

LET'S TALK TOURISM

**Travel Federation of Iowa
2009)**

Capitol News - #4 (March 1,

Go to www.votervoice.net/groups/TFI. Try it today!

Since the last newsletter, we have learned a new term – the soft funnel. As many of you recall, the Iowa Legislature has a pair of “funnels” it employs to filter out legislation that is not making forward progress by a certain date. The first funnel requires a bill to emerge from the committee to which it has been assigned by a certain date (this year, “officially” March 13th), and the second funnel requires a bill to emerge from the committee to which it was assigned in the OTHER chamber (this year, “officially” April 10th).

Since the Legislature trimmed the session from 110 days down to 100 days, and Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal had been talking about shooting for an April 2nd adjournment, many of us were anticipating some sort of drastic move with the funnel dates. Midway through last week, we began to hear that the “soft first funnel” would be March 6th, one week before the official funnel deadline. Then, this week, people began talking about February 27th as the “soft, soft funnel.” Basically, what these terms mean is that legislative leadership in both the House and the Senate are instructing their committee chairs to begin quickly winnowing down the list of legislative bills they will consider for the year.

For legislators and the lobbyists, the soft funnel has meant a crazy couple of weeks – subcommittees are being held on large numbers of bills while at the same time new bills are being introduced in each chamber every day by the dozen. Many of the bills you will see in the bill list this week will be dead by the next Capitol Report.

Policy bills have definitely been the focus, as legislators have waited until a couple of days ago to begin work on the budget. The budget targets were released on Thursday and they show a smaller budget than what the Governor proposed. The targets essentially give each of the appropriations subcommittee a slice of budget with which they have to allocate to programs under their jurisdiction. Still unknown is how money from the federal stimulus bill may fit into the budget. If legislators do intend to try to adjourn in early April, then the numbers will start to come together fairly quickly.

School Start Date Alert!

We sent this earlier, but we're sending again. **We need your help! The House Education Committee will vote on the School Start Date compromise (HF 351) on Monday.** The bill **as amended** by the subcommittee working on the bill eliminates all school start date waivers and moves the earliest start date to the fourth Monday in August - so the earliest the start date would ever be is August 22 and the latest is August 28.



This compromise is supported by the Travel Federation of Iowa, State Fair of Iowa, County Fair Association, and the Hospitality Association, but it is opposed by the powerful Iowa Association of School Boards. **School board members will be lobbying their legislators heavily over the weekend** - please act now and urge others to take action before Monday afternoon.

You can send an email to your Representative, but please also send one to the targeted Education Committee members as well - they will be listed automatically in your contacts. If your legislator is having a local forum this weekend - please attend and urge their support of this bill. It's time to resolve this issue!

Click the link below to log in and send your message:
<http://www.votervoice.net/link/target/tfi29440015.aspx>

Historic Tax Credits

[SSB1086](#) was passed out of the Senate Economic Growth Committee on Thursday (and will be renumbered soon). This bill would increase historic preservation tax credits from an annual appropriation of \$20 million to \$50 million. The bill was amended in committee to change the approval process, alter the credit refund procedure upon project completion, and require that 20 percent of appropriated moneys must go to disaster-affected areas and 20 percent to projects that create more than 500 new jobs.

Federal Stimulus Chart

You have undoubtedly heard about the \$787 Billion stimulus bill that was just enacted and will begin flowing into the states. Iowa's portion of the

stimulus is roughly \$1.9 Billion. The Iowa League of Cities has put together a great interactive chart of how the Iowa dollars are divided. Just go to: <http://www.iowaleague.org/Downloads/Legislative/2009/StimulusFlowchart09.pdf>

TIME-21 and the Gas Tax

Legislation ([SSB1182](#) & [HSB164](#)) to raise the gas tax by eight cents and to deposit those funds in the TIME-21 account for use on infrastructure has stalled a bit in the past two weeks. Legislators have had to shift their focus to other priorities as the funnel deadline approaches. In order to ensure transportation funding remains on legislators' minds, please take a moment and visit TFI's Grassroots Action Center at www.votervoicenet.com/groups/TFI and send your legislators a message about the importance of more road funding.

The TFI Bill Tracker List is Available at:

<http://www.ialobby.com/CPCBillTracker/tabid/59/Default.aspx?cid=TFI>

Remember - The bill tracker contains several functions that we are still refining. You can view individual bills along with our description in the list by pressing the "Details" link below the bill title. Additionally, you can go directly to the bill's listing on the Iowa General Assembly's website by clicking on the bill's number. If your goal is to get the full bill list and copy and paste it for your own use, you can do that by clicking the "Print All" link at the beginning of the bill list.

Your Advocacy Toolkit:

- [TFI Resources](#)
- [Find Your Legislator](#)
- [Contact Your Legislator](#)
- [Legislative Committee Listings](#)
- [Track Legislation \(instantly updated\)](#)
- [Daily Legislative Activity Reports](#)
- [Listen to Debate \(live\)](#)
- [House & Senate Calendars \(weekly & daily\)](#)
- [Session Calendar](#)
- [How a Bill Becomes a Law & Other Educational Information](#)

Your Capitol Team

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