

STATEHOUSE NEWS

June 11, 2009

Disaster Assistance and Recovery Update

As we hit the one-year mark, about \$3 billion has been made committed in state and federal funding to assist in recovery from the 2008 weather-related disasters. This week, it was announced that Iowa will receive \$516.7 million in additional funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for disaster recovery. This brings Iowa's funding from HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to nearly \$800 million.



Iowa is making more than \$165 million in additional disaster recovery funds available through the I-Jobs bill including \$46.5 million dedicated to specific projects and \$118.5 million that will soon be available through a competitive application process. In addition, \$100 million is available for the University of Iowa.

Community Assistance

Iowa's Homeland Security and Emergency

Management agency reports that all \$22 million in community assistance has now been sent out to eligible cities and counties. In January, the Legislature authorized that money be provided to the 85 counties and the communities in those counties that were affected by the flooding. Each governmental body could get at least \$2,000. However, some entities did not apply for the money, so it was redistributed, using a damage assessment formula, to those counties and cities that did apply.

Tornado Assistance

The Legislature also approved \$1.15 million in additional assistance to seven communities impacted by the 2008 tornadoes. The following communities will receive a share of that money:

- Marion County (to benefit Attica) \$25,000
- Dunkerton \$50,000
- Fairbank \$50,000
- Hazleton \$50,000
- New Hartford \$200,000
- Delaware County (to benefit of Oneida) \$25,000
- Parkersburg \$750,000

Railroad Assistance

The Federal Railroad Administration has awarded more than \$9.6 million to the Iowa Department of Transportation to reimburse three of Iowa's shortline and regional railroads for emergency repairs made after last year's flooding.

- Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway - \$6,965,163.
- Keokuk Junction Railway Yard - \$459,200.
- Replacement of the Waterloo Bridge over the Cedar River for the Iowa Northern Railway - \$2,174,880. In addition, the Legislature provided \$1 million for the Waterloo Bridge.

Help for Stress

The department of human services has a new website for Iowans who are dealing with stress issues due to last year's disasters. The site, www.projectrecoveryiowa.org provides information including free confidential crisis counseling. As one-year anniversaries of these disasters occur, it is possible for survivors to feel sad, anxious or stressed. Call the Iowa Concern Hotline, 1-800-447-1985.

Inside this issue:

<i>Job Training for the Unemployed</i>	2
<i>I-JOBS Board Holds First Meeting</i>	2
<i>Major Grant Received for Math and Science Teachers</i>	3
<i>Five-Year Transportation Improvement Program</i>	3
<i>Nursing Homes Reviewed by State</i>	4
<i>Reduction in Child Abuse Cases</i>	4
<i>New Research and Development School</i>	5
<i>Rebuild Iowa Coordinating Council Holds First Meeting</i>	5
<i>Federal Stimulus Funds Approved to Protect Education</i>	6
<i>Review Auto Insurance Before Summer Road Trip</i>	6
<i>Constitutional Amendment on Natural Resources</i>	7
<i>DNR to Monitor State Park Beaches</i>	7
<i>Firefighter and Police Officer Assistance</i>	8
<i>Environment Commission Supports Passenger Rail</i>	8

Job Training for the Unemployed

Governor Culver announced that the US Department of Labor has certified \$70.8 million in federal Recovery Act funds to the state of Iowa. Iowa became eligible for these funds as a result of the passage of Senate File 197, the law modernizing Iowa's unemployment insurance system.

"These funds will directly benefit unemployed Iowans who are seeking to improve their skills in the workplace, and to stay competitive. In addition, these funds will help to stabilize the state Unemployment Trust Fund, to minimize the impact of the national recession on Iowa's employers," said Governor Culver.



ment benefits, if the individual participates in a Iowa Workforce Development department approved training program. The individual would have to have been in a declining occupation or involuntarily separated from employment by a permanent reduction in operations at their last job.

The benefits will not pay for the training, but will assist Iowans who want to improve their skills by extending their unemployment benefits. It is also hoped that this will be a long-term solution for a chronic unemployed person since they will be trained for a better, long-term career.

Changes to the Base Period

One of the difficulties in qualifying for unemployment benefits in Iowa has been that some workers

do not have enough wages earned in a particular period to qualify for unemployment. Senate File 197 allows a base period of wages for the most recent quarter to be counted.

This change helps the seasonal employed worker who may not work for extended periods of time, or who works sporadically, qualify for unemployment. There are 19 states that already have this provision in their unemployment laws.

Iowa was the first state in the country to fully pass an unemployment modernization bill and completely qualify for all the federal benefits. The \$70.8 million Iowa is certified to receive is part of a \$7 billion national unemployment insurance modernization initiative signed into law by President Obama as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Job Training

Senate File 197 provides an additional 26 weeks in unemploy-

I-JOBS Board Holds First Meeting

The Iowa Jobs (I-JOBS) Board held their first meeting on June 3rd to begin the process of distributing \$165 million in infrastructure projects that will rebuild Iowa's communities affected by last summer's storms and create jobs. The I-JOBS Board was created as part of the \$830 million I-JOBS infrastructure, flood recovery, and job creation initiative approved by the Legislature in 2009.

At the meeting, the board members received an overview of the legislation creating the program and the board. Draft rules were distributed that the board will consider at their next meeting on June 15th. The board plans to approve the rules on an emergency basis, which makes them effective

upon adoption by the board. The board also plans to consider identical rules filed under notice, which will allow for public comment.

The I-JOBS board is charged with managing applications for the \$165 million, and ensuring that funds are distributed in an efficient and transparent manner. The board will distribute \$118.5 million through a competitive grant program for disaster rebuilding, reconstruction of local public buildings, flood control, and flood prevention projects. The board will also distribute \$46.5 million in targeted grants to Linn County, Cedar Rapids, Palo, Elkader, and Charles City for disaster relief and mitigation. All award recipients are accountable to the board.

The 11-member I-JOBS board is chaired by Jeff Pomeranz of West Des Moines. The other members include Joni Dittmer, Eldridge; Kate Gronstal, Council Bluffs; Pat Baird, Cedar Rapids; Toi Sullivan, Sioux City; and Willard "Sandy" Boyd, Iowa City. In addition to the six public members, the board consists of State Treasurer Mike Fitzgerald and representatives of the Iowa Finance Authority, Department of Economic Development, Iowa Workforce Development and the Rebuild Iowa Office.

Iowans can track all awards at the I-JOBS website: www.iowafinanceauthority.gov/en/i_jobs/.

Tentative I-Jobs Timeline:

- June 15 - Telephonic Board Meeting
- June 24 - Review Committee Meeting (Location: TBD)
- June 15-28 - Regional Meet-

ings (Location: TBD)

- June 29 - Board Meeting (Location: Cedar Rapids)
- July 1 - Application Available
- August 3 - First round of applications due

- August 14 - Review Committee Meeting (TBD)
- August 31 - Board Meeting (TBD)

Major Grant Received for Math and Science Teachers

The Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program of the National Science Foundation has awarded Iowa's three Regent universities a grant of \$900,000 to be used as scholarships for math and science majors. The goal is to put more math and science teachers in Iowa's classrooms over the next five years.

The Iowa Mathematics and Science Education Partnership (IMESP) recently won the award designed to encourage science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) majors and professionals to become middle

and high school science and math teachers.

The IMESP is a collaborative effort between Iowa's three Regent universities. The organization is the result of action by the Legislature in 2008 requiring the University of Northern Iowa to develop and implement the STEM collaborative initiative between the three Regent universities. The goals of the program are to promote statewide collaboration and coordination, prepare highly qualified math and science teachers, and improve the math and science performance of Iowa's students.

This is the first grant received by IMESP since its inception in 2008. The award will allow IMSEP to provide annual scholarships of \$10,000 to junior and senior-level math and science majors, or STEM-related graduate-level students, from all three universities. Students receiving the scholarships are required to commit to teaching for two years in schools where needs are the greatest.

More information about IMSEP or other programs can be found at www.iowamathscience.org.

Five-Year Transportation Improvement Program Adopted

At their June meeting, the Iowa Transportation Commission adopted the Fiscal Year 2010 through Fiscal Year 2014 Iowa Transportation Improvement Program, which sets funding priorities in all modes of transportation. The largest portion of the program is highway funding, which is \$2.1 billion for all five fiscal years.

The highway portion of the program continues to focus in the following four major areas:

Maintenance and preservation. The program allocates an average of \$232 million for interstate, noninterstate, bridge, and safety improvements.

Continue previously scheduled completion of capacity and economic development projects, such as U.S. 61 Fort Madison bypass, U.S. 30 in Story and Marshall counties, and the U. S. 30 Tama/Toledo bypass.

Investment in major interstate capacity and economic development projects. In this program, there is an annual average for the five years of \$91 million for Sioux City, Council Bluffs, and Bettendorf.

Adding non-stewardship capacity and economic development projects or phases of projects. In this program, some of the items are U.S. 63 in Black Hawk County

(Waterloo), U.S. 30 in Clinton County, U.S. 61 in Louisa County, Iowa 330 in Marshall County and U.S. 20 in Dubuque County.

The Commission recognizes that federal funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) has contributed a great deal to this program. In this five-year program, there is close to \$270 million from ARRA. This five-year program also receives \$50 million in state funding from the I-JOBS initiative, which will be used to reduce structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges, and another \$10 million for other modes of transportation.

Nursing Homes Reviewed by State

Twenty nursing homes and eight assisted living programs received a letter of recognition for deficiency-free inspections conducted in March and April. Earlier this month, the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) issued their reviews of nursing homes and assisted living programs across Iowa.

The facilities and programs that received a deficiency-free or regulatory insufficiency free letter from DIA were:

- Lincolnway Villa, Wheatland
- Jackson County Senior Center, Maquoketa
- Franken Manor, Sioux Center
- Windsor Manor, Vinton
- Waterford at Ames, Ames
- Wellington Place, Decorah
- Panora Assisted Living, Panora
- Lamoni Assisted Living, Lamoni
- Good Samaritan Society of Le Mars, Le Mars
- Manor House Care Center, Sigourney
- Behavioral Technologies – Evans House, Pleasant Hill
- Mosaic – 68th Street, Des Moines
- Mosaic – E. 42nd Street, Des Moines
- Belmond I, Belmond
- Belmond II, Belmond
- ChildServe – Johnston Home, Johnston
- Richland Group Home, Waterloo
- Beacon Hill Community Living Home, Dubuque
- Bunker Hill Community Living Home, Dubuque
- Concord Community Living Home, Dubuque
- Kennedy Community Living Home, Dubuque
- Maplewood Community Living Home, Dubuque
- Solar Group Home, Waterloo
- Duncan Heights, Inc., Garner
- Genesis Medical Center, De Witt
- Heritage Nursing Home, Bancroft
- Wellington Place, Decorah
- St. Francis Manor, Grinnell

Reduction in Child Abuse Cases

The Department of Human Services (DHS) announced this month that the rate of child abuse and neglect has declined the past two years in Iowa. DHS accredits the reduction to many reasons including increased efforts to prevent re-abuse and continued efforts to strengthen abuse prevention efforts at the local level.

“Denial of critical care,” or neglect, continue to be the most common form of abuse. DHS abuse investigators conducted over 23,000 assessments for child abuse last year, down 2% from the previous year. An assessment is

started when complaints from the public meet the legal guidelines for sending an investigator.

Of all the assessments, child abuse or neglect was found in 7,981 cases. A majority of the cases, 6,141 were “founded,” meaning the perpetrator was placed on the child abuse registry. An additional 1,840 cases were “confirmed,” meaning the abuse or neglect was isolated, minor, and unlikely to recur, with the perpetrator not placed on the registry.

This year the Legislature passed Senate File 101, which establishes a shaken baby prevention program.

DIA is responsible for licensing or certifying more than 1,000 nursing facilities, residential care facilities, intermediate care facilities, assisted living programs, elder group homes, and adult day service centers. Nursing homes are routinely surveyed on an annual basis, while assisted living programs are inspected once every two years under Iowa law.

During their inspections, surveyors and monitors review the quality of care and service provided to the residents and tenants. Inspectors also review the policies and procedures used by the facilities and programs in their day-to-day operations. Identified problems are expected to be remedied and plans of correction developed to prevent further issues.

DIA posts reports from all inspections and compliant investigations conducted at nursing homes and assisted living programs on its Nursing Home Report Card web site (dia.hfd.iowa.gov/DIA_HFD/Home.do).

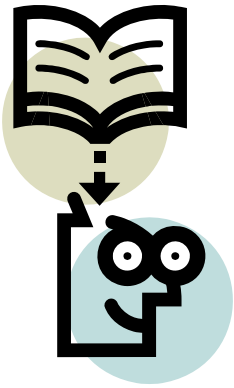
The goal of the program is to educate parents, and persons responsible for the care of a child, about the dangers to children three years of age or younger caused by shaken baby syndrome and to discuss ways to reduce the syndrome's risks. The new program will take effect July 1, 2009.

Everyone has the ability to report child abuse. The Iowa Child Abuse Hotline is available 24 hours a day at 1-800-362-2178. If a child is in imminent danger, you should call 911 immediately.

New Research and Development School

Governor Culver has signed legislation that creates a state Research and Development school in Cedar Falls. The purpose of the school is to serve Iowa students and educators in a sustainable partnership between the University of Northern Iowa and the Iowa Department of Education. Supporters of the new school feel strongly that the R & D school is essential to Iowa's coming generations and the vitality of the State of Iowa.

The site for the school is the current Price Laboratory School. The school will accept students in



grades kindergarten through grade twelve with total enrollment capped at 650 students. A three-year transition plan is put in place to allow time for the school to become fully operational. Funding for the school will come from open enrollment provisions in current law. The geographic boundary line agreement with the Cedar Falls School District will ensure that students currently receiving priority access to the school through open enrollment will continue to have priority access.

Two committees are established: a 17-member advisory council to review and evaluate the educational processes and results of

the school, and a nine-member standing institutional research committee to serve as the clearinghouse for investigative and applied research at the school. Annual reports are to be provided.

A design firm will evaluate the current Price Lab school facility and determine whether renovation or new construction is the most feasible option.

The Board of Regents is the governing entity of the school and is responsible for the faculty, facility, grounds, and staffing. The Department of Education is the accreditation agency and the authority on teacher qualification requirements.

Rebuild Iowa Coordinating Council Holds First Meeting

The first meeting of the Rebuild Iowa Coordinating Council was held last month. The council is comprised of 17 state agencies, groups representing local governments, and four Legislative members. The purpose is to oversee communication and insure coordination and partnership between state agencies and local governments in developing and implementing long-term recovery plans.

The council was created by the Legislature in House File 64. This bill also provided \$56 million in disaster relief for individuals and communities throughout the disaster areas.

The council is chaired by Lt. General Ron Dardis, who is also the executive director of the Rebuild Iowa Office. He told members that the 2008 weather related disaster would have a \$8 billion to \$10 billion price tag. Not only is it the largest disaster in Iowa history, but also the fifth largest in the nation.

Council members each explained their agency's role in disaster

recovery. Legislative members identified their concerns. Among the issues raised was the need for better communication, further clarification of disaster assistance programs, the inflexibility of federal programs, and the lack of data sharing between federal and state agencies.

Steve Saunders, Director of FEMA Preparedness Directorate, National Exercise Division, told the Council he is working with the Rebuild Iowa Office on an Iowa Recovery Analysis report. They will identify the best practices and pinpoint places where improvement is needed in Iowa's disaster recovery programs and plans.

The Iowa Recovery Analysis will be used by federal agencies in determining if there should be changes in federal regulations and policies related to disaster recovery.

The Rebuild Iowa Coordinating Council will meet every other month. The next meeting will be on July 21. The meeting will be used to review current recovery programs and processes and then propose

new priority issues as well as make recommendations to improve the recovery planning for the next 12 months. While the Council works on strategy and policy, interagency meetings will be held on the opposite months to continue work on implementing disaster recovery programs.

Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission

The Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission was created by executive order of Governor Culver last summer. The commission presented a 45-day and 120-day report on immediate and long-term disaster recovery recommendations. Of the twelve recommendations made in the 120-day report, Dardis told the commission in a teleconference meeting in May that the Legislature enacted all twelve.

The commission members agreed that they would remain on stand-by status through June 2011 when the Rebuild Iowa Office is scheduled to close.

Federal Stimulus Funds Approved to Protect Education

The Governor signed House File 820 that appropriates \$680 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act federal funds intended to stabilize educational and government services. In all, Iowa expects to receive \$2.5 billion in federal stimulus funds, with most of these funds flowing through existing federal programs. Approximately \$831 million of the federal stimulus funds are tied to state budget allocations for stabilization purposes.

House File 820 expends \$680 million of the federal stimulus funds in the 2009 and 2010 fiscal year budgets. The largest share, \$363 million, goes toward education; health care receives \$290 million; and the remaining is utilized

to stabilize other government services.

Protecting education (58%) and health and human service programs (24%) represents 82% of the state's total general fund spending. This year, the federal stimulus fund provided some temporary relief from steep reductions to these programs due to the current economic downturn.

K-12 school districts will receive \$40 million in federal stimulus money to prevent further reductions to school aid funding for the current school year budget. In the 2009-2010 school year, \$202.5 million in federal stimulus funds will be used to allow the school aid formula to fully fund the 4% growth promised

to schools. K-12 schools will also continue to receive funding for the state's share of the Instructional Support Program, through an allocation of \$13.1 million of federal stimulus funds.

Iowa's publicly funded higher education institutions also benefit from the federal stimulus funds. The state universities and special state schools will share \$80.3 million, which will maintain their funding at current year levels. Community colleges will receive \$25.6 million to maintain their current funding levels.

Maintaining funding at the higher education institutions should help minimize a spike in tuition increases.

Review Auto Insurance Before Summer Road Trip

Sue Voss, the Iowa Insurance Commissioner, wants Iowans to review their auto insurance before leaving on that summer road trip - and offers the following tips.

Before leaving, make sure you have your insurance ID card in the car. If the phone numbers of your insurance company and agent are not on the card, write them down and keep them with the card.

If You're In an Accident...

1. Remain calm and don't say anything that admits fault.
2. Check for injuries and give first aid if needed. Do you have a first aid kit in the car?
3. Always report the accident to the police, including any injuries. Ask the officer how to get a copy of the police report.
4. Record the name, address and phone number of the other driver, all passengers and witnesses. Write down the make, model and license plate number of all vehicles involved.
5. Take photos of the accident scene, if possible.

6. Notify your agent or insurance company immediately.

If your car is damaged due to the other driver's negligence, his insurer should pay for a rental car for a reasonable length of repair time. If the car is totaled, insurers don't have to pay for a rental, but many do as a courtesy.

Your insurer will only pay for a rental if your policy has that coverage. Most have a dollar limit, so check your policy.

If an uninsured driver is at fault, your insurer will pay for your car's damage only if your policy has collision coverage, and you will pay a deductible.

If your adjuster recommends a body shop, you may choose another, but that may cost you more. To avoid confusion, tell the adjuster which shop you prefer before any of the work is done.



If repairs would cost more than the car's value, the insurance company may declare it a total loss. If they do, they may take the title when they pay the claim. It's a good idea to independently research your car's value before settling with the insurance company.

Your premium might increase when you file a claim. Although this is more likely if you're at fault; your premium may increase because you had more than one not-at-fault accident within a time period. Most insurers use a three to five year claims period.

If you have questions about a rate increase following a claim, or have a dispute with your insurer about a claim, contact the Insurance Division by calling 877-955-1212 or through the Division's web site at www.iid.state.ia.us.

Constitutional Amendment on Natural Resources

Over the past two legislative sessions, the Iowa Legislature adopted an amendment to the state's constitution that creates a Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, for the purpose of providing a sustainable source of funding to protect and enhance water quality and natural areas in Iowa. The question on whether to adopt this amendment will be on the November 2010 ballot.

No revenue will be credited to the fund until the Legislature increases the sales tax in the future, after the public votes on the amendment. If approved by the public, the amendment would dedicate 3/8th of 1¢ of a future sales tax increase raised by the Legislature. This would generate approximately \$150 million.

The advisory committee established by the Legislature to provide recommendations on how to provide sustainable funding for natural resources met last month and discussed where the money would go if the fund is approved by the public in November, 2010, and if the Legislature increases the sales tax.

The following categories were identified by the advisory committee. They are also supported by a 2007 interim legislative committee. These represent increases to baseline funding to meet current needs.

- REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection). 13% (\$19.5 mil-

lion) additional funds to meet the demands on REAP. This would provide a total of \$39.5 million from current and future sources. This program provides moneys for projects that enhance our natural, cultural, and recreational resources across the state at multiple levels of government and management.

- Local Conservation Partnership Program. 13% (\$19.5 million) for habitat protection and conservation, infrastructure needs, conservation education, and nature interpretation at the local level. Funds would be made available to county conservation boards (\$11.5 million), non-governmental organizations (\$5 million), and cities (\$3 million).

- Watershed Protection. 14% (\$21 million) to improve and encourage a watershed approach to solving water quality environmental problems. Watershed protection includes encouragement of watershed groups, targeted projects, wetland restoration, and runoff filtration management techniques.

- Lakes Restoration. 7% (\$10.5 million) additional for lake restoration needs. Local involvement and watershed protection are essential components of all successful lake restoration projects.

- Trails. 10% (\$15 million) for the addition of new hiking, walking, biking, and water trails, and maintenance of existing trails. These state investments in trails will be able to leverage additional federal, local and private funds.

- Natural Resources Management. 23% (\$34.5 million) additional to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for identified needs in state parks, state preserves, wildlife areas, state forests, wildlife habitats, wildlife diversity program, access for hunting and other recreational activities, technical assistance, natural resources outreach, and conservation law enforcement and recreational safety programs.

- Land Stewardship. 20% (\$30 million) additional to the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to provide additional technical assistance to soil and water conservation districts, develop a stream bank and buffer stabilization project, initiate a state-funded CRP-type program to keep lands in hay and grass, and start a tillage management incentives program to assure adequate crop residue levels in areas impacted by demand for cellulosic ethanol production. This new money would also be used to support environmental agricultural and livestock stewardship.

The advisory committee will meet again in July to discuss oversight and accountability issues, and provide more specific details on each of the funding accounts.

DNR to Monitor State Park Beaches

The Department of Natural Resources said they are monitoring water quality at 37 Iowa state park beaches to protect public health and enhance understanding of water quality. The water quality standards will be utilized to determine

the risk of waterborne illnesses for swimmers.

Monitoring began in mid-May and will continue through September. "Our monitoring over the past nine swimming seasons has shown that our state park beaches are safe

for swimming the vast majority of the time," said Eric O'Brien, supervisor of the DNR Watershed Monitoring and Assessment Section.

During the summer of 2008, water quality standards were ex-

ceeded for swimming less than 5 percent of the time. If standards are exceeded, "swimming is not recommended" signs will be posted, which does not close a

beach. The DNR may close a beach, however, if there is a documented health risk.

Weekly water quality test results can be found on the DNR web site at www.iowadnr.gov under the heading "Beach Monitoring."

Firefighter and Police Officer Assistance

Governor Culver signed Senate File 226 to assist firefighters and police officers who become disabled due to a work-related injury. The bill establishes a presumption that cancer and infectious diseases are work-related for the purposes of disability and death benefits.

Under the bill, cancer and infectious diseases contracted by firefighters and police officers, who are members of the statewide fire and police retirement system (411 System), are presumed to be a disease contracted while on active duty. This makes them job-related for purposes of establishing a disability pension or providing a death benefit. Cancer includes

prostate cancer, primary brain cancer, malignant melanoma, leukemia, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, bladder cancer, colorectal cancer, multiple myeloma, testicular cancer, kidney cancer, ovarian, breast, uterine, and cervix cancers. Infectious disease includes human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, all strains of hepatitis, meningococcal meningitis, and mycobacterium tuberculosis.

This means that those firefighters and officers, under the 411 System, would not have to pay for their own health care treatment. The cost for this coverage will be paid by the members of the Municipal Fire

and Police Officers' Retirement System (411 System) through an increase in their contribution rates.

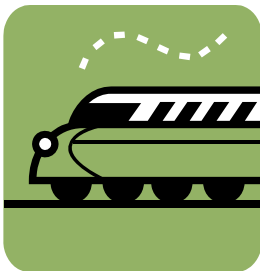
Since January 1, 1992, the beginning of the 411 system, there has been 13 cancer disabilities. Ten of these were considered work-related. There has been one disability due to contracting an infectious disease. Eighteen states have a similar presumption for firefighters in their statute.

This proposal applies to illnesses diagnosed after July 1, 2009, the effective date of this bill.

Environment Commission Supports Passenger Rail

Citing environmental benefits, the Environmental Protection Commission unanimously passed a resolution supporting the expansion of passenger rail service to several of Iowa's largest cities.

Information from the British government estimates that emissions by passenger mile for rail are only 45% as much as emissions from cars and trucks, and only 27% as much as emissions from air travel on short routes such as Des



Moines to Chicago. Information also shows that there is potential for electric rail to operate with zero carbon emissions if it is powered by renewable energy. This type of passenger rail could increase the market for Iowa-manufactured renewable energy.

Currently, southern Iowa is served by two passenger trains, but recent state and federal legislation is aimed at expanding to other areas in Iowa. The Iowa Department of Transportation will be able to compete for federal passenger rail

funds with a \$3 million appropriation in House File 822.

Governor Culver also signed Senate File 151, which changes the definition of passenger rail to include both short and long commutes, and encourages the Department of Transportation to engage in contracts that will bring more passenger rail to Iowa. There are recent proposals to bring service to Dubuque, the Quad Cities, and Iowa City from Chicago. Long-term plans involve service to Des Moines and West Des Moines.