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DATE: October 15, 2002

**PERSL #1370**

TO: Agency Heads

Cc: Steven Bosacker, Deputy Commissioners, HR Directors/Designees

FROM: Ann Schluter   
Acting Commissioner

RE: **Out of State Travel and Off-Site Retreats: Delegation of Approval Authority**

Governor Ventura has authorized the following delegation of authority from the Department of Employee Relations back to agency heads:

**Domestic Out-of-State Travel**

**Existing Policy:** Agencies are operating under directions issued by the Governor on February 12, 2002: all out-of-state travel requests are to be approved by the Commissioner of Employee Relations.

**New Policy:** As of this date, agency heads are the final approval authority for their own agency domestic out-of-state travel requests. The guidelines issued by the Governor and used by the Commissioner of DOER remain.

Agencies are cautioned to make sure any request they approve meets the criteria set out:

- Does the travel have a significant state interest, both in general terms and also in terms of the budget deficit to merit the travel; and
- Is the funding for the travel coming from a State source or other source?

Agencies have always been expected to be responsible and accountable for travel – that is why we are giving this responsibility back to you.

**Note: The requirement of DOER approval of international travel requests remains in effect at this time. For Commissioner international travel, approval of the Governor’s Office is also required.**

**Off-Site Retreats**

**Existing Policy:** Per instructions first issued by Governor Carlson in 1998 and continued under Governor Ventura, all off-site retreats must receive approval from the Department of Employee Relations prior to the event.

**New Policy:** As of this date, the approval requirement is delegated back to agencies. There is no approval requirement beyond the agency head nor is there any reporting requirement beyond the agency's own record keeping. Agencies are required to use the existing guidelines in their approval process:

- Site selection should be based on meeting the business needs of the agency, cost efficiency, convenience, competitive bids and the understanding that this retreat and site are truly necessary to conduct State business;
- Sites selected should avoid any appearance of impropriety, such as casinos and resorts;
- Overnight stays in local hotels for local employees should be avoided – e.g., metro area employees staying overnight in metro area facilities; and,
- Request for approval should be submitted to the agency head at the beginning of the planning process.

Agencies are cautioned to insure that they maintain adequate records of both the off-site retreat approval process and the out-of-state travel request process.

If you have any questions on either of these delegations, please contact Bill Eisele at (651) 296-8366 or via e-mail at [bill.eisele@state.mn.us](mailto:bill.eisele@state.mn.us).