



# Representative Andrew Wenthe Statehouse News

August 8, 2008

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For additional information, check out our website at:

[www.andrewwenthe.org](http://www.andrewwenthe.org).

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## Capitol Comments

Over the past couple months I have visited with many constituents about the need to provide relief for those affected by the natural disasters that plagued Iowans this summer. Thousands of Iowans are displaced from their homes and jobs, and we are committed to helping these folks get back on their feet. I am pleased that Iowa recently received federal funding that will help displaced workers get back to work while also helping to rebuild areas devastated by floods and tornadoes.

The Iowa Department of Workforce Development has received a \$17.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor through the Emergency Public Jobs (EPJ) Program. In counties that have been declared eligible for FEMA Public Assistance, the EPJ program provides jobs to rebuild public facilities and infrastructure. There are currently over 120 work sites identified with the ability to employ nearly 900 Iowans.

Individuals can work for approximately six months in the program. Thanks to a just announced waiver from the Federal Government, there is no income limit. Individuals are paid a prevailing wage. EPJ can help with transportation costs to a site, supply safety equipment, provide day care, and workers are eligible for workers' compensation. The program cannot rehire someone returning to work or displace other workers. Eligible Iowans are encouraged to contact their local Iowa Workforce Development Office to apply.

Here are just a few examples of Emergency Public Job work sites:

Adams County - Lake Icaria

Butler County - New Hartford School District

Delaware County - Backbone State Park

Des Moines County - Flint Creek Levee

Flood County - Charles City Public Library

Iowa County - Amana Historical Society

Johnson County - Cities of Coralville and Iowa City

Linn County - African American Museum

Louisa County - City of Oakville

Polk County - Neal Smith Bike Trail

In the near future, projects will include clean-up of elderly homes.



**Andrew says hello to voters along Main Street at the Tripoli Parade.**

Another concern that is likely on your mind is the high energy

costs that are eating into your household's budget. While it's hard to imagine given the steamy weather we've been having lately, cool temperatures are just around the corner. Utilities are estimating that natural gas prices may be 25% higher this winter. Therefore, the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) is urging Iowans to prepare now by taking steps to reduce the impact of higher energy prices.

Although actual weather severity and demand are unknown, natural gas prices have been high as Iowa utilities buy supplies for the upcoming winter heating season. They will monitor natural gas prices throughout this fall and winter to keep customers informed. For many years, the IUB has

worked closely with rate-regulated gas utilities to help protect consumers by locking in the cost for part of their natural gas supplies in advance. The IUB also ensures that customers pay the same prices paid by their utility.

A simple way to conserve energy is to adjust your thermostat for sleeping or when you are not at home. Another inexpensive step is to weatherize around leaky windows and doors and on exterior walls in areas that are usually cold or drafty. In addition, many utilities offer cash rebates to customer who buy energy efficient appliances. Flood victims should also check with their utility company. Some, including MidAmerican Energy and Alliant Energy, have increased

rebate amounts for flood-affected customers.

Wise purchases, regardless of rebates, include programmable thermostats, high efficiency heating and/or cooling systems, hot water heaters, washers or dryers, refrigerators, stoves, replacement windows, and additional insulation. Look for the ENERGY STAR label to ensure that you are buying high efficiency appliances. More *Iowa House of Representatives* information about the ENERGY STAR program is available at [www.homeenergysaver.lbl.gov](http://www.homeenergysaver.lbl.gov).

Have a great week, and enjoy the waning days of summer!

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## Relief Payments Tax Exempt

Iowa tax law, with few exceptions, conforms to federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) definitions of income. Under federal law, certain qualified disaster relief payments are not considered as income. Therefore, such payments are exempt from both federal and state income taxes.

A "qualified disaster" includes a presidentially declared disaster, a state declared disaster, a terrorist attack, an air carrier accident, or any other event determined by the IRS to be of a catastrophic nature. This tax exemption applies to payments from any source, including those from a federal, state, or local

government, a charitable organization, an employer, etc.

Payments are tax exempt if they are for the benefit of an individual to pay reasonable and necessary expenses related to:

- Personal, family, living or funeral expenses.
- Costs to repair or rehabilitate a personal residence or to repair or replace its contents.

However, payments are subject to tax if they are for losses that are reimbursed by insurance or other means, or if they represent lost income replacement for either businesses or individuals, including unemployment benefits.

Both individuals and businesses in presidentially declared disaster areas may get a faster refund by claiming disaster related losses on their previous year's tax return by filing an amended return for that year.

For more information, taxpayers should contact the IRS and get a copy of IRS publication 2194 (Disaster Losses Kit for Individuals) or IRS publication 2194B (Disaster Losses Kit for Businesses).

These publications and other useful tax information may be obtained through the IRS disaster tax relief web page at: <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=156138,00.html>

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## Commission Visits Flood Sites

The Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission viewed the flood damage in Cedar Rapids, Iowa City and Coralville area at their second meeting on July 31 and the damage in Wapello at their third meeting on

August 5. The Commission is chaired by General Ron Dardis of the Iowa National Guard. Governor Chet Culver and Lt. Governor Patty Judge attended. The next meeting of the commission is

scheduled for August 19 in Cedar Falls.

Governor Culver has directed the commission to have their initial recommendations ready within 45 days. The commission reviewed a

calendar that includes soliciting public input, coordinating task force meetings, and developing its first report by September 2. This report will include the initial steps the Legislature and the Governor should take for recovery.

The commission formed nine task forces, which have started meeting, to determine the latest estimates on the damage, identify gaps in services and unmet needs; and develop a strategic recovery plan. The task forces are as follows:

- Flood Plain Management/Hazard Mitigation.
- Education
- Infrastructure / Transportation
- Records / Cultural Heritage
- Long-term Recovery
- Agriculture / Environment
- Public Health / Health Care
- Housing
- Economic Development/Workforce

**Task Force Updates**

The commission members heard preliminary updates on the task force meetings at their meetings in Cedar Rapids and Wapello.

**Housing** – The commission heard preliminary estimates on the number of homes damaged by the floods or tornados. Approximately 34,800 Iowans have applied for assistance, and an additional 200 are being registered each day. FEMA is currently in the process of bringing more mobile homes to the state to provide temporary housing.

The Iowa Finance Authority announced that federal housing legislation has provided the state with an additional \$100 million in bonding authority to assist in the development of affordable housing. This is in addition to the \$400 mil-

lion the authority annually issues for the development of affordable housing.

The task force is also exploring a model program in South Dakota that uses prison labor to build or rebuild homes. In exchange, the prisoners earn certification in various aspects of the building trades.

**Economic Development** – The commission learned it has been difficult assessing the damages of businesses in the state. Business owners need to file with FEMA to get a case number that can be used to apply for assistance from the Small Business Administration (SBA) for low interest loans. Approximately \$36.7 million has been approved for loans; the average loan is \$60,000. The Iowa Department of Economic Development has consultants from the Main Street Program helping businesses.

The task force identified the need for quick financial assistance to help businesses. They recommend creating a business disaster assistance program.

**Education** – Approximately 73 school districts, 2 area education agencies, and 5 community colleges experienced some type of weather related damage. Schools are encouraged, if they have not done so, to register their damage with FEMA.

The Department of Education is encouraging school districts to be flexible so they can help neighboring school districts with displaced students and bus routes. Some schools are taking creative steps to provide places for classrooms. Others may close a building and relocate children to other buildings in the district.

The state universities are estimating \$232 million in damages, which does not include lost business activity. The University of Iowa is working to accommodate housing needs for students.

**Cultural Heritage** – The task force and the Department of Cultural Affairs are trying to assess the extent of the damage to Iowa’s cultural institutions. Reporting has been voluntary so it is difficult to get an accurate picture. The impact is not just on museums and historical places, but also cultural events that may have been cancelled due to the disaster.

Because of concerns about the limited resources the state provides for cultural affairs, there are fears that many local organizations may go out of business. The task force said there is a need for additional historical tax credits. The current tax credits, which the state provides, are capped at \$20 million. They would like to see the cap lifted or a separate tax credit created to address disaster areas.

The commission also heard about efforts to help local governments restore flood-damaged records. The state archivist recommends freezing water damaged documents and the state has a freeze-drying process to restore many of these records. Freezing the documents within 48 hours of the damage can help avoid mold damage.

**Agriculture / Environment** – At the height of the flooding, approximately 10% of corn acres and 20% of soybean acres were yet to be planted. That is about 3.3 million acres in total. Some crops have been re-planted, so the estimated impact is expected to be significantly less than originally anticipated. Better numbers on the impact will be available when the harvest begins.

Farmers are being impacted by lost grain storage facilities, lost inventories, lost hay and pasture lands, and lost livestock feed inventories. Most of the livestock losses occurred in areas between Columbus Junction and Oakville, where approximately 3,100 head of swine were lost. Between 500 and 1,000

are estimated to be essentially feral swine.

The task force also reviewed soil conservation practices. Over two million acres sustained severe soil erosion damage. They found farm land using no-till practices experienced fewer signs of erosion. The flood damaged numerous terraces, sediment control basins, and grass water ways.

The Department of Natural Resources reported 24 state parks were impacted in various degrees by floods, heavy rainfall, and strong winds. Concerns were raised about a decline in camping receipts and fishing license sales, which pay for much of the maintenance efforts at the parks and fisheries.

**Transportation** – Preliminary estimates indicate that this will be the largest federal disaster public assistance program in the history of

Iowa. Federal disaster public assistance helps state and local governments. FEMA estimates total public assistance at \$798 million, with emergency work estimated to be \$128.2 million. Only 908 applications have been received out of the 5,400 anticipated. Based on these estimates, the local share to match federal funds will likely exceed \$200 million if the 20% state/local match is not reduced by the federal government.

The task force raised concerns about cash flowing projects, as the federal share is paid as a reimbursement. One recommendation of the task force is to raise the 5% debt limit for local governments (this would require a constitutional amendment, which would take several years to accomplish).

### Listening Sessions

The Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission will be holding listening sessions in Red Oak on August 11, Fort Dodge on August 12, and at the Governor’s State Fair booth during the fair. The responses provided at these listening sessions will help the commission formulate their recommendations.

The listening session will have nine tables set up representing each of the commission task forces. This will allow individuals to provide input on how the state should move forward with long-term recovery efforts. These sessions will also provide help for Iowans needing to access the assistance programs available through FEMA and the state.

An input survey can also be filled out on-line at the Rebuild Iowa Office website: [www.rio.iowa.gov](http://www.rio.iowa.gov)

## Disaster Unemployment Assistance Update

### Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is a federal disaster program, providing unemployment benefits to certain persons who applied for state unemployment assistance but were ineligible for the state program. To be eligible for the federal DUA, the county where your job site is located must be declared a Presidential Disaster area. Those eligible for benefits, in addition to individuals who lost their jobs directly due to the severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes, may also include:

- Individuals who are unable to reach their job or self-employment location because they are prevented from doing so by the disaster.
- Individuals who became the breadwinner or major support for a household because of the death of

the head of household due to the disaster.

- People who cannot work because of an injury caused as a direct result of the disaster.
- Farmers, migrant seasonal farm workers and self-employed individual are eligible.

### DUA Deadline August 12

DUA claims need to be filed by August 12, 2008, except for people in Montgomery County, where there is an August 20 deadline. The state has asked for an extension to September 15, but has not received word yet from the federal government.

People are urged to contact their local Workforce Development Center to apply. Even though they may not be eligible for state unemployment assistance, people need to file for state unemployment bene-

fits first in order to be eligible for the federal program. To be eligible for DUA, you must first be turned down for state unemployment assistance. So far, 2,007 DUA claims and another 7,688 traditional Unemployment Insurance claims, which are disaster eligible, have been processed in Iowa this year.

### Construction Laws

As the rebuilding of many areas of Iowa begins, the Department of Workforce Development reminds people of Iowa's construction laws:

- Construction contractors working in Iowa must register with Iowa Workforce Development, Division of Labor Services.
- Out-of-State contractors must have the appropriate bonds on file.
- For Iowa’s contractor registration law, call (515) 242-5871.

## Infrastructure Group Discusses Recommendations

The Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure and Transportation Task Force met to discuss potential solutions to the damage caused to Iowa's infrastructure and transportation network from the 2008 floods. The task force noted that a report is due by August 18 to the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission. The task force heard presentations from individuals involved with flood recovery efforts and discussed potential recommendations to the advisory committee.

The task force heard presentations from members of the Iowa Homeland Security Emergency Management Division, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Federal Highway Administration, and the Iowa Department of Economic Development. These agencies and divisions detailed the damage to Iowa's infrastructure and transportation network. FEMA stated that the current estimate for emergency work necessary in Iowa is \$128.2 million

and the estimate for permanent work is \$670.44 million.

Following the presentations, the task force identified issues that needed to be addressed. In the area of transportation, the task force discussed roads, trails, railroads, public transit, and aviation. Infrastructure affected by the flooding included telecommunications and structures, including buildings at University of Iowa.

The task force identified potential gaps in the infrastructure and transportation networks that need to be addressed by the advisory committee. In particular, the task force noted that a lack of funding for infrastructure projects was likely going to be a significant hurdle to recovery efforts.

The task force stressed the need for planning across agencies and departments to assure an efficient recovery. The task force said there is a need for collaboration and coordination to avoid timing issues in completing recovery work that

involves multiple agencies, as well as both the state and federal government. The task force also stressed the need for complete data on the status of Iowa's infrastructure and transportation network in order to make informed decisions.

The task force identified areas of the state's infrastructure that present specific challenges, such as railroads, that suffered damage but for which there is little in existing public funding to aid in recovery efforts. Another problem area is local matches, which could present challenges for small communities and communities that have had a significant decrease in tax base due to the floods.

Finally, the task force expressed the desire to address aging infrastructure across the state by not building back systems to levels that may have fallen into disrepair or no longer are sufficient for their current use.

## Education Flood Task Force

The Education Flood Task Force met last week in order to discuss the effects of this year's flooding on the education community. Stakeholders in education presented information related to the effects of the flooding to buildings, employees, students, and families.

Every level of education from early childhood, K-12, and higher education has been affected by the flooding of 2008. This ranges from displaced students to destroyed space to limited resources.

To date, the Department of Education has reported that 33 school districts experienced damage totaling approximately \$53.4

million. There are still damage reports pending that will affect this total. At this time, \$2 million in grant applications have been completed for educational facilities.

School districts with significant damage include Aplington-Parkersburg with one campus totally destroyed, Cedar Rapids with eight campuses damaged, Iowa City with six campuses damaged, Waverly-Shell Rock with three campuses damaged, and Grant Wood Educational Assistance with one facility damaged.

Cedar Rapids School District has 1800 students currently displaced, and Aplington-Parkersburg

has 500 students displaced. The Department of Education stated that these students are allowed to go to school at neighboring school districts or open enroll elsewhere in the state, since the students are entitled to a public education this fall.

Higher education facilities have experienced significant damage as well. There are currently 10 universities or colleges reporting damage. For six of those 10 schools, damage is estimate at this time at \$228 million. The University of Iowa reported the most damage, \$226 million to 30 buildings.

The Iowa College Student Aid Commission (ICSAC) is in the process of surveying financial aid administrators to determine the needs of this fall's students and if the flooding has affected their financial needs. Right now, 2053 students are eligible for financial aid, with 84% reporting they will attend college this fall.

The impact has also been felt by the early childhood community. The voluntary four-year old preschool program is in its second year of grantees. Each school district participating in the program must

collaborate with community partners including private preschools.

In some communities with significant damage, questions have arisen over how to meet the requirements of the approved grant. In some cases, the proposed space for the children is in buildings that are damaged. In addition, some community partners, such as businesses, that were to participate in the collaboration are no longer available.

Another prevalent issue at all levels is transportation. This mostly affects the K-12 system, but

will cause problems for higher education and early childhood. School districts may not be able to comply with the law on time limitations for how long a student can be on a bus due to poor road and infrastructure conditions.

The task force will be preparing a report on the day's meeting in order to present it to the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission. The report will include recommendations on how to address these issues.

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## Agriculture Task Force Update

The members of the Agriculture Flood Task Force met on July 30 to discuss issues related to this year's flooding and the industry. Task forces are specifically charged with assisting the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission in its efforts.

Presenters at the meeting focused on the economic and social impact of the flooding on the agriculture industry, including livestock and land. Among the groups to present were Iowa State University (ISU), the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), Land Improvement Contract Association (LICA), Risk Management Agency, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The most recent reports in July show that approximately 93% of the corn crop planted will be harvested this fall. This equates to an approximate loss of 560,000 acres. The statewide impact may not be as severe as the individual losses.

Soybean farmers had over 400,000 acres destroyed. ISU stated that the bean crop is showing signs of stress and is behind in the growing season. This makes the crop more susceptible to any future weather events between now and harvest.

As for livestock, there will be a significant impact on winter feeding. The first hay cut was delayed due to the flooding and suffered significant loss as well. Pastures suffered damage with silt and debris still on many fields and fences destroyed or damaged.

The community impact of the problems in the agriculture industry includes public and private issues. Economists from ISU predict there will be reduced Main Street spending in rural communities and damaged infrastructure, which is used by the agriculture industry, will disrupt community productivity.

Early estimates from IDALS on the agriculture infrastructure are approximately \$40 million in damages. This includes grassland, terraces, and water and sediment control basins. A survey that went out to the 100 soil and water conservation districts concluded that there is approximately 20 tons per acre of soil erosion (2.284 million), which equates to 10% of the land affected.

The Risk Management Agency reported that 90% of Iowa's acres are insured, which is 20 million acres. Of that, 73% are buy-up acres. There is \$11 billion plus in insurance coverage in Iowa with a

strong delivery system due to high participation in coverage plans.

Government programs that are available to farmers include:

- SURE (Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program)
- CRP (Conservation Reserve Program)
- Emergency Farm Loans
- Emergency Conservation Program.

The SURE program is new in 2008 and requires sign-up by farmers. Eligibility kicks in when a county receives a disaster declaration from the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture or total loss of production for the farm is greater than 50%. Information about these programs can be found on the Farm Services Agency website at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

Members of the task force discussed several issues related to the recovery and future efforts for the agriculture industry and will be meeting again on August 13th. The looming issue was making sure that the state is ready for the fall harvest.

# Cultural Heritage and Records Retention Task Force

The Governor's Flood Task Force on Cultural Heritage/Records Retention met on July 30. This task force had two issues to look at including the impact natural disasters of the summer of 2008 had (or continue to have) on cultural organizations and individuals associated with arts, history, and culture in Iowa; and to consider the issue of records retention under both physical and electronic storage.

This task force was broken into two separate groups with different members serving on each group. The cultural heritage group met in the morning and covered issues related to cultural buildings, etc., and the records retention group met in the afternoon to discuss issues related to records retention.

Both groups identified a list of recommendations that will be compiled and reported to the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission.

## Cultural Heritage

Cyndi Pederson, Director of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, opened the morning session with an overview of the damage incurred to date to cultural buildings and institutions. She reported the damage is widespread. The department has received in-

clude 73 reports of art-related damage, 67 reports of historic structures damage, 24 reports of museum-related damage, 22 reports of document-related damage, and 5 reports fall into various other categories.

Sandi Yoder, President of the Iowa Museum Association, reported that the damage is extensive and devastating. These institutions hold the history of our state and nation - everything that makes us Iowans. Many of these institutions have budgets of less than \$50,000. They are an important part of the cultural life of many small communities and need a lot of help to rebuild.

## Records Retention

Gordon Hendrickson, State Archivist and Records Manager of the State Historical Society, spoke to the task force in the afternoon regarding records retention. It is difficult to assess the impact of the flooding and tornadoes on the documents in the state. Since Iowa does not require local governments to report to the state, there is no way of knowing how many records have been lost and the value of the records.

## Iowa Arts Council Receives Grant

Governor Culver announced on August 4 that the Iowa Arts Council has received a \$100,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for Iowa artists and arts organizations recovering from storm damage.

A portion of the grant will be used to re-open the 2008 Emergency Arts Relief program. This program provides small stipends and grants of up to \$500 for immediate recovery needs. The application is available at [www.iowaaartscouncil.org](http://www.iowaaartscouncil.org). Applications will be processed on a first-come basis.

The remaining funds will be made available as grants and stipends ranging from \$3,000 to \$6,000. Funds could be used for rental fees to conduct programming in unscheduled locations; offsite storage of materials and collections; or hiring temporary staff to assist with organizing records, inventory, and business planning. Application information will be available August 8 at [www.iowaartscouncil.org](http://www.iowaartscouncil.org).

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# New Back to School Health Screenings

Beginning this year, Iowa law requires that newly enrolled schoolchildren receive a blood lead test and a screening for dental disease. The law strengthens prior legislation in regards to compliance with these requirements.

In 2007, the Legislature passed House File 158, which required all children entering school in Iowa to be tested for lead poisoning. Parents must show that children entering kindergarten have been tested

for dangerous levels of lead in their blood. In addition, the bill encourages parents of younger children to have a blood lead test by the age of two. High blood lead levels can cause learning disabilities.

The Legislature also passed House File 906 in 2007, which requires that all children in Iowa have a dental screening performed before entering kindergarten and

ninth grade. Dental screenings will facilitate early detection and referral for treatment of dental disease; reduce the incidence, impact, and cost of dental disease; inform parents and guardians of their children's dental problems; encourage the establishment of effective oral health practices early in life; promote the importance of oral health as an integral component of



preparation for school and learning; and contribute to statewide surveillance of oral health.

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) will work closely with Iowa schools to ensure that parents are aware of any potential risk posed to their children by lead poisoning or dental disease. IDPH feels that this is a clear example of what can be achieved when legislators, schools and public health

share a common interest—the health of our youngest Iowans.

No child will be prevented from attending school without proof of blood lead testing and dental screenings. If families have difficulty meeting the requirements, IDPH and local public health will provide assistance to children and schools to ensure that the necessary dental and lead screenings are obtained. IDPH encourages parents of children entering kindergarten or

ninth grade to contact their health provider to check their child's records and make appointments for check-ups if necessary.

For more information on dental screenings, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/oral\\_health\\_school\\_screening.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/oral_health_school_screening.asp). To learn more about childhood lead poisoning prevention and testing, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/lead\\_poisoning\\_prevention.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/lead_poisoning_prevention.asp) or call 800-972-2026.

## 2008 Iowa Weatherization Challenge

The Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) will be coordinating the fourth annual Iowa's annual community-based initiative to weatherize homes for Iowans in need before the winter heating season.

Community groups are encouraged to participate and the IUB will help them secure weatherization training for volunteers, obtain donated or favorably priced supplies, locate weatherization sites, and communicate with the media.

### \$500 Matching Grants

The IUB will provide matching grants of up to \$500 to assist qualified community groups meet their objectives. At least \$5,000 is available for matching grants.

Weatherization projects must be completed by November 30, 2008, and applications must be submitted by October 31, 2008.

More information, including a sample application, is available at the following IUB web page: [http://www.state.ia.us/government/com/util/energy/iwc/IWC\\_grant.html](http://www.state.ia.us/government/com/util/energy/iwc/IWC_grant.html)

### New \$5,000 Grant

For the first time, the IUB is also offering up to a \$5,000 grant to one community with a population of 10,000 or less. Funds may be used for weatherization or energy efficiency materials or for educational seminars in the community.

The grant will be awarded based on the merit of the proposed projects and will be judged by an IUB review committee. Interested communities should submit an application by August 29, 2008. The winner will be announced by September 12, 2008.

Proposals should include plans for educational seminars, events to help weatherize or improve home energy efficiency targeted to, but not limited to, low-income families, the elderly, or the disabled. More information is available at the following IUB web page: [http://www.state.ia.us/government/com/util/energy/iwc/IWC\\_community\\_grant.html](http://www.state.ia.us/government/com/util/energy/iwc/IWC_community_grant.html)

## Lottery Sales Benefit State Programs by \$57 Million

State programs will benefit by \$57 million because of strong lottery sales during fiscal year 2008. However, record fuel prices and storm and flood damage across much of Iowa impacted lottery sales in the final months of FY 2008.

Iowa Lottery profits currently are deposited in the state general fund, where they are used to pay for a variety of programs. Education, natural resources, health and family services and public safety

are some of the programs that receive funding from lottery proceeds.

“Iowa's Million Dollar Raffle” game, the first cash raffle game, did not meet the lottery's initial expectations. At the time the game began in April, parts of eastern Iowa began to experience flooding. The Parkersburg tornado followed as well as massive flooding across the state. More than 71,000 of the 120,000 tickets available in the cash raffle

game were sold. This allowed the lottery to cover the cost of the game's prizes and clear some funds beyond that.

Lottery equipment and tickets were damaged or destroyed by storms and flooding in about 30 of the 2,600 Iowa Lottery retail locations. Sales may continue to be impacted due to either the temporary or permanent closing of some retail locations that experienced flooding.



According to the Iowa Lottery, sales of instant-scratch tickets, the first product introduced by the Iowa Lottery, rose ten percent to a record \$137.9 million in FY 2008.

Powerball sales increased 3.6 percent on total sales in FY 2008 of \$64.7 million. Hot Lotto sales fell nearly 19 percent to \$11.7 million compared to FY 2007 sales. Sales

of pull-tab tickets rose 1.7 percent to \$21.4 million compared to sales in FY 2007.

## Power Fund Energy Forum Set for Algona

The Iowa Power Fund board of directors will hold three of its monthly meetings in locations around the state, with the second meeting being held on Wednesday, August 13 in Algona. This meeting, as well as the last summer meeting of the Power Fund directors, will be followed by an evening public forum on energy issues.

The August 13 meeting of the Power Fund directors will be held at 10:00 a.m. at the Water's Edge Nature Center, 1010 250th, Algona. The meeting will include presentations by seven applicants for funding.

The applicants include Soy Energy – Biodiesel Plant at Marcus using PEF Pellet Boiler; Carbon-Free Energy – Vertical Wind Turbine Manufacturer; The Corner-

stone BRAD - managed by Bison Renewable Energy; Indigo Dawn, – Green and Main, Integrating Efficiencies into a Historic Mix; I-Renew – Energy and sustainability EXPO; TPI Iowa – TPI Wind Blade Advanced Manufacturing Initiative; and Prairie Land Enterprises – Switchgrass.

### **Forum Starts at 6:30 pm**

The evening public forum is the second in a series of six annual forums hosted by the Office of Energy Independence (OEI). The energy forum in Algona will also be held at the Water's Edge Nature Center and will begin at 6:30 p.m.

### **Other Forums**

The Power Fund board of directors will hold their September

meeting in Mount Vernon with a public forum to follow. Other public forums for 2008 are tentatively scheduled for Decorah in October, Sioux City in November, and a location in southeastern Iowa in December.

Last year, the Legislature created the \$100 million Power Fund, which is managed by the newly created Office of Energy Independence. The Carbon Free Energy project alone is a \$2.1 million project.

The money dedicated to the Power Fund will largely be used for grants, distributed over the next four years. The Iowa Power Fund Board and OEI have also developed an Energy Independence plan that calls for the development of a long-term energy strategy for Iowa.

## New Loess Hills Study

The Iowa Department of Economic Development is providing \$60,000 over the next two years to help fund a study of the Loess Hills in western Iowa. The study will develop a recreation plan for new amenities within the Loess Hills region, including hiking and biking trails, canoe access, boating, golfing, fishing, hunting, camping, wetlands, and wildlife viewing.

The study is designed to compile recreation information and inventory private, city, county, state, and federal lands; integrate the accumulated information into the corridor management plan; and improve recreation opportunities

and resources in the Loess Hills region. The study will start in late 2008 and is to be completed by the end of 2009.

Currently, nearly 10,000 acres of Iowa's Loess Hills are dedicated by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service as National Natural Landmark sites. The Department of Natural Resources also manages the Loess Hills Pioneer State Forest, which is located in Harrison and Monona counties. In addition, there is a 220 mile Loess Hills Scenic Byway that weaves through this landscape of windblown silt deposits along the Missouri River Valley.



The Loess Hills in western Iowa run north and south along the Missouri River. Counties included within Iowa's Loess Hills Development and Conservation Authority are Adams, Adair, Audubon, Carroll, Cass, Cherokee, Crawford, Fremont, Guthrie, Harrison, Ida, Lyon, Mills, Monona, Montgomery, Page, Plymouth, Pottawattamie, Sac, Shelby, Sioux, Taylor, and Woodbury.

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## Health Care Roundtable Planned

A bipartisan group of Iowa lawmakers announced plans this week for a gathering of state and federal leaders on August 20 to discuss ways to build on successful health-care reforms passed during the 2008 session by the Iowa Legislature. The "Health Care Roundtable Discussion" will be held from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, August 20, at Des Moines University Medical Education Center at 3200 Grand Avenue, in Des Moines.

State Legislators have invited the Iowa congressional delegation to join them in this important dialog about health care reform.

Terry Branstad, former Governor and current Des Moines University President, will moderate the Health Care Roundtable Discussion. Other confirmed participants include U.S. Senator Tom Harkin and Congressman Leonard Boswell and representatives from consumer groups, the health care industry, health care professionals, the insurance industry and regulators.

State leaders feel that by improving the partnership between the State of Iowa and our federal leaders, Iowa can build on its successes, including the initiative that is making Iowa the first state in the nation in which all children will have

health insurance. This bipartisan discussion will help build the strongest possible state-federal partnership to keep health care reform moving forward in Iowa.

The Health Care Roundtable discussion will kick off with the panelists answering this question: "What federal policies should be changed or eliminated to help Iowa do the best job possible in delivering accessible and affordable health care?"

The roundtable is open to the public.