



# State Representative Andrew Wenthe

# Statehouse News

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## Inside this Issue

- 1** Health Care Commission Continues Discussions
- 2** Iowa 2<sup>nd</sup> in ACT Scores
- 2** Office of Energy Independence Director
- 2** Intense Demand Shown for Historic Tax Credits
- 3** September is National Preparedness Month
- 4** Emergency Preparedness Guidebooks for Local Officials
- 4** College of Vet Medicine Accreditation No Longer Limited
- 5** Sustainable Funding for Natural Resources
- 6** City and County REAP Grant Requests
- 6** Young Drivers Could Win a Car
- 6** Century and Heritage Farms Recognized

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## Capitol Comments

We were lucky in northeast Iowa to welcome Governor Culver to Oelwein on Wednesday, August 15<sup>th</sup> for the Governor's "Capitol for a Day" tour. Oelwein's Williams Center provided a great venue for Governor Culver's visit, and it was great to see so many people attend the event. Many issues were raised, including the need for additional funding for autism research and residence facilities, the importance of continued advocacy for agencies supporting the needs of foster care children, and the progression of Iowa's efforts toward becoming an energy independent state.

Those attending also had the opportunity to meet Elisabeth Buck, the new Director of Iowa Workforce Development, who spoke at the Williams Center before touring the workforce development office in Oelwein and meeting with employees. Director Buck and Governor Culver also were able to meet with individuals who have benefited from the Workforce Investment Act, a program that allows the state legislature to utilize federal job training funds

for adults, dislocated workers and youth.

I was especially proud to have two new appointees to the Generation Iowa Commission in attendance at the "Capitol for a Day" event. Karris Golden of Waterloo and Jodi Grover of Rowley were both selected out of over 250 applicants to serve as Commissioner's on the 15-member Generation Iowa Commission, which I co-authored and floor managed in the House this year. I know that Karris and Jodi will be outstanding advocates for northeast Iowa on this incredibly important commission designed to help Iowa solve the "brain drain" crisis.

It was great to see so many of you at the Denver Breakaway Days parade this past Saturday. It marks the final community parade of the summer, just one more indication that fall and football are right around the corner.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me via email, phone or mail if you have any questions or concerns. I look forward to seeing you around the district soon!

## Health Care Commission Continues Discussions

The Commission on Affordable Health Care Plans for Small Businesses and Families adopted eight guiding principles at their August meeting to help them develop their final recommendations. The Commission is charged with reviewing, analyzing, and making

recommendations to the Legislature relating to the affordability of health care for Iowans.

The following are their guiding principles:

- Coverage & Care should be universal or near universal.

- Coverage should be affordable & take into account all health care costs.
- Everyone should have a medical home.
- Health care should be accessible.
- Financing should be a shared responsibility.
- Reforms should drive quality improvements and contain costs.
- Reforms should do no harm.
- Reforms must be sustainable and doable.

Former Iowa Governors Tom Vilsack and Terry Branstad will co-host three public hearings in September to gather suggestions from Iowans on how to reform our state's health care system. After the hearings, the Governors will

present to the Commission what they heard. The three dates for the public hearings are:

- September 4; Iowa Western Community College's Looft Hall, Council Bluffs
- September 26; Simpson College, Indianola
- September 27; Mississippi Bend AEA, Bettendorf

All three public hearings are from 6-8 p.m. Individuals or groups interested in presenting at one of the meetings may sign up on site beginning one half hour before the event begins. For more information on the public hearings, you may go the commission's website <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Committees/Committee.aspx?id=208>, or call the Legislative Information Office at (515) 281-5129.

In addition to the public hearings, the Commission has initiated a Health Care Survey, or blog. Each month a new question is posed for the public to answer. This month's question is, "What do you like or not like about Iowa's health care system and plans?" The website for the Health Care Survey is at [www.legis.state.ia.us](http://www.legis.state.ia.us) and click on the health care survey.

The Commission will continue to meet monthly through December. The remaining scheduled meetings for the Commission are:

- September 19; Iowa City
- October 17; Sioux City
- November 14; Dubuque
- December 19, Des Moines

## Iowa 2<sup>nd</sup> in ACT Scores

Iowa now ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation for students testing on the ACT. The title for 2<sup>nd</sup> place is shared with Wisconsin and just behind Minnesota, who got the top honor.

The average composite score on the test was 22.3, up 0.2 percentage points from last year. Minnesota's first in the nation score is 22.5. The na-

tional average score for the college admission and placement exam is 21.2 out of a possible 36.



The rankings are based on states that test 50 percent or more of their graduating seniors. This puts Iowa up from its 2005 ranking of 11<sup>th</sup>.

Iowa also made gains

by ethnic and racial groups. African-American student scores rose 0.2 percentage points to 18.5, putting this demographic above the national average for African-American students which is 17.0. With a national average for Hispanic students at 18.7 percent, Iowa's Hispanic students scored an average of 20.1 percent, up 0.3 points.

## Office of Energy Independence Director Named

Governor Culver has named Roya Stanley as Iowa's Director of the Office of Energy Independence. The Office of Energy Independence is a new office created under the Iowa Power Fund.

The fund provides \$25 million per year for four years to develop energy related industries. This could include developing new ways of making ethanol and the devel-

opment of its byproducts; expanding Iowa's wind industry; and addressing various transportation, production and equipment needs for alternative energy.

Under House File 918, the Iowa Power Fund Board is created to oversee the newly created Office of Energy Independence. The legislation gives some details for funding specific areas of energy pro-

jects while maintaining flexibility to address future energy development. The board will also assist the director in creating an Iowa Energy Independence plan to reduce the state's consumption of energy, dependence on foreign sources of energy, use of fossil fuels, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Roya Stanley has worked for the Iowa Department of Natural

Resources and the Iowa state energy office. As the Energy Bureau chief, she led the development of a state program which provided energy efficiency project investments in Iowa public facilities resulting in reduced utility bills for tax payers. Stanley also collaborated with several Iowa organizations to develop the Iowa switchgrass initiative, laying the foundation for a cellulosic fuel of the future. In 2000, Stanley accepted a position with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in Golden, Colorado. Acting as a liaison, she provided timely dissemination of

the most current information on renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies and policy practices.

Appointed by the governor as an advisor to the Governor and the General Assembly, the Director of the Office of Energy Independence will coordinate the administration of the Iowa Power Fund.

Besides developing an Iowa Energy Independence plan by December 14, 2007, the director will lead public education about renewable energy, renewable fuels, and energy efficiency. She will pursue

new renewable energy funding from public and private sources, and coordinate all existing state and federal grants, programs, and policies having to do with renewable energy, renewable fuels, and energy efficiency.

The director will also be responsible for coordinating assistance from the Departments of Economic Development and Natural Resources and the Iowa Utilities Board regarding administration of grants and loans from the Iowa Power Fund. The position is subject to Senate confirmation.

## Intense Demand Shown for Historic Tax Credits

The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) has reported an incredible demand for tax credits to rehab historic buildings. At the beginning of this fiscal year, there was a narrow 10-day window to apply for the tax credits. After that window was closed, nearly all the tax credits available for projects were taken by developers.

After July's 10-day window to reserve the tax credits, there are no tax credits available for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, and there is an estimated \$1.1 million left available for small projects in fiscal year 2010. Those credits will remain available for small projects. If the small project tax credits are not reserved by the end of fiscal year 2010, they will become available on a statewide allocation. On July 1, 2008, a new 10-day window will open up to reserve the credits available for fiscal year 2011.



sure that character-defining features and spaces of buildings are retained and helps encourage revitalization of surrounding neighborhoods. The Program provides an income tax credit of up to 25% of qualified rehabilitation costs, and it has been very popular as a development tool to revitalize downtowns.

During its past session, the Legislature passed Senate File 566 that expanded the tax credits to \$10 million for the current fiscal year. It will be further expanded to \$20 million by fiscal year 2010. In Senate File 566, the tax credits are grouped into three separate funding streams that include a portion for small projects to help small communities, a portion for communities with a cultural and entertainment district or a Great Place project and a portion for statewide use.

“first come, first serve” basis. With this narrow window, the line to submit applications could have been long, and DCA was concerned about possible problems that could arise over mailed in applications.

After discussions with developers, and looking at a similar program in Ohio, a lottery system was developed for the application procedure to establish the order. The implementation process was overseen by the Auditor's office. The new system went off without complications and, according to the department, seems to be well liked by developers. It has also met with the approval of the Legislative Rules Review Committee at their August meeting.

Going into this year, the program has leveraged \$236 million by private investors who are preserving and rehabilitating Iowa's historic buildings. The increase in funding could eventually leverage \$80 million or more each year.

The State Historic Preservation and Cultural and Entertainment District Tax Credit Program provides an income tax credit for the sensitive rehabilitation of historic buildings. It en-

### ***New Application Procedure Ensures Equal Chance***

During session, concerns were raised by legislators regarding the application procedure being on a



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## September is National Preparedness Month

September is National Emergency Preparedness Month. Iowa will hold a kick-off event in Des Moines on September 4th focusing on the importance of emergency preparedness planning.

Participants will include Lt. Governor Patty Judge, the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division, the American Red Cross, the Iowa Emergency Management Association, Hy-Vee, the Iowa Lottery and the National Weather Service.

The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Divi-

sion also established a website at [www.bereadyiowa.org](http://www.bereadyiowa.org), to help Iowans prepare for emergencies.

The website provides easy-to-follow tips for Iowa families to be better prepared, including how to:

- Make a family emergency plan.
- Make a family communication plan.
- Make an emergency supply kit.
- Prepare your children.
- Prepare special needs persons.
- Prepare your pets.

- Get involved – volunteer.
- Be aware.

Free American Red Cross Kit: Web site visitors will be able to enter a drawing for an American Red Cross emergency supply kit. The deadline is September 27th. However, anyone may also send an entry to the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division at 7105 N.W. 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Camp Dodge, Building W-4, Johnston, IA 50131.

## Emergency Preparedness Guidebooks Available for Local Officials

The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division has prepared a guidebook for local officials, which outlines basic information on how homeland security and emergency management functions within the state as well as how local, state and federal emergency management partners work together to keep Iowans safe.

### ***Guidelines include the following areas***

Local officials will find helpful information in the following areas:

- Phases of homeland security and emergency management.
- Recognized hazards in Iowa including natural disasters; human-caused - accidental; human-caused-intentional; and other hazards such as human disease or animal disease.
- Local emergency management commission responsibilities including developing and implementing the county's Emergency Operations Plan and tests of the plan.
- Local Emergency Management Commissions and Homeland Security Regions – federal funding al-

lows Iowa to be divided into six homeland security regions for planning and funding purposes.

- Countywide comprehensive emergency planning – each county is responsible for writing, training on and exercising a countywide comprehensive emergency plan made up of three parts: Response Plan; Mitigation Plan and Recovery Plan.
- Emergency management functions and responsibilities including which entity is responsible for notification and warning; direction and control; emergency public information; search and rescue; health and medical; evacuation, traffic control, and security.
- The incident command system, which is responsible for providing on-scene incident management during an emergency or disaster.
- Emergency operations center, which is a central location where governments coordinate policy decisions, manage resources and respond to disasters.
- Responsibilities and functions of chief elected officials include

being informed and providing leadership.

- Continuity of government, i.e., how government will carry out its responsibilities under the threat or occurrence of any emergency condition that could disrupt government.
- Local emergency management declarations can and should be made by local officials when it appears that the local jurisdiction will need resources outside the jurisdiction. In Iowa, the chairperson of the Board of Supervisors or the mayor has the authority to make this declaration.
- State and federal assistance – disaster declarations can be made either by the president or the governor. Various programs are available to local jurisdictions depending on whether the emergency or disaster has been declared by the federal government or by the state. Statewide capabilities are made up of enhanced local resources such as the police, fire and other emergency responders. These resources include the Incident Management Team, Explosive

Ordnance Disposal, Urban Search and Rescue and Weapons of Mass Destruction Tactical Officers Task Force.

**Guidebook available on-line**

The guidebook is available on-line at: [www.iowahomelandsecu-](http://www.iowahomelandsecurity.org/asp/resource_room/info_library.asp)

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## College of Veterinary Medicine Accreditation No Longer Limited

Iowa State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine has full accreditation status restored. In 2003, the College of Veterinary Medicine underwent a re-accreditation review and was granted limited accreditation for a period of two years. The college was asked to address (1) declining teaching hospital facilities, (2) the need for a new isolation facility for animals with infectious diseases, and (3) the need to maintain appropriate numbers of clinical faculty in the teaching hospital.

The accrediting agency required the college to file annual interim reports on progress toward correcting the accreditation deficiencies; it also granted the college a two-year extension to correct the accreditation deficiencies. In 2007, on the basis of the annual interim report and the report of the focused

site visit, the College of Veterinary Medicine received full accreditation until the next site visit in the fall of 2010.

ISU’s College of Veterinary Medicine is the first public veterinary college established in the United States (1879) and has graduated more than 6,200 veterinarians to date. The College includes the following academic departments – biomedical sciences, veterinary clinical sciences, veterinary diagnostic and production animal medicine, veterinary microbiology and preventive medicine, and veterinary pathology. The pathology training program for board-certification is ranked second in the U.S. by the American College of Veterinary Pathology.

### **Shared 2+2 Program with University of Nebraska**

Iowa State University entered into an agreement with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) which would allow Nebraska students admitted to ISU’s College of Veterinary medicine to complete their first two years at UNL and then transfer to ISU to complete the Veterinary Medicine program, which is not available at UNL. The ISU class size will be expanded to enroll 25 Nebraska students per year who will pay the in-state tuition rate; UNL will pay the differential between the in-state tuition rate and the non-resident tuition rate. The focus of the program will be on food production animal medicine. Availability of seats for Iowa residents will not be affected by this agreement.

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## Sustainable Funding for Natural Resources

The first meeting of the Legislative Sustainable Funding for Natural Resources interim study committee was held on August 13<sup>th</sup>. The committee is charged with studying how best to provide for sustainable funding for natural resources needs.

The committee heard from representatives of the current Sustainable Natural Resources Funding Advisory Committee, which the Legislature created during the 2006 legislative session.

This advisory committee met numerous times throughout 2006 and came up with recommenda-

tions for the Legislature. They believe an additional \$150 million per year is needed to support Iowa’s natural resources – for parks and trails; soil and water conservation; and fish, wildlife, and other natural areas.

At the August 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, the interim committee is recommending \$30,000 be spent for a comprehensive study conducted by Iowa State University’s Center for Agriculture and Rural Development. The study is for a literature review, analysis, and compilation of existing state and regional data concerning economic impact, conservation

benefits, and social benefits of natural resources in Iowa.

The comprehensive study will report on the benefits the state would receive for the investment of the recommended \$150 million per year.

The following are types of questions that the study will answer:

- **How will Iowa’s \$150 million annual investment over the years in natural resources affect the state’s economy?** What is the eco-



conomic impact of more trails, more hunting areas, cleaner water that encourages more water trails and lake use, more fishing opportunities, more soil and watershed projects on the ground, etc.? How does this improvement in Iowa's natural resources affect the state's ability to recruit and retain a high-performing work force?

- **What impact will the projects funded by Iowa's \$150 million annual investment over the years in natural resources have on the conservation and environmental health of the state?** What percentage of the watersheds for critical rivers and lakes will have targeted protection? How

many public parks will be able to improve potable water access, sewage systems, and electrical hook-ups? What percentage of increased applications of soil and water conservation practices does this fund? How many acres does this provide for people to view wildlife? How many landowners are assisted in establishing or managing habitat improvements, etc.?

- **What is the societal benefit for the citizens of Iowa if \$150 million is invested annually in natural resources?** How does increased opportunity for outdoor recreation affect physical and mental health? How does a healthy natural resource base attract a di-

verse age population? What is the connection between place and job satisfaction, etc.?

The interim committee is also recommending inviting a panel of colleagues from other states with successful conservation programs that could serve as a resource by sharing their successful models. The panel would be afforded the opportunity to describe their conservation program including funding mechanisms. Additionally, the panel could discuss their return on investing in natural resources and their program benefits. States to be invited include North Carolina, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Missouri.

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## City and County REAP Grant Requests

Iowa's Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program received \$15.5 million for fiscal year 2008, which is an increase of \$4.5 million. REAP, which needs \$20 million to be fully funded, provides moneys for projects that enhance our natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

Ross Harrison, the REAP Coordinator, reports that both the

county grant and the city grant portions of REAP have been requested well in excess of available funds. Based on a formula, 20% of REAP goes to counties and 15% to cities.

In the competitive bid county grant portion, Mr. Harrison said there are 34 grants requesting more than \$6 million, with \$1.25 million available. He said this is a record amount of requests since at least

2002. Under the city grants portion there is almost \$5 million in requests, with \$2.6 million available.

Mr. Harrison is working with the various scoring committees in evaluating the grant applications. The grants will have to be approved by the Natural Resources Commission later this fall before they can be awarded.

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## Young Drivers Could Win a Car

In an effort to educate young drivers about work zone safety as well as general driving safety, the Department of Transportation, Charles Gabus Ford, and KDSM-Fox 17 have come together for the *Sweet Ride* promotion. These three entities, as well as many others, have come together and developed an educational website, [www.sweetridecontest.com](http://www.sweetridecontest.com), where persons between the age of 14 and 24 years have the opportunity to

win a Ford Fusion. In order to enter the contest, persons must first watch an online educational video about work zone safety issues and then must successfully complete a short quiz.

The DOT reports that in Iowa there are an average of 366 work zone crashes each year, with an average of seven fatalities. Persons between the ages of 14 and 24 years are most frequently involved in work zone crashes, as well as all



motor vehicle crashes. All participants in the *Sweet Ride* contest share the belief that one death is one too many, and hope that the messages on the website are heard and practiced by all young drivers.

## Century and Heritage Farms Recognized

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) recognized Century and Heritage Farms this year at the Iowa State Fair. This year 321 Century Farms and 87 Heritage Farms were recognized.

A Century Farm is designated as a farm where the family has owned it for 100 years or more. A Heritage Farm has been in a family for 150 years or more.

The Century and Heritage Farm Program is sponsored jointly by IDALS and Iowa Farm Bureau. The Century Farm program began in 1976 as part of the Nation's Bicentennial Celebration, and the Heritage Farm program began last year as part of the 30<sup>th</sup> year celebration of the Century Farm Program.

Since 1976, over 15,000 families have been recognized as part of the Century Farm program. To be

eligible, members of the same family must have owned at least 40 acres for the specified time for either the Century or Heritage Farm Programs.

To learn more about the awards, please check out IDALS website at:

<http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us>.