



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

November 30, 2017

[www.iowaHouseRepublicans.com](http://www.iowaHouseRepublicans.com)

## Appropriations

(Contact Brad Trow at 1-3471)

### Inside this issue:

### Liberal Washington Think Tank... Iowa is a leader in Providing More Funding for Schools

A study released by the liberal Center for Budget and Policy Priorities analyzes the amount of state tax resources being allocated to K-12 education. The Center looked at funding from 2008 to 2015 and adjusted these figures for inflation to determine whether a state had increased funding or not. The study found that twenty-nine states were providing less funding to schools than they were in the fiscal year preceding the last recession.

ties study found that state school spending in Nebraska rose by 3.1 percent during this same period. Kansas, the Democratic poster child for questioning budget practices, experienced 6.5 percent growth. The study found that South Dakota reduced its funding to schools by 11.8 percent, while Wisconsin saw a decrease of 10.6 percent. What about Minnesota, the state often held out as the example what Iowa should be doing with education? State funding to their schools grew during this time by just 1.5 percent.

Iowans who have been subjected to the repeated claims of House Democrats and their partners in the media would assume that Iowa is amongst the twenty-nine who have cut funding during this seven-year period. These folks will be surprised to learn that the Center’s study not only finds that state funding to Iowa schools increased during this time, but the increase in state funding is the fourth highest in the country at 20.6 percent growth. Iowa’s growth in school funding is only surpassed by Alaska, Illinois, and North Dakota.

The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities’ report buttresses the statements made by House Republicans over the past seven years that state funding to Iowa schools has been increasing. Between Fiscal Year 2012 and Fiscal Year 2015 (the last year of the Center’s study) the budgets passed by House Republicans provided \$470 million in new state funding to schools. And in the last three years, schools have received an additional \$263 million from the state’s General Fund.

The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities

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### Contingent Liabilities Report Shows Decrease in Tax Credits Issued, Claimed in FY 2017

As part of the process for forecasting state revenue, the Department of Revenue issues the Contingent Liabilities Report three times a year. This report gives the Revenue Estimating Conference and state policymakers a snapshot view of the amount of tax credits issued each year, how much of these credits have been redeemed in a year, and a projection of the amount of outstanding tax credits yet to be claimed and how much is expected to come in each year.

**“12.0 percent decrease from the previous year,”**

and well below the amount awarded in Fiscal Year 2007 when the administrations of Tom Vilsack and Chet Culver handed out \$341.4 million in tax credits.

According to the October 2017 report, the state awarded \$208.8 million of tax credits in Fiscal Year 2017. This was a (continued on next page)



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The October report found that the amount of tax credits claimed in Fiscal Year 2017 currently sits at \$322.5 million. This is \$22.5 million less than what was claimed by Iowa taxpayers in Fiscal Year 2016. It is also significantly less than the Department of Revenue's last projection in March, when they expected that \$406.5 million of tax credits would be claimed by taxpayers in

2017.

The tax credit with the largest amount claimed was the Earned Income Tax Credit, which paid out \$69.4 million in FY 2017. Next largest is the Historic Preservation and Cultural and Entertainment District Tax Credit, which had \$45.7 million claimed in FY 2017. These two credits have experienced significant growth in the last few years, as EITC was significantly increased

as part of the Commercial Property Tax reduction bill in 2013 and the creation of Cultural & Entertainment District program in that same year.

One program that saw a decline in the amount claimed in FY 2017 is the Research Activities Tax Credit. In FY 2017, \$41.4 million was claimed by qualifying businesses, down from the previous year's level of \$53.9 million.

## Agriculture

(Contact Lew Olson at 1-3096)

### Long-Term Water Quality Funding in Departmental Budget Request

On Monday, November 27, 2017, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release in which Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey requested an additional \$150,000 for the IDALS' Animal Industry Bureau to provide additional support for preparations for and potentially responding to a foreign animal disease outbreak. Secretary Northey further specifically requested continued funding to support the Renewable Fuels Infrastructure Program and the Agriculture Drainage Well Closure Program. Last year, the General Assembly appropriated \$100,000 in funding starting this fiscal year to support preparations for a foreign animal disease outbreak and a portion of that funding was used to hire a new Emergency Management Veterinarian. Secretary Northey in his budget presentation requested an additional \$150,000 for the IDALS' Animal Industry Bureau for foreign animal disease outbreak response preparation. The additional funds would be used to accelerate work on emergency response plans, organize disease response exercises and expand coordination efforts with indus-

try partners.

Secretary Noted--"Due to the challenging budget situation, we have put forward a lean budget proposal with the only request for additional funding being a \$150,000 increase for our foreign animal disease response planning efforts. I do believe it is important we continue to invest in priority areas, including taking steps to better protect our state's vitally important animal industry." Northey also requested continued funding of \$10.575 million to support the Iowa Water Quality Initiative in the next fiscal year and emphasized his support for identifying a long-term source of funding for the state's water quality efforts. Different water quality funding approaches passed both the Iowa House and Iowa Senate last session, but the legislature was not able to reach final agreement on a funding plan.

In the meeting with Reynolds, Northey also requested \$1.875 million in continued funding to support the closure of Agriculture Drainage Wells (ADWs). Of the 300 registered ADWs in Iowa, 18 remain to be closed

at an estimated cost of \$5.625 million. This level of funding over the next three years would allow all of the remaining ADWs to be closed. IDALS additionally requested continued funding for the Iowa Renewable Fuels Infrastructure Program. The Department has received \$3 million annually to offer cost-share grants for the installation of E85 dispensers, blender pumps, biodiesel dispensers, and biodiesel storage facilities. Since 2007, the Renewable Fuels Infrastructure Program has provided more than \$33 million to fuel retailers for infrastructure that give customers additional access to renewable fuels. This includes 309 projects installing E85 or ethanol blender pumps and 413 projects installing biodiesel pumps or storage tanks.

### IDALS Needs Updated Livestock Information From Farmers

On Tuesday, November 28, 2017, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release in which it announced that it will continue contacting farmers who have previously registered a livestock premises in an effort to update the Iowa Premises Registration database. Farmers are asked to respond to the letter and either confirm the information is correct or respond with their updated information. In December, the Department will be sending letters to producers that had previously registered a premises in Clinton,

Crawford, Dallas, Davis and Decatur counties. In January, letters will be sent to producers in Delaware, Des Moines, Dickinson, Dubuque, Emmet, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Fremont and Greene counties.

All Iowa livestock farmers are encouraged to make sure that all locations where they have livestock have a premises identification number (PIN) and to make sure their information is up-to-date. All the information in the premises ID database is completely confidential and protected under

federal law and can only be used for animal health purposes. If farmers have questions they can contact the Department's Animal ID Coordinator toll free at 888-778-7675 or by email at [ids\\_id@iowaagriculture.gov](mailto:ids_id@iowaagriculture.gov). A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about premises identification can be found on the Department's webpage [www.iowaagriculture.gov](http://www.iowaagriculture.gov) under "Hot Topics."

**Commerce**

(Contact Ben Gentz at 1-3452)

**Health Insurance Enrollment Deadline is Near**

The state of Iowa withdrew its stop gap Section 1332 Waiver from consideration on October 23, when it became clear that Obamacare was so inflexible that it would not allow the stop gap measure to move forward in a way that would be workable in Iowa and allowable under current law. The stopgap measure was an innovative approach tailored to Iowa's needs. It would have given Iowans relief from Obamacare and provided access to high quality and affordable health insurance.

With the many changes in Iowa's insurance market this year, it is important to seek help from a licensed insurance agent. While you are able to review the information available on <http://healthcare.gov>, for consumers

priced out of the individual market, a licensed insurance agent can help explain the options available in your situation. An agent can help consumers identify the types of coverage available to them. These options may include small group health insurance coverage for the self-employed, HIP-Iowa, Iowa's high-risk pool, for those with certain medical conditions, and a small group market for those who operate a business. Local licensed insurance agents can be found through Independent Insurance Agents of Iowa at <https://www.iiiaowa.com/ContactUs/Pages/FindAnAgent/FindAnAgent.aspx> or the Iowa Association of Health Underwriters at <https://nahu.org/looking-for-an-agent/find-an-agent>.

It is also very important to gather information regarding your anticipated 2018 income before meeting with an agent, because federal tax credits under the ACA are determined based upon income, not net worth. An individual with 2018 annual income of \$48,000 or less will be able to protect themselves with tax credits. Similarly, married couples without dependents who have 2018 annual income of \$64,500 or below will be able to protect themselves with tax credits. Individuals can check whether or not tax credits would be available to them at: <https://www.healthcare.gov/lower-costs/>.

Source: IID

**Economic Growth**

(Contact Kristi Kious at 2-5290)

**IEDA Board Approves November Awards**

The Iowa Economic Development Board approved awards in November that include direct financial assistance and tax benefits from High Quality Jobs (HQJ) to five companies for job creation and expansion projects. This action will assist in the creation of 436 jobs, retention of 270 jobs, and will result in over \$246 million in new capital investment for the state. The board also approved innovation funding for eight startups.

Projects receiving awards were:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Arconic, Inc.</b>, (Riverdale)                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans to purchase and install new machinery.</li> <li>\$1,500,000 in direct financial assistance, tax benefits from HQJ.</li> <li>\$159.6 million capital investment is expected to create 30 jobs and retain 250 jobs incented at a qualifying wage of \$18.30 per hour.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Cedar Ridge</b>, (Swisher)                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand distillery and increase production.</li> <li>Tax benefits from HQJ.</li> <li>\$2 million capital investment is expected to create six jobs incented at a qualifying hourly wage of \$24.32.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>CJ Bio America Inc.</b> (Fort Dodge)                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New production buildings and expansion.</li> <li>Tax benefits from HQJ.</li> <li>\$46 million capital investment is expected to create 18 jobs incented at a qualifying wage of \$17.56 per hour.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>John Deere's Intelligent Solutions Group</b> (Urbandale)                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct new facility in Urbandale.</li> <li>Tax benefits from HQJ.</li> <li>\$32.6 million capital investment is expected to create 31 jobs and retain 20 jobs incented at a qualifying wage of \$29.12 per hour.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>TPI Composites</b> (Newton)                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversify and manufacture bus bodies for electric-powered passenger buses.</li> <li>\$1,000,000 in direct financial assistance, tax benefits from HQJ.</li> <li>\$6 million capital investment will create 351 jobs at a qualifying hourly wage of \$18.12 per hour.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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The next meeting of the IEDA board will be December 22 at IEDA headquarters.

**Education**

Contact Jason Chapman at 1-3015)

**Education Spending in Iowa a Model for the Nation**

If you were convinced that the ceiling was falling in on education spending in Iowa over the past several years, it's not surprising, given the rhetoric that has been passed around in debate. Legislative Democrats spend hours on the House and Senate floors lamenting the historic *increases* that House Republicans put forward year after year, claiming over and over again that it's not enough, schools need more. They point

to other states spending on education as examples of where we should be. But a new report that was released this week proved that it is Iowa other states should be looking to as an example.

The article detailed the report (from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, CBPP), titled "A punishing decade for school funding," focuses on the "dramatically" declining public investment in

schools across the county over the past decade. The data points to the year 2015 when 29 states were still providing less total school funding per student than they were in pre-recession 2008.

But where does Iowa fall in this range? 4<sup>th</sup> best in the nation, with an increase of 20.6% in total state funding per student, inflation adjusted.

Change in Per-Pupil Spending, Inflation-Adjusted, 2008 - 2015			
State	Percentage Change	State	Percentage Change
Arizona	-36.6%	North Dakota	+96.2%
Florida	-22.0%	Illinois	+30.8%
Alabama	-21.6%	Alaska	+27.6%
Idaho	-18.0%	<b>Iowa</b>	<b>+20.6%</b>
Georgia	-16.6%	Connecticut	+16.3%
Texas	-15.9%	Vermont	+15.5%
Oklahoma	-15.6%	Wyoming	+8.5%
Utah	-14.6%	Pennsylvania	+7.8%
Mississippi	-12.4%	Kansas	+6.5%
Louisiana	-12.4%	Missouri	+4.2%

This isn't new information from the CBPP. Iowa has shown this recover in several of the Center's previous reports reviewing this data.

The legislature continued school funding increases this year with a \$40 million investment, despite a very tough fiscal year. House Republicans, along with Gov. Branstad, committed to keeping the promise to fund schools with new money despite the

need for reductions in many other areas of state government. In fact, when state revenues fell again shortly after the legislature set the \$40 million, House budget committees worked hard to find the savings in other areas to prevent backing up on that increase.

The results? Combining this new funding increase for school districts, the state has now increased school funding by over

**"\$730 Million over the past 7 years."**

Teacher leadership funds are delineated separately due the unique nature of its interaction with school funding overall and to provide clarity to the conversation.

Fiscal Year (school year)	Percent Growth	State Cost Per Pupil	State Spending Increase - Teacher Leadership	Teacher Leadership Increase
FY12 (11/12)	0%	\$5883	\$178 million	
FY13 (12/13)	2%	\$6001	\$29.2 million	
FY14 (13/14)	2% + 2% one-time	\$6121	\$63.2 million + \$57 million	
FY15 (14/15)	4%	\$6366	\$148.6 million	
FY16 (15/16)	1.25%	\$6446	\$37.2 million	\$50.2 million
FY17 (16/17)	2.25%	\$6591	\$81.8 million	\$53.3 million
	<b>6-yr total increase</b>			<b>\$641.5 million + \$57 million</b>
FY18 (17/18)	1.11%	\$6664	\$39.9 million	\$54.0 million
	<b>7-yr total increase</b>			<b>\$735.4 million + \$57 million</b>



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State investment in general K-12 education has increased from \$2.446 billion in FY11 to \$3.183 billion in FY18, a 30% increase.

House Republicans are proud of the investment the state has continued to make in our state's schools. It's been sustainable and reliable and has kept Iowa towards the front of the pack nationwide.

To see the full report, visit: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/a-punishing-decade-for-school-funding>

## New Fine Arts Standards Adopted by State Board

After convening a group in February of this year to develop optional standards for students in grades preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The team was created in response to public support for offering standards that go beyond the mandatory subject areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and 21st century skills, already parts of the Iowa Core, Iowa's set of content standards.

The Fine Arts team recommended, and the State Board of education adopted, the Na-

tional Core Arts Standards, which are used in 22 states and were developed by an alliance of national arts and arts education groups. Fine arts generally include visual arts, music, theater, dance and media arts.

The adoption team sought public input on the National Core Arts Standards through an online survey as well as public forums. A majority of comments expressed support for the standards, as well as their connections to careers, consistency and rigor. The Fine Arts Standards Adoption Team recom-

mended minor edits to the standards for clarity in the areas of general music and theater in its final report to the State Board of Education.

For information about the make-up of the team and for dates of meetings, visit the Department's website: <https://www.educateiowa.gov/fine-arts-standards-adoption-team>

For more information on the National Core Arts Standards, visit: <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>

## Environmental Protection

(Contact Lew Olson at 1-3096)

### EPA Awards \$12.3 Million to State of Iowa for Critical Water Projects

On Tuesday, November 14, 2017, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a press release in which it announced that EPA Region 7 has awarded

**“\$12,326,000 to Iowa’s drinking water revolving loan program funds,”**

to help finance improvements to water projects that are essential to protecting public health and the environment.

The more than \$12 million in funding will be used across Iowa for water quality projects

that will improve municipal drinking water and wastewater infrastructure; help protect public drinking water systems; make projects more sustainable by increasing water and energy efficiency; and reduce water pollution.

This is an annual Capitalization Grant awarded to Iowa's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program. The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) provides a financing mechanism to ensure safe drinking water for the public. The Capitalization Grant created by the SDWA funds various drinking water improvement projects for cities in Iowa. Numerous projects will be funded that are listed on Iowa's Intended Use Plan. The DWSRF Capitalization Grant funds public and privately-owned

community water systems' improvement projects, nonprofit non-community water systems, and disadvantaged communities. Infrastructure replacement and other projects are also funded with this grant, ensuring safe and affordable drinking water supplies to Iowans. For more information about Iowa's DWSRF program, including lists of projects slated to be funded this year, visit [Iowa's Drinking Water Loan Program website](#). EPA's Region 7 serves communities and administers federal environmental laws in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and nine Tribal Nations. For more information, visit [EPA's website](#).

## Labor

(Contact Mackenzie Nading at 1-3626)

### Denison IowaWORKS Office Moving to New Location

Last week, the Iowa Workforce Development released the following information concerning the IowaWORKS Expansion office:

The IowaWORKS Expansion Office in Denison will be providing services at Western Iowa Tech Community College campus starting Monday, Dec. 4.

The center is currently located at 519 High-

way 39. Services will be delivered at that location until 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 30. The new office will open the following Monday at 8 a.m. at the community college, 11 N. 35th St. The phone number remains the same: 712-267-3654.

The office will be open from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m. every Monday and Thursday.

Beth Townsend, Director of Iowa Workforce Development, said the collaborative spirit of the Denison community to keep the office

open is impressive.

“Thanks to Western Iowa Tech Community College for providing office space so that we can continue to offer career training and support services to Denison residents,” Townsend said. “We’re very appreciative of the flexibility and the creative solutions offered by community leaders so we can continue to have a local presence in Denison.”

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Jessica Garcia, the Director of the Denison Campus and Southern Service Area for Western Iowa Tech Community College, said the community college is extremely excited to offer office space for IowaWORKS on an interim basis.

“The IowaWORKS office is able to provide

phenomenal support services to individuals in the community with a variety of services and tools,” Garcia said. “By working together, we will be able to provide services to the community to enable individuals to obtain gainful employment as well as continue their education if that is something they wish to do. The IowaWORKS office is a post in our community and allowing them to stay in the Denison community will be bene-

ficial for all individuals who require their services.”

IowaWORKS, a proud partner of the American Job Center network, provides job seeker services such as employment searches, resume and cover letter assistance, mock interviews and workforce training. Businesses can receive worker recruitment services.

**Natural Resources**

(Contact Carrie Malone at 5-2063)

**Remodeled DNR Shooting Range Reopens in Polk City**

On Friday, November 9, 2017, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a press release announcing that the newly remodeled Olofson shooting range in rural Polk City is open for business. Due to a need to update the facility, the Olofson shooting range closed in mid-December 2015 to undergo a complete renovation including a new administration and classroom facility, new earthen berms, 30, 50 and 100 yard ranges, and a trap range. Additionally, updates are being made to the skeet range along with construction of a new 5-stand range and archery range, which will include both static and 3D archery courses. Olofson shooting range provides a safe and centrally located area for target shooters of all skill levels to prac-

tice their bow and firearms skills. The range will also play host to numerous special events like hunter education classes, skill trainings, and school archery and trap shooting matches. The Olofson shooting range is open Wednesday through Fridays from 11am - 5pm and Saturdays and Sundays from 9am – 5pm. Olofson is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Safety is the top priority at Olofson shooting range. Anyone visiting or utilizing the Olofson shooting range is required to abide by the strict safety guidelines set forth for the area. The DNR has Range Safety Officers on site at all times. Banner shooting range in Warren County is open similar hours but closed on Wednesdays and Thursdays and

provides another option in the metro area for recreational shooters and archers to utilize.

To learn more about the Olofson Shooting Range, visit:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/olofson> The address of the Butch Olofson Shooting Range is--

11652 NW Nissen Dr.,  
Polk City, Iowa 50226

**Public Safety**

(Contact Amanda Wille at 1-5230)

**Medical Cannabidiol to be Produced in Des Moines**

Iowans are one step closer to getting access to Medical Cannabidiol. The Iowa Department of Public Health has announced they will be issuing the first license to manufacture medical cannabidiol to MedPharm Iowa, located in Des Moines.

House File 524, enacted earlier this year, allows persons diagnosed with specific debilitating medical conditions to qualify for a Medical Cannabidiol Registration Card and to possess medical cannabidiol in the state. Medical marijuana will be grown and processed into cannabidiol and regulated under the Department of Public Health.

For now, MedPharm will be the only company in Iowa to produce medical cannabidiol.

Iowans have had many questions about the new medical cannabidiol program, some answers can be found below. For additional information, please visit the Iowa Department of Public Health’s website <http://idph.iowa.gov/mcarcp>

Who qualifies for medical cannabidiol?

The new law allows Iowans, diagnosed with specific debilitating medical conditions to qualify for a Medical Cannabidiol Registration Card.

A person who is a primary caregiver for someone with any of the debilitating medical conditions can also apply to have a card so they can possess the medical cannabidiol for the patient. The primary caregiver must be resident of Iowa or a bordering state, and over the age of 18. The patient’s healthcare provider must designate the primary caregiver.

What are the debilitating medical conditions that qualify for a card?

The following medical conditions have been approved for treatment with Cannabidiol:

- Cancer, if the condition or treatment

produces one or more of the following:

- Severe or chronic pain
- Nausea or severe vomiting
- Cachexia or severe wasting

- Multiple Sclerosis, with severe and persistent muscle spasms
- Seizures, including those characteristic of epilepsy
- AIDS or HIV
- Crohn’s disease
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig’s Disease)
- Untreatable Pain (as defined by law)

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- Any terminal illness with a life expectancy under one year, if the illness or treatment produces one or more of the following:

Severe or chronic pain

Nausea or severe vomiting

Cachexia or severe wasting

Who can recommend Medical Cannabidiol?

An Iowa doctor, licensed under chapter 148, who is the patient's primary care provider, may recommend medical cannabidiol

for the patient. The patient and doctor must fill out forms approved by the Department of Public Health. Every year the doctor must evaluate the patient and determine if they still qualify for a Medical Cannabidiol Registration Card.

Doctors not licensed in Iowa cannot recommend Iowa patients for a medical cannabidiol card.

How much do Medical Cannabidiol Registration Cards cost?

A patient card will cost \$100 per year, unless the patient is receiving social security disability benefits, supplemental security insurance payments or is enrolled in a med-

ical assistance program, then the fee is \$25.

A Primary Care Giver Card is \$25 per year.

What do I do if my application for a Medical Cannabidiol Registration Card is denied?

A person whose card application has been denied can appeal to DPH within 20 days of receiving notice of the denial. The appeal shall be sent to the Department of Inspections and Appeals and a hearing shall be conducted in accordance with 641-Chapter 173.

## State Government

(Contact: Mackenzie Nading 1-3626)

### IPERS Unveils New Microsite

On Thursday, November 16, IPERS unveiled its new microsite, [TheTruthAboutIPERS.org](http://TheTruthAboutIPERS.org). The purpose of the website is to provide current, accurate information about IPERS, along with links to additional resources.

Over the past year, IPERS has received an increasing number of inquiries about funding, stability and future changes. As admin-

istrators, IPERS is tasked with keeping members, legislators and other stakeholders informed.

The single-page microsite provides information on what caused the shortfall, what IPERS is doing to close the shortfall, why IPERS is important to Iowa, and more.

Ignore fearmongering tweets and other information from legislative Democrats as they try and scare Iowans into believing House Republicans will make changes to IPERS. IPERS is among the most sound pension systems in the nation and does not have any significant impact on the development of the state budget.

## Transportation

(Contact: Ben Gentz 1-3452)

### Iowa Transportation Commission Meeting Highlights

At its November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Iowa Transportation Commission approved a transfer of jurisdiction and a Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) grant application.

The transfer of jurisdiction included a segment of alleyways adjacent to Interstate 29 within the city limits of Council Bluffs. One segment of approximately 0.44 mile was

transferred to the city and another segment approximately 0.16 mile was transferred to the state. It is now the new owners responsibility for all future maintenance and improvement for those sections of roadway and corresponding right of ways.

Additionally, a RISE grant of up to \$651,446 was approved for the city of Ankeny. This grant application was accepted for the relo-

cation and reconstruction of a piece of Southeast Hulsizer Drive and a new intersection (including traffic signal) with Southeast Hulsizer Drive and Oralabor Road. The project will improve access to more than 12 acres for light industrial, warehousing, and manufacturing purposes and is predicted to be completed by next May.

## Veterans Affairs

(Contact Ashley Beall at 1-3440)

### VA Prioritizes Improving Veteran's Access to Pro Bono Legal Services

Earlier this November, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the American Bar Association, The Veterans Consortium and National Law School Veterans Clinic Consortium all signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the goal of improving Veteran's access to free legal services.

There are many veterans that face stressful legal problems, which include: eviction, foreclosure, child support, or driver's license revocations. This can affect their ability to focus on medical treatment or maintaining

employment and housing. This need for free legal services repeatedly popped up on the top of the list of homeless veteran's unmet needs in the VA's annual Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups Survey.

Through the signing of this memorandum, the VA is encouraging VA Medical Centers as well as other VA facilities to engage with their local communities to help establish legal clinics and medical legal partnerships to address Veteran's growing legal needs.

VA Medical Centers, Community Based Outpatient Clinics and Vet Centers across the country host at least 165 free legal clinics. They are able to do this by partnering with external, legal-service providers, such as local bar associations, legal-aid organizations and law school clinics.

For more information on VA's coordination of legal services for Veterans at VA facilities, visit: <https://www.va.gov/OGC/LegalServices.asp>.

## Ways & Means

(Contact Kristi Kielhorn at 2-5290)

### Sales Tax Increase Possible on Ballot in March for Polk County Voters

In March, residents of Des Moines (and surrounding suburbs) might be faced with the option to vote for a local option sales tax. According to the Department of Revenue, a one penny increase in Des Moines could generate \$37 million per year that the city could use for property tax relief, or more likely, to increase their budget. That number grows to \$79 million per year if you include all of Polk County.

Neighboring Dallas County passed the initiative last month. Voters of Clive, Urbandale, Waukee and West Des Moines (who live in Dallas County) approved the one penny

increase on the November 7 election. That sales tax increase will take effect on July 1, 2018 independent of whatever happens in Polk County.

For the vote to even be on the ballot in Polk County, citizens have to petition for it (like in Dallas County) or the city councils representing 50 percent of Polk County's population can ask for the vote. Des Moines makes up roughly 47 percent of Polk County's population and the Des Moines City Council plans to approve a motion on Dec. 4 calling for a vote. Thus, another city that represents at least three percent of the

county's residents will need to approve a similar motion by Dec. 12 to get the initiative before voters in March.

If Polk County manages to get the local option sales tax initiative on the ballot in March—Des Moines and all contiguous cities will be treated as one aggregate voting bloc. For the measure to pass—it will need a majority of voters in Polk County to vote in favor of it. If a majority of voters approve the measure in certain suburbs, but as a whole, the county does not pass the local option sales tax—it will not go into effect anywhere in the county.