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IowaHouseRepublicans.com

Appropriations

Board of Regents Increases Fiscal Year 2024 General Fund Request

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The Iowa Board of Regents adopted their Fiscal Year 2024 budget proposal at their September meeting, but not before increasing the amount requested by an additional \$1 million.

The Regents' proposal calls for a General Fund increase in FY 24 of \$36.6 million, which would raise their total General Fund appropriations to \$631.5 million. The main part of the increase (\$32 million) is in the General Education line items for each school. The increases would be:

University of Iowa	\$12 million
Iowa State University	\$12 million
University of Northern Iowa	\$8 million

These funds are dedicated to a number of initiatives at each school. At the University of Iowa, a majority of the increase (\$7 million) would be used to hire 10 additional nursing faculty and renovate and expand the simulation training space in the College of Nursing. Another part of their increase is to increase financial aid to students who are the first in their families to attend college. Among the initiatives at Iowa State is a plan to use \$3 million to expand its work the Ames Research Lab on rare earth metals. Iowa State would also increase its financial aid for first generation students, and expand a number of technology programs including cyber security. UNI would spend \$4 million of its increase to recruit more education majors, while the other \$4 million would be used to limit the growth of tuition.

Under the Regents funding plan, UNI would also get an additional \$2 million for their new partnership program with DMACC. They would be increasing the number of community colleges partnering in this by adding Iowa Western CC, Western Iowa Tech, and Indian Hill CC. The program was not funded in the FY 23 budget, but Governor Reynolds gave UNI \$1 million of COVID funds to start their joint effort with DMACC.

The School for the Deaf would receive a \$518,586 increase for increased salaries for staff. Also, \$300,000 is being requested to start the language equality and acquisition for deaf kids(LEAD-K) program, which the Legislature passed in the 2022 session. For the Regents' economic development programs, the Board is requesting an increase of \$902,025 distributed among the three universities.

After meeting with the student leadership at the three universities, the Board of Regents moved to increase the General Fund request by \$1 million to address student mental health issues. The funds would be used to increase access to mental health services on campus. The \$1 million appropriation would be given to the Board office, who would proportionally distribute this amongst the schools.

The Board's Fiscal Year 2024 budge request will now be submitted to the Governor for consideration as she puts together her General Fund budget proposal for the next year.

Agriculture

ISU Extension & Outreach--Developing Reliable Perennial Groundcover Systems

On Monday, September 20, 2022, Iowa State University (ISU) Extension and Outreach issued a press release by Alena Whitaker announcing a webinar discussing the current state of research and practical applications of cover crops and perennial groundcover. The [Iowa Learning Farms](#) conservation webinar will take place on September 28, 2022 at noon. The featured speaker is D. Raj Raman, Morrill Professor with ISU's Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering and project director at Regenerating America's Working Landscapes to Enhance Natural Resources and Public Goods through Perennial Groundcover, also referred to as RegenPGC. In the webinar, "Developing Large-Scale, Reliable Perennial Groundcover Systems - Challenges and Approaches from RegenPGC," Raman will highlight the current state of research, practical applications of cover crops and how perennial groundcover could become a lower barrier-to-entry approach to cover cropping, which could accelerate adoption. He will also discuss technical and non-technical challenges to realizing broad utilization of PGC. In addition, Raman will provide insights into the multiple critical ecosystem services cover crops contribute to the overall health and productivity of cropland.

Professor Raman's research includes technoeconomic modeling of bioprocessing systems, and he has been collaborating since 2017 with Ken Moore, the Charles F. Curtiss Distinguished Professor in Agriculture and Life Sciences at ISU, on a transdisciplinary project focused on perennial groundcover. The Iowa Learning Farms is an ISU Extension and Outreach conservation and water quality education program. Professor Raman noted--"Cover crops have been a talking point in agriculture for years, but adoption rates are low, and our research is pointing to different ways to take advantage of the known conservation benefits through practices that may have stronger appeal for farmers. We understand and appreciate both the promise and challenges of making PGC adoption a viable approach throughout the upper Midwest, and are eager to draw attention to the potential of perennial groundcover farming systems that could become widely deployed as a conservation practice." Participants are encouraged to ask questions of the presenters. People from all backgrounds and areas of interest are encouraged to join. Webinar access instructions

To participate in the live webinar, shortly before noon CDT September 28, 2022:

- Click this URL, or type this web address into your internet browser: <https://iastate.zoom.us/j/364284172>.
- Or, go to <https://iastate.zoom.us/join> and enter meeting ID 364 284 172.
- Or, join from a dial-in phone line by dialing +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 876 9923; meeting ID 364 284 172.

The webinar will also be recorded and archived on the ILF website, so that it can be watched at any time. A Certified Crop Adviser board-approved continuing education unit has been applied for. Those who participate in the live webinar are eligible. Information about how to apply to receive the CEU will be provided at the end of the live webinar.

ISU Extension & Outreach--Webinars Address Food Safety for Food Entrepreneurs

On Friday, September 16, 2022, Iowa State University (ISU) Extension and Outreach issued a press release by Shannon M. Coleman announcing that beginning in October, food entrepreneurs can learn about best practices related to food safety, food labeling, and cleaning and sanitation of food contact surfaces during a free webinar series. The series features extension food safety specialists from several land-grant universities and is made possible through a food safety outreach grant supported by USDA and the [North Central Region Food Safety Extension Network](#). [Register online](#) to participate in one, two or all three webinars.

Dates, times, topics

- October 12, 12 p.m. CDT: Food Safety Basics. Planning for food safety helps to ensure the safety of your food products. Emily Marrison, Ohio State University, Betty Feng, Purdue University, and Morrine Omolo, University of Minnesota, will discuss how to protect your consumers and your business.
- October 26, 12 p.m. CDT: Cleaning and Sanitation Basics. Learn about the definition of cleaning and sanitization, and methods to clean and sanitize food contact surfaces from Shannon Coleman, Iowa State University, and Karen Fifield, Michigan State University.
- November 9, 12 p.m. CST: Food Labeling Basics. Learn about labeling your food products and FDA's food package labeling requirements, including nutrition, ingredients, allergens and more from Julie Garden-Robinson, North Dakota State University, and Karen Blakeslee, Kansas State University.
- For more information about the webinar series, contact Shannon Coleman, scoleman@iastate.edu, or Karen Fifield, fifield@msu.edu.

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Commerce

Utility Bills Increase as Winter Approaches

U.S. utility customers, faced with some of the highest energy bills in recent years, are set to pay even more this winter as natural gas prices continue to climb.

Natural gas prices have more than doubled this year because of a global supply shortage, and they are expected to remain high over the coming months as demand remains high and natural gas will be required to light and heat homes this winter. The supply crunch for natural gas has made it more expensive for utilities to purchase or produce power, and those costs are passed on to customers.

Customers' electricity rates are also increasing across the country. The Energy Information Administration (EIA) projects the residential price of electricity will average 14.8 cents per kilowatt-hour in 2022, up 7.5% from 2021. The EIA is also forecasting record gas consumption this year despite surging prices, in part because power producers are limited in their ability to burn coal instead for electric generation due to supply constraints and plant retirements.

Record exports of U.S. natural gas, the electricity demand associated with some of the hottest and driest weather on record along with sluggish production growth have kept U.S. natural gas supplies lower than usual leading into the winter season – elevating prices. Demand for U.S. natural gas supplies in Europe has soared following the war in Ukraine, with European prices surging as Russia reduced exports to the region. Demand from Asia for natural gas has also increased ahead of winter. Domestic buyers have been swept up in the scramble for supplies, with U.S. prices rising about 44% since the beginning of July.

The U.S. consumer-price index for electricity in August climbed 15.8% over the same month a year ago, the biggest such 12-month increase since 1981, according to a report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

What has the Biden administration done in response? Biden and the D.C. Democrats have consistently discouraged the extraction of domestic resources, driving energy costs and inflation even higher. This is despite the fact that the United States has an abundance of available natural gas.

These rising energy costs further hurt Iowans already stressed by the Biden Administration fanning the flames of inflation through runaway government spending.

(Contact: Ben Gentz, 1-3452)

Economic Growth

Destination Iowa Awards

Recently, Governor Kim Reynolds announced \$12.9 million in grant funding for three projects through Destination Iowa. The \$100 million program was announced last April and uses federal funds to invest in transformational attractions that will improve the quality of life in Iowa communities as well as attract visitors and new residents.

The City of Council Bluffs and the Southwest Iowa Nonprofit for Collaborative Impact have been awarded \$4,900,000 toward phase four of the Iowa Riverfront Development project. This phase includes a treetop walk, a pier, and a 138-foot-tall observation tower with an adventure course. The award represents 15% of the total project investment of \$32,827,000.

The Great Outdoors Foundation has been awarded \$7,000,000 for the Scott Avenue site portion of the Iowa Confluence Water Trails project. The project is creating a regional water trails network in central Iowa with more than 80 planned improvements across 150 miles of waterways. The award represents 13% of the Scott Avenue site investment of \$53,500,000.

The Val Air Ballroom has been awarded \$1,000,000 toward the overhaul of the historic ballroom into a music venue that can host up to 2,400 patrons. The project proposes to rehabilitate elements of the facility that are historically significant, such as signage, dance floor, and exterior features, while bringing more modern amenities to the facility. The award represents 8% of the total project investment of \$12,718,138.

IEDA began accepting applications last spring and will continue to review applications as they arrive through December 31 or until funding runs out. Applications are scored based on eligibility, completeness, and the project's ability to meet the program goal of creating transformational tourism attractions. Cities, counties, nonprofits and other organizations can apply for Destination Iowa grants through four separate funds: Economically Significant Development, Outdoor Recreation, Tourism Attraction, and Creative Placemaking. To date, a total of \$50 million has been awarded to 13 projects throughout the state through Destination Iowa grants.

Funded projects must be completed by June 30, 2026. For more information on the Destination Iowa program, visit iowaeda.com/destination-iowa/. Funding for this program is being made available through the federal American Rescue Plan Act.

Contact: Kristi Kiouss, 2-5290))

Education

Free Speech on Regent Campuses

Recently, the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, or FIRE, released their 2022-2023 College Free Speech Rankings. As many of you know, free speech at schools and campuses has been a hot topic not only across the United States, but right here in Iowa.

In 2021, the legislature passed HF 744, which accentuated Frist Amendment protections on college campuses. It requires the Board of Regents to develop materials, programs, and procedures to ensure that those persons who are responsible for discipline, instruction, or administration of the campus community, or who have oversight of student

government organizations, or distribute activity fee funds understand the policies, regulations, and duties of the institution regarding free expression on campus. This could include presidents, vice presidents, deans, department directors, administrators, campus police officers, residence life officials, faculty, and members of student government organizations. It also requires the institutions to establish and publicize their free speech policies. All three universities now have webpages on their free speech policies, how to file a complaint if there is a violation of free speech, and faculty can be disciplined if it is found that they are in violation. The other major component in this bill is that each institution must provide training on free speech to all students, faculty, and staff on an annual basis. The reasons for this requirement were reemphasized at the most recent Iowa Board of Regents meeting on September 14 when it was reported that 36% of college students don't believe college campuses should foster a free exchange of ideas.

FIRE, in partnership with College Pulse, ranked the speech climates of 203 of America's largest and most prestigious campuses in order from top to bottom. The top five colleges for free speech are the University of Chicago, Kansas State, Purdue, Mississippi State, and Oklahoma State. The worst colleges for free speech are Skidmore College, Georgetown, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia University. The rankings rely mostly on student responses while factoring in whether schools had a speech code and how restrictive that code is. FIRE also took into account whether schools sanctioned faculty for their speech or disinvited guest speakers.

Findings include:

- 63% of respondents worried about damaging their reputation because someone misunderstood something they said or did.
- 63% of respondents said that students shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus was acceptable to some degree.
- Conservative students are most likely to feel they cannot express their opinions freely, with 42% reporting they "often" feel uncomfortable speaking freely, compared to 13% of liberal students.
- 40% of students are uncomfortable disagreeing with a professor whether in public or in a written assignment.
- The three most difficult topics to discuss on campus are abortion, racial inequality, and COVID-19 vaccine mandates.
- The majorities of students believe campus speakers with opinions that stray from liberal orthodoxy should not be allowed to speak on campus.
- 74% do not support allowing a campus speaker who says transgender people have a mental disorder (some campuses have that number rising to over 90%)
- 74% do not support allowing one who says Black Lives Matter is a hate group
- 69% do not support allowing one who says the 2020 election was stolen
- 60% do not support allowing one who says abortion should be completely illegal.

Out of 203 schools, the three Iowa schools that made the list are Iowa State ranked 50th, the University of Iowa ranked 85th, and Grinnell College ranked 185th. The University of Northern Iowa and other private Iowa colleges were not included in the rankings. Both Iowa State and University of Iowa are labeled as "average" while Grinnell labeled as "poor" in their rankings. At Iowa State the liberal to conservative student ratio is 1.1:1. At the University of Iowa it is 2.4:1. At Grinnell it is 13.9:1. It should be noted that at all three of these schools there were no speaker disinvitations.

Let's break down the two Regent Universities a bit more.

Iowa State:

- 44% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is never acceptable.
- 42% of students say they have rarely or never self-censored on campus.
- 40% of students say they are not worried about damaging their reputation because someone misunderstands something they have said or done.

University of Iowa:

- 39% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is never acceptable.
- 43% of students say they have rarely or never self-censored on campus.

- 35% of students say they are not worried about damaging their reputation because someone misunderstands something they have said or done.

At the most recent Board of Regents meeting, UNI professor Dr. Anelia Dimitrova gave a presentation from the Regents Free Speech Committee. Dr. Dimitrova stated that according to research done by the Freedom Forum, 64% say college campuses should foster a free exchange of ideas. Regent David Barker quickly pointed out that means more than one-third, 36%, of students don't believe college campuses should foster a free exchange of ideas. That means high schools are graduating a significant number of students who do not believe in the fundamental right to free speech at colleges and universities.

Dr. Dimitrova added, "If we give people the opportunity to talk, they will. And if they do talk, then we have an honest discussion. And we have an opportunity to build trust in the classroom, we have an opportunity to hear opposing views, everybody feels comfortable, everybody feels respected and people are not silenced. And people are not silenced, they don't sit in the corner and say nothing. In fact they do say what they think, because they feel safe and they feel respected. That's what I think we should do."

Protecting free speech is a key priority for Iowa House Republicans and the conversation around its place on college campuses will continue in 2023.

(Info from the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), the Board of Regents, and FreedomForum.org)

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Environmental Protection

EPA's Annual SepticSmart Week: Protecting Your Home and the Environment While Saving Money

On Monday, September 19, 2022, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), issued a press release noting that this federal agency is partnering with state and local governments, community groups, businesses, and academic institutions to sponsor the tenth annual SepticSmart Week from September 19-23, 2022. SepticSmart focuses on educating homeowners and communities on the proper care and maintenance of septic systems to enhance healthy communities and protect our nation's waters.

SepticSmart Week 2022 seeks to create public awareness about the event and share the following helpful tips designed both to preserve environmental quality and reduce potential future onsite septic system maintenance costs:

- *Think at the Sink!* What goes down the drain has a big impact on your septic system. Fats, grease, and solids can clog a system's pipes and drainfield.
- *Don't Overload the Commode!* A toilet is not a trash can. Disposable diapers and wipes, feminine hygiene products, coffee grounds, cigarette butts, and cat litter can damage a septic system.
- *Don't Strain Your Drain!* Use water efficiently and stagger use of water-based appliances. Too much water use at once can overload a system that hasn't been pumped recently.
- *Shield Your Field!* Tree and shrub roots, cars, and livestock can damage your septic drainfield.
- *Keep It Clean!* Contamination can occur when a septic system leaks due to improper maintenance. Be sure your drinking water is safe to drink by testing it regularly.
- *Protect It and Inspect It!* Regular septic system maintenance can save homeowners thousands of dollars in repairs and protect public health.
- *Pump Your Tank!* Ensure your septic tank is pumped at regularly intervals as recommended by a professional and/or local permitting authority.

Human Resources

Legislature Prioritizes Addressing Mental Health

Over the last five sessions, House Republicans have made mental health a priority by passing significant legislation. These bills include efforts to expand access to mental health services for all ages, create a sustainable, long-term funding system, provide training to help schools address student mental health needs, and increase the mental health workforce throughout the state.

This is an issue that is personal to many Iowans. Few people are immune from the loss of a family member or friend who suffered from a lifelong battle with depression. Too often there is another tragic story in the news of a family feeling hopeless as they seek treatment far from home for their loved one's chronic mental illness. Legislators are also regularly contacted about the costs for law enforcement to drive across the state and find inpatient psychiatric beds; the costs to the hospitals that are not reimbursed for a patient no longer in need of acute level psychiatric placement; and the costs to our jails and prisons for unintentionally becoming the default locations to treat individuals with mental illness.

All the bills below passed during the 89th general assembly and were successful because both parties came together and worked closely with families and individuals who have experienced mental health crises, mental health professionals, and law enforcement to find solutions. We will continue to monitor the progress throughout the state to ensure mental health care for Iowans into the future.

- **MHDS Region Funding (SF619)** – Phased out the mental health and disability services (MHDS) property tax levy and requires general fund dollars to be distributed to the MHDS Regions on a per capita basis and based on performance-based contracts with DHS. The state appropriation is gradually increased based on a per capita rate until FY2026, and then a growth factor will be utilized potentially amounting to an annual 1.5% increase.
- **Psychiatric Intensive Care (HF2578 and HF2546)**: Provides \$1.5 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. This amounts to a \$4 million increase when combined with federal funds.
- **Telehealth access:**
 - Mental health telehealth payment parity (SF619) – requires health insurers reimburse for mental health services provided through telehealth at the same rate as services provided in person.
 - Out-of-state providers (HF2578) – Ensures that health insurers are not excluding mental health providers providing telehealth to Iowans simply because they are not physically located in Iowa.
- **Mental Health Workforce:**
 - HF 2578 establishes a new psychiatric residency program in Iowa by requiring the university of Iowa hospitals and clinics to apply for 12 residencies per year to be focused on training at state facilities, including the mental health institutes, Eldora State Training School, and Woodward Resource Center. If UIHC is awarded all 12 slots by ACGME, this will amount to a \$1.2 million appropriation in the first year, and \$4.8 million state appropriation in the 4th year and every year going forward.
 - HF 2578 and HF 891 fully fund a rural psychiatry residency program with UIHC. This was the 4th year of expanded funding, meaning the residency program is up to 2 new residents per year.
 - HF 2549 and HF 2575 fund \$520,000 per year to go towards a mental health professional loan repayment program for mental health professionals that agree to practice in a mental health shortage area in Iowa for at least 5 years.

- HF 868 provided an increase of \$300,000 and HF 2575 provided an increase of \$780,000 for Rural Primary Care Loan Repayment Program which is designed to recruit physicians into high-need rural areas.
 - HF 2575 provided an increase of \$250,000 for the Health Care Loan Repayment Program which provides financial awards to nurse educators teaching full-time at eligible colleges and universities, as well as applicants who agree to practice as registered nurses, advanced registered nurses, or physician assistants in service commitment areas for five consecutive years.
 - HF 868 provided an increase of \$100,000 for the Health Care Professional Recruitment Program which was established to increase the number of advanced registered nurse practitioners, athletic trainers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, physicians, physician assistants, podiatrists, and registered nurses practicing in high-need communities in Iowa if individuals practice in specified locations for up to four years.
- **Children's Mental Health (HF891) –**
 - Provided an increase of \$1.03 million to be used to reduce the waiting list for the children's mental health home and community-based services waiver.
 - Psychiatric Medical Institutions for Children (PMICs) – provided an increase of \$3.9 million to PMICs, which amounts to \$10.3 million when combined with federal funds.
 - Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs) received a \$3.85 million increase. These facilities provide treatment, including mental health treatment, to children in the child welfare system.
 - HF 868 provided \$1.1 million and HF 2575 provided \$200,000 for Children's Mental Health training.
 - HF 868 provided \$1.6 million for the Therapeutic Classroom Incentive Fund as well as \$500,000 for Classroom Environment professional development and \$500,000 for Therapeutic Classroom Transportation. HF 2575 provided an increase of \$725,000 for the Therapeutic Classroom Incentive Fund.
- **Other Medicaid Rate Increases:**
 - Habilitation providers (HF891) – provided an increase of \$7.13 million to home-based habilitation providers. These providers help individuals with mental illness live in their community and not in the hospital or jail, and the total increase amounts to \$20. Million when combined with federal funds.
 - Behavioral Health Intervention Services (HF2578) – provided a \$1.28 million of state funding, and a total funding increase of \$3.4 million in FY2023
 - Autism providers (HF2578) – provided a 7.5% increase to autism providers
- **Other Mental Health Policy Changes:**
 - HF736 came from the Iowa Behavioral Health Association to correct a problem that substance abuse providers were experiencing with formerly incarcerated patients. The bill prohibits health care providers from having to have funds recouped after they have provided services to someone that they have verified Medicaid eligibility for and obtained prior authorization for prior to giving services. If it is later determined that the person receiving services was not eligible for Medicaid, the provider would not have to return the funds if they have documented everything correctly.
 - HF2167 revises the definition of autism spectrum disorder in the insurance code sections to align with current mental health diagnostic criteria. This bill will ensure that parents seeking autism treatment for their children are not limited by arbitrary insurance limitations.
 - HF 2246 establishes a provisional license for a doctoral psychology student in their internship. The current provisional license only applies after internship, and insurance companies have not been reimbursing these providers due to this license issue.
 - HF891 allowed Polk County to transfer money within the county to their MHDS Region in FY2022.
 - HF2578 corrects inconsistencies in code to ensure that all MHDS Regions have a governing board that comply with state law.

- HF2578 requires DHS to apply for a state plan amendment to cover 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.
- SF513 – Allows a law enforcement report to remain confidential when a report is made regarding a mental health crisis and no crime has been committed.
- HF 891 – requires the board of social work and the board of behavioral science to amend their administrative rules to remove any requirement for supervised clinical experience and supervised professional practice to be completed in-person as a condition of licensure. This bill also allows for licensed independent social workers, marriage and family therapists, and mental health counselors to supervise within these three professions.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Judiciary

Who are Iowa's Judges?

For many Iowans interacting with the courts can be an overwhelming process. Knowing more about judges and their responsibilities can help ease concerns for those unfamiliar with the system.

Below is a brief explanation of judgeships in Iowa.

District Courts

In Iowa there is one District Court in each county and counties are divided among eight judicial districts. Each district has one Chief Judge, selected by the Iowa Supreme Court.

District Court Judge- these judges hear matters involving civil, criminal, juvenile, probate and small claims cases. The Supreme Court has a formula to determine how many District Judges serve in each judicial district. This formula is designed to ensure all Iowans have equal access to justice.

District Associate Judge-Iowa code allows civil cases (less than \$10,000), involuntary commitment or hospitalization proceedings, misdemeanors, Class D felonies and other felony arraignments, protective orders, probate and juvenile court matters to be heard by these judges. The number of District Judges is determined by a formula found in Iowa code based on the population of each county.

Associate Juvenile Judge- Issues in juvenile court appear before these judges. They can issue warrants, nontestimonial identification orders, and issue orders, findings and decisions as the judge of the juvenile court. There is no formula for appointment of these judges.

Associate Probate Judge- Probate court proceedings are handled by Associate Probate Judges. They can issue no-contact or protective orders, injunctions and contempt orders for adults in probate court proceedings as well as issue findings, orders and decisions as the judge of the probate court.

Magistrate-Simple misdemeanors, traffic violations, search warrants, small claims and other issues are handled by magistrate judges. Iowa code determines how the 206 magistrate judges will be apportioned amongst the counties.

Court of Appeals- The court of appeals is comprised of nine judges, one Chief Judge and eight Associate Judges. This court hears cases referred by the Iowa Supreme Court, normally in panels of three.

Supreme Court-The Iowa Supreme Court is made up of seven justices (one Chief Justice and six justices). According to the Constitution, the court has appellate jurisdiction and supervisory and administrative control over the judicial

branch. All appeals from the District court are filed in the Supreme Court. This is the highest court in the state and its opinions are binding on all other Iowa Courts.

Senior Judges – These judges have served on either the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals or District Court and can be appointed a senior judge upon application and assignment by the Supreme Court. They serve two-year terms and are assigned duties by the supreme court.

(Contact: Amanda Wille, 1-5230)

Labor

IWD Launching Business Engagement Division

Iowa Workforce Development launched its new Business Engagement Division on September 12th, reorganizing employees around the state to create a more efficient team for assessing and resolving the workforce challenges of Iowa employers.

The launch is accompanied by an employer outreach blitz across the state. Over the next 100 days, IWD leadership and members of the new division will deploy across Iowa to share information about available resources and provide specific points of contact for assisting employers with any workforce need.

The Division, which will be led by Division Administrator Tim Goodwin and Deputy Division Administrator Kathy Anderson, was created at the direction of Governor Kim Reynolds, who challenged IWD to design and implement a “one-stop shop” for employers – an easy-to-access system that will meet employer needs regardless of where they are in the cycle of their business lives.

“We want to spend the next few months connecting with as many Iowa employers as possible so we can make certain that the state is doing everything it can to address their workforce needs and also provide a slate of real solutions,” said Beth Townsend, Director of Iowa Workforce Development. “Iowa has many workforce tools to help with different challenges employers face. It can be difficult for businesses to navigate the available resources in the state, so we have created a one-stop shop to provide concierge service to them, regardless of where the programs are housed.”

A key first step involves building long-term relationships. Toward that end, IWD wants to meet with Iowa’s employers and will be reaching out to schedule in-person visits with them to evaluate any ongoing workforce needs. (Employers also can sign up for a visit by clicking [here](#)). IWD experts also will follow up to provide any identified assistance during those conversations. Subject areas include:

- Exploring and building workforce (available assistance with worker training and work-based learning)
- Surviving a slowdown (rapid response team, voluntary shared work program)
- Developing, expanding, and retaining workforce (help finding more workers, expanding the pool through targeted programs and retention programs)

“We’re transforming Iowa Workforce Development into a one-stop shop where employers can go to find assistance with any workforce issue at any point in the business cycle,” said Sherri Behrendt, IWD’s new Deputy Director of Employment and Training, including Business Engagement. “Over the next few weeks and months, we’re going to be actively reaching out to businesses across the state to be sure Iowa employers understand that we’re ready, willing, and more than able to help.”

To find more information on the workforce services available to Iowa employers, visit [this link](#). You can contact Business Engagement at iaworks@iwd.iowa.gov, 1-833-469-2967, or by clicking the link above.

(Info from Iowa Workforce Development)

Natural Resources

Iowa DNR to Host Public Meetings on Chronic Wasting Disease

On Tuesday, September 20, 2022, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a press release announcing that this state agency plans to host three meetings in October to provide an update to the public on chronic wasting disease surveillance and management efforts. Meetings are scheduled for:

- Jefferson, October 4, 2022; 7 p.m., Clover Hall, Greene County Fairgrounds, 601 E. Lincoln Way
- Decorah, October 6, 2022; 7 p.m., Valders Hall of Science, Room 206, Luther College, 700 College Drive
- Glenwood, Oct. 11, 2022; 7 p.m., American Legion Hall, 104 N. Vine Street

Tissue samples collected during the 2021-2022 surveillance season resulted in deer testing positive in both Fremont and Greene counties – the first-time deer tested positive for the always fatal disease in these counties. In addition to Fremont and Greene counties, deer have tested positive in 10 other Iowa counties since 2013.

Chronic wasting disease is a neurological disease belonging to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) or prion diseases. It attacks the brain of infected deer causing the animal to lose weight, display abnormal behavior, lose body functions and die. It is always fatal to the infected animal.

DNR Touts On-stream Impoundment Restoration fund

On Tuesday, September 20, 2022, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a press release announcing that the on-stream impoundment restoration fund, created by the Iowa Legislature in 2021 and administered by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), will award funds to improve water quality and recreational opportunities on eligible on-stream impoundments throughout Iowa. Up to \$500,000 will be awarded for State Fiscal Year 2023 through this competitive grant program to fund restoration projects that will protect, maintain, and enhance these popular recreation destinations and their related watersheds. Projects funded should ensure a cost-effective investment for the citizens of Iowa, a local community commitment to watershed protection, and improve overall water quality in the impoundment. Applications are due November 4, 2022. Information on how to apply for the On-Stream Impoundment Restoration Fund Grant is available online at <https://iowadnr.gov/onstreamimpoundment>.

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

State Government

Election Day Preparedness

Governor Reynolds proclaimed September 20, 2022 as Voter Registration Day in celebration of National Voter Registration Day. It is roughly six weeks until election day, Tuesday November 8, and it is important that Iowans are prepared to cast their ballots in the general election. The ability to vote and make one's voice heard is one of our most sacred rights.

How to Register to Vote

If you are not already registered to vote or have moved since the last time you voted there are several easy ways to register. If you have a driver's license or state issued ID card you can register online through the [Iowa DOT website](#).

Additionally, you can register to vote through the mail by filling out and returning your completed [voter registration form](#) to your county auditor's office. You can register in person at your county auditor's office or on election day at your polling location. In order to register to vote you must be a U.S. Citizen, an Iowa resident, and be 18 years old on election day.

Absentee Ballot Requests

All Iowans are now able to request their absentee ballots for the 2022 election. Registered voters can submit a written application in their County Auditor's office or submit a completed [Absentee Ballot Request Form](#) via mail to the County Auditor's office. In order to request an absentee ballot, the voter must provide their name, date of birth, their residential address, Iowa driver's license/ID number, or their four-digit Voter PIN. Absentee ballot requests must be received by the County Auditor's office by 5:00 pm October 24. You can find your County Auditor's information [here](#) or for any other questions regarding registering to vote or absentee ballot requests can be found at <https://voterready.iowa.gov/>

Find Your Legislative and Congressional District

This past November, the Governor signed into law the newly redrawn congressional and legislative districts. As required by the Constitutions of the United States and Iowa and Iowa Code, Iowa's 4 congressional districts, 50 Iowa Senate districts, and 100 Iowa House districts were drafted based on ideal populations for each in accordance with the 2020 Decennial Census Data that was released in August.

Beyond locating your polling place, voters should ensure they know which legislative and congressional districts they live in. A statewide map detailing the new districts can be found [here](#) and the Iowa Legislature website has an [interactive district map](#) that allows you to enter your address and see which Iowa House, Iowa Senate, and U.S. Congressional district you live in. Voters can also look at the Secretary of State's [Candidate List](#) for which candidates are seeking election in those districts.

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

Transportation

The Land of Electric Cars...But No Power

Only in California will they [mandate electric vehicle sales](#) at the same time as their [electric grid faces blackouts](#). While most of the country was celebrating Labor Day, the [Governor of California](#) was pleading with residents to turn their air-conditioning up to 78 degrees and avoid use of big appliances. Do you think "big appliances" includes charging your electric vehicle?

Just 10 days prior, the non-elected bureaucrats of the California Air Resources Board banned the sale of new gas-power cars, trucks and SUVs in the state by 2035. In just 12 years, thanks to a group of unaccountable board members, California will require 100% of new vehicles sold in the state to be electric. This requirement however does exempt used vehicles and vehicles purchased in other states, which will only continue to increase the price of a used vehicle for the rest of the country.

Fortunately, Iowans still believe in consumer choice, from the gas tank to the car you purchase. Of the [4.59 million vehicles](#) registered in Iowa, [4,264 of them are completely electric](#) (.09%).

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Veterans Affairs

How to Apply for Burn Pit Benefits

The federal government has recently allowed for veterans exposed to burn pits to apply for benefits based on their medical conditions.

To file a claim, or have a previous denial reconsidered, veterans should apply here: <https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/>.

The U.S. VA will begin processing claims on January 1, 2023, and those will be applied retroactively to this summer. The VA has additionally announced that they will provide toxic exposure screenings to every enrolled veteran beginning October 1.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Ways & Means

How Your Home Is Assessed (and what to do if you don't like it)!

By now most Iowans have (probably) paid their property taxes for the year. That payment was actually for the assessment that was done in 2021 because property taxes are paid in arrears. For purposes of this article, we are focusing on residential assessments and property classes (various classes of property are assessed differently and by different entities.)

Let's start with how and when homes are assessed. Iowa law requires that all residential property be reassessed every two years on the odd numbered year by the county assessor. So, all Iowa homeowners will have their homes reassessed next year.

When most Iowans talk about assessing a home—they are really talking about figuring out the market value. The law in Iowa is that assessed value is market value. The assessor finds the market value by analyzing recent sales, but will also look at the replacement cost (the amount it would cost to rebuild the property) less depreciation. Assessed value should be as close to market value as possible.

One thing people often wonder is how an assessor knows that they finished a basement or added a bathroom without ever coming into a home. Assessors actually find out most of this information by looking at building permits that are filed with the local city hall or the county. Another issue people have is when they find mistakes in their assessments—like a basement that claims to be finished when it is not. When you find inaccuracies with your assessment, you should contact the assessor's office. The assessor will review it and determine if the changes need to be made. An appraiser from the assessor's office may need to walk through the property to obtain accurate data.

After considering all relevant information, assessments are sent out to homeowners by April 1 of the assessment year. Iowans will not actually pay the taxes on these assessments until September of the following year. If you disagree with the assessment you receive—there is a process for you to argue your case. In a reassessment year, a property owner may protest an assessment for one or more of the following reasons:

- The assessment is not comparable to others with similar properties.
- The property is assessed at more than its actual value.
- The property is exempt from taxation.

- There is an error in the assessment.
- The assessment is fraudulent.

Completed protest forms can be received in your assessor's office starting April 2nd up to and including April 30th. The Board of Review will then review your assessment and determine whether the assessed value is fair. If, after review, you still do not agree with the assessed value, you may choose to appeal the case by filing in district court or with the Property Assessment Appeal Board at the Department of Revenue.

The next newsletter will cover more about the actual taxes Iowans pay on their homes and how a taxing authority comes up with the amount to actually tax a homeowner.

(Contact: Kristi Kiious, 2-5290)