

LET'S TALK TOURISM



Iowa Legislative Report Capitol News Issue # 5

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Getting Close to the Finish Line

The Legislature continues to steam toward the finish line. What was originally set to be a 100-day session, and then was replaced by an 80-day session slated to finish on March 31st, has now been reconfigured for a March 26th targeted adjournment. Whether they make the March 26th goal or not, they are putting the pieces together to make it a reality. The last bill to leave the station is usually the Standing Appropriations Bill, and as we write, legislators are making decisions about what will go in Standings in preparation for its release.



Publication Note - We typically publish every two weeks during the legislative session. Since there are less than 2 weeks left before the target adjournment, but since actual adjournment is a mystery, the next issue will be written shortly after actual adjournment, whenever that may occur. Thirty days later, at the end of the Governor's 30-day bill review period, a final bill list reminder will be sent out showing the final status of all bills. In the mean time, be watching for alerts to contact your legislators!!

→ Budget

The Economic Development Budget - [HF 2522](#) - has passed the House and will probably be taken up in the Senate on Monday. For the



most part, the budget bill funds department line items at levels equal to last year's post-across-the-board-cut levels. This news isn't all bad given the overall situation with the state's budget.

A big unknown out there is the fact that the Infrastructure (RIIF) Budget has not yet been introduced. This budget bill is usually introduced pretty late in the process, but we expected to see it by now. There is talk that the RIIF Budget is projected to be lower than originally anticipated. If that is the case, then funding could be in jeopardy for many priorities to those in the tourism industry, including Regional Sports Authorities, Great Places, Cultural Community Grants, Lake Restoration, Water Trails and Recreational Trails.

Be sure to take a moment to weigh in with your legislators about the budget for your priorities. Time is short and decisions are being made quickly that will affect you all year! Go to TFI's Grassroots Action Center [HERE!!](#)



Hotel Fees Not Moving

No action has been taken and, at this point, probably won't be taken on either of two bills that would affect hotel/motel fees. [HSB 737](#) would increase the maximum allowable hotel/motel tax for cities from 7% to 9% and for counties from 7% to 8%. [SSB 3245](#) would allow cities and counties to impose a lodging regulation fee not to exceed \$1.50 per night that could be used first for the inspection, supervision, and regulation of hotels and motels and then for property tax relief.



Candidate Deadline

Anyone wanting to run for state, congressional, or legislative office had to have filed candidate forms by 5:00 p.m. today (Friday, March 19). Those running for county office this year have until March 31.



Seventeen legislators have decided to step down this year, including all of the Sioux City legislators. Here is a quick run down:

State Senate

- Three State Senators will step down - two Democrats (Sen. Steve Warnstadt of Sioux City and Sen. Roger Stewart of Preston) and one Republican (Sen. Ron Wieck of Sioux City)
- Democrats have 19 seats to defend this year, two of which are open. Republicans will defend 6 seats, one of which is open.
- Former state representative Bill Dix will challenge Sen. Bill Heckroth of Waverly
- Former state representative Sandy Greiner will challenge Sen. Becky Schmitz of Fairfield
- David Thede, the husband of Democratic Rep. Phyllis Thede of Bettendorf, announced he will run for the Senate seat currently held by Republican Sen. David Hartsuch.

State House of Representatives

- 8 Democratic Representatives will not seek re-election - Rep. Polly Bukta of Clinton, Rep. Marcella Frevert of Emmetsburg, Rep. Wayne Ford of Des Moines, Rep. Elesha Gayman of Davenport, Rep. Mark Kuhn of Charles City, Rep. Dolores Mertz of Algona, Rep. Roger Wendt of Sioux City, and Rep. Wes Whitehead of Sioux City,
- 6 Republican Representatives will not seek re-election - Rep. Mike May of Arnolds Park, Rep. Christopher Rants of Sioux City, Rep. Rod Roberts of Carroll (who is running for Governor), Rep. Kent Sorenson of Indianola (he is running for Senate against Sen. Staci Appel), Rep. Doug Struyk of Council Bluffs, and Rep. Jodi Tymeson of Winterset
- Former state senator Stewart Iverson will challenge Rep. McKinley Bailey of Webster City

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