



Happenings on the Hill



The Week of January 23, 2017 in review by Representative Greg Heartsill

A Review of the Revenue Estimating Conference

A question that has often been asked concerns the Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) and its function with regard to setting the state's budget.

Here is a little refresher: The REC was established in Iowa Code 8.22A during the 1987 state reorganization, as a way to bring consensus of General Fund revenue estimates that are to be used by both the Governor and Legislature for the budget process.

The REC meets periodically (generally in October, December, and March/April). The REC must meet on or before December 15 of each year and once during the regular session of the Legislature. At the December meeting, the REC establishes the net General Fund estimate that is to be used by both the Governor and the Legislature in developing the State's budget.

The REC is responsible for providing periodic estimates of General Fund revenues available for the budgeting process. The estimate is composed of several pieces, including:

- Cash tax receipts for July 1 through June 30
- Other receipts to the General Fund for July 1 through June 30
- Lottery transfers and other transfers to the General Fund for July 1 through June 30
- Accruals of tax receipts, other receipts, and transfer revenues associated with the fiscal year hold open period after June 30
- Refunds paid from fiscal year receipts
- School Infrastructure Transfers from fiscal year receipts

The combination of these projections provides the estimate of total net General Fund revenues available during the fiscal year.

If the REC in their March/April meeting lowers the net General Fund revenue estimate for the subsequent fiscal year, then the Governor and Legislature are to use the new lower amount. If the REC raises the net General Fund revenue estimate for the subsequent fiscal year, the Governor and Legislature are to still use the lower amount that was estimated in the previous December.

The current membership of the REC is:

- David Roederer, Governor's Designee
- Holly Lyons, Fiscal Division Director of the Legislative Services Agency
- David Underwood, retired CFO and Treasurer, AADG, Inc. in Mason City, Iowa

There has been concern as of late, connected with this year's budget shortfall and the last three years about why the REC is unable to predict state revenue. In order to alleviate this in coming budgets, the House will be looking at the REC and what steps need to be taken to improve their forecasting ability.

Annual Condition of Education Report

The Annual Condition of Education Report provides a wide range of Iowa education statistics and data. Included in the report is information on student and staff demographics, enrollments and enrollment trends, student achievement, district programs, and school finance. Information published in the report is intended to provide the citizens of Iowa a comprehensive look at the education system in Iowa.

To view the report for the 2015-2016 school year, visit [https://www.educateiowa.gov/education-statistics#Condition of Education Reports](https://www.educateiowa.gov/education-statistics#Condition_of_Education_Reports). Several other years are listed for review, as well. The highlights of the newest report are listed below:

STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- ✓ 483,451: The number of students enrolled in Iowa's public schools, up from 480,772 the year before. This represents the fifth enrollment increase in as many years, following a 17-year decline in enrollment
- ✓ 41.8%: The percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, up from 41% from the year before
- ✓ 22.6%: The percent of minority student enrollment, up from 21.8% the year before
- ✓ 5.7%: The percent of public school students whose primary language is not English (English Language learners, or ELL). This represents no change from the year before.
- ✓ 22.1: The ACT composite score among students in the Class of 2015 who took the college-entrance exam, down from 22.2 the year before
- ✓ 68%: The percent of students in the Class of 2016 who took the ACT, up from 67% the year before
- ✓ 90.8%: The percent of students in the Class of 2015 who graduated in four years, up slightly from 90.5% the year before

TECHNOLOGY READINESS

- ✓ 76.2%: The percent of schools in the state that have a bandwidth of at least 100 MB, which is considered the minimum bandwidth requirement for digital learning

SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, FINANCE

- ✓ Iowa's average teacher salary increased 2% in 2015-16 to \$56,449, up from \$55,356 in 2014-15
- ✓ Iowa's average teacher salary climbed to 23rd in the national rankings from 25th the year before; the Midwestern ranking remained the same at sixth out of 12 states
- ✓ There were 34,727 teachers during the 2015-16 school year, essentially the same from the year before (34,725)
- ✓ There were 336 school districts in 2015-16, down two from the year before. There are 333 districts in the current school year
- ✓ The state's total per-pupil expense was \$10,622 in the 2014-15 school year, up from \$10,240 in the 2013-14 school year

2017 Urban Youth Corps Program

The Iowa Department of Transportation is seeking private, nonprofit, and public organizations/agencies to submit applications to participate in the 2017 Urban Youth Corps program.

The program's objectives are to provide transportation-related work projects and training opportunities to youth between the ages of 16 and 21 who face barriers to employment while accomplishing meaningful and productive improvements to transportation facilities.

Examples of eligible transportation-related work projects include:

- ❖ Pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- ❖ Safe routes for non-driver projects and systems
- ❖ Conversion and use of abandoned railway corridors for pedestrian and bicycle trails
- ❖ Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas
- ❖ Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising
- ❖ Historic preservation of transportation facilities
- ❖ Vegetation management practices in transportation rights of way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control
- ❖ Archeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of transportation projects eligible under Title 23 of the United States Code
- ❖ Any environmental mitigation activity
- ❖ Projects eligible under Safe Routes to Schools, Transportation Alternatives, and Federal Recreational Trails

This cost-reimbursement program requires participating agencies to pay expenses prior to seeking reimbursement from the Iowa DOT. In addition, each participating agency is required to provide 30 percent of the total project cost as a local match. Projects will be funded for all or part of a five-month period beginning May 1, 2017 and ending Sept. 30, 2017.

It is anticipated that \$80,000 will be available for this year's program; however, the award has not yet been finalized by the Iowa Transportation Commission. In anticipation that this award does become final in March 2017 and in order to allow successful applicants to begin projects on time during the project period, applications will be due March 1, 2017. Applicants will be notified of the results by April 30, 2017.

For application forms or other information, please contact Stacy Lentsch @ 515-239-1686 or email stacy.lentsch@iowadot.us

You can also visit the Iowa DOT's website www.iowadot.gov/systems_planning/Urban_Youth_Corps.htm

Secretary Northey Comments on Court Ruling

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey issued the following statement regarding the Iowa Supreme Court ruling on four certified questions of law that the Court received from the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Iowa that is hearing the full case. The full Supreme Court decision can be found at http://www.iowacourts.gov/About_the_Courts/Supreme_Court/Supreme_Court_Opinions/Recent_Opinions/20170127/index.asp.

“This decision is a significant loss for Des Moines Water Works. Their failed strategy seeks to circumvent well-established Iowa law with more than 100 years of precedent. Unfortunately, it has already cost Des Moines Water Works ratepayers more than \$1 million dollars on lawyer fees that could be better spent improving their infrastructure and serving their customers. While Iowans have continued to take on the challenge of improving water quality and investing in additional conservation practices, the lawsuit has been a needless distraction from our collaborative, research-based approach that is working with Iowans in rural and urban areas across the state to improve water quality.”

Water Control Plan Updates

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is hosting public open house events to seek input on updating the Des Moines River Regulation Manual, which includes the Water Control Manual for Saylorville Lake and Red Rock Lake. District staff will be on hand to answer questions. Times and locations for the open houses are:

- 📍 **Jan. 31** - Johnston Public Library, 2 - 4 p.m. and 5 - 7 p.m. Presentations at 2:30 and 5:30 p.m.
- 📍 **Feb. 1** - Central College Graham Annex Building, Pella, 2 - 4 p.m. and 6 - 8 p.m. Presentations at 2:30 and 6:30 p.m.
- 📍 **Feb. 2** - Bridge View Center, Ottumwa, 2 - 4 p.m. and 6 - 8 p.m. Presentations at 2:30 and 6:30 p.m.

The Des Moines River Regulation Manual revision process will begin after public scoping has taken place. A draft is anticipated to be available for public review in early 2018. Public meeting attendees who sign up to receive direct updates will receive notification of availability by mail or email. The final Water Control Plan is anticipated to be completed in September 2018.

For up-to-date information on the revision process, to view the current plan, to submit comments or be added to an email list to receive updates and notifications, visit: <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/About/Offices/Programs-and-Project-Management/Des-Moines-River-Water-Control-Plan-Update/>.

Online comment submission will be available starting January 31, 2017. Public comments may also be submitted by mail to: Rock Island District, Attn: PM-M, P.O. Box 2004, Rock Island, IL 61204-2004; by email to PublicInvolvement@usace.army.mil; or by telephone at: (309) 794-5704.

Chronic Wasting Disease in Iowa

Nine samples from hunter-harvested deer from near Harpers Ferry during the 2016 hunting seasons have tested positive for chronic wasting disease, bringing the total of CWD positive deer from the area to 15.

The disease is spread from animal to animal through nose-to-nose contact and through environmental contamination from urine, feces and saliva left by positive deer. Chronic wasting disease involves a misshapen protein called a prion. Since this is a protein, a deer's body does not recognize it as a foreign substance, so it does not produce an antibody response. There is no cure once an animal becomes infected.

The DNR met with hunters and landowners in Harpers Ferry and Waukon on Jan. 18 to discuss collecting additional deer samples from areas where data is limited and to get more samples from the immediate areas where new positive cases were confirmed. At each meeting, attendees volunteered to help collect additional samples.

"We hope to collect 250 to 300 samples from mature deer from a specific area around Harpers Ferry and that will do two things – provide information on specific areas in the target zone where we do not have any data and to remove animals from the area where CWD-positive deer have been found," said Dr. Dale Garner, chief of the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Bureau.

Once a sample is submitted for testing, it takes two to three weeks to get results back.

"There is no good news when it comes to chronic wasting disease. We know that if we leave it alone, it's going to spread. By removing adult deer, we are trying to target animals that are most likely to carry the prion, which will slow the spread of the disease while still allowing for quality deer hunting experiences each fall."

The DNR has established a scientific collection effort from Jan. 21 to Feb. 5 in a defined area near Harpers Ferry. Participants met with local DNR wildlife staff to discuss how to remove the deer, where they planned to focus their effort, and how to contact the DNR to provide the lymph nodes for testing.

Participants must have a scientific collector's permit and tags and must contact the DNR within 24 hours of collecting deer to arrange for sample collection. There is no fee for the permits. Participants may use shotguns, muzzleloaders, bows and rifles .24 caliber and larger. All other regulations, including the blaze orange requirement and shooting hours restrictions, apply.

Chronic wasting disease is not just an Iowa issue; Minnesota has had a spike in deer testing positive for the disease as well. Illinois, Nebraska, Missouri and Wisconsin are all battling this disease.

"We encourage everyone to not use piles of feed or salt-mineral licks to attract deer. These baited sites increase the concentration of deer which facilitates transmission of the disease," said Garner. "And don't leave a carcass or bones from this region to decay on the land. Place remains in heavy-duty plastic garbage bags to be properly disposed of in a landfill."

Eagle Found Shot at Polk County Park

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is looking for the person or persons responsible for shooting a bald eagle at Yellow Banks County Park, near the Des Moines River on the southeast side of Des Moines, and removing its head and talons.

The crime was reported by a hiker on Wednesday.

“We don’t have much to go on so we need some help. If anyone saw or heard shots in this area during the first two weeks of the year, we would like to know about it,” said State Conservation Officer Nate Anderson. “It’s hard to estimate how long the eagle has been dead due to the warmer temperatures and the state of the eagle’s remains.”

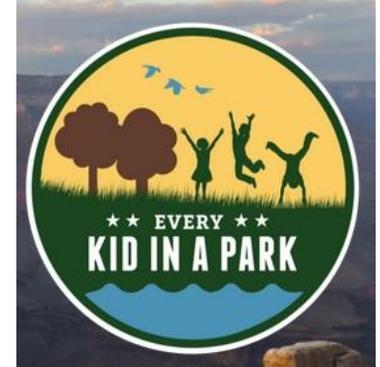
Anderson said people can use the Turn in Poachers website at www.iowadnr.gov/tip or by calling the hotline at 1-800-532-2020. Information can be left anonymous.

Bald eagles are a state and federally protected species.

Every Kid in a Park

Visiting public lands is a healthy activity, a great learning opportunity and fun for the whole family. “Every Kid in a Park” is a federally funded program designed to have America’s youth connect to nature and their history.

The program was designed around fourth graders because research shows that kids ages 9 to 11 are beginning to learn about the world around them. They are open to new ideas, and they are likely to connect to nature and our history. No matter where children live in the U.S., they are within two hours of an included site.



This program only provides passes for fourth graders and by extension, their families. Fourth-grade educators can also participate in this program if they teach at a U.S. school. Other adults who qualify are those who engage fourth graders through a youth-serving organization. (For example, a camp director, a home-school leader, an after-school leader, or a religious group leader.) Select sites can choose to waive fees for the teachers on a field trip.

These agencies support Every Kid in a Park.

- ❖ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- ❖ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- ❖ U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- ❖ U.S. Forest Service
- ❖ U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- ❖ National Park Service

Visit www.everykidinapark.gov for more information or to start the adventure!

From Inside the Chamber

Who says legislators don't have a sense of humor?

Occasionally, during the legislative session, House members will put forth resolutions that highlight certain people or events that deserve special recognition in our state. Such was the case this past week when Reps. Joel Fry, Tom Moore, and Rob Bacon introduced House Resolution 3 recognizing the Pork Congress and the importance of the pork industry to Iowa's agricultural economy. The title of the resolution reads as follows:

House Resolution 3
By FRY, MOORE, BACON



Tuesday, I had the opportunity to visit with Knoxville School Board President Andrew Schmidt during the IASB's Day on the Hill. We had a good chat about education, followed up by a tour of the Capitol. I also took a few minutes to



connect with Maureen Miller (former Knoxville resident) who visited the Capitol for Clinton County's Day on the Hill. That evening, I visited with the Maasdam's from Eye Health Solutions in Knoxville during the annual optometric gathering.



With the deappropriation logjam cleared out of the way, House members had more time to focus on subcommittee work. Several bills that I have introduced have cleared the first hurdle and are on their way to the full committee.

Getting Around the District...

During Session, I hold weekly town hall meetings around the District. Below is the current schedule:
February 3rd: Last Chance Market in Russell – 8 am, Mosaic Office in Chariton – 10 am,
Chamber Office in Knoxville – 5 pm

If you cannot attend a forum, you may also contact me at 641-218-0185 or 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. It is a great honor to represent you in Iowa House District 28. God Bless!