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# The Valley

## Free rides probable for MSU students

### Stomper Express would operate evenings

By Dan Linehan  
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**MANKATO** — A partnership between Mankato and Minnesota State University will likely ferry students from River Hills Mall, to the downtown area, then back to campus at no charge.

The city would pay about 80 percent of the bill — roughly \$40,000 — while MSU would

pick up the remaining \$16,000. It would operate between 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. Thursday through Saturday.

The City Council will hear a resolution during its meeting today at 7 p.m. in the Intergovernmental Center. Interim Mayor Mike Laven said there's no reason to expect it won't pass.

"I think it's a long time coming," he said.

Called the Stomper Express, the new route will be the first university-funded service to travel beyond apartments near MSU's campus. Non-students will be able to ride, but they must pay the standard \$1.25 ticket.

Dean Trauger, the school's vice president for finance and administration, called the proposal "something that will help our entire student body." He

said MSU remains uninterested in funding late-night bus service, sometimes called the sober bus, that runs on Friday and Saturday from midnight to 3 a.m.

Students won't be charged a special fee to ride, he said, though evaluations may change that.

"It's too early to say for sure."

City Manager Pat Hentges said the state funds 80 percent of many routes, and he hopes the same will happen to

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MIKE LAVEN,  
Mankato interim mayor

the Stomper Express once Minnesota "sees value" in it.

He said the new route would help students get to major entertainment sites, athletic events and downtown Mankato. The city is looking to wrap an athletic advertisement around the bus that should generate some profit.