



“Be sure you put your feet in the right place, then stand firm.” - Abraham Lincoln

October 7th, 2011

Appropriations

(Contact Lon Anderson at 1-5184.)

www.iowahouserepublicans.com

Inside this issue:

Revenue Figures: FY 2011 Above REC, FY 2012 Below

On Monday, October 3, the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) released the final revenue figures for FY 2011 and the first quarter figures for FY 2012. While FY 2011 came in above the estimate set by the Revenue Estimating Conference (REC), FY 2012 is below the current REC estimate.

For FY 2011 (which ended June 30, 2011), revenue increased by \$320 million (5.8 percent) compared to FY 2010. Adjusting for transfers, this is \$42.7 million above the REC estimate. That amount will roll over into the beginning balance of the FY 2012 general fund budget.

Through the first quarter of FY 2012, revenue was down \$43.5 million (3.0 percent) compared to FY 2011. However, this is all due to \$59.7 million of cigarette and tobacco tax being deposited into the Health Care Trust Fund. Factoring in this transfer, revenue grew by \$16.2 million (1.1 percent) compared to FY 2012. Unfortunately, this is dramatically below the REC estimate of 5.3 percent growth.

Despite revenue being below the current REC estimate, most major facets of general fund revenue is up compared to FY 2011. Personal income tax receipts were up 4.4 percent (right at the REC estimate), sales and use tax is up 2.2 percent

(compared to an estimate of 3.7 percent), corporate income tax is up 6.9 percent (compared to 9.5 percent) and other receipts were up 8.2 percent (compared to 10.5 percent).

The REC will meet again on October 14 to adjust the estimates for FY 2012. Due to FY 2011 coming in \$42.7 million above the estimate, there will be a cushion to absorb some of the expected decrease.

“...dramatically below the REC estimate...”

In ad-

dition, the FY 2012 budget has a nearly \$300 million ending balance thanks to House Republicans for refusing to allow it to be spent on ongoing appropriations.

These facts are not reason for panic but definitely a reason to be concerned. House Republicans will continue to use and argue for conservative revenue estimates in the future and urge the REC to decrease the estimate slightly in order to better align it with actual revenue growth.

Fiscal Committee to Meet in Iowa City on October 18th

The second meeting of the Legislative Fiscal Committee for the 2011 interim will be held in Iowa City at the University of Iowa on Tuesday, October 18.

The membership of the committee consists of:

- Senator Dvorsky (co-chair)
Representative Raecker (co-chair) \*

- Senator Bolkcom
Representative Sands
Senator Danielson
Representative Cownie
Senator Kettering

Table listing issue sections and page numbers: Appropriations (1), Agriculture (2), Commerce (3), Economic Growth (4), Education (5), Environmental Protection (8), Human Resources (9), Judiciary (10), Labor (11), Natural Resources (11), Public Safety (12), State Government (12), Transportation (12), Veterans Affairs (13), Ways and Means (13)



(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

**Representative T. Olson**

**Senator Zaun**

**Representative Jacoby**

**\* Indicates statutory membership**

While the first meeting in September tackled a variety of fiscal issues, this meeting will be primarily geared to reviewing education

funding, specifically the budgets of the three Regent universities.

The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a reception with Regents and university presidents. That will be followed by a thorough review of each university's budget as well as a discussion of global Regent issues and disaster-related Regent issues. In the afternoon the committee will take a tour of the dental building and the pharmacy building, which is the next building project the University will request funding for.

The committee will also receive a report

from the October 14<sup>th</sup> REC meeting, an updated general fund balance sheet and a follow-up from Homeland Security on the Missouri River flooding.

House Republicans are committed to a line-by-line review of the budget to find efficiencies and that includes the university budgets. If the goal is to keep tuition low, the Regents need to embrace reducing overhead and getting more out of the state funding they are provided.

## Agriculture

(Contact Lew Olson at 1-3096.)

### USDA/ISU Announce Assistance to Help Raise New Crop of Farmers and Ranchers

On Friday, September 30, 2011, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has awarded 36 grants nationwide. The grants total \$18 million to organizations that will provide training and assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers to help them run successful and sustainable farms. One of those grants goes to the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Annie's Project proposal-- Farm Transition and Business Management Training for Women Farmers and Ranchers, which was awarded \$675,750 for curriculum development and delivery of courses. Additionally, the Farm Credit Council, [www.fccouncil.com](http://www.fccouncil.com), and 11 Farm Credit Associations also are providing \$188,865 in support of Annie's Project.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach department issued a follow-up press release on Monday October 3, 2011 which elaborated on Annie's Project; which is an agricultural risk management education program for women, that was started by Ruth Hambleton in 2003 when she was a University of Illinois Extension farm busi-

ness management and marketing specialist. That press release noted that Hambleton recognized that the unique learning prefer-

***"focus on five areas of risk management ..."***

ences of women often are not served through traditional farm management education programs. Annie's Project, created in tribute to Hambleton's mother, Annette "Annie" Fleck, sets up multi-session courses in farm communities. The sessions focus on five areas of risk management from production and marketing to finances, legal issues and human resources. Annie's Project has successfully reached more than 8,000 women farmers and ranchers in 26 states.

There is a significant need for education designed specifically for women farmers and ranchers to help them manage business risks, enhance the financial viability of their family farms and ranches, and strengthen the potential for beginning farmers and ranchers. The 2007 USDA Census

of Agriculture identified 306,209 women as primary farm operators; their average age was 59.

To maintain the integrity of Annie's Project, the newly funded course curriculum will build on the successful educational methodologies of the standard course and the strengths of partners and collaborators. A team from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach including agriculture economics, value-added agriculture and the beginning farmer specialists will partner with experienced extension professionals and Farm Credit Association staff in 10 states to develop the new course and deliver pilot programs. The transition planning courses will help women farmers and ranchers consider generational succession, retirement and estate and business planning.

The course planning team discusses the recently funded project during the Annie's Project video at <http://www.vimeo.com/28956754>.

### 12 Iowa Entities to Receive Specialty Crop Grants

On Wednesday, October 5, 2011, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release that

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey had announced that IDALS will be awarding \$260,549 in grants to Iowa organizations to help enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops grown in Iowa. The Department received \$276,526.15 through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program from the USDA

Agricultural Marketing Service to support the program.

Iowa agricultural non-profit organizations, cooperatives, specialty crop industry associations or organizations, and producer groups were eligible to apply for funding to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. IDALS also invited public comment from specialty crop stakeholders to help

identify priorities for the program and established a Review Committee to help review, evaluate, and make recommendations on which grant proposals submitted to the Department should receive funding. The maximum grant award from the Department to sub-grantees is \$24,000 and administrative

(Continued on page 3)



(Continued from page 2)

and indirect costs are not allowed. Grant funds shall be used for projects that benefit and enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops industry as a whole, and cannot be for projects that directly benefit a particular product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. "Specialty Crops" that are eligible under this program are fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture. The funds not passed through to Iowa organizations will be used by the Department to administer the grant.

The full list of 12 grant recipients is as follows:

Iowa Nursery and Landscape Association - \$12,350 to expanding educational programming for Iowa's green industry professionals through a webinar series and accompanying on-line modules

Golden Hills Resource Conservation and Development - \$18,343 for building capacity for southwest Iowa local food producers to increase specialty crop competitiveness in the region

Iowa State University (Dr. Gleason) - \$23,784 for virtual field days to develop web-based resources to enhance competitiveness of Iowa fruit and vegetable growers

Iowa State University (Erin Hodgson) -

\$22,170 to support improving detection and management strategies for insects in Iowa grapes

Iowa State University (Dr. Randall) - \$23,805 for research on bio fumigation potential to promote woods grown American ginseng

Iowa State University (Dr. Randall) - \$20,077 to establishing standards for the fertilization of fir trees to assist Iowa Christmas tree growers

Iowa Food Systems Council - \$23,475 to study the feasibility of fruit and vegetable value-added processing in Iowa's congregate meal site kitchens

Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association - \$4,000 for expanding Iowa's fruit and vegetable industry through grower education

Southern Iowa Resource Conservation and Development - \$24,000 for Farm to where you are: Creating and Enhancing Markets for Southern Iowa Specialty Crop Producers

Iowa Nut Growers Association - \$20,791 for Connecting Iowa Nut Growers: Past-Present-Future

CRP Acres Available to Benefit Grassland Birds

On Tuesday, October 4, 2011, the Iowa

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a press release announcing that an estimated 3,300 acres is being accepted into the popular Conservation Reserve Program State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) (CP38) Gaining Ground for Wildlife project designed to restore native grasslands, wetlands and develop food plots where they will be most beneficial.

Landowners should visit their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office or contact the Iowa DNR wildlife bureau for detailed information. Contact the Farm Service Agency to enroll. The rental rate payment schedule is based on maximum soil rental rate established for the three predominant soils and contracts run 10 to 15 years.

The standard FSA 50 percent cost share, 40 percent practice incentive payment to establish the practice, and a signing incentive payment of \$100 per enrolled acre are authorized for eligible contracts. Iowa's SAFE is targeted around public wildlife areas to benefit grassland birds both songbirds, and upland game birds. Land that is eligible was cropped or considered cropped four out of the six years from 2002 to 2007. Eligible cropland includes row crops, small grains and forage crops. Targeted portions of all Iowa counties, except Allamakee and Clayton, are eligible to participate. More information is available at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) and <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/LandStewardship/WildlifeLandownerAssistance/>

## Commerce

(Contact Brad Trow at 1-3471.)

### National Study Shows Health Insurance Premiums Up 9 Percent

A national survey of health insurance premiums found that the rates for family health coverage rose 9 percent nationally in 2011. The survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research and Educational Trust also found that a portion of the increase could be attributed to the initial implementation phase of the federal health care reform law passed in 2010.

The annual survey by the groups found that health insurance premiums for singles rose by 8 percent, while family coverage climbed by 9 percent. This is a significant spike in rates compared to the 3 percent growth rate in 2010. In terms of actual dollars, the 2011 average for single coverage cost \$5,429

while family coverage cost \$15,073. When compared to the family premium in the 2001 survey, the cost of coverage had gone up by 113% over the past decade.

The survey also looked at how much of these premiums employees were asked to contribute. The 2011 survey found that single employees were paying 18 percent of the premium. Employees with family coverage were paying 28 percent of their premium. The dollar amounts for employee contribution were found to be very close to the 2010 levels.

One factor that is beginning to play a role in health insurance rates is the implementa-

tion of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). Initially, the federal health care reform law required coverage to be offered to adult children of employees up to the age of 26, and did not allow health plans to make major changes to their coverage plan in order to maintain "grandfathered" status under the law. Drew Altman, the president of the Kaiser Family Foundation, stated in a blog that 1-2 percent of the 9 percent increase could be attributed to these changes.

For more information or the full report, visit [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org).

## Protecting Your Home Computer

Governor Branstad has declared October to be Cyber Security Awareness Month in Iowa. As computers and information technology play an ever-growing role in the everyday lives of Iowans, it is important that people take steps that protect their computers and personal devices. One part of this is ensuring that your personal computer at home is cleaned and secured from identity thieves and others seeking information you wish to maintain control over. Below are some tips from the Department of Administrative Services' Information Security Office has put out for maintaining and protecting personal computers using the Windows operating system.

**Establish and maintain a plan.** Make a plan to perform periodic maintenance and put it on your calendar as a reminder. Back up critical files system files and programs before beginning.

**Set a System Restore Point.** Before you begin your periodic maintenance or make any significant changes, set up a system restore point, which will enable recovery from any error that may occur during maintenance. To set a System Restore Point, click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, System Restore, Create a Restore Point. (For "Classic" Start Menu: click Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, System Restore, Create a Restore Point.)

**Remove unnecessary files or programs.** Empty your Recycle Bin and delete Windows temporary files. Remove installed programs that you no longer use. The Disk

Cleanup program does all of these tasks including the deletion of unneeded Windows components. To access the Windows Disk Cleanup program, click: Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Cleanup. (For "Classic" Start Menu, click: Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Cleanup.)



In Internet Explorer, clear your history, temporary Internet files, and cookies by clicking on Tools, Internet Options and select the tab labeled "General." Click on the Delete button under the section labeled "Browsing history."

Finally, archive or delete old files such as documents, images and graphics that are no longer needed.

**Optimize system performance.** Configuring your PC software to operate as efficiently as possible will help your PC run faster and smoother. Organize your data files in a central folder with appropriate subfolders (do not save files in the root directory or on the desktop). This makes backup easier and can reduce fragmentation on your hard drive.

**Run a defragment tool on your disk drive.** To do so, click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Defragmenter. (For "Classic" Start Menu, click Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Defragmenter.)

**Apply updates and patches.** Make sure your operating system and software applications have the latest updates installed—and that the auto-update feature is enabled. Ensure that your anti-virus/anti-spyware/anti-adware software are running and receiving automatic updates. Check vendor and manufacturer websites for device drivers updates, and apply patches as needed. Renew all maintenance contracts/subscriptions.

**Perform regular backups.** All critical files, as well as any information not easily replaced should be backed up. Check backup functions to ensure they are operating properly. Back up your files to a remote location (external hard drive or PC).

**Check your firewall.** Review firewall settings for product configurations. Confirm that settings are appropriate for the current level of security needed.

**Routinely change your passwords.** Routinely change all of your passwords for local applications, as well as those used for websites. Use strong passwords with at least eight characters and incorporate a mix of numbers, special characters, and upper and lower case letters.

## Economic Growth

(Contact Louis Vander Streek 1-3626.)

### Creighton's Business Conditions Index Predicts Regional Growth, But At A Slow Pace

The September Survey on Economic Conditions for Business in the Mid-American and Mountain States was released by Creighton University last week. Indicators used in the survey show that, while the Mid-American states look like they will avoid a recessionary downturn, growth in the region will increase at a very low rate.

*"positive growth, but just barely..."*

The Survey covers the Mid-American region consisting of Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota,

Oklahoma, and South Dakota. According to the press release issued by Creighton University's College of Business, the index is created using a monthly survey of supply managers and is a mathematical average of indices for new orders, production or sales,

(Continued on page 5)

employment, inventories, and delivery lead time. The index is set on a scale from 0 to 100, with 50.0 representing stagnant growth. The September Survey revealed that the index was at 52.0, positive growth, but just barely. Iowa's position is better suit-

ed than the regional average, however. Iowa's index was at 57.8 for September, which was down from 59.3 the previous month.

## Education

(Contact Jason Chapman at 1-3015.)

### Education Reform Looms Large

Governor Branstad unveiled his vision for education reform earlier this week, a plan that will likely dominate much of the discussion during the 2012 legislative session. The plan was developed primarily by Department of Education Director Jason Glass, and the Governor's Assistant for Education, Linda Fandel. Following the Education Summit, which the Governor hosted this summer, they set to work taking ideas from multiple sources and began drafting a plan. After several meetings with many education stakeholders, including legislators, school boards, teachers unions, school administrators, AEAs, and the business community, a draft was composed.

The heart of the plan is to get a great teacher in every classroom and a great principal in every building. Director Glass has emphasized many times that this is a comprehensive plan with many pieces that all fit together. This is a systemic change of "Strategic Persistence," reforms that pull together, make sense, last years, and will take time to work.

Here is the breakdown:

#### I. The Centerpiece: Great Teachers and Principals

This portion of the plan is meant to help raise the teaching profession, make sure that skilled educators and leaders are being produced by preparatory programs, proper support and mentoring is being provided to them, and a pay scale and career ladder that have impact are created.

To attract talented educators, preparatory programs have to be more selective on who enters and exits teacher prep programs. Raising the bar on who enters the profes-

sion helps to ensure quality individuals are making it through and being placed in front of children. In addition, not all talent comes from a traditional teacher prep program and the plan would look to include ways for alternative pathways to enter teaching. If an individual is qualified and has years of experience in their field, they make me an excellent educator.

***"Cost for the plan is also still unavailable..."***

For recruiting and hiring great teachers and leaders, a "one-stop" educator recruiting system for Iowa needs to be developed, where prospective teachers can go online to find education jobs, a unified state application process and links to relevant sources such as the licensing process. This would also include allowing reciprocity for teachers licensed in other states. There would also be the creation of school-level hiring teams comprised of current teachers and parents in those buildings who would pass recommendations onto administrators and school boards.

For supporting teachers in the field and those who are new to the profession, leadership roles would be established to provide mentoring, coaching, and peer evaluations. Mentor and Master Teachers would be in every building and would spend time out of their day serving as instructional leaders along with principals. Additional hours would be required, based on their level in the career ladder, and teachers would be required to meet weekly in small groups to plan and collaborate on teaching and student learning.

Peer evaluation would become a part of the system, with a new educator evaluation system being put into place in which teachers would receive multiple evaluations yearly by both administrators and other teachers. The evaluations would take into account many factors to help teachers find where they are and how they can improve. It is a system that will be meant for improvement, not punishment.

Finally, a new pay-scale and four-tiered career ladder would be put into place for all new teachers and for any teacher on the current pay system that want to switch over. The four tiers are:

1. Apprentice teacher (years 1 to 5):
  - a. Beginning salary around \$40K
  - b. At-will employees
  - c. Teach 100% of the day
  - d. About 20% of the workforce
  - e. Career teacher (years 5+):
    - f. Salary around \$50K
    - g. Teach 100% of the day
    - h. About 60% of the workforce
    - i. Mentor Teacher (Selective hiring process):
      - j. Salary around \$55K to \$60K
    - k. Teach 75% of the day, mentor 25% of

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

the day

l. About 15% of the workforce

m. 10 additional contract days

n. Master Teacher (Selective hiring process):

o. Salary around \$65K to \$70K):

p. Teach 50% of the day, mentor 50% of the day

q. About 5% of the workforce

20 additional contract days

Mentor and Master Teachers would be selected based on performance in a competitive process. The goal is to get teachers who are great at their profession to evaluate, mentor, and share best practices with other teachers. The positions would be decided by the principal and would be at-will, with a teacher returning to the career teacher tier if removed.

Additional salary options would be available for advanced degrees in content areas, national board certification, performance based elements determined locally, hard to fill subjects or areas, and working in high poverty schools, among other options.

Another change being suggested is in job protections and effectiveness. The plan would do away with the last-in-first-out policy of reduction in force situations, instead putting into place a democratic firing process that would involve a committee of peers at some level, with final decisions being made by the principal (for teachers) or school board (for administrators). Apprentice teachers will be considered at-will, with annually renewed contracts. Career teachers can be dismissed after two consecutive years of ineffective performance. They will have a due process afforded to them in cases of dismissal, but the school board will make the final decision, not the court system. Ineffective performance will be based on peer and administrator evaluations compared to a state-established definition and observation-based measure of

effective teaching. Teachers must be given individualized improvement plans and supports to improve if they are evaluated as ineffective.

## **II. A Relentless Focus on Learning: High Expectations and Fair Measures**

The second part of the Governor's plan focuses on student learning through high expectations and fair measures.

The state needs to improve and expand the Iowa Core. A standing-level committee would be established, made up primarily of teachers, to keep the standards up-to-date and to keep improving our standards. The goal is to get a rigorous model curriculum in place by July 2013 that can be used as a starting point for schools and teachers. Additionally, these standards will be applied to art, music, and world languages as well, given their importance as vital 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills.

Assessments will be a part of the framework and will vary by year:

Kindergarten - A kindergarten assessment would be put into place to ensure that kids are starting kindergarten ready to learn and exiting kindergarten prepared for success. It should help identify weakness and strengths and instruction will adopt accordingly.

Grades 3 through 8 - A new assessment will be designed and implemented that will replace the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED). As part of the Smarter Balance Consortium, a group of states working on a better developed assessment tool, Iowa will work to put into place assessments that align to the Core and are taken online to reduce test-taking time and provide instant results.

Grade 9 - A sampling of 9<sup>th</sup> graders every three years would be randomly chosen to participate in the PISA exam which measures progress internationally.

High School - End-of-course exams would be designed and given for the core subjects such as English, Algebra, Biology, and US History to provide clear expectations for high school

courses and to provide a check on how students are performing. A cut score required for graduation would reinforce clear expectations for students, with remedial help provided to students who fail, along with multiple opportunities to retake the test.

Grade 11 - Finally, the plan would require all 11<sup>th</sup> graders to take the ACT or similar college entrance exam. The purpose is to give Iowa comparable data to other states as well as provide all students a key needed to attend college.

The administration also wants to put into place a new accountability system for schools, rating them on a scale from "exceptional" to "persistently low-achieving." Student growth, assessments aligned with the Core, healthy and success children, successful support for teachers, graduation rates, parent satisfaction, and other factors will be used to rate the school. Districts and schools that rank high on the scale will earn autonomy from the state, while those with low rankings will receive additional support but are subject to increasingly prescriptive direction from the state.

Lastly, the plan includes a path towards ensuring third grade literacy. The program would take a model that has been successful in Florida for the past decade, increasing Florida's reading scores to among the highest in the country and effectively closing the racial achievement gap. It would involve establishing a reading center in the Department and providing a system of support to ensure that all kids who enter fourth grade are reading at a minimum level. It would end social promotion by not allowing those who are not proficient from moving on to fourth grade. Exceptions will be allowed when the case warrants one, and holding a child back will be a last resort option.

## **III. A Spirit of Innovation in Education**

The final section of the plan recognizes that not all good ideas come from the state level department or the legislature. Many are found in the districts doing the work and

(Continued on page 7)

making the effort to find creative ways to educate children and spend money efficiently.

An “Innovation Acceleration Fund” would be established that would be distributed to districts through a competitive process. The ideas submitted for the grant money must recognize a problem in the district and find a creative way to solve it. The best ideas get funded and the results are measured to see if they can be replicated state-wide.

In addition, the department would get greater waiver authority to allow for flexibility in granting districts the opportunity to try things that may not fit with current statute or rules. The State Board would be the approving body of such waivers.

Iowa’s Charter School law would be expanded to allow for the possibility of stronger Charter Schools to exist. They would have to demonstrate a need in the community and how the school would propose to meet that need. The process for starting a school would be multi-step and transparent. The Charter Schools would have to be open for all students and a Charter School that is failing its mission must be closed.

## Town Hall Meetings on Education Reform

The Governor plans to hit the road over the coming months to talk with the public about his newly released education framework. In addition to the Governor touring to spread the news, his Special Assistant for Education Linda Fandel and Iowa Department of Education Director Jason Glass will also be travelling and holding town halls.

Two town hall meetings have been scheduled for mid-October. More will be announced later. This is a good opportunity for legislators to hear about the plan firsthand and to hear what questions and concerns their local communities will have as the plan moves forward.

Online learning options need to be expanded with the possibility of establishing a virtual school that would be open to students across the state. And competency-based education would be a part of that as well, recognizing that some students learn at different levels with different skillsets and to allow students to progress at a pace that makes sense for them.

Finally, the plan would establish a parent and community engagement network to get parents and communities involved in their children’s education. The schools can’t do it all and much of a child’s learning should be spurred by encouragement from home. High-needs schools and high-poverty neighborhoods would see the creation of teacher leaders that would act as a parent liaison, working to establish connections and get them involved.

### Timeline and Cost

The plan at this point is a framework, without the details filled in. Director Glass speculates that the provisions in the plan will take anywhere from a year to ten years to fully implement and start taking root. Parts like the compensation system may not be able to be put into effect until 2014, given the complexity of the roll-out.

Cost for the plan is also still unavailable. Early estimates put the new compensation structure at \$100 to \$200 million, but that could change. The Department is working with the Department of Management and the Legislative Services Agency to put a price on the reforms. We may not see a solid picture until the end of the year.

It’s likely the bill will come before the legislature as a single omnibus bill, but the chance of it being broken out into more manageable drafts is still a possibility. Expect many parts to change, additions to be made, and parts to be removed.

The plan is incredibly ambitious and complicated. At this point, the Governor’s plan is a blue-print, a document that will change. There’s a lot more to be seen and a lot of discussion still to occur. House Republicans are keeping an open mind about the plan and look forward to working with the Governor, the Department, the minority party, and the Senate to ensure that we pass an effective set of reforms with focused effort on student achievement and efficient spending.

To read the full plan, visit <http://www.governor.iowa.gov/>. The Governor, Education Director, and staff will be holding town hall meetings across the state in the

The following meetings are open to the public:

**Saturday, October 15, 2011 - 3:30 p.m.**

Woodrow Wilson Middle School Auditorium

715 N 21st Street

Council Bluffs, IA

**Sunday, October 16, 2011 – 1:00 p.m.**

Iowa City West High School

2901 Melrose Avenue

Iowa City, IA

## Environmental Protection

(Contact Lew Olson at 1-3096.)

### DNR Seeking Veterans for New AmeriCorps Programs

On Thursday, September 22, 2011, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources published its electronic weekly newsletter 'EcoNewsWire' which contained an article announcing that the state agency was accepting applications for the Iowa Green Veterans AmeriCorps program. This new program aids recently returning veterans in their transition to civilian life while offering the opportunity to learn new job skills. Members will spend October through March assisting rural, low income and elderly residents to identify and make energy improvements. Members will learn energy efficiency-related job skills. March through September, members will help with disaster recovery and stewardship activities in Iowa's state parks.

wa's state parks.

This AmeriCorps program will connect military veterans with meaningful employment opportunities in the green jobs economy and natural resources. Service sites are in the following Iowa counties: Boone, Cerro Gordo, Delaware, Dickinson, Emmet, Franklin, Linn, Muscatine, Polk, Pottawattamie, Warren and Webster. Positions are open to residents of all counties. Interested applicants can apply at [americorps.iowadnr.gov](http://americorps.iowadnr.gov) under the tab "How to Apply."

AmeriCorps is a national service program administered through the Corporation for National and Community Service. Each

year, AmeriCorps offers adults of all ages and backgrounds more than 75,000 opportunities to meet critical needs in communities across America. Benefits of serving include a modest living allowance, health, dental and vision insurance, and an educational benefit at the end of service. The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America. For more information, visit [NationalService.gov](http://NationalService.gov). Please contact Dawn Stohs with questions at [dawn.stohs@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:dawn.stohs@dnr.iowa.gov) or call 515-281-0878.

### Organic Waste, Paper and Plastic are the Top Three Components in Iowa Trashcans

On Thursday, September 22, 2011, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources published its electronic weekly newsletter 'EcoNewsWire' which contained an article that reported that a statewide study of nine landfills used by Iowans revealed the top three components entering the state's waste stream, by weight, are organic waste, paper products and plastics. The 2011 study shows Iowa is doing a good job of diverting traditional recyclables (plastic containers, glass and certain paper products such as newsprint and office paper) from

the landfill. However, there continues to be opportunities to divert such wastes as compostable organics (food and yard waste), cardboard, and construction and demolition debris.

In the study, trash was gathered from two sectors, residential and industrial/commercial/institutional and was broken down by type. The top three waste types from the two sectors combined were organic, 25.5 percent; paper, 25.2 percent; and plastic, 16.7 percent. The study was conducted in the spring and early summer of

this year by a team from MidAtlantic Solid Waste Consultants, Cascadia Consulting Group and Foth Infrastructure & Environment. Similar studies were conducted in 1998 and 2005. The final report of the 2011 Iowa Statewide Waste Characterization Study can be viewed online at [www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/LandStewardship/WasteManagement.aspx](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/LandStewardship/WasteManagement.aspx).



### U.S. Supreme Court Opens Term with Case Determining Whether State Decisions on Medicaid Can Be Challenged

The United States Supreme Court opened their October, 2011 term with a critical case on state power and health care. The case tests the power of states to make changes to their Medicaid program and what recourse impacted citizens may have to challenge these decisions. Surprisingly though, the case has nothing to do with the federal health care reform law.

In 2008 and 2009, the state of California enacted provider rate cuts of 10 percent to a variety of Medicaid covered services in an effort to reduce expenditures in the wake of the recession. These cuts went into effect even though they had yet to be approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency overseeing the program.

A number of California Medicaid enrollees and providers brought lawsuits against the state, claiming that the state's action was in violation of the federal Medicaid law. That requires the states to ensure that Medicaid reimbursement rates are high enough to get a sufficient number of providers into the program, so that access to the service is at the same level for those with private insurance. The suit also asked for the courts to recognize that enrollees and providers had the right to challenge these decisions in federal court.

The issue of standing may be viewed as "inside baseball" by some observers, but it is a critical issue for states. If a provider or Medicaid enrollee had the right to go to federal court and challenge a state's decision to make changes to an aspect of their program, states would be severely restricted in making policy or rate revisions.

At the federal district court level, the court ruled that the providers and enrollees did not have standing to bring a challenge to the state's action. But the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed this decision and said that California had violated the "equal access" provision when it cut provider rates. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear the case last January, but limited the hearing to just the issue of standing.

During the oral arguments on Monday, the justices appeared to be closely divided. Chief Justice John Roberts expressed support for California's position, that Congress had the opportunity to provide a private cause of action in these cases and they chose not to. But Justice Ginsburg noted that only private plaintiffs could seek an injunction against the state implementing the rate cuts without federal approval. She pointed out that the remedy Congress did provide to CMS for a state failing to provide equal access – suspension of all federal Medicaid funds – was extreme and virtually impossible to implement.

Even the federal government's position in the case is complicated. The Justice Department's argument is that the dispute is not between providers and the state, but is between CMS and the state. They asserted that Medicaid was a contract between the federal government and the states, and thus it was between these two groups to settle the issue. But attorneys for the Department of Health and Human Services refused to sign on to the Justice Department brief, and a group of former HHS officials submitted a friend of the court brief in support of the providers' position.

The Court's hearing of the case is occurring at a time when HHS is working on proposed administrative rules that would require states to conduct surveys on access to services and whether reimbursement rates are sufficient to ensure equal access. These rules were brought up during the hearing, and the Justice Department stated that the new rules would not be completed before the beginning of the new year.

The official name of the case is *Douglas v. Independent Living Centers of Southern California*. While the case is the first of the term, it is unclear when a decision can be expected.

### DHS Mental Health Redesign Work Groups in Home Stretch, Legislative Interim Committee to Begin Meeting

Work on the redesign of Iowa's mental health system is beginning to move to the next phase. The Department of Human Services' six work groups are scheduled to wrap up their efforts by the end of the month. The groups are to submit initial reports to the Legislature by the end of October.

The legislative interim committee will have the first of its three scheduled meeting days on October 24. The group will meet in a

new location for interim committees – the second floor of the Ola Babcock Miller building on the Capitol Complex. The twelve-member committee will begin its work with consideration of financial issues, including property taxes. The November meeting will focus on the work of the DHS work groups, with each group providing their recommendations.

**MENTAL HEALTH MEETING SCHEDULE**

**October 11**

Children’s Services - United Way of Central Iowa, 1111 Ninth Street, Des Moines  
 Regional Governance – Iowa State Capitol, Room 22, Des Moines – 9:30AM to 3:15 PM  
 Brain Injury Services - United Way of Central Iowa, 1111 Ninth Street, Des Moines

**October 17**

Mental Health Public Forum– 108 E Industrial Street, DeWitt– 1pm and 5pm

**October 18**

Adult Mental Health Services – Iowa State Capitol, Room 22, Des Moines  
 Adult Intellectual Disability Services – United Way of Central Iowa, 1111 Ninth Street, Des Moines

**October 20**

Commitment/Court-DHS Issues – State Judicial Building, 1111 East Court Avenue, Des Moines

**October 24**

Legislative Interim Committee - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Ola Babcock Miller (Old Historical) building – 10AM to 4:45 PM

**October 25**

Children’s Services - United Way of Central Iowa, 1111 Ninth Street, Des Moines  
 Regional Governance – Iowa State Capitol, Room 22, Des Moines – 9:30AM to 3:15 PM  
 Brain Injury Services –Polk County River Place – Room 2, 2309 Euclid Avenue, Des Moines

**November 17**

Legislative Interim Committee – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Ola Babcock Miller building – 8:30 AM to 5 PM

**Judiciary**

(Contact: Amanda Freel, 1-5230)

**Finding a Lawyer in Iowa**

When the time comes that you or a loved one needs a lawyer, the task of finding the right one can seem overwhelming. Many Iowans don’t know where to start and sometimes hire the first one they talk to, which may not always be the right decision. Hiring an attorney takes careful research and an understanding of what you expect the attorney to accomplish. An attorney who specializes in divorce or family law may not be able to help a client who has an OWI or who needs will. Some Iowans worry if they can afford a lawyer at all. There are many services available to help Iowans choose the attorney right for their issue and one they can afford.

If you have never thought about hiring an attorney, it’s never to late to start. A simple google search for “attorneys in Iowa” gives millions of hits and may be overwhelming to many. This is one of the reasons the Iowa

Bar Association created “Find-A-Lawyer”. According to the Bar, this service is designed to supply you the names of lawyers who are willing to consult with you for \$25 for the first 30 minutes. If further legal services are needed, you and the attorney will negotiate the arrangement including the fee. The Bar Associations “Find-A-Lawyer” program can be accessed from the Iowa Bar Association website.

(www.iowabar.org). The American Bar Association also offers help to those looking for legal representation. Their website www.findlegalhelp.org lets a potential client search for lawyers by state and also offers guidance on basic legal information. Both of these services are great places to start your search for legal representation.

With tough economic times, many Iowans may have trouble affording an attorney but don’t have the ability to represent them-



selves in the court. Iowa Legal Aid is available to help Iowans facing economic hardship who also need legal assistance. The goal of Iowa Legal Aid is to provide resources for low-income Iowans, seniors and others looking for help with a legal problem or seeking information on the law. Their website (www.iowalegalaid.org) provides information on finding lawyers who fit your specific needs (both legal and economic)

(Continued on page 11)



(Continued from page 10)

along with basic do it yourself information for smaller cases. Iowa Legal Aid is available throughout the state and can be reached by phone at 1-800-532-1275

Finding a lawyer may seem like an overwhelming task, but many groups in Iowa

have resources to make the search easier. Using one of the above mentioned sites or other trusted sources can save you time, money and you can feel confident knowing you have an attorney who can properly handle your case.

## Labor

(Contact Louis Vander Streek 1-3626.)

### Taxpayer Costs for State Employees' Health Insurance Rises

The Iowa Executive Council met on October 3 with a number of items on the agenda. One such piece was a vote to renew the state's group insurance contract with Wellmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The renewal was accompanied by premium increases for two of the four covered areas. Health premiums are going to increase by 0.8% and dental rates will increase at a rate of 4.4%. The rates for term life insurance and long term disability will remain constant.

These rate increases translate into an additional \$12 million in spending the state has to pay in order to cover its employees. For purposes of health insurance, the state pays 100% of single and double spouse contracts and 85% of an employee's family

premium. According to the nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency, 87% of state employees pay nothing toward their health insurance premiums.

**"87% of state employees pay nothing ..."**

House Republicans attempted multiple times last session to restore some equity to the taxpayer by requiring state employees to contribute as little as \$100 a month toward their health insurance. Each time the issue was raised, it was met with strong resistance by Democrats. In an analysis conducted for HF 525, the collective bar-

gaining reform bill that House Republicans offered and passed, LSA estimated that by requiring a \$100 contribution to the premium, the state would save \$33.3 million per year.

However, due to Governor Culver's acceptance of the initial union collective bargaining agreement offer, the state is locked in to paying these rates for the next two years. At that point, a new agreement will have to be reached and Governor Branstad has made it clear that he will not accept the first offer the union presents without making a counter-offer. Governor Branstad has said he intends to take a hard look at the cost of insurance and that it will be on the table for discussions.

## Natural Resources

(Contact Dustin Blythe 1-3452.)

### Public Listening Meetings Concerning the Forest

The Department of Natural Resources has recently released the schedule for the six listening tour meetings regarding the Forest Reserve Tax Credit Program.

The meetings will be as follows:

October 4 – 8:00a.m

Pilot Grove Savings Bank

506 North Main Street, Donnellson

October 6 – 9:30a.m

Yellow River State Forest

729 State Forest Road

October 11 – 7:00 p.m.

State Forest Nursery

2404 South Duff Ave, Ames

October 13 – 7:00p.m

EB Lyons Interpretive Center (Mine of Spain State Park)

8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque

October 18 – 7:00p.m

Pin Oak Marsh (South of Chariton on Hwy 14)

October 20 – 7:00p.m

Loess Hills State Forest

206 Polk Street, Pisgah

Each meeting will have a 30 minute presentation with time for public comment following. Any suggestions on improving the program are welcome. Comments from all of these meetings will be collected and shared with the House Natural Resources Committee.

For land to qualify as a forest reservation several criteria must be met:

- Forested area must be at least 2 continuous acres in size, not less than 66 feet wide
- Each acre shall contain not less than 200 growing trees

No cattle, horses, sheep, goats, or hogs are permitted on forest reserves



## Public Safety

(Contact: Amanda Freel, 1-5230.)

### Amber Alert System in Iowa

When a child goes missing parents are panicked and time is of essence for police. In 1996, nine year old Amber Hagerman was riding her bike in her Texas neighborhood. A neighbor heard Amber scream and saw a man pull her into his truck and drive away. Police were immediately notified, but four days later Amber's body was found four miles from her house. People in the community were upset and began thinking of ways to alert the public when children are reported missing. Dallas broadcasters suggested spreading missing child alerts the same as weather alerts, through TV and radio announcements. This idea led to the creation of the Amber Alert System.

In 1998, eight month old Rae-Leigh Bradbury was abducted from her apartment by her babysitter. As her parents and police searched for the sitter, Officers suggested issuing an Amber Alert for Rae-Leigh. Even though her parents had never heard of it, they agreed and within 90 minutes of the

alert the babysitter was apprehended and Rae-Leigh was rescued and returned to her parents. This first successful use of the Amber Alert system help it spread throughout the country.

Iowa began using Amber Alerts state wide in 2003 after a National Amber Alert Coordinator was appointed by the President George W. Bush, in 2002. As of 2009 all 50 states and several countries, including Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Australia have adopted the Amber Alert System or a program very similar.

Not every abduction meets Amber Alert guidelines. In order for an alert to be issued the following criteria must be met:

1. Law enforcement confirms a child has been abducted and entry has been made into the IOWA/NCIC Systems identifying the child as missing.

2. The child is under the age of 18.

3. Law enforcement believes the circumstances surrounding the abduction indicate that the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death.

There is enough descriptive information about the child, abductor, and/or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help.

The goal of the Amber Alert System in Iowa is for the safe recovery of missing children that a law enforcement agency believes have been abducted and are in danger of serious bodily harm or death.

In Iowa, Amber Alerts are issued on the Radio, TV, digital billboards, electronic road signs and email. Individuals can also sign up for Text message alerts. Since the Amber Alert system began over 495 children have been saved and with the publics continued help many more will be saved in the future.

## State Government

(Contact Kristi Kielhorn at 2-5290.)

This week the Iowa lottery released a new iPhone application on iTunes that will let lottery players check if their ticket is a winner. The free LotteryPlus mobile application can run on iPhone 3GS, iPhone 4 and iPad devices running IOS 3.2 and above.

LotteryPlus was created in conjunction with the Georgia company Scientific Games International—the same company the Iowa Lottery uses for the gaming network used to sell and cash tickets in the state of Iowa.

The mobile application is not only convenient for lottery players, but also provides more player security by allowing the player to check their ticket themselves, instead of relying on a cashier. A player can either scan the barcode of the ticket with their device, or enter the ticket's serial number to check and see if it is a winner. LotteryPlus will also provide players with the current prize amounts and winning numbers for Powerball, Mega Millions and Hot Lotto.

In addition to telling players they have a winning ticket, the application provides information on where lottery ticket retailers are located, as well as information on how lottery proceeds are used around the state. The application does not allow for players to do any sort of online lottery playing. The Iowa lottery is currently investigating mobile applications for other mobile platforms.

## Transportation

(Contact: Kristi Kielhorn, 2-5290.)

### Interstate 29 to Reopen this Week

For the first time since June, drivers will be able to utilize Interstate 29 all the way through Iowa. The DOT plans to reopen the last sections of Interstate 29 sometime this week. The interstate was closed after massive spring flooding damaged it extensively and left sections underwater all summer.

The DOT is optimistic that the interstate will

be open from Missouri all the way up to U.S. Highway 34. There will be some areas where traffic will be two-lanes and several on-ramps and off-ramps will remain closed due to damage. Exit 1 will remain closed into Hamburg as well as Exit 10 onto Highway 2 to avoid a damaged bridge that goes over the Missouri River into Nebraska City, NE.

As soon as the DOT makes a determination as to the exact day and time of the reopening it will be made available on its website.

## Veterans Affairs

### Veterans Events around Iowa in October

#### October 7-8<sup>th</sup> America's Family Coaches Military Marriage Conference [ans@pcsia.net](mailto:ans@pcsia.net)

Americas Family Coaches knows that military marriages experience unique strain, especially during deployment. Even military couples with self-described strong marriages tell us about the immense toll separation causes as well as how difficult it is to reintegrate after deployment. America's Family Coaches invite Iowans to this fall's Military Marriage Conference at the Sheraton in West Des Moines. Military personnel are invited to bring their husband or wife to the event where they will be pampered with a one-night hotel stay, meals, marriage resources, entertainment by a comedian and marriage teaching and coaching sessions by Dr. Gary & Barb Rosberg. Sheraton West Des Moines Hotel 1800 50th Street West Des Moines IA Register online at [http://www.thegreatmarriageexperience.com/discover/category/military\\_marriage\\_conference](http://www.thegreatmarriageexperience.com/discover/category/military_marriage_conference), Cost of Attendance is \$20.00

www.thegreatmarriageexperience.com/discover/category/military\_marriage\_conference, Cost of Attendance is \$20.00

#### October 11<sup>th</sup>-Wapello County Homeless Veterans Stand Down

At 6:00 p.m. Guest Speaker Moe Armstrong speaks. Armstrong is a former homeless Vet who has battled and overcome serious mental health issues. Transportation will be provided from a few locations around SE Iowa, two meals will be provided that day. Please let your Veterans, (homeless/at-risk) know about this event. Ottumwa National Guard Armory, 2858 North Court Road, **Ottumwa IA** 52501-1198, Dan Hoy, Wapello County Director of Veterans Affairs, (641) 684-8079, [wapelloveter-](http://wapelloveter.com)

#### October 11-12<sup>th</sup>-Mental Health Conference "Moving Forward In Recovery"

The 2011 Mental Health Conference is designed for professionals, clinicians, administrators, educators, consumers, family members, advocates and other providers. Must pre-register, can do so on web site. Iowa State University Campus, Scheman Building, Ames IA 50111

POC: Training Resources, (515) 309-3315, [mhconference@mchsi.com](mailto:mhconference@mchsi.com), or <https://www.trainingresources.org/>



#### [October 13th](#)

#### United States Navy Birthday – 236 years! (October 13, 1775)

#### Various Dates-Mental Health First Aid

#### Training

There are still seats available for Mental Health First Aid Training / Certification in Des Moines on **October 19-20th**, and there seats available for the same training in Iowa City **on October 26-27th**. Please reserve a seat by contacting Stacie Bendixen (515) 237-0338, [sbendixen@sppg.com](mailto:sbendixen@sppg.com), to reserve a seat.

#### Help with Employment and Educational Opportunities in Johnson County

For veterans who may have missed the job fair this week in Johnson County, there are many people willing to reach out and help veterans find the right opportunity for school and work. Veterans Service Officers, VA Health Care & Women's Health Experts, VA OIF / OEF Clinicians, Vets Center, and a wide range of service & training resources are available to our veterans. Some groups that sponsored the job fair and are reaching out to help veterans are IowaWORKS, Kirkwood Community College, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, Kaplan University, the Employers' Council of Iowa, and ITT Technical Institute. If you know someone who needs help looking for opportunities in Johnson County please contact POC: Gregory Clark, Veteran Advisor, Iowa Workforce Development, (319) 351-1035 X31320, [gregory.clark@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:gregory.clark@iwd.iowa.gov)

For a full schedule of event please contact, Todd Jacobus at [todd.jacobus@us.army.mil](mailto:todd.jacobus@us.army.mil)

## Ways and Means

( Contact: Dustin Blythe, 1-3452.)

### Revamping the Tax Code – GOP-style

Rep. Paul Ryan, the Republican chairman of the House Budget Committee wants the wealthy to give something back: the billions of dollars in government benefits, taxpayer subsidies and corporate welfare they receive each year and do not need. Ryan was recently quoted in the Washington Post.

"We want to stop subsidizing corporations. Well-connected companies have gotten a free ride from the taxpayer for too long."

With Republicans viewed as blindly pro-business, the case Ryan makes is powerful. Ryan believes that Republicans should be willing to end the crony capitalism of picking winners and losers and instead write a better tax code.

While most, if not all Democrats view closing tax loopholes as raising revenues, Ryan wants to use that revenue to reduce tax rates to spur job creation. Ryan wants to

end what he calls "wasteful welfare for corporations." If you look at the recent scandals at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and now defunct solar panel manufacturer Solyndra, Ryan makes a strong case. Solyndra received \$500 million dollars of taxpayer money – a half a billion dollars for one company that is now bankrupt.

(Continued on page 14)



*(Continued from page 13)*

With job creation a national priority, all forms of government should be focused on creating a level playing field with a simpler and fairer tax code, while letting the private sector invest in technologies that show promise and allowing the market determine winners and losers. What Ryan is proposing at the Federal level has implications here in Iowa as well.

On November 16, an interim Tax Credit Committee will be meeting here at the capitol. The Department of Revenue, along with LSA will provide the committee with the results of various studies that have been done on the effectiveness of various tax credit programs available here in Iowa. As the 2012 session draws closer, tax relief continues to be a priority for House Republicans.