

LET'S TALK TOURISM

Iowa Legislative Report Capitol News Issue # 6

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Last year's final adjournment date of March 30th came and went this week. The end of the 12th week of the Legislative Session brought with it little indication of an upcoming adjournment of the 2011 session. Observers probably noticed a little bit more activity in the way of discussions between the two Chambers and the Governor, however many very heavy issues still need to be lifted before the final fall of the gavel.

One of the biggest issues of the decade descended this week on the Legislature when the first draft of Iowa's redistricting maps arrived on desks on Thursday. Every ten years, the Legislature uses new census data to reallocate all of the House and Senate districts in the state, in an effort to ensure Iowans of the most equal possible representation. An added twist this year came from the federal government's determination that Iowa would lose a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, taking us from 5 to 4 (and reducing our electoral votes in presidential elections from 7 down to 6).

You can learn all you want to learn about new maps at the Legislature's redistricting website [HERE](#).

A few points about the first draft:

- Each Congressional District will consist of approximately 761,589 people
- Each State Senate District will consist of approximately 60,927 people
- Each House District will consist of approximately 30,464 people
- The first draft puts four of Iowa's current 5 Congressmen into two Congressional Districts - Braley and Loeb sack in Congressional District 1, and Latham and King in Congressional District 4

- The first draft has 7 Iowa Senate Districts in which two current Senators reside and 13 House Districts in which more than two or more House members reside

Here is a timeline of the events that will occur in the days ahead regarding this process:

- **Thursday, March 31:** At 8:15 am, the first redistricting map proposal was made public.
- **Friday, April 1:** The Temporary Redistricting Advisory Commission (TRAC), a commission made up of five Iowans, met at the Capitol and reviewed the plan. The five members of the Commission are Chair Maggie Tinsman of Davenport, Rose Brown of Council Bluffs, Lance Ehmcke of Sioux City, Matt Paul of Des Moines, and Eric Turner of Des Moines.
- **Monday, April 4:** The TRAC holds a public hearing in Council Bluffs at 6 pm at the Council Bluffs Public Library. This will include ICN sites at Mason City, Sioux City, and Spencer.
- **Tuesday, April 5:** TRAC holds a public hearing in Bettendorf at the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency at 7 pm.
- **Wednesday, April 6:** TRAC holds a Cedar Rapids public hearing at 6:30 pm at the ICN room at Kirkwood Community College. This will include ICN sites at Dubuque, Ottumwa, and Waterloo.
- **Thursday, April 7:** TRAC holds a public hearing in Des Moines at the Wallace State Office Building at 7 pm.
- **Monday, April 11:** TRAC **releases a report** summarizing information and testimony received at the public hearings and offers their own comments. The commission will also accept a written comment if an individual is unable to make one of the hearings or satellite locations.
- Following the release of the report, the Iowa General Assembly shall not consider the proposed plan until **at least three days after the TRAC report** has been made public.
- The plan has to be accepted or rejected by each Legislative Chamber. The plan is not amendable. Either chamber can start the vote, but if it dies in either chamber, the first plan is officially dead. The governor must sign the plan in order for it to be adopted.
- If the first plan is rejected, the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) has to deliver a second plan within 35 days. The 2nd plan is also not amendable.
- If the second plan is rejected, the LSA has to deliver a

third plan within 35 days. A third plan can be amended by either legislative body, but must pass by September 1 and be signed by Governor Branstad by September 15.

- If those deadlines are not met, the Iowa Supreme Court will then be tasked with creating the map by December 31, 2011.

→ Infrastructure Budget

As you know, we sent out an alert to you earlier this week asking for you to weigh in on the Infrastructure Budget ([House File 648](#)). This bill still needs to be a MAJOR priority, as it makes deep cuts in many programs of interest to TFI members.

Among other things, the bill includes the following:

- Zeroes out the \$10 Million **River Enhancement Community Attractions and Tourism (RECAT)** program
- Reduces the **Community Attractions and Tourism (CAT)** program funding from \$12 Million down to \$5 Million
- Reduces the **Environment First Fund** allocation by \$9 Million
- Zeroes out the \$500,000 funding for **Regional Sports Authorities**
- Deappropriates the \$6.5 Million allocation for **passenger rail** in the next fiscal year AND the \$4.2 Million from the CURRENT fiscal year
- Zeroes out the **Grow Iowa Values Fund** that funds many DED programs

Be sure to take some time to contact your legislators on some of these issues. As of press time, a dozen TFI members had used the [TFI Grassroots Action Center](#) to send 56 messages to their legislators, the Governor and Lt. Governor. It takes only a couple of minutes, but it will make all the difference when the decisions are being made. Just go to <http://www.tiny9.com/u/6805>, click on the **Infrastructure Budget** link, and send your messages in **TODAY!**

→ DED Restructuring

Legislation ([HF 590](#)) to convert the Iowa Department of Economic Development into a public-private partnership passed the House on March 28th with a vote of 66-33. The Senate turned around and passed the bill out of committee

this week in order to keep it alive for the funnel deadline, however they passed it "without recommendation." This simply means the committee plans to make many changes to the bill before allowing the full Senate to vote on it.

Senator Sodders, Chair of the Senate Economic Growth Committee, assigned a 5-person "subcommittee" consisting himself, Senators Dotzler, Hatch, Bertrand and Greiner to have further discussions about the bill. Their first public meeting is set for 8 AM on Tuesday, April 5th. If you have thoughts about HF 590, and about changes you would like to see made, or changes you WOULD NOT like to see made, you'll want to weigh in with these Senators SOON. This bill will likely start to evolve fairly quickly now.

→ **School Start Date**

Thank you to those of you that responded to efforts to convince Iowa Senators to amend [HF 534](#) to get rid of early start waivers. HF 534 is the bill that would convert school days into a set number of minimum instructional hours.

As you may recall, this bill initially struck all school start dates and allowed schools to start any time after July 1. Based partially on the requests of TFI and several other partners, the House amended HF 534 to put the existing law back into the bill, maintaining the status quo. TFI and others have been working to see if we might be able to convince the Senate to FIX the school start date issue by removing the Department of Education's ability to grant waivers.

The Senate held a subcommittee meeting this week on HF 534. TFI Lobbyists attended along with State Fair lobbyists and several education lobbyists. It quickly became clear that the Senators did not intend to pass HF 534 in any form, for reasons having nothing to do with the school start date. As such, HF 534 is now dead for the year.

TFI lobbyists will continue to seek opportunities to try to insert language in other bills to enforce the school start date throughout the rest of the session. However, our coalition members agreed that our best bet for someday fixing this is to continue to drive as many people as humanly possible to sign the online petition at http://www.saveiowasummers.com/?page_id=21. Please be sure to share this website with people in your area.



Corporate Tax vs. Gaming Tax

Legislation ([HSB 223](#)) to increase the taxes on gaming to 36% and to use those proceeds to pay for a cut and simplification of corporate income taxes was introduced recently. It is funnel-proof so it will be alive until the end of session. TFI is one of several groups registered in opposition to HSB 223. While the bill itself seems unlikely to pass, the Iowa Gaming Association is watching closely to ensure that some modification of this proposal does not show up in a tax bill that passes late in the session.

Your Advocacy Toolkit:

[Grassroots Contact Center](#)

[Bill Tracker](#)

[TFI Resources](#)

[Find & Contact Your Legislator](#)

[Legislative Committee Listings](#)

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

[More Bill Tracking Tools](#)

[Daily Legislative Activity Reports](#)

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[Session Calendar](#)

[How a Bill Becomes a Law & Other Educational Information](#)

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