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Rapid City, SD

RECEIVED

JUN 23 2008

Mayor Alan Hanks  
300 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701

20 June 2008

MAYOR'S OFFICE

Dear Mr. Mayor,

As Traffic Management Officer for Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana, I was responsible for a staff of 35 and the movement of personnel, cargo, and household goods around the world. My entire operation was 'customer-service' based and in that respect not so very different from city administration. Approximately 20 years ago, I approached the Squadron Commander with an idea of increasing the workday while maintaining a forty-hour workweek. I was given the opportunity to test a four-day workweek on a trial basis to analyze any problems or concerns and compare those to the advantages of such a schedule.

The trial was so successful I was the first operation on the base allowed to implement the four-day, ten-hour day workweek. The advantages were overwhelming, the problems minimal, and the staff was thrilled with the new schedule. The four-day, forty-hour workweek is still in place today and still operating successfully almost 10 years after my retirement.

In this era of escalating gas prices, resulting in inflated and rising costs for all commodities, I believe this presents an opportunity for the city of Rapid City to examine and consider this new work schedule. In my experience, the following advantages were proven time and time again.

- Individual gas consumption reduced
- Sick days reduced
- Staff scheduled doctor, dentist, and other appointments for themselves and their children on their day off, resulting in increased productivity and reduced absences
- Quiet time at the beginning and end of the workday allowed increased productivity
- Time available for customer service increased
- One-half of the staff were off on Monday's, the other half on Friday's resulting in each segment of the operation being manned five days a week, 10 hours each day. Only one individual opted to remain on the five-day workweek.

As you work on next year's city budget, I request you present this concept to your department heads, or any entity deemed appropriate, for discussion and possible adoption. I would very much appreciate you contacting me and discussing this in more detail. I would be happy to come to City Hall or may be reached at 394-9112.

  
PATRICIA K. HAHN

Cc: Rapid City Council Members



**By Larry Copeland, USA TODAY**

Utah this summer will become what experts say is the first state to institute a mandatory four-day work week for most state employees, joining local governments across the nation that are altering schedules to save money, energy and resources.

Gov. Jon Huntsman, a first-term Republican, says he's making the change to reduce the state's carbon footprint, increase energy efficiency, improve customer service and provide workers more flexibility.

**RELATED STORY:** [Gas prices spurring switch to 4-day week](#)

"The reaction (from the public) has been very much a willingness to give this a go," he says.

The change will apply to about 17,000 employees, roughly 80% of the state workforce, Huntsman says. Public universities, the state court system, prisons and other critical services will be exempt. Residents still will have sufficient access to state offices, many staying open from 7 a.m.- 6 p.m., and more than 800 state services are available online, he says.

Leslie Scott, executive director of the National Association of State Personnel Directors, says Huntsman's action is a first. "Most states have a four-day work week option for their employees, but Utah is the first to go to a mandatory four-day work week," she says. "A good number of the states are encouraging their agencies and managers to offer a four-day work week whenever possible."

The four-day work week is fairly common among city and county governments. Rex Facer, an assistant professor at Brigham Young University whose research team is studying the four-day work week concept, estimates that about one-sixth of U.S. cities with populations above 25,000 offer employees a four-day work week. His projection is based on the team's continuing survey of 150 city human resource directors.

Facer expects more cities to begin shuttering offices on Fridays. "The increasing pressures the American is facing around gas prices is certainly a significant factor, and the overall fiscal pressures governments are facing in general," he says.

Jacqueline Byers, director of research at the National Association of Counties, says the four-day work week is gaining in popularity among county governments. Marion County, Fla., has a mandatory four-day work week for employees; Oconee County, S.C., and Walworth County, Wis., have it for road work crews, while Will County, Ill., has it for the auditor's office. Oakland County, Mich., is seeking volunteers for a four-day work week, and Miami-Dade County, Fla., and Suffolk County, N.Y., are moving toward it, she says.

"They like it for a couple of reasons," says Byers. "They're not able to give raises, so this is like a bonus, to cut off one day's commute. Also, if they can close a whole department (for a day), they save money for the county."

It takes some adjusting. "One thing that has to be changed is the level of expectation from taxpayers, because they've always wanted five-day access," Byers says. "They have to adjust to offices that are open longer on weekdays, but closed on Fridays."

Cities offering employees condensed work weeks include Coconut Creek, Fla., Birmingham, Ala., and Avondale, Ariz., according to the National League of Cities.

In Utah, the new schedule starts Aug. 4. In the meantime, Huntsman says, the state is moving to iron out problems for employees with child-care concerns and those using public transportation that currently would not accommodate a longer workday.

Huntsman says the change will help Utah reach its goal of reducing energy use 20% by 2015.

Beyond the energy and financial implications, the four-day work week is a quality-of-life issue for many. Huntsman says it is especially popular among younger employees and that his action will make Utah more competitive in luring talent.

Facer agrees that an improved "work-life balance" often results from a shorter work week.

"More and more young workers are entering the work force," Facer says. "They're looking for ways to enhance their work-life balance. Alternative work schedules offer more of this work-life balance than do traditional work schedules."

***What are the pros and cons of a four-day work week? Would you switch to a four-day week if you could? Would you rather have government offices open five days a week or open longer hours for four days a week?***