

STATEHOUSE NEWS

October 21, 2009

New High Tech Jobs in Eddyville

A state award is helping create 38 new high tech jobs in Eddyville. The Economic Development Board has approved \$5 million in assistance to Wacker Chemical Corporation, which plans to invest approximately \$83 million to build a fermentation plant at the Iowa bioprocessing complex in Eddyville. The plant will use Wacker's proprietary technology to convert corn starch into an amino acid (L-Cystine) used in the baking, dietary supplement and food flavoring industries.

Construction should begin in October of next



year and be completed by 2012. The award is the largest project in Iowa since the IBM expansion in Dubuque back in February.

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Tyson Expands in Independence

The board also approved an awarded of \$400,000 and tax benefits to Provemex, a subsidiary of Tyson Foods. Eventually the project will employ 105 people and utilize the closed Tyson plant in Independence. Tyson will invest \$6.6 million in the project.

Tyson Foods plans to enter the growing pet treat industry in the next 12 months. The new division will use raw materials from Tyson's U.S. food plants.

Rail Improvements in Appanoose County

The Appanoose County Community Railroad (APNC) needs to rehabilitate a bridge and replace railroad ties as part of \$1 million in improvements to comply with structural requirements of the Federal Railway Administration. The Economic Development Board awarded \$150,000 from the infrastructure component of the Grow Iowa Values Financial Assistance Program to maintain the viability of the line. The railroad serves Centerville and Albia industries, which when combined employ 428 persons.

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Flu Spreads Across the Heartland

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) reports that schools are seeing a rise in absenteeism due to flu-like illnesses. Recently, 56 schools in 23 counties reported to the IDPH that at least 10% of their enrollment was absent due

to illness. The average percent absent for the schools reporting was 15% of students out due to illness.

The largest number of H1N1 cases has been seen in people between the ages of 5 and 24. Schools are a typical

place where viruses spread among students, and then from students to their teachers, and from students to their families. Because the H1N1 vaccine is being allocated to states on a staggered basis and may not be immediately

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available to all school children, it is important for students to be watchful for the signs of influenza and take action to prevent the spread of the virus at their schools.

Symptoms of H1N1 influenza are similar to seasonal flu and include a fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people with H1N1 flu may

also have diarrhea and vomit. Because H1N1 is spread by person-to-person contact, it is important for students who are ill to stay home from school until their cough significantly improves and they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

For more information about H1N1 influenza, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/h1n1/.

The Three Cs for Prevention

Cover your cough. Use a tissue or your elbow to cover coughs and sneezes.

Clean your hands. Use soap and water or a hand sanitizer.

Contain germs. Stay home from work or school when sick.

Rebuild Iowa Coordinating Council Looks to the Future

The Rebuild Iowa Coordinating Council has been meeting throughout the summer and fall to review progress on 2008 flood recovery and to evaluate current programs and projects. At the October Meeting, the Council also began consideration of future legislation and action that may be needed to continue recovery from the 2008 disasters and to prepare for future disasters.

Individual Assistance

Among the successes of the 2008-2009 effort was the creation of the case management system, providing mental health services, and \$7.85 million in funding for unmet needs grants for individuals.

However, among the roadblocks the victims and disaster recovery workers found were the need for more flexible state funding, lack of centralized information and data, federal programs that were not specifically designed for disaster assistance, a difficulty in providing affordable housing, foreclosure of damaged properties, impacted businesses struggling with debt, and lack of adequate resources and funding.

Among future recommendations are institutionalizing the case management system, a coordination system for federal funding, and speeding up property buyouts. In addition, they suggest expediting the Jumpstart Housing Pro-

gram, finding better ways to identify and assist displaced renters, and continued training for mental health response teams.

Infrastructure/Public Assistance

Among the successes is the fact that most FEMA Public Assistance projects have been approved, there is I-JOBS funding to repair and improve damaged infrastructure, and there is money for floodplain mapping using LiDAR.

Among the roadblocks was the lack of funding for infrastructure maintenance before the flooding, federal restrictions slow the process, and flood insurance for public buildings is often unaffordable.

In addition, there was not enough staff to do disaster work quickly, current floodplain maps are not accurate statewide, planning takes time but quick decisions are needed.

Recommendations including moving buildings out of floodplains whenever possible, consider new land use rules, prevent rebuilding in flood-prone areas, complete new floodplain maps, and strengthen Iowa's emergency management laws and the role of emergency management.

Long-Term Recovery

Among the successes was the assistance provided by the Council of Governments, aid in moving his-

torically significant properties out of floodplains, and pilot projects to integrate "green strategies" in community development.

Roadblocks include the lack of resources by many communities for comprehensive planning, recovery takes longer with greater planning, lack of coordination at all levels of government, different regional boundaries exist making planning difficult, and forty percent of communities do not have building codes.

Recommendations include adopting and promoting Smart Planning Principles, increase purchase of flood insurance, complete floodplain mapping, increase multi-jurisdictional cooperation, advocate for a coordinated system for federal disaster recovery, plan for the protection and recovery of documents, consider quality of life as part of rebuilding, create alternative areas for development out of the floodplain, and standardize emergency management funding, duties and reporting.

Proposed Legislation

The Rebuild Iowa Office will be submitting Legislative proposals dealing with Smart Planning and for institutionalizing Case Management. In addition, the State Building Code Commissioner is to submit guidelines on building safe rooms and storm shelters to reduce the risk of per-

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sonal injury from tornadoes and other severe weather. The Water Resources Coordinating Council

will be submitting recommendations on watershed management. The Commissioner of Insurance is developing recommendation on how to

expand the availability and procurement of flood insurance.

The next Coordinating Council meeting will be in December.

Federal Funds Saved or Created 4,434 Jobs

A quarterly progress report, transmitted to the Governor last week, indicated that Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds had created or retained 4,434 jobs in Iowa. The report indicated that these are jobs, using ARRA funds, that flowed through state government.

The report cautioned that these figures are only preliminary numbers and a more detailed jobs report would be available on October 30, 2009. This progress report is based on expenditures made through the end of September.

The most significant number of jobs created or saved is related to the education State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), which created or saved 2,463 jobs in school districts throughout Iowa. Funding

for highway transportation projects created or saved 921 jobs.

On October 10, 2009, the State of Iowa, along with every other recipient of ARRA funds, submitted a detailed report to the federal government on the expenditure of ARRA funds. This report, known as a "Section 1512" report, provides information on ARRA expenditures from a variety of sources within state government, and various sub-recipients and vendors throughout the state. The State of Iowa is a centralized reporting state and therefore collected information on all ARRA funds that flowed through any state agency or institution. In total, data from 3210 ARRA awards was requested for this report.

This report included information on 194 awards that totaled over

\$269 million in expenditures. Some of the biggest recipients of ARRA funds in this reporting period, including entitlement programs, are exempt from the Section 1512 reporting process. These exempt funds include the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP) program, which represents nearly 39% of all of Iowa's ARRA expenditures to date.

A more complete and detailed number of jobs created/jobs saved will be available on October 30 on the www.recovery.gov web site after the entire collection and reconciliation process is completed. This number will include those jobs created or saved with ARRA expenditures other than those that flowed through state government.

HAWK-I Enrollment Increases

Enrollment in *hawk-i* (Healthy and Well Kids in Iowa) has already exceeded expectations of state officials for this fiscal year. Anita Smith of the Department of Human Services (DHS) presented this information at the hawk-I board meeting this week.

Hawk-i is health insurance for uninsured children funded by state and federal funds. No family pays more than \$40 per month

for health insurance for their children.

From July 1 to the end of September, enrollment in *hawk-i* has increased by 1,168 children. DHS estimated enrollment to increase by 750 children over the entire fiscal year, July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2010. In addition, the enrollment has reached an all time high of over 23,000 members.

The majority of the increase, 79%, is for families that would not

have qualified prior to July 1. This year the Legislature adopted provisions to increase the level of eligibility to 300% of the federal poverty level (FPL), which is \$66,150 for a family of four. The level was increased from 250% FPL.

To find more information on the *hawk-i* program and eligibility, call 1-800-257-8563 or visit <http://www.hawk-i.org>.

Smart Planning Part of Recovery Agenda

One of the proposals to come out of the 2008-2009 Disaster Recovery effort is for a greater degree of land use planning. A proposal developed by the Rebuild Iowa Office calls for Smart Planning. This means better land use decisions, more protected development and coordinating concerns of multiple jurisdictions.

Among the components of Smart Planning is the adoption of several principles.

1. Stakeholder, community and regional collaboration in development decisions
2. Advance equity: predictable, fair and cost effective development decisions

3. Promote clean energy production and increased energy efficiency
4. Increase diversity of job and business opportunities
5. Concentrate development and mix land uses
6. Expand diversity in housing opportunities and choices
7. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
8. Protect, preserve and wisely utilize natural resources and working lands
9. Incorporate green building and infrastructure design
10. Provide for a variety of transportation choices

Another component calls for the adoption of local comprehensive planning guides outlining definitions and basic components. These should also coordinate with flood plain management recommendations.

The third component calls for a taskforce to recommend a structure for greater coordinate of statewide planning and state assistance to local governments, including goals and measurements.

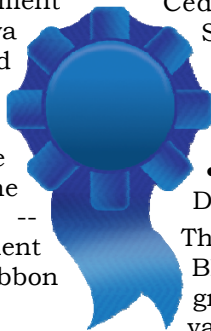
The Smart Planning ideas will be drafted into proposed legislation to be considered by the Iowa Legislature when it reconvenes in January.

Six Iowa Schools Named Blue Ribbon Schools

Based on 2007-2008 achievement data, the Iowa Department of Education nominated Iowa public schools as No Child Left - Behind Blue Ribbon Schools.

The six schools -- five Iowa public schools and one accredited nonpublic school -- named by the U.S. Department of Education as Blue Ribbon Schools are:

- Central Springs Elementary - Manly Campus, North Central Community School District
- Earlville Elementary School, Maquoketa Valley Community School District



- Horizon Elementary School, Cedar Rapids Community School district
- West Lyon High School, West Lyon Community School District
- Resurrection School, Dubuque.

The No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement to high levels.

Based on One of Two Criteria

The schools are selected based on one of two criteria: schools with

at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantage backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance to high levels on state tests, or schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top ten percent of their state on state tests. Private schools honored are in the top ten percent of the nation on nationally-normed tests.

A total of 413 schools across the country were named 2009 Blue Ribbon schools. A complete list is available at [http://www.ed.gov/p\[rograms/nc lbbs/awards.html](http://www.ed.gov/p[rograms/nc lbbs/awards.html).

2009 Great Places Announced

The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) has announced that six Iowa communities have been named 2009 Iowa Great Places.

Now in its fifth year, Iowa Great Places encourages communities to work together to achieve a better quality of life for its citizens. The program combines state resources with local assets to build capacity in neighborhoods, communities, regions, or districts that cultivate their unique and authentic qualities.

The Great Places were officially announced at a banquet to recognize the newly designated Great Places. Following are summaries of each community's proposal:

Cedar Valley Alliance

This proposal focuses on increasing the public's use and enjoyment of the Cedar River and its watershed; and enhancing its environmental health, cultural heritage, recreational features and economic opportunities.

Iowa City/Coralville/North Liberty

Incorporates three communities with a vision focusing on literature. Iowa City became part of

the Creative Cities Network when it was named a City of Literature in November 2008 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Iowa City is the third city in the world to receive this recognition. Its proposal develops and supports the "City of Literature" brand for Iowa City and surrounding communities. A Stories Project, an interpretative center on 25 former Brownfield acres near the Iowa River, will be dedicated to language, literature, and literacy.

Marion

The City of Marion has developed a community-wide visioning process called Imagine 8. This process solicited more than 1,800 responses from area residents to develop a clear picture of the community's direction. Eight ideas were selected from the 1,800 ideas submitted. "All Trails Lead to Marion" focuses on Marion Square Park as the center of community and recreational trails, parks, amphitheatre and public art, connecting many of the Great 8 ideas.

Tama County

Tama County and its 12 towns submitted a proposal that focuses on its Native American heritage with

the theme "Feeding the Spirit." This culturally diverse county proposes expansion of Otter Creek Lake and Park; restoration of historical museums and the Weiting Opera House; and the development of the Meskwaki Cultural Center and Museum.

Turkey River Corridor

Three towns – Clermont, Elgin and Elkader – and two counties – Clayton and Fayette – have joined together to submit a unique regional application. All three towns are connected by 114 miles of the Turkey River. Their vision is to collaborate, develop and enhance the existing natural resources flowing from the Turkey River through the creation of land and water trails.

Villages of Van Buren County

The proposal calls for developing a Villages Folk School to offer learning experiences in traditional arts, such as pottery, fine arts, spinning, weaving and sculpting within the unique surroundings of each village. The county would be the "campus," with more than 42 classes offered to adults, parents, children and their families.

Transportation Commission Approves Grants

The Transportation Commission approved six RISE (Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy) grants at their October meeting, which was held in Bettendorf. The RISE grants enable local communities to either attract or retain businesses in their communities through road improvements. All projects put forth a 50% local match.

Sioux City received a total of \$500,000 for the reconstruction of close to 1,000 feet of Cunningham Drive, which will provide access to four lots to be used for industrial purposes.

Polk County was awarded

\$1.2 million to assist in the construction of 4,700 feet of Northeast 49th Avenue. Once completed, this will provide initial access to seventeen lots in the Tonini Farm subdivision.

Mount Pleasant received a total of \$226,000, which will be used to construct close to 620 feet of Commerce Drive and 814 feet of Progress Street. These streets will provide access into the Mount Pleasant Crossroads Industrial Park.

Urbana was awarded a grant totaling \$440,000. This money will be used to construct 1,550 feet of local road, which will provide access

to ten lots in the Industrial Park, and create turn lanes on Iowa Highway 150, which will provide access into the new Industrial Park.

Le Mars received a grant totaling \$204,000 for assistance with construction to provide access to eight lots in the Industrial Park. Close to 1,140 feet of Blue Diamond Drive from Hawkeye Avenue to Holton Drive will be developed.

Recreational Trails

The Commission also approved over \$4 million in recrea-

tional trails funding to entities across the state. These entities include cities, county conservation

boards, and the Department of Natural Resources. For a detailed list of the approved projects, please

visit www.governor.iowa.gov/news/2009/10/13_1.php

Iowa a Lower-Tax State, Says Latest Census Data

Iowa's per-person tax burden ranks in the bottom one-third of the 50 states, according to the Federation of Tax Administrators (FTA).

Per person taxes levied by state government rank Iowa 36th, while total taxes levied by state and local government rank Iowa 32nd.

Measured as a percent of state personal income, Iowa ranks 32nd for state government taxes and 26th for state and local government taxes.

The FTA provides research and other services to tax agencies for all 50 states. It facilitates intergovernmental and interstate coordination and represents the interests of state tax administrators before federal policymakers.

FTA tax burden reports use data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. The latest available data on state government

taxes is for 2008, while the latest data on combined state and local

taxes is for 2007.

2008 STATE GOVERNMENT TAX REVENUE										
	Tax Dollars Per Person	As % of Personal Income	% from Property Tax	% from Sales Tax	% from Other Excise	% from Personal Inc. Tax	% from Corporate Inc. Tax	% from Other Taxes		
US	\$2,575 --	6.7% --	1.6%	30.8%	15.0%	35.7%	6.5%	10.4%		
AV										
IOWA	\$2,295 (36)	6.6% (32)	--	26.7%	16.2%	41.3%	5.0%	10.7%		
Illi- nois	\$2,472 (26)	6.1% (38)	0.2%	24.9%	23.6%	32.4%	9.8%	9.2%		
Kan- sas	\$2,555 (22)	7.1% (25)	1.1%	31.6%	11.5%	41.1%	7.4%	7.2%		
Minn.	\$3,505 (8)	8.6% (9)	3.9%	24.8%	15.7%	42.5%	5.7%	7.4%		
Miss.	\$1,855 (47)	5.5% (45)	0.3%	29.4%	14.1%	46.7%	3.5%	6.0%		
Neb.	\$2,341 (32)	6.5% (35)	0.1%	36.7%	10.7%	41.3%	5.6%	5.6%		
N. Dak.	\$3,604 (6)	10.0% (4)	0.1%	22.9%	14.8%	13.7%	7.7%	41.4%		
S. Dak.	\$1,643 (50)	4.6 % (49)	--	55.4%	25.7%	--	5.3%	13.6%		
Wisc.	\$2,681 (18)	7.4% (19)	0.8%	28.3%	13.6%	44.0%	5.7%	7.6%		

2007 STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TAX REVENUE										
	Tax Dollars Per Person	As % of Personal Income	% from Property Tax	% from Sales Tax	% from Other Excise	% from Personal Inc. Tax	% from Corporate Inc. Tax	% from Other Taxes		
US	\$4,234 --	11.6% --	30.0%	23.5%	10.9%	22.7%	4.7%	8.2%		
AV										
IOWA	\$3,665 (32)	11.3% (26)	33.1%	21.2%	10.4%	25.1%	3.0%	7.2%		
Illi- nois	\$4,290 (14)	11.2% (27)	37.1%	16.6%	17.2%	17.1%	5.3%	6.7%		
Kan- sas	\$4,088 (22)	11.9% (17)	30.5%	26.6%	8.9%	24.2%	4.6%	5.3%		
Minn.	\$4,566 (12)	11.8% (19)	25.9%	19.2%	12.6%	30.6%	5.0%	6.8%		
Miss.	\$3,265 (43)	10.1% (45)	27.4%	26.2%	11.4%	26.9%	2.0%	6.0%		
Neb.	\$4,034 (24)	11.9% (18)	33.4%	24.3%	8.1%	23.1%	3.0%	8.1%		
N. Dak.	\$4,805 (23)	12.7% (10)	26.8%	21.9%	13.2%	12.2%	5.2%	20.7%		
S. Dak.	\$3,009 (48)	9.4 % (50)	34.3%	40.5%	13.6%	--	3.2%	8.5%		
Wisc.	\$4,169 (20)	12.2% (13)	36.0%	19.0%	8.4%	27.1%	4.0%	5.5%		

Source: Compiled by the Federation of Tax Administrators from U.S. Census Bureau data

DOT Wants Your Input Concerning Aviation Planning

The Department of Transportation (DOT) will be holding a public meeting to get input from individuals and groups interested in Iowa's Aviation System Plan. The department will be updating the 20-year system plan, which sets the direction for future development within Iowa's air transportation system.

Items to be discussed include:

- Updates of airport data and aircraft activity forecasts.

- Review the goals, objectives, airport roles, and facility and service objectives for airports.
- Evaluation of the air transportation system plan performance measures.
- Analysis of airport flight path approaches for increased safety and efficiency.
- Recommendations for future system needs.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 22 in Cedar Rapids, at the Kirkwood Center for Continuing Education. The address is 7725 Kirkwood Blvd SW, Suites B & C. Persons who would like more information or directions can visit www.iawings.com, and click on the Aviation System Plan link.

Iowa Recovery Hampered by Federal Rules

As the State of Iowa has worked to recover from the tornadoes and floods of 2008, it has become evident that federal rules and regulations have sometimes hampered recovery efforts. As a result, the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) has been working with federal officials on a list of recommendations to improve the process.

Among the recommendations coming from RIO are:

- Federal program rules are overly burdensome for disaster recovery. Most federal programs are not designed to be used in disasters, making it difficult to spend funds in a timely manner. RIO is recommending increased flexibility of funding without all the usual restrictions on those programs.
- There is no useful means of sharing information across disaster programs at the state and federal level. Impacted individuals may have to apply to as many as 10 different agencies, providing the

same personal information dozens of times. RIO is recommending that a shared database be established for individual recovery information and that state and local programs have access if they sign confidentiality agreements. This would include a shared system of checking for duplications of benefits.

- Federal funding and programs vary from state to state and disaster to disaster. This makes it difficult for a state to make plans based on what is available. For example, Iowa has received almost \$800 million in CDBG assistance – but in four separate allocations at different times with different rules and different allocation formulas requiring new action plans to be approved. RIO is recommending that there be a standard allocation formula based on one agreed-upon disaster damage standard.
- Several key parts of disaster recovery have no sustainable funding to insure their success and continuation. For example, only

13,000 Iowans had flood insurance before the summer of 2008 but there is no funding built into the National Flood Insurance Program to increase awareness and participation. RIO recommends increased program support in specific areas.

- It is difficult to use volunteers or do your own repair work when federal funds are involved, even though it would be less expensive. For example, homeowners under some programs cannot buy materials to paint their own home, but can hire a painter. RIO recommends that provisions be created to allow volunteer labor.

- FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program rules make it difficult to use the funding for projects that could prevent future damage. RIO suggests that the program be restructured to cover more projects.

Iowan's Satisfied with Disaster Recovery Efforts

After the floods and storms of 2008, the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) held Speak Up Iowa! forums throughout the state to gather input from Iowans on what steps they believed were needed to help in recovery. This summer, RIO held forums again in impacted communities and asked people to complete a new survey, called the Speak Up Iowa II Survey.

On Right Track

More than 250 people filled out the survey. Of those, 79% either strongly agree or agree that Iowa is

on the right track in the recovery process. When asked if the programs were adequate and helped them recover, 33% strongly agreed or agreed that they were, 33% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 34% were neutral. Asked if the current Iowa recovery process is building a safer, stronger, smarter Iowa, 65% of respondents either strongly agree or agree, 14% disagree or strongly disagree and 21% did not know.

Seventy-five percent said they were directly affected by the storms. Forty-nine percent of respondents were homeowners, 24% were business owners, 8% were renters, 8%

were landlords, 6% were non-profits, and 5% were other. Fifty-two percent were displaced from their homes and the same percentage had their employment affected in some way.

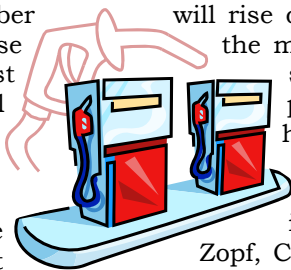
Fifty percent of those who answered the survey said that they had volunteered to help in recovery.

One disturbing result of the survey was that many of the respondents did not know about all the programs put in place to help them.

Gas Prices Increase as Supply Decreases

Average gasoline prices in Iowa increased from September to October. This increase was the first since August 10, 2009. Crude oil prices increased 9% over the September price.

"Fuel supplies have declined by the largest margin in a year, leading to slight increases in pricing. Energy ana-



lysts are split over whether prices will rise or fall next week because the market did not respond to supply numbers as anticipated. Refinery activity has decreased, but if demand increased, there would be enough capacity to cover," said Jessica Zopf, Communications Specialist for the Iowa Office of Energy Independence.

The October 16th average of \$2.37 for 10% ethanol blended mid-

grade gasoline was 14% lower than the October 2008 price of \$2.74.

Heating fuel prices also increased from September to October. Natural gas prices increased \$0.55 over the last month to \$3.70/MMbtu. Propane increased \$0.02 to \$1.31/MMbtu and heating oil increased \$0.01 to \$2.21/MMbtu over the same time.

OSHA Ten Hour Training to be offered in Dubuque

The Employers Council of Iowa, in partnership with Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC), Dubuque Area Labor Management Council, and Iowa Workforce Development are offering OSHA training. This ten hour OSHA general industry training satisfies OSHA requirements.

OSHA training will be offered beginning Wednesday, November 18, 2009 from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm and concluding on Thursday, No-

vember 19, 2009 from 8:00 am – 11:00 am. Content will include introduction to OSHA standards, walking and working surfaces, falls, means of egress and fire protection, ergonomics, personal protective equipment, welding and hazardous materials, materials handling and back ergonomics, machine guarding, electrical, hazard communication and OSHA recordkeeping.

Training will be offered at the NICC Town Clock Center for Professional Development in Room 106C.

The instructor for the course is registered with the State of Iowa as an OSHA trainer. Fee for the ten-hour class, including a ten-hour OSHA certification upon satisfactory completion, is \$35.00.

Deadline to register for the class is Wednesday, November 11. Call 1-888-642-2338, ext. 380, or (563) 557-8271, ext. 380 to register or for more information.

New On-Line Resource to Help Students Plan

The Iowa College Student Aid Commission has launched a new online resource to help students transition from school to the workplace and to provide resources for adults seeking education and employment opportunities.

IHaveaPlanIowa.gov is a community web portal that provides free resources for students, par-

ents, adult learners and job seekers. Information is available in the following areas:

- Helping individuals discover their strengths and interests, match interests with education and employment opportunities;
- Preparing for the ACT or SAT through free test preparation;

- Exploring programs and majors at Iowa's colleges and universities;

- Researching financial aid, building resumes and practicing for job interviews.

Log on to:

www.IHaveaPlanIowa.gov for more information.

DHS Program Savings

The Department of Human Services (DHS) recently announced program changes that will save around \$11 million in state dollars this and next year. The savings are mostly directed to the Medicaid program, which is funded by state and federal dollars.

The largest program saving comes as the result of a lawsuit that enables Medicaid to pay less to pharmacy providers. Under settlement of the suit, in which authors of a drug database were accused of artificially inflating the average wholesale price of pharmaceuticals, Medicaid will save \$2.2 million in state funds this fiscal year and \$3.4 million next year.



Other changes include:

- Beginning next March, Medicaid will require prior approval before paying for high-tech radiology services such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). The change will save over \$1.5 million through the end of fiscal year 2011.

• Beginning in November, payments to recipients of Iowa's Family Investment Program (FIP) will be made via an electronic payment card. The change will save an estimated \$238,000 this year and next year.

- Beginning next spring, Medicaid will no longer make payments to physicians and others by check. Eliminating checks will save about \$182,000 through next fiscal year.

- All Medicaid claims will soon be

screened by a new tool that checks for coding errors that can result in over payments. The change will prevent an estimated \$3.5 million in overpayments through fiscal year 2011.

DHS is also working to create an automated system that will speed the process of obtaining information on client income, resources, and other eligibility documents. Also planned is creation of an electronic case file that will save storage space and enable more flexibility in work assignments.

The announcement of these savings was prior to the Governor Culver's 10% across the board cut. Additional savings will be necessary to meet the new requirement.