



Representative Andrew Wenthe Statehouse News

June 17, 2008

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For additional information, check out our website at:

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Capitol Comments

The Floods of 2008 have created a disaster of colossal proportions across Iowa. 83 of Iowa's 99 counties have received the Governor's Disaster Proclamation, and at least 24 counties have received the Presidential Disaster Proclamation, including Black Hawk, Bremer and Fayette. State agencies have been working around the clock to provide support and assistance to those in the path of these floods. More than 2500 Iowa National Guard, 200 Iowa State Patrol, and 1000 Iowa Department of Transportation Employees have been deployed. Additionally, more than 4.8 million sandbags, 114 pumps, and 180,930 gallons of water have been distributed.

While flood waters are now receding in northeast Iowa, they leave in their wake damage beyond anyone's expectations. Several communities in District 18 were affected by this disaster, and hundreds of individuals, rural and urban, have been hit hard. It is important to point out that, despite the tremendous property loss and emotional toll the floods have taken on folks here in northeast Iowa, the efforts of community leaders and volunteers prevented this from being an even worse disaster. As I worked with state and local emergency management officials throughout the floods last week, I was continually amazed by the incredible dedication demonstrated by city workers, volunteer firefighters, emergency personnel, law enforcement, and citizen volunteers. The qualities that make Iowans great are certainly on display during times of crisis.

As we begin to recover and rebuild from this natural disaster, I want you to know that your state and federal government will be there to help. FEMA officials will be on the ground for inspections in Fayette, Bremer, and Black Hawk counties this week, and assistance is available to those who are affected. Here is information you will need as we move forward:

To apply for the FEMA Individual Assistance Program, call 1-800-621-3362 or apply online here: www.fema.gov/assistance/index.shtm

Visit www.fema.gov/individual/grant.shtm to learn more about the type of assistance available through FEMA.

Individuals or small business owners planning to seek FEMA assistance should keep detailed records and receipts. Pictures of damaged property are also helpful.

Farmers seeking assistance due to crop loss or other agriculture related damage should contact their local Farm Service Agency (Black Hawk, 319-296-3185; Bremer, 319-352-1597; Fayette, 563-422-5770).

Iowa's Congressional delegation can provide assistance as well. Contact Congressman Bruce Braley's Waterloo office at 319-287-3233, Senator Chuck Grassley's Waterloo office at 319-232-6657 or Senator Tom Harkin's Dubuque office at 563-582-2130.

For individuals looking for updates or information about the

floods, visit www.flood2008.iowa.gov

For information about Red Cross assistance and services, call 866-438-4636

Do not hesitate to contact me at 563-427-4831 (home) or 563-425-5348 (work) anytime with questions

Our state faces a challenge over the coming days, weeks and months unlike any we have ever seen before. Recovering from this disaster will require cooperation, patience, resolve and a whole lot of hard work. I am committed to do everything I can as your State Representative to help people, businesses, and communities rebound

and rebuild as quickly as possible. With your help, I know we have it in us to emerge from this challenge a stronger, better and more prosperous state. Let's get to work!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at andrew.wenthe@legis.state.ia.us or call me at home, 563-427-4831.

Draft Rules on Smoking Ban

We all know there was heated discussion on this subject during the legislative session. I have explained previously in this newsletter why I voted against the state-wide smoking ban, and continue to have concerns about this law. However, it is now law so I want to explain exactly what changes will go into effect on July 1st.

This week, the Legislative Administrative Rules Review Committee held an informal review of the draft administrative rules regarding the Smokefree Air Act, House File 2212. The bill bans smoking in workplaces and public places, which are defined as enclosed areas where the public is invited or permitted.

Rules Process

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) has drafted emergency rules to ensure that rules are in place by July 1, 2008, when the bill goes into effect. The Board of Health also needs to approve the emergency filed rules for them to be in effect by July 1, 2008. The Board of Health meeting scheduled for this week was postponed due to weather related issues. The department will continue to work on the rules, so they may change before the board meets to vote on the emergency rules. When the emergency rules are adopted, they will be in place until formal administrative rules are filed and adopted.

After the implementation of the bill on July 1, IDPH will file formal rules. The formal rules will follow the normal process before being approved in final form. Part of the process includes a comment period. The IDPH has allowed the official comment period to be open until August 6, 2008. During that time, the IDPH will have five regional hearings across Iowa, with additional sites being able to connect to the hearing location through the ICN. To make a comment or learn more about the upcoming hearings, the IDPH has set up the following website: <http://www.iowasmokefreeair.gov/>.

Issues of Discussion

Even before the draft rules were published by the IDPH, they received over 300 comments and questions. At the Rules Committee this week, the discussion focused on the issues related to the definition of bars and restaurants, signage, and enforcement.

Numerous bar owners from across Iowa provided comments on the definition of "serving of food incidental to the consumption of alcoholic beverages" and their ability to have smoking on an outdoor patio. The rules defines incidental as "food preparation that is limited to the service of ice, pre-packaged snack foods, popcorn, peanuts, and the reheating of commercially prepared foods that do not require assembly, such as frozen pizza, pre-packaged sandwiches, or other pre-



packaged, ready-to-serve products.”

The bar owners are concerned that this definition is too limiting and puts bars that serve any substantial food into the same classification as restaurants. The bill clearly states that smoking is banned on outdoor patios for restaurants; however, for bars it is allowed. The bar owners feel the definition of food sold by a bar should be percentage of overall sales. The IDPH stated that their definition is in line with the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals definition for a specific license for bars. The IDPH feels that the next level of licensing is too similar to a restaurant and that the experience in other states makes determining a percentage difficult to enforce.

The signage issue was also raised by many legislators on the committee and the public. Groups felt that the required minimum size of the signs was too big to be posted inside vehicles as required by the law. All groups asked the IDPH to review these issues before submitting formal rules.

The final major issue of discussion was around enforcement.

Local police departments and sheriff offices expressed concern about how to enforce the law. The IDPH stated that the law is implemented on a complaint by complaint basis. The IDPH will set up a toll free number for people to call into with complaints. In addition, IDPH

stated that they will work with all establishments, schools and other entities affected by the bill to educate them about the new requirements and exemptions. Their goal is education not fines at this point.

The IDPH encourages public input on the Smokefree Air Act. A

toll free number, 1-888-944-2247, will be activated on June 16th for question and comments.

The Floods are Affecting Agriculture

“The severe weather and heavy rains have caused significant problems all across the state and agriculture is no exception,” Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey said. “Unfortunately more rain is predicted for later this week which would further slow field work and hurt plant progress. Everyone is hoping for dry weather.”

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey sent out a press release reporting crop and livestock statistics released by the federal USDA National Agricultural Statistical Service.

Agricultural Summary: A steady succession of severe storms characterized by inches of rain, high winds and tornadoes along with flooding, prevented fieldwork and resulted in standing water in fields. Soil and crop erosion have become a concern in many parts of Iowa. Much needed crop spraying halted, to a large extent, as did hay progress. Hay supplies have become short as weather conditions

prevented the harvest of new hay. Severe weather and ponded water in pastures damaged fences and greatly affected pasture utilization.

There were 0.9 days suitable for fieldwork, compared to 4.2 days last year at this time. Topsoil moisture rated 0 percent very short, 0 percent short, 26 percent adequate, and 74 percent surplus across the state. Subsoil moisture rated 0 percent very short, 0 percent short, 30 percent adequate, and 70 percent surplus.

Field Crops Report: Ninety-eight percent of Iowa’s corn crop has been planted, with 89 percent emerged. Corn condition rated 2 percent very poor, 8 percent poor, 34 percent fair, 47 percent good, and 9 percent excellent.

Soybeans are 86 percent planted, which is 11 percentage points behind last year and the five-year average, respectively. Soybeans are 63 percent emerged, which is 24 percentage points be-

hind last year and 21 percentage points behind the five-year average. Soybean condition rated 3 percent very poor, 7 percent poor, 37 percent fair, 46 percent good, and 7 percent excellent.

First cutting of hay was 13 percent. Oat emergence is nearly complete. Oat heading is 8 percent for the state, compared to 25 percent last year and 28 percent for the five-year average. Oats condition rated 0 percent very poor, 5 percent poor, 36 percent fair, 50 percent good, and 9 percent excellent.

Livestock, Pasture and Range Report: Pasture and range condition rated 2 percent very poor, 7 percent poor, 27 percent fair, 50 percent good, and 14 percent excellent.

Iowans with questions or in need of assistance are encouraged to go to www.iowaAgriculture.gov or www.flood2008.iowa.gov or call 515-281-5321.

Preschool Grants Awarded

I was pleased to announce last week that two additional school districts in House District 18 received preschool grants this year. Oelwein and Valley Community Schools join North Fayette in being preschool grant awardees. I know that many other schools applied this year, and I wish all could be awarded immediately. However, keep in mind that in two years all schools wishing to participate in

this critical program will be awarded with funding, so I encourage schools to keep applying.

The Governor announced this year’s statewide voluntary four-year old preschool awards for the 2008-2009 school year. Forty-eight new school districts will receive awards in the second year of

the grant awards.

During the 2007 Legislative session, House File 877 established a statewide voluntary four-year old preschool program. The goal of the program was to make available quality preschool for 90% of the state’s four-year olds by the end of a four year



ramp up process.

Preschools must have at least 10 hours of quality instruction by a licensed early childhood educator and collaborate with the school district and other partners in the community. The program is voluntary for children and a parent can decide on a child's participation.

A total of 161 school districts applied for the competitive grants this year. The selection is based on several criteria, but priority is given to areas with high poverty without a current preschool. The 48 grantees are expected to serve approximately 4,341 more four-year old children.

The 48 school districts will receive funding out of the \$15 million appropriated by the General Assembly for the 2008-2009 school year. School districts that received grants for the 2007-2008 school year will now be rolled into an allowable growth formula for funding in the 2008-2009 year and will continue to receive funding.

Last year, 64 school districts were awarded preschool funding. This allowed approximately 4,500 four-year olds to access quality preschool programming. With the addition of this year's children, the program will be serving about 8,800 four-year olds. This is about

one third of the goal of reaching 90% of the 40,000 four-year olds in the state.

If additional money is available after the certified enrollment count, those districts with qualifying applications will be reconsidered. Districts are encouraged to apply next year for funding if they did not receive a grant for this year. For more information on the state-wide voluntary four-year old preschool program, go to the department of education's website at <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/940/1103/>.

Sex Offender Council Explores Offender Statistics

The Sex Offender Research Council discussed offender statistics at their June meeting. The council noted that there has been no significant legislation regarding sex offenders since the 2005 Legislative session; however, there is still significant interest in sex offender issues.

During 2008, the Legislature adopted legislation that made this council permanent. It also expanded the list of issues for it to study to include all Iowa sex offender sentencing policies. This may include residency restrictions and the effectiveness of safe zones, efforts to prevent sex abuse related crimes including child sex abuse, computer/internet related sex crimes, and other issues related to the sex offender registry. The bill also expands their duties to include juvenile sex offender issues.

At the June meeting, the council noted that from FY 2004 to FY 2007, the number of cases dismissed/acquitted and the number of

convictions of sex offenses has remained fairly steady. However, the number of individuals convicted as charged has dropped each fiscal year since 2005. The council noted that following the 2005 changes to sex offense crimes, there could be more individuals initially charged with sex offenses that are pleading to non-sex offender crimes to avoid registration and the 2,000 foot residency restriction.

The council also stated that Class D felony sex offenses dropped significantly in FY 2006 and remained steady in FY 2007. The council said this could be because there are fewer Class D felony sex crimes available following changes in 2005. The council found that total probation revocation admissions have increased significantly since FY 2004, while probation revocations without registry violations have remained nearly flat since FY 2005.

Finally, the council stated that, according to projections, ten-year supervisions of sex offenders will level off between now and FY 2015-2016, while lifetime supervision of sex offenders during this same period will continue to increase annually.

Council members also discussed additional topics for the council to consider. These topics include whether special sentences were having any impact on recidivism, any correlation between monitoring and violations, cost factors associated with utilizing GPS for monitoring, whether the backgrounds of sex offenders could be used to determine any patterns for prevention and treatment, or other states' experiences with special sentences.

The council decided to hold two meetings before the next legislative session. The first will be a working session, and the second will determine any legislative proposals.

Criminal Code Reorganization Committee Meets

The Legislature's Criminal Code Reorganization Committee, which was established to study proposals for criminal code revisions, reorganization, and updates over the 2007 and 2008 interims, met again on June 3rd. The committee is made up of fifteen members, nine are from the public sector and six are legislators from both the House and Senate.

Mr. David Meyers, Project Manager, Criminal Justice Information System Integration System (CJIS), presented the committee an overview of CJIS. CJIS was formed in response to the need for criminal justice agencies to integrate information systems in order to share critical data, documents, images, and key transactions. CJIS culled the Iowa criminal code and identified approximately 3,000 criminal offenses which will be used by criminal justice agencies to identify a particular criminal charge in CJIS.

Mr. Joe McEniry, Senior Legal Counsel, Legislative Services Agency, presented an overview of criminal code reorganizations and reviews occurring in other states. Illinois launched their Criminal

Law Edit, Alignment and Reform (CLEAR) Initiative in 2005 to review and reorganize the criminal code of Illinois. Senate Study Bill 110, currently before the California Legislature, would establish a Sentencing Commission that has the authority to modify criminal penalties. Other states have established Sentencing Commissions, but also include a sunset date.

Another option to consider for Iowa would be to codify a Criminal Law Committee much like the Iowa Public Retirement Committee (IPERS) codified in Code Section 97D.4.

Subcommittees to Meet

Committee discussion ensued about the four established subcommittees that will meet during the next few months and begin reporting later in the fall to the full Committee.

- The Foundational Subcommittee will be chaired by Professor James Tomkovicz (University of Iowa) and will review definitions, culpability issues, defenses, and inchoate (conspiracy) crimes. The first subcommittee meeting is

scheduled for July 8 at 1:00 pm in Iowa City.

- The Reorganization Subcommittee will be chaired by Professor Robert Rigg (Drake University) and will review proposals to reorganize the criminal code and to enhance the readability of the code.

- The Specific Crimes Subcommittee will be chaired by Representative Rick Olson (D-Des Moines) and will review proposals related to specific crimes in the criminal code by identifying potential gaps, adding criminal offenses, removing duplicative offenses and penalties, and reviewing proportionality. The first subcommittee meeting is scheduled for July 15 at 10:00 am at the State Capitol in Des Moines.

- The Sentencing Subcommittee will be chaired by the Honorable Michael Mullins and will review sentencing structures in other states, including the establishment of a sentencing commission.

More information can be obtained at this website: <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Committees/Committee.aspx?id=211>

State Historical Museum Celebrated Flag Day

The State Historical Museum will celebrated Flag Day, June 14, with battle flag laboratory tours and a wide variety of family-friendly activities.

Tours of the Museum's Battle Flag Laboratory will be offered at 9 and 10:30 a.m. Registration and ticket purchases must be made by 3 p.m. on June 13 through the Museum Store at the State Historical Building, 600 E. Locust Street in Des Moines or at 515-281-5111. Tickets are \$10, a 50 percent discount in honor of Flag Day.

Other activities include reproduction flags on display for viewing; a large screen television program about the conservation process on Civil War battle flags; and several hands-on opportunities for children and their families.

Legislators supported the conservation of the Civil War Battle Flags process with continued funding for the project. Senate File 2432 provides \$220,000 for battle flag stabilization.

History of Flag Day



The history of Flag Day dates to June 14, 1777, when John Adams designated the design of the flag during an address of the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. He described the flag "of the thirteen United States shall be thirteen stripes, alternating in red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white on a blue field, representing a new constellation."

It was not until 1885, however, that a flag day was actively promoted by Bernard Cigrand of Waubeka, Wisconsin. He worked for many years promoting the need for an annual observance of the 1777 adoption of the flag of the United States. He promoted this

idea through speeches, newspaper articles and through his influence as the editor of the American Standard magazine.

In June 1894, children from the public school system in Chicago, Illinois, celebrated Flag Day

in local parks. The observance of Flag Day has grown from that early start to include displaying stylized versions of the national flag in front of homes and businesses. President Harry Truman signed legislation in 1949 making Flag Day a national observance.

DOC Updates Infrastructure Construction Projects

The Department of Corrections, or DOC, held a meeting concerning infrastructure improvements by the department. The department reviewed progress on Community Based Corrections (CBC) expansions, prison expansions, and general construction by the DOC.

The DOC indicated that since the end of April the department has visited all three CBCs that are scheduled for expansion, the 1st District at Waterloo, the 3rd District at Sioux City, and the 8th District at Ottumwa. The requests for proposals (RFPs) are being developed for each of those projects and are scheduled to be released for bids in July 2008.

Any contractor interested in bidding the project will be required to make a mandatory site visit, scheduled for July 2008. Architectural and engineering selection for

the CBC expansions is scheduled for September 2008. Construction on the CBC expansions has been extended, with completion in August 2010.

The DOC then reviewed the progress of prison expansions scheduled to begin in 2008. The DOC plans expansions at Mitchellville and Fort Madison. Site visits and feedback were received in May. The RFPs for both Mitchellville and Fort Madison are currently in progress and are scheduled to be released for bid in July 2008.

Mandatory site visits for any contractors interested in bidding the project are scheduled to occur in July 2008 with architectural and engineering selection scheduled for November 2008. Construction at Mitchellville is scheduled to be completed in January 2012 and construction at Fort Madison is

scheduled to be completed in January 2014.

The DOC noted that a RFP is in progress to study potential locations of a facility to add up to 170 beds and address infrastructure needs for the 5th District CBC in Des Moines. The study is scheduled to be released for bid in July 2008 with a completion date of November 2008 to the Iowa Board of Corrections and 5th District Board of Directors.

The DOC also reviewed kitchen remodels at the Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility and the North Central Correctional Facility. Site visits at both projects were completed and feedback was received in May. The RFPs are currently in progress and are scheduled to be released for bids in July 2008, with construction scheduled to be completed during 2010.

Oversight Reviews EBT Card Fees

The Government Oversight Committee met Monday, June 9, to discuss eliminating a seven cent payment to grocers for every time a food stamp debit card, otherwise known as a EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer), is swiped.

The EBT cards replaced food stamps for low-income families in 2003. The card acts like a debit card and each time the card is swiped the grocer is paid an additional seven cents. The fee was provided as a way for grocers to

cover the initial costs of accepting the EBT cards, such as the replacing of equipment and is now paid as a reimbursement for card use. It also helps the grocers keep down costs to the customer.

Around 256,000 Iowans receive food assistance, with the average family receiving a \$205 per month benefit from this program. Iowans with food assistance spent around \$25 million a month, which has doubled in last five years.

Currently, about \$1 million each year is paid to the grocers. Iowa grocers receive \$50,000 from federal funds and the rest is paid through the state's Health and Human Services Budget.

Forty-three states have moved to the EBT cards and, of these states, only six pay these sorts of fees. However, no other state pays this high of a fee to the grocers for each time a EBT card is used. Minnesota is the next highest at

four cents, almost half of what Iowa pays.

The Iowa Department of Human Services would like to see the

money from the elimination of this fee go toward food bank assistance and other related food assistance programs. The Oversight Committee plans to look further into this

situation during the 2009 Legislative Session.

No Spray Signs Posted

As part of the effort to keep crops from being damaged by pesticides, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) will be posting "No Spray" signs for applicators.



During this legislative session, the agriculture committee addressed the issue of crops being damaged by aerial applicators incorrectly spraying sensitive areas of crops. House File 2551 directed IDALS to implement rules for out of state applicators.

The bill also eliminated the option for an out of state applicator to operate without a commercial license and to operate under Iowa

supervision. The resident commercial licensee is subject to being jointly liable with the nonresident aerial applicator and immediately notifying IDALS of commencement or termination of the nonresident's service.

On Thursday, June 12th, IDALS will be receiving \$10,000 from the Iowa Aerial Applicators Association to support the sensitive crops directory and signage programs. The "No Spray" signs will assist pesticide applicators in locating sensitive crop areas to avoid drift damage.

Pesticide sensitive crops such as organic production, vineyards, orchards, or fruits and vegetables and apiaries registered their loca-

tions with the IDALS to provide pesticide applicators with a directory of crop locations that are most susceptible to harm from pesticide drift.

Registered producers can post the markers at the physical location of the pesticide sensitive crop at a height above the crop canopy that will make them visible to both ground and aerial applicators. Signs are available on a cost share basis.

For more information on aerial application, visit IDALS pesticide bureau website at <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/pesticides.asp>.

Winnebago Plant Employees Receive Rapid Response

As part of the federal Worker Adjustment and Retaining Notification "WARN" Act, the Winnebago plant in Charles City has notified workers and Iowa Workforce Development that 270 employees will be laid off August 1. The WARN Act requires notification within 60 days if a plant is going to layoff 50 or more employees from a company that employees 100 or more employees.

This has kicked in Workforce Development's Rapid Response Team to assist workers from various state agencies. They met with workers at the plant this week to reduce the time that workers will be unemployed before getting a new job quickly. Employees were interviewed to assess their skill level so the department can match up their skills with employers. The

department will also determine if an individual's skill level might be enhanced with job training.

Becoming unemployed, particularly for older workers reentering a job search, can be intimidating. They may not be aware of job training availability, dislocated worker programs, unemployment benefits and new job opportunities.

Workshops may also be available to individuals. Workshops help in compiling resumes, tuning up interview skills and exploring job openings.

The 270 employees who will be laid off will be factory workers. Approximately 190 other Charles City Winnebago employees will retain their jobs.



During the 2008 Legislative Session, Senate File 2332 was considered that would have created the Iowa "WARN" Act, but it did not become law. Under the bill, an employer of 25 or more full-time employees would have to notify the agency and employees within 60 days if there is a permanent or temporary shut down that results in the layoff of 25 or more full-time employees.

In Iowa, even a layoff of 25 or more employees would be significant to a community. In addition, Workforce Development has seen a significant benefit to workers when a Rapid Response Team is deployed compared to workers that did not receive a WARN notice,

including becoming employed sooner.

Vandalism Will Not Delay Veteran Cemetery Opening

Patrick Palmersheim, the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs, announced that the Veterans Cemetery site was vandalized May 29th or early May 30th. He does not anticipate any delay in the scheduled opening of the cemetery on July 3rd.

Palmersheim reported that some one threw chunks of concrete at several of the widows in the administration building. The damage broke through a double pane glass and two windows. The damage broke the center post of the windows, breaking the seals as well, so the entire window will have to be removed so the frame can be replaced.

Palmersheim noted that the department has insurance on the property during the construction

time and the Dallas County Sheriff's Department is investigating.

Veterans Cemetery

The Iowa Veterans Cemetery will be the first state-owned and operated veterans' cemetery in the State of Iowa. The cemetery will serve the veteran population throughout the state. When construction is completed, any eligible veteran, their spouse and eligible dependents may be interred at the cemetery. State residency will not be a prerequisite to be interred at the cemetery.

Construction began in late July 2007. The dedication for the cemetery is planned for July 3, 2008. Generous contributions of land by two donors, a combination of a federal grant and state funds, and efforts of many veterans and family

members have made the Iowa Veterans Cemetery possible.

The cemetery is located on 96 acres in Dallas County bordering Interstate 80, approximately 10 miles west of Des Moines. The first phase under construction involves the development of approximately 40 acres, which will include a main entrance feature and 12,110 gravesites. Funding also provides for the development of an administration and maintenance complex, assembly area, committal service shelter, memorial walk, and supporting infrastructure. Phase one of the cemetery is estimated to meet the needs of eligible veterans and their families for 20 years. Phases 2-4 will be available for future expansion.

Rates for Public Employee Pensions Increase

Effective July 1, 2008, employers and employees will see an increase in the contribution rates paid for retirement under IPERS. This is the second year of the four-year phase-in to increase the rates paid into the system by both employers and employees.

In 2005, the IPERS actuary expressed concern about the long-term funding of the system. She advised that the increase in contribution rates was necessary as shown by the recently completed experience study of the system. The study showed adjustments needed to be made as a result of new mortality tables and some benefit enhancements enacted in previous years' legislation. She cautioned that the system could not earn its way out of this situation unless the system experienced an

11% rate of return on investments each year through the year 2014.

The General Assembly acted to address this concern with passage of House File 729 in 2006. This bill phases-in a two percentage point increase for both employers and employees over a four-year period. The phase-in began on July 1, 2007.

The following table shows the new contribution rates beginning July 1, 2008, through July 1, 2010.

	7/1/08	7/1/09	7/1/10
Employee	4.1%	4.3%	4.5%
Employer	6.35%	6.65%	6.95%
Total rate	10.45%	10.95%	11.45%

Other Contribution Rates

There are two other classifications of employees covered by

IPERS. These include those covered under the protection occupation class and those covered under the special service category of sheriffs and deputies.

The contribution rates for these two groups fluctuate each year depending on the amount necessary as certified by the system's actuary to fund retirement benefits.

For the fiscal year beginning July 2008 (fiscal year 2009), these groups will be contributing the following percentage of their salary for retirement purposes.

Member Category	Member Share	Employer Share	Total
Sheriffs & Deputies	7.52%	7.52%	15.04%
Protection Occupation	5.63%	8.45%	14.08%

Newly Created Plumbing Board to Meet on July 2

The newly established Plumbing and Mechanical Systems Examining Board will hold its first meeting on Wednesday, July 2. The meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. and run until 2:00 p.m. in the first floor conference room of the Department of Public Safety at 215 East 7th Street in Des Moines.

The Governor recently appointed the members as per legislation establishing statewide licensure requirements passed in 2007. Members are appointed for a term of three years. Board members include:

- Patricia Broerman, Polk County, Plumbing Inspector;
- Dennis Molden, Woodbury County, Mechanical Inspector;
- Carol Crane, Boone County, Journeyman Plumber;
- Jane Hagedorn, Johnson County, Plumbing Contractor/Master Plumber;

- Charles Thomas, Polk County, Journeyman Mechanical Professional;
- Ronald Masters, Polk County, Journeyman Mechanical Professional;
- Mickey Gage, Chickasaw County, Master Mechanical Professional;
- Thomas Day, Linn County, Master Mechanical Professional/Contractor;
- The director of the Iowa Department of Public Health or a designee;
- The Commissioner of the Iowa Department of Public Safety or a designee.

Cindy Houlson began her duties as executive officer for the board in June.

Legislation passed in 2007 requires all plumbers and mechanical contractors to obtain a statewide license if they provide plumbing,

heating, ventilation, and air conditioning services. Certain persons are exempt from this licensure requirement.

Local jurisdictions that issue licenses as of July 1, 2008, are required to continue to issue licenses until June 30, 2009. On July 1, 2009, all local licensing programs become null and void. Enforcement provisions will begin January 1, 2009.

The board will begin meeting to develop rules for qualifications and the examinations for licensure.

Information about the licensure program may be found on the Department of Public Health's website at <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/plumbing.asp>.

Additionally, anyone wishing to be kept up to date on the board's actions may be added to their list serve by contacting the department at 515-281-7726.