

IOWA HOUSE REPUBLICANS

March 24, 2022

IowaHouseRepublicans.com

Appropriations

Budgets Moving Through Iowa House

On Tuesday, the Iowa House of Representatives passed the first budget bills for Fiscal Year 2023. The House approved the Transportation, Judicial Branch, and Justice Systems budget bills for next year. With the House looking to also take action on the Agriculture & Natural Resources, Administration & Regulation, and Economic Development bills before adjourning for the week, two-thirds of the state budget bills will have been completed by the House by Friday.

Action on the remaining bills is also progressing. On Tuesday, the proposal for the FY 2023 Education Appropriations bill was introduced. The bill allocates just over \$1 billion for primarily higher education programs. The bill provides increases for Community Colleges, Department for the Blind, Iowa Tuition Grants. The bill also makes a substantial investment the Jobs for America’s Graduates program.

The Education budget bill also institutes a new approach to addressing Iowa’s need for highly skilled workers. The bill provides \$12 million in student financial aid to students at Iowa’s three state universities, providing \$5,000 per year grants for juniors and seniors getting degrees in high need jobs or education. The grants would be paid out by semester, with the last payment coming after the student has worked for one year in the state of Iowa.

Also released on Tuesday was the House proposal for the Health and Human Services budget for next year. The bill takes a major step in addressing community-based services for those with intellectual disabilities by providing a \$14.6 million increase for providers (dedicated for wage & benefit costs) and an increase in the number of Home and Community Based Services waiver slots available throughout the state.

The Health and Human Services budget also addresses the need for additional mental health beds, by funding a plan to create a new psychiatric level of care within the Medicaid program while also addressing children’s providers. Substance abuse treatment facilities and rural home health providers would also see an increase in funding. It is quite possible that by the end of March, the House will have acted on at least eight of the ten annual budget bills.

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BUDGET BILL STATUS

AS OF 12 PM, MARCH 23

Bill	Bill Number	Status	Last Action
Administration & Regulation	HF 2565	On House Floor (Eligible for debate 3/24)	3/21/2022
Agriculture & Natural Resources	HF 2560	On House Floor (Eligible for debate 3/18)	3/15/2022
Economic Development	HF 2564	On House Floor (Eligible for debate 3/24)	3/21/2022
Education	LSB 5003YA	In House Appropriations	3/22/2022
Health & Human Services	LSB 5004YA	In Subcommittee	3/22/2022
Judicial Branch	HF 2558	PASSED HOUSE	3/22/2022
Justice Systems	HF 2559	PASSED HOUSE	3/22/2022
Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund			
Transportation	HF 2557	PASSED HOUSE	3/22/2022
Standings			

Agriculture

House Gives Final Okay to Personal Use livestock Slaughter Measure

On Tuesday, March 22, 2022, the Iowa House passed Senate File 2245 by a unanimous 94-0 vote. SF 2245 creates a personal use exception to the state licensing provisions in the Iowa Meat and Poultry Inspection Act based on two such exemptions in the federal Acts regarding the inspections of meat animals. This legislation would clarify that a person could slaughter their own livestock for personal use (including non-paying guests and nonpaying employees) without being inspected or paying meat slaughter/processing license fee. Meat slaughtered in this manner may not be sold to another person. This measure previously passed the Senate on February 22, 2022 by a unanimous vote of 48-aye in that chamber.

IDALS Awards 13 Choose Iowa Marketing and Promotion Grants

On Monday, March 21, 2022, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release concerning nearly \$250,000 in grants to help 13 Iowa farmers, businesses and non-profits increase or diversify their agricultural product offerings.

Choose Iowa Marketing and Promotion grants are being awarded to the following individuals, businesses and non-profit organizations:

- *Stensland Creamery*, located near Larchwood, is being awarded \$25,000 to increase their on-farm dairy processing capacity and product offerings. Total projected cost: \$52,912
- *Country View Dairy*, located near Hawkeye, is being awarded \$20,030 to increase production capability, enabling them to enter more retail markets and serve more Iowa schools. Total projected cost \$40,060
- *Austin Schulte*, located near Norway, is being awarded \$25,000 to begin on-farm dairy processing of cheese, increasing opportunities for workforce and consumers in the area. Total projected cost: \$350,000
- *Kerns Farms*, located near Clearfield, is being awarded \$25,000 to purchase stationary and mobile cold storage to expand their mobile meat delivery service. Total projected cost: \$61,406
- *T-A Family Premium Meats*, located in Marquette, is being awarded \$25,000 to construct a retail store to showcase Iowa meats, cheeses, honey, maple syrup, cider, sauces, spices, and other specialty foods. Total projected cost: \$52,000
- *SkyView Farms*, located near Nora Springs, is being awarded \$9,770 to expand their current direct sale beef business to a beef, pork, poultry, and egg food hub serving Iowans. Total projected cost: \$30,020
- *Iowa Food Hub*, located in Waukon, is being awarded \$18,000 to access additional markets, add more distribution routes, and serve more customers in Iowa. Total projected cost: \$40,000
- *Franklin Street Brewing Company*, located in Manchester, is being awarded \$25,000 to purchase and install a canning line that will increase their production and purchases of Iowa-grown hops and grains. Total projected cost: \$83,339
- *Whitetail Valley Farm*, located near Stanton, is being awarded \$21,000 to increase their production and sales of apple-based beverages. Total projected cost: \$46,152

- *Local Harvest CSA*, located near Solon, is being awarded \$5,750 to establish an on-farm kitchen to extend their production season and expand their market of value-added fruit and vegetable products. Total projected cost: \$11,500
 - *Clear Sky Flowers*, located in Leon, is being awarded \$2,500 to increase storage capacity and improve transportation methods of their flowers to create alternative methods to the current supply chain disruptions. Total projected cost: \$5,067
 - *ChopLocal*, based in Wayland, is being awarded \$25,000 to increase access to their online meat marketplace for producers and consumers. Total projected cost: \$58,500
- Brun Ko Farm*, located near Exira, is being awarded \$15,000 to increase vegetable production by increasing washing and storage capacity. Total projected cost: \$30,000

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Commerce

IUB Schedules Time to Determine Hearing Locations for Summit Carbon Pipeline

The Iowa Utilities Board has issued an order scheduling an oral argument for April 12, 2022, to review its compliance with a statutory requirement for selecting a hearing location for Summit Carbon Solutions LLC’s (Summit Carbon) request for a permit of a hazardous liquid pipeline. The order also sets out the IUB’s proposed methodology for setting the midpoint of the proposed pipeline route and seeks input on whether the hearing can be held in a county where the proposed pipeline would not be located.

Iowa Code § 479B.6(b) requires the IUB to hold the hearing “in the county seat of the county located at the midpoint of the proposed pipeline.” The order states the IUB “interprets the statute to require that the hearing be held at a location that provides all landowners an approximate equal opportunity to attend the hearing.”

The pipeline route, as proposed, would have endpoints in Lyon, Woodbury, Fremont, Chickasaw and Dickinson counties. To meet its statutory requirement, the IUB estimated the travel time from the five endpoints and noted that because of the configuration of the proposed pipeline, with one primary line and several trunk lines, the midpoint cannot be easily determined.

The order allows parties wishing to comment on how the Board should determine the hearing location to file comments or briefs no later than **March 31, 2022**. The comments will be considered at the oral argument, which will be held in the IUB Hearing Room following the monthly public Board meeting that begins at 9 a.m. April 12.

Summit Carbon filed its petition to construct, operate, and maintain a proposed hazardous liquid pipeline to transport liquefied carbon dioxide within the state of Iowa on January 28, 2022, in Docket No. [HLP-2021-0001](#). IUB staff are currently reviewing the petition and exhibits filed in support of the petition to determine whether additional information is needed or corrections are required to bring those documents into compliance with Iowa Code chapter 479B and IUB rules in 199 Iowa Administrative Code chapter 13.

Following a determination that the petition is substantially complete, the IUB will issue a subsequent order that establishes a procedural schedule, sets an intervention date, sets dates for Summit Carbon and other parties to file prepared testimony and exhibits, and sets the hearing date and location.

(Contact: Ben Gentz, 1-3452)

Economic Growth

March IEDA Awards

Last week, the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) Board approved awards for three companies, which will assist in the creation of 56 jobs and result in over \$76 million in new capital investment for the state. These projects are located in Ames, Peosta, and Underwood.

Berdex—Ames

Berdex USA manufactures livestock trailers with a focus on biosecurity measures and animal well-being. The company plans to locate its U.S. headquarters at an existing facility in Ames where it will manufacture three different livestock trailers for swine and cattle producers. The project represents a capital investment of just over \$1 million and is expected to create 20 jobs at a qualifying wage of \$28.87 per hour. The board awarded tax benefits through the High Quality Jobs (HQJ) program.

Camsco—Peosta

Camsco Manufacturing USA designs, develops, and manufactures specialized components, subsystems, and assemblies for original equipment manufacturers. The company plans to rework its facility in Peosta with new equipment to implement a new line. The board awarded this \$20 million capital investment project tax benefits through the HQJ program. It is expected to create 33 jobs, of which 17 are incented at a qualifying wage of \$21.13 per hour.

Link Snacks—Underwood

Link Snacks, Inc. is a manufacturer of meat snacks operating in the U.S. and internationally. The facility in Underwood serves as a national distribution hub and the company plans to expand it, approximately doubling the current capacity. They also plan to purchase an automated storage and retrieval system. The project is expected to create three jobs at a qualifying wage of \$22.94 per hour and was awarded tax benefits through the HQJ program. It represents a capital investment of just over \$55 million.

(Contact: Kristi Kiouss, 2-5290)

Education

House GOP Stands With Parents, Students On Curriculum Transparency Bill

Since the government-imposed shutdowns of schools gave parents a clear view of what their children were learning in schools, curriculum transparency has become the key issue with parents reasserting their fundamental right to know what is being taught to their children. When parents tried to gain more access to what their child was learning, some school boards, administrators and even some teachers pushed back. Additionally, parents discovered a clear process for gaining access or discussing concerns about instructional material wasn't available.

Somehow, over the course the 2022 legislative session, Democrats in Des Moines have made the right of parents to know what is being taught inside classrooms a partisan issue. It is an odd stand to take. Parents, regardless of political persuasion, have a right to know what is being taught to their children.

While the vast majority of teachers in Iowa have no concerns with being transparent and providing information to their students' families, that isn't always the case. Good teachers will have no problem sharing their lessons and materials while working with parents; bad or ideologically motivated teachers and administrators, on the other hand, will be exposed to parental oversight and can be held responsible.

The ultimate goal of curriculum transparency legislation is to provide families with a tool for accountability. Curriculum transparency battles politics in the classroom from both the left and the right and keeps the culture wars out of the classroom. It lets kids be kids and lets teachers be teachers.

HF 2499 makes school districts and teachers post the syllabus, textbooks, related core materials and a list of instructional materials that will be used in the student's classes. The school will satisfy this requirement simply by providing the parent or guardian access to the school's classroom management software such as Canvas or Google Classroom. School's that do not have a classroom management software system will have until July 1, 2023 to get up to speed.

As this discussion has evolved during the 2022 legislative session a couple controversial ideas have garnered a significant amount of interest. One is criminal penalties against teachers. The House Republican plan DOES NOT contain criminal penalties against teachers. Our plan gives teachers the opportunity to correct any oversights regarding the posting of instructional material. A second controversial idea was a potential requirement for teachers to post ALL material prior to the start of the fall semester in August and then again before the spring semester begins in January. The House Republican plan allows teachers the flexibility to post instructional material throughout the year as their lessons and material change.

The district also will provide a list of school library books. Again, this can be satisfied by allowing parent or guardian access to the online library catalogue. If a school does not have an online catalogue, they have until 2025 to comply. Parents will have the ability to review the list of books and provide to the school any titles they do not want their own children to check out.

School districts must post the process for the review of educational materials and the reconsideration or removal of school library books prominently on their website so parents know exactly what they can and should do. If the parent disagrees with the school board's decision, or the school fails to take action on a complaint from a parent or guardian on either of the above, they can appeal to the State Board of Education.

None of these requirements places an undue burden on a school district or a teacher. But, if a teacher or a district decides to break the rules, there will be consequences. If it is found that a school is not being transparent and withholding information, the Department of Education has the ability to either impose conditions on their funding or withhold payment of funds. If the Department finds that a district is noncompliant, the department will allow the school 14 days to correct the violation and if they fail to do so, a civil penalty will be assessed against the district in an amount not less than \$500 and not more than \$5,000. The teacher who is not compliant will also be referred to the Board of Educational Examiners for potential sanctions on their license.

In contrast, Democrats in the Iowa House have taken an approach that targets parents and their decisions as parents. Instead of supporting the fundamental right of parents to know what is being taught to their children, legislative Democrats have decided to punish parents with more government restrictions. Those restricted are as follows:

- A comprehensive list of every of television show the student watched during the preceding week
- A comprehensive list of every video game the student played during the preceding week
- A comprehensive list of the social media programs and applications the student used during the preceding week – including links to all of the content the student posted on social media programs and platforms during the preceding week
- A list of all of the student's friends on social media
- A list of all slang terms and racial epithets that were used at least once per day in the student's home during the preceding week.
- A thorough description of how the relationships among the adults in the student's life are displayed in front of the student

- An accounting of the total number of times during the preceding week that an adult in the student’s home said something to the student that could reasonably be considered to be uplifting, motivational, judgmental, or demotivational
- A picture of the quiet space in the student’s home that is set aside for the student to do school work.
- A comprehensive list of the books the student’s parent or guardian plans to read to the student
- A comprehensive list of the books the student plans to read
- A comprehensive list of activities the parent or guardian believes the student’s household will take part in each day for the remainder of the school year.

Targeting parents who simply want to know what is being taught inside the classroom is as ridiculous as arguing that schools can’t teach kids certain material unless it’s kept secret.

House Republicans are listening to the parents who want more access to their child’s education while also listening to teachers on how to properly implement these protocols and processes. While Democrats have chosen to oppose the fundamental right for parents to know what is being taught inside the classroom, Republicans, parents, teachers, and schools are working together to be transparent and involved in the education of their children.

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Human Resources

Health Care Bills Protecting Taxpayer Dollars, Private Health Decisions Head to Governor

This week, the Iowa Senate passed two important health care bills that will now head to the Governor for her signature. These bills support Iowa’s hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care providers, and ensure lower health care costs for Iowans.

House File 2521 ensures that Iowa’s taxpayer funds are not being gouged by temporary staffing agencies charging health care entities unnecessarily high costs. The state has entered into these agreements on behalf of hospitals when staffing was difficult this winter, and the state also pays for at least half of nursing home beds in Iowa through Medicaid.

This bill helps provide transparency in pricing by requiring these temp health staffing agencies report quarterly a detailed list of the average amount charged to the health care entity for each agency worker category, and average amount paid by the agency to the agency workers for each worker category. The bill also requires these health care employment agencies to register with the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals, and requires DIA to investigate complaints against these agencies. Importantly, this bill requires agency workers to be qualified and meet health regulation requirements for the health care setting they are working in. Lastly, this bill prohibits non-competes, as it has been seen that these agencies are using these for even CNA positions.

The Senate also passed House File 2200 with bipartisan support to provide Iowans with the option to enter into direct health care agreements with health care providers. The legislature understands that Iowans should be able to make their own health care choices and might be seeking alternative options from health insurance because they have a high deductible plan, can’t afford insurance, or want something tailored to their specific health care needs.

In 2018, the legislature allowed Iowans to enter into direct primary care agreements with primary care providers only. This bill expands this option to any health care service with any health care provider. Under this bill, a patient can enter into a direct health care agreement and pay a service charge for health care services defined under the agreement.

This bill includes patient protections regarding billing, termination notification, and understanding that these agreements do not constitute health insurance and recommend additional coverage. Importantly, this bill prohibits health care providers from discriminating based on a patient's preexisting conditions.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Information Technology

Cyber Security Simulator Training Center at ISU

All session, the Information Technology committee has been learning and gathering information on cybersecurity risks. The Committee has heard from cybersecurity experts and even a first-hand account of a major cyber-attack at DMACC. One of the proposals to arise from these conversations is House File 2555, which creates a cybersecurity simulation training center at Iowa State University.

This cybersecurity simulation training center (CySim) will conduct and sponsor research and activities that enable businesses, teams, and others to practice of strategies to counter and mitigate cyber threats and attacks. It will be available to businesses, state agencies, political subdivisions, as well as students and educators. CySim will be capable of conducting cybersecurity training exercises, developing case studies, providing at setting for Student events and competitions, providing training exercises for educators, and coordinating cybersecurity workforce development

There is a significant need for cyber security awareness and defenses at all levels of government, business, and for everyone. The CySim can be a tool to ensure people are prepared for when they are attacked. House File 2555 passed the floor with strong bipartisan support.

(Contact: Ben Gentz, 1-3452)

Judiciary

Voting Constitutional Amendment Approved by House and Senate

Last week, the Iowa House voted to pass Senate Joint Resolution 9, a constitutional amendment addressing the qualification of electors in the state. The resolution has now passed the House and Senate with unanimous support. SJR 9 is a straightforward resolution that changes article I and II of the Iowa Constitution. Under the current language, voters must be 21, even though the legal age was lowered to 18 many years ago. The resolution changes the age to vote to 18 and clarifies that only citizens of the United States are eligible to vote. While the language changes are small, they are important to ensure our state Constitution remains up do date and to protect voting rights.

A change to the Iowa Constitution can only happen if the language passes both the House and Senate in two separate general assemblies and then is approved by voters. SJR 9 will have to pass both chambers in either 2023 or 2024 and then will be on the ballot for approval in November of 2024.

(Contact: Amanda Wille, 1-5230)

Labor

Unemployment to Re-employment

On Wednesday, House Republicans passed a change in unemployment policy designed to encourage Iowans to fill the thousands of job openings. Instead of thinking of this process as an unemployment policy, House Republicans are turning it into a re-employment policy. Right now, Iowa has 85,946 job openings posted, which is more jobs than workers available. This re-employment policy helps get workers back in the workforce and helps Iowa continue to thrive economically.

Major changes include reducing the unemployment weeks from 26 to 16. If unemployment is due to plant closure, the weeks are reduced from 39 to 26. Iowa is not the first state, nor the only state to have fewer than 26 weeks of unemployment. Near Iowa, Kansas and Arkansas also have 16 weeks of unemployment.

This bill also changes the percentage of unemployment benefits one receives each week a person refuses a job offer. Benefits are 100% if the work is being offered during the first week of unemployment, benefits are 90% if the work is being offered during the second and third week of unemployment, benefits are 80% if the work is offered during the fourth and fifth week of unemployment, benefits are 70% if the work is offered during the sixth through eighth week of unemployment, and benefits are 60% if the work is offered after the eighth week of unemployment. Again, there are a lot of jobs available right now and businesses that are desperate for employees. This will incentivize those on unemployment to get back in the workforce sooner without relying on unemployment benefits.

These changes, in conjunction with the Re-Employment Case Management System Iowa Workforce Development that launched in January, will work together to get individuals back in the workforce and make Iowa's economy thrive. When fully implemented, the RCM program will include 18 new Career Planners who are assigned to meet individually with Iowans seeking reemployment beginning with the first week of their unemployment claims.

The Career Planners work to directly connect unemployment claimants with training and educational opportunities in high-demand careers. They will be assisted by new technology that's being added to Iowa's existing IowaWORKS system, thereby making it easier to match an unemployment claimant's work history with the skills in demand by Iowa companies with open jobs.

Getting Iowans back in the workforce is good for everyone from the individual, to the businesses, to the State of Iowa. Iowa is a re-employment state.

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Local Government

Shared Assessors Passes Iowa House

This week the Iowa House passed Senate File 384, a bill that allows county conference boards to enter into agreements to share county assessors. All property that is subject to taxation in a county is assessed its actual value by the county assessor (or a city assessor if they city chooses to appoint one). Assessors are required to meet certain educational and training requirements set forth by the Department of Revenue. County conference boards are required to choose only from a list of qualified assessors provided by the Department of Revenue.

As population shifts and modernization of processes have taken place, counties need to be given tools and opportunities to think outside the box or to streamline processes where possible. SF 384 will be an additional tool for counties to utilize in order to save resources and adapt to their specific needs. By allowing counties to share assessors,

like they already do for other positions and resources, it allows for more local control to make decisions that benefit their counties the most. For some counties it might make more sense to share an assessor between the two. The legislature will continue to need to address flexibility and options for counties as we see declines in population in more rural counties and to reassess the need for some practices in order to streamline local government. SF 384 will improve those options for Iowa's counties.

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

Natural Resources

DNR Touts that Iowa's Spring Turkey Hunting Season is Right Around the Corner

On Tuesday, March 22, 2022, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a press release noting turkey hunting participation has returned to pre-pandemic levels. However, only around 20 to 22 percent of the tags are filled each year, which equates to a harvest of around 11,500 birds.

Hunters may purchase up to two tags for Iowa's four spring turkey seasons as long as at least one of the tags is for the fourth season. Each year it all begins with the youth only season. The purpose of the youth season is for adults to mentor the youth without any pressure or competition from other hunting adults. Youth turkey licenses purchased before the youth season closes and are not filled during the youth season may be used in any of the subsequent seasons until filled or the season ends.

2022 Iowa Spring Turkey Seasons (Gun/Bow)

- Youth-only: April 8-10 (Iowa residents only)
- Season 1: April 11-14
- Season 2: April 15-19
- Season 3: April 20-26
- Season 4: April 27-May 15
- Resident archery-only season: April 11-May 15

Iowa DNR to Begin Annual Spring Burning

On Monday, March 21, 2022, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a press release announcing that the state agency will be conducting prescribed burns this spring on wildlife management areas managed by the Iowa DNR's Prairie Lakes Wildlife Unit.

Prescribed burns are used to improve wildlife habitat, control invasive plant species, restore and maintain native plant communities and reduce wildfire potential and vary in size from a few acres to several hundred acres. Burn units are typically on a 4-5 year rotation. Prescribed burns typically begin mid to late morning and are completed by late afternoon or early evening between mid-March and mid-May. Burns will be conducted on a day that meets the objectives and weather conditions defined in the burn plan. Any prescribed burns that are not able to be completed this spring will be considered for the burn schedule next fall.

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

State Government

Gubernatorial Line of Succession Passes Both Chambers

This week the Senate passed House Joint Resolution 2005, a proposed Constitutional amendment to clarify and update the line of succession for the office of governor. Article IV, Section 17 of the Iowa Constitution says that in the case there is a vacancy in the office of governor, that the powers and duties of the governor devolve upon the lieutenant governor. Following the appointment of Governor Branstad as the ambassador to China there has been legal debate over the line of gubernatorial succession and what that means for filling vacancies and powers of the offices.

In 2009, when Democrats controlled both chambers of the legislature and the governor's office, they amended Iowa Code to say that "An appointment by the governor to fill a vacancy in the office of lieutenant governor shall be for the balance of the unexpired term." However, in 2017 when Governor Branstad resigned, Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller issued a legal opinion that Kim Reynolds would assume the powers and duties of governor, but she did not have the authority to appoint a new lieutenant governor. In 2018, Governor Reynolds won her election with appointed Lt. Governor Adam Gregg.

Addressing this legal issue is important for Iowans to know the legal line of succession in the case of a vacancy in the office of governor. HJR 2005 replaces and updates Section 17 to clarify that the lieutenant governor or lieutenant governor-elect assumes the office if a vacancy occurs. This then creates a vacancy in the office of lieutenant governor or lieutenant governor-elect, which can be filled by the new Governor.

Amendments to the Iowa Constitution are required to pass both legislative chambers in consecutive general assemblies. The language will need to pass both chambers next year or in 2024. Once the legislation has passed both chambers in consecutive general assemblies, the amendment will be presented to Iowans to vote to enact it on the ballot.

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

Transportation

Budget for Iowa Department of Transportation Moves Through the Process

This week, the Transportation Appropriations Bill (House File 2557) overwhelmingly passed the Iowa House with bipartisan support.

Annually, this budget bill moves funds from the Road Use Tax Fund and the Primary Road Fund to the Department of Transportation for a total of \$416.1 million.

The Road Use Tax Fund is a fund made of dedicated highway user revenue, collected through a state excise tax on fuels. No state general fund revenue is used for highway projects in Iowa. Established in 1949 by the 53rd Iowa General Assembly, the Road Use Tax Fund (RUTF) provides the funding for the state's primary, secondary and municipal roadway systems. After some off-the-top diversions, receipts into the RUTF are distributed according to a formula of 47.5 percent for the Primary Road System (State), 24.5 percent for secondary county roads, 8 percent for farm-to-market county roads, and 20 percent for city streets. Legislation that went into effect in 2003, which involved the transfer of jurisdiction of some roadways from the state to either a city or county government, requires a share (1.75 percent) of the Primary Road System funds be paid to local governments.

The Treasurer of State is required to allocate the RUTF moneys by formula to the Primary Road Fund, the Secondary Road Fund, the Farm-to-Market Road Fund, and the Street Construction Fund of the Cities. Moneys in the Primary Road Fund may be used to construct and maintain the primary road system and for expenses related to the primary road system, including the maintenance of DOT facilities and merit pay increases for DOT employees for which appropriations are not otherwise made.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Veterans Affairs

House Veterans Affairs Funnel Survivors

The House Veterans Affairs Committee had the following bills pass second funnel, a legislative deadline of the session:

HF 2300 – Civil Air Patrol - This bill adds in members of the Civil Air Patrol to the list of military branches protected under law from car and health insurance termination and from employment discrimination while performing official duties. Last year, the legislature added the Coast Guard to this same list.

HF 2501 – Veterans Trust Fund Investment - This bill requires the state treasurer to invest moneys in the Veterans Trust Fund along with the investment for IPERS. The earnings will be credited to the Veterans Trust Fund. This bill allows for greater flexibility in the state's investment strategy to help grow the Veterans Trust Fund, a fund used to improve the quality of life for our Iowa veterans.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Ways & Means

IRS Tips for a Smooth Tax Filing Season

This week the Internal Revenue Service published advice on how to avoid common errors on tax returns. The IRS stated they were already seeing trends in errors this filing season—specifically that taxpayers were claiming incorrect amounts of the Recovery Rebate Credit and Child Tax Credit. To avoid this, taxpayers should refer to Letter 6419 for advance Child Tax Credit payments and Letter 6475 for third Economic Impact Payment amounts they received.

Here are the other specific tips the IRS provided for an error-free tax filing season:

Use the correct filing status. If taxpayers are unsure about their filing status, the Interactive Tax Assistant on IRS.gov is helpful.

Answer the virtual currency question. Do not leave this field blank—check either "Yes" or "No."

Report all taxable income. Underreporting income may lead to penalties and interest.

Include unemployment compensation. Although a special law allowed taxpayers to exclude unemployment received in 2020, it was only for that year. Unemployment received in 2021 is generally taxable, so taxpayers should include it as income on their tax return.

Double-check name, birth date and Social Security number entries. Taxpayers must correctly list the name, Social Security number (SSN) and date of birth for each person they claim as a dependent on their individual income tax return.

Double check routing and account numbers. Incorrect numbers can cause a refund to be delayed.

Mail paper returns to the right address. Paper filers should confirm the correct address for where to file on IRS.gov or on form instructions to avoid processing delay—however processing paper tax returns will take longer than if you file online.

Sign and date the return. If filing a joint return, both spouses must sign and date the return. E-filers can sign using a self-selected personal identification number (PIN).

Keep a copy. When ready to file, taxpayers should make a copy of their signed return and all schedules for their records.

Request an extension, if needed. Taxpayers who cannot meet the April 18 deadline can easily request a six-month filing extension to October 17 and prevent late filing penalties

(Contact: Kristi Kiouss, 2-5290)