

IOWA HOUSE REPUBLICANS

March 31, 2022

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Appropriations

Budget Work Continues in the Iowa House

This week in the Iowa House of Representatives there has been continued focus on the Fiscal Year 2023 budget bills. These efforts have put the House in position to complete initial action of the nine spending plans put together by the various budget subcommittees in the next few days.

On Tuesday evening, the House passed the FY 23 Education Appropriations bill, House File 2575. The bill spends 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 and creates a new financial aid program for students at Iowa's three state universities who are seeking degrees in fields that are high need professions in state or K-12 education. The bill is now in the Senate awaiting action by that body.

Earlier in the week the House Appropriations Committee moved two other budget bills to the House floor for consideration. The FY 2023 Health & Human Services budget bill was approved by the committee on Monday. The bill addresses community-based services for those with intellectual disabilities by providing a \$14.6 million reimbursement increase for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver providers (dedicated for wage & benefit costs) and an increase in the number of Intellectual Disability waiver slots available throughout the state. The bill also provides funding to increase access to mental health care in Iowa's hospitals and children's mental health provider network. Substance abuse treatment facilities and rural home health providers would also see an increase in funding, as well as Iowa's programs for seniors.

On Tuesday, the Appropriations Committee moved forward with the FY 2023 Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund budget bill. This bill funds the state's infrastructure projects via the taxes collected from Iowa's casinos. The focus of this year's bill is to pay off a number of multi-year projects. The RIIF fund has a larger balance than normal, due to higher gaming tax collections over the past two years. But this windfall is not expected to last long, as the state of Nebraska has approved the opening of six casinos in its state over the next few years. This move could significantly reduce gaming tax revenue that flows into RIIF.

This year's RIIF bill will speed up the state's funding of the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at Iowa State University and the Industrial Technology Center at the University of Northern Iowa. Both projects would receive their final two years of funding in FY 2023. Another project whose funding is being sped up is the construction of a new National Guard armory in West Des Moines. It also would receive two years of funding in Fiscal Year 2023. One new commitment in the bill is the restoration of the livestock barns at the Iowa State Fair. The bill provides a one-time appropriation of \$12 million to restore all four barns. Each RIIF dollar will be matched by at least \$2 from the State Fair's Blue Ribbon Foundation.

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Continuing the House’s focus on addressing Iowa’s workforce needs, the RIIF bill provides additional funding for a number of “placemaking” programs. These quality of life programs are very popular in communities of all sizes around the state. The Community Attractions and Tourism program (CAT) would have its funding doubled to \$10 million under the House bill, as would the Great Places program for smaller communities. Funding for infrastructure projects at Iowa’s state parks would be tripled to \$6 million in Fiscal Year 2023 and funding for trails would be increased by \$1 million. Water trails and low head dams would receive a \$500,000 increase. A final piece of this effort is providing \$12 million to the Sports Tourism Fund to help bring additional attractions to the state. Overall, the FY 2023 RIIF budget would spend \$289.7 million. This is an increase of \$87.1 million over what is being spent during the current fiscal year.

With the Health & Human Services and RIIF budget bills eligible for debate on April 1, the House will soon be done with all the budget bills put together by the various budget subcommittees. The next steps will be in the Iowa Senate, where they have yet to commence consideration of any piece of the Fiscal Year 2023 budget.

BUDGET BILL STATUS			
AS OF 12 PM, MARCH 30			
Bill	Bill Number	Status	Last Action
Administration & Regulation	HF 2565	PASSED HOUSE; In Senate Approps	3/24/2022
Agriculture & Natural Resources	HF 2560	PASSED HOUSE; In Senate Approps	3/23/2022
Economic Development	HF 2564	PASSED HOUSE; In Senate Approps	3/24/2022
Education	HF 2575	PASSED HOUSE	3/29/2022
Health & Human Services	HF 2578	On the House Floor	3/29/2022
Judicial Branch	HF 2558	PASSED HOUSE; In Senate Approps	3/22/2022
Justice Systems	HF 2559	PASSED HOUSE; In Senate Approps	3/22/2022
Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund	HF 2579	On the House Floor	3/29/2022
Transportation	HF 2557	PASSED HOUSE; In Senate Approps	3/22/2022
Standings			

(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

Agriculture

IDALS Takes Additional Steps to Protect Poultry Flocks

On Wednesday, March 23, 2022, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release which announced [an order cancelling all live bird exhibitions](#) at fairs and other gatherings of birds due to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). The order also prohibits live birds from being sold or transferred at livestock auction markets, swap meets and exotic sales. IDALS’ order begins immediately and is effective for a minimum of 30 days, and until 30 days has passed without a confirmation of a new infection of HPAI in domestic poultry in the state of Iowa. Iowa currently has more than six million birds impacted by HPAI across five commercial and backyard poultry flocks.

IDALS is asking flock owners to prevent contact between their birds and wild birds. Biosecurity resources and best practices are available at iowaagriculture.gov/biosecurity. If producers suspect signs of HPAI in their flocks, they should contact their veterinarian immediately. Possible cases should also be reported to the Iowa Department of Agriculture at (515) 281-5305. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the recent HPAI detections in birds do not present an immediate public health concern. No human cases of these avian influenza viruses have been detected in the United States. It remains safe to eat poultry products. As a reminder, the proper handling and cooking of poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165 °F kills bacteria and viruses. The Iowa

Poultry Association recommended that bird exhibitions be cancelled in Iowa due to avian influenza. Iowa leads the nation in egg production and ranks seventh in turkey production.

For updates on this developing situation, please visit <https://iowaagriculture.gov/animal-industry-bureau/avian-influenza>. For information on Governor's disaster proclamations for HPAI, visit <https://governor.iowa.gov/newsroom>.

IDALS Secretary Naig Applauds U.S. Supreme Court Decision to Consider the Constitutionality of California's Proposition 12

On Monday, March 28, 2022, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release which Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig issued the following statement in response to the U.S. Supreme Court decision to hear the case against California's Proposition 12 filed by the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Pork Producers Council. California's Proposition 12 prohibits the sale of pork from hogs born to sows— anywhere in the world – not raised according to the state's highly prescriptive housing standards.

IDALS Secretary Naig noted--“I am extremely pleased that the U.S. Supreme Court will consider the constitutionality of California's Proposition 12. This decision is the first step in preserving the rights of our farmers, protecting the well-being of our livestock and ensuring consumers have access to affordable food. Over the last two years, Iowa farmers, consumers and rural communities have faced many challenges beyond their control, but they should not have to face another simply due to one state's heavy-handed and unnecessary regulations. Our founders were clear when they wrote the Constitution; only the federal government holds the power to regulate interstate and international commerce. California politicians and activists cannot regulate activities outside of their borders, let alone Iowa farmers.”

IDALS Secretary further added--“As the country's top pork producing state, Iowa farmers take great pride in caring for their animals and producing a high-quality, nutritious and affordable source of protein for consumers. California represents 15% of U.S. pork production. Iowa farmers need access to this market.” California's Proposition 12 took effect Jan. 1, 2022. In August 2021, Iowa Sens. Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst co-sponsored the Exposing Agricultural Trade Suppression (EATS) Act, that would prohibit states from interfering with food production in other states.

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Commerce

House Republicans Work to Improve Bottle Bill

The current bottle deposit and redemption system in Iowa has developed problems since its inception. One primary issue is the lack of redemption centers and viable and convenient options for redeeming cans and bottles. Parties on all sides of the issue are ignoring the law without any consequences. Significant work was done last year that makes changes to the system. That work continued this year and both the House and Senate are considering reform options to make the bottle bill system one that works for consumers.

House File 2571 takes many positive steps towards improving the current system. It increases the handling fee for redemption centers to two cents per can. This also gives retailers the ability to opt out of taking empty containers back if they meet one of the following four criteria:

- 1) retailer only sells single containers located at or near the point of sale,
- 2) has a food establishment license and has a certified food protection manager on site,
- 3) retailer has an agreement with a mobile redemption system, or
- 4) the retailer is within the radius of a redemption center based on the convenience standard for their county.

It also enhances enforcement by strengthening fines and enabling the DNR and attorney general to work together to ensure all parties are following the law. Finally, HF 2571 establishes a legislative review committee that will meet ahead of the 2026 legislative session to review how the law is working and report to the legislature its findings and recommendations. HF 2571 requires all stakeholders to follow the law and encourages additional redemption locations, which is good for all Iowans.

(Contact: Ben Gentz, 1-3452)

Economic Growth

\$100 Million in Federal Funds Heading to Iowa Airports

Governor Reynolds recently announced a \$100 million investment to modernize Iowa's air transportation system through the Iowa Commercial Aviation Infrastructure Fund. Iowa's eight commercial airports are eligible for this funding that will support modernization and expansion projects. Ninety percent of the funds will be granted based upon passenger numbers from 2019 and the remaining 10 percent will be split equally among the eight commercial airports. Iowa's airport system supported 2.2 million passengers and 142 million pounds of cargo in 2019, prior to the pandemic.

Eligible projects for the funding include the maintenance and development of airport facilities, such as terminal buildings, maintenance facilities, and aviation hangars. The Iowa Commercial Aviation Infrastructure Fund will be administered by the Iowa Department of Transportation utilizing one-time federal funds from the American Rescue Plan. The fund is also supported by an appropriation from the Rebuild Iowa's Infrastructure Fund budget subcommittee. Project selection and allocations for the program are approved annually by the Iowa Transportation Commission.

(Contact: Kristi Kiou, 2-5290)

Education

House Republicans Pass \$1,004,141,874 Education Budget

This week, House Republicans passed an education budget that appropriates \$1,004,141,874 in General Fund dollars for the Department for the Blind, the College Student Aid Commission, the Department of Education, Community Colleges, Vocational Rehabilitation, Iowa Public Television, and the Board of Regents. Within the bill, there are many increases in funding.

Department for the Blind

- \$113,000 increase for the Department for the Blind

College Student Aid Commission

- College Student Aid Commission Administration = \$60,000 increase
- All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship Program = \$129,000 increase
- Teach Iowa Scholar = \$250,000 increase
- Rural Primary Care Loan Repayment Program = \$2.3 million increase
- Healthcare Loan Repayment Program = \$750,000 increase
- Rural Veterinarian Loan Repayment Program = \$300,000
- Iowa Tuition Grant = \$1.2 million increase

- Iowa Tuition Grant (For-profit) = \$44,000 increase
- Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program Scholarship = \$200,000
- Mental Health Practitioner Loan Repayment Program = \$1.5 million
- Iowa Workforce Grant and Incentive Program = \$12 million
- FAFSA assistance with the ICAN = \$120,000

Department of Education

- Early Childhood Iowa = \$200,000 increase
- iJAG (Jobs for America's Grads) = \$3.5 million increase
- Children's Mental Health Training = \$200,000 increase
- Best Buddies Iowa = \$10,000 increase
- Therapeutic Classroom Incentive Fund = \$42,000 increase

Community Colleges

- \$6.5 million increase for the Community Colleges

Vocational Rehabilitation

- \$120,000 increase for Vocational Rehabilitation

Board of Regents

- \$500,000 for the University of Iowa Family Practice Program
- \$150,000 to Iowa State University for the Cooperative Extension Office
- \$270,000 increase for the Iowa School for the Deaf
- \$114,000 increase for services for Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School
- \$300,000 for the University of Northern Iowa Degree Attainment program
- \$905,000 for the Iowa State University Cybersecurity Simulator

One program in particular that should be highlighted is the new Iowa Workforce Grant and Incentive Program. This is a program focused on addressing Iowa's workforce shortage problem. This program appropriates \$6 million in scholarships to those students attending one of the Regents institutions who are in teacher preparatory programs and \$6 million in scholarships to those students who are in majors that align with Iowa's high demand jobs. In order to be eligible, students must complete the FAFSA, be a resident of Iowa, and be enrolled in either a teacher preparatory program or a program that was jointly approved by the College Student Aid Commission and Iowa Workforce Development. Students will be able to access the money in their third and fourth years of college. Upon graduation, if the student is working as either a teacher or has a high demand job, they will receive a bonus payment after staying one year in Iowa. Students can receive up to \$5000 per year, or \$2500 per semester. House Republicans think this is a great way to partner with the Regent Universities, Iowa Workforce Development, and students across Iowa to help solve workforce shortages.

Curriculum Transparency Bill Empowers Parents

There is no good reason for secrecy in the classroom.

On the idea that parents have a fundamental right to know what is being taught to their kids in Iowa classrooms, Iowans are not polarized. Instead, the vast majority agree with legislation that allows parents to view classroom instructional material when it is convenient and useful for parents. Working parents have little time in their days to check on a daily basis with teachers to find out what is being taught to their kids. The House Republican plan requires teachers to post classroom instructional material by the end of each week so it can be viewed by parents who choose to do so. The plan empowers parents while not overburdening teachers.

This common-sense idea was somehow opposed by nearly all Democrats in the Iowa House. What they don't seem to understand is how demeaning and irritating it is to be a working parent, sometimes with more than one job, who has to

not only get their kids to school, daycare and activities before and after work but also help their kids with homework only to be told that they really have no right to know what happens inside the classroom all day. And that if they want to know, then it is up to them to check every single day. When the simplest solution is to just post every week the classroom material and allow those parents who are interested to review it.

Parents are not the bad guys for wanting to know this information. Parents have every right to know what is being taught to their kids in public taxpayer funded schools.

The House bill does the following:

- Requires school districts to post syllabus or written summaries and all instructional materials used in the classroom – such as links to videos, slide presentations or articles along with uploaded copies of other instructional materials except for copyright protected material. District must provide a process for parents to view that material when requested.
- Requires school districts to post a list of all school library books available while providing parents a protocol for preventing their child from checking out specific books.
- School districts must post teacher professional development and trainings on their website.
- If school districts violate the law, the Dept. of Education can withhold or place restrictions on school funding. Additionally, school districts can be fined between \$500 and \$5000 for violations. Teachers who violate the law will be referred to the Board of Educational Examiners for a review.
- Specifically, this is how it works for teachers in the classroom and parents at home – at the end of each week teachers need to have updated their classroom management platforms with the instructional material used during the week. If a teacher fails to update the platform by the end of the week, they are allowed 14 days to correct the problem. Teachers are busy and mistakes can occur while managing students and/or multiple classes. It is up to parents to review the classroom management platform to stay current with what is being taught. If they object to any material, they can take that objection to the teacher, the principal, district superintendent, school board members or the Board of Educational Examiners. Or all of them if the parent chooses to do so.

The thrust of the bill is to give parents access to classroom material and short circuit any attempt to inject politics into instructional material by preventing secrecy in the classroom

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Human Resources

House HHS Budget Provides Increase for Mental Health, Disability Providers

This week, the House Appropriations Committee approved the House Health and Human Services Budget for FY 2023 (House File 2578). Below is a list of highlights of the significant investments to advance access to mental health and support disability providers. In total, this budget appropriates \$2.1 billion of state general fund (in total with federal money and other funds it is over \$6 billion) towards Medicaid, child care, child welfare, public health and aging and veteran services.

Disability Providers

- Fully funds Glenwood and Woodward Resource Centers, as well as DHS Department-Wide duties line item that includes central office oversight of the state facilities
- Community capacity investments to ensure that Iowans can be cared for near their families:
 - Provides a \$14.6 million investment in home and community-based services rates. In total, this is a \$38.5 million investment when combined with federal match. This allows for a \$2 raise to all direct support professionals, and this bill requires this increase to go towards our front-line workers wages.

- Provides a \$7.4 million state investment to reduce the waitlist on the intellectual disability services waiver. This appropriation should add an additional 250 ID waiver slots.
- Intermediate Care Facilities for those with Intellectual Disabilities receive a total increase of \$8.2 million, and also require these funds to go directly to direct support professional wage increases.
- Provides a \$4 million appropriation to create a new home health rate structure that provides an incentive for providing care to rural Medicaid members.

Mental Health – The House has focused on expanding mental health workforce and access to beds for difficult to serve Iowans. This budget funds those priorities, along with the help of the Education budget, and also provides additional rate increases through Medicaid.

- Provides \$2 million for psychiatric tiered rates so that hospitals are reimbursed based on the acuity of the patient and can receive the intensive psychiatric care that they need
- Funds multisystemic and functional family therapies to provide evidence-based treatments for youth that address a youth's home and environment to reduce problematic behavior and divert the youth from out-of-home placements.
- Provides \$3 million of state funding, and a total funding increase of \$7.9 million, to behavioral health intervention services. This is a 35% increase because there are currently lengthy waitlists for individuals to get services due to staffing shortages.
- Provides \$1.1 million of state funding and almost \$3 million of total funding to increase residential substance use treatment rates.
- Continues to fund, and increase funding towards the MHDS Regions. This \$71 million increase will now completely phase out any property tax levies for the regional system.
- Adds in HF 2245 to ensure that health insurers are not excluding mental health providers providing telehealth to Iowans simply because they are not physically located in Iowa.

Child Welfare

- Group care for child welfare – this budget provides increases to both shelter and QRTP care for children in foster care.
- Field Operations: Funds an additional 50 FTEs to reduce caseloads for child abuse.

Long-Term Care – removes the backlog with the state substitute decision maker and adds 3 FTEs at the state-long term care ombudsman

Health and Human Services Alignment – this bill creates a department of health and human services that will over the next year merge together the department of human services and the department of public health to ensure one point of access for Iowans.

Additional health care workforce: We know that individuals with a connection to the state are more likely to stay in the state following their medical education.

- Adds in HF 468 that requires at least 75% of the students accepted at UI College of medicine and dentistry to be resident of Iowa or currently attending undergraduate school in Iowa.

Adds in House File 487 that requires UIHC to offer an interview for the medical resident of the top 7 most-need specialties to those with an Iowa connection.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Information Technology

House Focuses on Cybersecurity

2021 set records new records for data breaches, by the end of September 2021, the number of breaches already exceeded the number of breaches in all of 2020. Industries targeted included manufacturing, utilities, healthcare, financial services, and government. These breaches impacted millions of people. Some of the major breaches from 2021 included Facebook, LinkedIn, Coinbase, Robinhood, T-Mobile, and Colonial Pipeline among others.

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 the creation of a cybersecurity simulation training center at Iowa State University. The proposal has support in the Iowa House but has encountered issues in the Iowa Senate.

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.

(Contact: Ben Gentz, 1-3452)

Judiciary

Sex Offenders To Serve a Longer Time on the Registry

The Iowa Sex Offender Registry was established in 1995 and provides the public information on sex offenders living in the area. Current law allows offenders to apply to have their sentenced reduced after a short time on the registry. SF 2363, passed by both the House and the Senate will increase the time an offender must remain on the registry before applying for a modification.

The Sex Offender Registry provides the public and law enforcement with important information about sex offenders in their area. You can search for someone by name, address or general location. Using the Iowa Sex Offender Registry Website <https://www.iowasexoffender.gov/> all Iowans can find information to keep their family safe. Offender must provide their address, picture, and other identifying features. There is also information about the offender's crimes, and any exclusions, including living and working restrictions.

Offenders are divided in to three tiers, based upon their offense. Tier I offenders must verify their information every year, tier II must verify their information every six months and tier III must verify every three months. Under current law a tier I or II offender can apply to have their sentence modified after only two years on the registry and a tier III offender can apply after five years. SF 2363 changes the time an offender must be on the registry before requesting a modification.

The new law will require a tier I offender to be on the registry at least 10 years before applying for a modification and they must have not been convicted of any criminal offense besides a simple misdemeanor or traffic violation during that time. A tier II and III offender will have to wait 15 years before requesting a modification and cannot have any

convictions besides simple misdemeanors or traffic violations at that time. All offenders must have successfully completed any treatment programs, and be classified as a low risk to offend. They cannot be on parole, probation or any pretrial release when they ask for the modification.

Extending the time a sex offender remains on the registry helps ensure they have successfully completed all their treatment, been appropriately reviewed by the Department of Corrections and should lower their chances of reoffending.

(Contact: Amanda Wille, 1-5230)

Labor

Iowa Labor Market Quick Stats

Unemployment and labor issues are a topic in Iowa, and across the nation. To get a picture of what that looks like, here are some snap shots of what's going on in the labor market.

The unemployment rate for February 2022 in Iowa was 3.5%, which ranks Iowa as tied for 20th in the United States. The overall unemployment rate for the U.S. was 3.8%. The labor force participation rate in February 2022 in Iowa was 67%, which ranks Iowa 8th in the U.S. The U.S. labor force participation rate was 62.3%.

In February, Iowa had 1,626,800 employed, 59,400 unemployed, for a total labor force of 1,686,200. Iowa is up 5,800 jobs from one month ago, and up 38,500 jobs from one year ago. Since March, 2020 there were 169,800 jobs lost. There have been 148,300 jobs recovered since April, 2020 for a total net loss of 21,500 jobs.

Industries with the largest change from the previous month are Leisure and Hospitality up 2,100 jobs and Professional and Business services up 1,700 jobs. Iowa's top five industry sectors by employment are manufacturing, health care and social assistance, retail trade, educational services, and accommodations and food services. Current job openings in Iowa are 86,920. Employers with the most posted openings are Unity Point Health, the University of Iowa, Kwik Trip, Inc, the University of Iowa (import), the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, Care Initiatives, McDonalds Corporation, MCI, Securitas Security Services USA, Inc, and O'Reilly Auto Parts.

Iowa's unemployment and labor force participation rate continues to stay above the national average with our jobs continuing to grow. House Republicans remain focused on getting more Iowans either back into the workforce, or give them the skills to move right into these much needed job areas.

(Info from Iowa Workforce Development and Iowa Works)

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Local Government

House Passes Emergency Response Districts

This week the House passed Senate File 2267 which authorizes the use of emergency response districts for counties, cities, and townships throughout the state. In 2008, the Iowa Legislature adopted a pilot program for these emergency response districts for 4 counties in Iowa. Under the pilot program in Iowa code, these counties' board of supervisors to establish emergency response districts to provide fire protection and emergency medical services to areas of the county.

Senate File 2267, will now allow the establishment of these districts across the state. With the enactment of the legislation, townships, cities, and counties can establish these emergency response districts in order to better serve their areas for emergency services. When entered into agreement the commission would be comprised of a representative of each governmental body in the district. The commission would oversee the procurement of necessary equipment, facilities, and certify for levy an annual tax to provide the services. The commission also appoints a district Fire Chief, who will be responsible for the delivery of fire protection and emergency services to the district.

These emergency response districts are intended to promote more efficient emergency services to rural areas of Iowa. By pooling together local resources and streamlining possible redundancies or fragments in service, these emergency response districts are another tool for Iowa communities to better serve and provide emergency services.

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

Natural Resources

DNR Notes--Residential Tree Distribution Events Offered Statewide this Spring

On Tuesday, March 29, 2022, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a press release alerting Iowa residents and Alliant Energy customers that they can purchase landscaping trees for their homes at deep discounts this spring. DNR collaborates with local nurseries and organizations to provide a mixture of hardwoods, low-growing ornamental and evergreen tree species. The DNR will offer discounted trees through its Residential Tree Program in Council Bluffs on Saturday, May 21. Any Iowa resident can purchase up to two trees per planting address at \$25 per tree, plus a small credit card processing fee.

Alliant Energy's [One Million Trees](#) initiative helps plant more than one million trees - one tree for each utility customer - by the end of 2030. Alliant Energy customers can participate and purchase up to two trees per planting address at \$25 per tree. Tree pick-up dates and locations include:

- Tuesday, April 26 in Decorah
- Saturday, April 30 in Ottumwa
- Thursday, May 5 in Storm Lake
- Tuesday, May 17 in Ames

Find event location addresses and times along with order forms and requirements, and information about available tree species on the DNR webpage at www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/Forestry/Urban-Forestry/Residential-Tree-Programs.

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

State Government

Absentee Ballot Request Period Now Open

This year is a general election year and Iowans will have a chance to vote for candidates for the offices of U.S. Senator, U.S. House of Representatives, Governor and other statewide offices, state legislators, and county offices. Before the general election, Iowans who have registered their political party affiliation are eligible to vote in the June 7 primary. Iowa law allows voters to submit their request for an absentee ballot for the primary election up to 70 days before the election. Voters must submit a completed absentee ballot request to their county auditor in order to receive their absentee ballot.

Blank request forms can be downloaded from the [Secretary of State's website](#) and returned via mail or in person to their county auditor. Completed requests for absentee ballots must be received by the county auditor by 5:00 p.m. Monday, May 23 in order for the absentee ballot to be sent to the voter. All request forms must have the voter's name, date of birth, residential address, Voter ID Number, date of the election, party affiliation, and their signature to be considered completed. County auditors are allowed to begin mailing absentee ballots on Wednesday May 18. Voters can return their completed absentee ballot in person at the county auditor's office, by mail, by a designated immediate family member or a member of your household, or if you are a disabled voter, a designated delivery agent.

Voters looking for additional information can go to <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/index.html> to find information on whether you are registered to vote, FAQ section on voter ID requirements, polling place location and much more information.

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

Transportation

House GOP Backs Emergency Response Personnel

Last week, the Iowa House passed a common-sense bill – Senate File 551 allows fire department and EMS responders to exceed the speed limit if they are responding to an emergency. When seconds matter in saving a life, this bill can make a difference.

Iowa's volunteer firefighters and paramedics are called to emergencies when they are not at the station or near the ambulance. They are called in from home, their work, or any of the other many places they spend time with their family and friends. They drive their personal vehicles to the station *prior* to going to the scene, and once they get in that firetruck or ambulance, they have the authority to drive over the speed limit.

During debate on the House floor, Democrats lambasted a change that allows firefighters and EMS responders to *reasonably* speed when responding to an emergency. Even with significant safeguards within the bill regarding emergency vehicle operations training for volunteers, requiring the fire chief or chief of EMS to sign off on the driver responding to an emergency call, and requiring the court to determine if their speeding was reasonable – over half of the Iowa House Democrats voted against this simple common-sense bill.

Iowa House Republicans support and have faith that our first responders drive responsibly and that it is important for them to get to the emergency as soon as possible to save Iowa lives.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Veterans Affairs

Veteran Career Planning Assistance Available

Recently, Home Base Iowa announced that there will be a career planner at Camp Dodge military base for walk-in access to professional career-planning for Iowa Veterans and their spouses. The career planner is available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Veterans, active duty service members, and their spouses will be able to receive tailored resume assistance, advice on career exploration, and connections to HBI-affiliated employers. HBI career planners also can provide access to

valuable career tools, including workshops, mock interviews, and hiring sessions at Iowa *WORKS* job centers, as well as assistance with all pathways to employment, such as apprenticeships, certificates, and higher education.

Home Base Iowa is a unique initiative that connects Iowa businesses with qualified Veterans and their spouses looking for career opportunities as they transition to civilian life. The program currently partners with just over 2,400 businesses across Iowa. HBI provides resources to help connect Veterans and their families to education and career opportunities when transitioning to a new community.

Walk-ins will be welcome at Camp Dodge, or email HBI@iowa.gov (link sends e-mail) to schedule an appointment. The career planner will be located at:
Education Office, Bldg 3586 (next to the Camp Dodge Exchange)
7105 NW 70th Avenue
Johnston, IA 50131

For more information, visit www.homebaseiowa.gov.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Ways & Means

House Ways and Means Passes Bill to Support Iowa's Aircraft Industry

This week the House Ways and Means Committee passed Senate File 2370 unanimously out of committee. The bill makes changes to special certificates and sales tax for aircrafts.

Under current law, an aircraft manufacturer or dealer may operate an aircraft for purposes of transporting, testing, demonstrating, or selling the aircraft without registering the aircraft by obtaining a special certificate from the DOT. Senate File This section limits that certificate to three years and increases the annual fee from \$100 to \$400.

More importantly, Senate File 2370 brings some parity to Iowa's aircraft parts and labor businesses as compared to surrounding states. Currently, parts and service on aircraft are exempt from sales tax if they are used in certified FAA interstate travel (commercial flights). The bill removes the requirement that the aircraft be used for commercial flights and expands the sales tax exemption of parts and service to all aircrafts. This change will stop incentivizing Iowa aircraft owners from flying their planes to other states for service and repairs. Iowa has a thriving aircraft mechanic industry as well as several community college education programs that this sales tax exemption will directly support.

Senate File 2370 is now ready for full consideration by the House.

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