

# LET'S TALK TOURISM

Travel Federation of Iowa

Capitol News - #6 (March 29, 2009)

Go to [www.votervoice.net/groups/TFI](http://www.votervoice.net/groups/TFI). Try it today!

## Scary Budget, Final Countdown?

The biggest news under the golden dome of the last two weeks was the Revenue Estimating Conference's revised budget estimates which were announced on March 20<sup>th</sup> – showing that revenue estimates had dropped for the current fiscal year (2009) by another \$130 million and for the next fiscal year (FY 2010) by about \$270 million.

As you probably know, Iowa has a balanced budget law, so if revenues decrease then legislators and the Governor have to enact budget cuts in order to pull the budget into balance. Fiscal Year 2009 ends on June 30, 2009. Many are expecting that the FY2009 deficit will be made up with emergency funds. Then, the FY 2010 budget can be built with much lower numbers in order keep the budget balanced. The resulting FY 2010 budget is going to be a very hard pill for many state departments to swallow.

**Actual Budget FY 2008:** \$5.898.4 Billion

**Original FY 2009 Budget:** \$6.133 Billion

**New FY 2009 Budget:** \$6,049.4 Billion

**New FY 2010 Budget:** \$5,803.4 Billion

As you can see, Iowa's budget for fiscal year 2010 will be less than what the state spent in services two years ago, in fiscal year 2008. This is about a 13.5% cut in funding.

If there is a bright side to this tough budget legislative session, it would be that it appears to be winding down. Legislators are shooting to be adjourned for the year in two weeks, before Easter weekend. Whether they can achieve that remains to be seen, but there are some hopeful signs that they may have a shot at it:

- The Legislature is already negotiating budgets with the Governor - typically this only really occurs near the end of session;
- They have directed their appropriations subcommittees to have all appropriations bills passed out of subcommittee by this Tuesday (presumably so they can be debating by the end of the week or early the following week);
- The Legislature imposed its second funnel deadline this past Friday. With a few exceptions, all policy bills that did not emerge from committee in the opposite chamber from where they were introduced by this past Friday are now DEAD. The second funnel deadline was scheduled to be imposed on April 10<sup>th</sup>, so it has been moved up a full two weeks.

We will get a better sense by the end of the next week whether the pre-Easter deadline is attainable. Most likely this will be the last edition of the Capitol Report that will be printed before the end of the session wrap-up. However, the TFI Bill Tracker is updated daily; be sure to keep up on legislation by checking back frequently. There are a number of bills that TFI is still working on – An increase in Historic Tax Credits, enhancement of the Iowa Film Promotion Program, legislation to help native distilleries and many others.

### **An Update on TFI's Big Three:**

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**

We are still waiting on the Infrastructure Budget bill, but the Economic Development Appropriations Committee's budget details were released and voted out of subcommittee on Thursday. They aren't pretty, but they won't be good numbers for any part of state government. Highlights are as follows:

-Takes the Governor's budget recommendations for FY 2010 (6.5% ATB cut) and makes the following additional cuts to meet new expenditure target:

- Great Places - 24.6% reduction (an additional \$60,000 from Governor's recommendation, leaving \$248,000)

- World Food Prize - 25% reduction (an additional \$171,000 from Governor's recommendation, leaving \$750,000)
- Community Development - also gets a \$125,000 additional reduction, leaving \$5,833,379)
- Center for Citizen Diplomacy (\$147,750), Statewide Standard Skills Assessment (\$970,074), & Employee Misclassification Project (\$771,153) are all eliminated.

-Overall, DED receives a 9.2% cut; Cultural Affairs & Regents Economic Development gets 7.5% cut; and IWD receives a 4.3% cut. All cuts are over adjusted FY09 levels.

We will see an actual budget bill on this soon, and we will plug it into the TFI Bill Tracker for you.

## 2. School Start Date **We Still Need Your Help!**

In the most recent VoterVoice alert, you probably noticed we were directing you to contact your legislators in support of the school start date compromise amendment to HF 732, the Department of Education Bill. The amendment would 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. This compromise is supported by the Travel Federation of Iowa, State Fair of Iowa, County Fair Association, and the Hospitality Association.

**The vote on this amendment HAS NOT YET OCCURRED and we need as many people as possible e-mailing legislators about this!** We need you and anyone you can recruit, especially any parents and teachers in your area, to **e-mail in support of the** school start date compromise amendment to HF 732! There is still a chance to win this!

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

There has really been no legislative movement on this issue over the last two weeks. The Governor still wants his \$750 million, three-year bonding plan called "I-JOBS" and legislators have argued instead for a gas tax increase. Whatever compromise is being negotiated will have to be announced soon, since the session is beginning to dwindle away.

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.voterveice.net/groups/TFI](http://www.voterveice.net/groups/TFI) and send your legislators and the Governor 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:**

[Find Your Legislator](#)

[Contact Your Legislator](#)

[Legislative Committee Listings](#)

[Track Legislation \(instantly updated\)](#)

[Daily Legislative Activity Reports](#)

[Listen to Debate \(live\)](#)

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## **Your Capitol Team**

Craig Patterson, TFI Lobbyist - [Craig@Campbell-Patterson.com](mailto:Craig@Campbell-Patterson.com)  
Amy Campbell, TFI Lobbyist - [Amy@Campbell-Patterson.com](mailto:Amy@Campbell-Patterson.com)