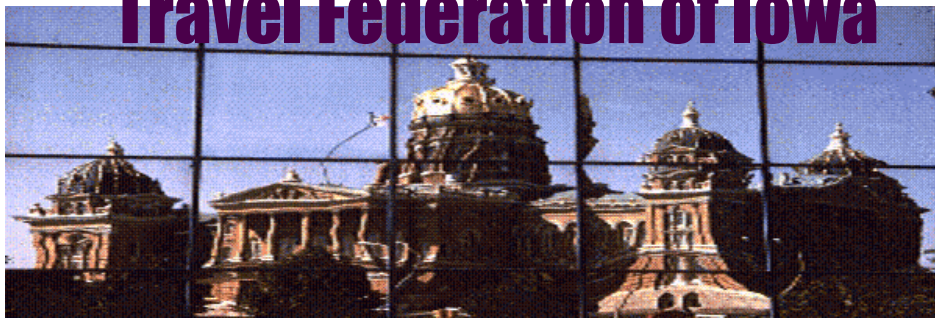


Travel Federation of Iowa



LET'S TALK
TOURISM

Issue Six – March 31, 2007

Capitol News

Tourism News

Important Bills

Capitol News

It's crunch time. Legislators have less than a month now to finish up all the work before them. Today is the 83rd day of the 110-day legislative session. Legislators have only 27 paid days to clear their desks, and there are a lot of things left to do.

Budgets have not been finalized, and we expect targets will need to be adjusted downward before the session ends. While legislators must by law base their fiscal year 2008 budget on the Revenue Estimating Conference's December estimates, leaders are waiting to see what the April 6 REC numbers look like before making their final budget markups. Word is those estimates are not looking too rosy and may be signaling a downturn in the economy. If that is the case, leaders may want to err on the side of caution and scale back their spending for the year.

Details of the Governor's proposed Power Fund (his renewable energy economic development package) have yet to be hammered out. A plan to fill the gaps in the health care safety net and begin discussions on universal health care coverage has not been finalized. The proposed four-year-old preschool initiative, guaranteeing every four-year-old child in the state access to free preschool is still waiting action on the calendar.

With the end of session closing in and the second "funnel" deadline about to hit on Friday (April 6), legislators will start to pick up the pace this week. Expect floor debates early in the day and late in the evening, with committee meeting sandwiched between. Bills that are not voted out of at least one chamber and out of a committee in the opposite chamber will not make the funnel deadline, and will be ineligible for debate the rest of the year.

Typically, the body count on bills after the second funnel is very high. More than half of the bills introduced this year will meet their end on Friday, April 6. While they are technically dead, your legislators can always revive them by having them drafted as amendments to other bills. Where there is a will, there is always a way at the Capitol.

[\(return to top\)](#)

Tourism News

Perennial tourism advocate Rep. Mike May (R-Spirit Lake) does not want to take "no" for an answer. He is continuing to work hard for tourism professionals – last week he introduced a bill to earmark \$1 million of the Community Attractions & Tourism (CAT) Fund dollars for regional tourism marketing. This is another way to get additional dollars to the Tourism Office, so Iowa's tourism industry can help bring in more state revenues!

Please contact your legislators and ask that they consider putting the language of [HF 871](#) into another bill (you might suggest the Economic Development Budget or the Standings Budget). This, along with the \$250,000 proposed increase in the Economic Development Budget, and the new funds coming in from gaming dollars, Iowa may just move up a couple notches in the tourism spending rankings.

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION TAX CREDITS PASSES SENATE

After a brisk debate, Sen. Bill Dotzler of Waterloo shepherded the bill expanding the historic preservation tax credits ([SF 566](#)) through to a 48-0 victory. Having passed the Senate, the bill must now make its way through the House (although it is exempt from the funnel deadline because it deals with tax matters).

The bill expands the amount of tax credits available as well as the amount each individual may take from those credits.

TOURISM \$\$ FIX READY FOR DEBATE

The bills ([HF 616](#) & [SF 302](#)) allowing the new gaming money for tourism marketing are on the House Calendar ready for debate and safe from the second funnel deadline. Legislators may amend the bill to allow the county endowment fund to also receive its money quarterly. The amendment will not affect the bill's chances of passing – no one is expressing opposition.

RECREATIONAL TRAILS CONNECTIVITY IN TROUBLE

Legislators spent the early part of session working hard to develop a comprehensive community development bill that included historical tax credits, cultural and arts districts, and trails in its package. The bill (originally [SF 29](#), now [SF 556](#)) appears on a chop shop floor. With the passage of [SF 566](#) (historical tax credits only), the future of this more comprehensive bill seems to be in question.

Of concern is the piece addressing trail interconnectivity. [SF 556](#) appropriates \$100,000 to market Iowa's recreational trails, and establishes a Trail Interconnectivity Fund with \$2.7 million in RIF (gambling) dollars and authorization for bonding. What better way to spend our INFRASTRUCTURE dollars than on interconnecting our tourism infrastructure? And marketing it?

Contact your legislators and let them know that this is an important for Iowa's tourism industry, and ask that they consider putting this language in another bill (perhaps the Infrastructure Budget!).

SENATE SWITCHBOARD: (515) 281-3371

HOUSE SWITCHBOARD: (515) 281-3221

MORE INFO. ON LEGISLATORS:

www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Legislators/LegislatorInfo.aspx

TO FIND WHO YOUR LEGISLATORS ARE:

www.legis.state.ia.us/FindLeg/

[\(return to top\)](#)

BILLS OF INTEREST

An updated bill list has been attached to this report. Only the bills that continue to be eligible for debate are listed in this report.

2007 Top Tourism Priorities

1. Increase the Iowa Tourism Office's budget to the Midwest regional average of \$8.3 million. Iowa's current budget of \$3,442,000 is not even half of the Midwest regional average.
2. Maintain a traditional school year calendar.
3. We encourage local interest groups to consider what will best serve the industry in their location and encourage them to advocate for those issues.

Important 2007 Dates

- **Friday, April 6, 2007:** Second "Funnel" (deadline to be passed by one chamber, clear committee in opposite chamber)
- **Friday, April 27, 2007:** Final Day of Session (that is, final PAID day of session – legislators can go on as long as they like, they just won't be paid for their work anymore)
- **Friday, April 27, 2007** – While your lobbyists are toiling away and grumpy under the golden dome, we hope that you all are kicking it up and having a great time at **TOURISM UNITY DAY** at the Hy Vee Conference Center in West Des Moines.

Your Advocacy Toolkit:

[Find Your Legislator](#)
[Legislative Committee Listings](#)
[Listen to Debate \(live\)](#)
[Session Calendar](#)
[Guide to the General Assembly](#)
[Forums/Roundtables](#)

[Contact Your Legislator](#)
[Track Legislation \(instantly updated\)](#)
[House & Senate Calendars \(weekly & daily\)](#)
[How a Bill Becomes a Law](#)
[List of Local Public Legislative](#)

[\(return to top\)](#)

Your Capitol Team

Craig Patterson, TFI Lobbyist - Craig@Campbell-Patterson.com
Amy Campbell, TFI Lobbyist - Amy@Campbell-Patterson.com