

IOWA HOUSE REPUBLICANS

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Appropriations

Gambling Tax Revenue Collections Start Strong in Fiscal Year

2023, as Competition from the West Moves Closer

State tax collections from casino gaming and sports wagering remained strong in July, even as inflation and recessionary pressures grew on the Iowa economy.

For the month, gaming tax collections at Iowa's nineteen casinos came in at \$23,768,851. This is slightly less than the \$24.2 million paid to the state in July 2021. But the month's collections are significantly higher than was paid in the same month pre-pandemic. In July 2019, gaming tax collections were just \$18.056 million.

The strong start to the fiscal year was also seen in state tax payments for sports wagering. July's collections for this revenue category was \$754,292. When compared to July 2021, sports wagering tax receipts rose by 57.3 percent over the first month of Fiscal Year 2022.

The strong start to Fiscal Year 2023 comes as Nebraska gets closer to entering the casino gaming field. At the end of July, representatives of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska and their business entity Ho-Chunk Inc. broke ground on the WarHorse casino at the Horseman's Park racetrack in Omaha. The project will renovate the existing simulcast building and put up additional space to make up the new casino. Officials said they expected the renovated portion to be open for wagering in the spring of 2023, and the whole project will be completed in early 2024.

The arrival of casino gambling on the west side of the Missouri River will be direct competition to the three casinos in Council Bluffs. In Fiscal Year 2022, these facilities generated 27.55 percent of the casino gaming tax paid in Iowa.

(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

Agriculture

IDALS Announces the Funding of Two New Water Quality Partnership Projects

On Monday, August 8, 2022, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release in which Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig announced the funding of two new water quality and soil conservation partnership projects that will increase the utilization and installation of proven conservation practices in key watersheds. Partnering with the Practical Farmers of Iowa in one project and the Soil and Water Conservation Society in the second project, IDALS will provide the funding to support outreach and technical assistance to deliver priority practices.

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The first project, a partnership with Practical Farmers of Iowa, is designed to advance several land use and edge-of-field water quality practices. The 3-year project, funded at \$480,000, will focus on direct one-on-one technical assistance and outreach to landowners to deploy strategically placed prairie plantings (prairie strips/precision conservation areas) and multipurpose oxbows to advance water quality and wildlife habitat efforts. The second project, a partnership with the Soil and Water Conservation Society, is a 3-year project aiming to build capacity and edge-of-field infrastructure practices in four new locations within key watersheds. Leveraging existing local and national networks to streamline the installation process, this partnership, funded at \$426,000, will deliver targeted outreach, technical assistance, resources, and training to build capacity.

Background on Iowa Water Quality Initiative

The Iowa Water Quality Initiative was established in 2013 to help implement the Nutrient Reduction Strategy, which is a science and technology-based approach to achieving a 45 percent reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus losses to our waters. The strategy brings together both point sources, such as municipal wastewater treatment plants and industrial facilities, and nonpoint sources, including farm fields and urban stormwater runoff, to address these issues. The Initiative seeks to harness the collective ability of both private and public resources and organizations to deliver a clear and consistent message to stakeholders to reduce nutrient loss and improve water quality. More information about the initiative can be found at www.CleanWaterIowa.org.

IDALS Awards Funding for New Phase of Seed Corn Cover Crops Project

On Friday, August 5, 2022 the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release in which Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig announced the funding of the next-phase of a collaborative water quality and soil conservation project that seeks to increase the utilization of cover crops on seed corn production acres. Partnering with the Iowa Seed Association and their members as well as farmers and landowners, IDALS will provide the next phase of funding to expand the planting of cover crops. Cover crops usage is a proven conservation practice highlighted in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy that helps to conserve soil and protect water quality.

Seed corn production lends itself to an earlier harvest, thereby providing an even larger window for establishing cover crops in the late summer and fall after the acres are harvested. The next 3-year phase of this project, funded at \$226,750, will also incorporate edge-of-field (EOF) practice outreach and installations within the statewide network of seed corn producers. More than 30,000 acres are enrolled in the program in 2022 and an estimated one-third of acres utilized for seed corn production in Iowa are now utilizing cover crops.

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Commerce

Summit Begins Process to Seek Use of Eminent Domain

Summit Carbon Solutions (Summit) has begun the process of notifying the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) of which properties it may seek the use of eminent domain to require landowners to allow access to their property for the carbon pipeline project. To date, Summit has negotiated voluntary easements with approximately 1200 parcels, which equates to about 750 landowners or roughly 270 miles of pipeline. This is about 40% of total project.

The filings, including properties identified for the use of eminent domain can be viewed [here](#) or at efs.iowa.gov/efs and search by docket number HLP-2021-0001.

Summit is one of three companies who have proposed building carbon pipelines through the state of Iowa.

(Contact: Ben Gentz, 1-3452)

Economic Growth

Monthly Iowa Economic Development Awards

Last month, the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) Board approved awards for an established company in Lyon County and innovation funding in support of four startups located in Ames, Des Moines, and Indianola. The board also provided final approval on a reinvestment district plan for Cedar Rapids.

Diversified Technologies—Lyon County

Diversified Technologies, Inc., parent company of Sudenga Industries and Dur-A-Lift, Inc., was founded in George, IA in 1888. Sudenga Industries manufactures grain handling equipment and Dur-A-Lift manufactures aerial lifts. Both production lines take place on the campus in Lyon County, where the company plans to construct a new, nearly 160,000 square foot facility that will bring operations under one roof. The project represents a capital investment of \$12.6 million and is expected to create 10 jobs at a qualifying wage of \$21.96 per hour. The board awarded the company tax benefits through the HQJ program.

True360—Ames

Founded in 2016, True360 of Ames captures immersive experiences through their WOW! Moment 0Finder™ that can automatically compile highlight reels and their 360-degree camera enclosures that immerse users directly into different worlds. The company was awarded a \$100,000 Demonstration Fund loan for product refinement and market planning and entry activities.

Zymosense—Ames

Zymosense is developing a modular enzyme activity characterization platform that is well-suited to test in complex backgrounds. It will be simpler to use and more accurate than traditional procedures for research and development teams. The company was awarded a \$25,000 Proof of Commercial Relevance loan for equipment and market planning and entry activities.

Music League—Des Moines

Music League, LLC, based in Des Moines, is a social gaming app that amplifies passionate debate and insight on all music-related topics to expand the love of music. The company was awarded a \$25,000 Proof of Commercial Relevance loan for product refinement.

IdRamp—Indianola

Indianola's IdRamp, Inc. created a platform to enhance identity management systems that better supports security, service delivery, and business need through flexibility and speed. Bouncer, a new product, will further focus on security of online meetings. The company was awarded a \$100,000 Demonstration Fund loan for marketing, travel, memberships and market planning and entry activities.

Contact: Kristi Kiouss, 2-5290))

Education

Parent Appeal Denied on Controversial “Gender Queer” in School Library

A West Des Moines parent began her fight against the West Des Moines school district to have the book “Gender Queer,” removed from the 9th grade library in October of 2021, last week on Thursday her appeal before the State Board was denied. Nearly ten months after she made her initial request.

On October 17th a Reconsideration Request was sent to the West Des Moines school board. This parent stated that she objected to the book because it contained “sexual/pornographic illustrations and drawings, the sexual content of the text and the inappropriate nature/Adult content.” She went on to give examples and pages, as well as copies of excerpts of the book.

Upon receiving the complaint, pursuant to their school board policy, a review committee was formed on November 11th and met again on November 18th to deliver their unanimous decision to keep the book stating that the book “has won two literary awards.” And that it was in line with their board selection policy because “This book covers the same type of material as many other text-based books. Menstruation, body image, masturbation, oral and vaginal sex are all topics covered in both biographies and young adult (YA) books commonly found in high school libraries.” They went on to state that the “primary purpose of the book (was) to be autobiographical, and not pornographic or obscene.” The awards “Gender Queer” has won are the ALA Alex Award and the ALA Stonewall Book Awards—Israel Fishman Non-Fiction Award. The ALA Alex Award is given to ten books that are written for adults that have special appeal to young adults aged 12-18. The ALA Stonewall Award is given annually to English-language books of exceptional merit relating to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender experience. The award has a specific category for nonfiction books called the Israel Fishman Award.

On December 28th the parent appealed the review committee’s decision stating that the committee was not impartial since they were selected by the principal, included students, and essentially that the reconsideration committee was not “a sufficient tool for evaluating what constitutes as pornographic content.” This parent states that “This book graphically depicts oral sex, sex toys, masturbation, and a man touching the genitals of a teenager, all of which meet the definitions in Iowa code 728.1.” Iowa Code 728.1 contains the definition of obscene material. (Code section linked [here](#)) She goes on to talk about using the awards as criteria for keeping the book. The ALA Alex Award is for books that are written for adults, as the parent points out. She also included in her appeal that “Gender Queer” is catalogued in the Adult Graphic Novel section in the West Des Moines Public Library.

Upon receiving the reconsideration appeal from the parent, West Des Moines convened a Teaching and Learning Services Advisory Committee to review the issue on January 27, 2022. The committee upheld the decision with eight members voting to retain, one member voting to withdraw all or part of the material, and one member voted to limit the educational use of the challenged material. This committee discussed the fact that this book should be read as a whole, not just view the pictures. The book, according to them, is “a story that students can connect to, about adolescent development, a sense of belonging, connecting to others, healthy relationships, the topic of consent.” This committee did state that if there are parents who want to limit what their kids have access to, they can notify the school and the teacher librarian to limit what is available to their child. They also referenced Iowa Code section 728.1.5 where it states that “...taking the material as a whole and applying contemporary community standards...would find appeals to the prurient interest and is patently offensive...” The committee found the text is a memoir and the purpose is not excessive interest in sexual matters.

The parent continued her fight. She appealed this decision again on March 5, 2022 to the West Des Moines school board. In this appeal she again discusses how the book meets the definition in Iowa Code for obscene materials. She talks about how the committee says the words make the pictures okay, but that words don’t really make the pictures less pornographic. She restates the book is located in the adult section of the West Des Moines public library. She also thinks there are other books that address issues such as gender fluidity and sexual identification that are not this graphic, particularly for 9th graders. Google has flagged “Gender Queer” for images that contain adult sexual content. Facebook said images from the book violate community standards on sexual activity. Two metro school districts removed the book from their libraries. The board continued to uphold the decision of their other review committees with a vote of six yes and one no.

Documents and minutes from the West Des Moines School Board meeting can be found [here](#).

The fight still didn’t stop there. She appealed to the State Board of education on August 4, 2022. Thomas Mayes, the Administrative Law Judge, recommends to the board that they affirm the decision of the West Des Moines Community School District’s Board of Directors. He recommends first that the parent lacks standing due to the fact that their child no longer attends Southwoods school, which is the 9th grade building where the library is located. Mr. Mayes

concluded that the parent is not “the parent or guardian of an affected pupil who is a minor, who is aggrieved by a decision or order” of the Board. (Iowa Code 290.1) The child would not be “affected” by a board decision, therefore has no standing.

Now, on the merits of the case. The parent argued that the State Board has the right to substitute its judgment for that of the Board. The District argued that the State Board’s review is deferential. In Thomas Mayes decision he says “The State Board does not sit as a “super school board’ substituting its judgment for that of the elected board officials,” and that “The State Board will affirm a local board decision absent a “total absence of reason.” He believes that it is clear that the Board acted permissibly and reasonably. He also states that “the District is ultimately responsible for the collections in its libraries, and need not defer its judgment to non-educators.” On the discussion of whether excerpts of “Gender Queer” meet the definition of obscenity in Iowa Code 728 and whether law enforcement could or should be involved, the proposed decision by Mayes states: “While school districts cannot make decisions on what matters to prosecute and investigate, school districts have ‘exclusive jurisdiction in all school matters’ ...and need not defer to law enforcement personnel where reasonable minds could differ on questions of education policy or pedagogy.”

The State Board ultimately decided to affirm the school’s decision and deny the parent her appeal based on lack of standing. Now, the parent can choose to appeal to District Court.

A recording of the State Board meeting can be heard here: https://youtu.be/YUDoMVDFP_s

This process could have played out differently had House File 2577 been signed into law. HF 2577, the House Republican curriculum transparency bill, died in the Senate.

House would things have been different?

First, the timeline of the decision process would have been shortened. Once the school received the parental appeal, they’d have 15 business days to make a recommendation to the school board and notify the parent of that recommendation. Then, they have up to 30 days for the school board to then act on that recommendation and notify the parent of its decision. Then, if the parent disagrees, the decision may be appealed to the State Board. This process would not only be shorter, but it would take out a few steps of the process for this particular school district. Second, it gives the State Board of Education jurisdiction over this case. The administrative law judge and board members did not believe that they had either standing or jurisdiction to even hear the merits of the case. There would be no question anymore if the State Board could overrule a school board’s decision on keeping a book that was found to be inappropriate. Third, it puts in Code that there must be a process for reconsidering a book in a school library, as well as allow a parent to control what books their child cannot check out of their school library. This school district said they would honor any request from a parent to do so, but it is not a guarantee.

Without specific structural process changes, parents can do everything right, fight for their kids, yet still lose to an education bureaucracy tilted against parents. Parents will follow the education system’s process only to be told the system knows better than them. Curriculum transparency remains a key priority for House Republicans and will be back as an issue in 2023. Transparency and restoring balance to parental control of taxpayer funded schools is absolutely necessary.

Learning Loss Due to School Shutdowns

Over the summer and fall of 2020, the outcry from parents to return to full 100 percent in-person learning in taxpayer funded public schools was so intense it led House Republicans to make it their top priority upon returning to the Statehouse in January of 2021. Led by State Representatives John Landon and Garrett Gobble, both of Ankeny, the Governor was able to sign the bill requiring a 100 percent in-person learning option for public school parents and students on January 29, 2021.

Not surprisingly, the bill passed the Iowa House 59-39. The bill received support from 58 Republicans and exactly one Democrat. Zero House Republicans voted against the bill.

Why was this important? As the data has rolled in since the school shutdowns, the learning loss has become apparent. Unfortunately for many parents and students, they had to fight left-learning school boards, administrators and legislators just to get their children back in school.

Harvard University Center for Education and Policy Research: The Consequences of Remote and Hybrid Instruction During the Pandemic

- As long as schools were in-person for all of 2020-2021, there was no widening of math achievement gaps between high, middle, and low poverty schools. The main effects of school poverty status are small and not statistically significant.
- Using test data from 2.1 million students in 10,000 schools in 49 states (plus D.C.), while investigating the role of remote and hybrid instruction in widening gaps in achievement by race and school poverty, they found that remote instruction was a primary driver of widening achievement gaps. Math gaps did not widen in areas that remained in-person, although there were some widening in reading gaps.
- This study estimates that high-poverty districts that went remote in 2020-2021 will need to spend nearly all federal aid on academic recovery to help students recover from achievement loss.
- Study found that the shift in instructional mode was a primary driver of widening achievement gaps by race/ethnicity and by school poverty status. Within school districts that were remote for most of 2020-2021, high-poverty schools experienced 50% more achievement loss than low-poverty schools.
- Math achievement gaps did not widen in areas that remained in-person.
- High poverty schools were more likely to go remote and they suffered larger declines when they did so. Poverty played a role, but the remote learning was a more important factor.
- Study found that most of the widening by race/ethnicity occurred because the schools attended by Black and Hispanic students were more negatively impacted, rather than because they fell behind classmates attending the same school.
- There is a higher incidence of remote school for Black and Hispanic students.
- High poverty schools spent about 5.5 more weeks in remote instruction during the 2020-2021 school year than low and mid poverty schools.

University of Washington Bothell Center on Reinventing Public Education: How Much Have Students Missed Academically Because of the Pandemic? (July 2021)

- Impacts on learning are greater where students had less access to in-person instruction. “There is little doubt that, on average, more in-person instruction produced more learning.”
- Teachers report they covered much less material than usual if remote instruction was used.

McKinsey and Company: Covid-19 and Education: The lingering effects of unfinished learning

- Math: as schools closed their buildings in the Spring of 2020, students fell behind rapidly learning almost no new math content over the final few months of the 2019-2020 school year. Those students experienced the typical summer slide, then resumed learning through the 2020-2021 school year but at a much slower pace which resulted in about five months of unfinished learning.
- Some of the statistics on student assessments do not give the whole picture because students who stayed remote are not included in those assessments since they needed to be taken in the school.

American Enterprise Institute: Pandemic Enrollment Fallout: School District Enrollment Changes Across COVID-19 Response

- K-12 enrollment nation-wide declined by nearly 3%, approximately 1.3 million students over the past two school years.
- Enrollment dropped more in 2020-2021 districts with the most remote learning than those with the most in-person learning.
- Many parents opted to homeschool their children instead of having them stare at screens all day.
- Districts that returned in-person sooner saw enrollments go back up faster while those that stayed remote saw more declines.
- Those that stayed remote the longest saw a net decline of 4.4% while those that went back in-person recovered about 1% in the second year with a net decline of only 1.2%.
- Enrollment fell more in districts in counties that voted for Joe Biden (3.8%) than in those that favored Donald Trump (2%). Potentially because conservatives put a higher priority on keeping schools open.
- “District’s COVID caution or assertiveness had more to do with communities’ shared ideological priors than COVID case rates in the county,” writes AEI fellow Nate Malkus.
- COVID-19 caused the largest enrollment declines in the history of American public schools.
- Districts that spent more of 2020-2021 remote face the largest enrollment declines and are more likely to see substantial revenue declines.
- Enrollment in the districts with the most remote learning had a net decline of 4.4% over the two pandemic years.
- The districts with the most in-person instruction had a net decline of 1.2%.
- Using student numbers, this means that districts with the most remote instruction lost 1 in 23 students while districts with the most in-person instruction lost 1 in 87 students across the two years.
- Enrollment changes did not vary by COVID case rates. Data shows a lack of that expected relationship. Enrollment changes are due to differences in COVID culture.
- Data shows that things such as community masking, masking in schools, and vaccine hesitancy all played a role in enrollment. Places with less community masking, less masking in schools, and higher vaccine hesitancy had higher enrollment than those with the opposite.
- In terms of funding, New York City and Los Angeles Unified school districts have potential declines of \$1.1 and \$0.68 billion.

NPR: 6 Things We’ve Learned About How the Pandemic Disrupted Learning

- High-poverty schools spent about 5.5 more weeks in remote instruction than low and mid poverty schools. High poverty schools that stayed remote for the majority of the 2020-2021 school year missed the equivalent of 22 weeks of in-person math.
- Learning gaps were most pronounced in states with higher rates of remote instruction overall.

Oster Study:

- Economist Emily Oster and co-authors of this study found that learning loss was far worse in districts that kept classes fully remote, and that declines in reading scores were greater in districts serving predominantly poor and non-white students.
- This is the same author who’s study helped persuade the CDC to reduce the recommended social distancing requirements in schools from six feet to three feet.
- The total effect of a school district shifting from 0% in-person learning to 100% in-person learning would be like reducing the drop in math pass rates by 10.1 percentage points. That same change would reduce the drop in English pass rates by 3.7 percentage points.

Chalkbeat: The State of Learning Loss: 7 Takeaways from the Latest Data

- Woodland Hills school district outside Pittsburgh assistant to the superintendent quote “Now we know that we have to remediate 3,000 students because we chose to keep our students’ health as our priority...If I had to go back and redo it, I would want to come back from virtual instruction a lot earlier than we did.”

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Environmental Protection

EPA Issues Guidance to Help Communities Locate Lead Pipes that can Contaminate Drinking Water

On Thursday, August 4, 2022, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that this federal agency is releasing guidance that will help communities and water utilities identify lead pipes that connect drinking water service to homes and other buildings. This action marks a key milestone in implementing the [Lead Pipe and Paint Action Plan](#). Together with unprecedented funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, this guidance will help water utilities comply with the requirements of the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions that went into effect in December 2021 and make rapid progress on removing harmful lead from America’s drinking water.

Specifically, EPA’s new *Guidance for Developing and Maintaining a Service Line Inventory*:

- Provides best practices for inventory development and risk communications.
- Contains case studies on developing, reviewing, and communicating about inventories.
- Includes a template for water systems, states, and Tribes to use or adapt to create their own inventory.
- Highlights the importance of prioritizing inventory development in disadvantaged communities and where children live and play.

Under the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions, water systems are required to prepare and maintain an inventory of service line materials by October 16, 2024. EPA’s new guidance will assist water systems in developing and maintaining service line inventories, support notifications to consumers served by lead pipes, and provide states with needed information for oversight and reporting to EPA. Additional information can be accessed about [safe drinking water](#), EPA’s [new guidance](#) (including an upcoming webinar) and efforts to strengthen the Lead and Copper Rule, and EPA’s [water infrastructure investments](#).

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Human Resources

Iowa Continues to Combat Opioid Abuse

This session, the Legislature established an Opioid Settlement Fund, which receives the state’s share of legal settlements with opioid manufacturers and distributors. The state is expecting tens of millions of dollars to both the state and local governments from settlements with drug companies that unnecessarily pushed opioids on the public.

The legislature appropriated \$3.8 million from the fund to the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics this year to provide medication addiction treatment to Iowans.

The Iowa Department of Public Health was also awarded \$17.9 million over two years to address the use of opioids and psychostimulants, such as methamphetamines, as part of the State Opioid Response grant. These funds will be utilized to increase overdose prevention, and expand treatment and recovery support services throughout the state.

IDPH also offers an opioid overdose reversal spray, known as NARCAN (naloxone), for free at local pharmacies throughout Iowa. Any individual 18 years of age or older can request to be screened by a pharmacist for eligibility to receive NARCAN. If approved, the pharmacy may dispense up to two NARCAN spray kits at no charge to the recipient.

These actions build on the work House Republicans have done over the last few years to combat the opioid epidemic in Iowa. [House File 2377](#) passed unanimously through both chambers and specifically prevented doctor shopping for opioids and reduced overprescribing by requiring prescribers to register and use the Prescription Monitoring Program when prescribing controlled substances and for pharmacies to report to the PMP within 24 hours. The bill also included proactive notifications to providers so they can recognize patients at a high risk for opioid abuse and addiction.

The legislature has also provided support to Iowans suffering from opioid addiction by allowing for immunity from liability to a person calling 911 to seek help for a drug overdose and for the person experiencing the overdose. House Republicans also passed [House File 623](#), which requires immediate treatment for those seeking help for opioid abuse by limiting prior authorizations before a Medicaid patient can access medication-assisted treatment.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Information Technology

New Statewide Broadband Map Available for Public Input

Recently, the Department of Management Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) announced the release of a new broadband map of Iowa, reporting the conditions of broadband availability in accordance with federal grant guidelines at over 1 million locations throughout the state. The public can view the map [here](#).

The new map provides a more detailed view than prior maps, identifying the broadband service available at homes and businesses across Iowa as reported by broadband providers. Locations with slower broadband speeds – defined by relevant federal guidelines to be slower than 100 upload/20 download – may be eligible for future grant funding opportunities through the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Program.

The publication of the map starts a 30-day challenge process where the public, broadband providers, and communities throughout Iowa can submit information to the OCIO wherever they believe the map incorrectly reports broadband service data.

Instructions for challenging the map are available [here](#), including videos, guides, and templates to assist those who wish to submit a challenge. Challengers may also e-mail ociogrants@iowa.gov for assistance and questions.

(Contact: Ben Gentz, 1-3452)

Iowa Workforce Development Awards Over \$3.6 Million to Grow and Expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs Across Iowa

Iowa Workforce Development announced it has awarded over \$3.6 million in funding designated to create or expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs across Iowa. Benefiting both employers and high schools, Registered Apprenticeship Programs are a critical tool for building new workforce pipelines in high-demand fields and allowing young Iowans to earn while they learn.

The state's support of these programs is provided through the Iowa Apprenticeship Act (15B) and the Iowa Registered Apprenticeship Development Fund (15C). 15B provides \$3 million in annual funding to support training or ongoing costs within any active Iowa Registered Apprenticeship program. 15C, with \$760,000 in funding available annually, applies to programs that have created or expanded with a new program in a high-demand occupation.

The state announced that 31 recipients are receiving 15C funding and 57 recipients are receiving 15B funding this year. In total, this year's funding is estimated to support approximately 5,957 apprentices across the state. The full list of 2022 awardees can be viewed below:

[15B Awardees Summary](#)

[15C Awardees Summary](#)

During fiscal year 2021, Iowa saw record growth in Registered Apprenticeship programs, adding 51 new occupations, 4,515 apprentices and 197 programs – the third highest number of new programs across the country.

Previously, the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) oversaw the Iowa Apprenticeship Act (15B) and the Iowa Registered Apprenticeship Development Fund (15C). To streamline state efforts to support the rapid growth of apprenticeship programs that are traditionally managed by IWD, both 15B and 15C funding were transitioned to IWD to create one central point of contact for all Registered Apprenticeship opportunities.

“Iowa continues to lead by expanding the earn while you learn model to more occupations, high school students, and employers who collectively are building a stronger, more prepared workforce that our state needs for the future,” said Gov. Reynolds. “I applaud the diverse number of Registered Apprenticeship programs – both new and existing – that are committed to the goals of a highly-skilled workforce and a Future Ready Iowa.”

“Registered Apprenticeship programs continue to be one of the most successful tools we have in today's workforce, with opportunities in nearly every occupation you can imagine,” said Beth Townsend, Director of Iowa Workforce Development. “We are committed to expanding and supporting these programs that are already creating long-term pipelines for Iowa.”

For more information on Iowa's Registered Apprenticeship programs and the funding opportunities available, visit earnandlearniowa.gov.

(Info from Iowa Workforce Development)

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Natural Resources

DNR--Learn to Hunt Program Opens Registration for Waterfowl Course

On Tuesday, August 9, 2022, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a press release announcing that this state agency is offering a program to teach skills needed to hunt, field dress and cook waterfowl to adults who have little to no waterfowl hunting experience. The same program will be offered in two different formats - as a webinar on August 30th, and as an in-person class on September 10th.

The August 30, 2022, webinar is free and be held via Zoom from 6 to 8 p.m. Space is limited so early registration is encouraged. To begin the registration process, go to:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qlj7U-CpQjGs58fgXYYk7w The September 10th in-person course costs \$20 and will be held at the Olofson Shooting Range, near Polk City, from 2 to 7 p.m. Space is limited so early registration is encouraged. For more information and to begin the registration process, go

to: <http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=dep4qyuab&oeidk=a07ej9evnjzda219543> The program is provided through a partnership with the Iowa DNR and Delta Waterfowl. It is part of a national effort to recruit, retain and reactivate hunters due to the overall decline in hunting and outdoor recreation.

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Public Safety

What is Fentanyl?

There have been countless news stories about fentanyl and how dangerous it is to users as well as people who may accidentally come in contact with it. But what is fentanyl and does it have any legal use?

Fentanyl was first developed in 1959. It is a synthetic opioid and when used legally can help patients with extreme pain. It can be given as a shot, a patch on skin, or as a lozenge (like a cough drop). This opioid is 100 times more potent than morphine and is most often used by cancer patients with severe pain and sometimes individuals who face chronic pain and have built a tolerance to other opioids. According to the FDA, it is a schedule II-controlled substance, meaning it has a high potential for abuse which may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence. Prescription names include; Actiq®, Fentora®, Abstral®, Subsys®, Lazanda®, and Duragesic®. When used as prescribed these drugs can ease even extreme pain.

Unfortunately, fentanyl is being manufactured in clandestine labs and being brought in to the United States and sold illegally across the country. Illegal fentanyl is either in a powder or counterfeit tablet and can be sold individually or combined with other narcotics including heroin and cocaine. According to the Department of Justice, common street names include; apache, china girl, china town, dance fever, he-man, and king ivory. When taken it creates a feeling of euphoria, confusion, drowsiness, nausea, and respiratory distress. It is very addictive and can easily lead to overdoses. A fentanyl overdose can be treated with naloxone (Narcan), if it is available.

Synthetic opioid deaths are increasing dramatically. Just 2mg of fentanyl is considered a potentially lethal dose and it is impossible to tell how much is in one illegal pill without lab testing. This has led to countless overdose injuries and deaths. While it is not possible to track all deaths directly related to fentanyl, the CDC and the National Institute of Health National Institute on Drug Abuse have tracked opioid deaths from 1999 through 2020 and there is clearly a dangerous upward trend. In 1999, opioid involved overdose deaths were well under 20,000 and in 2020 there were almost 70,000 across the country. In 2021, 258 Iowans died from opioid overdoses and 83% of those deaths involved fentanyl or other synthetic narcotics.

The drastic increase in opioid addictions and deaths have led to numerous lawsuits. Iowa has been involved with these suits and will be receiving a financial settlement to help abate the crisis in our state. Please see the human resources article in this newsletter for more information.

(Contact: Amanda Wille, 1-5230)

State Government

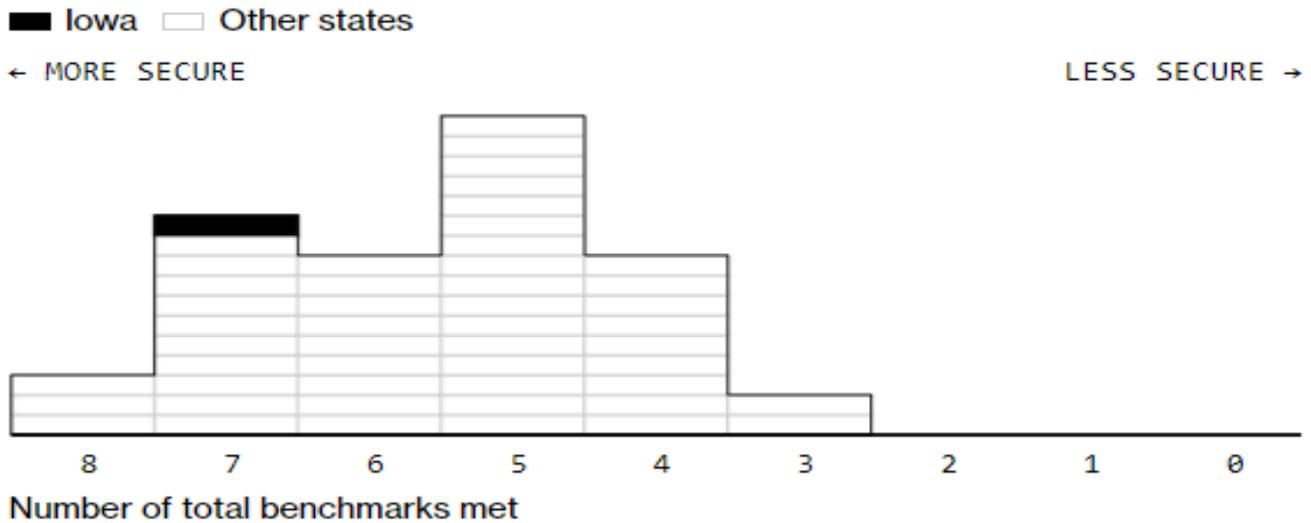
Bloomberg Study Shows Iowa’s Strong Ballot Security

Bloomberg recently conducted and published a study on states’ election susceptibility. Two areas the study examined were ease of voting and ballot security.

It should be no surprise that Iowa received high scores for its ballot security. Of the major benchmarks for ballot security, Iowa has had many of them for years. The election policies Iowa has in place that earned its high ranking in the Bloomberg study include simple widely supported measures such as voter ID requirements. Others that have recently been enacted have which strengthen Iowa’s score were voter roll maintenance, like removing deceased voters and voters who have moved out of state and/or districts. Additionally, having a mail-in ballot deadline and regular election audits earned Iowa additional benchmarks in the study.

Of the benchmarks the study examined the only one Iowa did not meet was automatic recounts. While Iowa does not have automatic recount measures, there are measures in place for candidates in Iowa to request a recount. Beyond the 8 benchmarks they measured each state by, the study considered the prohibition of absentee ballot harvesting when analyzing Iowa’s ballot security.

How Iowa compares to other states



The study also showed that while Iowa is strong at election security, it hasn’t been at the expense of the ease of voting. Only 17 states were ahead of Iowa in the benchmarks in that category and only Delaware scored higher in ballot security. Iowa has been able to maintain it’s ballot security while balancing access to vote. Iowans have continued to turnout to vote in record numbers after legislation and policies have been enacted in order to enforce election integrity. In November, Iowa saw a record turnout for city and school board elections following the enactment of two election

integrity bills passed by House Republicans. In the 2020 general elections, Iowa set a new record for percentage of participating voters.

As Iowa continues to see such high levels it is clear that Iowans have trust and faith in our elections and the outcomes. While the work to ensure election integrity is never over, House Republicans have lead the way in enacting legislation to protect the election process while enabling Iowans the fundamental right to vote.

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

Transportation

Iowa's 5-Year Transportation Plan

Recently, the Iowa Transportation Commission approved the Fiscal Year 2022-2026 Iowa Transportation Improvement Plan, which includes aviation, public transit, railroads, trails and highways. The 5-year plan can be found [here](#).

This plan includes \$3.6 billion for highway right of way and construction, with \$2.8 billion of the funding devoted to modernization of existing highways and additional safety features.

This plan also includes more than \$1.2 billion towards state-owned bridges. The Iowa DOT states that the number of poor condition bridges on the state highway system has been reduced from 256 in 2006 to 35 in 2020 as a result of the Transportation Commission's emphasis to improve the condition of Iowa's bridges.

To learn more about transportation projects planned in your area, scroll down to [page 49 of the plan](#) which outlines the timeline for projects by county.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Veterans Affairs

Veteran Hunting License Public Comment

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is accepting comments on new veteran licenses, through August 19.

This session, the legislature established a new lifetime trout fishing license for Iowa residents who qualify for the disabled veteran homestead credit under Iowa Code section 425.15.

The legislature also passed Senate File 2383, which establishes a new annual armed forces fishing license and a new annual armed forces hunting and fishing combined license to be issued to any resident of Iowa who has served in the armed forces of the United States on federal active duty. The law provides that the fee for the new veteran licenses shall be no more than five dollars.

Iowa Code section 483A.1 requires that all license fees be promulgated in rule. Accordingly, this proposed rulemaking would add these new licenses to 571 Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) chapter 15 and would establish a \$63 fee for the disabled veteran lifetime trout license and a \$5 fee for each of the new veteran licenses.

Comments on the proposed new veteran licenses may be submitted through August 19 via email to fisheries@dnr.iowa.gov, or by mail to Joe Larscheid, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, 502 East Ninth Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Ways & Means

GovConnectIowa Adding More State Agencies

Seven State of Iowa agencies are preparing to hook up to GovConnectIowa, the State's secure online tax portal, to make it easier to do business in Iowa and to better serve Iowa's taxpayers. The seven agencies are:

- Iowa Department of Revenue
- Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division
- Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals
- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- Iowa Finance Authority
- Iowa Lottery Authority
- Iowa Utilities Board

This marks the second rollout of a multi-year effort to simplify processes for taxpayers doing business in Iowa. The State launched GovConnectIowa in November 2021 with the Department of Revenue, Iowa Lottery, Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals, and Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division. That initial effort included the ability to:

- Register or renew certain business licenses and permits
- File and make payments for sales, use, withholding, and fuel taxes
- Communicate with state agencies

This November the state will add additional tax types, increase functionality, and introduce additional state agency partners to GovConnectIowa. This second rollout will include:

- New functionality for making payments and account management for corporate income tax (including corporations, S corporations, and partnerships), and franchise tax
- The ability to apply for tax credits and manage tax credit certifications for businesses
- Expanding functions for Alcoholic Beverages Division, Department of Inspections and Appeals, and Iowa Lottery
- Introduction of new partnerships with Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa Finance Authority, and Iowa Utilities Board to provide tax credit applications and administration through GovConnectIowa

More details and information about the additions and how they affect taxpayers will be available in September.

(Contact: Kristi Kiouss, 2-5290)