

Sweeney from the Statehouse 6-16-2010

New Requirements Coming for Pesticide Applicators

On Thursday, June 10, 2010, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) published its weekly electronic newsletter *EcoNewsWire* that contained an article announcing that DNR is seeking input from people who apply pesticides to Iowa waters at an informal meeting June 29 in Des Moines. Due to a federal court decision, anyone who sprays or applies pesticides to road ditches, stream banks, lakes or other areas where the pesticide residues can end up in a water body will soon have to meet the requirements of a permit issued by the DNR.

The meeting is from 1 to 4 p.m. in the DNR's fourth floor conference rooms, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. Ninth St. The DNR will present the latest information about proposed new requirements and seek input from attendees on the permit.

The input will be used to further develop a draft general permit that would require all pesticide applicators, including cities and counties that spray to control aquatic weeds, algae or mosquitoes in water bodies, to use best management practices. Such practices include using the proper rate of pesticide, keeping equipment in good operating order, monitoring effects after application and reporting any spills or adverse effects to the DNR. Some applicators will need to meet additional requirements—based on the size of the water area they spray. For example, those who apply mosquito pesticides to more than 640 acres of water per year would have more stringent requirements. The new permit is required based on a ruling from the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals which vacated the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's final rule on Jan. 7, 2009. The decision gives all states until April 9, 2011, to develop and issue general pesticide permits. For more information, check the DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov/water/npdes/pesticides.html

Calling Iowa Entrepreneurs

Do you know an Iowan who has a business plan or an existing small business that would like to expand their operations, but needs financial assistance to do so? If so, you may want to inform them of www.DreamBigGrowHere.com. A new initiative spearheaded by the University of Northern Iowa's MyEntre.Net.

MyEntre.Net is an online development network that Iowa entrepreneurs and small business owners can join to access resources to assist them with their business ventures. Free to anyone, the website offers online market research assistance, shared technology resources, webinars, networking opportunities, and a "money map" that identifies funding sources in communities throughout the state. According to UNI's February 2010 report, more than 4,600 entrepreneurs from each county in Iowa participate in the system, with approximately 20 new registrations per day.

Recently, MyEntre.Net launched the "Dream Big Grow Here" contest. Beginning this month, entrepreneurs and small businesses located in Iowa can register their business plan in a monthly contest to win \$1,000 in assistance to help start or expand their business model. The prize money is being provided courtesy of the Iowa Bankers Association, the first partner in the project.

Each month from now until the end of the year, participants can email details or submit a video outlining their business idea to the "Dream Big Grow Here" website. After ideas have been submitted, voting will begin on the 16th through the last day of each month. Individuals are limited to one vote per day for their favorite proposal. At the end of each month, the project with the most number of votes will be awarded with \$1,000 to begin or expand their business in Iowa

Thus far, five projects have been submitted for the June contest. The projects competing for the June prize range from a mobile software development company, to a photography firm looking to expand beyond its capabilities, to a company trying to help children with birth defects. Individuals seeking additional information about the competition can visit www.DreamBigGrowHere.com or contact MyEntre.Net at info@myentre.net.

State Patrol Renews “Safe Saturdays” Program This Month

According to traffic data, Saturdays in June are traditionally some of the deadliest days to travel on Iowa roads. To address this, the Iowa State Patrol has begun their “Safe Saturdays” program for the second year in a row.

Each Saturday in June, the State Patrol will activate entire districts with all uniformed officers, regardless of rank, participating in the program. This will increase the active staff level on those evenings anywhere from 40% to 50%.

If the program operates similar to last year, the State Patrol will focus their efforts in the evening hours. The reason for this is simple, per mile driven, a driver in Iowa is three times more likely to be killed when driving at night according to the State Patrol.

The results from the 2009 “Safe Saturdays” program were cited by Colonel Patrick Hoye, Chief of the Iowa State Patrol, as contributing to the decision to renew the program for 2010. During the program last year, OWI arrests increased by 120%, seat belt citations increased 51%, and speeding citations were up 81%. Most importantly, there was only one traffic related death where the Troopers were in operation.

Safe Saturdays 2010 Schedule of Operations

June 5: Des Moines, Spencer, Oelwein

June 12: Council Bluffs, Mason City, Mt. Pleasant

June 19: Osceola, Cedar Falls, Stockton

June 26: Denison, Cedar Rapids, Fort Dodge

In Closing...

Parade season is among us! I love watching friends old & new getting together and sharing what is happening in their lives. Yes, we have the internet connections, but nothing beats one on one conversation!

In Ackley, we threaded it through the rain storm, but people’s enthusiasm was not dampened. Ackley also had a fantastic opening of their new Recreation Center. I was lucky to go the night before and get a personal tour. The story of how the whole community got together to build it was something for a news cast.

Hubbard Days also used their “make it work” attitude by scheduling the parade as soon as they saw a break in the clouds. Everyone had such a good time!

I’ve also been attending lawn chair nights. There is so much fun and interaction! Last time in Iowa Falls, the “Taste of Iowa Falls” was excellent and Iowa Falls Idol was enjoyable! If you have a lawn chair night in your community, I would encourage you to attend!

The summer is full of parades, meetings, and sunshine. May yours be fun! Stay Safe!

-Annette