

# Grounded

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Governor Easley cancelled plans for the state to buy a \$9 million jet when reporters asked about it. His spokesperson said, "A plane is not necessary. It's not going to be purchased in this economy." Talk about stating the obvious.

The plane would have been used by the Department of Commerce to fly executives around in an effort to recruit companies to come to the state. A plane, a mere propeller job, and a helicopter are currently used for this purpose. Those seem sufficient.

In fact, the whole episode prompts the question: What was the plane even doing in last year's budget to begin with? It's not as if the state was fat and sassy, economy-wise, even then -- minimum raises for teachers and state employees, needed programs that directly impact the people underfunded, concerns about the future of the state's economy -- concerns since frighteningly justified.

Someone should have kept this idea in the hangar long ago, in other words. The notion was, unfortunately, another example of state officials seeming to be out of touch with budget realities and priorities. Maybe the air around them has been a little too thin.