, aimed at a 30 percent overall reduction in energy consumption by 2015. This effort concentrates on installing more efficient lighting, installing a "green roof" on the Dirksen Building and recycling.

No matter what anybody's position is on global warming, conservation of energy at the Capitol contributes - albeit very modestly - to the widely shared goals of energy independence and long-run cost control. Congress is also setting an example

for the rest of the country. Some measures cost money in the short run, such as the proposed installation of "smart meters" to monitor energy use in the Capitol and **House** offices, at a cost of \$4.3 million.

Republicans complain that the meters are a waste of money, but **House Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** points out that the meters will pay for themselves in six years and after that will save \$750,000 a year by helping reduce electricity usage. Republicans may be on firmer ground in protesting the **House's** purchase of \$89,000 worth of carbon credits from the Chicago Climate Exchange, whose effectiveness is controversial.

Global warming legislation sponsored by Sens. Joe Lieberman (ID-Conn.) and John Warner (R-Va.) will be on the Senate floor June 2. Some Republicans forecast that their party will support cloture on the measure to permit a full debate and action on amendments. We hope so, as a means of advancing - eventually - a national policy established by elected officials, not judges or bureaucrats.

Document RLCL000020080423e44n0002t

Visualizing a Happier Workplace

Elizabeth Brotherton

970 words

21 April 2008

Roll Call

English

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Congressional staffers don't need a panel of outside experts to tell them that Capitol Hill offices aren't exactly ideal spaces for getting work done.

But maybe it doesn't have to be that way.

The American Institute of Architects unveiled recommendations on Friday for making the Cannon, Longworth and Rayburn **House** office buildings more efficient - and more enjoyable - places to work.

In a study commissioned by **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard**, AIA looked for ways to make improvements within the existing context of the **House** buildings that free up space and help offices operate more smoothly.

What is clear is that major change is needed as soon as possible - and it will take more than a few new cubicles to get it done.

"You need to look at a change in the culture," said Norman Strong, an architect who served as the project's team leader. "That is going to be needed to accomplish this."

Finding additional workspace for **House** employees is key, the experts said. But the chamber needs to think as a unit, they said - not just as 440-plus individual offices with individual needs - if it ever expects to see improvements.

"What we're looking at in this study is a new way of working," Strong said.

Tackling technology is one key component. Right now, each office has its own computer server, which offers limited capacity and takes up office space (and generates heat, which increases energy costs).

Centralized servers would free up space and increase capacity, the report notes. AIA also recommended that the **House** create centralized resource centers for photocopiers, scanners and similar equipment.

Multiple centers could occupy each floor, and a few could be staffed and offer high-volume scanning equipment, decreasing the amount of paper generated by the **House**. Shared storage spaces also could be created, eliminating the need to store supplies in individual offices.

Individual office suites - which typically consist of three rooms - also must be configured differently. After all, removing the copy machine might not help that much.

"I've built shelves in our **house**," Strong said. "And boy, they fill up right away."

AIA drew up two concepts for the suites, which are designed to be more open and adaptable with features such as movable partitions and flexible furniture. Offices also should make changes that will help with ventilation and heating and cooling systems, such as installing operable windows.

But not everything needs to be done indoors. AIA recommended greening building courtyards and creating walkable streets that allow staffers to travel between buildings outdoors rather than just underground.

"We're basically providing a campus instead of three existing buildings," Strong said.

The recommendations aren't perfect, as a few of the staffers attending Friday's unveiling pointed out. AIA's new Congressional suite designs, for example, fail to include workspace for interns - which is important, since almost every office on Capitol Hill employs at least a few, one staffer noted.

And buying the new equipment to make the changes? Easier said than done.

"I wouldn't replace a computer if it exploded, or for any reason, because of our budget," the staffer joked.

Another possible problem with the recommendations: Many Members take the biggest room in their office suite for their personal use, and AIA's designs put Members in smaller rooms - making those suggestions far less realistic.

Those concerns are understandable, Strong said. Knowing that major infrastructure changes happen slowly on Capitol Hill, the AIA report urges the **House** to retrofit six offices - two in each building - to serve as pilot projects for making changes.

If those offices are monitored closely, the benefits created - such as lower energy costs and higher office morale - not only will help convince others that change is needed but will provide a blueprint for implementing change elsewhere on Capitol Hill.

Beard is hopeful that the **House** will move to implement the pilot projects, he said after the presentation. "I think that's a reasonable suggestion," he said.

Acting Architect of the Capitol Stephen Ayers, who also attended the unveiling, called AIA's ideas "really intriguing." He said he was particularly impressed by things that can be done in the short term, including opening up and better utilizing the west courtyard of Rayburn.

Perhaps the toughest challenge facing **House** office buildings - and what makes implementing AIA's recommendations tougher - is the fact that the buildings are filled to the brim. Congressional spaces are five times more populated than the typical office building, Ayers said.

"I think ultimately we are going to have to engage and fix that problem," Ayers said. "It's only going to get worse over time."

The upcoming renovation of the Cannon building could be the ideal time to make changes to how offices are laid out, Ayers said. That project is slated to begin in 2012 and will involve an entire reworking of the 100-year-old building, designed to tackle numerous life-safety and electrical issues.

(In fact, practically the whole campus needs work. The AOC estimates that about \$1.4 billion is needed to tackle a backlog of maintenance and capital renewal projects.)

Beard echoed Ayers' comments. An AIA recommendation to install better window treatments to improve both lighting and heating and cooling in offices is something Beard said he had never thought of, for example.

"It's a low-budget item that can make a tremendous difference," Beard said.

It is unclear how many, if any, of the recommended changes will come to fruition. A spokesman for the **House** Administration Committee, which would need to formally sign off on most of the ideas, said the panel appreciates Beard and the AIA "taking this preliminary step."

"We look forward to seeing a presentation of any final recommendations," spokesman Kyle Anderson said.

Document RLCL000020080421e44100008

Campus Notebook

New Payday? New Payday? Legislation giving the House Administration Committee the authority to change the day when staffers receive their paychecks passed the House by voice vote on Tuesday, another step forward in the effort to pay staffers twice instead of once a month.

Elizabeth Brotherton

664 words

16 April 2008

Roll Call

English

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New Payday? Legislation giving the **House** Administration Committee the authority to change the day when staffers receive their paychecks passed the **House** by voice vote on Tuesday, another step forward in the effort to pay staffers twice instead of once a month.

The bill now heads to the Senate, where it is expected to pass. It does not immediately change the day when staffers get paid, but merely allows **House** Administration to study the issue and enact changes later.

House Administration Chairman

Robert Brady (D-Pa.) introduced the measure, which passed the panel earlier this month. Ranking member Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.) is a co-sponsor of the bill, although he has cautioned that Members must take steps to ensure staffers are not negatively affected during the transition period to a potential twice-a-month payday system.

More Benefits? Legislation that would give all federal employees four weeks of guaranteed paid leave following the birth of a child passed a **House** Oversight and Government Reform subcommittee on Tuesday.

The Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia voted 8-3 to send the measure to the full committee.

Introduced by Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) and co-sponsored by Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) and full committee ranking member Tom Davis (R-Va.), the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act is unusual because it applies to legislative branch employees, not just those working in the executive branch.

Legislative branch workers currently are guaranteed 12 weeks of unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Maloney's measure not only would give employees four weeks of paid leave, but also let them use accumulated paid time off up to the 12-week mark.

Supporters argue leave is an incentive to continue to serve the government, especially since the private sector often offers federal workers higher yearly salaries.

"The federal government is a great start for paid leave - we should be setting the national standard for providing American workers with a truly family friendly workplace," Maloney said in a statement.

"Antiquated family leave policies are a talent drain on the government - they're an incentive for skilled people to look elsewhere for work at the very time when our government needs them most," she added. "This bill is a positive step in the right direction."

Gym Rats. Members of the armed forces who are assigned to a Congressional liaison office in the **House** might soon be able to use the **House** fitness center.

The **House** passed a bill by voice vote on Tuesday that allows military liaisons to use the gym, which is open only to **House** employees. **House** Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D-Pa.) introduced the bill, calling it a small gesture to the men and women who serve the nation.

"It's just not practical for them to use exercise equipment at local military facilities while they're stationed on the Hill," Brady said. "These men and women are responsible for protecting our nation and we want them to have every opportunity to stay fit."

Into the Future. The American Institute of Architects is on Capitol Hill this week to figure out ways to turn the **House** into a "21st century workplace."

The AIA has been asked to find ways to help Members and their staffs use space as efficiently as possible, use taxpayer dollars wisely and help make Member offices more open to constituents.

Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard invited the group to Capitol Hill, and AIA officials have met with **House** workers all week to come up with their recommendations, which are scheduled to be released on Friday morning.

Please send tips to notebook@rollcall.com.

Document RLCL000020080417e44g0000b

Arundel

Composting heaps ending government waste

JOSHUA STEWART Staff Writer

817 words

15 April 2008

The Capital (Annapolis)

B1

English

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This is where government waste comes to die and be reincarnated.

Unless a member of the **House** of Representatives or their staff is in the Clean Plate Club, the leftovers from meals in their cafeteria end up at Chesterfield Farms, an organic composting plant in Crofton.

On a tour of the 5-acre facility Monday afternoon, Rep. John P. Sarbanes, D-Baltimore County, federal officials and business people saw firsthand how leftovers from Washington, D.C., end up in Mr. Sarbanes' 3rd Congressional District - about 2.5 million meals- worth a year.

"It's one of those things, when you are in the middle of it, you think 'what are you doing?' " said Daniel Beard, **chief administrative officer** for the **House**, as he stood near neat rows of what were once salads, noodles and chicken fingers, a two-story tall heap of yard waste, near tractors, trailers and a scale the size of a bus - all quite pungent.

Composting of meals is all a part of the Green the Capitol program, an initiative by **House** Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., to make government more eco-friendly. Mrs. Pelosi is a Baltimore native.

At the **House**, her program includes using renewable power sources, fewer pesticides, more trees, a fleet of hybrid vehicles and a week- old car electric car from Fargo, N.D., called Gem.

For Chesterfield Farms it means more table scraps.

"If you want to know what your representatives ate for lunch, come here," said Marsha Boehm, who owns the composting company with her husband, Alan Boehm.

From Mr. Sarbanes' plate or the cafeteria's kitchen, **House** food services separates compostable food from other types of trash. Behind the **House** offices, a machine turns the food into a pulp and squeezes out water, making it 60 percent lighter and 90 percent smaller before it is sent by truck to Crofton to begin a 75-day process that turns it into dirt.

There is "definitely an awareness" among representatives that this is important, said Mr. Sarbanes, who, wearing a starched shirt, suit pants and a tie was overdressed for a man touring a compost plant.

Once at Chesterfield Farm, the food pulp is mixed with other organic materials like yard waste, making the perfect recipe for soil. It is then piled into narrow rows around five feet high, where microorganisms go to work, eating away at the mix, leaving nutrient- rich dirt in their wake.

Throughout the process, plant employees monitor gas levels and temperatures; long thermometers stick out of the rows like javelins. Roughly every four days the mix is tilled - the rows turned inside- out, encouraging microorganisms to consume the entire pile.

"This is just a perfect scenario, a perfect ecosystem for the bugs to thrive in," Mr. Boehm said as he raised his arms above his head, gesturing to one of his compost rows.

Eventually, bits of plastic are removed and large chunks are collected by shooting the entire mix through a large net. From there it may be mixed with other soils or sold as-is to nurseries, developers, green-roofers and others.

The **House** sends about 250 tons of trash to landfills every month, but since December when it began sending scraps to Chesterfield Farms, that number has dropped. In February, 11 tons of food waste from the **House** was either recycled or composted.

But the process is not without its critics. It's a smelly operation and sometimes Crofton residents gripe about the odor.

Mr. Sarbanes said the smell could come from a nearby sewage plant, but concerns will wane as time goes on, and operations like Chesterfield Farms become more common and technologies advance.

"Every day the processes are being improved," he said.

Mr. Boehm, who was raised on a farm and later worked as an excavator - finds himself reliant on soil again. His business has grown, with clients including Anne Arundel County, the World Bank, National Institute of Health and soon BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, and now he needs more land. He and his wife currently take in up to 30 tons of waste a day.

And in Anne Arundel, he is confined to industrially zoned land. He wants to be considerate of nearby neighborhoods, too, he said.

"It's hard to site a facility. As you can see, we have residents on our downwind side and that's tough," he said.

But for the time, Chesterfield Farms may be the only show in town. There are other composting plants, but his is the only one in the state he knows of that accepts food waste.

In San Francisco, which is in Ms. Pelosi's district, composting is mandatory, Ms. Boehm said.

"This is the last part of the nation that needs to come on board," Ms. Boehm said as she gave a presentation in a heavily perfumed office.

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NATIONAL; Inq Front Page
Lighting Practice caught off-guard by furor

By Linda Loyd
Inquirer Staff Writer
979 words
4 April 2008
The Philadelphia Inquirer
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When the Lighting Practice Inc. won a \$671,900 contract to relight the U.S. Capitol Dome exterior in Washington, the small Center City design firm didn't envision it would soon be caught in a partisan maelstrom.

Some Republicans on Capitol Hill have questioned whether the Lighting Practice got the contract because it was in U.S. Rep. Robert A. Brady's Philadelphia district. Brady, a Democrat, is chairman of the **House Administration Committee**, which signs off on final contract awards.

But interviews with several officials, and a review of recent campaign-finance records, offer no evidence to support the suggestion. Instead, this tempest may amount to a cautionary tale for innovative local businesses that seek government contracts and try to play by the rules.

The company's founder, Al Borden, who was a lighting designer for theater companies and rock bands before starting his own architectural-lighting firm in 1989, said the Lighting Practice submitted a bid in November for "environmentally friendly" lighting as part of **House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's "Green the Capitol"** initiative.

"It was a normal, standard public process. We worked like dogs to put together the best proposal we could," said Borden, 55. "We think we won it on the merits."

The office of the **House chief administrative officer** sought bid proposals and awarded the contract, which was announced early last month. Brady's **House** committee signed off on it.

The Lighting Practice, which designed the lighting of City Hall, buildings on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and on the Avenue of the Arts, said it had no idea who was on the selection committee.

Borden said he had never met Brady. "I think I may have seen him on TV when he was running for mayor."

What a surprise, Borden said, when, on Tuesday, his firm got a call from a Washington reporter asking, "Was Robert Brady involved?" We thought, Isn't this silly. Because we don't make political contributions. We're not political at all. We are just designers."

Indeed, a review of federal campaign contributions shows that neither Borden nor the principals of his company have donated to federal campaign committees or candidates, at least in the last decade, according to data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.

The lighting bid was issued by the **House chief administrative officer**, Daniel Beard. The recommendation of the executive director of the "Green the Capitol" office and a representative from the Architect of the Capitol was sent to Brady's **House Administration Committee** in a "normal procurement process," said Kyle Anderson, spokesman for the **House** committee of which Brady is chairman.

"The committee was not aware it was a Philadelphia firm until everything was submitted for final approval," Anderson said. Brady did not "steer anything." The bids ranged from \$521,307 to \$1.3 million, he said.

The selection committee rejected two lower bids, which were about \$100,000 less than the Lighting Practice's proposal, because of insufficient financial information, said Jeff Ventura, spokesman for the **House chief administrative officer**.

One lower bid had "inconsistencies" in line-item costs, while the other lacked proof of the company's financial stability, Ventura said.

"The idea that the Lighting Practice was given this contract based on being in Mr. Brady's district couldn't be further from the truth," Ventura said. "It's a very interesting coincidence, but nothing but a coincidence."

The Lighting Practice teamed up with two subcontractors on its proposal - Vitetta architects and engineers in Philadelphia, and Flack & Kurtz, a New York engineering firm. The subcontractors were not named in the bid proposal.

The Lighting Practice has 23 employees at the Public Ledger Building in Center City and two in Dallas. The firm had \$3.1 million in revenue last year.

"We are a legitimate company. We light up a lot of buildings," said Borden, who earned a bachelor's degree in theater from Temple University and a master's degree in theatrical-lighting design from New York University.

He began his lighting career working for theater companies, dance troupes and rock bands. "I did some rock concert kind of stuff. Ultimately, that was just not satisfying." Borden then did architectural-lighting design for two Philadelphia firms.

In 1989, he started the Lighting Practice and today has two partners, Helen K. Diemer and Michael A. Barber.

"We have projects all over the world - offices, hospitals, schools, museums, restaurants," Borden said.

Besides City Hall and buildings and monuments on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, the Lighting Practice designed the lighting of the Terra Building on the Avenue of the Arts, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and Fairmount Waterworks. The company is currently working on a lighting project at the National Zoo in Washington.

In October, the Lighting Practice saw a request for a proposal advertised in a government document that lists federal contract awards and procurement information.

"It was a very open process. A number of firms went after it," Borden said. "We had no knowledge of who was on the selection committee."

Vitetta president Alan Hoffmann said firms wanting to do work for the federal government frequently checked the electronic document FedBizOpps, which comes out five days a week. "It's a public document. It is something most firms who do federal work look at on a daily basis."

Hoffmann scoffed at the notion that Brady - or anyone - had a hand in steering the contract to the Philadelphia firm.

"We've teamed with the Lighting Practice on several other projects," including a county courthouse in San Antonio, Texas, Hoffmann said. "I would stand by this team's credentials. They are outstanding. Nobody steered anything. We are expertly qualified."

Contact staff writer Linda Loyd at 215-854-2831 or lloyd@phillynews.com.

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More Checks, Cab Rides on Tap

Elizabeth Brotherton

979 words

3 April 2008

Roll Call

English

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House employees are a little closer to getting paid twice a month.

The **House** Administration Committee unanimously approved legislation Wednesday giving the panel authority to establish the day when **House** staffers receive their paychecks.

The panel also approved several other bills affecting life on Capitol Hill, including one to let staffers get reimbursed for late- night cab rides home and a bill allowing military personnel in the Defense Departments Congressional liaison office to use the **House** fitness center.

But the pay bill is likely to have the widest impact on Capitol Hill.

The pay system change isnt happening immediately, as the legislation only gives **House** Administration the authority to determine when staffers are paid and when such a change will go into effect.

But should the panel eventually move to pay staffers twice a month, it will mark a major change in the administration of the chamber, since staffers have been paid once a month for decades.

And the consequences of such a change concerns some Members.

Many employees pay their mortgages, utility bills and other financial obligations in concert with the month pay schedule, said Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.), the panels ranking member. To change a system that has been in place for such an extended period of time will have a pervasive impact.

One of Ehlers chief concerns is that changing the system would likely involve the implementation of a pay lag meaning a pay period would end about a week before an employee actually gets paid.

Such a lag is expected to save the **House** money, as payroll transactions would be submitted on a more consistent schedule, potentially reducing the number of overpayments. But the initial creation of the lag something the chamber currently does not have could be problematic for some staffers, according to an Ehlers spokeswoman.

If the lag were to be implemented at the start of the month, for example, staffers would get their first check two weeks later. But they would get only one weeks worth of money with the other week used to create the lag.

But whether a lag is even required, and if so, how long it will be, is up to the committee.

Either way, supporters say Members should move to make the pay change, as the pay lag and other concerns are minimal and can be worked though.

The benefits would be enormous, supporters argue. Among them is **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard**, who is in charge of getting employees their paychecks and has advocated for the change since taking office last year.

About 54 percent of **House** employees in 2007 were younger than 35; 40 percent are under 30, according to CAO statistics. Those staffers often earn the least of anybody on Capitol Hill CAO statistics show about 30 percent of **House** employees make less than \$40,000 annually.

Once a month pay can be very difficult for staffers budgeting on a tight paycheck, **House** Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D- Pa.) said.

Beard understands Member concerns and said his staff already is studying how to help **House** employees transition to a new system should one be approved, he said. CAO officials are meeting with consultants Watson Wyatt today to discuss how a pay change would be implemented, Beard added.

Our objective is to make this transition as smooth as possible, Beard said. That's going to include a lot of public outreach.

Meeting with **House** staffers themselves is important, Beard noted.

Everybody has a different set of circumstances, and they'll have to make some modest adjustments, Beard said.

According to a January 2008 report of the **House** Inspector General, implementing a pay system change would cost \$744,000 to \$1,116,000 and take 12-15 months.

Another Congressional campus issue tackled by the committee on Wednesday was cab-ride compensation.

Ehlers raised concern over the creation of the Alternative Ride Home program, which would let staffers who get stuck working on Capitol Hill after the Metro closes or their carpool buddies head home take a cab instead.

Under the proposal, staffers who take a taxi would be required to fill out a form expected to be available on the **House** Intranet to get reimbursed. It is a system designed to make sure staffers get home safely while keeping their wallets intact, Brady said.

The employing authority will sign off on the validity of the expense in the course of approving the voucher, Brady said.

But Ehlers warned that the program is vulnerable to the possibility of abuse.

We have seen before that the ill intent of a few can ruin a benefit for many, he said.

One point of debate is whether the program should apply when Congress is out of session. Ehlers argued that staffers rarely have to stay late during recess, while Brady said staffers work hard even when Members aren't around.

Their need for safety is not just a function of when the **House** is in session, Brady said.

Despite the debate, Members passed the bill unanimously. One reason: Brady has directed the **House** Inspector General to review the program after six months and issue any recommendations needed to improve it.

Legislation introduced by Rep. Walter Jones Jr. (R-N.C.) to allow Members to designate a person to disperse the money in their campaign accounts in the event of their death also passed the committee on Wednesday. Under current law, campaign treasurers take control of the accounts in the event of a Member's death, which can be problematic since many treasurers are outside operatives and have little knowledge of Member's wishes.

The panel also voted to appoint Rep. Mike Capuano (D-Mass.) chairman of the Subcommittee on Capitol Security. Brady had been chairman of the panel, which has yet to hold a hearing since being established at the start of the 110th Congress.

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Retirement Unlikely for Hills Coal-Fired Plant

Elizabeth Brotherton

950 words

2 April 2008

Roll Call

English

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As Members and top Capitol Hill officials work to create a new long-term master plan for the Capitol complex, they also are grappling with what to do about the coal-burning Capitol Power Plant.

The future of the power plant the century-old facility provides the steam and chilled water that heats and cools the Capitol complex was perhaps the centerpiece topic when Members and officials met during a Transportation and Infrastructure subcommittee hearing on Tuesday to talk about that master plan.

After all, the discussion before the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management dealt with the future of the campus itself, which Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) has declared will become as green as possible.

There's little doubt that the power plant is a major producer of carbon emissions. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) labeled it the greatest polluter in the District of Columbia but getting rid of it isn't that simple.

As acting Architect of the Capitol Stephen Ayers told Members, switching the complex's cooling and heating needs from a centralized facility to each individual building would take years and could cost about \$2.5 billion. In his written testimony, Ayers labeled eliminating the power plant impractical and cost-prohibitive.

Existing, centralized heating and cooling systems have been studied and proven to be most cost-effective for a large campus such as the Capitol complex, he said.

Instead, the AOC is focusing on improving the plant's environmental efficiency. Ayers told the panel that his agency has made strides to increase the plant's efficiency in recent months, including the ongoing expansion of the West Refrigeration Plant.

The plant's expansion is designed to help provide heating and cooling needs to the Capitol Visitor Center, which is slated to open in November. But it is also designed to upgrade refrigeration systems to increase overall efficiency, including by using environmentally friendly 134-A Freon, he said.

The plant uses a mixture of fuels: natural gas, oil and coal depending on cost, Ayers said. Only low-sulfur, low-ash coal is now used, Ayers said.

The ability to burn three fuels at the CPP assures reliability, provides flexibility, and ensures some protection against rapidly rising fuel costs, he testified.

Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard, who is overseeing the Green the Capitol Initiative, admitted that the plant is perhaps the biggest hurdle in making environmental improvements on the Capitol campus. But Beard added that he now is resigned that the plant isn't going away.

I think we have to make the best of a bad situation, he said. I think the centralized system that we have is very inefficient, and the best thing we can do is make it as efficient as we can.

As Members debate the future of the power plant, the facility finds itself alongside other government facilities caught in the battle over how air emissions should be regulated.

One environmental expert warned Members at the hearing that the plant is not in compliance with regulations that require facilities that produce hazardous air pollutants to obtain a specific permit setting limits on toxic emissions.

AOC officials refuted those claims, calling them inaccurate and pointing to the fact that the power plant operates under a valid Title V Environmental Protection Agency permit requiring emissions monitoring and reporting.

Earthjustice staff attorney James Pew testified that the plant's steam-generating boilers produce a range of toxic metals and acids, which are particularly dangerous and can cause an array of health problems.

The plants current permit does not contain limits or create a schedule for meeting limits on emissions of some of these pollutants, Pew testified, adding that a lot of that is the EPAs fault.

The Clean Air Act of 1990 required the EPA to issue standards for hazardous air pollutants generated from boilers by November 2000, Pew said. But the EPA didnt issue standards until 2004, which were hopelessly defective and failed to establish standards for the majority of boiler-emitted pollutants, Pew added.

Those standards were declared unlawful by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia in June 2007. And when the D.C. Circuit issued its 2007 ruling, responsibility fell to the District of Columbia and AOC to submit a special permit application requesting limits on the plants emissions of hazardous air pollutants.

The AOC has not done so, Pew said. (Neither have a slew of other government and privately run plants, he admitted.)

But AOC spokeswoman Eva Malecki said that the Title V permit requires the power plant to report emissions to the EPA and the District of Columbia on a semiannual basis, which it does.

The CPP is in full compliance with the Clean Air Act of 1990, Malecki wrote in an e-mail. EPA Region III officials have inspected and verified CPP compliance.

Other topics tackled on Tuesday:

Members discussed the need to fund \$1.4 billion to tackle a backlog of deferred maintenance and capital renewal projects. Committee Chairman James Oberstar (D-Minn.) suggested that the committee draft a long-term authorization bill that would address the backlog.

Capitol Police Chief Phillip Morse told Members that the department will present its plans for a new radio system to the Capitol Police Board by next week. The departments 25-year-old system is not interoperational, meaning that the Capitol Police are not able to communicate with other police agencies via radio, which could be a serious issue during a major emergency if phone lines go down.

Beard updated the panel on the Green the Capitol Initiative. The **House** is hoping to be carbon neutral by July 4, he said.

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A Section
Seeing the Light

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2 April 2008
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Updating the lighting of national landmarks has changed the way they look -- for a price.

Jefferson Memorial Relighting

The memorial is 129 feet tall. Its relighting involved the installation of 17,000 light-emitting diode units and the illumination of the 19-foot statue of Thomas Jefferson on four sides with 400-watt metal halide lamps.

The new lights illuminated 30 percent more of the memorial and reduced energy usage by nearly 80 percent, from 125,840 watts to 27,893 watts. The cost was \$900,000, paid by Osram Sylvania.

Source: Osram Sylvania

Capitol Dome Relighting

The Capitol dome is 288 feet tall and is illuminated for eight hours nightly by 38 1,000-watt metal halide lamps mounted on the rooftops over the **House** and Senate wings. The lighting, which dates to 1990, is not energy efficient and it poorly illuminates the Statue of Freedom atop the dome. The system consumes more than 122,000 kilowatt-hours of power and costs nearly \$15,000 a year.

The new lighting system has not been designed, but it is supposed to offer smaller, more powerful light sources that use less energy while providing sharper color and better distribution of light. It also will require less maintenance.

The contractor is the Lighting Practice, based in Philadelphia, and the cost for design alone is \$671,900. There is no estimate for the overall cost of the project.

Sources: Architect of the Capitol, **House chief administrative officer**, the Lighting Practice

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A Section

Beacon or Boondoggle? New Lights For the Capitol; Update Would Conserve Energy, Democrats Say

Christopher Lee
Washington Post Staff Writer
939 words
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The warm white glow of the Capitol dome may soon go green, part of an effort by Democratic congressional leaders to save energy and modernize the District's nocturnal landscape.

But like so many issues on Capitol Hill, the plan to update the building's 18-year-old exterior lighting has ignited partisan bickering. Republicans and other critics consider the project's early phase wasteful, and they question whether a \$671,900 contract to design the lighting system was steered by Rep. Robert A. Brady (D-Pa.), chairman of the **House** Administration Committee, to a company in his home district.

"Everyone supports making the Capitol more energy efficient, but we don't have to waste taxpayer dollars to do it," said **House** Minority Leader John A. Boehner (R-Ohio). "This is a ridiculous boondoggle."

The project is part of **House** Speaker Nancy Pelosi's environmentally friendly "Green the Capitol" initiative, which includes using more recycled paper, distributing more documents electronically, purchasing carbon offsets for the **House**'s greenhouse-gas emissions, and developing a plan to use wind power and other renewable energy sources.

Updating the lights would bring the Capitol up to par with makeovers at the Jefferson and Lincoln memorials and the Washington Monument, proponents say. The Lincoln Memorial's relighting was completed in 2007, as some fixtures dating to the 1920s were replaced. The Washington Monument got new lights in 2006 to replace a 1970s system.

Lighting manufacturer Osram Sylvania picked up the \$900,000 tab in 2001 to overhaul a lighting system at the Jefferson Memorial that dated to the 1960s, using the donation to celebrate the company's 100th year in business.

The Capitol, which last got new lights in 1990, is next in line. Its system consists of 38 1,000-watt metal halide lamps mounted on rooftops over the **House** and Senate wings. The lamps burn for about eight hours a night and consume more than 122,000 kilowatt-hours of power each year. The annual electric bill is nearly \$15,000.

Daniel P. Beard, the **House**'s chief administrative officer, said that if **House** and Senate leaders give final approval, new lighting could be installed by year's end. Officials do not yet have an estimate for the cost of the project.

"You have the most recognized building in America, and lighting it with new energy-efficient lighting has tremendous symbolic value," Beard said. "We're not going to drastically cut our energy consumption, but it will have a modest impact, and I think it will help promote the energy-efficient-lighting industry, which is in all of our best interests."

But converting to a more eco-friendly system has turned out to be expensive -- and the work has just begun. Beard's office rejected two lower bids to recommend awarding the design contract to the Lighting Practice of Philadelphia, located in Brady's district. The contract covers no installation costs.

In a Feb. 19 memo to Brady, whose committee approved the award, Beard said that of the seven bidders for the contract, the Philadelphia company offered "the best value and greatest opportunity for success." In an interview, he said the two lowest bidders were eliminated because they did not provide enough information for his office to assess their financial health.

A Brady spokesman said there was nothing improper about the selection process. The committee "has a procedure, and the procedure was adhered to," said Kyle Anderson, a spokesman for the **House** Administration Committee.

Helen K. Diemer, vice president of the Lighting Practice, said: "We believe we won on the strength of our proposal." She added that newer lights will be "more powerful and have better control capabilities than what was available in the late '80s."

Lighting experts say newer technology also offers sharper color and better light distribution across the dome, whose north and south faces now have better illumination than its east and west sides. Newer technology also can improve the lighting of the 19-foot Statue of Freedom that sits atop the building, 288 feet above the east front plaza.

Still, there are concerns. Even if a new configuration were to miraculously reduce electricity consumption to zero, at current electricity rates it would take more than 45 years to recoup money spent on the system's design, critics note.

"You've got to balance the costs" and the energy savings, said Steve Ellis, a spokesman for Taxpayers for Common Sense, a nonprofit government watchdog group. "This is going to be an expensive ego trip if it doesn't actually bear out the savings from efficiency gains."

Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill said the project is not just about money. New lights "will not only bring our 'beacon of democracy' in line with other landmarks on the National Mall but allow the dome to be a beacon to all reminding us of the need to address the global climate crisis," he said.

Tom Martin, executive vice president of the National Parks Conservation Association, said the Capitol is not just another building.

"It's a place where we can project America's values and our history and our heritage," Martin said. "In that context, having the Capitol reflect and teach us all the values of energy efficiency, thoughtful investments in our future, makes an enormous amount of sense. We wouldn't expect the Capitol to use the same kind of accounting that we'd use in our home of whether something makes sense or not."

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CVC Watch

CVC Watch: The impending opening of the Capitol Visitor Center has brought...[Derived headline]

Elizabeth Brotherton

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The impending opening of the Capitol Visitor Center has brought an increased level of attention to the Capitol campus, with folks on and off Capitol Hill anxious to see what exactly \$621 million and nearly a decade of preparation produces

The impending opening of the Capitol Visitor Center has brought an increased level of attention to the Capitol campus, with folks on and off Capitol Hill anxious to see what exactly \$621 million and nearly a decade of preparation produces.

But for Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.), now also is a perfect time to look at how the CVCs opening will affect the complex other needs, from fixing deteriorating buildings to figuring out exactly what to do about the controversial Capitol Power Plant.

The new addition helps focus on the entire complex in a way we have not done, Norton said of the CVC. All of its component parts have to come together. ... You cant put up a new visitor center and let the historic Capitol rot.

Norton will address the Capitol complex future today at a hearing sponsored by the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management.

Norton chairs the subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over the Capitol complex but has lagged behind panels such as the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch in hosting oversight hearings on the CVC.

Today's hearing will reassert some of the committees jurisdiction over the campus, Norton said. The goal is to conduct atop to bottom review of all things campus-related, with acting Architect of the Capitol Stephen Ayers, **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** and top Capitol Police officials all expected to testify.

Ayers and Terrie Rouse, the CVCs chief executive officer for visitor services, will provide the latest updates on the CVC project itself, an AOC spokeswoman said.

But aside from the CVC, the AOC must address a range of other infrastructure needs, including the complex backlog of major maintenance projects, said Justin Harclerode, a spokesman for Republicans on the committee.

The AOC asked for \$643 million in its fiscal 2009 budget request, with the bulk of that looking to tackle maintenance and repair projects, including the renovation of the Cannon **House** Office Building, which is rife with life and safety issues.

The forward-looking budget approach is something Transportation and Infrastructure ranking member John Mica (R-Fla.) and subcommittee ranking member Sam Graves (R-Mo.) favor, Harclerode said.

After all, getting all that maintenance done isnt an easy thing to do.

Youve got all these needs, and on top of that, we now have the Green the Capitol Initiative, which now adds more to the burden of maintenance needs up here, he said.

Beard is expected to discuss the latest progress of the Green the Capitol Initiative. One noteworthy item: The **House** now is expected to achieve carbon neutrality by July 4, months ahead of schedule, according to a CAO spokeswoman.

Beard also will discuss the energy-efficient relighting of the Capitol Dome and give an update on the installation of electricity- monitoring meters in **House** office buildings.

But one of Nortons main greening concerns is the power plant, which heats and cools the Capitol campus. It

is powered using natural gas, heating oil and coal, depending on whatever is most cost-effective.

And although the Green the Capitol project has allowed more money to be allocated to purchase more natural gas, there is lingering concern especially from Capitol Hill residents that the plant is an environmental hazard, Norton said.

The power plant does not fit a modern Capitol complex, Norton said. If you are modernizing the Capitol complex with a new visitor center and trying to upgrade the historic Capitol, then the power plant sticks out as an anomaly.

The CVC itself wont be ignored at the hearing. Norton particularly is interested in seeing whether security officials are prepared to handle the increased number of people expected to visit the Capitol after the CVC opens, she said.

And then theres the issue of transportation.

Figuring out exactly how visitors will get to the facility has been a focus among Members and other Congressional officials in recent weeks, and is expected to be discussed today.

Under current regulations, private tour buses are not allowed to drop off people directly at the CVC. Instead, plans call for visitors to walk over from the West Front or to board a special city- run Circulator bus from Union Station.

Security officials have said the bus ban is needed, since private buses with their concealed luggage compartments are among the least secure vehicles traveling near the Capitol.

But that ban aside, Members have argued that asking visitors to walk a lengthy distance or pay to board a bus is an unnecessary hardship. Last month, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), chairwoman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, directed AOC officials to draft new transportation plans for the CVC.

Ayers, Rouse, city transportation officials and representatives from various tour bus groups are expected to be on hand today to discuss those other options, Norton said.

Americans need to walk a little bit, given the obesity problem, Norton joked. But I dont think you need to walk a mile to get to the visitor center.

As for the CVC itself, Norton said she visited the site on Monday morning and is pleased with the facilitys recent progress.

I think people are going to be very satisfied, she said, adding that the CVC maintains the grandeur of the Capitol itself.

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Local News

Bike sharing spins ahead with D.C. test drive

JEFF KOSSEFF

The Oregonian

593 words

6 March 2008

The Oregonian

Sunrise

B1

English

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SUMMARY: Pilot project | Rep. Earl Blumenauer of Oregon gears up Wheels4Wellness, providing 30 bikes for Capitol Hill employees

WASHINGTON --When then-Portland City Commissioner Earl Blumenauer was in Copenhagen in 1995, he tried out the city's unique bike-sharing program, which allowed anyone to check out a bicycle and cruise around the city.

"It was just really slick," said Blumenauer, who was elected to Congress the next year and founded the Congressional Bike Caucus.

Now, Blumenauer is launching a modest pilot program for bike sharing on Capitol Hill. Today, as part of the National Bike Summit in Washington, D.C., Blumenauer will announce Wheels4Wellness, a program to provide up to 30 bicycles around the Capitol Hill complex for U.S. **House** employees to check out.

"You have such a huge concentration of people," Blumenauer said, "and so much of the errand running doesn't need to fire up an engine."

Blumenauer hammered out the details of the system with **Dan Beard**, the **chief administrative officer** of the U.S. **House**. The **House** will select a vendor to provide bikes on self-service racks throughout the **House** campus. Employees who register for the program can check out the bikes for short trips.

Bike-sharing programs take advantage of new technology --using smart cards or cell phone codes for riders to check out bikes from bike shelters. They're funded by advertising, user fees or government subsidies.

The programs are more common in Europe. A 20,000-bicycle system in Paris is wildly popular.

In the second half of last year, there were about 75,000 trips per day on the Parisian bike-sharing system, and 166,000 people bought annual subscriptions for \$45, according to bike-sharing.blogspot.com, a site run by Paul DeMaio, owner of MetroBike LLC. In six months, Paris bike users purchased 205,000 weekly tickets and 2.5 million daily tickets, the Web site said.

Largely as a result of Paris' success, Portland and several other U.S. cities are looking at establishing bike-sharing programs.

"It's going to happen," DeMaio said. "It's going to be the leaders of the pack that show the rest of the country what the concept is."

This spring, the municipal government in Washington, working with Clear Channel Outdoor, will launch a 120-bike fleet throughout the district.

Washington now ranks seventh in the country for bicycle commuting, according to Thunderhead Alliance. But its 1.7 percent of trips to work by bike is less than half Portland's, which ranks first in the country, according to Thunderhead, with 3.5 percent of commuting by bike.

Blumenauer said he sees huge potential for bike sharing in Washington.

"This is a city where there are millions of visitors every year who would take advantage of a bicycle to be able to tour the city," he said. "There are lots of people in neighborhoods that are reasonably easy to access."

Blumenauer sees the concept catching on nationwide. In the long run, he thinks the programs could be self-supporting with modest user fees and advertising. Short term, he hopes to get money for a few pilot programs in the next surface transportation funding bill.

"This could have strong application," he said, "where there's lots of people in concentrated areas where you don't want the pollution and the congestion."

ILLUSTRATION: Blumenauer Got cycling idea in

Copenhagen, Denmark

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Document POR0000020080310e43600031

Biweekly Payroll Could Replace Monthly Pay Stubs

Elizabeth Brotherton

812 words

28 February 2008

Roll Call

English

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Attention, **House** staffers: Balancing that checkbook could soon get a lot easier.

House Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D-Pa.) introduced a bill on Tuesday giving his panel authority to establish a fixed day that **House** employees receive their paychecks. While that might not seem like a major accomplishment, the legislation's passage could lead to a monumental first in the **House** - the creation of a biweekly pay period.

"I think it's an extremely important piece of legislation, and I'm thrilled that Mr. Brady has introduced it," said **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard**, the man in charge of getting **House** employees their paychecks. "It's going to mean an historic change for **House** staff."

Under the current system, staffers receive their paychecks once a month. That undoubtedly requires pretty strict budgeting - something that can be difficult, especially for the many young employees who are near the bottom of the **House's** pay scale.

Seven percent of **House** staffers earned somewhere from \$20,000 to \$29,999 in 2007, while some 21 percent of **House** staffers earned \$30,000 to \$30,999.

About 54 percent of **House** employees in 2007 were younger than 35 years old; 40 percent are under 30, according to statistics provided by the CAO.

"When you're in that age group, it's just so helpful to get paid every two weeks as opposed to every 30 days," Beard said. "This is really an important first step. People have been talking about this for a long time."

The bill does not establish a new pay system, but merely gives **House** Administration the authority to make changes if Members eventually decide they want to do so, according to a statement from Brady's office.

Transitioning to a new biweekly frequency system would cost \$744,000 to \$1,116,000 and take 12 to 15 months to complete, according to a January 2008 report by **House** Inspector General James Cornell. The process could take less time if some tasks are run concurrently, the report reads.

Beard said he expects the project to cost about \$1 million and take several months.

"It's going to be a challenge to figure out the smoothest way to make the transition," Beard said, adding that much of the prep work already is under way.

"This has been rattling around in a serious way for at least a couple of years, so we've already expended a considerable amount of brainpower to the effort," he said.

Aside from easing the monthly money worries for many **House** staffers, a biweekly pay period also would be beneficial to the chamber, according to the IG report.

Under the current system, the **House** pays its 10,000 employees in real-time - that is, the pay date is on or earlier than the pay period ends.

But best business practices recommend implementing a pay lag - meaning a pay period would end about a week before an employee actually gets paid - in order to permit payroll transactions to be submitted on a more consistent schedule, something that also could potentially reduce the number of overpayments.

House Administration ranking member Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.) is concerned about how the transition to a new system would play out - and whether the period during which a pay lag is instituted will wreak havoc on staffers' bottom lines, according to spokeswoman Salley Collins.

If the new pay system goes into effect at the start of the month, for example, staffers would get their first

check two weeks later. But they would only get one week's worth of money - with the other week used to create the lag.

"While we realize that there are obvious benefits to changing the pay cycle, we also know that there are significant costs and inconveniences for staff," Collins said.

The exact time of the lag, or whether a lag will be implemented at all, remains up to the committee, however. In its report, the IG wrote that officials "should consider an option that provides the best balance of transactional processing time with a reasonable lag period."

But there are several employee advantages for the new system, according to the IG report. New hires could potentially receive their paycheck sooner, pay raises could go into effect more quickly, and overtime would be paid in the current cycle rather than the next month. New employees also could start receiving benefits sooner.

Beard predicted that if a new system is implemented, money would be saved in the long term. The CAO currently closes its books on the 15th of the month, he said.

So, if an office hires someone on the 16th, the CAO needs to do a supplemental payroll and a second run, usually done between the first and 10th of the month.

"We've got a really complicated system," Beard said.

Document RLCL000020080228e42s00007

Beard Details New Recycling Efforts

Elizabeth Brotherton

925 words

27 February 2008

Roll Call

English

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Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard touted his efforts in greening the **House** cafeterias before the chamber's global warming committee on Tuesday, the same day his office unveiled a new pilot program to increase recycling in **House** offices.

Testifying before the Energy Independence and Global Warming Committee, Beard gave an overview of the composting system in the cafeterias, which he said already is saving the **House** money with minimal change and upfront cost.

"We're not talking about rocket science here; this isn't brain surgery," said Beard, who is in charge of the **House's** Green the Capitol Initiative. "It really isn't that hard. It doesn't cost that much more and you make the money back in the long term."

The new composting system was introduced in late December after food vendor Restaurant Associates officially took over the **House's** cafeterias. Most **House** employees already are aware of the basic changes.

Bins in the restaurants allow visitors to sort their items into compostable and noncompostable materials. Most things are compostable; the cafeterias now feature utensils and sandwich clam shells made from corn, plates and coffee cups made from paper, and containers made from sugarcane.

Rather than heading for the trash heap, the compostable items are taken to a pulper outside the Longworth **House** Office Building that breaks down and dewateres the materials. They are then shipped off to a commercial compost facility, where everything becomes dirt. The entire process takes 90 days, Beard said.

"Composting is mother nature's natural process of recycling. It starts and ends there," said Patricia Millner, a research microbiologist at the Department of Agriculture's Sustainable Agricultural Systems Laboratory in Beltsville, Md., where a big chunk of the **House's** compostable material heads.

Even though the program only has been going for about 60 days, preliminary results show that the waste hauler that picks up trash headed to the landfill gathered about 20 tons less material for the last three weeks of December 2007 compared to the same period in 2006, Beard said.

"We've made a good start, but we know there is much more we have to do," he said.

That's where the new recycling program comes in. CAO officials found not everybody who picks up lunch at the cafeterias ends up throwing their plates into the compost - about 40 percent of staffers take their meals back to their offices, Beard said.

"We weren't able to take advantage to get those materials into compost streams," Beard said.

So, special compost bins will be placed in offices that request them, allowing staffers to send their cups and forks to the compost without heading back downstairs. Offices can sign up for the program on the CAO's Web site.

Paper recycling also will be made easier - offices that sign up for the program will get one special bin for paper, eliminating the need to sort various materials.

Beard admitted change in the cafeterias hasn't been without some problems. Many staffers have had a difficult time deciding what can and cannot be placed in the compost bin - so greening officials are preparing new signs to make things more explanatory, he said. Officials also are looking into buying flat screen televisions that would show a short film explaining the composting process, Beard said.

But greening isn't just making sure there is less trash. Officials also are buying foods that originate within a 150-mile radius of the Capitol whenever possible, Beard said, reducing carbon emissions generated by transporting goods.

The food itself is different, too - there is fresher produce and meat, and much of it is organic, Beard said. And people are buying it: Beard said he has yet to receive an e-mail from someone who dislikes the food.

"Revenues are up, and more people are eating," he said. "You don't usually go back after a bad meal."

Reaction from committee members was mostly positive, with Chairman Edward Markey (D-Mass.) saying that "the **House** should be proud of the Greening the Capitol initiative."

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.) urged Beard to continue to reach out to Members to help offices do things such as turn their lights off at night - a small change that could have a big impact.

"I had hoped that when word got out about all the changes you've made in the restaurants, that would be a subtle suggestion," Cleaver said.

Beard responded that he hopes the **House** will adopt a policy requiring offices to turn their lights off at night when not in use, at least until motion sensors can be installed in every office.

But not everybody was so enthusiastic.

Ranking member Jim Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.) said the **House** needs to be cautious to ensure that the costs associated with making changes on Capitol Hill bring "the most bang for the buck."

"If the point is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, could the money spent making wholesale changes to **House** food services be better focused on creating more energy efficiency in the **House**?" he said. "It's unclear to me if there's enough transparency in this process to actually measure if these changes are worth it."

Sensenbrenner particularly took to task last year's **House** purchase of \$89,000 of carbon offsets, which Republicans have repeatedly criticized as a waste of taxpayer dollars.

Beard and others argue the purchase is necessary for the chamber to meet its goal of being carbon neutral by the end of the year.

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NATION

Boehner defends anti-earmark site ; House rules bar domain name

Sean Lenggell
Sean Lenggell, THE WASHINGTON TIMES
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House Minority Leader John A. Boehner has refused to find a new home for his anti-earmark Web site after the **House** administrative officer said it violated chamber rules.

The office of **House Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard**, which authorizes **House** Web sites, said the domain name for Mr. Boehner's site - earmark reform.**house.gov** - violates rules that require **house.gov** addresses be "recognizably derivative or representative of the name of the member or the name of the office sponsoring the Web site," said office spokesman Jeff Ventura.

It also fails to meet criteria that **house.gov** domain names be free from slogans and that they don't "imply in any manner that the **House** endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity or service," Mr. Ventura said.

Mr. Boehner said the rules don't apply to **House** members with leadership positions. He added he will continue to operate the site opposing pork-barrel spending projects, which debuted two weeks ago, until he gets a more detailed explanation from Mr. Beard regarding his decision to force the site off the **house.gov** domain.

"Changing its address now will inevitably hamper the effectiveness of the new website, much to the convenience of the majority that runs the **House**," said Mr. Boehner in a letter Thursday to Mr. Beard.

The site includes press releases, video links, news articles and comments from the Ohio Republican on **House** Republican efforts to overhaul earmarks - pet projects that members of Congress insert into legislation. Mr. Boehner's contact information is included at the page's bottom.

Mr. Beard's office in August approved the site's domain name. The office yesterday declined to say why it changed its position.

Rep. Robert A. Brady, Pennsylvania Democrat and chairman of the **House** Administration Committee, which drafted the Web domain rules, said there is no partisan motivation behind Mr. Beard's orders.

"This domain name contravenes a **House** Administration Committee regulation adopted in 1999, at a time when you yourself sat on the committee," said Mr. Brady in a letter yesterday to Mr. Boehner.

"I can assure you that it was not until your site was launched that committee staff became aware of the violation of the committee policy and conveyed that information" to Mr. Beard's office.

Mr. Ventura said Mr. Boehner is free to keep the site active as long he transfers it off the **house.gov** domain. It has received more than 6,200 "hits" since it became active Feb. 12, said Boehner spokesman Michael Steel.

The office of the **Chief Administrative Officer** has begun a review of all **House** Web addresses to ensure compliance, Mr. Ventura said.

The flap over the site comes at a time when **House** Republicans, eager to reclaim the party's reputation for fiscal responsibility, increasingly have tried to portray themselves as earmark reformers.

Mr. Boehner used a procedural move on the **House** floor earlier this month to force Democrats to voting on a measure to ban earmarks. Democrats rejected the measure, calling it a publicity stunt. Democratic leaders added that under Republican rule, pork spending jumped from \$12 billion in 1999 to \$29 billion in 2006.

Caption: Rep. John A. Boehner [NO CREDIT]

Document WATI000020080226e42q0000b

Morning Business
Warrior Hired

347 words
26 February 2008
Roll Call
English

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Warrior Hired. Retired Marine Master Gunnery Sgt. Patricia Orsini will head the **House's** Wounded Warrior Program, a new \$5 million venture that is expected to bring up to 50 wounded veterans to work in various Congressional offices, **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** announced Monday.

In a press release, Beard said Orsini was picked for the job because she has a history of developing similar programs that support servicemen and servicewomen.

Orsini spent more than 24 years as a Marine in a variety of roles, including escorting the bodies of fallen Marines returning home to the United States and helping active and reservist Marines with medical benefits.

Web Update. **House** Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D-Pa.) wrote **House** Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio) on Monday backing a decision by **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** to have Boehner move the Web site earmarkreform.house.gov to a new domain name.

The site serves as a portal for the GOP-led effort to enact earmark reform. The CAO's **House** Information Resources office gave Boehner permission to use the domain last year, but last week Beard ordered that the site be moved to a non-**House**.gov address, saying it violated regulations governing **House** URLs.

"I can assure you that it was not until your site was launched that Committee staff became aware of the violation of the Committee policy and conveyed that information to the CAO," Brady writes. "No content regulation was intended."

Brady will direct the CAO to help move the site to a new URL and create a redirection notice so visitors to the old URL can still find the site, he wrote.

But the letter might not appease Boehner. A spokesman said the Minority Leader has many questions about the CAO's decision, including why Beard gave permission for the URL only to take it back after the site starting getting attention. "Until we get real answers to these questions, we are not currently inclined to take down our website," spokesman Michael Steel wrote in an e-mail.

- Elizabeth Brotherton

Document RLCL000020080226e42q0000a

Boehner Defies Order to Remove Earmark Site

Elizabeth Brotherton

581 words

25 February 2008

Roll Call

English

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House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio) is refusing to take down a Web site promoting the GOPs earmark reform efforts, defying a directive from **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** to move the site to a new domain name.

The Republican leader will not comply until he receives a response to a letter he sent Beard on Thursday protesting the decision and requesting further details as to why the site must be taken down, a spokesman said.

Mr. Beards office has been thoroughly contradictory on this, Boehner spokesman Michael Steel said on Friday. In August, they approved the URL. Now, as the site is attracting attention ... they say it is against **House** rules.

Launched Feb. 12, earmarkreform.**house.gov** features articles about earmarks, press releases and video clips from Republican leaders discussing earmarks, as well as a link to Boehners leadership Web site. It has received thousands of hits, according to Boehner.

The CAOs **House** Information Resources office authorized the use of the domain name in August 2007. But in recent days, officials have discovered that the site violates **House** Administration Committee rules governing **House.gov** domain names, Beard spokesman Jeff Ventura said in a statement on Thursday.

House Administration regulations require all **House.gov** domain names to be recognizably derivative or representative of the name of the Member or office sponsoring the site, according to Ventura. Domain names may not be a slogan or imply that the **House** endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity or service, Ventura added.

It was determined the Web site in question was not compliant with the aforementioned rule and Mr. Boehner was asked to transition to another URL, Ventura said.

But Boehner takes issue with the CAOs interpretation of the rules. The **House** Administration rule cited by the CAO pertains only to committee Web sites, not leadership sites, Steel said.

Boehner sent Beard his letter within hours of receiving word that he must take down the site.

Transferring the website to a different address now nearly two weeks after its successful launch will inevitably cause confusion for visitors and discourage some from continuing to utilize the website as a regular resource, Boehner wrote.

Ventura declined to comment further on Friday. Ventura and **House** Administration Committee officials also declined to comment on what might happen if Boehner continues to refuse to take down the site. It is not clear whether the CAO or others can remove the site themselves if Boehner doesnt change the domain name.

Ventura said HIR will work with Boehners staff to make the transition to a new domain name as seamless as possible.

All **House** domain names are now being reviewed by the CAO to make sure they are in compliance with **House** rules, Ventura added.

Earmarks in general have proved to be a contentious battle between the parties over the past several weeks, as Boehner and other Republicans have called for major earmark reform. In particular, they have attacked Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) for refusing to support the GOP-led call for a total earmark moratorium.

But Pelosi and her allies have claimed the GOP effort is an act of grandstanding, arguing that the Democratic-led 110th Congress has been tougher on earmarks than during any previous session.

Democrats enacted sweeping changes to the earmark system last year, for example, that managed to cut the number nearly in half, Pelosi wrote in a letter to Boehner on Feb. 6.

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GOP Critical of Energy-Monitoring Plan

Elizabeth Brotherton

730 words

11 February 2008

Roll Call

English

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Republican leaders are once again lashing out against the Green the Capitol Initiative, this time targeting a \$4.3 million effort to install several meters to monitor the **House's** energy use throughout the Capitol complex.

But Democrats say the meters are necessary because they will allow greening officials to better monitor the chamber's energy use - and thus will save millions in the long run.

"The Speaker has said that energy efficiency must become a way of business for the **House** community, and metering is an essential part of any greening effort," said Drew Hammill, a spokesman for Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.).

In a Nov. 30 letter to acting Architect of the Capitol Stephen Ayers, Pelosi directed the AOC to install "smart meters" that provide detailed utility usage in the Capitol and **House** office buildings. These will help greening officials monitor energy use and help the **House** reach its goal of cutting energy consumption in half by fiscal 2018.

The meters also would let greening officials track how much fuel is used for the Capitol Power Plant, which provides cooling and heating service. Pelosi also asked the AOC to work with **House Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** to create a display system that would allow staff and visitors to see the buildings' power usage, "so that energy-usage awareness can be raised."

Pelosi set a May deadline for the project's completion. Exact costs for the installation of the meters were still being worked out on Friday, but according to estimates, the process is expected to cost at least \$4.3 million, and up to \$4.6 million. And that, Republicans said, is just too much money.

"While we recognize the need to improve the **House's** method of monitoring energy usage, we are uncertain that, as stewards of taxpayer dollars, spending \$4.5 million on a 'showcase' should be a priority," said Salley Collins, a spokeswoman for **House** Administration ranking member Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.).

A spokesman for **House** Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio) echoed those thoughts, noting that Democrats had to reappropriate funds this year to make sure Member Representational Allowances were increased.

"That's absurd," said Boehner spokesman Kevin Smith. "And it's a waste of taxpayer dollars."

The MRAs, which fund staff salaries and other Congressional office expenses, eventually went up about 2.5 percent.

Others involved in the greening efforts argued that meters are cost-effective and will save taxpayers money in the long run.

"This is simple math," said Jeff Ventura, a spokesman for Beard, who is charged with overseeing the project. "The metering installation will pay for itself in just six years, because every year the meters will save us, and the taxpayers, \$750,000. After the six years, it's just pure money saved."

Ventura also noted that all federal agencies are required to properly evaluate their energy consumption, and the meters will help meet that requirement.

But there also is concern that the cost of the meters will be a burden to the AOC, an agency already overloaded with hundreds of millions of dollars worth of maintenance projects. The agency requested \$643 million in funds for fiscal 2009, with the bulk of the money going to help tackle a backlog of repair projects throughout the campus.

As such, the metering issue is expected to be addressed at the AOC's upcoming hearing before the **House** Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, which is set for Wednesday. Ayers' testimony had

not been submitted to the panel as of Friday afternoon, so an AOC spokesman declined to discuss whether Ayers will bring up the meters.

But the spokesman did say that if the meters are something the AOC is tasked with doing, it is likely to be included in the agency's detailed budget request.

Meters aren't the only greening issue that has been criticized by Republicans over the past several weeks. The GOP recently criticized the AOC's \$89,000 purchase of carbon credits from the Chicago Climate Exchange.

Critics have said the credits went to worthless projects and were a waste of taxpayer dollars, but supporters maintain offsets are the only way the **House** can meet its goal of becoming carbon neutral.

Beard likely will be asked to defend the greening project when he appears before appropriators on Thursday.

Document RLCL000020080211e42b00009

Business

Pura Vida Coffee wins support of the House

Melissa Allison

Melissa Allison. Seattle Times business reporter

575 words

7 February 2008

The Seattle Times

Fourth

C1

English

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Forget earmarks and political donations. Pura Vida Coffee, of Seattle, won the right to sell coffee at the U.S. **House** of Representatives through an old-fashioned taste test.

Last November, about 40 **House** staffers chose Pura Vida over Fair Trade-certified coffees from Starbucks, Seattle's Best Coffee, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters and Bluebird Artisanal Coffee Roasters.

"When we decided to switch to Fair Trade coffee, there was some nervousness about whether that coffee is as good as regular coffee, which is one reason we had the taste-off," said **Dan Beard**, the **House's chief administrative officer**. Pura Vida began supplying the **House** with coffee in December.

Fair Trade certification means that coffee farmers receive a fair price for their beans. Pura Vida's coffee is also organic and shade-grown, which protects bird habitat and reduces clear-cutting.

Pura Vida is majority owned by F5 Networks co-founder Jeff Hussey. It was started by two Harvard MBAs in 1998 with the goal of improving the lives of children and families in coffee-growing countries.

A nickel of every pound it sells goes to a nonprofit, Pura Vida Partners, that shares space with the company in Fremont and distributes the money to organizations in coffee-growing countries. Over the years, the for-profit Pura Vida has contributed more than \$2.5 million in cash and other support to the nonprofit.

Pura Vida is at the end of an effort to raise \$3.5 million in capital to help grow the company, which is expected to become profitable for the first time this year, said President Jeff Angell. It has 17 employees; the nonprofit has two.

The company sells much of its coffee to hundreds of cafes on university campuses, Angell said. "They're very discriminating consumers with high expectations for the quality of the product as well as the truth in what you say you're doing."

Pura Vida is served off campus as well, including at Washington Mutual's headquarters in Seattle and at four Smithsonian Institution museums in Washington, D.C. The company hopes to expand more off-campus, Angell said.

Pura Vida's coffee is roasted to its specifications by S&D Coffee in Concord, N.C.

The **House** of Representatives is its largest customer, sipping about 100 pounds of drip coffee a day.

Pura Vida doesn't disclose sales. Its **House** contract is with the food-management giant Compass Group, which also sells Pura Vida coffee to some colleges and universities and recently began offering it to corporate, health care and other clients.

For every pound of coffee Pura Vida sells through Compass -- at the **House** and elsewhere -- the two companies contribute 30 cents to Pura Vida Partners.

At the **House's** biggest cafeteria, a flat-screen television plays a video from Pura Vida.

"When you see this guy who picked the coffee beans, it really drives home a message," Beard said. "I like the fact that you can buy a cup of coffee and do a little good with it."

Melissa Allison: 206-464-3312

photo; Caption: Tom Reese / The Seattle Times: Jeff Angell, president of Pura Vida Coffee, seen at the Fremont store. He says the company also sells much of its coffee to hundreds of cafes on college and university campuses and they're "very discriminating consumers." (0404332414)

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Pura Vida Coffee wins support of the House

Melissa Allison
Seattle Times business reporter
651 words
7 February 2008
The Seattle Times
English

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Pura Vida Coffee recently won a contract to supply coffee at cafeterias at the U.S. **House** of Representatives. The Seattle company gives a nickel of every pound it sells to help children and families in coffee-growing countries. I like the fact that you can buy a cup of coffee and do a little good with it."

Dan Beard

Chief administrative officer, House of Representatives

They're very discriminating consumers{ellipsis}for the quality of the product as well as the truth in what you say you're doing."

Jeff Angell

Of Pura Vida, discussing

patrons on college campuses

The Fair Trade coffee company's mission is to help children and

families in coffee-growing countries. Its coffee is now served in Congress.

Forget earmarks and political donations. Pura Vida Coffee, of Seattle, won the right to sell coffee at the U.S. **House** of Representatives through an old-fashioned taste test.

Last November, about 40 **House** staffers chose Pura Vida over Fair Trade-certified coffees from Starbucks, Seattle's Best Coffee, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters and Bluebird Artisanal Coffee Roasters.

"When we decided to switch to Fair Trade coffee, there was some nervousness about whether that coffee is as good as regular coffee, which is one reason we had the taste-off," said **Dan Beard**, the **House's chief administrative officer**. Pura Vida began supplying the **House** with coffee in December.

Fair Trade certification means that coffee farmers receive a fair price for their beans. Pura Vida's coffee is also organic and shade-grown, which protects bird habitat and reduces clear-cutting.

Pura Vida is majority owned by F5 Networks co-founder Jeff Hussey. It was started by two Harvard MBAs in 1998 with the goal of improving the lives of children and families in coffee-growing countries.

A nickel of every pound it sells goes to a nonprofit, Pura Vida Partners, that shares space with the company in Fremont and distributes the money to organizations in coffee-growing countries. Over the years, the for-profit Pura Vida has contributed more than \$2.5 million in cash and other support to the nonprofit.

Pura Vida is at the end of an effort to raise \$3.5 million in capital to help grow the company, which is expected to become profitable for the first time this year, said President Jeff Angell. It has 17 employees; the nonprofit has two.

The company sells much of its coffee to hundreds of cafes on university campuses, Angell said. "They're very discriminating consumers with high expectations for the quality of the product as well as the truth in what you say you're doing."

Pura Vida is served off campus as well, including at Washington Mutual's headquarters in Seattle and at four Smithsonian Institution museums in Washington, D.C. The company hopes to expand more off-campus, Angell said.

Pura Vida's coffee is roasted to its specifications by S&D Coffee in Concord, N.C.

The **House** of Representatives is its largest customer, sipping about 100 pounds of drip coffee a day.

Pura Vida doesn't disclose sales. Its **House** contract is with the food-management giant Compass Group, which also sells Pura Vida coffee to some colleges and universities and recently began offering it to corporate, health care and other clients.

For every pound of coffee Pura Vida sells through Compass -- at the **House** and elsewhere -- the two companies contribute 30 cents to Pura Vida Partners.

At the **House's** biggest cafeteria, a flat-screen television plays a video from Pura Vida.

"When you see this guy who picked the coffee beans, it really drives home a message," Beard said. "I like the fact that you can buy a cup of coffee and do a little good with it."

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Campus Notebook
Beard Bites Back

Elizabeth Brotherton and Emily Yehle
1,018 words
6 February 2008
Roll Call
English

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Beard Bites Back. **Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard** on Tuesday defended the **House's** decision to buy \$89,000 worth of carbon offset credits from the Chicago Climate Exchange, more than a week after new concerns were raised about the value of the purchase.

In a lengthy statement, Beard said he welcomes the results of upcoming investigations by the Government Accountability Office and Federal Trade Commission, which examine whether the carbon-trading marketplace is "mature enough to substantiate the spending of taxpayer dollars on offsets."

Oversight and control of the trading system are needed to make sure investments are sound, Beard said, adding that

carbon credits "play a critical role" in helping government groups and private-sector companies become carbon-neutral.

Beard oversees the Green the Capitol Initiative on behalf of Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.). One of the project's main goals is for the **House** to be carbon-neutral by the end of 2008. But that cannot happen without the purchase of carbon credits.

A recent investigation by The Washington Post found that some of the credits purchased by the **House** went to fund projects that had already ended or weren't effective, which prompted Reps. Joe Barton (R-Texas) and John Shimkus (R-Ill.) to ask the GAO to look into the purchase.

Concern about offsets isn't new. In a Nov. 2 letter to Beard, **House** Administration ranking member Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.) argued that officials should wait until a separate GAO investigation studying the offset market was completed before making the purchase. (Beard bought the offsets a few days later.)

"This is a long overdue acknowledgment that there are serious concerns surrounding the lack of discretion applied to this costly purchase at the expense of the American taxpayer," Ehlers spokeswoman Salley Collins said of Beard's statement. "Unfortunately, it is after the fact."

In an interview, Beard said he purchased the credits on behalf of **House** leadership, noting that the **House** Administration and Appropriations committees approved the move. Ehlers' concerns emerged after the purchase already had been given the green light by authorizers, Beard said.

"I think the implication of some of the [criticism] is that this was done in sort of the dead of the night," Beard said. "That the CAO got an idea and sort of did something, but that's far from the case. ... This was fully vetted by all of the appropriate committees."

Others on Capitol Hill remained supportive of the offset purchase on Tuesday, including Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.).

"Offsetting the **House** of Representatives' greenhouse gas emissions is a priority for this Congress that Congressman Emanuel is proud of and will continue to support," a spokeswoman said.

Page Delays. A report by the **House** Inspector General investigating the page program was supposed to be completed last week, but it has yet to surface and officials aren't saying when it will be released.

The report will address the accusations of former **House** Page Board members Reps. Ginny Brown-Waite (Fla.) and Shelley Moore Capito (W.Va.). The board's two GOP members both resigned in December, citing a lack of communication between the oversight board and Clerk of the **House** Lorraine Miller.

Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio) has said he won't consider appointing two more Republican board members until after the IG report is completed.

One **House** staffer familiar with the page program said an announcement on the IG report is due any day.

But there's no word on whether Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) has chosen an independent entity to do a promised top-to-bottom investigation on the program.

Budget Seeks to Keep Tours. A provision to maintain staff-led tours at the Capitol was included in the fiscal 2009 budget proposal submitted to Congress by President Bush on Monday.

Similar to language included in the fiscal 2008 omnibus spending package, the provision would prohibit the Architect of the Capitol, Capitol Guide Service or Congressional Special Services Office from using any appropriations to eliminate tours of the Capitol led by staffers or interns from Congressional offices.

The Capitol Police could direct tours to be temporarily suspended or altered for security reasons, but only to the same extent as Capitol tours led by the guide service, according to the provision.

The language included in the omnibus measure is set to expire at the end of fiscal 2008.

AOC officials and the Capitol Police had recommended that staff-led tours be altered once the Capitol Visitor Center opens in November. Under that plan, official guides would lead all tours, with staffers coming along if requested. Official guides are more knowledgeable about the Capitol's history and better trained in security procedures, officials said.

But hundreds of Members protested, arguing that the staff tours provide an important way for their offices to interact with constituents.

And Improve Landscaping. The budget proposal also includes a provision authorizing the AOC to improve landscape features in "the irregular shaped grassy areas" located about one block west of the Rayburn **House** Office Building.

AOC officials should work with District of Columbia officials to improve the space, which is bounded by Washington Avenue Southwest, Second Street Southwest and the beginning of the I-395 tunnel.

Kids and Books. The Library of Congress is hoping to lure kids into libraries and bookstores by airing radio commercials that include a few sentences from several adolescent classics.

The idea is to leave listeners with a cliffhanger. For Jerry Spinelli's "Maniac Magee," a child narrator sets up the story of a roaming orphan.

Gary Paulson's "Hatchet" gets a fast-paced narration of the plane crash that leaves its protagonist alone in the wilderness.

And for C.S. Lewis' "The Chronicles of Narnia," the voice of Prince Caspian invites listeners on his quest to claim the throne.

The advertisements are part of the LOC and Ad Council's Lifelong Literacy campaign, which aims to attract kids to the Library's resources through its Web site.

Please send tips to notebook@rollcall.com.

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Leg Branch Approps Jump

Emily Yehle and Elizabeth Brotherton

1,201 words

5 February 2008

Roll Call

English

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Funding for long-neglected maintenance projects on Capitol Hill helped push President Bush's fiscal 2009 legislative branch appropriations up 17.4 percent over the prior year, to \$4.7 billion.

But Members have historically appropriated far less than the president's legislative branch budget request, which is widely viewed as a wish list for the various agencies.

The legislative branch received only a 3 percent hike in funding for fiscal 2008. The fiscal 2009 budget proposal does, however, offer a glimpse into where the bulk of the appropriated money will go.

The Architect of the Capitol and the Government Printing Office led the infrastructure requests, with each agency arguing it needs to tackle long-overlooked maintenance projects.

The AOC requested by far the most funding and the biggest increase out of any legislative branch agency - \$643 million, a 55 percent jump from last year's \$414 million appropriation.

The bulk of the requested funds would go toward the huge backlog of maintenance and repair projects throughout the Capitol campus, according to AOC spokeswoman Eva Malecki, including nearly \$127 million to repair dangerous utility tunnels beneath the complex.

"The longer we wait to address these issues, the greater the cost will be to fix the problems over time," Malecki said.

Recent AOC assessments of Capitol Hill facilities have indicated a backlog of more than \$600 million in deferred maintenance work and about \$800 million in needed Capital Renewal projects, Malecki said. But until the AOC receives the money to fix these problems, they remain - and more problems could emerge, she said.

Once the assessments of all Capitol complex facilities are completed, the AOC will create a five-year Capital Improvement Plan to evaluate which projects need to be tackled first, placing fire- and life-safety issues at the top, followed by code compliance and historical preservation, according to Malecki.

This year's major project request would go to repair the tunnels. The AOC signed an agreement with the Office of Compliance last spring to eliminate within five years several health and safety hazards in the tunnels, including asbestos and cracked and falling concrete.

Both the AOC and OOC say that progress is being made in the tunnels, but the AOC needs the nearly \$127 million in order to keep the project on schedule, Malecki said. Without the tunnel request, the AOC's budget request would be about 24.5 percent over fiscal 2008 appropriations, Malecki noted.

The AOC oversees 16.5 million square feet of buildings and more than 450 acres of land, Malecki said. Buildings range in age from 25 years old (the Library of Congress' James Madison Building) to more than 200 years old (parts of the Capitol), she noted.

Other AOC requests include \$27 million to make repairs needed to ensure Library buildings are in compliance with code and \$31 million for the Capitol Visitor Center, which is set to open in November.

Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.), who chairs the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, is happy to see funds being requested for key infrastructure updates such as the utility tunnels, spokeswoman Stephanie Allen said Monday.

It's much the same story over at the GPO. If Congress won't help the agency move out of its outdated and large building, then lawmakers are looking at tens of millions of dollars to fix it up, according to the agency.

The GPO is asking for \$33 million for building repair and technology development in fiscal 2009 in hopes that some of the money would help fix old elevators and leaky roofs. Officials asked for about \$27 million in

fiscal 2008 for similar reasons - and got none of it.

"It's no longer fair to employees to continue to defer maintenance," said GPO Chief of Staff Maria Lefevre, adding an oft-repeated phrase of Public Printer Robert Tapella: "When it rains, we know it's going to leak, we just don't know where."

Moving from the large complex on North Capitol Street has been a priority for the agency for years. Officials say it is too big and too spread out for the needs of a modern printing plant. But in order to move, Congress must pass a bill that would allow the agency to keep the money from a sale rather than return it to the treasury. Tapella hopes to use that money to build the most environmentally friendly printing plant in the country.

Former Public Printer Bruce James tried to convince Members to help the agency make the move in the 109th Congress and ended up empty-handed. And if the agency is to stay in the 1.5 million- square-foot complex, Lefevre said, then it needs some work.

The extra funds bring the agency's request to about \$174 million, or almost 40 percent more than it got this year. The increase is not only for maintenance repair, it also would complete the funding for the Future Digital System, an initiative to put government documents online.

The GPO and the AOC aren't the only legislative branch agencies to hope for more funds.

The Capitol Police requested nearly \$334 million for fiscal 2009, a 19 percent jump from \$281 million appropriated for this fiscal year.

Included is a \$270 million request for personnel costs, which is an increase of about \$36 million over fiscal 2008. A large chunk of that money is expected to go to the estimated 121 officers needed to patrol the upcoming CVC, which should be open for much of fiscal 2009, as well as additional costs stemming from the merger between the department and the LOC police force, which is already under way.

The Library of Congress is asking for almost 8 percent more than it received this year, mostly for salaries and expenses. The increase would make the total about \$606 million.

And despite Comptroller General David Walker's vocal disappointment with previous budgets, the Government Accountability Office also is asking for an 8 percent increase - one of the lowest of all legislative branch agencies. In the past, Walker has argued that the agency needs more funds to carry out the added responsibilities it takes on every year.

House leadership, officers and select committees requested about \$1.3 billion for fiscal 2009, a 12.8 percent jump from fiscal 2008.

Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard, who oversees more than 600 **House** employees, requested \$128.5 million. About \$2 million of the CAO's budget request is devoted to fund the Green the Capitol Initiative, spokeswoman Karissa Marcum said.

House Clerk Lorraine Miller requested about \$25 million, and **House** Sergeant-at-Arms Bill Livingood asked for about \$8.5 million.

Senate leadership, officers and committees, meanwhile, asked for \$941 million, a 13.2 percent increase from fiscal 2008.

Other notable budget requests include \$17 million for "Member Transition Services" after the 2008 elections and \$3 million for the Capitol Police to provide security at the 2009 presidential inauguration.

About \$19 million is being requested to provide new or expanded benefits to **House** employees, and \$5 million for the Wounded Warrior initiative introduced last year by Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.).

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House Set To Remove Hall Clutter

Elizabeth Brotherton

689 words

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Roll Call

English

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Signage and furniture sitting in Congressional hallways created obstacles for a number of disabled people who came to lobby on Capitol Hill this week, as advocates tripped and bumped into furnishings while on their way to offices and hearing rooms.

But a change in **House** policy could soon make things much easier for the disabled on on Capitol Hill, where corridors are often filled with old committee tables, stacks of chairs and easels holding a variety of large laminated signs.

Jointly proposed in the fall by **House** Administration Chairman Robert Brady (D-Pa.) and ranking member Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.), the new hallway policy seeks to improve **House** compliance with the requirements included in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Under the proposal, **House** offices would not be allowed to place or store items within a hallway or exit access, including equipment and furnishings such as signs, tables, easels, carpets and pedestals.

Anything placed in the hallway will be "presumed to be excess" and removed, according to the proposal, a copy of which was obtained by Roll Call.

These items would be held by the **Chief Administrative Officer** for three days and then disposed of if not claimed. Temporary, extended and long-term storage would be available for certain items.

The plan is waiting approval by the **House** Office Building Commission, of which Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) and Minority Leader John Boehner (R- Ohio) are members.

"The HOBC is considering the bipartisan [**House** Administration] recommendations that address hallway accessibility and safety issues," Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill said Wednesday.

House Administration spokesman Kyle Anderson said that committee members expect the building commission to approve new regulations "in the near future."

The problems created this week by signage and furniture weren't a surprise to Mariana Nork, a spokeswoman for the D.C.-based American Association of People with Disabilities.

"There's always people with disabilities up on the Hill, and people are always having difficulties," she said, adding that her group has long lobbied for a policy of "no tables in the hallways, no signage, no coat racks."

"The signage on the hill is horrible," Nork said. "It's a tremendous barrier. ... It's extremely difficult to get around."

Nork noted that when her group holds events on Capitol Hill, it must be careful that the locations picked are suited for the disabled, not only by clearing out nearby hallways but also by ensuring close access to handicapped restrooms.

An Ehlers spokeswoman said the struggles that the disabled regularly face on Capitol Hill offer proof that the new policy should be implemented.

"Fire and life-safety conditions need to be a top priority to ensure the safety of not only Members and staff, but also visitors," spokeswoman Salley Collins said. "We hope that the Speaker will take these policies under immediate consideration."

A Democratic aide noted that this is not the first time such recommendations have been made to the HOBC; a similar proposal was issued during the Republican-controlled 109th Congress but never approved.

House Sergeant-at-Arms Bill Livingood, Chief Fire Marshal Kenneth Lauziere and Capitol Police Chief

Phillip Morse endorsed the plan in September.

In his Sept. 26 letter recommending that hallways be cleared of "unnecessary obstructions," Morse writes that hallways already are narrow and crowded during the day, which would impede an evacuation.

"In the event of an emergency, any objects, which obstruct the free flow of people or create a tripping hazard, are a serious impediment to a timely and successful evacuation," Morse writes in the letter.

The **House** is not the only chamber seeking to improve disability access on Capitol Hill.

Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.) distributed a guide last week that outlines ways for Members to make their offices more accessible to disabled staffers and visitors.

And although problems remain, officials say things have improved for the disabled on Capitol Hill in recent years.

For example, an October 2007 Office of Compliance report found that after years of undeveloped plans, officials had developed emergency evacuation procedures for the disabled.

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A Section

Value of U.S. House's Carbon Offsets Is Murky; Some Question Effectiveness of \$89,000 Purchase to Balance Out Greenhouse Gas Emissions

David A. Fahrenthold
Washington Post Staff Writer
1,218 words
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The Washington Post
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English

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The **House** of Representatives has presumably learned that money cannot buy love or happiness. Now, it turns out it's not a sure solution to climate guilt, either.

In November, the Democratic-led **House** spent about \$89,000 on so-called carbon offsets. This purchase was supposed to cancel out greenhouse-gas emissions from **House** buildings -- including half of the U.S. Capitol -- by triggering an equal reduction in emissions elsewhere.

Some of the money went to farmers in North Dakota, for tilling practices that keep carbon buried in the soil. But some farmers were already doing this, for other reasons, before the **House** paid a cent.

Other funds went to Iowa, where a power plant had been temporarily rejiggered to burn more cleanly. But that test project had ended more than a year before the money arrived.

The **House's** purchase provides a view into the confusing world of carbon offsets, a newly popular commodity with few rules. Analysts say some offsets really do cause new reductions in pollution. But others seem to change very little.

To environmentalists, the **House's** experience is a powerful lesson about a market where pure intentions can produce murky results.

"It didn't change much behavior that wasn't going to happen anyway," said Joseph Romm, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress who writes a blog calling for more aggressive action on climate change. "It just, I think, demonstrated why offsets are controversial and possibly pointless. . . . This is a waste of taxpayer money."

The **House** bought its offsets through the Chicago Climate Exchange, a five-year-old commodities market where greenhouse-gas credits are traded like pork bellies.

This month, officials at the exchange vigorously defended the sale, saying the **House's** purchase had done a great deal of good by funneling money to those who were helping to combat climate change.

"It basically rewards people for having done things that had environmental good in the past and incentivizes people to do things that have environmental good in the future," said Richard Sandor, the exchange's chairman and chief executive.

He rejected the argument that the exchange shouldn't sell offsets until it can prove that the pollution reductions wouldn't have happened if the money wasn't paid. "We can't, as an exchange, trade hypothetical things," Sandor said.

The offset purchase was part of a Green the Capitol initiative, begun after Democrats took over last year. **House** leaders bought compact fluorescent light bulbs to save energy and ordered the Capitol Power Plant to burn natural gas instead of dirtier coal. For emissions they couldn't avoid, they bought offsets: 30,000

metric tons at about \$2.97 per metric ton.

The Senate has taken some similar steps to reduce energy use but has not purchased offsets.

Daniel P. Beard, the **House's chief administrative officer**, said he asked the Chicago exchange for offsets based only on U.S. projects. But, he said, he asked not to be told where the projects were, so representatives could not buttonhole him about projects in their districts.

The carbon offset market has taken off in the United States -- worth an estimated \$55 million, according to a study last year -- despite its odd-sounding premise. Its stock in trade is, in essence, a claim that some pollution might have been emitted but wasn't.

In Europe, offsets are regulated and often expensive, more than \$30 per metric ton. In the United States, offsets are hardly regulated and generally far cheaper.

Many environmental groups say any offset must meet one all-important criterion, called "additionality": Buying an offset must cause some new reduction in emissions that wouldn't have happened if the money hadn't been paid.

"If you don't have additionality," said Mark Trexler, a consultant in Portland, Ore., who advises companies on offset purchases, "you know what you're getting. You're getting nothing."

A review of three projects that got about a third of the funds from the **House's** offset purchases shows that, in all three cases, it did not appear that offset money was the sole factor causing any of the projects to go forward.

About \$14,500 of the **House's** money went to the North Dakota Farmers Union, some to pay farmers to do "no-till" farming. The farmers stopped using conventional plows and instead make tiny slits to plant their seeds. The practice increases the amount of carbon, a component in heat-trapping carbon dioxide, kept in the soil. But organizers said that some farmers had started the practice before the offset money came in because it saves fuel, brings in federal soil-conservation funds and could increase crop yields.

"When we first started, the financial incentive was trying to raise better crops . . . and that's still the biggest incentive," said Mark Holkup, who raises wheat and sunflowers in Wilton, N.D. He said, however, that the contract for his offsets would prevent him from abandoning this practice in the near future.

That's a troubling sign, according to Wiley Barbour, director of Environmental Resources Trust in Arlington County, which evaluates the worth of potential carbon offsets.

"If they say, 'Well, they were already doing no-till,' then immediately that raises a big, red flag," Barbour said. "Nothing changed."

Another \$14,500 went to a project that enabled a power plant near Chillicothe, Iowa, to burn switch grass instead of coal. This was a test program to learn more about making power from plant matter, and it reduced the facility's emissions for 45 days in spring 2006. Officials conducted the test with the expectation that they would get offset money.

Would it have happened in the absence of such funds?

"I don't know," said David Miller, of the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, who helped broker the deal.

About \$1,400 went to the Nez Perce Indian tribe to pay for tree plantings on tribal land in northern Idaho. Trees absorb carbon dioxide as they grow.

An official involved said the offset money was welcome in this case but was not the only factor that made the project worthwhile.

"No one is changing any practices for carbon offsets right now, because it doesn't make economic sense" with prices so low, said Ted Dodge, executive director of the National Carbon Offset Coalition, based in Butte, Mont., which handled the transaction.

Rep. Vernon J. Ehlers (R-Mich.) said this month that he was concerned about the real effect of the **House's** offset purchase.

"This is just extra money in their pocket for something they're already doing," Ehlers said. A member of the

ouse committee that oversees Beard's office, Ehlers said he wanted the money spent on energy-efficiency measures on Capitol Hill.

But Beard said he did not regret the purchase, despite questions about the role that offset money played in the individual projects.

"Whether they were going to do it or not" without the **House** funds, "the point is that they did do it."

Staff researcher Meg Smith contributed to this report.

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Welcome Back Congress

Ethics Reform ; Scandals of Recent Years Are Still Hanging Over Capitol Hill

Rachel Van Dongen

2,360 words

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Roll Call

English

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Jack Abramoff may be in jail, but the ethics woes of Republicans are hardly locked away with him.

Despite efforts to scrub themselves of the ethical stain that hurt them in the 2006 elections and helped ensure the loss of their **House** and Senate majorities, Republicans may still be plagued by scandal in 2008.

Of the 11 lawmakers known to be facing trouble with the law, nine are Republicans. Luckily for the GOP, two of them heeded pressure from their colleagues and announced their retirement: most recently Rep. John Doolittle (Calif.), who is being investigated for his Abramoff ties, and Rep. Rick Renzi (Ariz.), whose family business was raided in April by FBI agents examining a suspicious land deal.

Stefan Passantino, head of the political law practice at McKenna Long & Aldrich, said the focus on Republicans represents the legal system catching up to the alleged ethical misdeeds of a longtime Congressional majority.

"It's always a problem," said Passantino, who has represented former Speakers Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) and Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.). "The ethics issues and the culture of corruption mantras still resonate with the public."

For instance, people outside of Idaho likely will have heard about GOP Sen. Larry Craig, who was going to resign after pleading guilty to a charge stemming from his arrest in a Minneapolis airport restroom. But Craig changed his mind and is appealing his guilty plea - and staying in Congress until the next election.

Sen. Ted Stevens (R) and Rep. Don Young (R) of Alaska are embroiled in the Justice Department's wide-ranging corruption probe into oil-services giant VECO. No charges have yet been lodged against the lawmakers, however, and they maintain their innocence.

And a new federal prosecutor in Los Angeles - plus the conviction of defense contractor Brent Wilkes - could breathe life into the probe of **House** Appropriations ranking member Jerry Lewis' (R-Calif.) ties to former Rep. turned lobbyist Bill Lowery (R-Calif.).

Two Democrats also are on the hot seat. The corruption trial of Rep. William Jefferson (La.) is set to start Feb. 25 in Alexandria, Va., and there are indications that a subpoena was served last March in the probe into earmarks obtained by Rep. Alan Mollohan (D-W.Va.).

Rep. Ken Calvert (R-Calif.)

On July 24, 2007, D.C.-area FBI agents pulled the Congressman's personal financial records for 2006 and 2007 after allegations that he repeatedly earmarked money for development near land that he owns.

But there is no evidence there is a formal investigation under way, and the Congressman has not retained counsel.

Calvert maintains he has done nothing wrong, and he produced a May 2007 letter from the **House** ethics committee that greenlighted a \$5.6 million earmark for a transit center in his district one-tenth of a mile from property he owns and less than a mile from four of his other properties.

In 2006, the Los Angeles Times reported that Calvert and a business partner earned a profit of about a half-million dollars in less than a year on a land deal. The report found that while he owned the land, Calvert earmarked \$1.5 million for commercial development nearby and \$8 million for a freeway exchange 16 miles away.

A week after that, a California FBI agent pulled Calvert's financial disclosure forms for 2000 through 2005.

Calvert's GOP colleagues don't seem worried; he won a coveted **House** Appropriations Committee slot in

May despite a campaign by conservative bloggers against him.

Sen. Larry Craig (R-Idaho)

Craig continues to try to reverse his guilty plea to disorderly conduct after allegedly being caught soliciting gay sex last June in a Minneapolis-St. Paul airport men's room. On Jan. 8, his lawyers, led by Billy Martin, filed a brief with the Minnesota Court of Appeals arguing that a lower court erred in refusing to overturn that plea. The state has 45 days to respond.

Craig's lawyers argue that his plea "lacks a sufficient factual basis" because the disorderly conduct statute says such behavior must affect more than one person (the only person affected, say Craig's lawyers, was Sgt. Dave Karsnia of the airport police), the behavior was invited by Karsnia, and it cannot be legally characterized as "offensive, obscene, abusive, boisterous or noisy."

Meanwhile, Craig has pledged to stay in Congress until the end of his term. It's unclear where a Senate ethics investigation into his actions stands.

Rep. John Doolittle (R-Calif.)

Under pressure from the long-running probe into his ties with Abramoff, Doolittle announced his retirement on Jan. 10.

The California Congressman has yet to be indicted, however, and the Justice Department investigation into his Abramoff ties continues. Three aides to Doolittle - his scheduler, Alisha Perkins, Chief of Staff Ron Rogers and Deputy Chief of Staff Dan Blankenburg - testified in September before a grand jury at the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Doolittle denies wrongdoing and is fighting a subpoena issued to the **House Chief Administrative Officer** for previous e-mails, citing separation of powers conflicts.

Under pressure from colleagues, Doolittle stepped down from the **House** Appropriations Committee after his Oakton, Va., home was raided by FBI officials in April. Investigators were looking for records related to Doolittle's wife Julie's home-based fundraising business.

The Doolittles have several ties to Abramoff. Julie Doolittle was on retainer for Abramoff from September 2002 to February 2004. Doolittle accepted campaign contributions from the former super-lobbyist and intervened with the Interior Department on behalf of Abramoff's tribal clients.

Rep. Tom Feeney (R-Fla.)

Feeney's name continues to arise in connection with the wide-ranging probe into Abramoff's activities. In June, the lawmaker established a legal defense fund to deal with expenses related to the case.

The problems for Feeney revolve around his participation in the infamous 2003 golf trip to Scotland paid for by Abramoff. As the trip violated **House** rules barring lobbyists from paying for travel, Feeney forked over \$5,643 to the U.S. Treasury to cover his portion of the trip. But Abramoff records put the cost of the sojourn at \$160,000, meaning Feeney's share could be more like \$20,000.

Feeney has acknowledged contacts between his attorneys and the Justice Department, though he says he has done nothing wrong. In April, the FBI, according to press accounts, sought more information about e-mails written by ex-Feeney Chief of Staff Jason Roe to three Florida newspapers about the Scotland junket.

Rep. William Jefferson (D-La.)

Jefferson is fighting a long court battle over whether he traded his influence with African officials for money for his family members and himself as outlined in a sensational 16-count indictment last June.

While the trial originally was scheduled to start Jan. 16, Judge T.S. Ellis of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia agreed to delay it to Feb. 25 after the defense offered a slew of motions to suppress evidence it claims was unlawfully gathered by the FBI.

Thus, Jefferson defense attorney Robert Trout of Trout Cacheris and lead prosecutor Mark Lytle are battling it out in a pretrial standoff. Jefferson is actively engaged in the proceedings, attending courthouse hearings and taking notes though not talking to the press.

Meanwhile, prosecutors are fighting a separate battle to use information gathered in a search of Jefferson's office in the Rayburn **House** Office Building that defense attorneys say violated the Constitution's Speech or Debate Clause. The Justice Department has appealed a lower court ruling in Jefferson's favor to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-Calif.)

A Los Angeles grand jury continues to examine the Appropriations ranking member and ex-chairman's ties to Lowery, a partner in the lobbying firm formerly known as Copeland Lowery Jacquez Denton & White.

The probe is an outgrowth of the investigation into convicted ex- Rep. Duke Cunningham (R-Calif.) and is focusing on Lewis' ties to the former Congressman and whether he improperly earmarked funds to Lowery's clients. Lowery and his clients were big Lewis campaign contributors. Prosecutors may be aided by the 2007 conviction of Wilkes for bribing Cunningham; Wilkes was a Lowery client and a Lewis acquaintance.

After silence for some time, the grand jury showed signs of life in October when it subpoenaed the testimony and records of Greg Lankler, a Lewis staffer with the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense. The **House** counsel is fighting to quash the subpoena based on the grounds that it is overly broad.

Over the summer, local FBI agents examined the personal financial records of Lewis and top current and former staffers, including Deputy Staff Director Jeff Shockey; Arlene Willis, Lewis' wife and chief of staff in his personal office; and ex-top aide Letitia White, who formerly worked for Lowery's lobbying shop.

Yet the federal probe has been slowed by staff vacancies and turnover in the Los Angeles district attorney's office. But it could be revitalized by Thomas O'Brien, who was appointed by the White **House** in July to head up the office.

Unfazed, Lewis has announced he will seek re-election to a 16th term.

Rep. Gary Miller (R-Calif.)

Last November, Miller told the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin that reports of an FBI investigation into his land deals were "stupid."

"I know of no ongoing investigation into any of these deals," Miller said, according to the newspaper. "They never have contacted me. I think they have all the documents, read them and saw nothing there."

About a year ago, FBI agents requested information from officials in the California cities of Monrovia and Fontana to investigate claims that Miller may have sheltered millions in profits from land sales from capital gains taxes.

A successful real estate developer before being elected to Congress in 1998, the Los Angeles Times reported that Miller was able to defer taxes until 2009 by claiming he was forced to sell land to the local governments in 2002, and again in 2005 and 2006, under eminent domain.

FBI agents sought a videotape from a 2000 Monrovia City Council meeting in which Miller is alleged to have asked four times for city officials to buy his land.

It's unclear where the investigation stands now, but Miller seems to think that offense is the best defense.

Rep. Alan Mollohan (D-W.Va.)

The federal probe into Mollohan's finances seems to be in limbo, at least for now. The last public information regarding it was a March report in The (Morgantown, W.Va.) Dominion Post that said a grand jury based in Washington, D.C., had issued a subpoena connected to it.

After the conservative National Legal and Policy Center filed a complaint with the feds in February 2006, Mollohan stepped down from his post as ranking member on the ethics committee. When Democrats regained the majority, he recused himself from overseeing the Justice Department budget as chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and science.

The allegations concern the Democrat's steering \$202 million in federal largess to five West Virginia nonprofit groups run by friends and campaign contributors, some of whom have participated in lucrative real estate deals with him.

The government may be moving glacially, but the probe has affected Mollohan's ability to bring home the bacon. The Congressman voluntarily stripped earmarks in 2007 from the Canaan Valley Institute, one of the nonprofits in question, in order to avoid controversy for the overall appropriations bill.

Rep. Rick Renzi (R-Ariz.)

The Republican won't seek re-election in 2008 after FBI agents raided a family business in Sonoita, Ariz., in April 2006.

The raid was part of the inquiry into a land deal that yielded a whopping \$4.5 million for the Congressman and his former business partner and campaign donor, James Sandlin. The Federal Election Commission dropped a parallel probe into Renzi's 2002 campaign after the Congressman paid substantial back taxes.

So it was no surprise that the Arizona Republican, who had resigned his seats on three **House** panels following the raid, announced after the August recess that he would retire from Congress.

His fellow Republicans likely appreciate it.

Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska)

The Alaskan legend has been snared in a wide-ranging corruption probe led by the Justice Department into Alaska's public officials, including Stevens' son, former state Senate President Ben Stevens.

Investigators are probing if workers for VECO, an Alaskan oil- services company whose top officials have pleaded guilty to bribery and are cooperating with the government, illegally remodeled Stevens' Alaska home. Stevens maintains he has done nothing wrong and that he reimbursed VECO for all the bills presented to him.

During trials of other state officials last fall, former VECO CEO Bill Allen testified that the company paid for the 2000 renovation, but he said he did not know what it cost.

More damaging details for Stevens could emerge as trials of other state lawmakers continue. In July, the FBI and Internal Revenue Service spent 12 hours searching Stevens' home and documenting the renovation.

Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska)

Like Stevens, Young has not been charged with anything, but his name has been floated by various players in the VECO scandal.

The 18-term Congressman spent \$447,000 on legal fees during 2007.

VECO employees are among Young's biggest campaign contributors, and prosecutors are said to be looking at cash prizes distributed to Young at an Alaskan golf tournament allegedly arranged by VECO Vice President Rick Smith. Smith, who pleaded guilty to bribery and is cooperating with prosecutors, allowed the government to listen in on his phone calls with the Congressman.

Young amended his campaign filings in 2006 to reflect a \$38,000 reimbursement for "fundraising costs" to Allen.

Democrats clearly smell blood. Three prominent Democrats are running against Young in 2008; one Republican, state Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux, plans to take him on in the primary.

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Star Homes

'Green' House of Representatives closer to reality; After six months Capitol building achieves significant progress.

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Washington, DC -The first six months of the greening of the Capitol have brought measurable successes-from beginning the process of relighting the Capitol Dome with environmentally-friendly lighting to eliminating environmentally-unfriendly Styrofoam from **House** food services-and the initiative promises to deliver more exciting gains in 2008.

"We're thrilled with the progress that we've made so far," **Chief Administrative Officer** Daniel P. Beard said. "We're looking forward to even more improvements in the way we do business and getting the **House** community involved in reducing our carbon footprint."

Beard's organization just released the Green the Capitol Initiative's six-month progress report, which can be found here: <http://cao.house.gov/greenthecapitol/progress-booklet-2007dec.pdf>.

Much like the Jefferson Memorial, the Capitol Dome may soon be lit with environmentally-friendly lighting. "The Capitol Dome shines as a symbol of democracy and soon it may also be a symbol of environmental responsibility," Beard said.

Food services have already been revamped as part of the Green the Capitol Initiative mandated by Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The recent transition to the new food service vendor brought not only healthier dining options to the Hill, but also 100 percent biodegradable food service containers. The changeover was important because the **House** complex is responsible for producing an estimated 250 metric tons of waste every year, half of which is comprised of food service waste, Beard added.

The **House** is not only evaluating what it puts into the ground, but also what it puts into the air.

It already has purchased carbon offsets to account for 30,000 metric tons of the greenhouse gases it emits. The remainder will be eliminated, in part, by using natural gas instead of coal in the Capitol Power Plant to power the **House**.

"Natural gas is the cleanest of all the fossil fuels and burns much cleaner than coal," said Grant Scherling, Executive Director of the Green the Capitol Office. "Natural gas has fewer emissions of carbon, sulfur and nitrogen and releases much less ash into the environment."

The plant's partial conversion to natural gas will decrease the number of offsets by 10,000 metric tons. The \$2.75 million fix is included in the legislative branch appropriations bill.

The **House** also will buy wind power to provide 100 percent of its electricity.

Beard said getting the **House** community involved in going green is another essential goal of the initiative, with outreach to **House** employees beginning in earnest this year.

"It's not only a matter of changing the way we do business," Beard said. "We also have to get people thinking about changing their habits and encourage them to go beyond doing things as they've always been done."

The goals of the Green the Capitol program steadily are being realized: to make the **House** carbon neutral by the end of the 110th Congress and reduce energy consumption by 50 percent in 10 years.

Beard said he's confident the initiative will meet its objectives. "We're on track to achieve our goals and make the U.S. **House** a model of both sustainability and environmental responsibility."

About the Green the Capitol Office or Initiative: <http://cao.house.gov/greenthecapitol/>

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NATION

House eatery goes organic ; Pelosi hails green changes

Audrey Hudson

Audrey Hudson, THE WASHINGTON TIMES

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So long, fatty and foreign food. Cafeterias serving staffers on the **House** side of the Capitol have ditched such meals in favor of healthier menus that include organic and locally grown cuisine.

The crossover in food services is part of the "Green the Capitol Initiative" mandated by **House** Speaker Nancy Pelosi, California Democrat, a move that also has eliminated foam cups and plans to illuminate the Capitol Dome with environmentally friendly lighting.

"We're thrilled with the progress that we've made so far," said Daniel P. Beard, the **chief administrative officer** for the **House** of Representatives.

"We're looking forward to even more improvements in the way we do business and getting the **House** community involved in reducing our carbon footprint," he said. "The Capitol Dome shines as a symbol of democracy and soon it will also be a symbol of environmental responsibility."

The transition was made just before the new year and is also important in reducing waste from the **House** complex, which produces an estimated 250 metric tons of it every month, half of which is comprised of food-service waste, Mr. Beard said.

Kathleen Quaid-Weisz, spokeswoman for Restaurant Associates, the operator under contract to run the cafeterias, said the switch is "going over big with **House** members."

House members said finding a healthy meal is next to impossible on the Hill, she said.

"They had what they termed 'a crisis of flavor on the plate,' mainly because the bulk of the offerings were chosen for their ability to travel long distances and still maintain the appearance of being edible. That has now changed," she said.

Some **House** staffers are not pleased with the changes.

"Staffers are about as thrilled with this nonsense as most taxpayers will be when they learn that they're subsidizing sushi, tofu, couscous and other pretentious meals for federal employees," said one Republican leadership aide.

"Most people here want a real lunch during a hectic day on the Hill, not organic noodles with nonfat soy nuts or a lecture from nannies and nutritionists," the aide said.

A second **House** staffer called it an "unnecessary and useless renovation of the **House** kitchens and cafeterias."

No changes are foreseen on the Senate side of the menu.

Asked whether the legendary Senate bean soup with its 2 pounds of smoked ham hocks will get a healthy rewrite, a spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said, "Oh no, that's not changing."

"One thing people can always count on is getting a bowl of Senate bean soup," said spokesman Jim Manley.

A Senate Republican staffer was glad to hear that status quo will continue.

"All you can get on the **House** side now is a one-size drink," the Senate staffer said. "A Soviet-style, one-size-fits-all drink - no small, medium or large drinks. It's the exact opposite of a free market."

Caption: Fresh fruit is available in the cafeteria on the **House** side of the Capitol. A healthier menu is part of the "Green the Capitol Initiative." [Photo by Rodney Lamkey Jr./The Washington Times]

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