

Sweeney from the Statehouse 5-19-2010

Greetings House District 44!

Fellow campers I thought you might like to see clarification on the new rule by the DNR.

Rules Panel Quizzes DNR on Controversial Camping Rule

On Monday, May 10, 2010, the Administrative Rules Review Committee (ARRC) questioned the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on why it was moving forward a change in its definition of "immediate family." Currently, DNR's rules define "immediate family" as "parents, dependent children and grandparents." The new definition reads "'spouses, parents, legal guardians, domestic partnerships, dependent children, and grandparents.'"

Current rules limit occupation of specific non-group camp sites to 6 persons who may use two tents, with the second tent only being used for sleeping by an under-age dependant child. Current rules allow an exception to exceed the number limit for 'immediate families.' However, this existing rule exception still doesn't allow for circumstances where an adult spouse might want to occupy a second tent because of snoring issues, or technically when unrelated adult persons want to share a site, while not sleeping together in the same tent.

Regrettably, this redefinition isn't really necessary to accommodate the primary intent of the rule. That intent is accomplished by the second aspect of the proposal, which is to balance overcrowding and noise at state parks while still accommodating family activities.

New Assistance Programs for Disaster Impacted Businesses

Two new programs developed by the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) were recently approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The programs will utilize Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funds.

The Equipment Reimbursement Assistance Program (ERAP) provides funds to aid in the purchase of equipment for businesses that owned their own building or leased rental space during the 2008 disasters.

A qualifying business is one who sustained actual physical damage to machinery, equipment, furniture, inventory or supplies. Additionally, those businesses must be located in a presidentially declared disaster county.

The financial assistance is limited to 75% of the replacement cost of the equipment, and can not exceed a total of \$75,000 per business. Furthermore, no business who has already received assistance for these particular losses through insurance, federal funding, state or local grants, forgivable loans or private loans may receive ERAP funds.

No business who has received funds through the Business Rental Assistance Program (BRAP) or the Expanded Business Rental Assistance Program (EBRAP) will be eligible for the new program. In-home businesses are also ineligible.

A second program, the Flood Insurance Reimbursement Program, provides funds to reimburse businesses for the cost of one year of flood insurance.

Businesses eligible for this program must have had flood water in their building during the 2008 disaster or must be located in the 100-year or 500-year flood plain. A business can be eligible under the floodplain criteria even if they moved to that location following the 2008 floods.

Businesses may receive a one-time payment for one year of flood insurance coverage under the program, with a maximum award of \$5,000. An eligible policy must fall between January 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010.

According to a May 5th press release from the Rebuild Iowa Office, applications should be made to local Council of Governments or Entitlement cities by December 31, 2010.

\$2 Million Available for Water Quality & Flood Prevention Projects

On Wednesday, May 12, 2010, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey issued a press release urging eligible groups to apply for project grants that improve water quality and help prevent flooding. A total of \$2 million in grant funds are available to local watershed improvement committees, soil and water conservation districts, public water supply utilities, county conservation boards, cities and counties.

Projects eligible for funding include, but are not limited to, those addressing:

- agricultural runoff and drainage
- flood prevention
- stream bank erosion
- municipal discharge
- storm water runoff
- unsewered communities
- industrial discharge
- livestock runoff

Each project can request up to \$200,000 in funding over four years. There are several new guidelines that are part of this Request for Applications (RFA). The funds come from Capital Revenue Bonds, which have several restrictions. These restrictions prevent funding for indirect costs, information and education activities, and salary and benefits for general administration and project management. Potential applicants should review the RFA in full at www.iowaagriculture.gov/IWIRB.asp to make sure their proposal qualifies.

All applications are due on Thursday, July 1, 2010 and will be reviewed by the Watershed Improvement Review Board. The Board is comprised of representatives from agriculture, drinking water and wastewater utilities, environmental organizations, agribusiness, the conservation community along with two state senators and two state representatives. A funding announcement is expected to be made in August. Application materials can be downloaded from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship website at www.iowaagriculture.gov/IWIRB.asp. To receive more information or ask questions, contact Jerry Neppel at 515-281-3599.

Fellow voters, here is a list of the Polling (voting) places for the primary.

June 8th Primary Locations:

Hardin County Precinct	Polling Place
Alden/Buckeye	Alden Public Library
Clay/Eldora/Pleasant/Providence/Union	Eldora City Hall Basement
Concord/Sherman/Grant/Tipton	Radcliffe EMS Building
Eldora City	Hardin County Courthouse
Etna	St John's United Church of Christ
Hardin/Ellis/Jackson	Iowa Falls American Legion
Iowa Falls 1	Iowa Falls Community Theatre
Iowa Falls 2	Barlow Memorial Library

Marshall County Precinct	Polling Place
Bangor/Liberty/Minerva	Clemons Fire Station
Eden/Logan	Melbourne Recreation Center
Green Castle	Gilman City Hall
Jefferson	Laurel City Hall
LeGrand	LeGrand Community Building
Marietta/Washington	Consumers Energy
State Center	State Center City Hall
Timber Creek	IVCCD Administration Building

The summer has started off fast! Right after session we were busy finishing business and starting new business so we are ready for next session. I look forward to seeing everyone at the hometown events. Stay safe!!