

LET'S TALK TOURISM

Travel Federation of Iowa

Capitol News - #5 (March 15, 2009)

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

The 2nd Friday the 13th of the Session

The second Friday the 13th of 2009 marked the end of the 9th legislative week and the first major deadline of the session – the first funnel. By this past week, all non-spending or tax bills had to have been voted out of committee in order to stay alive. Thanks to the first funnel, legislators will return to the Capitol on Monday, March 16th for the 64th day of the session with about half the bills to contend with that they had a week ago.

On Friday, March 20th, the Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) will meet and announce their updated revenue estimate for the state. That means many in the Legislature and the Lobby will have a long week of worrying about how bad the numbers may be. Once the numbers are known, the appropriations process will kick into high gear and legislators will generally shift their attention from policy issues to the state budget.

The goal is to get the legislative session wrapped up quickly after that, however the budget process itself takes a while to get through. The session was originally scheduled for 110 days which would mean a May 1st adjournment date, but they then agreed to a 100-day session which would end around April 21st. Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal said a few weeks ago that he would shoot for an April 2nd adjournment and see how close they may get.

So, what's the prognosis for tourism? You'll recall that TFI has three big issues this year we have asked for from the Legislature and the Governor:

1. Bring the Iowa Tourism Office budget to the Midwest Regional average of \$10.2 million dollars.
2. Enforce the current school start date.
3. Continue to support TIME 21 Funding to repair and improve Iowa's road system.

1. Iowa Tourism Budget

As we mentioned, legislators and the Governor are very nervous about the revenue projections. We should know more soon, but brace yourself and be ready to contact your legislators about continuing to market the state while the economy is struggling. In addition to the Tourism Office's budget, we are very nervous about other potential cuts that could affect the industry, whether it be the CAT program, money for trails, etc.

2. School Start Date **We Need Your Help Right Away!**

You have probably seen a couple of VoterVoice alerts on this issue and hopefully you are recruiting parents and teachers in your area to send letters to the editor in support of SF 351, legislation to eliminate all school start date waivers and move 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.

If you have not yet helped generate some letters to the editor in your area, **we need your help!** School Board members are doing **several alerts** to their members to try to kill this proposal they have a long record of getting their way on this issue. This compromise is supported by the Travel Federation of Iowa, State Fair of Iowa, County Fair Association, and the Hospitality Association.

Please act now! It's time to resolve this issue!

To send a letter to the editor, click the link below to log in and send your message:
<http://www.votervoice.net/link/target/tfi30057795.aspx>

Click the link below to contact your legislators about this:
<http://www.votervoice.net/link/target/tfi29440015.aspx>

3. 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 is officially **DEAD** from the First Funnel. However, don't get too caught up with the funnel deadline on this particular issue; it would need to go to Ways & Means anyway and that committee is exempt from the funnel deadlines. Rather, the gas tax is DEAD because the Governor has said he will veto it. (You can read the release at http://www.governor.iowa.gov/news/2009/03/6_4.php.)

The Governor instead is insisting on his bonding proposal for infrastructure. This past Thursday, Governor Culver unveiled details of his \$750 million, three-year bonding plan called "I-JOBS" and argued that it's a way to create 21,000 jobs, improve infrastructure and strengthen the economy. Under the plan, the state would use \$56 million a year in gambling revenue to pay back 20-year bonds.

Here's how the money would be spent:

- * \$250 million for transportation projects, roads and bridges
- * \$175 million for projects already scheduled including those at the Iowa Veterans Home and community colleges
- * \$150 million for public buildings and disaster relief
- * \$100 million for water quality and wastewater improvement projects
- * \$75 million for local infrastructure, broadband technology and alternative energy

You can view more information about the I-JOBS proposal at <http://www.governor.iowa.gov/ijobs/index.php>.

On Friday, the Governor began a statewide "Shovel Ready" Tour to promote the I-JOBS proposal with an event in Des Moines to highlight transit projects that could benefit from his proposed initiative. Since many legislators are split on this issue with some supporting a gas tax and many apprehensive to bond, it is unclear how this will all unfold. The Senate approved a smaller \$175 Million bonding package on a 32-18 party-line vote, but the Governor has indicated it is not aggressive enough. The Senate proposal includes \$47.5 million to expand the Iowa Correctional Facility for Women at Mitchellville and \$20.6 million for construction of resident living areas and related improvements at the Iowa Veterans Home. About \$18.1 million would be spent on community-based corrections facilities in Des Moines.

In order to ensure that your voice is heard on this issue, please take a moment and visit TFI's Grassroots Action Center at www.votervoicenet.org/groups/TFI and send your legislators and the Governor a message about the importance of more road funding.

Historic Tax Credits

Legislation to greatly expand the Historic Preservation Tax Credit has been altered significantly but is still excellent legislation that continues moving forward. The bills are now SF 309 and HSB 134. The program last year was expanded to \$20 million per year. The legislation this year would increase the overall amount to \$50 million. The \$50 Million would be allocated in following manner:

- 10% or \$5 million would be allocated for projects less than \$500,000.
- 30% or \$15 million would be allocated for projects within a Cultural and Entertainment District and Great Places
- 20% or \$10 million would be allocated for disaster recovery.
- 20% or \$10 million would be allocated for projects that would create 500 jobs or more
- 20% or \$10 million would be statewide.

Native Distilleries

Legislation TFI supports ([HF 693](#)) to allow manufacturers of native distilled spirits to sell their products on-site for off-premise consumption (as is done for native wines) has made it through the funnel and is on the House Debate Calendar awaiting deliberation. A similar bill in the Senate got caught by the Senate funnel, however we are hearing that it wasn't for a lack of support but rather a desire to let the House take the first crack at this bill. We hope to see it come up for debate soon.

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.

Bills Being tracked by TFI that DIED in the First Funnel

BILL NUMBER	BILL TITLE	SUMMARY	STATUS	POSITION
HF 198	Gaming Licenses	Imposes a moratorium on all new gaming licenses. Prohibits a current licensee from moving the location of a boat, gambling structure, or racetrack as well. Effective upon enactment. Sponsored by Rep. Roberts	DEAD	Monitor
HF 26	School Year Day-to-Hour Conversion	Replaces the current 180-day school calendar with a required school calendar of 990 hours of instructional time for grades 1-6 and 1,080 hours of instructional time for grades 7-12. Contains several related details. Sponsored by Rep. Tjpekes	DEAD	Undecided
HF 286	Public Transit Vehicle Fund	Establishes a public transit vehicle fund to help public transit systems draw down additional federal dollars to purchase buses, vans and other public transit equipment.	DEAD	Monitor
HF 309	School Start Date	Eliminates the school start date waiver and enforces the current law, beginning July 1, 2010. Schools starting earlier than the school start date will have state aid payments reduced by 1/180 for each day school starts early. Continues to allow innovated school year pilots. Effective upon enactment.	DEAD	Monitor

HF 392	Walking & Riding on Public Land	<p>This bill would require the natural resource commission to designate walking and horseback riding trails and post signage for such trails on all public land under the commission's jurisdiction in the state. The commission also shall determine where such trails shall be located and under what conditions the trails may be used for walking or horseback riding, consistent with sound game and land management practices and federal requirements. A walker or horseback rider must use designated trails. The commission is also authorized to make available a special use off-trail walking or horseback riding permit upon the request of an individual or group of individuals to the department of natural resources specifying where the proposed off-trail walking or horseback riding event is to take place. The bill contains other details. A violation of the bill's provisions is punishable by a scheduled fine of \$25. Sponsored by Reps. Windschitl, Schultz, Struyk, Huseman & De Boef</p>	DEAD	Monitor
HF 498	Year-Round School	<p>This bill requires that the department of education direct the boards of directors of each school district with 3,000 or more students to have at least one year-round class each of kindergarten and grades one through five. Sponsored by Reps. Willems, Wessel-Kroeschell, Frevert, Ficken, Struyk, Gayman, Bukta & Thede.</p>	DEAD	Monitor
HSB 164 & SSB 1182	Gas Tax 4 and 4	<p>This bill increases the excise tax on gasoline, ethanol-blended gasoline, special fuel for diesel engines by 4 cents per gallon beginning on the effective date of the bill and by an additional 4 cents per gallon beginning January 1, 2010. The current differential in the tax rate between ethanol and other motor fuel is maintained under the bill. The excise tax on E-85 gasoline is not increased under the bill. All excise taxes on motor vehicle fuel are used for road purposes as required under the Iowa Constitution.</p>	DEAD	Support
HSB 235	County Endowment Fund Allocations	<p>Currently, the moneys appropriated to the fund may only go to counties that do not have a licensee authorized to conduct gambling games pursuant to Code chapter 99F. Of those moneys, each county has to reserve 25 percent for a permanent endowment fund that benefits charitable organizations. The remaining 75 percent must be distributed as grants. The bill provides that each county in the state gets a pro rata share of 25 percent of the moneys in the fund, and that the remaining 75 percent is reserved for counties that do not have a licensee authorized to conduct gambling games pursuant to Code chapter 99F. Moneys received from the 25 percent allocation must be reserved for a permanent endowment and moneys received from the 75 percent allocation must be distributed as grants to eligible county recipients.</p>	DEAD	Monitor

SF 210	Native Distilled Spirits	A similar bill DID SURVIVE THE FUNNEL in the House. This bill would allow a manufacturer of native distilled spirits may sell, keep, or offer for sale native distilled spirits for off-premises consumption through sales on the manufacturer's premises. The bill contains related details. Sponsored by Sens. Rielly, Bolkcom, McCoy, Hogg, Dvorsky, Kibbie, Danielson & Black	DEAD	Monitor
Several	Smoking Ban Changes	Several bills that would make various changes to last year's smoking ban legislation.	DEAD	Monitor
SF 76	School Start Date Compromise	Changes the school start date to August 25 and eliminates the waiver. Effective upon enactment for school years beginning 2010. Sponsored by Sen. Johnson, Kettering, Kapucian, McKinley, Reynolds, Ward, McKinley, Boettger, Wieck, Seymour, Feenstra, Hahn & Houser	DEAD	Support
SF 94	Moratorium on New Gambling	This bill establishes a moratorium preventing the racing and gaming commission from issuing a new license to conduct gambling games on an excursion gambling boat, gambling structure, or at a pari-mutuel racetrack on and after January 1, 2009. The bill takes effect upon enactment and is retroactively applicable to January 1, 2009. Sponsored by Sens. Zaun, McKinley, Boettger, Hartsuch & Hahn	DEAD	Monitor
SF 95	Honey Creek Park Study	Requires the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to study the feasibility of entering into a long-term lease with one or more persons to assume control of real and personal property located at Honey Creek Premier Destination Park currently held by the DNR. Sponsored by Sen. McCoy & Black	DEAD	Monitor
SSB 1236 & HSB 205	Special Wine Auction Permit	Allows an Iowa non-profit organization to apply for a special wine auction permit (\$25). Allows only one wine auction per year and requires proceeds of the auction to be used for educational, religious, or charitable purposes. The wine to be auctioned must be donated or purchased from a class "B" wine permittee or a class "B" or "C" native wine permittee.	DEAD	Monitor
SSB 1252	Special Wine Festival Permit	This bill establishes a special wine festival permit and allows a nonprofit entity domiciled in this state to apply for a special wine festival permit which allows them to conduct a festival including and promoting wine. The bill contains other related details.	DEAD	Monitor

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

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

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