

around the metro

Owner to keep Zephyr train running for now

By ALLIE SHAH • ashah@startribune.com

The owner of the Minnesota Zephyr said Monday he will reopen for business in May and continue operating the popular dinner train for at least two more years.

Dave Paradeau shocked Stillwater and its neighbors when he announced in December 2006 that he was retiring and idling the Zephyr at the end of 2007.

For 22 years, the train has been a major tourist attraction, drawing visitors to the St. Croix Valley from around the world.

Paradeau, 65, had been talking with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota and Washington County about selling the rail line and turning it into a public trail. The plan was to connect Stillwater to the state's Gateway Trail System. But the deal did not materialize.

Paradeau announced last fall that he would keep the train going through the end of 2008. But, for the first time, he closed the Zephyr for the winter because of the cold.

Paradeau said it appears unlikely that the DNR will be in a position soon to buy the land where the Zephyr runs and convert it into a public trail.

"[Gov. Tim] Pawlenty didn't put any money [in his budget] for DNR acquisitions," he said, adding that he has mixed reactions about what's happening. "It's been an awful lot of anxiety not knowing what direction to go in. But we're going to make this thing better than it ever has been and it will be great."

He has hired a new general manager and plans to hire a train manager, who will serve as a tour guide.

Paradeau said he'll continue operating the train until the state acquires the land. "I'm scheduling it for as long as it takes," he said, predicting the Zephyr could run for three or four more years.

As for the Stillwater Depot Grill, Paradeau said he plans to sell or lease the building: "I can't right now do both. I just don't have the funds nor the ability nor the time to run both."

Allie Shah • 651-298-1550

The Minnesota Zephyr operates from the old Stillwater Depot on N. Main Street.

DAVID BREWSTER
Star Tribune



Tsering Topgyal marched with a photo of the Dalai Lama.

MARKING 49 YEARS OF EXILE WITH A MARCH



Photos by JERRY HOLT • jgholt@startribune.com

Ngawang Ngora, 5, of New Brighton, carried an American flag Monday during a march at the State Capitol in St. Paul. More than 300 members of the Tibetan community rallied to commemorate the 49th anniversary of Tibet's failed 1959 uprising against Chinese rule, an event that forced their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, to flee. St. Paul, Minneapolis and Columbia Heights issued Tibet Day proclamations. In India on Monday, an angry Dalai Lama assailed China for "unimaginable and gross violations" of human rights in his homeland.

Leave Spot at the spa and jet off carefree

- Travelers soon will have a luxurious new pet boarding facility by the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport where they can drop off their pets, park and take a shuttle to the plane.

By HERÓN MÁRQUEZ ESTRADA and TIM HARLOW
Star Tribune staff writers

When it debuts in the fall, the newest Twin Cities hotel figures to be luxurious enough to make Rob-in Leach proud.

The yet-to-be-named facility will be the cat's meow, with suites, a spa, day care, heated floors and a grooming area complete with a therapy pool.

All for about \$25 a day.

There are some catches, though. Most suites will be 4 by 6 feet. Guests will be locked up but taken for the occasional walk. And most important, boarders must not bite and must have four legs and a tail. This luxury hotel is strictly for pets.

It's so nice that "we've heard from some owners that they'd like to stay there with their pets," said Janelle Dixon, president and CEO of the Animal Humane Society, which on Monday announced plans for the hotel.

The \$4.25 million facility near the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport will be run by the group in partnership with the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC).



RICHARD SENNOTT • rsennott@startribune.com

Janelle Dixon, president and CEO of the Animal Humane Society, brought along her dog Blanca when she announced the new \$4.25 million pet hotel on Monday.

They will refurbish a 12,000-square-foot building just off Hwy. 62 at 28th Avenue S. and add another 10,800 square feet. The enhanced facility will be able to board 96 dogs, 30 cats and 15 smaller animals.

Although officials expect to gain most of their revenue from travelers who will drop off and pick up their pets on their way to and from the airport, they emphasized that they will accept pets from nontravelers as well, and the facility will be run like any other kennel or boarding facility, with one exception: It will be

open and staffed 24 hours a day.

"It will be a new revenue stream for us," said Eric Johnson, the MAC's director of commercial management and airline affairs.

The facility is set to open in October. It will offer doggie day care and multiple indoor and outdoor exercise areas. There also will be a parking lot and shuttle service to the airport for an additional charge.

The idea came up after similar operations opened at airports in Denver, San Diego, Florida and New Orleans.

Dixon said those enterprises have proved successful, and she expects the Humane Society to pull in about \$100,000 a year within two years.

Johnson said the MAC also expects to make money — as much as \$4 million during the 15-year lease it signed with the Humane Society.

News of the proposed facility had pet owners excited to have another option to board their pets.

"I'm thrilled," said Kari Kehr of Minneapolis, a frequent business traveler. "I like the idea that I can drop my pet off on the way to the airport or coming home. A lot of other kennels have standard 9-to-5 hours so if you fly out early, or come home late, you need to leave your pet extra time."

Kehr said she was especially glad to hear of the new facility because she's been contemplating getting a new dog. Her previous dog, a black Lab-golden retriever mix named Winnie P. Kehr, died last year at 2. She has been hesitant to get a new dog because as her travel increased she did not always have a convenient place to board Winnie.

"It is this simple," she said Monday. "When this is built, I get a new dog. I can't wait."

hme@startribune.com • 612-673-4280
harlow@startribune.com • 612-673-7768

Yoga advocate for disabled wins award

WHAT: Matthew Sanford of Orono, a nationally recognized yoga instructor who has pioneered techniques to adapt yoga for people with disabilities, is one of three winners in the sixth annual Volvo for Life Awards.

The awards recognize "heroes" from around the country with up to \$100,000 for their charities.

BACK STORY: Sanford, 42, was paralyzed after a car crash at age 13 and has written about his experiences in "Waking: A Memoir of Trauma and Transcendence." He will be recognized at an awards ceremony on March 19 in New York.

"This award is a wonderful breath of fresh air for Mind Body Solutions," Sanford said in a statement.

The motivational speaker launched Mind Body Solutions in 2001 and offers programs in workplaces, community centers and at his studio in Minnetonka.



KYNDELL HARKNESS • Star Tribune file
Matt Sanford of Orono, shown in a yoga pose at his Mind Body Solutions studio, has won a Volvo for Life Award.

OTHER WINNERS: They are Marilyn Adams, 57, of Earlham, Iowa, who founded Farm Safety 4 Just Kids to reduce child health and safety hazards on the farm, and Lorraine Kerwood, 47, of Eugene, Ore., who established NextStep Recycling, which has recycled more than 800 tons of electronic waste and placed 11,000 computers in disadvantaged communities in the United States and other countries.

TO LEARN MORE: For more about the Volvo for Life Awards, go to www.volvoforlifeawards.com. And for more about Sanford and his work, go to www.mindbodysolutions.org.
PATRICE RELERFORD

WEST METRO DETOUR



Sources: ESRI, TeleAtlas

Access to Highway 12 is restricted this week

The Minnesota Department of Transportation has closed a portion of Hwy. 12 that runs through Long Lake and Orono so crews can set beams for a new bridge being built at County Road 6.

The highway will be closed between Willow Drive and County Road 6 until 5 a.m. today and from 10 tonight to 5 a.m. Wednesday.

A detour will be posted.

TIM HARLOW