

SOURCE: Rochester (MN) Post Bulletin
AUDIENCE: 6,091 [provided by Nielsen//NetRatings]
DATE: 06-28-2010
HEADLINE: Women in Minnesota continue to lag behind men in pay, leadership positions

Source Website

6/28/2010 10:20:04 PM

The Post-Bulletin, Rochester **MN**

Study notes persistent disparities

What happened: A recent study found that women continue to lag behind men in several areas, such as pay, safety, and positions of power. The pay gap in southeast **Minnesota** is significant, but is the lowest in the state.

Why it matters: Data in the study could be used to bolster grant applications for local programs that help women.

What's next: The study will be compared to a similar analysis conducted to years ago to see where things have improved for women and where they have worsened. The study could also open discussions on difficult topics such as sex trafficking, domestic violence, and rape.

Women and girls in **Minnesota** are lagging significantly behind their male counterparts in areas such as pay equality, safety and positions of power, according to a statewide report presented Monday in Rochester.

"Our research shows that women continue to be shortchanged," said **Lee Roper-Batker**, president and chief executive officer of the **Women's Foundation of Minnesota**, which produced the report, "Status of Women and Girls in **Minnesota**," with the University of **Minnesota** Humphrey Institute's Center on Women and Public Policy.

Roper-Batker presented findings from the report to around 30 people Monday at the United Way of Olmsted County as part of a statewide tour.

While women earn the majority of postsecondary degrees in the state, those with professional degrees (such as doctors and lawyers) and master's degrees face larger pay gaps than women with less education, 67 cents and 75 cents on a man's dollar, respectively, the report found.

None of **Minnesota**'s 21 Fortune 500 companies are led by a woman, and more than 50 percent of the state's county commissions do not include even one woman, the report notes.

The report provides information that can bolster grant applications for local programs that help women, said April Sutor of the United Way of Olmsted County. Data in the report can also be compared to a similar analysis completed two years ago to establish trend data, she said. The report can also open conversations on difficult topics such as sex trafficking, domestic violence and rape, she said.

Several findings were listed for an area of southeastern **Minnesota** that includes Olmsted, Mower, Houston, Winona, Wabasha, Fillmore, Dodge, Freeborn, Steele, Waseca, Blue Earth and Nicollet counties. They include:

Women earned 80 percent of what men earned on average in southeastern **Minnesota** in 2008, the narrowest pay gap in the state.

Women in southeastern *Minnesota* earned an average of \$33,607 per year in 2008 inflation-adjusted dollars compared to \$41,754 for men. The largest disparity in the state was seen in the east central Census region, where women earn an average of 70 percent of what men earn.

Southeastern *Minnesota* had the lowest proportion of women, 18.1 percent, who reported in the 2008 *Minnesota* Crime Victim Survey that someone forced them or attempted to force them to have sexual intercourse at some point in their life. The highest percentage, 33 percent, was found in the west central Census region of the state.

The percentage of income spent on accredited child care was the lowest in southeastern *Minnesota* of seven Census Bureau regions in the state. Single-parent, female-headed households in the region spend 30 percent of their incomes for infant child care and 25 percent for preschool child care. That compares to 49 percent and 40 percent, respectively, in the west edge Census region.

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Highlights: MN, MINNESOTA, Minnesota, Lee Roper-Batker, Women's Foundation