Here is a highlight of bills advancing through the funnel from House Committees that I serve on:

HF 2254- Protecting Minors from Prostitution (Judiciary)
I was assigned this bill in Judiciary Committee and I will be managing it on the House floor. The goal of this legislation is to protect underage people who have been forced in to prostitution. Instead of facing prosecution for prostitution, this legislation would allow the minors to be referred to the Department of Human Services alleging that they are a child in need of assistance (CINA) and providing the minor the necessary protection and services needed.

HF 2253- Kidnapping (Judiciary)
In response to the Kathlynn Shepard case, House File 2253 was put forward to increase penalties for those who kidnap or do other harm to a child under the age of 15. This bill increases the penalty for kidnapping someone under the age of 15 to a class C felony. Additionally, a person who commits any of the crimes listed in the bill (such as; murder, some classes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of a minor), will not earn credit for time served while in prison.

HF 384- Suppressors for Firearms (Judiciary)
HF 384 would allow Iowans to purchase sound suppressors for firearms. Currently Iowa is one of only 11 states that do not allow for the purchase and use of suppressors. This bill would change that and allow Iowans to purchase the suppressor if they comply with federal regulations.

HSB 662 - All-Terrain Vehicles on Highways (Transportation)
This bill provides expanded highway use of all-terrain vehicles. The operator is required to have a valid driver’s license and a 35 mile-per-hour speed restriction applies. The bill revises the definition of all-terrain vehicle to include larger vehicles, but does NOT include dune buggies, golf carts, go-carts, or minitrucks. I heard from several of you that would appreciate the larger vehicles being added.

HSB 545 – Homeland Security and Emergency Management (Public Safety)
I worked with Subcommittee Chair Rep. Brandenburg on this bill to get it to the full committee. This bill amends the Homeland Security provision to provide the governor the authority to enter into mutual aid arrangements with other states during times of natural disaster.

HF 2289- Limit on Drone Usage (Public Safety)
This bill prevents individuals, state agencies and law enforcement from recording video through the use of a drone on private property without a search warrant or permission.

HF 2043 – Emergency Warning Systems (Local Government)
I authored this bill in response to Marion County Emergency Management Coordinator Jeff Anderson’s concern about warning systems in rural townships. Jeff brought this to my attention last year at a town hall forum and I was able to get the bill through subcommittee and now full committee. The basic rundown of the bill is that it now allows smaller counties to assume control of their emergency warning systems in the event of inclement weather for the safety of area residents.
As a member of the Transportation Committee, I wanted to let my constituents know that The Iowa Transportation Commission will conduct four public input meetings around the state in 2014. The meetings will give Iowans opportunities to present ideas and comments directly to the commissioners concerning transportation policies and programs, without traveling to Ames.

The four public input meetings are scheduled for April 8 at the Honey Creek Resort State Park, June 10 in Perry, Aug. 12 in Cedar Rapids, and Oct. 14 in Sioux Center.

Commissioners encourage representatives of regional and metropolitan planning organizations, cities, counties, chambers of commerce, economic development groups, and modal transportation providers to attend. All other interested groups and individuals are also invited to participate.

Items that may be discussed at the meetings include: the Iowa Transportation Improvement Program; transportation policies; and highway, aviation, rail, river, trail and transit issues.

**Legalizing Fireworks in Iowa Moves forward in Senate**

Legislation is coming through the Senate that would allow adults in Iowa to use fireworks. Senate File 2064 cleared the state government subcommittee, with a large push from public opinion. The bill would legalize Roman candles, bottle rockets and firecrackers to be used without a permit for those over the age of 18, in addition to sparklers and snakes which are already legal in Iowa.

Even though most Iowans are in favor of this bill, critics are concerned with the safety of using fireworks. Lobbyists for the Iowa Medical Society and the Iowa Academy of Ophthalmology made sure to note their appreciation for the age restriction, but made sure to stress that many injuries occur to bystanders. There were also concerns about medical response time.

**Licensing Barriers Eliminated for Military Veteran Teachers**

Last week, the governor’s office announced another effort aimed at getting more veterans to make Iowa their home. The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners has created a new military exchange license for veterans and their spouses who have teaching credentials in other states, but wish to relocate to Iowa. Because military families often move every few years, spouses must relicense and meet new teacher licensing requirements in every new state.

This new military exchange license allows military veterans and their spouses teach in Iowa temporarily without taking any additional college courses. This license costs $85 instead of the normal $210 licensing fee. The military exchange license is only valid for three years. After that time, the license can be converted to a one-year license which would give the individual the ability to teach while obtaining the required education. Once all of the Iowa licensing requirements are met, the license can be converted to a regular Iowa teaching license.

All military exchange license applicants must have completed a teacher preparation program through a college or university, and must have a license to teach in another state. Teachers who have completed an alternative teacher program and are not eligible for full licensure will be given substitute licenses.
As a member of the House Public Safety Committee, I wanted to alert parents that the drug compound 5F-PB-22 was confirmed responsible for the death of three young Iowans in 2013. In response to this news, the Drug Enforcement Agency used emergency action last week to ban four new synthetic drug compounds. Soon, the DEA could add another ten new substances to the list. Even with the bans in place, these dangerous drugs are easy to come by and parents need to be aware of identifiers and symptoms of synthetic drug use.

**New Synthetic Drug Alert!**

On January 1, the 2014-15 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) became available. For those who need financial aid to help pay for college, it is important to complete the FAFSA. Anyone can fill out the FAFSA— for free— on the official website at www.fafsa.gov. On average, it takes less than 30 minutes to complete.

To speed up the process, the Federal Department of Education provided these resources:

- "7 Things You Need Before You Fill Out the FAFSA"
- "6 Steps for Filling Out the FAFSA"
- "5 Reasons You Should Complete the FAFSA"
- "7 Myths About the FAFSA and Applying for Financial Aid"
- "7 Common FAFSA Mistakes"
- "Parents: Tips to Help Your Child Complete the FAFSA"
This week I introduced a bill that would rebate up to $2 million or 25 percent of the total costs (whichever is less) of an improvement project to the owner of a raceway facility. The sales tax rebates would begin Jan. 1, 2015 and continue for 10 years or until either cap is reached. The sales tax rebate would be limited to five of the seven-cent retail sales tax and would not include the local option penny or the penny dedicated to schools.

The Marion County Fair Board, owners of the Knoxville Raceway, are developing long-term plans for the race track and the fairgrounds overall. Plans being considered are a four-story building on the southeast corner of the track where the Skate Pit currently stands, an entry plaza and skywalk to existing stands, additional skyboxes, a rooftop terrace, raceway offices and retail space. The Skate Pit would be relocated, either inside the new building or to Dyer-Hudson Hall.

One of the first steps is getting funding into place. Knoxville Raceway intends to make a significant investment, around $4 million, into the project. Based on past Legislative actions, sales tax rebates over a period of time are a way legislators prefer to offer this kind of support for tourism and economic growth.

According to Brian Stickel, General Manager of the Raceway, this is the first time that the track has sought State financial support for a project. The Fair Board, however, has donated money to the Iowa State Fair in the past, when the State Fair was dealing with financial issues.

The Knoxville Raceway has been a racing icon, recognized worldwide, for over a half century. During Nationals week, Knoxville draws an international crowd to the heart of central Iowa. At the 2013 Nationals event they hosted over 1,000 fans from Australia, a country which also has a strong sprint car racing tradition. Stickel said that they are proud of their record of tourism, which continues to grow. He hopes to break ground on the project by the end of 2016.

Despite criticism from those that misunderstood the nature of the bill, I am excited for what this will mean for the Knoxville Community, Marion County and the State of Iowa as a whole.
From Inside the Chamber

Due to leadership’s (both parties/chambers) pre-session decision to shorten the “funnel” deadline by two full weeks, I am disappointed to report that certain “big issue” pieces of legislation did not make it out of their respective committees in time to be considered on the House floor.

For example, all of the substantive legislation dealing with Common Core was swept aside. Clearly defining government’s proper use of eminent domain, so that individual property rights are not abused, were also discarded. My heart is heavy for the many farm families who traveled to the Capitol this past week and pleaded with lawmakers to not allow the interests of out-of-state, multi-billion-dollar investors (i.e. Rock Island Clean Line) supersed their rights as property owners and family farmers. I am sickened to think that one of my House colleagues (and his surrounding neighbors) are just weeks away from having their multi-generational farms condemned by the government, via eminent domain, so that the special interest developers can turn it into a recreational facility, under the guise of “drinking water availability”. I am also dismayed at the fact that after our Secretary of State, Matt Schultz, has investigated and documented the actual and potential abuses of voter fraud, the bill designed to enhance election integrity also died.

Many dedicated legislators experienced this same frustration. Bills that we have been working very diligently on for our constituents and interests, met a similar fate. It would appear that this year’s session was ruled by pragmatism and expediency, at the expense of common sense and reason.

However, all hope is not lost. Just because the aforementioned legislation “died” by funnel, there are many of us who have vowed to not give up and continue the fight. While these important issues have hit a major roadblock, there are still opportunities to resurrect them while the session moves forward. It may be an interesting year after all. Stay tuned.

Getting Around the District...

Below is a list of my town hall forums scheduled for February:
Feb 21st: Bussey City Hall – 8 am, Lynnville City Hall – 11 am, Coffee Cup Cafe in Sully – 2 pm, Tracy Fire Station – 6 pm
Feb 28th: Last Chance Market in Russell – 7 am, Mosaic Office in Chariton – 10 am

I would like to encourage folks to attend one of scheduled forums to share concerns with me. If you prefer, I can be reached on my cell phone at 641-218-0185 or by email greg.heartsill@legis.iowa.gov.

If you have a group that is coming to the Capitol, please let me know so that I am able to arrange some time to visit with you and arrange a tour. If you would like to watch us online in the House Chamber, please go to: http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?category=BillInfo&Service=livevideo

Please share this newsletter with those that might be interested and/or send me email addresses of those that wish to be added to my newsletter list.

I consider it a great honor to represent you in Iowa House District 28. God Bless!